cient corrective of all our other corruptions, had things gone on around us in their usual and accustomed channels. Unfortunately, however, the French Revolution came, to astonish and appal the world; and, originating with the people, not only subverted thrones and establishments, but made such havoc on the lives and properties and principles of individuals, as very naturally to excite the horror and alarm of all whose condition was not already intolerable. This alarm, in so far as it related to this country, was always excessive, and in a great degree unreasonable: But it was impossible perhaps altogether to escape it; and the consequences have been incalculably injurious to the interests of practical liberty. During the raging of that war which Jacobinism in its most disgusting form carried on against rank and royalty, it was natural for those who apprehended the possibility of a similar conflict at home, to fortify those orders with all that reason and even prejudice could supply for their security, and to lay aside for the time those jealousies and hereditary grudges, upon which, in better days, it was their duty to engage in contention. While a raging fever of liberty was epidemic in the neighbourhood, the ordinary diet of the people appeared too inflammatory for their constitution; and it was thought advisable to abstain from articles, which, at all other times, were allowed to be necessary for their health and vigour. Thus, a sort of tacit convention was entered into,—to say nothing, for a while, of the follies and vices of princes, the tyranny of courts, or the rights of the people. The Revolution of 1688, it was agreed, could not be mentioned with praise, without giving some indirect encouragement to the Revolution of 1789; and it was thought as well to say nothing in favour of Hampden, or Russell, or Sydney, for fear it might give spirits to Robespierre, Danton, or Marat. To this strict regimen the greater part of the nation submitted of their own accord; and it was forced upon the remainder by a pretty vigorous system of proceeding. Now, we do not greatly blame either the alarm, or the precautions which it dictated; but we do very seriously lament, that the use of those precautions should have degenerated into a sort of national habit; and should be continued and approved of so very long after the danger which occasioned them has ceased.

It is now at least ten years since Jacobinism was prostrated at Paris; and it is still longer since it ceased to be regarded with any thing but horror in this country. Yet the favourers of power would still take advantage of its name to shield authority from question; and to throw obloquy on the rights and services of the people. The power of habit has come unfortunately to their aid; and it is still unfashionable, and, we are afraid, not very popular, to talk of the tyranny of the Stuarts, and the triumph of the Revolution, in the tone which was universal and established within these last twenty years. For our parts, however, we see no sort of reason for this change; and we hail, with pleasure, this work of Mr. Fox's, as likely to put an end to a system of timidity so apt to graduate into servility; and to familiarize his countrymen once more to speak and to think of Charles, of James, and of Strafford,—and of William, and Russell, and Sydney,—as it becomes Englishmen to speak and to think of such characters. To talk with affected tenderness of oppressors, may suit the policy of those who wish to bespeak the clemency of an Imperial Conqueror; but must appear peculiarly base and inconsistent in all who profess an anxiety to rouse the people to great exertions in the cause of their independence.

The volume itself, which has given occasion to these reflections, and from which we have withheld our readers too long, consists of a preface or general introduction from the pen of Lord Holland; an introductory chapter, comprising a review of the leading events, from the year 1640 to the death of Charles II.; two chapters of the history of the reign of James, which include no more than seven months of the year 1685, and narrate very little but the unfortunate expeditions of Argyle and of Monmouth; and a pretty long Appendix, consisting chiefly of the correspondence between Barillon, the French confidential minister at the court of England, and his master Louis XIV.

Lord Holland's part of the volume is written with great judgment, perspicuity, and propriety; and though it contains less anecdote and minute information with regard to his illustrious kinsman than every reader must wish to possess, it not only gives a very satisfactory account of the progress of the work to which it is prefixed, but affords us some glimpses of the character and opinions of its author, which are peculiarly interesting, both from the authenticity of the source from which they are derived, and from the unostentatious simplicity with which they are communicated. Lord Holland has not been able to ascertain at what period Mr. Fox first formed the design of writing a history; but, from the year 1797, when he ceased to give a regular attendance in parliament, he was almost entirely occupied with literary schemes and avocations. The following little sketch of the temper and employments of him who was pitied by many as a disappointed politician, is extremely amiable; and, we are now convinced by the fragment before us, correctly true.

"During his retirement, that love of literature, and fondness for poetry, which neither pleasure nor business had ever extinguished, revived with an ardour, such as few, in the eagerness of youth or in pursuit of fame or advantage, are capable of feeling. For some time, however, his studies were not directed to any particular object. Such was the happy disposition of his mind, that his own reflections, whether supplied by conversation, desultory reading, or the common occurrences of a life in the country, were always sufficient to call forth the vigour and exertion of his faculties. Intercourse with the world had so little deadened in him the sense of the simplest enjoyments, that even in the hours of apparent leisure and inactivity, he retained that keen relish of existence, which, after the first impressions of life, is so rarely excited but by great interests and strong passions. Hence it was, that in the interval between his active attendance in parliament, and the undertaking of his History, he never felt the tedium of a vacant day. A verse in Cowper, which he frequently repeated,

'How various his employments whom the world
Calls idle!'

was an accurate description of the life he was then leading; and I am persuaded, that if he had consulted his own gratifications only, it would have continued to be so. The circumstances which led him once more to take an active part in public discussions, are foreign to the purposes of this preface. It is sufficient to remark, that they could not be foreseen, and that his notion of engaging in some literary undertaking was adopted during his retirement, and with the prospect of long and uninterrupted leisure before him."—p. iii. iv.

He seems to have fixed finally on the history of the Revolution, about the year 1799; but even after the work was begun, he not only dedicated large portions of his time to the study of Greek literature, and poetry in general, but meditated and announced to his correspondents a great variety of publications, upon a very wide range of subjects. Among these were, an edition of Dryden—a Defence of Racine and of the French Stage—an Essay on the Beauties of Euripides—a Disquisition upon Hume's History—and an Essay or Dialogue on Poetry, History, and Oratory. In 1802, the greater part of the work, as it now stands, was finished; but the author wished to consult the papers in the Scotch College, and the *Depôt des Affaires etrangères* at Paris, and took the opportunity of the peace to pay a visit to that capital accordingly. After his return, he made some additions to his chapters; but being soon after recalled to the duties of public life, he never afterwards found leisure to go on with the work to which he had dedicated himself with so much zeal and assiduity. What he did write was finished, however, for the most part, with very great care. He wrote very slow: and was extremely fastidious in the choice of his expressions; holding pedantry and affectation, however, in far greater horror than carelessness or roughness. He commonly wrote detached sentences on slips of paper, and afterwards dictated them off to Mrs. Fox, who copied them into the book from which the present volume has been printed without the alteration of a single syllable.

The only other part of Lord Holland's statement, to which we think it necessary to call the attention of the reader, is that in which he thinks it necessary to explain the peculiar notions which Mr. Fox entertained on the subject of historical composition, and the very rigid laws to which he had subjected himself in the execution of his important task.

"It is therefore necessary to observe, that he had formed his plan so exclusively on the model of ancient writers, that he not only felt some repugnance to the modern practice of notes, but he thought that all which an historian wished to say, should be introduced as part of a continued narration, and never assume the appearance of a digression, much less of a dissertation annexed to it. From the period, therefore, that he closed his Introductory Chapter, he defined his duty as an author, to consist in recounting the facts as they arose; or in his simple and forcible language, *in telling the story of those times*. A conversation which passed on the subject of the literature of the age of James the Second, proves his rigid adherence to these ideas; and perhaps the substance of it may serve to illustrate and explain them. In speaking of the writers of that period, he lamented that he had not devised a method of interweaving any account of them or their works, much less any criticism on their style, into his history. On my suggesting the example of Hume and Voltaire, who had discussed such topics at some length, either at the end of each reign, or in a separate chapter, he observed, with much commendation of their execution of it, that such a contrivance might be a good mode of writing critical essays, but that it was, in his opinion, incompatible with the nature of his undertaking, which, if it ceased to be a narrative, ceased to be a history."—p. xxxvi. xxxvii.

Now, we must be permitted to say, that this is a view of the nature of history, which, in so far as it is intelligible, appears to be very narrow and erroneous; and which seems, like all such partial views, to have been so little adhered to by the author himself, as only to exclude many excellences, without attaining the praise even of consistency in error. The object of history, we conceive, is to give us a clear narrative of the transactions of past ages, with a view of the character and condition of those who were concerned in them, and such reasonings and reflections as may be necessary to explain their connection, or natural on reviewing their results. That some account of the authors of a literary age should have a place in such a composition, seems to follow upon two considerations: *first*, because it is unquestionably one object of history to give us a distinct view of the state and condition of the age and people with whose affairs it is occupied; and nothing can serve so well to illustrate their true state and condition as a correct estimate and description of the great authors they produced: and, *secondly*, because the fact that such and such authors did flourish in such a period, and were ingenious and elegant, or rude and ignorant, are facts which are interesting in themselves, and may be made the object of narrative just as properly as that such and such princes or ministers did flourish at the same time, and were ambitious or slothful, tyrannical or friends to liberty. Political events are not the only events which are recorded even in ancient history; and, now when it is generally admitted, that even political events cannot be fully understood or accounted for without taking into view the preceding and concomitant changes in manners, literature, commerce, &c. it cannot fail to appear surprising, that an author of such a compass of mind as belonged to Mr. Fox, should have thought of confining himself to the mere chronicling of wars or factions, and held himself excluded, by the laws of historical composition, from touching upon topics so much more interesting.

The truth is, however, that Mr. Fox has by no means adhered to this plan of merely "telling the story of the times" of which he treats. On the contrary, he is more full of argument, and what is properly called reflection, than most modern historians with whom

we are acquainted. His argument, to be sure, is chiefly directed to ascertain the truth of reputed facts, or the motives of ambiguous actions; and his reflections, however just and natural, may commonly be considered as redundant, with a view to mere information. Of another kind of reasoning, indeed, he is more sparing; though of a kind far more valuable, and, in our apprehension, far more essential to the true perfection of history. We allude now to those general views of the causes which influence the character and disposition of the people at large; and which, as they vary from age to age, bring a greater or a smaller part of the nation into contact with its government, and ultimately produce the success or failure of every scheme of tyranny or freedom. The more this subject is meditated, the more certain, we are persuaded, it will appear, that all permanent and important occurrences in the internal history of a country, are the result of those changes in the general character of its population; and that kings and ministers are necessarily guided in their projects by a feeling of the tendencies of this varying character, and fail or succeed, exactly as they had judged correctly or erroneously of its condition. To trace the causes and the modes of its variation, is therefore to describe the true sources of events; and, merely to narrate the occurrences to which it gave rise, is to recite a history of actions without intelligible motives, and of effects without assignable causes. It is true, no doubt, that political events operate in their turn on that national character by which they are previously moulded and controuled: But they are very far, indeed, from being the chief agents in its formation; and the history of those very events is necessarily imperfect, as well as uninstructive, if the consideration of those other agents is omitted. They consist of every thing which affects the character of individuals:—manners, education, prevailing occupations, religion, taste,—and, above all, the distribution of wealth, and the state of prejudice and opinions.

It is the more to be regretted, that such a mind as Mr. Fox's should have been bound up from such a subject by the shackles of an idle theory; because the period of which he treats affords the finest of all opportunities for prosecuting such an inquiry, and does not, indeed, admit of an intelligible or satisfactory history upon any other conditions. There are three great events, falling within that period, of which, it appears to us, that "the story" has not yet been intelligibly told, for want of some such analysis of the national feelings. One is, the universal joy and sincere confidence with which Charles II. was received back, without one stipulation for the liberties of the people, or one precaution against the abuses of power. This was done by the very people who had waged war against a more amiable Sovereign, and quarrelled with the Protector for depriving them of their freedom. It is saying nothing, to say that Monk did this by means of the army. It was not done either by Monk or the army, but by the nation; and even if it were not so, the question would still be,—by what change in the dispositions of the army and the nation Monk was able to make them do it. The second event, which must always appear unaccountable upon the mere narrative of the circumstances, is the base and abject submission of the people to the avowed tyranny of the restored Charles, when he was pleased at last to give up the use of Parliaments, and to tax and govern on his own single authority. This happened when most of those must have still been alive who had seen the nation rise up in arms against his father; and within five years of the time when it rose up still more unanimously against his successor, and not only changed the succession of the crown, but very strictly defined and limited its prerogatives. The third, is the Revolution itself; an event which was brought about by the very individuals who had submitted so quietly to the domination of Charles, and who, when assembled in the House of Commons under James himself, had, of their own accord, sent one of their members to the Tower for having observed, upon a harsh and tyrannical expression of the King's, that "he hoped they were all Englishmen, and not to be frighted with a few hard words." It is not to give us the history of these events, merely to set down the time and circumstances of the occurrence, They evidently require some explanation, in order to be comprehended; and the narrative will be altogether unsatisfactory, as well as totally barren of instruction, unless it give some account of those changes in the general temper and opinion of the nation, by which such contradictory actions became possible. Mr. Fox's conception of the limits of legitimate history, restrained him, we are afraid, from entering into such considerations; and they will best estimate the amount of his error, who are most aware of the importance of the information of which it has deprived us. Nothing, in our apprehension, can be beyond the province of legitimate history, which tends to give us clear conceptions of the times and characters with which that history is conversant; nor can the story of any time be complete or valuable, unless it look before and after,—to the causes and consequences of the events which it details, and mark out the period with which it is occupied, as part of a greater series, as well as an object of separate consideration.

In proceeding to the consideration of Mr. Fox's own part of this volume, it may be as well to complete that general estimate of its excellence and defects which we have been led incidentally to express in a good degree already. We shall then be able to pursue our analysis of the successive chapters with less distraction.

The sentiments, we think, are almost all just, and candid, and manly; but the narrative is too minute and diffusive, and does not in general flow with much spirit or facility. Inconsiderable incidents are detailed at far too great length; and an extreme and painful anxiety is shown to ascertain the

exact truth of doubtful or contested passages, and the probable motives of insignificant and ambiguous actions. The labour which is thus visibly bestowed on the work, often appears, therefore, disproportioned to the importance of the result. The history becomes, in a certain degree, languid and heavy; and something like a feeling of disappointment and impatience is generated, from the tardiness and excessive caution with which the story is carried forward. In those constant attempts, too, to verify the particulars which are narrated, a certain tone of debate is frequently assumed, which savours more of the orator than the historian; and though there is nothing florid or rhetorical in the general cast of the diction, yet those argumentative passages are evidently more akin to public speaking than to written composition. Frequent interrogations—short alternative propositions—and an occasional mixture of familiar images and illustrations,—all denote a certain habit of personal altercation, and of keen and animated contention. Instead, therefore, of a work emulating the full and flowing narrative of Livy or Herodotus, we find in Mr. Fox's book rather a series of critical remarks on the narratives of preceding writers, mingled up with occasional details somewhat more copious and careful than the magnitude of the subjects seemed to require. The history, in short, is planned upon too broad a scale, and the narrative too frequently interrupted by small controversies and petty indecisions. We are aware that these objections may be owing in a good degree to the smallness of the fragment upon which we are unfortunately obliged to hazard them; and that the proportions which appear gigantic in this little relic, might have been no more than majestic in the finished work; but even after making allowance for this consideration, we cannot help thinking that the details are too minute, and the verifications too elaborate.

The introductory chapter is full of admirable reasonings and just reflections. It begins with noticing, that there are certain periods in the history of every people, which are obviously big with important consequences, and exercise a visible and decisive influence on the times that come after. The reign of Henry VII. is one of these, with relation to England;—another is that comprised between 1588 and 1640;—and the most remarkable of all, is that which extends from the last of these dates, to the death of Charles II.—the era of constitutional principles and practical tyranny—of the best laws, and the most corrupt administration. It is to the review of this period, that the introductory chapter is dedicated.

Mr. Fox approves of the first proceedings of the Commons; but censures without reserve the unjustifiable form of the proceedings against Lord Strafford, whom he qualifies with the name of a great delinquent. With regard to the causes of the civil war, the most difficult question to determine is, whether the Parliament made sufficient efforts to avoid bringing affairs to such a decision. That they had justice on their side, he says, cannot be reasonably doubted,—but seems to think that something more might have been done, to bring matters to an accommodation. With regard to the execution of the King, he makes the following striking observations, in that tone of fearless integrity and natural mildness, which we have already noticed as characteristic of this performance.

"The execution of the King, though a far less violent measure than that of Lord Strafford, is an event of so singular a nature, that we cannot wonder that it should have excited more sensation than any other in the annals of England. This exemplary act of substantial justice, as it has been called by some, of enormous wickedness by others, must be considered in two points of view. First, was it not in itself just and necessary! Secondly, was the example of it likely to be salutary or pernicious? In regard to the first of these questions, Mr. Hume, not perhaps intentionally, makes the best justification of it, by saying, that while Charles lived, the projected Republic could never be secure. But to justify taking away the life of an individual, upon the principle of self-defence, the danger must be, not problematical and remote, but evident and immediate. The danger in this instance was not of such a nature; and the imprisonment, or even banishment of Charles, might have given to the republic such a degree of security as any government ought to be content with. It must be confessed, however, on the other side, that if the republican government had suffered the King to escape, it would have been an act of justice and generosity wholly unexampled; and to have granted him even his life, would have been one among the more rare efforts of virtue. The short interval between the deposal and death of princes is become proverbial; and though there may be some few examples on the other side, as far as life is concerned, I doubt whether a single instance can be found, where liberty has been granted to a deposed monarch. Among the modes of destroying persons in such a situation, there can be little doubt but that adopted by Cromwell and his adherents is the least dishonourable. Edward the Second, Richard the Second, Henry the Sixth, Edward the Fifth, had none of them long survived their deposal; but this was the first instance, in our history at least, where, of such an act, it could be truly said, that it was not done in a corner.

"As to the second question, whether the advantage to be derived from the example was such as to justify an act of such violence, it appears to me to be a complete solution of it to observe, that with respect to England (and I know not upon what ground we are to set examples for other nations, or, in other words, to take the criminal justice of the world into our hands), it was wholly needless, and therefore unjustifiable, to set one for kings, at a time when it was intended the office of king should be abolished, and consequently that no person should be in the situation to make it the rule of his conduct. Besides, the miseries attendant upon a deposed monarch, seem to be sufficient to deter any prince, who thinks of consequences, from running the risk of being placed in such a situation; or if death be the only evil that can deter him, the fate of former tyrants deposed by their subjects, would by no means encourage him to hope he could avoid even that catastrophe. As far as we can judge from the event, the example was certainly not very effectual; since both the sons of Charles, though having their father's fate before their eyes, yet feared not to violate the liberties of the people even more than he had attempted to do.

"After all, however, notwithstanding what the more reasonable part of mankind may think upon

this question, it is much to be doubted whether this singular proceeding has not, as much as any other circumstance, served to raise the character of the English nation in the opinion of Europe in general. He who has read, and still more he who has heard in conversation, discussions upon this subject, by foreigners, must have perceived, that, even in the minds of those who condemn the act, the impression made by it has been far more that of respect and admiration, than that of disgust and horror. The truth is, that the guilt of the action, that is to say, the taking away the life of the King, is what most men in the place of Cromwell and his associates would have incurred. What there is of splendour and of magnanimity in it, I mean the publicity and solemnity of the act, is what few would be capable of displaying. It is a degrading fact to human nature, that even the sending away of the Duke of Gloucester was an instance of generosity almost unexampled in the history of transactions of this nature."—pp. 13—17.

Under the Protector, of whom he speaks with singular candour, the government was absolute—and, on his death, fell wholly into the hands of the army. He speaks with contempt and severe censure of Monk for the precipitate and unconditional submission into which he hurried the country at the Restoration; and makes the following candid reflection on the subsequent punishment of the regicides.

"With respect to the execution of those who were accused of having been more immediately concerned in the King's death, that of Scrope, who had come in upon the proclamation, and of the military officers who had attended the trial, was a violation of every principle of law and justice. But the fate of the others, though highly dishonourable to Monk, whose whole power had arisen from his zeal in their service, and the favour and confidence with which they had rewarded him, and not perhaps very creditable to the nation, of which many had applauded, more had supported, and almost all had acquiesced in the act, is not certainly to be imputed as a crime to the King, or to those of his advisers who were of the Cavalier party. The passion of revenge, though properly condemned both by philosophy and religion, yet when it is excited by injurious treatment of persons justly dear to us, is among the most excusable of human frailties; and if Charles, in his general conduct, had shown stronger feelings of gratitude for services performed to his father, his character, in the eyes of many, would be rather raised than lowered by this example of severity against the regicides."—pp. 22, 23.

The mean and unprincipled submission of Charles to Louis XIV., and the profligate pretences upon which he was perpetually soliciting an increase of his disgraceful stipend, are mentioned with becoming reprobation. The delusion of the Popish plot is noticed at some length; and some admirable remarks are introduced with reference to the debates on the expediency of passing a bill for excluding the Duke of York from the Crown, or of imposing certain restrictions on him in the event of his succession. The following observations are distinguished for their soundness, as well as their acuteness; and are applicable, in principle, to every period of our history in which it can be necessary to recur to the true principles of the constitution.

"It is not easy to conceive upon what principles even the Tories could justify their support of the restrictions. Many among them, no doubt, saw the provisions in the same light in which the Whigs represented them, as an expedient, admirably indeed adapted to the real object of upholding the present king's power, by the defeat of the exclusion, but never likely to take effect for their pretended purpose of controuling that of his successor; and supported them for that very reason. But such a principle of conduct was too fraudulent to be avowed; nor ought it perhaps, in candour, to be imputed to the majority of the party. To those who acted with good faith, and meant that the restrictions should really take place, and be effectual, surely it ought to have occurred (and to those who most prized the prerogatives of the crown, it ought most forcibly to have occurred), that, in consenting to curtail the powers of the crown, rather than to alter the succession, they were adopting the greater, in order to avoid the lesser evil. The question of, what are to be the powers of the crown? is surely of superior importance to that of, who shall wear it? Those, at least, who consider the royal prerogative as vested in the king, not for his own sake, but for that of his subjects, must consider the one of these questions as much above the other in dignity, as the rights of the public are more valuable than those of an individual. In this view, *the prerogatives of the crown are in substance and effect the rights of the people: and these rights of the people were not to be sacrificed to the purpose of preserving the succession to the most favoured prince*, much less to one who, on account of his religious persuasion, was justly feared and suspected. In truth, the question between the exclusion and restrictions seems peculiarly calculated to ascertain the different views in which the different parties in this country have seen, and perhaps ever will see, the prerogatives of the crown. The Whigs, who consider them as a trust for the people, a doctrine which the Tories themselves, when pushed in argument, will sometimes admit, naturally think it their duty rather to change the manager of the trust, than to impair the subject of it; while others, who consider them as the right or property of the king, will as naturally act as they would do in the case of any other property, and consent to the loss or annihilation of any part of it, for the purpose of preserving the remainder to him, whom they style the rightful owner. If the people be the sovereign, and the king the delegate, it is better to change the bailiff than to injure the farm; but if the king be the proprietor, it is better the farm should be impaired, nay, part of it destroyed, than that the whole should pass over to an usurper. The royal prerogative ought, according to the Whigs (not in the case of a Popish successor only, but in all cases), to be reduced to such powers as are in their exercise beneficial to the people; and of the benefit of these they will not rashly suffer the people to be deprived, whether the executive power be in the hands of an hereditary, or of an elected king; of a regent, or of any other denomination of magistrate; while, on the other hand, they who consider prerogative with reference only to royalty, will, with equal readiness, consent either to the extension or the suspension of its exercise, as the occasional interests of the prince may seem to require."—pp. 37—39.

Of the reality of any design to assassinate the King, by those engaged in what was called the Rye-House Plot, Mr. Fox appears to entertain considerable doubt, partly on account of the improbability of many of the circumstances, and partly on account of the uniform and resolute denial of Rumbold, the chief of that party, in circumstances when he had no conceivable inducement to disguise the truth. Of the condemnation of Russell and Sydney, he speaks with the indignation which must be felt by all friends to liberty at the recollection of that disgraceful proceeding. The following passage is one of the most eloquent and one of the most characteristic in the whole volume.

"Upon evidence such as has been stated, was this great and excellent man (Sydney) condemned to die. Pardon was not to be expected. Mr. Hume says, that such an interference on the part of the King, though it might have been an act of heroic generosity, could not be regarded as an indispensable duty. He might have said, with more propriety, that it was idle to expect that the government, after having incurred so much guilt in order to obtain the sentence, should, by remitting it, relinquish the object just when it is within its grasp. The same historian considers the jury as highly blameable: and so do I; But what was their guilt, in comparison of that of the court who tried, and of the government who prosecuted, in this infamous cause? Yet the jury, being the only party that can with any colour be stated as acting independently of the government, is the only one mentioned by him as blameable. The prosecutor is wholly omitted in his censure, and so is the court; this last, not from any tenderness for the judge (who, to do this author justice, is no favourite with him), but lest the odious connection between that branch of the judicature and the government should strike the reader too forcibly: For Jefferies, in this instance, ought to be regarded as the mere tool and instrument (a fit one, no doubt) of the prince who had appointed him for the purpose of this and similar services. Lastly, the King is gravely introduced on the question of pardon, as if he had had no prior concern in the cause, and were now to decide upon the propriety of extending mercy to a criminal condemned by a court of judicature! Nor are we once reminded what that judicature was,—by whom appointed, by whom influenced, by whom called upon to receive that detestable evidence, the very recollection of which, even at this distance of time, fires every honest heart with indignation. As well might we palliate the murders of Tiberius; who seldom put to death his victims without a previous decree of his senate. The moral of all this seems to be, that whenever a prince can, by intimidation, corruption, illegal evidence, or other such means, obtain a verdict against a subject whom he dislikes, he may cause him to be executed without any breach of indispensable duty; nay, that it is an act of heroic generosity, if he spares him. I never reflect on Mr. Hume's statement of this matter but with the deepest regret. Widely as I differ from him upon many other occasions, this appears to me to be the most reprehensible passage of his whole work. A spirit of adulation towards deceased princes, though in a good measure free from the imputation of interested meanness, which is justly attached to flattery, when applied to living monarchs; yet, as it is less intelligible with respect to its motives than the other, so is it in its consequences still more pernicious to the general interests of mankind. Fear of censure from contemporaries will seldom have much effect upon men in situations of unlimited authority. They will too often flatter themselves, that the same power which enables them to commit the crime, will secure them from reproach. The dread of posthumous infamy, therefore, being the only restraint, their consciences excepted, upon the passions of such persons, it is lamentable that this last defence (feeble enough at best), should in any degree be impaired; and impaired it must be, if not totally destroyed, when tyrants can hope to find in a man like Hume, no less eminent for the integrity and benevolence of his heart, than for the depth and soundness of his understanding, an apologist for even their foulest murders."—pp. 48—50.

The uncontrouled tyranny of Charles' administration in his latter days, is depicted with much force and fidelity; and the clamour raised by his other ministers against the Marquis of Halifax, for having given an opinion in council that the North American colonies should be made participant in the benefits of the English constitution, gives occasion to the following natural reflection.

"There is something curious in discovering, that, even at this early period, a question relative to North American liberty, and even to North American taxation, was considered as the test of principles friendly or adverse, to arbitary power at home. But the truth is, that among the several controversies which have arisen, there is no other wherein the natural rights of man on the one hand, and the authority of artificial institution on the other, as applied respectively, by the Whigs and Tories, to the English constitution, are so fairly put in issue, nor by which the line of separation between the two parties is so strongly and distinctly marked."—p. 60.

The introductory chapter is closed by the following profound and important remarks, which may indeed serve as a key to the whole transactions of the ensuing reign.

"Whoever reviews the interesting period which we have been discussing, upon the principle recommended in the outset of this chapter, will find, that, from the consideration of the past, to prognosticate the future, would, at the moment of Charles' demise, be no easy task. Between two persons, one of whom should expect that the country would remain sunk in slavery, the other, that the cause of freedom would revive and triumph, it would be difficult to decide, whose reasons were better supported, whose speculations the more probable. I should guess that he who desponded, had looked more at the state of the public; while he who was sanguine, had fixed his eyes more attentively upon the person who was about to mount the throne. Upon reviewing the two great parties of the nation, one observation occurs very forcibly, and that is, that the great strength of the Whigs consisted in their being able to brand their adversaries as favourers of Popery; that of the Tories (as far as their strength depended upon opinion, and not merely upon the power of the crown), in their finding colour to represent the Whigs as republicans. From this observation we may draw a further inference, that, in proportion to the rashness of the crown, in avowing and pressing forward the cause of Popery, and to the moderation and steadiness of the Whigs, in adhering to the form of monarchy, would be the chance of the people of England, for changing an ignominious despotism for glory, liberty, and happiness."—pp. 66, 67.

James was known to have had so large a share in the councils of his brother, that no one expected any material change of system from his accession. The Church, indeed, it was feared, might be less safe under a professed Catholic; and the severity of his temper might inspire some dread of an aggravated oppression. It seems to be Mr. Fox's great object, in this first chapter, to prove that the object of his early policy was, not to establish the Catholic religion, but to make himself absolute and independent of his Parliament.

The fact itself, he conceives, is completely established by the manner in which his secret negotiations with France were carried on; in the whole of which, he was zealously served by ministers, no one of whom had the slightest leaning towards Popery, or could ever be brought to countenance the measures which he afterwards pursued in its favour. It is made still more evident by the complexion

of his proceedings in Scotland; where the test, which he enforced at the point of the bayonet, was a Protestant test,—*so much so, indeed, that he himself could not take it*,—and the objects of his persecution, dissenters from the Protestant church of England. We consider this point therefore—and it is one of no small importance in the history of this period—as now sufficiently established.

It does not seem necessary to follow the author into the detail of that sordid and degrading connexion which James was so anxious to establish, by becoming, like his brother, the pensioner of the French monarch. The bitter and dignified contempt with which it is treated by Mr. Fox, may be guessed at from the following account of the first remittance.

"Within a very few days from that in which the latter of them had passed, he (the French ambassador) was empowered to accompany the delivery of a letter from his master, with the agreeable news of having received from him bills of exchange to the amount of five hundred thousand livres, to be used in whatever manner might be convenient to the King of England's service. The account which Barillon gives of the manner in which this sum was received, is altogether ridiculous: *the King's eyes were full of tears!* and three of his ministers, Rochester, Sunderland, and Godolphin, came severally to the French ambassador, to express the sense their master had of the obligation, in terms the most lavish. Indeed, demonstrations of gratitude from the King directly, as well as through his ministers, for this supply, were such as, if they had been used by some unfortunate individual, who, with his whole family, had been saved, by the timely succour of some kind and powerful protector, from a gaol and all its horrors, would be deemed rather too strong than too weak. Barillon himself seems surprised when he relates them; but imputes them to what was probably their real cause, to the apprehensions that had been entertained (very unreasonable ones!), that the King of France might no longer choose to interfere in the affairs of England, and, consequently, that his support could not be relied on for the grand object of assimilating this government to his own."—pp. 83, 84.

After this, Lord Churchill is sent to Paris on the part of the tributary King.

"How little could Barillon guess, that he was negotiating with one who was destined to be at the head of an administration which, in a few years, would send the same Lord Churchill, not to Paris to implore Lewis for succours towards enslaving England, or to thank him for pensions to her monarch, but to combine all Europe against him in the cause of liberty! to route his armies, to take his towns, to humble his pride, and to shake to the foundation that fabric of power which it had been the business of a long life to raise, at the expense of every sentiment of tenderness to his subjects, and of justice and good faith to foreign nations! It is with difficulty the reader can persuade himself that the Godolphin and Churchill here mentioned, are the same persons who were afterwards, one in the cabinet, one in the field, the great conductors of the war of the Succession. How little do they appear in the one instance! how great in the other! And the investigation of the cause to which this excessive difference is principally owing, will produce a most useful lesson. Is the difference to be attributed to any superiority of genius in the prince whom they served in the latter period of their lives? Queen Anne's capacity appears to have been inferior even to her father's. Did they enjoy, in a greater degree, her favour and confidence? The very reverse is the fact. But, in one case, they were the tools of a king plotting against his people; in the other, the ministers of a free government acting upon enlarged principles, and with energies which no state that is not in some degree republican can supply. How forcibly must the contemplation of these men in such opposite situations teach persons engaged in political life, that a free and popular government is desirable, not only for the public good, but for their own greatness and consideration, for every object of generous ambition."—pp. 88, 89.

As James, in the outset of his reign, professed a resolution to adhere to the system of government established by his brother, and made this declaration in the first place, to his Scottish Parliament, Mr. Fox thinks it necessary to take a slight retrospective view of the proceedings of Charles towards that unhappy country; and details, from unquestionable authorities, such a scene of intolerant oppression and atrocious cruelty, as to justify him in saying, that the state of that kingdom was "a state of more absolute slavery than at that time subsisted in any part of Christendom."

In both Parliaments, the King's revenue was granted for life, in terms of his demand, without discussion or hesitation; and Mr. Hume is censured with severity, and apparently with justice, for having presented his readers with a summary of the arguments which he would have them believe were actually used in the House of Commons on both sides of this question. "This misrepresentation," Mr. Fox observes, "is of no small importance, inasmuch as, by intimating that such a question could be debated at all, and much more, that it was debated with the enlightened views and bold topics of argument with which his genius has supplied him, he gives us a very false notion of the character of the Parliament, and of the times which he is describing. It is not improbable, that if the arguments had been used, which this historian supposes, the utterer of them would have been expelled, or sent to the Tower; and it is certain that he would not have been heard with any degree of attention, or even patience."—p. 142.

The last chapter is more occupied with narrative, and less with argument and reflection, than that which precedes it. It contains the story of the unfortunate and desperate expeditions of Argyle and Monmouth, and of the condemnation and death of their unhappy leaders. Mr. Fox, though convinced that the misgovernment was such as fully to justify resistance by arms, seems to admit that both those enterprises were rash and injudicious. With his usual candour and openness, he observes, that "the prudential reasons against resistance at that time were exceedingly strong; and that there is no point, indeed, in human concerns, wherein the dictates of virtue and of worldly prudence are so identified, as in this great question of resistance by force to established governments."

The expeditions of Monmouth and Argyle had been concerted together, and were intended to take effect at the same moment. Monmouth, however, who was reluctantly

forced upon the enterprise, was not so soon ready; and Argyle landed in the Highlands with a very small force before the Duke had sailed from Holland. The details of his irresolute councils and ineffectual marches, are given at far too great length. Though they give occasion to one profound and important remark, which we do not recollect ever to have met with before; but, of the justice of which, most of those who have acted with parties must have had melancholy and fatal experience. It is introduced when speaking of the disunion that prevailed among Argyle's little band of followers.

"Add to all this," he says, "that where spirit was not wanting, it was accompanied with a degree and species of perversity wholly inexplicable, and which can hardly gain belief from any one whose experience has not made him acquainted with the extreme difficulty of persuading men, who pride themselves upon an extravagant love of liberty, rather to compromise upon some points with those who have, in the main, the same views with themselves, than to give power (a power which will infallibly be used for their own destruction) to an adversary, of principles diametrically opposite; in other words, rather to concede something to a friend, than every thing to an enemy."—pp. 187,188.

The account of Argyle's deportment from the time of his capture to that of his execution, is among the most striking passages in the book; and the mildness and magnanimity of his resignation, is described with kindred feelings by his generous historian. The merits of this nobleman are perhaps somewhat exaggerated; for he certainly wanted conduct and decision for the part he had undertaken; and more admiration is expressed at the equanimity with which he went to death, than the recent frequency of this species of heroism can allow us to sympathize with: But the story is finely and feelingly told; and the impression which it leaves on the mind of the reader is equally favourable to the author and to the hero of it. We can only make room for the concluding scene of the tragedy.

"Before he left the castle he had his dinner at the usual hour, at which he discoursed not only calmly, but even cheerfully, with Mr. Charteris and others. After dinner he retired, as was his custom, to his bed-chamber, where, it is recorded, that he slept quietly for about a quarter of an hour. While he was in bed, one of the members of the council came and intimated to the attendants a desire to speak with him: upon being told that the earl was asleep, and had left orders not to be disturbed, the manager disbelieved the account, which he considered as a device to avoid further questionings. To satisfy him, the door of the bed-chamber was half opened, and he then beheld, enjoying a sweet and tranquil slumber, the man who, by the doom of him and his fellows, was to die within the space of two short hours! Struck with the sight, he hurried out of the room, quitted the castle with the utmost precipitation, and hid himself in the lodgings of an acquaintance who lived near, where he flung himself upon the first bed that presented itself, and had every appearance of a man suffering the most excruciating torture. His friend, who had been apprized by the servant of the state he was in, and who naturally concluded that he was ill, offered him some wine. He refused, saying, 'No, no, that will not help me: I have been in at Argyle, and saw him sleeping as pleasantly as ever man did, within an hour of eternity! But as for me ——'

The name of the person to whom this anecdote relates is not mentioned; and the truth of it may therefore be fairly considered as liable to that degree of doubt with which men of judgment receive every species of traditional history. Woodrow, however, whose veracity is above suspicion, says he had it from the most unquestionable authority. It is not in itself unlikely; and who is there that would not wish it true? What a satisfactory spectacle to a philosophical mind, to see the oppressor, in the zenith of his power, envying his victim! What an acknowledgment of the superiority of virtue! What an affecting and forcible testimony to the value of that peace of mind, which innocence alone can confer! We know not who this man was; but when we reflect, that the guilt which agonized him was probably incurred for the sake of some vain title, or at least of some increase of wealth, which he did not want, and possibly knew not how to enjoy, our disgust is turned into something like compassion for that very foolish class of men, whom the world calls wise in their generation."

pp. 207—209.

"On the scaffold he embraced his friends, gave some tokens of remembrance to his son-in-law, Lord Maitland, for his daughter and grandchildren; stript himself of part of his apparel, of which he likewise made presents; and laid his head upon the block. Having uttered a short prayer, he gave the signal to the executioner; which was instantly obeyed, and his head severed from his body. Such were the last hours, and such the final close, of this great man's life. May the like happy serenity in such dreadful circumstances, and a death equally glorious, be the lot of all, whom tyranny, of whatever denomination or description, shall in any age, or in any country, call to expiate their virtues on the scaffold!"—p. 211.

Rumbold, who had accompanied Argyle in this expedition, speedily shared his fate. Though a man of intrepid courage, and fully aware of the fate that awaited him, he persisted to his last hour in professing his innocence of any design to assassinate King Charles at the Ryehouse. Mr. Fox gives great importance to this circumstance; and seems disposed to conclude, on the faith of it, that the Ryehouse plot itself was altogether a fabrication of the court party, to transfer to their adversaries the odium which had been thrown upon them with as little justice, by the prosecutions for the Popish plot. It does not appear to us, however, that this conclusion is made out in a manner altogether satisfactory.

The expedition of Monmouth is detailed with as redundant a fulness as that of Argyle; and the character of its leader still more overrated. Though Mr. Fox has a laudable jealousy of kings, indeed, we are afraid he has rather a partiality for nobles. Monmouth appears to have been an idle, handsome, presumptuous, incapable youth, with none of the virtues of a patriot, and none of the talents of an usurper; and we really cannot discover upon what grounds Mr. Fox would exalt him into a hero. He was in arms, indeed, against a tyrant; and that tyrant, though nearly connected with him by the ties of blood, sentenced him with unrelenting cruelty to death. He was plunged at once from the heights of fortune, of youthful pleasure, and of ambition, to the most miserable condition of existence,—to die disgracefully after having stooped to ask his life by abject submission! Mr. Fox dwells a great deal too long, we think, both

upon his wavering and unskilful movements before his defeat, and on some ambiguous words in the letter which he afterwards wrote to King James; but the natural tenderness of his disposition enables him to interest us in the description of his after sufferings. The following extract, we think, is quite characteristic of the author.

"In the mean while, the Queen Dowager, who seems to have behaved with a uniformity of kindness towards her husband's son that does her great honour, urgently pressed the King to admit his nephew to an audience. Importuned therefore by entreaties, and instigated by the curiosity which Monmouth's mysterious expressions, and Sheldon's story had excited, he consented, though with a fixed determination to show no mercy. James was not of the number of those, in whom the want of an extensive understanding is compensated by a delicacy of sentiment, or by those right feelings which are often found to be better guides for the conduct, than the most accurate reasoning. His nature did not revolt, his blood did not run cold, at the thoughts of beholding the son of a brother whom he had loved, embracing his knees, petitioning, and petitioning in vain, for life!—of interchanging words and looks with a nephew on whom he was inexorably determined, within forty-eight hours, to inflict an ignominious death.

"In Macpherson's extract from King James' Memoirs, it is confessed that the King ought not to have seen, if he was not disposed to pardon the culprit; but whether the observation is made by the exiled prince himself, or by him who gives the extract, is in this, as in many other passages of those Memoirs, difficult to determine. Surely, if the King had made this reflection before Monmouth's execution, it must have occurred to that monarch, that if he had inadvertently done that which he ought not to have done without an intention to pardon, the only remedy was to correct that part of his conduct which was still in his power; and since he could not recall the interview, to grant the pardon."

pp. 258, 259.

Being sentenced to die in two days, he made a humble application to the King for some little respite; but met with a positive and stern refusal. The most remarkable thing in the history of his last hours, is the persecution which he suffered from the bishops who had been sent to comfort him. Those reverend persons, it appears, spent the greater part of the time in urging him to profess the orthodox doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance; without which, they said, he could not be an upright member of the church, nor attain to a proper state of repentance! It must never be forgotten, indeed, as Mr. Fox has remarked, if we would understand the history of this period, "that the orthodox members of the church regarded monarchy, not as a human, but as a *divine* institution; and passive obedience and non-resistance, not as political measures, but as *articles of religion*."

The following account of the dying scene of this misguided and unhappy youth, is very striking and pathetic; though a certain tone of sarcasm towards the reverend assistants does not, to our feelings, harmonize entirely with the more tender traits of the picture.

"At ten o'clock on the 15th. Monmouth proceeded, in a carriage of the Lieutenant of the Tower, to Tower Hill, the place destined for his execution. Two bishops were in the carriage with him; and one of them took that opportunity of informing him, that their controversial altercations were not yet at an end; and that upon the scaffold, he would again be pressed for more explicit and satisfactory declarations of repentance. When arrived at the bar, which had been put up for the purpose of keeping out the multitude, Monmouth descended from the carriage, and mounted the scaffold with a firm step, attended by his spiritual assistants. The sheriffs and executioners were already there. The concourse of spectators was innumerable, and, if we are to credit traditional accounts, never was the general compassion more affectingly expressed. The tears, sighs, and groans, which the first sight of this heart-rending spectacle produced, were soon succeeded by an universal and awful silence; a respectful attention, and affectionate anxiety, to hear every syllable that should pass the lips of the sufferer. The Duke began by saying he should speak little; he came to die; and he should die a Protestant of the Church of England. Here he was interrupted by the assistants, and told, that if he was of the Church of England, he must acknowledge the doctrine of Non-resistance to be true. In vain did he reply, that, if he acknowledged the doctrine of the church in general, it included all: they insisted he should own *that* doctrine particularly with respect to his case, and urged much more concerning their favourite point; upon which, however, they obtained nothing but a repetition, in substance, of former answers.

pp. 265, 266.

After making a public profession of his attachment to his beloved Lady Harriet Wentworth, and his persuasion that their connection was innocent in the sight of God, he made reference to a paper he had signed in the morning, confessing the illegitimacy of his birth, and declaring that the title of King had been forced on him by his followers, much against his own inclination.

"The bishop, however, said, that there was nothing in that paper about resistance; nor, though Monmouth, quite worn out with their importunities, said to one of them in a most affecting manner, 'I am to die!—pray my lord!—I refer to my paper,' would these men think it consistent with their duty to desist. There were only a few words they desired on one point. The substance of these applications on one hand, and answers on the other, was repeated, over and over again, in a manner that could not be believed, if the facts were not attested by the signature of the persons principally concerned. If the Duke, in declaring his sorrow for what had passed, used the word invasion, 'give it the true name,' said they, 'and call it rebellion.' 'What name you please,' replied the mild-tempered Monmouth! He was sure he was going to everlasting happiness, and considered the serenity of his mind, in his present circumstances, as a certain earnest of the favour of his Creator. His repentance, he said, must be true, for he had no fear of dying; he should die like a lamb! 'Much may come from natural courage,' was the unfeeling and stupid reply of one of the assistants. Monmouth, with that modesty inseparable from true bravery, denied that he was in general less fearful than other men, maintaining that his present courage was owing to his consciousness that God had forgiven him his past transgressions, of all which generally he repented, with all his soul.

"At last the reverend assistants consented to join with him in prayer; but no sooner were they risen from their kneeling posture, than they returned to their charge. Not satisfied with what had passed, they exhorted him to a *true* and *thorough* repentance. Would he not pray for the King? and send a dutiful message to his majesty, to recommend the duchess and his children? 'As you please;' was the reply, 'I pray for him and for all men.' He now spoke to the executioner, desiring that he might have no cap over his eyes, and began undressing. One would have thought that in this last sad ceremony, the poor prisoner might have been unmolested, and that the divines would have been satisfied, that prayer was the only part of their function for which their duty now called upon them. They judged differently; and one of them had the fortitude to request the Duke, even in this stage of the business, that he would address himself to the soldiers then present, to tell them he stood a sad example of rebellion, and entreat the people to be loyal and obedient to the King. 'I have said I will make no speeches,' repeated Monmouth, in a tone more peremptory than he had before been provoked to; 'I will make no speeches! I come to die.' 'My lord, ten words will be enough,' said the persevering divine; to which the Duke made no answer, but turning to the executioner, expressed a hope that he would do his work better now than in the case of Lord Russell. He then felt the axe, which he apprehended was not sharp enough, but being assured that it was of proper sharpness and weight, he laid down his head. In the mean time, many fervent ejaculations were used by the reverend assistants, who, it must be observed, even in these moments of horror, showed themselves not unmindful of the points upon which they had been disputing; praying God to accept his *imperfect* and *general* repentance.

"The executioner now struck the blow; but so feebly or unskillfully, that Monmouth, being but slightly wounded, lifted up his head, and looked him in the face as if to upbraid him; but said nothing. The two following strokes were as ineffectual as the first, and the headsman, in a fit of horror, declared he could not finish his work. The sheriffs threatened him; he was forced again to make a further trial; and in two more strokes separated the head from the body."—pp. 267—269.

With the character of Monmouth, the second chapter of the history closes; and nothing seems to have been written for the third, but a few detached observations, occupying but two pages. The Appendix is rather longer than was necessary. The greater part of the diplomacy which it contains, had been previously published by Macpherson and Dalrymple; and the other articles are of little importance.

We have now only to add a few words as to the style and taste of composition which belongs to this work. We cannot say that we vehemently admire it. It is a diffuse, and somewhat heavy style,—clear and manly, indeed, for the most part, but sometimes deficient in force, and almost always in vivacity. In its general structure, it resembles the style of the age of which it treats, more than the balanced periods of the succeeding century—though the diction is scrupulously purified from the long and Latin words which defaced the compositions of Milton and Harrington. In his antipathy to every thing that might be supposed to look like pedantry or affected loftiness, it appears to us, indeed, that the illustrious author has sometimes fallen into an opposite error, and admitted a variety of words and phrases rather more homely and familiar than should find place in a grave composition. Thus, it is said in p. 12, that "the King *made no point* of adhering to his concessions." In p. 20, we hear of men, "*swearing away* the lives" of their accomplices; and are afterwards told of "the *style* of thinking" of the country—of "*the crying injustice*" of certain proceedings—and of persons who were "*fond of ill-treating* and insulting" other persons. These, we think, are phrases too colloquial for regular history, and which the author has probably been induced to admit into this composition, from his long familiarity with spoken, rather than with written language. What is merely lively and natural in a speech, however, will often appear low and vapid in writing. The following is a still more striking illustration. In speaking of the Oxford Decree, which declared the doctrine of an original contract, the lawfulness of changing the succession, &c. to be *impious* as well as seditious, and leading to *atheism* as well as rebellion, Mr. Fox is pleased to observe—"If Much Ado about Nothing had been published in those days, the town-clerk's declaration, that receiving a thousand ducats for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully, was "*flat burglary*," might be supposed to be a satire upon this decree; yet Shakespeare, well as he knew human nature, not only as to its general course, but in all its eccentric deviations, could never dream that, in the person of Dogberry, Verges, and their followers, he was representing the vice-chancellors and doctors of our learned University." It would require all the credit of a well-established speaker, to have passed this comparison, with any success, upon the House of Commons; but even the high name of Mr. Fox, we believe, will be insufficient to conceal its impropriety in a serious passage of a history, written in imitation of Livy and Thucydides.

Occupied, indeed, as we conceive all the readers of Mr. Fox ought to be with the sentiments and the facts which he lays before them, we should scarcely have thought of noticing those verbal blemishes at all, had we not read so much in the preface, of the fastidious diligence with which the diction of this work was purified, and its style elaborated by the author. To this praise we cannot say we think it entitled; but, to praise of a far higher description, its claim, we think, is indisputable. Independent of its singular value as a memorial of the virtues and talents of the great statesman whose name it bears, we have no hesitation in saying, that it is written more truly in the spirit of constitutional freedom, and of temperate and practical patriotism, than any history of which the public is yet in possession.

(April, 1805.)

Mémoires d'un Temoin de la Révolution; ou Journal des faits qui se sont passé sous ses yeux, et qui ont preparé et fixé la Constitution Française. Ouvrage Posthume de JEAN SYLVAIN BAILLY, Premier Président de l'Assemblée Nationale Constituant, Premier Maire de Paris, et Membre des Trois Académies. 8vo. 3 tomes. Paris: 1804.*

AMONG the many evils which the French Revolution has inflicted on mankind, the most deplorable, perhaps, both in point of extent and of probable duration, consists in the injury which it has done to the cause of rational freedom, and the discredit in which it has involved the principles of political philosophy. The warnings which may be derived from the misfortunes of that country, and the lessons which may still be read in the tragical consequences of her temerity, are memorable, no doubt, and important: But they are such as are presented to us by the history of every period of the world; and the emotions by which they have been impressed, are in this case too violent to let their import and application be properly distinguished. From the miscarriage of a scheme of frantic innovation, we have conceived an unreasonable and undiscriminating dread of all alteration or reform. The bad success of an attempt to make government perfect, has reconciled us to imperfections that might easily be removed; and the miserable consequences of treating every thing as prejudice and injustice, which could not be reconciled to a system of fantastic equality, has given strength to prejudices, and sanction to abuses, which were gradually wearing away before the progress of reason and philosophy. The French Revolution, in short, has thrown us back half a century in the course of political improvement; and driven many among us to cling once more, with superstitious terror, to those idols from which we had been nearly reclaimed by the lessons of a milder philosophy. When we look round on the wreck and ruin which the whirlwind has scattered over the prospect before us, we tremble at the rising gale, and shrink even from the wholesome air that stirs the fig-leaf on our porch. Terrified and disgusted with the brawls and midnight murders which proceed from intoxication, we are almost inclined to deny ourselves the pleasures of a generous hospitality; and scarcely venture to diffuse the comforts of light or of warmth in our dwellings, when we turn our eyes on the devastation which the flames have committed around us.

The same circumstances which have thus led us to confound what is salutary with what is pernicious in our establishments, have also perverted our judgments as to the characters of those who were connected with those memorable occurrences. The tide of popular favour, which ran at one time with a dangerous and headlong violence to the side of innovation and political experiment, has now set, perhaps too strongly, in an opposite direction; and the same misguiding passions that placed factious and selfish men on a level with patriots and heroes, has now ranked the blameless and the enlightened in the herd of murderers and madmen.

There are two classes of men, in particular, to whom it appears to us that the Revolution has thus done injustice; and who have been made to share in some measure the infamy of its most detestable agents, in consequence of venial errors, and in spite of extraordinary merits. There are none indeed who made a figure in its more advanced stages, that may not be left, without any great breach of charity, to the vengeance of public opinion: and both the descriptions of persons to whom we have alluded only existed, accordingly, at the period of its commencement. These were the philosophers or speculative men who inculcated a love of liberty and a desire of reform by their writings and conversation; and the virtuous and moderate, who attempted to *act* upon these principles at the outset of the Revolution, and countenanced or suggested those measures by which the ancient frame of the government was eventually dissolved. To confound either of these classes of men with the monsters by whom they were succeeded, it would be necessary to forget that they were in reality their most strenuous opponents—and their earliest victims! If they were instrumental in conjuring up the tempest, we may at least presume that their cooperation was granted in ignorance, since they were the first to fall before it; and can scarcely be supposed to have either foreseen or intended those consequences in which their own ruin was so inevitably involved. That they are chargeable with imprudence and with presumption, may be affirmed, perhaps, without fear of contradiction; though, with regard to many of them, it would be no easy task, perhaps, to point out by what conduct they could have avoided such an imputation; and this charge, it is manifest, ought at any rate to be kept carefully separate from that of guilt or atrocity. Benevolent intentions, though alloyed by vanity, and misguided by ignorance, can never become the objects of the highest moral reprobation; and enthusiasm itself, though it does the work of the demons, ought still to be distinguished from treachery or malice. The knightly adventurer, who broke the chains of the galley-slaves, purely that they might enjoy their deliverance from bondage, will always be regarded with other feelings than the robber who freed them to recruit the ranks of his banditti.

*I have been tempted to let this be reprinted (though sensible enough of vices in the style) to show at how early a period those views of the character of the French Revolution, and its first effects on other countries, were adopted—which have not since received much modification.

We have examined in a former article the extent of the participation which can be fairly imputed to the *philosophers*, in the crimes and miseries of the Revolution, and endeavoured to ascertain in how far they may be said to have made themselves responsible for its consequences, or to have deserved censure for their exertions: And, acquitting the greater part of any mischievous intention, we found reason, upon that occasion, to conclude, that there was nothing in the conduct of the majority which should expose them to blame, or deprive them of the credit which they would have certainly enjoyed, but for consequences which they could not foresee. For those who, with intentions equally blameless, attempted to carry into execution the projects which had been suggested by the others, and actually engaged in measures which could not fail to terminate in important changes, it will not be easy, we are afraid, to make so satisfactory an apology. What is written may be corrected; but what is done cannot be recalled; a rash and injudicious publication naturally calls forth an host of answers; and where the subject of discussion is such as excites a very powerful interest, the cause of truth is not always least effectually served by her opponents. But the errors of cabinets and of legislatures have other consequences and other confutations. They are answered by insurrections, and confuted by conspiracies. A paradox which might have been maintained by an author, without any other loss than that of a little leisure, and ink and paper, can only be supported by a minister at the expense of the lives and the liberties of a nation. It is evident, therefore, that the precipitation of a legislator can never admit of the same excuse with that of a speculative inquirer; that the same confidence in his opinions, which justifies the former in maintaining them to the world, will never justify the other in suspending the happiness of his country on the issue of their truth; and that he, in particular, subjects himself to a tremendous responsibility, who voluntarily takes upon himself the new-modelling of an ancient constitution.

We are very much inclined to do justice to the virtuous and enlightened men who abounded in the Constituent Assembly of France. We believe that the motives of many of them were pure, and their patriotism unaffected: their talents are still more indisputable: But we cannot acquit them of blameable presumption and inexcusable imprudence. There are *three* points, it appears to us, in particular, in which they were bound to have foreseen the consequences of their proceedings.

In the *first* place, the spirit of exasperation, defiance, and intimidation, with which from the beginning they carried on their opposition to the schemes of the court, the clergy and the nobility, appears to us to have been as impolitic with a view to their ultimate success, as it was suspicious perhaps as to their immediate motives. The parade which they made of their popularity; the support which they submitted to receive from the menaces and acclamations of the mob; the joy which they testified at the desertion of the royal armies; and the anomalous military force, of which they patronized the formation in the city of Paris, were so many preparations for actual hostility, and led almost inevitably to that appeal to force, by which all prospect of establishing an equitable government was finally cut off. Sanguine as the patriots of that assembly undoubtedly were, they might still have remembered the most obvious and important lesson in the whole volume of history, That the nation which has recourse to arms for the settlement of its internal affairs, necessarily falls under the iron yoke of a military government in the end; and that nothing but the most evident necessity can justify the lovers of freedom in forcing it from the hands of their governors. In France, there certainly was no such necessity. The whole weight and strength of the nation was bent upon political improvement and reform.—There was no possibility of their being ultimately resisted; and the only danger that was to be apprehended was, that their progress would be too rapid. After the States-General were once fairly granted, indeed, it appears to us that the victory of the friends to liberty was certain. They could not have gone too slow afterwards; they could not have been satisfied with too little. The great object, then, should have been to exclude the agency of force, and to leave no pretext for an appeal to violence. Nothing could have stood against the force of reason, which ought to have given way; and from a monarch of the character of Louis XIV. there was no reason to apprehend any attempt to regain, by violence, what he had yielded from principles of philanthropy and conviction. The Third Estate would have *grown* into power, instead of usurping it; and would have gradually compressed the other orders into their proper dimensions, instead of displacing them by a violence that could never be forgiven. Even if the Orders had deliberated separately, (as it appears to us they ought clearly to have done,) the commons were sure of an ultimate preponderance, and the government of a permanent and incalculable amelioration. Convened in a legislative assembly, and engrossing almost entirely the respect and affections of the nation, they would have enjoyed the unlimited liberty of political discussion, and gradually impressed on the government the character of their peculiar principles. By the restoration of the legislative function to the commons of the kingdom, the system was rendered complete, and required only to be put into action in order to assume all those improvements which necessarily resulted from

the increased wealth and intelligence of its representatives.

Of this fair chance of amelioration, the nation was disappointed, chiefly, we are inclined to think, by the needless asperity and injudicious menaces of the popular party. They relied openly upon the strength of their adherents among the populace. If they did not actually encourage them to threats and to acts of violence, they availed themselves at least of those which were committed, to intimidate and depress their opponents; for it is indisputably certain, that the unconditional compliance of the court with all the demands of the Constituent Assembly, was the result either of actual force, or the dread of its immediate application. This was the inauspicious commencement of the sins and the sufferings of the Revolution. Their progress and termination were natural and necessary. The multitude, once allowed to overawe the old government with threats, soon subjected the new government to the same degradation; and, once permitted to act in arms, came speedily to dictate to those who were assembled to deliberate. As soon as an appeal was made to force, the decision came to be with those by whom force could at all times be commanded. Reason and philosophy were discarded; and mere terror and brute violence, in the various forms of proscriptions, insurrections, massacres, and military executions, harassed and distracted the misguided nation, till, by a natural consummation, they fell under the despotic sceptre of a military usurper. These consequences, we conceive, were obvious, and might have been easily forseen. Nearly half a century had elapsed since they were pointed out in those memorable words of the most profound and philosophical of historians. "By recent, as well as by ancient example, it was become evident, that illegal violence, with whatever pretences it may be covered, and whatever object it may pursue, must inevitably end at last in the arbitrary and despotic government of a single person."*

The *second* inexcusable blunder, of which the Constituent Assembly was guilty, was one equally obvious, and has been more frequently noticed. It was the extreme restlessness and precipitation with which they proceeded to accomplish, in a few weeks, the legislative labours of a century. Their constitution was struck out at a heat; and their measures of reform proposed and adopted like toasts at an election dinner. Within less than six months from the period of their first convocation, they declared the illegality of all the subsisting taxes; they abolished the old constitution of the States-General; they settled the limits of the Royal prerogative, their own inviolability, and the responsibility of ministers. Before they put any one of their projects to the test of experiment, they had adopted such an enormous multitude, as entirely to innovate the condition of the country, and to expose even those which were salutary to misapprehension and miscarriage. From a scheme of reformation so impetuous, and an impatience so puerile, nothing permanent or judicious could be reasonably expected. In legislating for their country, they seem to have forgotten that they were operating on a living and sentient substance, and not on an inert and passive mass, which they might model and compound according to their pleasure or their fancy. Human society, however, is not like a piece of mechanism which may be safely taken to pieces, and put together by the hands of an ordinary artist. It is the work of Nature, and not of man; and has received, from the hands of its Author, an organization that cannot be destroyed without danger to its existence, and certain properties and powers that cannot be altered or suspended by those who may have been entrusted with its management. By studying those properties, and directing those powers, it may be modified and altered to a very considerable extent. But they must be allowed to develope themselves by their internal energy, and to familiarize themselves with their new channel of exertion. A child cannot be stretched out by engines to the stature of a man; or a man compelled, in a morning, to excel in all the exercises of an athlete. Those into whose hands the destinies of a great nation are committed, should bestow on its reformation at least as much patient observance and as much tender precaution as are displayed by a skilful gardener in his treatment of a sickly plant. He props up the branches that are weak or overloaded, and gradually prunes and reduces those that are too luxuriant: he cuts away what is absolutely rotten and distempered: he stirs the earth about the root, and sprinkles it with water, and waits for the coming spring! He trains the young branches to the right hand or to the left; and leads it, by a gradual and spontaneous progress, to expand or exalt itself, season after season, in the direction which he had previously determined: and thus, in the course of a few summers, he brings it, without injury or compulsion, into that form and proportion which could not with safety have been imposed upon it in a shorter time. The reformers of France applied no such gentle solicitations, and would not wait for the effects of any such preparatory measures, or voluntary developments. They forcibly broke its lofty boughs asunder, and endeavoured to straighten its crooked joints by violence: they tortured it into symmetry in vain, and shed its life-blood on the earth, in the middle of its scattered branches.

The *third* great danger, against which we think it was the duty of the intelligent and virtuous part of the Deputies to have provided, was that which arose from the sudden transference of power to the hands of men who had previously no natural or individual influence in the community. This was an evil indeed, which arose necessarily, in some degree, from the defects of the old government, and from the novelty of the situation in which

* Hume's History, chapter lx. at the end. The whole passage is deserving of the most profound meditation.

the country was placed by the convocation of the States-General; but it was materially aggravated by the presumption and improvidence of those enthusiastic legislators, and tended powerfully to produce those disasters by which they were ultimately overwhelmed.

No representative legislature, it appears to us, can ever be respectable or secure, unless it contain within itself a great proportion of those who form the natural aristocracy of the country, and are able, as individuals, to influence the conduct and opinions of the greater part of its inhabitants. Unless the power and weight and authority of the assembly, in short, be really made up of the power and weight and authority of the individuals who compose it, the factitious dignity they may derive from their situation can never be of long endurance; and the dangerous power with which they may be invested, will become the subject of scrambling and contention among the factions of the metropolis, and be employed for any purpose but the general good of the community.

In England, the House of Commons is made up of the individuals who, by birth, by fortune, or by talents, possess singly the greatest influence over the rest of the people. The most certain and the most permanent influence, is that of rank and of riches; and these are the qualifications, accordingly, which return the greatest number of members. Men submit to be governed by the united will of those, to whose will, as individuals, the greater part of them have been previously accustomed to submit themselves; and an act of parliament is reverenced and obeyed, not because the people are impressed with a constitutional veneration for an institution called a parliament, but because it has been passed by the authority of those who are recognised as their natural superiors, and by whose influence, as individuals, the same measures might have been enforced over the greater part of the kingdom. Scarcely any new power is acquired, therefore, by the combination of those persons into a legislature: They carry each their share of influence and authority into the senate along with them; and it is by adding the items of it together, that the influence and authority of the senate itself is made up. From such a senate, therefore, it is obvious that their power can never be wrested, and that it would not even attach to those who might succeed in supplanting them in the legislature, by violence or intrigue; or by any other means than those by which they themselves had originally secured their nomination. In such a state of representation, in short, the influence of the representatives is not borrowed from their office, but the influence of the office is supported by that which is personal to its members; and parliament is chiefly regarded as the great depository of all the authority which formerly existed, in a scattered state, among its members. This authority, therefore, belonging to the men, and not to their places, can neither be lost by them, if they are forced from their places, nor found by those who may supplant them. The Long Parliament, after it was purged by the Independents, and the assemblies that met under that name, during the Protectorate of Cromwell, held the place, and enjoyed all the form of power that had belonged to their predecessors: But as they no longer contained those individuals who were able to sway and influence the opinion of the body of the people, they were without respect or authority, and speedily came to be the objects of public derision and contempt.

As the power and authority of a legislature thus constituted, is perfectly secure and inalienable, on the one hand, so, on the other, the moderation of its proceedings is guaranteed by a consciousness of the basis upon which this authority is founded. Every individual being aware of the extent to which his own influence is likely to reach among his constituents and dependants, is anxious that the mandates of the body shall never pass beyond that limit, within which obedience may be easily secured. He will not hazard the loss of his own power, therefore, by any attempt to enlarge that of the legislature; and feeling, at every step, the weight and resistance of the people, the whole assembly proceeds with a due regard to their opinions and prejudices, and can never do any thing very injurious or very distasteful to the majority.—From the very nature of the authority with which they are invested, they are in fact consubstantiated with the people for whom they are to legislate. They do not sit loose upon them, like riders on inferior animals; nor speculate nor project experiments upon their welfare, like operators upon a foreign substance. They are the natural organs, in fact, of a great living body; and are not only warned, by their own feelings, of any injury which they may be tempted to inflict on it, but would become incapable of performing their functions, if they were to proceed far in debilitating the general system.

Such, it appears to us, though delivered perhaps in too abstract and elementary a form, is the just conception of a free representative legislature. Neither the English House of Commons, indeed, nor any assembly of any other nation, ever realized it in all its perfection: But it is in their approximation to such a standard, we conceive, that their excellence and utility will be found to consist; and where the conditions upon which we have insisted are absolutely wanting, the sudden institution of a representative legislature will only be a step to the most frightful disorders. Where it has grown up in a country in which personal liberty and property are tolerably secure, it naturally assumes that form which is most favourable to its beneficial influence, and has a tendency to perpetual improvement, and to the constant amelioration of the condition of the whole society. The difference between a free government and a tyrannical one, consists entirely in the different proportions of the people that are influenced by their *opinions*, or subjugated by *intimidation* or *force*. In a large society, opinions can only be reunited by means of representations; and the

natural representative is the individual whose example and authority can influence the opinions of the greater part of those in whose behalf he is delegated. This is the natural aristocracy of a civilized nation; and its legislature is then upon the best possible footing, when it is in the hands of those who answer to that description. The whole people are then governed by the laws, exactly as each clan or district of them would have been by the patriarchal authority of an elective and unarmed chieftain; and the lawgivers are not only secure of their places while they can maintain their individual influence over the people, but are withheld from any rash or injurious measure by the consciousness and feeling of their dependence on this voluntary deference and submission.

If this be at all a just representation of the conditions upon which the respectability and security of a representative legislature must always depend, it will not be difficult to explain how the experiment miscarried so completely, in the case of the French Constituent Assembly. That assembly, which the enthusiasm of the public, and the misconduct of the privileged orders, soon enabled to engross the whole power of the country, consisted almost entirely of persons without name or individual influence; who owed the whole of their consequence to the situation to which they had been elevated, and were not able, as individuals, to have influenced the opinions of one-fiftieth part of their countrymen.—There was in France, indeed, at this time, no legitimate, wholesome, or real aristocracy.—The noblesse, who were persecuted for bearing that name, were quite disconnected from the people. Their habits of perpetual residence in the capital, and their total independence of the good opinion of their vassals, had deprived them of any real influence over the minds of the lower orders; and the organization of society had not yet enabled the rich manufacturers or proprietors to assume such an influence. The persons sent as deputies to the States-General, therefore, were those chiefly who, by intrigue and boldness, and by professions of uncommon zeal for what were then the great objects of popular pursuit, had been enabled to carry the votes of the electors. A notion of talent, and an opinion that they would be loud and vehement in supporting those requests upon which the people had already come to a decision, were their passports into that assembly. They were sent there to express the particular demands of the people, and not to give a general pledge of their acquiescence in what might there be enacted. They were not the hereditary patrons of the people, but their hired advocates for a particular pleading.—They had no general trust or authority over them, but were chosen as their special messengers, out of a multitude whose influence and pretensions were equally powerful.

When these men found themselves, as it were by accident, in possession of the whole power of the state, and invested with the absolute government of the greatest nation that has existed in modern times, it is not to be wondered at if they forgot the slender ties by which they were bound to their constituents. The powers to which they had succeeded were so infinitely beyond any thing that they had enjoyed in their individual capacity, that it is not surprising if they never thought of exerting them with the same consideration and caution. Instead of the great bases of rank and property, which cannot be transferred by the clamours of the factious, or the caprice of the inconstant, and which serve to ballast and steady the vessel of the state in all its wanderings and perils, the assembly possessed only the basis of talent or reputation; qualities which depend upon opinion and opportunity, and which may be attributed in the same proportion to an inconvenient multitude at once. The whole legislature may be considered, therefore, as composed of *adventurers*, who had already attained a situation incalculably above their original pretensions, and were now tempted to push their fortune by every means that held out the promise of immediate success. They had nothing, comparatively speaking, to lose, but their places in that assembly, or the influence which they possessed within its walls; and as the authority of the assembly itself depended altogether upon the popularity of its measures, and not upon the intrinsic authority of its members, so it was only to be maintained by a succession of brilliant and imposing resolutions, and by satisfying or outdoing the extravagant wishes and expectations of the most extravagant and sanguine populace that ever existed. For a man to get a lead in such an assembly, it was by no means necessary that he should have previously possessed any influence or authority in the community; that he should be connected with powerful families, or supported by great and extensive associations. If he could dazzle and overawe in debate; if he could obtain the acclamations of the mob of Versailles, and make himself familiar to the eyes and the ears of the assembly and its galleries, he was in a fair train for having a great share in the direction of an assembly exercising absolute sovereignty over thirty millions of men. The prize was too tempting not to attract a multitude of competitors; and the assembly for many months was governed by those who outvied their associates in the impracticable extravagance of their patriotism, and sacrificed most profusely the real interests of the people at the shrine of a precarious popularity.

In this way, the assembly, from the inherent vices of its constitution, ceased to be respectable or useful. The same causes speedily put an end to its security, and converted it into an instrument of destruction.

Mere popularity was at first the instrument by which this unsteady legislature was governed: But when it became apparent, that whoever could obtain the direction or command of it, must possess the whole authority of the state, parties became less scrupulous about the means they employed for that purpose, and soon found out that violence and

terror were infinitely more effectual and expeditious than persuasion and eloquence. The people at large, who had no attachment to any families or individuals among their delegates, and who contented themselves with idolizing the assembly in general, so long as it passed decrees to their liking, were passive and indifferent spectators of the transference of power which was effected by the pikes of the Parisian multitude; and looked with equal affection upon every successive junto which assumed the management of its deliberations. Having no natural representatives, they felt themselves equally connected with all who exercised the legislative function; and, being destitute of a real aristocracy, were without the means of giving effectual support even to those who might appear to deserve it. Encouraged by this situation of affairs, the most daring, unprincipled, and profligate, proceeded to seize upon the defenceless legislature, and, driving all their antagonists before them by violence or intimidation, entered without opposition upon the supreme functions of government. They soon found, however, that the arms by which they had been victorious, were capable of being turned against themselves; and those who were envious of their success, or ambitious of their distinction, easily found means to excite discontent among the multitude, now inured to insurrection, and to employ them in pulling down those very individuals whom they had so recently exalted. The disposal of the legislature thus became a prize to be fought for in the clubs and conspiracies and insurrections of a corrupted metropolis; and the institution of a national representative had no other effect, than that of laying the government open to lawless force and flagitious audacity.

It is in this manner, it appears to us, that from the want of a natural and efficient aristocracy to exercise the functions of representative legislators, the National Assembly of France was betrayed into extravagance, and fell a prey to faction; that the institution itself became a source of public misery and disorder, and converted a civilized monarchy, first into a sanguinary democracy, and then into a military despotism.

It would be the excess of injustice, we have already said, to impute those disastrous consequences to the moderate and virtuous individuals who sat in the Constituent Assembly: But if it be admitted that they might have been easily foreseen, it will not be easy to exculpate them from the charge of very blameable imprudence. It would be difficult, indeed, to point out any course of conduct by which those dangers might have been entirely avoided: But they would undoubtedly have been less formidable, if the enlightened members of the Third Estate had endeavoured to form a party with the more liberal and popular among the nobility; if they had associated to themselves a greater number of those to whose persons a certain degree of influence was attached, from their fortune, their age, or their official station; if, in short, instead of grasping presumptuously at the exclusive direction of the national councils, and arrogating every thing on the credit of their zealous patriotism and inexperienced abilities, they had sought to strengthen themselves by an alliance with what was respectable in the existing establishments, and attached themselves at first as disciples to those whom they might fairly expect speedily to outgrow and eclipse.

Upon a review of the whole matter, it seems impossible to acquit those of the revolutionary patriots, whose intentions are admitted to be pure, of great precipitation, presumption, and imprudence. Apologies may be found for them, perhaps, in the inexperience which was incident to their situation; in their constant apprehension of being separated before their task was accomplished; in the exasperation which was excited by the insidious proceedings of the cabinet; and in the intoxication which naturally resulted from the magnitude of their early triumph, and the noise and resounding of their popularity. But the errors into which they fell were inexcusable, we think, in politicians of the eighteenth century; and while we pity their sufferings, and admire their genius, we cannot feel much respect for their wisdom, or any surprise at their miscarriage.

The preceding train of reflection was irresistibly suggested to us by the title and the contents of the volumes now before us. Among the virtuous members of the first Assembly, there was no one who stood higher than Bailly. As a scholar and a man of science, he had long stood in the very first rank of celebrity: His private morals were not only irreproachable, but exemplary; and his character and dispositions had always been remarkable for gentleness, moderation, and philanthropy. Drawn unconsciously, if we may believe his own account, into public life, rather than impelled into it by any movement of ambition, he participated in the enthusiasm, and in the imprudence, from which no one seemed at that time to be exempted; and in spite of an early retreat, speedily suffered that fate by which all the well meaning were then destined to expiate their errors. His popularity was at one time equal to that of any of the idols of the day; and if it was gained by some degree of blameable indulgence and unjustifiable zeal, it was forfeited at last (and along with his life) by a resolute opposition to disorder, and a meritorious perseverance in the discharge of his duty.

The sequel of this article, containing a full abstract of the learned author's recollections of the first six months only of his mayoralty, is now omitted; both as too minute to retain any interest at this day, and as superseded by the more comprehensive details which will be found in the succeeding article.

(September, 1818.)

Considérations sur les Principaux Evènemens de la Révolution Françoise. Ouvrage Posthume de Madame la Baronne de Staël. Publié par M. le Duc de Broglie et M. le Baron A. de Staël. En trois tomes. 8vo. pp. 1285. Londres: 1818.

No book can possibly possess a higher interest than this which is now before us. It is the last, dying bequest of the most brilliant writer that has appeared in our days;—and it treats of a period of history which we already know to be the most important that has occurred for centuries; and which those who look back on it, after other centuries have elapsed, will probably consider as still more important.

We cannot stop now to say all that we think of Madame de Staël:—and yet we must say, that we think her the most powerful writer that her country has produced since the time of Voltaire and Rousseau—and the greatest writer, of a woman, that any time or any country has produced. Her taste, perhaps, is not quite pure; and her style is too irregular and ambitious. These faults may even go deeper. Her passion for *effect*, and the tone of exaggeration which it naturally produces, have probably interfered occasionally with the soundness of her judgment, and given a suspicious colouring to some of her representations of fact. At all events, they have rendered her impatient of the humbler task of completing her explanatory details, or stating in their order all the premises of her reasonings. She gives her history in abstracts, and her theories in aphorisms:—and the greater part of her works, instead of presenting that systematic unity from which the highest degrees of strength and beauty and clearness must ever be derived, may be fairly described as a collection of striking fragments—in which a great deal of repetition does by no means diminish the effect of a good deal of inconsistency. In those same works, however, whether we consider them as fragments or as systems, we do not hesitate to say that there are more original and profound observations—more new images—greater sagacity combined with higher imagination—and more of the true philosophy of the passions, the politics, and the literature of her contemporaries—than in any other author we can now remember. She has great eloquence on all subjects; and a singular pathos in representing those bitterest agonies of the spirit, in which wretchedness is aggravated by remorse, or by regrets that partake of its character. Though it is difficult to resist her when she is in earnest, we cannot say that we agree in all her opinions, or approve of all her sentiments. She overrates the importance of literature, either in determining the character or affecting the happiness of mankind; and she theorises too confidently on its past and its future history. On subjects like this, we have not yet facts enough for so much philosophy; and must be contented, we fear, for a long time to come, to call many things accidental, which it would be more satisfactory to refer to determinate causes. In her estimate of the happiness, and her notions of the wisdom of private life, we think her both unfortunate and erroneous. She makes passions and high sensibilities a great deal too indispensable; and varnishes over all her pictures too uniformly with the glare of an extravagant or affected enthusiasm. She represents men, in short, as a great deal more unhappy, more depraved, and more energetic, than they are—and seems to respect them the more for it. In her politics she is far more unexceptionable. She is everywhere the warm friend and animated advocate of liberty—and of liberal, practical, and philanthropic principles. On those subjects we cannot blame her enthusiasm, which has nothing in it vindictive or provoking; and are far more inclined to envy than to reprove that sanguine and buoyant temper of mind which, after all she has seen and suffered, still leads her to overrate, in our apprehension, both the merit of past attempts at political amelioration, and the chances of their success hereafter. It is in that futurity, we fear, and in the hopes that make it present, that the lovers of mankind must yet, for a while, console themselves for the disappointments which still seem to beset them. If Madame de Staël, however, predicts with too much confidence, it must be admitted that her labours have a powerful tendency to realize her predictions. Her writings are all full of the most animating views of the improvement of our social condition, and the means by which it may be effected—the most striking refutations of prevailing errors on these great subjects—and the most persuasive expostulations with those who may think their interest or their honour concerned in maintaining them. Even they who are the least inclined to agree with her, must admit that there is much to be learned from her writings; and we can give them no higher praise than to say, that their tendency is not only to promote the interests of philanthropy and independence, but to soften, rather than exasperate, the prejudices to which they are opposed.

Of the work before us, we do not know very well what to say. It contains a multitude of admirable remarks—and a still greater number of curious details; for Madame de Staël was not only a contemporary, but an eyewitness of much that she describes, and had the very best access to learn what did not fall

under her immediate observation. Few persons certainly could be better qualified to appreciate the relative importance of the subjects that fell under her review; and no one, we really think, so little likely to colour and distort them, from any personal or party feelings. With all those rare qualifications, however, and inestimable advantages for performing the task of an historian, we cannot say that she has made a good history. It is too much broken into fragments. The narrative is too much interrupted by reflections: and the reflections too much subdivided, to suit the subdivisions of the narrative. There are too many events omitted, or but cursorily noticed, to give the work the interest of a full and flowing history; and a great deal too many detailed and analyzed, to let it pass for an essay on the philosophy, or greater results of these memorable transactions. We are the most struck with this last fault—which perhaps is inseparable from the condition of a contemporary writer;—for, though the observation may sound at first like a paradox, we are rather inclined to think that the best historical compositions—not only the most pleasing to read, but the most just and instructive in themselves—must be written at a very considerable distance from the times to which they relate. When we read an eloquent and judicious account of great events transacted in other ages, our first sentiment is that of regret at not being able to learn more of them. We wish anxiously for a fuller detail of particulars—we envy those who had the good fortune to live in the time of such interesting occurrences, and blame them for having left us so brief and imperfect a memorial of them. But the truth is, if we may judge from our own experience, that the greater part of those who were present to those mighty operations, were but very imperfectly aware of their importance, and conjectured but little of the influence they were to exert on future generations. Their attention was successively engaged by each separate act of the great drama that was passing before them; but did not extend to the connected effect of the whole, in which alone posterity was to find the grandeur and interest of the scene. The connection indeed of those different acts is very often not then discernible. The series often stretches on, beyond the reach of the generation which witnessed its beginning, and makes it impossible for them to *integrate* what had not yet attained its completion; while, from similar causes, many of the terms that at first appeared most important are unavoidably discarded, to bring the problem within a manageable compass. Time, in short, performs the same services to events, which distance does to visible objects. It obscures and gradually annihilates the small, but renders those that are very great much more distinct and conceivable. If we would know the true form and bearings of an Alpine ridge, we must not grovel among the irregularities of its surface, but observe, from the distance of leagues, the direction of its ranges and peaks, and the giant outline which it traces on the sky. A traveller who wanders through a rugged and picturesque district, though struck with the beauty of every new valley, or the grandeur of every cliff that he passes, has no notion at all of the general configuration of the country, or even of the relative situation of the objects he has been admiring; and will understand all those things, and his own route among them, a thousand times better, from a small map on a scale of half an inch to a mile, which represents neither thickets or hamlets, than from the most painful efforts to combine the indications of the strongest memory. The case is the same with those who live through periods of great historical interest. They are too near the scene—too much interested in each successive event—and too much agitated with their rapid succession, to form any just estimate of the character or result of the whole. They are like private soldiers in the middle of a great battle, or rather of a busy and complicated campaign—hardly knowing whether they have lost or won, and having but the most obscure and imperfect conception of the general movements in which their own fate has been involved. The foreigner who reads of them in the Gazette, or the peasant who sees them from the top of a distant hill or a steeple, has in fact a far better idea of them.

Of the thousand or fifteen hundred names that have been connected in contemporary fame with the great events of the last twenty-five years, how many will go down to posterity? In all probability not more than twenty: And who shall yet venture to say which twenty it will be? But it is the same with the events as with the actors. How often, during that period, have we mourned or exulted, with exaggerated emotions, over occurrences that we already discover to have been of no permanent importance!—how certain is it, that the far greater proportion of those to which we still attach an interest, will be viewed with the same indifference by the very next generation!—and how probable, that the whole train and tissue of the history will appear, to a remoter posterity, under a totally different character and colour from any that the most penetrating observer of the present day has thought of ascribing to it! Was there any contemporary, do we think, of Mahomet, of Gregory VII., of Faust, or Columbus, who formed the same estimate of their achievements that we do at this day? Were the great and wise men who brought about the Reformation, as much aware of its importance as the whole world is at present? or does any one imagine, that, even in the later and more domestic events of the establishment of the English Commonwealth in 1648, or the English Revolution in 1688, the large and energetic spirits by whom those great events were conducted were fully sensible of their true character and bearings, or at all foresaw the mighty consequences of which they have since been prolific?

But though it may thus require the lapse of ages to develope the true character of a

great transaction, and though its history may therefore be written with most advantage very long after its occurrence, it does not follow that such a history will not be deficient in many qualities which it would be desirable for it to possess. All we say is, that they are qualities which will generally be found incompatible with those larger and sounder views, which can hardly be matured while the subjects of them are recent. That this is an imperfection in our histories and historians, is sufficiently obvious; but it is an imperfection to which we must patiently resign ourselves, if it appear to be an unavoidable consequence of the limitation of our faculties. We cannot both enjoy the sublime effect of a vast and various landscape, and at the same time discern the form of every leaf in the forest, or the movements of every living creature that breathes within its expanse. Beings of a higher order may be capable of this;—and it would be very desirable to be so: But, constituted as we are, it is impossible; and, in our delineation of such a scene, all that is minute and detached, however interesting or important to those who are at hand, must therefore be omitted—while the general effect is entrusted to masses in which nothing but the great outlines of great objects are preserved, and the details left to be inferred from the character of their results, or the larger features of their usual accompaniments.

It is needless to apply this to the case of history; in which, when it records events of permanent interest, it is equally impossible to retain those particular details which engrossed the attention of contemporaries—both because the memory of them is necessarily lost in the course of that period which must elapse before the just value of the whole can be known—and because, even if it were otherwise, no human memory could retain, or human judgment discriminate, the infinite number of particulars which must have been presented in such an interval. We shall only observe, further, that though that which *is* preserved is generally the most material and truly important part of the story, it not unfrequently happens, that too little is preserved to afford materials for a satisfactory narrative, or to justify any general conclusion; and that, in such cases, the historian often yields to the temptation of connecting the scanty materials that have reached him by a sort of general and theoretical reasoning, which naturally takes its colour from the prevailing views and opinions of the individual writer, or of the age to which he belongs. If an author of consummate judgment, and with a thorough knowledge of the unchangeable principles of human nature, undertake this task, it is wonderful indeed to see how much he may make of a subject that appears so unpromising—and it is almost certain that the view he will give to his readers, of such an obscure period, will, at all events, be at least as instructive and interesting as if he had had its entire annals before him. In other hands, however, the result is very different; and, instead of a masterly picture of rude or remote ages, true at least to the general features of such periods, we have nothing but a transcript of the author's own most recent fantasies and follies, ill disguised under the masquerade character of a few traditional names.—It is only necessary to call to mind such books as Zouche's Life of Sir Philip Sydney, or Godwin's Life of Chaucer, to feel this much more strongly than we can now express it. These, no doubt, are extreme cases;—but we suspect that our impressions of almost all remote characters and events, and the general notions we have of the times or societies which produced them, are much more dependent on the peculiar temper and habits of the popular writers in whom the memory of them is chiefly preserved, than it is very pleasant to think of. If we ever take the trouble of looking for ourselves into the documents and materials out of which those histories are made, we feel at once how much room there is for a very different representation of all those things from that which is current in the world: And accordingly we occasionally have very opposite representations. Compare Bossuet's Universal History with Voltaire's—Rollin with Mitford—Hume or Clarendon with Ralph or Mrs. M'Aulay; and it will be difficult to believe that these different writers are speaking of the same persons and things.

The work before us, we have already said, is singularly free from faults of this description. It is written, we do think, in the true spirit and temper of historical impartiality. But it has faults of a different character; and, with many of the merits, combines some of the appropriate defects, both of a contemporary and philosophical history. Its details are too few and too succinct for the former—they are too numerous and too rashly selected for the latter;—while the reasonings and speculations in which perhaps its chief value consists, seem already to be too often thrown away upon matters that cannot long be had in remembrance. We must take care not to get entangled too far among the anecdotes—but the general reasoning cannot detain us very long.

It is the scope of the book to show that France must have a free government—a limited monarchy—in express words, a constitution like that of England. This, Madame de Staël says, was all that the body of the nation aimed at in 1789—and this she says the great majority of the nation are resolved to have still—undeterred by the fatal miscarriage of the last experiment, and undisgusted by the revival of ancient pretensions which has signalised its close. Still, though she maintains this to be the prevailing sentiment of the French people, she thinks it not altogether unnecessary to combat this discouragement and this disgust;—and the great object of all that is argumentative in her book, is to show that there is nothing in the character or condition, or late or early history of her countrymen, to render this regulated freedom unattainable by them, or to disqualify them from the enjoyment of a repre

sentative government, or the functions of free citizens.

For this purpose she takes a rapid and masterly view of the progress of the different European kingdoms, from their primitive condition of feudal aristocracies, to their present state of monarchies limited by law, or mitigated by the force of public opinion; and endeavours to show, that the course has been the same in all; and that its unavoidable termination is in a balanced constitution like that of England. The first change was the reduction of the Nobles,—chiefly by the aid which the Commons, then first pretending to wealth or intelligence, afforded to the Crown—and, on this basis, some small states, in Italy and Germany especially, erected a permanent system of freedom. But the necessities of war, and the substitution of hired forces for the feudal militia, led much more generally to the establishment of an arbitrary or despotical authority; which was accomplished in France, Spain, and England, under Louis XI., Philip II., and Henry VIII. Then came the age of commerce, luxury, and taxes,—which necessarily ripened into the age of general intelligence, individual wealth, and a sense both of right and of power in the people;—and those led irresistibly to a limitation on the powers of the Crown, by a representative assembly.

England having less occasion for a land army—and having been the first in the career of commercial prosperity, led the way in this great amelioration. But the same general principles have been operating in all the Continental kingdoms, and must ultimately produce the same effects. The peculiar advantages which she enjoyed did not prevent England from being enslaved by the tyranny of Henry VIII., and Mary;—and she also experienced the hazards, and paid the penalties which are perhaps inseparable from the assertion of popular rights.—She also overthrew the monarchy, and sacrificed the monarch in her first attempt to set limits to his power. The English Commonwealth of 1648, originated in as wild speculations as the French of 1792—and ended, like it, in the establishment of a military tyranny, and a restoration which seemed to confound all the asserters of liberty in the general guilt of rebellion:—Yet all the world is now agreed that this was but the first explosion of a flame that could neither be extinguished nor permanently repressed; and that what took place in 1688, was but the sequel and necessary consummation of what had been begun forty years before—and which might and would have been accomplished without even the slightest shock and disturbance that was then experienced, if the Court had profited as much as the leaders of the people by the lessons of that first experience. Such too, Madame de Staël assures us, is the unalterable destiny of France;—and it is the great purpose of her book to show, that but for circumstances which cannot recur—mistakes that cannot be repeated, and accidents which never happened twice, even the last attempt would have led to that blessed consummation—and that every thing is now in the fairest train to secure it, without any great effort or hazard of disturbance.

That these views are supported with infinite talent, spirit, and eloquence, no one who has read the book will probably dispute; and we should be sorry indeed to think that they were not substantially just. Yet we are not, we confess, quite so sanguine as the distinguished writer before us; and though we do not doubt either that her principles are true, or that her predictions will be *ultimately* accomplished, we fear that the period of their triumph is not yet at hand; and that it is far more doubtful than she will allow it to be, whether that triumph will be easy, peaceful, and secure. The example of England is her great, indeed her only authority; but we are afraid that she has run the parallel with more boldness than circumspection, and overlooked a variety of particulars in our case, to which she could not easily find any thing equivalent in that of her country. It might be invidious to dwell much on the opposite character and temper of the two nations; though it is no answer to say, that this character is the work of the government. But can Madame de Staël have forgotten, that England had a parliament and a representative legislature for five hundred years before 1648; and that it was *by that organ*, and the widely spread and deeply founded machinery of the elections on which it rested, that the struggle was made, and the victory won, which ultimately secured *to us* the blessings of political freedom? The least reflection upon the nature of government, and the true foundations of all liberty, will show what an immense advantage this was in the contest; and with what formidable obstacles those must have to struggle, who are obliged to engage in a similar conflict without it.

All political power, even the most despotic, rests at last, as was profoundly observed by Hume, upon Opinion. A government is *Just*, or otherwise, according as it promotes, more or less, the true interests of the people who live under it. But it is *Stable* and secure, exactly as it is directed by the opinion of those who really possess, and know that they possess, *the power* of enforcing it, and upon whose opinion, therefore, it constantly depends;—that is, in a military despotism, on the opinion of the soldiery;—in all rude and ignorant communities, on the opinion of those who monopolise the intelligence, the wealth, or the discipline which constitute power—the priesthood—the landed proprietors—the armed and inured to war;—and, in civilised societies, on the opinion of that larger proportion of the people who can bring their joint talents, wealth, and strength, to act in concert when occasion requires. A government may indeed subsist for a time, although opposed to the opinion of those classes of persons; but its existence must always be precarious, and it probably will not subsist long. The *natural* and appropriate *Constitution*, therefore, is, in every case, that which enables those who actually administer the government, to ascertain and conform themselves in time to the opinion of those who have the power to overturn it;

and no government whatever can possibly be secure where there are no arrangements for this purpose. Thus it is plainly for want of a proper *Despotic Constitution*—for want of a regular and safe way of getting at the opinions of their armies, that the Sultans and other Asiatic sovereigns are so frequently beheaded by their janissaries or insurgent soldiery: and, in like manner, it was for want of a proper Feudal Constitution, that, in the decline of that system, the King was so often dethroned by his rebellious barons, or excommunicated by an usurping priesthood. In more advanced times, there is the same necessity of conforming to the prevailing opinion of those more extended and diversified descriptions of persons in whom the power of enforcing and resisting has come to reside; and the natural and only safe constitution for such societies, must therefore embrace a representative assembly. A government may no doubt go on, in opposition to the opinion of this virtual aristocracy, for a long time after it has come into existence. For it is not enough that there is wealth, and intelligence, and individual influence enough in a community to overbear all pretensions opposed to them. It is necessary that the possessors of this virtual power should be aware of their own numbers, and of the conformity of their sentiments or views: and it is very late in the progress of society before the means of communication are so multiplied and improved, as to render this practicable in any tolerable degree. Trade and the press, however, have now greatly facilitated those communications; and in all the central countries of Europe, they probably exist in a degree quite sufficient to give one of the parties, at least, very decided impressions both as to its interests and its powers.

In such a situation of things, we cannot hesitate to say that a representative government is the natural, and will be the ultimate remedy; but if we find, that even where such an institution existed from antiquity, it was possible so fatally to miscalculate and misjudge the opinions of the nation, as proved to be the case in the reign of our King Charles, is it not manifest that there must be tenfold risk of such miscalculation in a country where no such constitution has been previously known, and where, from a thousand causes, the true state of the public mind is so apt to be oppositely misconceived by the opposite parties, as it is up to the present hour in France?

The great and cardinal use of a representative body in the legislature is to afford a direct, safe, and legitimate channel, by which the public opinion may be brought to act on the government: But, to enable it to perform this function with success, it is by no means enough, that a certain number of deputies are sent into the legislature by a certain number of electors. Without a good deal of previous training, the public opinion itself can neither be *formed, collected*, nor *expressed* in any authentic or effectual manner; and the first establishment of the representative system must be expected to occasion very nearly as much disturbance as it may ultimately prevent. In countries where there never have been any political elections, and few local magistracies, or occasions of provincial and parochial assemblages for public purposes, the real state of opinion must be substantially unknown even to the most observant resident in each particular district;—and its general bearing all over the country can never possibly be learned by the most diligent inquiries, or even guessed at with any reasonable degree of probability. The first deputies, therefore, are necessarily returned, without any firm or assured knowledge of the sentiments of their constituents—and they again can have nothing but the most vague notions of the temper in which these sentiments are to be enforced—while the whole deputies come together without any notion of the dispositions, or talents, or designs of each other, and are left to scramble for distinction and influence, according to the measure of their individual zeal, knowledge, or assurance. In England, there were no such novelties to be hazarded, either in 1640 or in 1688. The people of this country have had an elective parliament from the earliest period of their history—and, long before either of the periods in question, had been trained in every hamlet to the exercises of various political franchises, and taught to consider themselves as connected, by known and honourable ties, with all the persons of influence and consideration in their neighbourhood, and, through them, by an easy gradation with the political leaders of the State;—while, in Parliament itself, the place and pretensions of every man were pretty accurately known, and the strength of each party reasonably well ascertained by long and repeated experiments, made under all variety of circumstances. The organization and machinery, in short, for collecting the public opinion, and bringing it into contact with the administration, was perfect, and in daily operation among us, from very ancient times. The various conduits and channels by which it was to be conveyed from its first faint springs in the villages and burghs, and conducted in gradually increasing streams to the central wheels of the government, were all deep worn in the soil, and familiarly known, with all their levels and connections, to every one who could be affected by their condition. In France, when the new sluices were opened, not only were the waters universally foul and turbid, but the quantity and the currents were all irregular and unknown; and some stagnated or trickled feebly along, while others rushed and roared with the violence and the mischief of a torrent. But it is time to leave these perplexing generalities, and come a little closer to the work before us.

It was the Cardinal de Richelieu, according to Madame de Staël, who completed the degradation of the French nobility, begun by Louis XI.;—and the arrogance and Spanish gravity of Louis XIV., assumed, as she says, "pour eloigner de lui la familiarité des jugemens," fixed them in the capacity of courtiers; and put an end to that gay and easy tone of communication, which, in the days of

Henri IV., had made the task of a courtier both less wearisome and less degrading. She has no partiality, indeed, for the memory of that buckram hero—and is very indignant at his being regarded as the patron of literature. "Il persécuta Port-Royal, dont Pascal étoit le chef; il fit mourir de chagrin Racine; il exila Fénélon; il s'opposa constamment aux honneurs qu'on vouloit rendre à La Fontaine, et ne professa de l'admiration que pour Boileau. La littérature, en l'exaltant avec excès, a bien plus fait pour lui qu'il n'a fait pour elle."—(Vol. i. p. 36.) In his own person, indeed, he outlived his popularity, if not his fame. The brilliancy of his early successes was lost in his later reverses. The debts he had contracted lay like a load on the nation; and the rigour and gloominess of his devotion was one cause of the alacrity with which the nation plunged into all the excesses and profligacy of the regency and the suceeding reign.

That reign—the weakness of Louis XV.—the avowed and disgusting influence of his mistresses and all their relations, and the national disasters which they occasioned—together with the general spread of intelligence among the body of the people, and the bold and vigorous spirit displayed in the writings of Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau, created a general feeling of discontent and contempt for the government, and prepared the way for those more intrepid reformers who were so soon destined to succeed.

Louis XVI., says Madame de Staël, would have been the mildest and most equitable of despots, and the most constitutional of constitutional kings—had he been born to administer either an established despotism, or a constitutional monarchy. But he was not fitted to fill the throne during the difficult and trying crisis of *a transition* from the one state to the other. He was sincerely anxious for the happiness and even the rights of his people; but he had a hankering after the absolute power which seemed to be his lawful inheritance; and was too easily persuaded by those about him to cling to it too long, for his own safety, or that of the country. The Queen, with the same amiable dispositions, had still more of those natural prejudices. M. de Maurepas, a minister of the old school, was compelled, by the growing disorders of the finances, to call to his aid the talents of Turgot and Necker about the year 1780. We hear enough, of course, in this book, of the latter: But though we can pardon the filial piety which has led the author to discuss, at so great length, the merit of his plans of finance and government, and to dwell on the *prophetic* spirit in which he foresaw and foretold all the consequences that have flowed from rejecting them, we have too much regard for our readers to oppress them. at this time of day, with an analysis of the Compte Rendu, or the scheme for provincial assemblies. As an historical personage, he must have his due share of notice; and no fame can be purer than that to which he is entitled. His daughter, we think, has truly described the scope of his endeavours, in his first ministry, to have been, "to persuade the King to do of himself that justice to the people, to obtain which they afterwards insisted for representatives." Such a counsellor, of course, had no chance in 1780; and, the year after, M. Necker was accordingly dismissed. The great objection to him was, that he proposed innovations—"et de toutes les innovations, celle que les courtisans et les financiers detestent le plus, c'est l'Economie." Before going out, however, he did a great deal of good; and found means, while M. de Maurepas had a bad fit of gout, to get M. de Sartine removed from the ministry of marine—a personage so extremely diligent in the studies belonging to his department, that when M. Necker went to see him soon after his appointment, he found him in a chamber all hung round with maps; and boasting with much complacency, that "he could already put his hand upon the largest of them, and point, with his eyes shut, to the four quarters of the world!"

Calonne succeeded—a frivolous, presumptuous person,—and a financier, in so far as we can judge, after the fashion of our poet-laureate: For he too, it seems, was used to call prodigality "a large economy;" and to assure the King, that the more lavish he and his court were in their expenses, so much the better would it fare with the country. The consequence was, that the disorder soon became irremediable; and this sprightly minister was forced at last to adopt Turgot's proposal of subjecting the privileged orders to their share of the burdens—and finally to advise the convocation of the Notables, in 1787.

The Notables, however, being all privileged persons, refused to give up any of their immunities—and they and M. de Calonne were dismissed accordingly. Then came the wavering and undecided administration of M. de Brienne, which ended with the resolution to assemble the States-General;—and this was the Revolution!

Hitherto, says Madame de Staël, the nation at large, and especially the lower orders, had taken no share in those discussions. The resistance to the Court—the complaints—the call for reformation, originated and was confined to the privileged orders—to the Parliaments—the Nobles and the Clergy. No revolution indeed can succeed in a civilised country, which does not begin at least with the higher orders. It was in the parliament of Paris, in which the peers of France had seats, and which had always been most tenacious of the privileges of its members, that the suggestion was first made which set fire to the four quarters of the kingdom. In that kingdom, indeed, it could hardly fail, as it was made in the form of a pun or *bon mot*. They were clamouring against the minister for not exhibiting his account of the public expenses, when the Abbé Sabatier said—"Vous demandez, messieurs, *les états de recette* et de depense—et ce sont *les Etats-Généraux* qu'il nous faut!"—This was eagerly repeated in every order of society; addresses to that effect were poured in, in daily heaps; and at

last M. de Brienne was obliged to promise, in the King's name, that the States-General should assemble at the end of five years. This delay only inflamed the general impatience: and the clergy having solemnly declaimed against it, the King was at last obliged to announce that they should meet early in the following year. M. Necker at the same time was recalled to the ministry.

The States-General were demanded by the privileged orders: and, if they really expected to find them as they were in 1614, which was their last meeting, (though it is not very conceivable that they should have overlooked the lifference of the times,) we can understand that they might have urged this demand without any design of being very liberal to the other orders of the community. This is the edifying abstract which Madame de Staël has given of the proceedings of that venerable assembly.

"*Le Clergé* demanda qu'il lui fût permis de lever des dîmes sur toute espèce de fruits et de grains, et qu'on défendît de lui faire payer des droits à l'entrée des villes, ou de lui imposer sa part des contributions pour les chemins; il réclama de nouvelles entraves à la liberté de la presse. *La Noblesse* demanda que les principaux emplois fussent tous donnés exclusivement aux gentilshommes, qu'on interdît aux roturiers les arquebuses, les pistolets, et l'usage des chiens, à moins qu'ils n'eussent les jarrets coupés. Elle demanda de plus que les roturiers payassent de nouveaux droits seigneuriaux aux gentilshommes possesseurs de fiefs; que l'on supprimât toutes les pensions accordées aux membres du tiers état; mais que les gentilshommes fussent exempts de la contrainte par corps, et de tout subside sur les denrées de leurs terres; qu'ils pussent prendre du sel dans les greniers du roi au même prix que les marchands; enfin que le tiers état fût obligé de porter un habit différent de celui des gentilshommes."—Vol. i. p. 162.

The States-General, however, were decreed;—and, that the whole blame of innovation might still lie upon the higher orders, M. de Brienne, in the name of the King, invited all and sundry to make public their notions upon the manner in which that great body should be arranged. By the old form, the Nobles, the Clergy, and the Commons, each deliberated apart—and each had but one voice in the enactment of laws;—so that the privileged orders were always two to one against the other—and the course of legislation had always been to extend the privileges of the one, and increase the burdens of the other. Accordingly, the tiers état had long been defined, "*la gent corvéable et taillable, à merci et à miséricorde;*"—and Madame de Staël, in one of those passages that already begin to be valuable to the forgetful world, bears this striking testimony as to the effect on their actual condition.

"Les jeunes gens et les étrangers qui n'ont pas connu la France avant la révolution, et qui voient aujourd'hui le peuple enrichi par la division des propriétés et la suppression des dîmes et du régime féodal, ne peuvent avoir l'idée de la situation de ce pays, lorsque la nation portoit le poids de tous les privilèges. Les partisans de l'esclavage, dans les colonies, ont souvent dit qu'un paysan de France étoit plus malheureux qu'un nègre. C'étoit un argument pour soulager les blancs, mais non pour s'endurcir contre les noirs. La misère accroît l'ignorance, l'ignorance accroît la misère; et, quand on se demande pourquoi le peuple françois a été si cruel dans la révolution, on ne peut en trouver la cause que dans l'absence de bonheur, qui conduit à l'absence de moralité."—Vol. i. p. 79.

But what made the injustice of this strange system of laying the heaviest pecuniary burdens on the poorest a thousand times more oppressive, and ten thousand times more provoking, was, that the invidious right of exemption came at last to be claimed, not by the true ancient noblesse of France, which, Madame de Staël says, did not extend to two hundred families, but by hundreds of thousands of persons of all descriptions, who had bought patents of nobility for the very purpose of obtaining this exemption. There was nothing in the structure of French society that was more revolting, or called more loudly for reformation, than the multitude and the pretensions of this anomalous race. They were most jealously distinguished from the true original *Noblesse;* which guarded its purity indeed with such extreme rigour, that no person was allowed to enter any of the royal carriages whose patent of nobility was not certified by the Court heralds to bear date prior to the year 1400; and yet they not only assumed the name and title of nobles, but were admitted, as against the people, into a full participation of all their most offensive privileges. It is with justice, therefore, that Madame de Staël reckons as one great cause of the Revolution,—

"Cette foule de gentilshommes du second ordre, anoblis de la veille, soit par les lettres de noblesse que les rois donnoient comme faisant suite à l'affranchissement des Gaulois, soit par les charges vénales de secrétaire du roi, etc., qui associoient de nouveaux individus aux droits et aux priviléges des anciens gentilshommes. La nation se seroit soumise volontiers à la prééminence des familles historiques; et je n'exagère pas en affirmant qu'il n'y en a pas plus de deux cents en France. Mais les cent mille nobles et les cent mille prêtres qui vouloient avoir des priviléges, à l'égal de ceux de MM. de Montmorenci, de Grammont, de Crillon, etc., révoltoient généralement; car des négocians, des hommes de lettres, des propriétaires, des capitalistes, ne pouvoient comprendre la supériorité qu'on vouloit accorder à cette noblesse acquise à prix de révérences ou d'argent, et à laquelle vingt-cinq ans de date suffisoient pour siégre dans la chambre des nobles, et pour jouir des priviléges dont les plus honorables membres du tiers état se voyoient privés.

"La chambre des pairs en Angleterre est une magistrature patricienne, fondée sans doute sur les anciens souvenirs de la chevalerie, mais tout-à-fait associée à des institutions d'une nature très-différente. Un mérite distingué dans le commerce, et surtout dans la jurisprudence, en ouvre journellement l'entrée; et les droits représentatifs que les pairs exercent dans l'état, attestent à la nation que c'est pour le bien public que leurs rangs sont institués. Mais quel avantage les François pouvoient-ils trouver dans ces vicomtes de la Garonne, ou dans ces marquis de la Loire, qui ne payoient pas seulement leur part des impôts de l'état, et que le roi lui-même ne recevoit pas à sa cour; puisqu'il falloit faire des preuves de plus de quatre siècles pour y être admis, et qu'ils étoient à peine anoblis depuis cinquante ans? La vanité des gens de cette classe ne pouvoit s'exercer que sur leurs inférieurs, et ces inférieurs, c'étoient vingt-quatre millions d'hommes."—Vol. i. p. 166—168.

Strange as it may appear, there was no law

or usage fixing *the number* of the deputies who might be returned; and though, by the usage of 1614, and some former assemblies, the three orders were allowed each but one voice in the legislature, there were earlier examples of the whole meeting and voting as individuals in the same assembly. M. de Brienne, as we have seen, took the sapient course of calling all the pamphleteers of the kingdom into council upon this emergency. It was fixed at last, though not without difficulty, that the deputies of the people should be equal in number to those of the other two classes together; and it is a trait worth mentioning, that *the only* committee of Nobles who voted for this concession, was that over which the present King of France (in 1818) presided. If it meant any thing, however, this concession implied that the whole body was to deliberate in common, and to vote individually; and yet, incredible as it now appears, the fact is that the King and his ministers allowed the deputies to be elected, and *actually to assemble* without having settled that great question, or even made any approach to its settlement! Of all the particular blunders that ensured or accelerated what was probably inevitable, this has always appeared to us to be one of the most inconceivable. The point, however, though not taken up by any authority, was plentifully discussed among the talkers of Paris; and Madame de Staël assures us, that the side of the *tiers état* was at that time the most fashionable in good company, as well as the most popular with the bulk of the nation. "Tous ceux et toutes celles qui, dans la haute compagnie de France, influoient sur l'opinion, parloient vivement en faveur de la cause de la nation. *La mode* étoit dans ce sens. C'étoit le résultat de tout le dix-huitième siècle; et les vieux préjugés, qui combattoient encore pour les anciennes institutions, avoient beaucoup moins de force alors, qu'ils n'en ont eu à aucune époque pendant les vingt-cinq années suivantes. Enfin l'ascendant de l'esprit public étoit tel, qu'il entraîna le parlement lui-même."—(Vol. i. pp. 172, 173.) The clamour that was made against them was not at that time by the advocates of the royal prerogative, but by interested individuals of the privileged classes. On the contrary, Madame de Staël asserts positively, that the popular party was then disposed, as of old, to unite with the sovereign against the pretensions of those bodies, and that the sovereign was understood to participate in their sentiments. The statement certainly seems to derive no slight confirmation from the memorable words which were uttered at the time, in a public address by the reigning King of France, then the first of the Princes of the blood.—"Une grande révolution étoit prêt, dit Monsieur (aujourd'hui Louis XVIII.) à la municipalité de Paris, en 1789; le roi, par ses intentions, ses vertus, et son rang suprême, *devoit en être le chef!*" We perfectly agree with Madame de Staël—"que toute la sagesse de la circonstance étoit dans ces paroles."

Nothing, says Madame de Staël, can be imagined more striking than the first sight of the twelve hundred deputies of France, as they passed in solemn procession to hear mass at Notre Dame, the day before the meeting of the States-General.

"La Noblesse se trouvant déchue de sa splendeur, par l'esprit de courtisan, par l'alliage des anoblis, et par une longue paix; le Clergé ne possédant plus l'ascendant des lumières qu'il avoit eu dans les temps barbares; l'importance des députés du Tiers état en étoit augmentée. Leurs habits et leurs manteaux noirs, leurs regards assurés, leur nombre imposant, attiroient l'attention sur eux: Des hommes de lettres, des négocians, un grand nombre d'avocats composoient ce troisième ordre. Quelques nobles s'étoient fait nommer députés du tiers, et parmi ces nobles on remarquoit surtout le Comte de *Mirabeau:* l'opinion qu'on avoit de son esprit étoit singulièrement augmentée par la peur que faisoit son immoralité; et cependant c'est cette immoralité même qui a diminué l'influence que ses étonnantes facultés devoient lui valoir. Il étoit difficile de ne pas le regarder long-temps, quand on l'avoit une fois aperçu: Son immense chevelure le distinguoit entre tous: on eût dit que sa force en dépendoit comme celle de Samson; son visage empruntoit de l'expression de sa laideur même; et toute sa personne donnoit l'idée d'une puissance irrégulière, mais enfin d'une puissance telle qu'on se la représenteroit dans un tribun de peuple.

"Aucun nom propre, excepté le sien, n'étoit encore célèbre dans les six cents députés du tiers; mais il y avoit beaucoup d'hommes honorables, et beaucoup d'hommes à craindre."—Vol. i. pp. 185, 186.

The first day of their meeting, the deputies of course insisted that the whole three orders should sit and vote together; and the majority of the nobles and clergy of course resisted:—And this went on for nearly two months, in the face of the mob of Paris and the people of France—before the King and his Council could make up their own minds on the matter! The inner cabinet, in which the Queen and the Princes had the chief sway, had now taken the alarm, and was for resisting the pretensions of the Third Estate; while M. Necker, and the ostensible ministers, were for compromising with them, while their power was not yet proved by experience, nor their pretensions raised by victory. The Ultras relied on the army, and were for dismissing the Legislature as soon as they had granted a few taxes. M. Necker plainly told the King, that he did not think that the army could be relied on; and that he ought to make up his mind to reign hereafter under a constitution like that of England. There were fierce disputes, and endless consultations; and at length, within three weeks after the States were opened, and before the Commons had gained any decided advantage, M. Necker obtained the full assent both of the King and Queen to a declaration, in which it was to be announced to the States, that they should sit and vote as *one* body in all questions of *taxation*, and in *two* chambers only in all other questions. This arrangement, Madame de Staël assures us, would have satisfied the Commons at the time, and invested the throne with the great strength of popularity. But, after a full and deliberate consent had been given by both their Majesties, the party about the Queen

found means to put off from day to day the publication of the important instrument; and a whole month was unpardonably wasted in idle discussions; during which, nearly one half of the nobles and clergy had joined the deputies of the Commons, and taken the name of the National Assembly. Their popularity and confidence had been dangerously increased, in the mean time, by their orators and pamphleteers; and the Court had become the object of suspicion and discontent, both by the rumour of the approach of its armies to the capital, and by what Madame de Staël calls the *accidental* exclusion of the deputies from their ordinary place of meeting—which gave occasion to the celebrated and theatrical oath of the Tennis-court. After all, Madame de Staël says, much might have been regained or saved, by issuing M. Necker's declaration. But the very night before it was to be delivered, the council was adjourned, in consequence of a billet from the Queen;—two new councillors and two princes of the blood were called to take part in the deliberations; and it was suddenly determined, that the King should announce it as his pleasure, that the Three Estates should meet and vote in their three separate chambers, as they had done in 1614!

M. Necker, full of fear and sorrow, refused to go to the meeting at which the King was to make this important communication. It was made, however—and received with murmurs of deep displeasure; and, when the Chancellor ordered the deputies to withdraw to their separate chamber, they answered, that they were the National Assembly, and would stay where they were! The whole visible population seconded this resolution, with indications of a terrible and irresistible violence: Perseverance, it was immediately seen, would have led to the most dreadful consequences; and the same night the Queen entreated M. Necker to take the management of the State upon himself, and solemnly engaged to follow no councils but his. The minister complied;—and immediately the obnoxious order was recalled, and a royal mandate was issued to the Nobles and the Clergy, to join the deliberations of the Tiers état.

If these reconciling measures had been sincerely followed out, the country and the monarchy might yet perhaps have been saved. But the party of the Ultras—"qui parloit avec beaucoup de dédain de l'autorité du roi d'Angleterre, et vouloit faire considérer comme un attentat, la pensée de réduire un roi de France au misérable sort du monarque Britannique"—this misguided party—had still too much weight in the royal councils; and, while they took advantage of the calm produced by M. Necker's measures and popularity, did not cease secretly to hasten the march of M. de Broglie with his German regiments upon Paris—with the design, scarcely dissembled, of employing them to overawe, and, if necessary, to disperse the assembly. Considering from whom her information is derived, we can scarcely refuse our implicit belief to the following important statement, which has never yet been made on equal authority.

"M. Necker n'ignoroit pas le véritable objet pour lequel on faisoit avancer les troupes, bien qu'on vou ût le lui cacher. L'intention de la cour étoit de ré unir à Compiègne tous les membres des trois ordres qui n'avoient point favorisé le système des innovations, et là de leur faire consentir à la hâte les impôts et les emprunts dont elle avoit besoin, afin de *les renvoyer* ensuite! Comme un tel projet ne pouvoit être secondé par M. Necker, on se proposoit de le renvoyer dès que la force militaire seroit rassemblée. Cinquante avis par jour l'informoient de sa situation, et il ne lui étoit pas possible d'en douter; mais il savoit aussi que, dans les circonstances où l'on se trouvoit alors, il ne pouvoit quitter sa place sans confirmer les bruits qui se répandoient sur les mesures violentes que l'on préparoit à la cour. Le roi s'étant résolu à ces mesures, M. Necker ne voulût pas y prendre part, mais il ne vouloit pas non plus donner le signal de s'y opposer; et il restoit là comme une sentinelle qu'on laissoit encore à son poste, pour tromper les attaquans sur la manœuvre."—Vol. i. pp. 231—233.

He continued, accordingly, to go every day to the palace, where he was received with cold civility; and at last, when the troops were all assembled, he received an order in the middle of the night, commanding him instantly to quit France, and to let no one know of his departure. This was on the night of the 11th of July;—and as soon as his dismissal was known, all Paris rose in insurrection—an army of 100,000 men was arrayed in a night—and, on the 14th, the Bastile was demolished, and the King brought as a prisoner to the Hotel de Ville, to express his approbation of all that had been done! M. Necker, who had got as far as Brussels, was instantly recalled. Upwards of two millions of men took up arms throughout the country—and it was manifest that a great revolution was already consummated!

There is next a series of lively and masterly sketches of the different parties in the Constituent Assembly, and their various leaders. Of these, the most remarkable, by far, was Mirabeau; who appeared in opposition to Necker, like the evil spirit of the Revolution contending with its better angel. Madame de Staël says of him, that he was "Tribun par calcul, et Aristocrat par goût." There never, perhaps, was an instance of so much talent being accompanied and neutralized by so much profligacy. Of all the daring spirits that appeared on that troubled scene, no one, during his life, ever dared to encounter him; and yet, such was his want of principle, that no one party, and no one individual, trusted him with their secrets. His fearlessness, promptitude, and energy, overbore all competition; and his ambition seemed to be, to show how the making or the marring of all things depended upon his good pleasure. Madame de Staël confirms what has often been said of his occasional difficulty in *extempore* speaking, and of his habitually employing his friends to write his speeches and letters; but, after his death, she says none of them could ever produce for themselves any thing equal to what they used to catch from his inspiration. In debate, he was artful when worsted, and merciless when successful. What he said of Abbé Maury, was true of all his opponents—"Quand il a raison, nous disputons; quand il a tort, *je l'écrase!*"

Opposed to this, and finely contrasted with it, is the character of M. de la Fayette—the purest, the most temperate, and therefore the most inflexible friend of rational liberty in France. Considering the times in which he has lived, and the treatment he has met with, it is a proud thing for a nation to be able to name *one* of its public characters, to whom this high testimony can be borne, without risk of contradiction. "Depuis le départ de M. de la Fayette pour l'Amérique, il y a quarante ans, on ne peut citer ni une action, ni une parole de lui qui n'ait été dans la même ligne, sans qu'aucun intérêt personnel se soit jamais mêlé à sa conduite." The Abbé Sieyes seems to us a little like our Bentham. At all events, this little sketch of him is worth preserving.

"Il avoit mené jusqu'à quarante ans une vie solitaire, réfléchissant sur les questions politiques, et portant une grande force d'abstraction dans cette étude; mais il étoit peu fait pour communiquer avec les autres hommes, tant il s'irritoit aisément de leurs travers, et tant il les blessoit par les siens. Toutefois, comme il avoit un esprit supérieur et des façons de s'exprimer laconiques et tranchantes, c'étoit la mode dans l'assemblée de lui montrer un respect presque superstitieux. Mirabeau ne demandoit pas mieux que d'accorder au silence de l'Abbé Sieyes le pas sur sa propre éloquence; car ce genre de rivalité n'est pas redoutable. On croyoit à Sieyes, à cet homme mystérieux, des secrets sur les constitutions, dont on espéroit toujours des effets étonnans quand il les révéleroit. Quelques jeunes gens, et même des esprits d'une grande force, professoient la plus haute admiration pour lui; et l'on s'accordoit à le louer aux dépens de tout autre, parce qu'il ne se faisoit jamais juger en entier, dans aucune circonstance. Ce qu'on savoit avec certitude, c'est qu'il détestoit les distinctions nobiliaires; et cependant il avoit conservé de son état de prêtre un attachement au clergé, qui se manifesta le plus clairement du monde lors de la suppression des dîmes. *Ils veulent être libres, et ne savent pas être justes!* disoit-il à cette occasion; et toutes les fautes de l'assemblée étoient renfermées dans ces paroles."—Vol. i. pp. 305, 306.

The most remarkable party, perhaps, in the Assembly was that of the Aristocrats, consisting chiefly of the Nobles and Clergy, and about thirty of the Commons. In the situation in which they were placed, one would have expected a good deal of anxiety, bitterness, or enthusiasm, from them. But, in France, things affect people differently. Nothing can be more characteristic than the following powerful sketch. "Ce parti, qui avoit protesté contre toutes les résolutions de l'assemblée, n'y assistoit que par prudence. Tout ce qu'on y faisoit lui paroissoit insolent, *mais très-peu sérieux!* tant il trouvoit *ridicule* cette découverte du dix-huitième siècle, *une nation!*—tandis qu'on n'avoit eu jusqu'alors que des nobles, des prêtres, et du peuple!"—(Vol. i. p. 298.) They had their counterpart, however, on the opposite side. The speculative, refining, and philanthropic reformers, were precisely a match for them. There is infinite talent, truth, and pathos, in the following hasty observations.

"Ils gagnèrent de l'ascendant dans l'assemblée, en se moquant des modérés, comme si la modération étoit de la foiblesse, et qu'eux seuls fussent des caractères forts. On les voyoit, dans les salles et sur les bancs des députés, tourner en ridicule quiconque s'avisoit de leur représenter qu'avant eux les hommes avoient existé en société; que les écrivains avoient pensé, et que l'Angleterre étoit en possession de quelque liberté. On eût dit qu'on leur répétoit les contes de leur nourrice, tant ils écoutoient avec impatience, tant ils prononçoient avec dédain de certaines phrases bien exagérées et bien décisives, sur l'impossibilité d'admettre un sénat héréditaire, un sénat même à vie, un veto absolu, une condition de propriété, enfin tout ce qui, disoient-ils, attentoit à la souveraineté du peuple! *Ils portoient la fatuité des cours dans la cause démocratique;* et plusieurs députés du tiers étoient, tout à la fois, éblouis par leurs belles manières de gentilshommes, et captivés par leurs doctrines démocratiques.

"Ces chefs élégans du parti populaire vouloient entrer dans le ministère. Ils souhaitoient de conduire les affaires jusqu'au point où l'on auroit besoin d'eux; mais, dans cette rapide descente, le char ne s'arrêta point à leurs relais; ils n'étoient point conspirateurs, mais ils se confioient trop en leur pouvoir sur l'assemblée, et se flattoient de relever de trône dès qu'ils l'auroient fait arriver jusqu'à leur portée. Mais, quand ils voulurent de bonne foi réparer le mal déjà fait, il n'étoit plus temps. On ne sauroit compter combien de désastres auroient pu être épargnés à la France, si ce parti de jeunes gens se fût réuni avec les modérés: car, avant les évènemens du 6 Octobre, lorsque le roi n'avoit point été enlevé de Versailles, et que l'armée Françoise, répandue dans les provinces, conservoit encore quelque respect pour le trône, les circonstances étoient telles qu'on pouvoit établir une monarchie raisonnable en France."—Vol. i. pp. 303—305.

It is a curious proof of the vivaciousness of vulgar prejudices, that Madame de Staël should have thought it necessary, in 1816, to refute, in a separate chapter, the popular opinion that the disorders in France in 1790 and 1791 were fomented by the hired agents of England.

There is a long and very interesting account of the outrages and horrors of the 5th of October 1789, and of the tumultuous conveyance of the captive monarch from Versailles to Paris, by a murderous and infuriated mob. Madame de Staël was herself a spectatress of the whole scene in the interior of the palace; and though there is not much that is new in her account, we cannot resist making one little extract. After the mob had filled the courts of the palace,—

"La reine parut alors dans le salon; ses cheveux étoient en désordre, sa figure étoit pâle, mais digne, et tout, dans sa personne, frappoit l'imagination: le peuple demanda qu'elle parût sur le balcon; et, comme toute la cour, appelée la cour de marbre, étoit remplie d'hommes qui tenoient en main des armes à feu, on put apercevoir dans la physionomie de la reine ce qu'elle redoutoit. Néanmoins *elle s'avança, sans hésiter*, avec ses deux enfans qui lui servoient de sauvegarde.

"La multitude parut attendrie, en voyant la reine comme mère, et les fureurs politiques s'apaisèrent à cet aspect; ceux qui, la nuit même, avoient, peut-être voulu l'assassiner, portèrent son nom jusqu'aux nues.

"La reine, en sortant du balcon, s'approcha de ma mère, et lui dit, avec des sanglots étouffés: *Ils vont nous forcer, le roi et moi, à nous rendre à Paris*

—*avec les têtes de nos gardes du corps portées devant nous au bout de leurs piques!* Sa prédiction faillit s'accomplir. *Ainsi* la reine et le roi furent amenés dans leur capitale! Nous revînmes à Paris par une autre route, qui nous éloignoit de cet affreux spectacle: c'étoit à travers le bois de Boulogne que nous passâmes, et le temps étoit d'une rare beauté; l'air agitoit à peine les arbres, et le soleil avoit assez d'èclat pour ne laisser rien de sombre dans la campagne: aucun objet extérieur ne répondoit à notre tristesse. Combien de fois ce contraste, entre la beauté de la nature et les souffrances imposées par les hommes, ne se renouvelle-t-il pas dans le cours de la vie!

"Quel spectacle en effet que cet ancien palais des Tuileries, abandonné depuis plus d'un siècle, par ses augustes hôtes! La vétusté des objets extérieurs agissoit sur l'imagination, et la faisoit errer dans les temps passés. Comme on étoit loin de prévoir l'arrivée de la famille royale, très-peu d'appartemens étoient habitables, et la reine avoit été obligée de faire dresser des lits de camp pour ses enfans, dans la chambre même où elle recevoit; elle nous en fit des excuses, en ajoutant: *Vous savez que je ne m'attendois pas à venir ici.* Sa physionomie étoit belle et irritée; on ne peut l'oublier quand on l'a vue.—Vol. i. pp. 347—349.

It has always struck us as a singular defect in all the writers who have spoken of those scenes of decisive violence in the early history of the French Revolution, such as the 14th of July and this of the 6th of October, that they do not so much as attempt to explain by what instigation they were brought about—or by whom the plan of operations was formed, and the means for carrying it into execution provided. That there was concert and preparation in the business, is sufficiently apparent from the magnitude and suddenness of the assemblage, and the skill and systematic perseverance with which they set about accomplishing their purposes. Yet we know as little, at this hour, of the plotters and authors of the mischief, as we do of the Porteous mob. Madame de Staël contents herself with saying, that these dreadful scenes signalized "l'avènement des Jacobins;" but seems to exculpate all the known leaders of that party from any actual concern in the transaction;—and yet it was that transaction that subverted the monarchy!

Then came the abolition of titles of nobility—the institution of a constitutional clergy—and the federation of 14th July 1790. In spite of the storms and showers of blood which we have already noticed, the political horizon, it seems, still looked bright in the eyes of France. The following picture is lively—and is among the traits which history does not usually preserve—and which, what she does preserve, certainly would not enable future ages to conjecture.

"Les étrangers ne sauroient concevoir le charme et l'éclat tant vanté de la société de Paris, s'ils n'ont vu la France que depuis vingt ans: Mais on peut dire avec vérité, que jamais cette société n'a été aussi brillante et aussi sérieuse tout ensemble, que pendant les trois ou quatre premières années de la révolution, à compter de 1788 jusqu'à la fin de 1791. Comme les affaires politiques étoient encore entre les mains de la première classe, toute la vigueur de la liberté et toute la grâce de la politesse ancienne se réunissoient dans les mêmes personnes. Les hommes du tiers état, distingués par leurs lumières et leurs talens, se joignoient à ces gentilshommes plus fiers de leur propre mérite que des privilèges de leur corps; et les plus hautes questions que l'ordre social ait jamais fait naître étoient traitées par les esprits les plus capables de les entendre et de les discuter.

"Ce qui nuit aux agrémens de la société en Angleterre, ce sont les occupations et les intérêts d'un état depuis long-temps représentatif. Ce qui rendoit au contraire la société françoise un peu superficielle, c'étoient les loisirs de la monarchie. Mais tout à coup la force de la liberté vint se mêler à l'élégance de l'aristocratie; dans aucun pays ni dans aucun temps, l'art de parler sous toutes ses formes n'a été aussi rémarquable que dans les premières années de la révolution.

"L'assemblée constituante, comme je l'ai déjà dit, ne suspendit pas un seul jour la liberté de la presse. Ainsi ceux qui souffroient de se trouver constamment en minorité dans l'assemblée, avoient au moins la satisfaction de se moquer de tout le parti contraire. Leurs journaux faisoient de spirituels calembours sur les circonstances les plus importantes; c'étoit l'histoire du monde changée en commérage! Tel est partout le caractère de l'aristocratie des cours. C'est la dernière fois, hélas! que l'esprit françoise se soit montré dans tout son éclat; c'est la dernière fois, et à quelques égards aussi la première, que la société de Paris ait pu donner l'idée de cette communication des esprits supérieurs entre eux, la plus noble jouissance dont la nature humaine soit capable. Ceux qui ont vécu dans ce temps ne sauroient s'empêcher d'avouer qu'on n'a jamais vu ni tant de vie ni tant d'esprit nulle part; l'on peut juger, par la foule d'hommes de talens que les circonstances développèrent alors, ce que seroient les François s'ils étoient appelés à se mêler des affaires publiques dans la rout tracée par une constitution sage et sincère."—Vol. i. pp. 383—386.

Very soon after the federation, the King entered into secret communications with Mirabeau, and expected by his means, and those of M. Bouillé and his army, to emancipate himself from the bondage in which he was held. The plan was, to retire to Compiegne; and there, by the help of the army, to purge the Assembly, and restore the royal authority. Madame de Staël says, that Mirabeau insisted for a constitution like that of England; but, as an armed force was avowedly the organ by which he was to act, one may be permitted to doubt, whether he could seriously expect this to be granted. In the mean time, the policy of the King was to appear to agree to every thing; and, as this appeared to M. Necker, who was not in the secret, to be an unjustifiable abandonment of himself and the country, he tendered his resignation, and was allowed to retire—and then followed the death of Mirabeau, and shortly after the flight and apprehension of the King—the revision of the constitution—and the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, with a self-denying ordinance, declaring that none of its members should be capable of being elected into the next legislature.

There is an admirable chapter on the emigration of 1791—that emigration, in the spirit of party and of *bon ton*, which at once exasperated and strengthened the party who ought to have been opposed, and irretrievably injured a cause which was worse than deserted, when foreigners were called in to support it. Madame de Staël is decidedly of opinion, that the Nobles should have staid, and resisted

what was wrong—or submitted to it. "Mais ils ont trouvé plus simple d'invoquer la gendarmerie Européenne, afin de mettre Paris à raison." The fate of their country, which ought to have been their only concern, was always a secondary object, in their eyes, to the triumph of their own opinions—"ils l'ont voulu comme un jaloux sa maîtresse—fidelle au morte,"—and seem rather to have considered themselves as allied to all the other nobles of Europe, than as a part of the French nation.

The Constituent Assembly made more laws in two years than the English parliament had done in two hundred. The succeeding assembly made as many—with this difference, that while the former aimed, for the most part, at general reformation, the last were all personal and vindictive. The speculative republicans were for some time the leaders of this industrious body;—and Madame de Staël, in describing their tone and temper while in power, has given a picture of the political tractability of her countrymen, which could scarcely have been endured from a stranger.

"Aucun argument, aucune inquiétude n'étoient écoutés par ses chefs. Ils répondoient aux observations de la sagesse, et de la sagesse désintéressée, par un sourire moqueur, symptôme de l'aridité qui résulte de l'amour-propre: On s'épuisoit à leur rappeler les circonstances, et à leur en déduire les causes; on passoit tour à tour de la théorie à l'expérience, et de l'expérience à la théorie, pour leur en montrer l'identité; et, s'ils consentoient à répondre, ils nioient les faits les plus authentiques, et combattoient les observations les plus évidentes, en y opposant quelques maximes communes, bien qu'exprimées avec éloquence. Ils se regardoient entre eux, comme s'ils avoient été seuls dignes de s'entendre, et s'encourageoient par l'idée que tout étoit pusillanimité dans la résistance à leur manière de voir. Tels sont les signes de l'esprit de parti chez les François! Le dédain pour leurs adversaires en est la base, et le dédain s'oppose toujours à la connoissance de la vérité."—"Mais dans les débats politiques," she adds, "où la masse d'une nation prend part, il n'y a que la voix des évènemens qui soit entendue; les argumens n'inspirent que le désir de leur répondre."

The King, who seemed for a time to have resigned himself to his fate, was roused at last to refuse his assent to certain brutal decrees against the recusant priests—and his palace and his person were immediately invaded by a ferocious mob—and he was soon after compelled with all his family to assist at the anniversary of the 14th July, where, except the plaudits of a few children, every thing was dark and menacing. The following few lines appear to us excessively touching.

"Il falloit le caractère de Louis XVI., ce caractère de martyr qu'il n'a jamais démenti, pour supporter ainsi une pareille situation. Sa manière de marcher, sa contenance avoient quelque chose de particulier. Dans d'autres occasions, on auroit pu lui souhaiter plus de grandeur; mais il suffisoit dans ce moment de rester en tout le même, pour paroître sublime. Je suivis de loin sa tête poudrée au milieu de ces têtes à cheveux noirs; son habit, encore brodé comme jadis, ressortoit à côté du costume des gens du peuple qui se pressoient autour de lui. Quand il monta les dégrés de l'autel, on crut voir la victime sainte, s'offrant volontairement en sacrifice! Il redescendit; et, traversant de nouveau les rangs en désordre, il revint s'asseoir auprès de la reine et de ses enfans. Depuis ce jour, le peuple ne l'a plus revu—que sur l'échafaud!"

Vol. ii. pp. 54, 55.

Soon after, the allies entered France; the King refused to take shelter in the army of M. de la Fayette at Compiegne. His palace was stormed, and his guards butchered, on the 10th of August. He was committed to the Temple, arraigned, and executed! and the reign of terror, with all its unspeakable atrocities, ensued.

We must pass over much of what is most interesting in the book before us; for we find, that the most rapid sketch we can trace, would draw us into great length. Madame de Staël thinks that the war was nearly unavoidable on the part of England; and, after a brief character of our Fox and Pitt, she says,

"Il pouvoit être avantageux toutefois à l'Angleterre que M. Pitt fût le chef de l'état dans la crise la plus dangereuse où ce pays se soit trouvé; mais il ne l'étoit pas moins, qu'un esprit aussi étendu que celui de M. Fox soutînt les principes malgré les circonstances; et sût préserver les dieux pénates des amis de la liberté, au milieu de l'incendie. Ce n'est point pour contenter les deux partis que je les loue ainsi tous les deux, quoiqu'ils aient soutenu des opinions très-opposées. Le contraire en France devroit peut-être avoir lieu; les factions diverses y sont presque toujours également blâmables: Mais dans un pays libre, les partisans du ministère et les membres de l'opposition peuvent avoir tous raison à leur manière; et ils font souvent chacun du bien selon l'époque. Ce qui importe seulement, c'est de ne pas prolonger le pouvoir acquis par la lutte, après que le danger est passé."

Vol. ii. p. 113.

There is an excellent chapter on the excesses of the parties and the people of France at this period; which she refers to the sudden exasperation of those principles of natural hostility by which the high and the low are always in some degree actuated, and which are only kept from breaking out by the mutual concessions which the law, in ordinary times, exacts from both parties. The law was now annihilated in that country, and the natural antipathies were called into uncontrolled activity; the intolerance of one party having no longer any check but the intolerance of the other.

"Les querelles des patriciens et des plébéiens, la guerre des esclaves, celle des paysans, celle qui dure encore entre les nobles et les bourgeois, toutes ont eu également pour origine la difficulté de maintenir la société humaine, sans désordre et sans injustice. Les hommes ne pourroient exister aujourd'hui, ni séparés, ni réunis, si le respect de la loi ne s'établissoit pas dans les têtes: tous les crimes naîtroient de la société même qui doit les prévenir. Le pouvoir abstrait des gouvernemens représentatifs n'irrite en rien l'orgueil des hommes; et c'est par cette institution que doivent s'éteindre les flambeaux des furies. Ils se sont allumés dans un pays où tout étoit amour-propre; et l'amour-propre irrité, chez le peuple, ne ressemble poit à nos nuances fugitives; c'est le besoin de donner la mort!

"Des massacres, non moins affreux que ceux de la terreur, ont été commis au nom de la religion; la race humaine s'est épuisée pendant plusieurs siècles en efforts inutiles pour contraindre tous les hommes à la même croyance. Un tel but ne pouvoit être atteint; et l'idée la plus simple, la tolé-

rance, telle que Guillaume Penn l'a professée, a banni pour toujours, du nord de l'Amérique, le fanatisme dont le midi a été l'affreux théâtre. Il en est de même du fanatisme politique; la liberté seule peut le calmer. Après un certain temps, quelques vérités ne seront plus contestées; et l'on parlera des vieilles institutions comme des anciens systèmes de physique, entièrement effacés par l'évidence des faits."—Vol. ii. p. 115—118.

We can afford to say nothing of the Directory, or of the successes of the national army; but it is impossible to pass quite over the 18th Fructidor (4th September) 1797, when the majority of the Directory sent General Augereau with an armed force to disperse the legislative bodies, and arrest certain of their members. This step Madame de Staël considers as the beginning of that system of military despotism which was afterwards carried so far; and seems seriously to believe, that, if it had not been then adopted, the reign of law might yet have been restored, and the usurpation of Bonaparte prevented. To us it seems infinitely more probable, that the Bourbons would then have been brought back without any conditions—or rather, perhaps, that a civil war, and a scene of far more sanguinary violence would have ensued. She does not dispute that the royalist party was very strong in both the councils; but seems to think, that an address or declaration by the army would have discomfited them more becomingly than an actual attack. We confess we are not so delicate. Law and order had been sufficiently trodden on already, by the Jacobin clubs and revolutionary tribunals; and the battalions of General Augereau were just as well entitled to domineer as the armed sections and butchering mobs of Paris. There was no longer, in short, any sanctity or principle of civil right acknowledged; and it was time that the force and terror which had substantially reigned for three years, should appear in their native colours. They certainly became somewhat less atrocious when thus openly avowed.

We come at last to Bonaparte—a name that *will* go down to posterity, and of whom it is not yet clear, perhaps, how posterity will judge. The greatest of conquerors, in an age when great conquests appeared no longer possible—the most splendid of usurpers, where usurpation had not been heard of for centuries—who entered in triumph almost all the capitals of Continental Europe; and led, at last, to his bed, the daughter of her proudest sovereign—who set up kings and put them down at his pleasure, and, for sixteen years, defied alike the sword of his foreign enemies and the daggers of his domestic factions! This is a man on whom future generations must yet sit in judgment. But the evidence by which they are to judge must be transmitted to them by his contemporaries. Madame de Staël has collected a great deal of this evidence; and has reported it, we think, on the whole, in a tone of great impartiality: though not without some indications of personal dislike. Her whole talents seem to be roused and concentrated when she begins to speak of this extraordinary man; and much and ably as his character has been lately discussed, we do think it has never been half so well described as in the volumes before us. We shall venture on a pretty long extract, beginning with the account of their first interview; for on this, as on most other subjects, Madame de Staël has the unspeakable advantage of writing from her own observation. After mentioning the great popularity he had acquired by his victories in Italy, and the peace by which he had secured them at Campo Formio, she says—

"C'est avec ce sentiment, du moins, que je le vis pour la première fois à Paris. Je ne trouvai pas de paroles pour lui répondre, quand il vint à moi me dire qu'il avoit cherché mon père à Coppet, et qu'il regrettoit d'avoir passé en Suisse sans le voir. Mais, lorsque je fus un peu remise du trouble de l'admiration, un sentiment de crainte très-prononcé lui succéda! Bonaparte alors n'avoit aucune puissance; on le croyoit même assez menacé par les soupçons ombrageux du directoire; ainsi, la crainte qu'il inspiroit n'étoit causée que par le singulier effet de sa personne sur presque tous ceux qui l'approchent! J'avois vu des hommes très-dignes de respect; j'avois vu aussi des hommes féroces: il n'y avoit rien dans l'impression que Bonaparte produisit sur moi, qui pût me rappeler ni les uns ni les autres. J'aperçus assez vite, dans les différentes occasions que j'eus de le rencontrer pendant son séjour à Paris, que son caractère ne pouvoit être défini par les mots dont nous avons coutume de nous servir; il n'étoit ni bon, ni violent, ni doux, ni cruel, à la façon des individus à nous connus. Un tel être n'ayant point de pareil, ne pouvoit ni ressentir, ni faire éprouver aucune sympathie. C'étoit plus ou moins qu'un homme! Sa tournure, son esprit, son langage sont empreints d'une nature étrangère—avantage de plus pour subjuguer les François, ainsi que nous l'avons dit ailleurs.

"Loin de me rassurer en voyant Bonaparte plus souvent, il m'intimidoit toujours davantage! Je sentois confusément qu'aucune émotion de cœur ne pouvoit agir sur lui. Il regarde une créature humaine comme un fait ou comme une chose, mais non comme un semblable. Il ne hait pas plus qu'il n'aime. Il n'y a que lui pour lui; tout le reste des créatures sont des chiffres. La force de sa volonté consiste dans l'imperturbable calcul de son égoïsme; c'est un habile joueur d'échecs, dont le genre humain est la partie adverse qu'il se propose de faire échec et mat. Ses succès tiennent autant aux qualités que lui manquent, qu'aux talens qu'il possède. Ni la pitié, ni l'attrait, ni la religion, ni l'attachement à une idée quelconque ne sauroient le détourner de sa direction principale. Il est pour son intérêt, ce que le juste doit être pour la vertu: si le but étoit bon, sa persévérance seroit belle.

"Chaque fois que je l'entendois parler, j'étois frappée de sa supériorité. Elle n'avoit pourtant aucun rapport avec celle des hommes instruits et cultivés par l'étude ou la société, tels que l'Angleterre et la France peuvent en offrir des exemples. Mais ses discours indiquoient le tact des circonstances, comme le chasseur a celui de sa proie. Quelquefois il racontoit les faits politiques et militaires de sa vie d'une façon très-intéressante; il avoit même, dans les récits qui permettoient de la gaieté, un peu de l'imagination italienne. Cependant rien ne pouvoit triompher de mon invincible éloignement pour ce que j'apercevois en lui. Je sentois dans son âme une épée froide et tranchante qui glaçoit en blessant! Je sentois dans son esprit une ironie profonde à laquelle rien de grand ni de beau, *pas même sa propre gloire*, ne pouvoit échapper: Car il méprisoit la nation dont il vouloit les suffrages, et nulle étincelle d'enthousiasme ne se mêloit à son besoin d'étonner l'espèce humaine.

"Ce fut dans l'intervalle entre le retour de Bonaparte et son départ pour l'Egypte, c'est-à-dire, vers la fin de 1797, que je le vis plusieurs fois à Paris;

et jamais la difficulté de respirer que j'éprouvois en sa présence ne put se dissiper. J'étois un jour à table entre lui et l'abbé Sieyes: singulière situation, si j'avois pu prévoir l'avenir! J'examinois avec attention la figure de Bonaparte; mais chaque fois qu'il découvroit en moi des regards observateurs, il avoit l'art d'ôter à ses yeux toute expression, comme s'ils fussent devenus de marbre. Son visage étoit alors immobile; excepté un sourire vague qu'il plaçoit sur ses lèvres à tout hasard, pour dérouter quiconque voudroit observer les signes extérieurs de sa pensée.

"Sa figure, alors maigre et pâle, étoit assez agréable; depuis, il est engraissé, ce qui lui va très-mal: car on a besoin de croire un tel homme tourmenté par son caractère, pour tolérer un peu que ce caractère fasse tellement souffrir les autres. Comme sa stature est petite, et cependant sa taille fort longue, il étoit beaucoup mieux à cheval qu'à pied; en tout, c'est la guerre, et seulement la guerre qui lui sied. Sa manière d'être dans la société est gênée sans timidité. Il a quelque chose de dédaigneux quand il se contient, et de vulgaire, quand il se met à l'aise. Le dédain lui va mieux—aussi ne s'en fait-il pas faute.

"Par une vocation naturelle pour l'état de prince, il adressoit déjà des questions insignifiantes à tous ceux qu'on lui présentoit. Etes-vous marié? demandoit-il à l'un des convives. Combien avez-vous d'enfans? disoit-il à l'autre. Depuis quand êtes-vous arrivé? Quand partez-vous? Et autres interrogations de ce genre, qui établissent la supériorité de celui qui les fait sur celui qui veut bien se laisser questionner ainsi.

"Je l'ai vu un jour s'approcher d'une Françoise très-connue par sa beauté, son esprit et la vivacité de ses opinions; il se plaça tout droit devant elle comme le plus roide des généraux allemands, et lui dit: '*Madame, je n'aime pas que les femmes se mêlent de politique.*'—'*Vous avez raison, général,*' lui répondit-elle: '*mais dans un pays où on leur coupe la tête, il est naturel qu'elles aient envie de savoir pourquoi.*' Bonaparte alors ne répliqua rien. C'est un homme que la résistance véritable apaise; ceux qui ont souffert son despotisme, doivent en être autant accusés que lui-même."

Vol. ii. pp. 198—204.

The following little anecdote is every way characteristic.

"Un soir il parloit avec Barras de son ascendant sur les peuples italiens, qui avoient voulu le faire duc de Milan et roi d'Italie. '*Mais je ne pense,*' dit-il, '*à rien de semblable dans aucun pays.*'—'*Vous faites bien de n'y pas songer en France,*' répondit Barras; '*car, si le directoire vous envoyoit demain au Temple, il n'y auroit pas quatre personnes qui s'y opposassent.*' Bonaparte étoit assis sur un canapé à côté de Barras: à ces paroles il s'élança vers la cheminée, n'étant pas maître de son irritation; puis, reprenant cette espèce de calme apparent dont les hommes les plus passionés parmi les habitans du Midi sont capables, il déclara qu'il vouloit être chargé d'une expédition militaire. Le directoire lui proposa la descente en Angleterre; il alla visiter les côtes; et reconnoissant bientôt que cette expédition étoit insensée, il revint décidé à tenter la conquête de l'Egypte."

Vol. ii. pp. 207, 208.

We must add a few miscellaneous passages, to develope a little farther this extraordinary character. Madame de Staël had a long conversation with him on the state of Switzerland, in which he seemed quite insensible to any feelings of generosity.

"Cette conversation," however, she adds, "me fit cependant concevoir l'agrément qu'on peut lui trouver quand il prend l'air bonhomme, et parle comme d'une chose simple de lui-même et de ses projets. Cet art, le plus redoutable de tous, a captivé beaucoup de gens. A cette même époque, je revis encore quelquefois Bonaparte en société, et il me parut toujours profondément occupé des rapports qu'il vouloit établir entre lui et les autres hommes, les tenant à distance ou les rapprochant de lui, suivant qu'il croyoit se les attacher plus sûrement. Quand il se trouvoit avec les directeurs surtout, il craignoit d'avoir l'air d'un général sous les ordres de son gouvernement, et il essayoit tour à tour dans ses manières, avec cette sorte de supérieurs, la dignité ou la familiarité; mais il manquoit le ton vrai de l'une et de l'autre. *C'est un homme qui ne sauroit être naturel que dans le commandement.*"—Vol. ii. pp. 211, 212.

The following remark relates rather to the French nation than their ruler. We quote it for its exquisite truth rather than its severity.

"Sa conversation avec le Mufti dans la pyramide de Chéops devoit enchanter les Parisiens; parce qu'elle réunissoit les deux choses qui les captivent: un certain genre de grandeur, et de la moquerie tout ensemble. Les François sont bien aises d'être émus, *et de rire de ce qu'ils sont émus!* Le charlatanisme leur plaît, et ils aident volontiers à se tromper eux-mêmes; pourvu qu'il leur soit permis, tout en se conduisant comme des dupes, de montrer par quelques bon mots que pourtant ils ne le sont pas."—Vol. ii. p. 228.

On his return from Egypt it was understood by every body that he was to subvert the existing constitution. But he passed five weeks at Paris in a quiet and apparently undecided way—and, with all this preparatory study, acted his part but badly after all. Nothing can be more curious than the following passage. When he had at last determined to put down the Directory,—

"Le 19 brumaire, il arriva dans le conseil des cinq cents, les bras croisés, avec un air très-sombre, et suivi de deux grands grenadiers qui protégeoient sa petite stature. Les députés appelés jacobins poussèrent des hurlemens en le voyant entrer dans la salle; son frère Lucien, bien heureusement pour lui, étoit alors président; il agitoit en vain la sonnette pour rétablir l'ordre; les cris de *traître* et d'*usurpateur* se faisoient entendre de toutes parts; et l'un des députés, compatriote de Bonaparte, le corse Aréna, s'approcha de ce général et le secoua fortement par le collet de son habit. On a supposé, mais sans fondement, qu'il avoit un poignard pour le tuer. Son action cependant *effraya* Bonaparte; et il dit aux grenadiers qui étoient à côté de lui, *en laissant tomber sa tête sur l'épaule de l'un d'eux*: '*Tirez-moi d'ici!*' Les grenadiers l'enlevèrent du milieu des députés qui l'entouroient; *ils le portèrent hors de la salle* en plein air; et, dès qu'il y fut, sa présence d'esprit lui revint. Il monta à cheval à l'instant même; et, parcourant les rangs de ses grenadiers, il les détermina bientôt à ce qu'il vouloit d'eux. Dans cette circonstance, comme dans beaucoup d'autres, on a remarqué que Bonaparte pouvoit se troubler quand un autre danger que celui de la guerre étoit en face de lui; et quelques personnes en ont conclu bien ridiculement qu'il manquoit de courage. Certes on ne peut nier son audace; mais, comme il n'est rien, pas même brave, d'une façon généreuse, il s'ensuit qu'il ne s'expose jamais que quand cela peut être utile. Il seroit très-fâché d'être tué, parce que c'est un revers, et qu'il veut en tout du succès. Il en seroit aussi fâché, parce que la mort déplaît à son imagination: Mais il n'hésite pas à hasarder sa vie, lorsque, suivant sa manière de voir, la partie vaut le risque de l'enjeu, s'il est permis de s'exprimer ainsi."—Vol. ii. pp. 240—242.

Although he failed thus strangely in the theatrical part of the business, the substantial

part was effectually done. He sent in a column of grenadiers with fixed bayonets at one end of the hall of the great council, and made them advance steadily to the other; driving the unhappy senators, in their fine classical draperies, before them, and forcing them to leap out of the windows, and scamper through the gardens in these strange habiliments! Colonel Pride's purge itself was not half so rough in its operation.

There was now an end, not only of liberty, but of republican tyranny; and the empire of the sword in the hand of one man, was substantially established. It is melancholy to think, but history shows it to be true, that the most abject servitude is usually established at the close of a long, and even generous struggle for freedom; partly, no doubt, because despotism offers an image of repose to those who are worn out with contention, but chiefly because that military force to which all parties had in their extremity appealed, naturally lends itself to the bad ambition of a fortunate commander. This it was which made the fortune of Bonaparte. His answer to all remonstrances was—"Voulez-vous que je vous livre aux Jacobins?" But his true answer was, that the army was at his devotion, and that he defied the opinion of the nation.

He began by setting up the Consulate: But from the very first, says Madame de Staël, assumed the airs and the tone of royalty.

"Il prit les Tuileries pour sa demeure; et ce fut un coup de partie que le choix de cette habitation. On avoit vu là le roi de France; les habitudes monarchiques y étoient encore présentes à tous les yeux, et il suffisoit, pour ainsi dire, de laisser faire les murs pour tout rétablir. Vers les derniers jours du dernier siècle, je vis entrer le premier consul dans ce palais bâti par les rois; et quoique Bonaparte fût bien loin encore de la magnificence qu'il a développée depuis, l'on voyoit déjà dans tout ce qui l'entouroit un empressement de se faire courtisan à l'orientale, qui dut lui persuader que gouverner la terre étoit chose bien facile. Quand sa voiture fut arrivée dans la cour des Tuileries, ses valets ouvrirent la portière et précipitèrent le marchepied avec une violence qui sembloit dire que les choses physiques elles-mêmes étoient insolentes quand elles retardoient un instant la marche de leur maître! Lui ne regardoit ni ne remercioit personne; comme s'il avoit craint qu'on pût le croire sensible aux hommages même qu'il exigeoit. En montant l'escalier au milieu de la foule qui se pressoit pour le suivre, ses yeux ne se portoient ni sur aucun objet, ni sur aucune personne en particulier. Il y avoit quelque chose de vague et d'insouciant dans sa physionomie, et ses regards n'exprimoient que ce qu'il lui convient toujours de montrer,—l'indifférence pour le sort, et le dédain pour les hommes."

Vol. ii. pp. 258, 259.

He had some reason, indeed, to despise men, from the specimens he had mostly about him: For his adherents were chiefly deserters from the royalist or the republican party;—the first willing to transfer their servility to a new dynasty,—the latter to take the names and emoluments of republican offices from the hand of a plebeian usurper. For a while he thought it prudent to dissemble with each; and, with that utter contempt of truth which belonged to his scorn of mankind, held, in the same day, the most edifying discourses of citizenship and equality to one set of hearers, and of the sacred rights of sovereigns to another. He extended the same unprincipled dissimulation to the subject of religion. To the prelates with whom he arranged his celebrated *Concordat*, he spoke in the most serious manner of the truth and the awfulness of the Gospel; and to Cabanis and the philosophers, he said, the same evening,—"Savez-vous ce que c'est la Concordat? C'est *la Vaccine de la Religion*—dans cinquante ans il n'y aura plus en France!" He resolved, however, to profit by it while it lasted; and had the blasphemous audacity to put this, among other things, into the national catechism, approved of by the whole Gallican church:—"*Qu.* Que doit-on penser de ceux qui manqueroient à leur devoir envers l'Empereur Napoléon? *Réponse.* Qu'ils resisteroient à l'ordre établi de Dieu lui-même—et *se rendroient dignes de la damnation éternelle!*"

With the actual tyranny of the sword began the more pitiful persecution of the slavish journals—the wanton and merciless infliction of exile on women and men of letters—and the perpetual, restless, insatiable interference in the whole life and conversation of every one of the slightest note or importance. The following passages are written, perhaps, with more bitterness than any other in the book; but they appear to us to be substantially just.

"Bonaparte, lorsqu'il disposoit d'un million d'hommes armés, n'en attachoit pas moins d'importance à l'art de guider l'esprit public par les gazettes; il dictoit souvent lui-même des articles de journaux qu'on pouvoit reconnoître aux saccades violentes du style. On voyoit qu'il auroit voulu mettre dans ce qu'il écrivoit, des coups au lieu de mots! Il a dans tout son être un fond de vulgarité que le gigantesque de son ambition même ne sauroit toujours cacher. Ce n'est pas qu'il ne sache très-bien, un jour donné, se montrer avec beaucoup de convenance; mais il n'est à son aise que dans le mépris pour les autres, et, dès-qu'il peut y rentrer, il s'y complait. Toutefois ce n'étoit pas uniquement par goût qu'il se livroit à faire servir, dans ses notes du Moniteur, le cynisme de la révolution au maintien de sa puissance. Il ne permettoit qu'à lui d'être jacobin en France.—Vol. ii. p. 264.

"Je fus la première femme que Bonaparte exila; Mais bientôt après il en bannit un grand nombre, d'opinions opposées. D'où venoit ce luxe en fait de méchanceté, si ce n'est d'une sorte de haine contre tous les êtres indépendans? Et comme les femmes, d'une part, ne pouvoient servir en rien ses desseins politiques, et que, de l'autre, elles étoient moins accessibles que les hommes aux craintes et aux espérances dont le pouvoir est dispensateur, elles lui donnoient de l'humeur comme des rebelles, et il se plaisoit à leur dire des choses blessantes et vulgaires. Il haïssoit autant l'esprit de chevalerie qu'il recherchoit l'étiquette: c'étoit faire un mauvais choix parmi les anciennes mœurs. Il lui restoit aussi de ses premières habitudes pendant la révolution, une certaine antipathie jacobine contre la société brillante de Paris; sur laquelle les femmes exerçoient beaucoup d'ascendant. Il redoutoit en elles l'art de la plaisanterie, qui, l'on doit en convenir, appartient particulièrement aux Françoises. Si Bonaparte avoit voulu s'en tenir au superbe rôle de grand général et de premier magistrat de la république, il auroit plané de toute la hauteur du génie au-dessus des petits traits acérés de l'esprit de salon. Mais quand il avoit le dessein de se faire un roi parvenu, un bourgeois gentilhomme sur le trône, il s'exposoit précisément à la moquerie du bon ton, et il ne pouvoit la comprimer, comme il l'a fait, que par l'espionage et la terreur."

Vol. ii. pp. 306, 307.

The thin mask of the Consulate was soon thrown off—and the Emperor appeared in his proper habits. The following remarks, though not all applicable to the same period, appear to us to be admirable.

"Bonaparte avoit lu l'histoire d'une manière confuse. Peu accoutumé à l'étude, il se rendoit beaucoup moins compte de ce qu'il avoit appris dans les livres, que de ce qu'il avoit recueilli par l'observation des hommes. Il n'en étoit pas moins resté dans sa tête un certain respect pour Attila et pour Charlemagne, pour les lois féodales et pour le despotisme de l'Orient, qu'il appliquoit à tort et à travers, ne se trompant jamais, toutefois, sur ce qui servoit instantanément à son pouvoir; mais du reste, citant, blâmant, louant et raisonnant comme le hasard le conduisoit. Il parloit ainsi des heures entières avec d'autant plus d'avantage, que personne ne l'interrompoit, si ce n'est par les applaudissemens involontaires qui échappent toujours dans des occasions semblables. Une chose singulière, c'est que, dans la conversation, plusieurs officiers Bonapartistes ont emprunté de leur chef cet héroïque galimatias, qui véritablement ne signifie rien qu' à la tête de huit cent mille hommes."

Vol. ii. pp. 332, 333.

"Il fit occuper la plupart des charges de sa maison par des Nobles de l'ancien régime; il aimoit les flatteries des courtisans d'autrefois, parce qu'ils s'entendoient mieux à cet art que les hommes nouveaux, même les plus empressés. Chaque fois qu'un gentilhomme de l'ancienne cour rappeloit l'étiquette du temps jadis, proposoit une révérence de plus, une certaine façon de frapper à la porte de quelque anti-chambre, une manière plus cérémonieuse de présenter une dépêche, de plier une lettre, de la terminer par telle ou telle formule, il étoit accueilli comme s'il avoit fait faire des progrès au bonheur de l'espèce humaine! Le code de l'étiquette impériale est le document le plus remarquable de la bassesse à laquelle on peut réduire l'espèce humaine."—Vol. ii. pp. 334, 335.

"Quand il y avoit quatre cents personnes dans son salon, un aveugle auroit pu s'y croire seul, tant le silence qu'on observoit étoit profond! Les maréchaux de France, au milieu des fatigues de la guerre, au moment de la crise d'une bataille, entroient dans la tente de l'empereur pour lui demander ses ordres,—et il ne leur étoit pas permis de s'y asseoir! Sa famille ne souffroit pas moins que les étrangers de son despotisme et de sa hauteur. Lucien a mieux aimé vivre prisonnier en Angleterre que régner sous les ordres de son frère. Louis Bonaparte, dont le caractère est généralement estimé, se vit constraint par sa probité même, à renoncer à la couronne de Hollande; et, le croiroit-on? quand il causoit avec son frère pendant deux heures tête-à-tête, forcé par sa mauvaise santé de s'appuyer péniblement contre la muraille, Napoléon ne lui offroit pas une chaise! il demeuroit lui-même debout, de crainte que quelqu'un n'eût l'idée de se familiariser assez avec lui, pour s'asseoir en sa présence.

"Le peur qu'il causoit dans les derniers temps étoit telle, que personne ne lui adressoit le premier la parole sur rien. Quelquefois il s'entretenoit avec la plus grande simplicité au milieu de sa cour, et dans son conseil d'état. Il souffroit la contradiction, il y encourageoit même, quand il s'agissoit de questions administratives ou judiciaires sans relation avec son pouvoir. Il falloit voir alors l'attendrissement de ceux auxquels il avoit rendu pour un moment la respiration libre; mais, quand le maître reparoissoit, on demandoit en vain aux ministres de présenter un rapport à l'empereur contre une mesure injuste.—Il aimoit moins les louanges vraies que les flatteries serviles; parce que, dans les unes, on n'auroit vu que son mérite, tandis que les autres attestoient son autorité. En général, il a préféré la puissance à la gloire; car l'action de la force lui plaisoit trop pour qu'il s'occupa de la postérité, sur laquelle on ne peut l'exercer."

Vol. ii. pp. 399—401.

There are some fine remarks on the baseness of those who solicited employment and favours under Bonaparte, and have since joined the party of the *Ultras*, and treated the whole Revolution as an atrocious rebellion—and a very clear and masterly view of the policy by which that great commander subdued the greater part of Continental Europe. But we can afford no room now for any further account of them. As a general, she says, he was prodigal of the lives of his soldiers—haughty and domineering to his officers—and utterly regardless of the miseries he inflicted on the countries which were the scenes of his operations. The following anecdote is curious—and to us original.

"On l'a vu dans la guerre d'Autriche, en 1809, quitter l'île de Lobau, quand il jugeoit la bataille perdue. Il traversa le Danube, seul avec M. de Czernitchef, l'un des intrépides aides de camp de l'empereur de Russie, et le maréchal Berthier. L'empereur leur dit assez tranquillement qu'*après avoir gagné quarante batailles, il n'étoit pas extraordinaire d'en perdre une;* et lorsqu'il fut arrivé de l'autre côté du fleuve, il se coucha et *dormit jusqu'au lendemain matin!* sans s'informer du sort de l'armée françoise, que ses généraux sauvèrent pendant son sommeil."—Vol. ii. p. 358.

Madame de Staël mentions several other instances of this faculty of sleeping in moments of great apparent anxiety. The most remarkable is, that he fell fast asleep before taking the field in 1814, while endeavouring to persuade one of his ministers that he had no chance of success in the approaching campaign, but must inevitably be ruined!

She has extracted from the Moniteur of July 1810, a very singular proof of the audacity with which he very early proclaimed his own selfish and ambitious views. It is a public letter addressed by him to his nephew, the young Duke of Berg, in which he says, in so many words, "N'oubliez jamais, que vos *premiers* devoirs sont envers MOI—vos *seconds* envers la France—ceux envers les peuples que je pourrois vous confier, ne viennent qu'après." This was at least candid—and in his disdain for mankind, a sort of audacious candour was sometimes alternated with his duplicity.

"Un principe général, quel qu'il fût, déplaisoit à Bonaparte; comme une niaiserie, ou comme un ennemi. Il n'étoit point sanguinaire, mais indifférent à la vie des hommes. Il ne la considéroit que comme un moyen d'arriver à son but, ou comme un obstacle à écarter de sa route. Il n'étoit pas même aussi colère qu'il a souvent paru l'être: il vouloit effrayer avec ses paroles, afin de s'épargner le fait par la menace. Tout étoit chez lui moyen ou but; l'involontaire ne se trouvoit nulle part, ni dans le bien, ni dans le mal. On prétend qu'il a dit: *J'ai tant de conscrits à dépenser par an.* Ce propos est vraisemblable; car Bonaparte a souvent assez méprisé ses auditeurs pour se complaire dans un genre de sincérité qui n'est que de l'impudence. —Jamais il n'a cru aux sentimens exaltés, soit dans

les individus, soit dans les nations; il a pris l'expression de ces sentimens pour de l'hypocrisie."—Vol. ii. pp. 391, 392.

Bonaparte, Madame de Staël thinks, had no alternative but to give the French nation a free constitution; or to occupy them in war, and to dazzle them with military glory. He had not magnanimity to do the one, and he finally overdid the latter. His first great error was the war with Spain; his last, the campaign in Russia. All that followed was put upon him, and could not be avoided. She rather admires his rejection of the terms offered at Chatillon; and is moved with his farewell to his legions and their eagles at Fontainebleau. She feels like a Frenchwoman on the occupation of Paris by foreign conquerors; but gives the Emperor Alexander full credit, both for the magnanimity of his conduct as a conqueror, and the generosity of his sentiments on the subject of French liberty and independence. She is quite satisfied with the declaration made by the King at St. Ouen, and even with the charter that followed—though she allows that many further provisions were necessary to consolidate the constitution. All this part of the book is written with great temperance and reconciling wisdom. She laughs at the doctrine of *legitimacy*, as it is now maintained; but gives excellent reasons for preferring an ancient line of princes, and a fixed order of succession. Of the *Ultras*, or *unconstitutional royalists*, as she calls them, she speaks with a sort of mixed anger and pity; although an unrepressed scorn takes the place of both, when she has occasion to mention those members of the party who were the abject flatterers of Bonaparte during the period of his power, and have but transferred, to the new occupant of the throne, the servility to which they had been trained under its late possessor.

"Mais ceux dont on avoit le plus de peine à contenir l'indignation vertueuse contre le parti de l'usurpateur, c'étoient les nobles ou leurs adhérens, qui avoient demandé des places à ce même usurpateur pendant sa puissance, et qui s'en étoient séparés bien nettement le jour de sa chute. L'enthousiasme pour la légitimité de tel chambellan de Madame mère, ou de telle dame d'atour de Madame sœur, ne connoissoit point de bornes; et certes, nous autres que Bonaparte avoit proscrits pendant tout le cours de son règne, nous nous examinions pour savoir si nous n'avions pas été ses favoris, quand une certaine délicatesse d'âme nous obligeoit à le défendre contre les invectives de ceux qu'il avoit comblés de bienfaits."—Vol. iii. p. 107.

Our Charles II. was recalled to the throne of his ancestors by the voice of his people; and yet that throne was shaken, and, within twenty-five years, overturned by the arbitrary conduct of the restored sovereigns. Louis XVIII. was *not* recalled by his people, but brought in and set up by foreign conquerors. It must therefore be still more necessary for him to guard against arbitrary measures, and to take all possible steps to secure the attachment of that people whose hostility had so lately proved fatal. If he like domestic examples better, he has that of his own Henri IV. before him. That great and popular prince at last found it necessary to adopt the religious creed of the great majority of his people. In the present day, it is at least as necessary for a less popular monarch to study and adopt their political one. Some of those about him, we have heard, rather recommend the example of Ferdinand VII.! But even the Ultras, we think, cannot really forget that Ferdinand, instead of having been restored by a foreign force, was dethroned by one; that there had been no popular insurrection, and no struggle for liberty in Spain; and that, besides the army, he had the priesthood on his side, which, in that country, is as omnipotent, as in France it is insignificant and powerless, for any political purposes. We cannot now follow Madame de Staël into the profound and instructive criticism she makes on the management of affairs during Bonaparte's stay at Elba;—though much of it is applicable to a later period—and though we do not remember to have met any where with so much truth told in so gentle a manner.

Madame de Staël confirms what we believe all well-informed persons now admit, that for months before the return of Bonaparte, the attempt was expected, and in some measure prepared for—by all but the court, and the royalists by whom it was surrounded. When the news of his landing was received, they were still too foolish to be alarmed; and, when the friends of liberty said to each other, with bitter regret, "There is an end of our liberty if he should succeed—and of our national independence if he should fail,"—the worthy *Ultras* went about, saying, it was the luckiest thing in the world, for they should now get properly rid of him; and the King would no longer be vexed with the fear of a pretender! Madame de Staël treats with derision the idea of Bonaparte being sincere in his professions of regard to liberty, or his resolution to adhere to the constitution proposed to him after his return. She even maintains, that it was absurd to propose a free constitution at such a crisis. If the nation and the army abandoned the Bourbons, nothing remained for the nation but to invest the master of that army with the dictatorship; and to rise *en masse*, till their borders were freed from the invaders. That they did not do so, only proves that they had become indifferent about the country, or that they were in their hearts hostile to Bonaparte. Nothing, she assures us, but the consciousness of this, could have made him submit to concessions so alien to his whole character and habits—and the world, says Madame de Staël, so understood him. "Quand il a prononcé les mots de *Loi* et *Liberté*, l'Europe s'est rassurée: Elle a senti que ce n'étoit plus son ancien et terrible adversaire."

She passes a magnificent encomium on the military genius and exalted character of our Wellington; but says he could not have conquered as he did, if the French had been led by one who could rally round him the affections of the people as well as he could direct their soldiers. She maintains, that after the battle, when Bonaparte returned to Paris, he had not the least idea of being called upon again to abdicate; but expected to obtain from the two chambers the means of renewing or continuing the contest. When he found that this was impossible, he sunk at once into despair, and resigned himself without a struggle. The selfishness which had guided his whole career, disclosed itself in naked deformity in the last acts of his public life. He abandoned his army the moment he found that he could not lead it immediately against the enemy—and no sooner saw his own fate determined, than he gave up all concern for that of the unhappy country which his ambition had involved in such disasters. He quietly passed by the camp of his warriors on his way to the port by which he was to make his own escape—and, by throwing himself into the hands of the English, endeavoured to obtain for himself the benefit of those liberal principles which it had been the business of his life to extirpate and discredit all over the world.

At this point Madame de Staël terminates somewhat abruptly her historical review of the events of the Revolution; and here, our readers will be happy to learn, we must stop too. There is half a volume more of her work, indeed,—and one that cannot be supposed the least interesting to us, as it treats chiefly of the history, constitution, and society of England. But it is for this very reason that we cannot trust ourselves with the examination of it. We have every reason certainly to be satisfied with the account she gives of us; nor can any thing be more eloquent and animating than the view she has presented of the admirable mechanism and steady working of our constitution, and of its ennobling effects on the character of all who live under it. We are willing to believe all this too to be just; though we are certainly painted *en beau*. In some parts, however, we are more shocked at the notions she gives us of the French character, than flattered at the contrast exhibited by our own. In mentioning the good reception that gentlemen in opposition to government sometimes meet with in society, among us, and the upright posture they contrive to maintain, she says, that nobody here would think of *condoling* with a man for being out of power, or of receiving him with less cordiality. She notices also, with a very alarming sort of admiration, that she understood, when in England, that a gentleman of the law had actually refused a situation worth 6000*l.* or 7000*l.* a year, merely because he did not approve of the ministry by whom it was offered; and adds, that in France *any man* who would refuse a respectable office, with a salary of 8000 louis, would certainly be considered as fit for Bedlam: And in another place she observes, that it seems to be a fundamental maxim in that country, that every man must have a place. We confess that we have some difficulty in reconciling these incidental intimations with her leading position, that the great majority of the French nation is desirous of a free constitution, and perfectly fit for and deserving of it. If these be the principles, not only upon which they act, but which they and their advocates avow, we know no constitution under which they can be free; and have no faith in the power of any new institutions to counteract that spirit of corruption by which, even where they have existed the longest, their whole virtue is consumed.

With our manners in society she is not quite so well pleased;—though she is kind enough to ascribe our deficiencies to the most honourable causes. In commiserating the comparative dulness of our social talk, however, has not this philosophic observer a little overlooked the effects of national tastes and habits—and is it not conceivable, at least, that we who are used to it may really have as much satisfaction in our own hum-drum way of seeing each other, as our more sprightly neighbours in their exquisite assemblies? In all this part of the work, too, we think we can perceive the traces rather of ingenious theory, than of correct observation; and suspect that a good part of the *tableau* of English society is rather a sort of conjectural sketch, than a copy from real life; or at least that it is a generalization from a very few, and not very common examples. May we be pardoned too for hinting, that a person of Madame de Staël's great talents and celebrity, is by no means well qualified for discovering the true tone and character of English society from her own observation; both because she was not likely to see it in those smaller and more familiar assemblages in which it is seen to the most advantage, and because her presence must have had the unlucky effect of imposing silence on the modest, and tempting the vain and ambitious to unnatural display and ostentation.

With all its faults, however, the portion of her book which we have been obliged to pass over in silence, is well worthy of as ample a notice as we have bestowed on the other parts of it, and would of itself be sufficient to justify us in ascribing to its lamented author that perfection of masculine understanding, and female grace and acuteness, which are so rarely to be met with apart, and never, we believe, were before united.

(February, 1816.)

Mémoires de Madame la Marquise de Larochejaquelein; *avec deux Cartes du Théatre de la Guerre de La Vendée.* 2 tomes, 8vo. pp. 500. Paris: 1815.

This is a book to be placed by the side of Mrs. Hutchinson's delightful Memoirs of her heroic husband and his chivalrous Independents. Both are pictures, by a female hand, of tumultuary and almost private wars, carried on by conscientious individuals against the actual government of their country:—and both bring to light, not only innumerable traits of the most romantic daring and devoted fidelity in particular persons, but a general character of domestic virtue and social gentleness among those who would otherwise have figured to our imaginations as adventurous desperadoes or ferocious bigots. There is less talent, perhaps, and less loftiness, either of style or of character, in the French than the English heroine. Yet she also has done and suffered enough to entitle her to that appellation; and, while her narrative acquires an additional interest and a truer tone of nature, from the occasional recurrence of female fears and anxieties, it is conversant with still more extraordinary incidents and characters, and reveals still more of what had been previously malignantly misrepresented, or entirely unknown.

Our readers will understand, from the title-page which we have transcribed, that the work relates to the unhappy and sanguinary wars which were waged against the insurgents in La Vendée during the first and maddest years of the French Republic: But it is proper for us to add, that it is confined almost entirely to the transactions of two years; and that the detailed narrative ends with the dissolution of the first Vendean army, before the proper formation of the Chouan force in Brittany, or the second insurrection of Poitou; though there are some brief and imperfect notices of these, and subsequent occurrences. The details also extend only to the proceedings of the Royalist or Insurgent party, to which the author belonged; and do not affect to embrace any general history of the war.

This hard-fated woman was very young, and newly married, when she was thrown, by the adverse circumstances of the time, into the very heart of those deplorable contests;—and, without pretending to any other information than she could draw from her own experience, and scarcely presuming to pass any judgment upon the merits or demerits of the cause, she has made up her book of a clear and dramatic description of acts in which she was a sharer, or scenes of which she was an eyewitness,—and of the characters and histories of the many distinguished individuals who partook with her of their glories or sufferings. The irregular and undisciplined wars which it is her business to describe, are naturally far more prolific of extraordinary incidents, unexpected turns of fortune, and striking displays of individual talent, and vice and virtue, than the more solemn movements of national hostility; where every thing is in a great measure provided and foreseen, and where the inflexible subordination of rank, and the severe exactions of a limited duty, not only take away the inducement, but the opportunity, for those exaltations of personal feeling and adventure which produce the most lively interest, and lead to the most animating results. In the unconcerted proceedings of an insurgent population, all is experiment, and all is passion. The heroic daring of a simple peasant lifts him at once to the rank of a leader; and kindles a general enthusiasm to which all things become possible. Generous and gentle feelings are speedily generated by this raised state of mind and of destination; and the perpetual intermixture of domestic cares and rustic occupations, with the exploits of troops serving without pay, and utterly unprovided with magazines, produces a contrast which enhances the effects of both parts of the description, and gives an air of moral picturesqueness to the scene, which is both pathetic and delightful. It becomes much more attractive also, in this representation, by the singular candour and moderation—not the most usual virtue of belligerent females—with which Madame de L. has told the story of her friends and her enemies—the liberality with which she has praised the instances of heroism or compassion which occur in the conduct of the republicans, and the simplicity with which she confesses the jealousies and excesses which sometimes disgraced the insurgents. There is not only no royalist or antirevolutionary rant in these volumes, but scarcely any of the bitterness or exaggeration of a party to civil dissensions; and it is rather wonderful that an actor and a sufferer in the most cruel and outrageous warfare by which modern times have been disgraced, should have set an example of temperance and impartiality which its remote spectators have found it so difficult to follow. The truth is, we believe, that those who have had most occasion to see the *mutual* madness of contending factions, and to be aware of the traits of individual generosity by which the worst cause is occasionally redeemed, and of brutal outrage by which the best is sometimes debased, are both more indulgent to human nature, and more distrustful of its immaculate purity, than the fine declaimers who aggravate all that is bad on the side to which they are opposed, and refuse to admit its existence in that to which they belong. The general of an adverse army has always more tolera

tion for the severities and even the misconduct of his opponents, and the herd of ignorant speculators at home;—in the same way as *the leaders* of political parties have uniformly far less rancour and animosity towards their antagonists, than the vulgar followers in their train. It is no small proof, however, of an elevated and generous character, to be able to make those allowances; and Madame de L. would have had every apology for falling into the opposite error,—both on account of her sex, the natural prejudices of her rank and education, the extraordinary sufferings to which she was subjected, and the singularly mild and unoffending character of the beloved associates of whom she was so cruelly deprived.

She had some right, in truth, to be delicate and royalist, beyond the ordinary standard. Her father, the Marquis de Donnison, had an employment about the person of the King; in virtue of which, he had apartments in the Palace of Versailles; in which splendid abode the writer was born, and continued constantly to reside, in the very focus of royal influence and glory, till the whole of its unfortunate inhabitants were compelled to leave it, by the fury of that mob which escorted them to Paris in 1789. She had, like most French ladies of distinction, been destined from her infancy to be the wife of M. de Lescure, a near relation of her mother, and the representative of the ancient and noble family of Salgues in Poitou. The character of this eminent person, both as it is here drawn by his widow, and indirectly exhibited in various parts of her narrative, is as remote as possible from that which we should have been inclined, *à priori*, to ascribe to a young French nobleman of the old regime, just come to court, in the first flush of youth, from a great military school. He was extremely serious, bashful, pious, and self-denying,—with great firmness of character and sweetness of temper,—fearless, and even ardent in war, but humble in his pretensions to dictate, and most considerate of the wishes and sufferings of his followers. To this person she was married in the nineteenth year of her age, in October 1790,—at a time when most of the noblesse had already emigrated, and when the rage for that unfortunate measure had penetrated even to the province of Poitou, where M. de Lescure had previously formed a prudent association of the whole gentry of the country, to whom the peasantry were most zealously attached. It was the fashion, however, to emigrate; and so many of the Poitevin nobility were pleased to follow it, that M. de Lescure at last thought it concerned his honour, not to remain longer behind; and came to Paris in February 1791, to make preparations for his journey to Coblentz. Here, however, he was requested by the Queen herself not to go farther; and thought it his duty to obey. The summer was passed in the greatest anxieties and agitations; and at last came the famous Tenth of August. Madame de L. assures us, that the attack on the palace was altogether unexpected on that occasion, and that M. Montmorin, who came to her from the King late in the preceding evening, informed her, that they were perfectly aware of an intention to assault the royal residence on the night of the 12th; but that, to a certainty, nothing would be attempted till then. At midnight, however, there were signs of agitation in the neighbourhood; and before four o'clock in the morning, the massacre had begun. M. de Lescure rushed out on the first symptom of alarm to join the defenders of the palace, but could not obtain access within the gates, and was obliged to return and disguise himself in the garb of a *Sansculotte*, that he might mingle with some chance of escape in the crowd of assailants. M. de Montmorin, whose disguise was less perfect, escaped as if by a miracle. After being insulted by the mob, he had taken refuge in the shop of a small grocer, by whom he was immediately recognised, and where he was speedily surrounded by crowds of the National Guards, reeking from the slaughter of the Swiss. The good natured shopkeeper saw his danger, and stepping quickly up to him, said with a familiar air, "Well, cousin, you scarcely expected, on your arrival from the country, to witness the downfal of the tyrant—Here, drink to the health of those brave asserters of our liberties." He submitted to swallow the toast, and got off without injury.

The street in which M. Lescure resided, being much frequented by persons of the Swiss nation, was evidently a very dangerous place of retreat for royalists; and, soon after it was dark, the whole family, disguised in the dress of the lower orders, slipped out, with the design of taking refuge in the house of an old *femme-de-chambre*, on the other side of the river. M. de Donnison and his wife went in one party; and Madame Lescure, then in the seventh month of her pregnancy, with her husband, in another. Intending to cross by the lowest of the bridges, they first turned into the Champs-Elysées. More than a thousand men had been killed there that day; but the alleys were now silent and lonely; though the roar of the multitude, and occasional discharges of cannon and musketry, were heard from the front of the Tuilleries, where the conflagration of the barracks was still visible in the sky. While they were wandering in these horrid shades, a woman came flying up to them, followed by a drunken patriot, with his musket presented at her head. All he had to say was, that she was an aristocrat, and that he must finish his day's work by killing her. M. Lescure appeased him with admirable presence of mind, by professing to enter entirely into his sentiments, and proposing that they should go back together to the attack of the palace—adding only, "But you see what state my wife is in—she is a poor timid creature—and I must first take her to her sister's, and then I shall return here to you." The savage at last agreed to this, though before he went off, he presented his piece several times at them, swearing that he believed they were aristocrats after all, and that he had a mind to have

a shot at them. This rencontre drove them from the lonely way; and they returned to the public streets, all blazing with illuminations, and crowded with drunken and infuriated wretches, armed with pikes, and in many instances stained with blood. The tumult and terror of the scene inspired Madame de L. with a kind of sympathetic frenzy; and, without knowing what she did, she screamed out, *Vive les Sansculottes! à bas les tyrans!* as outrageously as any of them. They glided unhurt, however, through this horrible assemblage; and crossing the river by the *Pont Neuf*, found the opposite shore dark, silent, and deserted, and speedily gained the humble refuge in search of which they had ventured.

The domestic relations between the great and their dependants were certainly more cordial in old France, than in any other country—and a revolution, which aimed professedly at levelling all distinction of ranks, and avenging the crimes of the wealthy, armed the hands of but few servants against the lives or liberties of their masters. M. de Lescure and his family were saved in this extremity by the prudent and heroic fidelity of some old waiting-women and laundresses—and ultimately effected their retreat to the country by the zealous and devoted services of a former tutor in the family, who had taken a very conspicuous part on the side of the Revolution. This M. Thomasin, who had superintended the education of M. Lescure, and retained the warmest affection for him and the whole family, was an active, bold, and good-humoured man—a great fencer, and a considerable orator at the meetings of his section. He was eager, of course, for a revolution that was to give every thing to talents and courage; and had been made a captain in one of the municipal regiments of Paris. This kind-hearted patriot took the proscribed family of M. de Lescure under his immediate protection, and by a thousand little stratagems and contrivances, not only procured passports and conveyances to take them out of Paris, but actually escorted them himself, in his national uniform, till they were safely settled in a royalist district in the suburbs of Tours. When any tumult or obstruction arose on the journey, M. Thomasin leaped from the carriage, and assuming the tone of zeal and authority that belonged to a Parisian officer, he harangued, reprimanded, and enchanted the provincial patriots, till the whole party went off again in the midst of their acclamations. From Tours, after a cautious and encouraging exploration of the neighbouring country, they at length proceeded to M. Lescure's château of *Clisson*, in the heart of the district afterwards but too well known by the name of La Vendée, of which the author has here introduced a very clear and interesting description.

A tract of about one hundred and fifty miles square, at the mouth and on the southern bank of the Loire, comprehends the scene of those deplorable hostilities. The most inland part of the district, and that in which the insurrection first broke out, is called *Le Bocage;* and seems to have been almost as singular in its physical conformation, as in the state and condition of its population. A series of detached eminences, of no great elevation, rose over the whole face of the country, with little rills trickling in the hollows and occasional cliffs by their sides. The whole space was divided into small enclosures, each surrounded with tall wild hedges, and rows of pollard trees; so that, though there were few large woods, the whole region had a sylvan and impenetrable appearance. The ground was mostly in pasturage; and the landscape had, for the most part, an aspect of wild verdure, except that in the autumn some patches of yellow corn appeared here and there athwart the green enclosures. Only two great roads traversed this sequestered region, running nearly parallel, at a distance of more than seventy miles from each other. In the intermediate space, there was nothing but a labyrinth of wild and devious paths, crossing each other at the extremity of almost every field —often serving, at the same time, as channels for the winter torrents, and winding so capriciously among the innumerable hillocks, and beneath the meeting hedgerows, that the natives themselves were always in danger of losing their way when they went a league or two from their own habitations. The country, though rather thickly peopled, contained, as may be supposed, few large towns; and the inhabitants, devoted almost entirely to rural occupations, enjoyed a great deal of leisure. The noblesse or gentry of the country were very generally resident on their estates; where they lived in a style of simplicity and homeliness which had long disappeared from every other part of the kingdom. No grand parks, fine gardens, or ornamented villas; but spacious clumsy châteaus, surrounded with farm offices and cottages for the labourers. Their manners and way of life, too, partook of the same primitive rusticity. There was great cordiality, and even much familiarity, in the intercourse of the seigneurs with their dependants. They were followed by large trains of them in their hunting expeditions, which occupied a great part of their time. Every man had his fowlingpiece, and was a marksman of fame or pretensions. They were posted in various quarters, to intercept or drive back the game; and were thus trained, by anticipation, to that sort of discipline and concert in which their whole art of war was afterwards found to consist. Nor was their intimacy confined to their sports. The peasants resorted familiarly to their landlords for advice, both legal and medical; and they repaid the visits in their daily rambles, and entered with interest into all the details of their agricultural operations. They came to the weddings of their children, drank with their guests, and made little presents to the young people. On Sundays and holidays, all the retainers of the family assembled at the château, and danced in the barn or the court-yard, according to the season. The ladies of the house joined in the festivity, and that without any airs of condescension or of mockery; for, in their own life,

there was little splendour or luxurious refinement. They travelled on horseback, or in heavy carriages drawn by oxen; and had little other amusement than in the care of their dependants, and the familiar intercourse of neighbours among whom there was no rivalry or principle of ostentation.

From all this there resulted, as Madame de L. assures us, a certain innocence and kindliness of character, joined with great hardihood and gaiety,—which reminds us of Henry IV. and his Bearnois,—and carries with it, perhaps, on account of that association, an idea of something more chivalrous and romantic—more honest and unsophisticated, than any thing we now expect to meet with in this modern world of artifice and derision. There was great purity of morals accordingly, Madame de L. informs us, and general cheerfulness and content throughout the whole district;—crimes were never heard of, and lawsuits almost unknown. Though not very well educated, the population was exceedingly devout;—though theirs was a kind of superstitious and traditional devotion, it must be owned, rather than an enlightened or rational faith. They had the greatest veneration for crucifixes and images of their saints, and had no idea of any duty more imperious than that of attending on all the offices of religion. They were singularly attached also to their curés; who were almost all born and bred in the country, spoke their *patois*, and shared in all their pastimes and occupations. When a hunting-match was to take place, the clergyman announced it from the pulpit after prayers, —and then took his fowlingpiece, and accompanied his congregation to the thicket. It was on behalf of these curés, in fact, that the first disturbances were excited.

The decree of the Convention, displacing all priests who did not take the oaths imposed by that assembly, occasioned the removal of several of those beloved and conscientious pastors; and various tumults were excited by attempts to establish their successors by authority. Some lives were lost in these tumults; but their most important effect was in diffusing an opinion of the severity of the new government, and familiarizing the people with the idea of resisting it by force. The order of the Convention for a forced levy of three hundred thousand men, and the preparations to carry it into effect, gave rise to the first serious insurrection;—and while the dread of punishment for the acts of violence already committed deterred the insurgents from submitting, the standard was no sooner raised between the republican government on the one hand and the discontented peasantry on the other, than the mass of that united and alarmed population declared itself for their associates; and a great tract of country was thus arrayed in open rebellion, without concert, leader, or preparation. We have the testimony of Madame de L. therefore, in addition to all other good testimony, that this great civil war originated almost accidentally, and certainly not from any plot or conspiracy of the leading royalists in the country. The resident gentry, no doubt, for the most part, favoured that cause; and the peasantry felt almost universally with their masters;—but neither had the least idea, in the beginning, of opposing the political pretensions of the new government, nor, even to the last, much serious hope of effecting any revolution in the general state of the country. The first movements, indeed, partook far more of bigotry than of royalism; and were merely the rash and undirected expressions of plebeian resentment for the loss of their accustomed pastors. The more extensive commotions which followed on the compulsory levy, were equally without object or plan, and were confined at first to the peasantry. The gentry did not join until they had no alternative, but that of taking up arms either against their own dependants, or along with them; and they went into the field, generally, with little other view than that of acquitting their own faith and honour, and scarcely any expectation beyond that of obtaining better terms for the rebels they were joining, or of being able to make a stand till some new revolution should take place at Paris, and bring in rulers less harsh and sanguinary.

It was at the ballot for the levy of St. Florent, that the rebellion may be said to have begun. The young men first murmured, and then threatened the commissioners, who somewhat rashly directed a fieldpiece to be pointed against them, and afterwards to be fired over their heads:—Nobody was hurt by the discharge; and the crowd immediately rushed forward and seized upon the gun. Some of the commissioners were knocked down—their papers were seized and burnt—and the rioters went about singing and rejoicing for the rest of the evening. An account, probably somewhat exaggerated, of this tumult, was brought next day to a venerable peasant of the name of *Cathelineau*, a sort of itinerant dealer in wool, who was immediately struck with the decisive consequences of this open attack on the constituted authorities. The tidings were brought to him as he was kneading the weekly allowance of bread for his family. He instantly wiped his arms, put on his coat, and repaired to the village marketplace, where he harangued the inhabitants, and prevailed on twenty or thirty of the boldest youths to take their arms in their hands and follow him. He was universally respected for his piety, good sense, and mildness of character; and, proceeding with his troop of recruits to a neighbouring village, repeated his eloquent exhortations, and instantly found himself at the head of more than a hundred enthusiasts. Without stopping a moment, he led this new army to the attack of a military post guarded by four score soldiers and a piece of cannon. The post was surprised,—the soldiers dispersed or made prisoners,—and the gun brought off in triumph. From this he advances, the same afternoon, to another post of two hundred soldiers and three pieces of cannon; and succeeds, by the same surprise and intrepidity. The morning after, while preparing for other enterprises, he is

joined by another band of insurgents, who had associated to protect one of their friends, for whose arrest a military order had been issued. The united force, now amounting to a thousand men, then directed its attack on Chollet, a considerable town, occupied by at least five hundred of the republican army; and again bears down all resistance by the suddenness and impetuosity of its onset. The rioters find here a considerable supply of arms, money, and ammunition;—and thus a country is lost and won, in which, but two days before, nobody thought or spoke of insurrection!

If there was something astonishing in the sudden breaking out of this rebellion, its first apparent suppression was not less extraordinary. These events took place just before Lent; and, upon the approach of that holy season, the religious rebels all dispersed to their homes, and betook themselves to their prayers and their rustic occupations, just as if they had never quitted them. A column of the republican army, which advanced from Angers to bear down the insurrection, found no insurrection to quell. They marched from one end of the country to the other, and met everywhere with the most satisfactory appearances of submission and tranquillity. These appearances, however, it will readily be understood, were altogether deceitful; and as soon as Easter Sunday was over, the peasants began again to assemble in arms,—and now, for the first time, to apply to the gentry to head them.

All this time Madame Lescure and her family remained quietly at Clisson; and, in that profound retreat, were ignorant of the singular events to which we have alluded, for long after they occurred. The first intelligence they obtained was from the indefatigable M. Thomasin, who passed his time partly at their château, and partly in scampering about the country, and haranguing the constituted authorities—always in his national uniform, and with the authority of a Parisian patriot. One day this intrepid person came home, with a strange story of the neighbouring town of Herbiers having been taken either by a party of insurgents, or by an English army suddenly landed on the coast; and, at seven o'clock the next morning, the château was invested by two hundred soldiers,—and a party of dragoons rode into the court yard. Their business was to demand all the horses, arms, and ammunition, and also the person of an old cowardly chevalier, some of whose foolish letters had been carried to the municipality. M. de L. received this deputation with his characteristic composure—made the apology of the poor chevalier, and a few jokes at his expense—gave up some bad horses—and sent away the party in great good humour. For a few days they were agitated with contradictory rumours: But at last it appeared that the government had determined on vigorous measures; and it was announced, that all the gentry would be required to arm themselves and their retainers against the insurgents. This brought things to a crisis;—a council was held in the château, when it was speedily determined, that no consideration of prudence or of safety could induce men of honour to desert their dependants, or the party to which, in their hearts, they wished well;—and that, when the alternative came, they would rather fight with the insurgents than against them. Henri de Larochejaquelein—of whom the fair writer gives so engaging a picture, and upon whose acts of heroism she dwells throughout with so visible a delight, that it is quite a disappointment to find that it is not *his* name she bears when she comes to change her own—had been particularly inquired after and threatened; and upon an order being sent to his peasantry to attend and ballot for the militia, he takes horse in the middle of the night, and sets out to place himself at their head for resistance. The rest of the party remained a few days longer in considerable perplexity.—M. Thomasin having become suspected, on account of his frequent resort to them, had been put in prison; and they were almost entirely without intelligence as to what was going on; when one morning, when they were at breakfast, a party of horse gallops up to the gate, and presents an order for the immediate arrest of the whole company. M. de L. takes this with perfect calmness—a team of oxen is yoked to the old coach; and the prisoners are jolted along, under escort of the National dragoons, to the town of Bressuire. By the time they had reached this place, their mild and steady deportment had made so favourable an impression on their conductors, that they were very near taking them back to their homes;—and the municipal officers, before whom M. de L. was brought, had little else to urge for the arrest, but that it did not seem advisable to leave him at large, when it had been found necessary to secure all the other gentry of the district. They were not sent, however, to the common prison, but lodged in the house of a worthy republican, who had formerly supplied the family with groceries, and now treated them with the greatest kindness and civility. Here they remained for several days, closely shut up in two little rooms; and were not a little startled, when they saw from their windows two or three thousand of the National guard march fiercely out to repulse a party of the insurgents, who were advancing, it was reported, under the command of Henri de Larochejaquelein. Next day, however, these valiant warriors came flying back in great confusion. They had met and been defeated by the insurgents; and the town was filled with terrors—and with the cruelties to which terror always gives birth. Some hundreds of Marseillois arrived at this crisis to reinforce the republican army; and proposed, as a measure of intimidation and security, that they should immediately massacre all the prisoners.—The native leaders all expressed the greatest horror at this proposal—but it was nevertheless carried into effect! The author saw hundreds of those unfortunate creatures marched out of the town, under a guard of their butchers. They were then drawn up in a neighbouring field, and were cut down with the sabre—

most of them quietly kneeling and exclaiming, *Vive le Roi!* It was natural for Madame de L. and her party to think that their turn was to come next: and the alarms of their compassionate jailor did not help to allay their apprehensions. Their fate hung indeed upon the slightest accident. One day they received a letter from an emigrant, congratulating them on the progress of the counter-revolution, and exhorting them not to remit their efforts in the cause. The very day after, their letters were all opened at the municipality, and sent to them unsealed! The patriots, however, it turned out, were too much occupied with apprehensions of their own, to attend to any thing else. The National guards of the place were not much accustomed to war, and trembled at the retaliation which the excesses of their Marseillois auxiliaries might so well justify. A sort of panic took possession even of their best corps; nor could the general prevail on his cavalry to reconnoitre beyond the walls of the town. A few horsemen, indeed, once ventured half a mile farther; but speedily came galloping back in alarm, with a report that a great troop of the enemy were at their heels. It turned out to be only a single country-man at work in his field, with a team of six oxen!

There was no waiting an assault with such forces; and, in the beginning of May 1793, it was resolved to evacuate the place, and fall back on Thouars. The aristocratic captives were fortunately forgotten in the hurry of this inglorious movement; and though they listened through their closed shutters, with no great tranquillity, to the parting clamours and imprecations of the Marseillois, they soon received assurance of their deliverance, in the supplications of their keeper, and many others of the municipality, to be allowed to retire with them to Clisson, and to seek shelter there from the vengeance of the advancing royalists. M. de Lescure, with his usual good nature, granted all these requests; and they soon set off, with a grateful escort, for their deserted château.

The dangers he had already incurred by his inaction—the successes of his less prudent friends, and the apparent weakness and irresolution of their opponents, now decided M. de Lescure to dissemble no longer with those who seemed entitled to his protection; and he resolved instantly to cast in his lot with the insurgents, and support the efforts of his adventurous cousin. He accordingly sent round without the delay of an instant, to intimate his purpose to all the parishes where he had influence; and busied himself and his household in preparing horses and arms, while his wife and her women were engaged in manufacturing white cockades. In the midst of these preparations, Henri de Larochejaquelein arrived, flushed with victory and hope, and announced his seizure of Bressuire, and all the story of his brief and busy campaign.

Upon his first arrival in the revolted district of his own domains, he found the peasants rather disheartened for want of a leader—some setting off for the army of Anjou, and others meditating a return to their own homes. His appearance, however, and the heartiness of his adherence to their cause, at once revived the sinking flame of their enthusiasm, and spread it through all the adjoining region. Before next evening, he found himself at the head of near ten thousand devoted followers—without arms or discipline indeed, but with hearts in the trim—and ready to follow wherever he would venture to lead. There were only about two hundred firelocks in the whole array, and these were shabby fowlingpieces, without bayonets: The rest were equipped with scythes, or blades of knives stuck upon poles—with spits, or with good heavy cudgels of knotty wood. In presenting himself to this romantic army, their youthful leader made the following truly eloquent and characteristic speech—"My good friends, if my father were here to lead you, we should all proceed with greater confidence. For my part, I know I am but a child—but I hope I have courage enough not to be quite unworthy of supplying his place to you—Follow me when I advance against the enemy—kill me when I turn my back upon them—and revenge me, if they bring me down!" That very day he led them into action. A strong post of the republicans were stationed at Aubiers:—Henri, with a dozen or two of his best marksmen, glided silently behind the hedge which surrounded the field in which they were, and immediately began to fire—some of the unarmed peasants handing forward loaded muskets to them in quick succession. He himself fired near two hundred shots that day; and a gamekeeper, who stood beside him, almost as many. The soldiers, though at first astonished at this assault from an invisible enemy, soon collected themselves, and made a movement to gain a small height that was near. Henri chose this moment to make a general assault; and calling out to his men, that they were running, burst through the hedge at their head, and threw them instantly into flight and irretrievable confusion; got possession of their guns and stores, and pursued them to within a few miles of the walls of Bressuire. Such, almost universally, was the tactic of those formidable insurgents. Their whole art of war consisted in creeping round the hedges which separated them from their enemies, and firing there till they began to waver or move—and then rushing forward with shouts and impetuosity, but without any regard to order; possessing themselves first of the artillery, and rushing into the heart of their opponents with prodigious fierceness and activity. In these assaults they seldom lost so much as one man for every five that fell of the regulars. They were scarcely ever discovered soon enough to suffer from the musketry—and seldom gave the artillery an opportunity of firing more than once. When they saw the flash of the pieces, they instantly threw themselves flat on the ground till the shot flew over, then started up, and rushed on the gunners before they could reload. If they were finally repulsed, they retreated and dis-

persed with the same magical rapidity, darting through the hedges, and scattering among the defiles in a way that eluded all pursuit, and exposed those who attempted it to murderous ambuscades at every turning.

As soon as it was known that M. de Lescure had declared for the white cockade, forty parishes assumed that badge of hostility; and he and his cousin found themselves at the head of near twenty thousand men! The day after, they brought eighty horsemen to the château. These gallant knights, however, were not very gorgeously caparisoned. Their steeds were of all sizes and colours—many of them with packs instead of saddles, and loops of rope for stirrups—pistols and sabres of all shapes tied on with cords—white or black cockades in their hats—and tricoloured ones—with bits of epaulettes taken from the vanquished republicans, dangling in ridicule at the tails of their horses! Such as they were, however, they filled the château with tumult and exultation, and frightened the hearts out of some unhappy republicans who came to look after their wives who had taken refuge in that asylum. They did them no other harm, however, than compelling them to spit on their tricoloured cockades, and to call *Vive le Roi!*—which the poor people, being "des gens honnêtes et paisibles," very readily performed.

In the afternoon, Madame de L., with a troop of her triumphant attendants, paid a visit to her late prison at Bressuire. The place was now occupied by near twenty thousand insurgents—all as remarkable, she assures us, for their simple piety, and the innocence and purity of their morals, as for the valour and enthusiasm which had banded them together. Even in a town so obnoxious as this had become, from the massacre of the prisoners, there were no executions, and no pillage. Some of the men were expressing a great desire for some tobacco; and upon being asked whether there was none in the place, answered, quite simply, that there was plenty, but they had no money to buy it!

In giving a short view of the whole insurgent force, which she estimates at about eighty thousand men, Madame de L. here introduces a short account of its principal leaders, whose characters are drawn with a delicate, though probably too favourable hand. M. d'Elbée, M. de Bonchamp, and M. de Marigny, were almost the only ones who had formerly exercised the profession of arms, and were therefore invested with the formal command. Stofflet, a native of Alsace, had formerly served in a Swiss regiment, but had long been a gamekeeper in Poitou. Of Cathelineau we have spoken already. Henri de Larochejaquelein, and M. de Lescure, were undoubtedly the most popular and important members of the association, and are painted with the greatest liveliness and discrimination. The former, tall, fair, and graceful—with a shy, affectionate, and indolent manner in private life, had, in the field, all the gaiety, animation, and love of adventure, that he used to display in the chase. Utterly indifferent to danger, and ignorant of the very name of fear, his great faults as a leader were rashness in attack, and undue exposure of his person. He knew little, and cared less, for the scientific details of war; and could not always maintain the gravity that was required in the councils of the leaders. Sometimes after bluntly giving his opinion, he would quietly lay himself to sleep till the end of the deliberations; and, when reproached with this neglect of his higher duties, would answer, "What business had they to make me a General?—I would much rather have been a private light-horseman, and taken the sport as it came." With all this light-heartedness, however, he was full not only of kindness to his soldiers, but of compassion for his prisoners. He would sometimes offer, indeed, to fight them fairly hand to hand, before accepting their surrender; but never refused to give quarter, nor ever treated them with insult or severity.

M. de Lescure was in many respects of an opposite character. His courage, though of the most heroic temper, was invariably united with perfect coolness and deliberation. He had a great theoretical knowledge of war, having diligently studied all that was written on the subject; and was the only man in the party who knew any thing of fortification. His temper was unalterably sweet and placid; and his never-failing humanity, in the tremendous scenes he had to pass through, had something in it of an angelical character. Though constantly engaged at the head of his troops, and often leading them on to the assault, he never could persuade himself to take the life of a fellow-creature with his own hand, or to show the smallest severity to his captives. One day a soldier, who he thought had surrendered, fired at him, almost at the muzzle of his piece. He put aside the musket with his sword, and said, with perfect composure, "Take that prisoner to the rear." His attendants, enraged at the perfidy of the assault, cut him down behind his back. He turned round at the noise, and flew into the most violent passion in which he had ever been seen. This was the only time in his life in which he was known to utter an oath. There was no spirit of vengeance in short in his nature; and he frequently saved more lives after a battle, than had been lost in the course of it.

The discipline of the army, thus commanded, has been already spoken of. It was never even divided into regiments or companies.—When the chiefs had agreed on a plan of operations, they announced to their followers;—M. Lescure goes to take such a bridge,—who will follow him? M. Marigny keeps the passes in such a valley—who will go with him?—and so on. They were never told to march to the right or the left, but to that tree or to that steeple. They were generally very ill supplied with ammunition, and were often obliged to attack a post of artillery with cudgels. On one occasion, while rushing on for this purpose, they suddenly discovered a huge crucifix in a recess of the woods on their flank,

and immediately every man of them stopped short, and knelt quietly down, under the fire of the enemy. They then got up, ran right forward, and took the cannon. They had tolerable medical assistance; and found admirable nurses for the wounded, in the nunneries and other religious establishments that existed in all the considerable towns.

Their first enterprise, after the capture of Bressuire, was against Thouars. To get at this place, a considerable river was to be crossed.—M. de Lescure headed a party that was to force the passage of a bridge; but when he came within the heavy fire of its defenders, all his peasants fell back, and left him for some minutes alone:—His clothes were torn by the bullets, but not a shot took effect on his person:—He returned to the charge again with Henri de Larochejaquelein:—Their followers, all but two, again left them at the moment of charging: But the enemy, scared at their audacity, had already taken flight; the bridge was carried by those four men; and the town was given up after a short struggle, though not before Henri had climbed alone to the top of the wall by the help of a friend's shoulders, and thrown several stones at the flying inhabitants within. The republican general Quetineau, who had defended himself with great valour, obtained honourable terms in this capitulation, and was treated with the greatest kindness by the insurgent chiefs. He had commanded at Bressuire when it was finally abandoned, and told M. Lescure, when he was brought before him, that he saw the closed window-shutters of his family well enough as he marched out; and that it was not out of forgetfulness that he had left them unmolested. M. Lescure expressed his gratitude for his generosity, and pressed him to remain with them.—"You do not agree in our opinions, I know;—and I do not ask you to take any share in our proceedings. You shall be a prisoner at large among us: But if you go back to the republicans, they will say you gave up the place out of treachery, and you will be rewarded by the executioner for the gallant defence you have made."—The captive answered in terms equally firm and spirited.—"I must do my duty at all hazards.—I should be dishonoured, if I remained voluntarily among enemies; and I am ready to answer for all I have hitherto done."—It will surprise some violent royalists among ourselves, we believe, to find that this frankness and fidelity to his party secured for him the friendship and esteem of all the Vendean leaders. The peasants, indeed, felt a little more like the liberal persons just alluded to. *They* were not a little scandalized to find a republican treated with respect and courtesy;—and, above all, were in horror when they saw him admitted into the private society of their chiefs, and discovered that M. de Bonchamp actually trusted himself in the same chamber with him at night! For the first two or three nights, indeed, several of them kept watch at the outside of the door, to defend him against the assassination they apprehended; and once or twice he found in the morning, that one more distrustful than the rest had glided into the room, and laid himself down across the feet of his commander.

From Thouars they proceeded to Fontenay, where they had a still more formidable resistance to encounter. M. de Lescure was again exposed alone to the fire of six pieces of cannon charged with grape; and had his hat pierced, a spur shot off, and a boot torn by the discharge;—but he only turned round to his men, who were hanging back, and said, "You see these fellows can take no aim;—come on!" They did come on, and soon carried all before them.

The republicans had retaken, in the course of these encounters, the first piece of cannon which had fallen into the hands of the insurgents, and to which the peasants had fondly given the name of *Marie Jeanne*. After their success at Fontenay, a party was formed to recover it. One man, in his impatience, got so far ahead of his comrades, that he was in the heart of the enemy before he was aware. Fortunately, he had the horse and accoutrements of a dragoon he had killed the day before, and was taken by the party for one of their own company. They welcomed him accordingly; and told him that he was just come in time to repulse the brigands, who were advancing to retake their *Marie Jeanne*. "Are they?" said he;—"follow me, and we shall soon give a good account of them:"—and then, heading the troop, he rode on till he came within reach of his own party, when he suddenly cut down the two men on each side of him, and welcomed his friends to the victory. At another time, four young officers, in the wantonness of their valour, rode alone to a large village in the heart of the country occupied by the republicans, ordered all the inhabitants to throw down their tricoloured cockades, and to prepare quarters for the royalist army, which was to march in, in the evening, one hundred thousand strong. The good people began their preparations accordingly, and hewed down their tree of liberty—when the young men laughed in their faces, and galloped unmolested away from upwards of a thousand enemies!—The whole book is full of such feats and adventures. Their recent successes had encumbered them with near four thousand prisoners, of whom, as they had no strong places or regular garrisons, they were much at a loss how to dispose.—To dismiss such a mob of privates, on their parole not to serve any more against them, they knew would be of no avail; and after much deliberation, they fell upon the ingenious expedient of shaving their heads, at the same time that their parole was exacted; so that if they again took the field against them within any moderate time, they might be easily recognised, and dealt with accordingly. Madame Lescure's father had the merit of this happy invention.

The day after the capture of Fontenay, the greater part of the army thought it was time to go home for a while to look after their cattle, and tell their exploits to their wives and

children. In about a week, however, a considerable number of them came back again, and proceeded to attack Saumur. Here M. de Lescure received his first wound in the arm; and Henri, throwing his hat over the entrenchments of the place, called to his men, "Let us see now, who will bring it back to me!"—and rushed at their head across the glacis. A vast multitude of the republicans fell in this battle; and near twelve thousand prisoners were made,—who were all shaved and let go. The insurgents did not lose four hundred in all. In the castle they found Quetineau, the gallant but unsuccessful defender of Thouars, who, according to M. de Lescure's prediction, had been arrested and ordered for trial in consequence of that disaster. He was again pressed to remain with them as a prisoner on parole; but continued firm in his resolution to do his duty, and leave the rest to fortune. He was sent, accordingly, to Paris a short time after—where he was tried, condemned, and executed!

The insurrection had now attained a magnitude which seemed to make it necessary to have some one formally appointed to the chief command; and with a view of at once flattering and animating the peasants, in whose spontaneous zeal it had originated, all voices were united in favour of Cathelineau, the humble and venerable leader under whom its first successes had been obtained. It is very remarkable, indeed, that in a party thus associated avowedly in opposition to democratical innovations, the distinctions of rank were utterly disregarded and forgotten. Not only was an humble peasant raised to the dignity of commander-in-chief, but Madame de L. assures us, that she herself never knew or enquired whether one half of the officers were of noble or plebeian descent; and mentions one, the son of a village shoemaker, who was long at the head of all that was gallant and distinguished in the body. We are afraid that this is a trait of their royalism, which it is no longer thought prudent to bring forward in the courts of royalty.

Those brilliant successes speedily suggested enterprises of still greater ambition and extent. A communication was now opened with M. de Charrette, who had long headed the kindred insurrection in Anjou; and a joint attack on the city of Nantes was projected and executed by the two armies. That of Poitou was now tolerably provided with arms and ammunition, and decently clothed, though without any attention to uniformity. The dress of the officers was abundantly fierce and fantastic. With pantaloons and jackets of gray cloth, they wore a variety of great red handkerchiefs all about their persons—one tied round their head, and two or three about their waist, and across their shoulders, for holding their pistols and ammunition. Henri de Larochejaquelein introduced this fashion; and it speedily became universal among his companions, giving them not a little the air of *brigands*, or banditti, the name early bestowed on them by the republicans, and at last generally adopted and recognised among themselves. The expedition to Nantes was disastrous. The soldiers did not like to go so far from home; and the army, as it advanced, melted away by daily desertions. There was also some want of concert in the movements of the different corps;—and, after a sanguinary conflict, the attack was abandoned, and the forces dispersed all over the country. The good Cathelineau was mortally wounded in this affair, at which neither M. de Lescure nor Henri were present; the latter being in garrison at Saumur, and the other disabled by his wound. The news of this wound came rather suddenly upon his wife, who, though she had always before been in agonies of fear on horseback, instantly mounted a ragged colt, and galloped off to rejoin him. She never afterwards had the least alarm about riding. The army having spontaneously disbanded after the check at Nantes, it was found impossible to maintain the places it had occupied. General Westermann arrived from Paris, at the head of a large force; and, after retaking Saumur and Parthenay, began the relentless and exterminating system of burning and laying waste the districts from which he had succeeded in dislodging the insurgents. One of the first examples he made was at M. de Lescure's château of Clisson. It was burnt to the ground, with all its offices, stores, and peasants' houses, as well as all the pictures and furniture of its master. Having long foreseen the probability of such a consummation, he had at one time given orders to remove some of the valuable articles it contained; but apprehensive that such a proceeding might discourage or disgust his followers, he afterwards abandoned the design, and submitted to the loss of all his family moveables. The event, Madame de L. assures us, produced no degree either of irritation or discouragement. The chiefs, however, now exerted all their influence to collect their scattered forces before Chatillon; and Madame de L. accompanied her husband in all the rapid and adventurous marches he made for that purpose, through this agitated and distracted country. In one of these fatiguing movements with some broken corps of the army, they stopped to repose for the night in the château of Madame de Concise, who was still so much an alien to the Vendean manners, that they found her putting on *rouge*, and talking of the agitation of her nerves!

The attack on Westermann's position at Chatillon was completely successful; but the victory was stained by the vindictive massacres which followed it. The burnings and butcheries of the republican forces were bloodily avenged—in spite of the efforts of M. de Lescure, who repeatedly exposed his own life to save those of the vanquished. In the midst of the battle, one of his attendants seeing a rifleman about to fire at him, stepped bravely before him, and received the shot in his eye. The carriage of Westermann was taken; and some young officers, to whom it was entrusted, having foolishly broken open the strong box, which was believed to be full of money, there was a talk of bringing them

to trial for the supposed embezzlement. M. de L., however, having declared that one of them had given him his word of honour that the box was empty when they opened it, the whole council declared themselves satisfied, and acquitted the young men by acclamation.

In the course of the summer of 1793, various sanguinary actions were fought with various success; but the most remarkable event was the arrival of M. Tinteniac, with despatches from the English government, about the middle of July. This intrepid messenger had come alone through all Brittany and Anjou, carrying his despatches in his pistols as wadding, and incessantly in danger from the republican armies and magistrates. The despatches, Madame de L. informs us, showed an incredible ignorance on the part of the English government of the actual posture of affairs. They were answered, however, with gratitude and clearness. A debarkation was strongly recommended near Sables or Paimbœuf, but by no means at L'Orient, Rochefort, or Rochelle; and it was particularly entreated, that the troops should consist chiefly of emigrant Frenchmen, and that a Prince of the House of Bourbon should, if possible, place himself at their head. Madame de L., who wrote a small and very neat hand, was employed to write out these despatches, which were placed in the pistols of M. Tinteniac, who immediately proceeded on his adventurous mission. He reached England, it seems, and was frequently employed thereafter in undertakings of the same nature. He headed a considerable party of Bretons, in endeavouring to support the unfortunate descent at Quiberon; and, disdaining to submit, even after the failure of that ill-concerted expedition, fell bravely with arms in his hands. After his departure, the insurgents were repulsed at Lucon, and obtained some advantages at Chantonnay. But finding the republican armies daily increasing in numbers, skill, and discipline, they found it necessary to act chiefly on the defensive; and, for this purpose, divided the country into several districts, in each of which they stationed that part of the army which had been recruited within it, and the general who was most beloved and confided in by the inhabitants. In this way, M. Lescure came to be stationed in the heart of his own estates: and was not a little touched to find almost all his peasants, who had bled and suffered by his side for so long a time without pay, come to make offer of the rents that were due for the possessions to which they were but just returned. He told them, it was not for his rents that he had taken up arms;—and that while they were exposed to the calamities of war, they were well entitled to be freed of that burden. Various lads of thirteen, and several hale grandsires of seventy, came at this period, and insisted upon being allowed to share the dangers and glories of their kinsmen.

From this time, downwards, the picture of the war is shaded with deeper horrors; and the operations of the insurgents acquire a character of greater desperation. The Convention issued the barbarous decree, that the whole country, which still continued its resistance, should be desolated; that the whole inhabitants should be exterminated, without distinction of age or sex; the habitations consumed with fire, and the trees cut down with the axe. Six armies, amounting in all to near two hundred thousand men, were charged with the execution of these atrocious orders; and began, in September 1793, to obey them with a detestable fidelity. A multitude of sanguinary conflicts ensued; and the insurgents succeeded in repulsing this desolating invasion at almost all the points of attack. Among the slain in one of these engagements, the republicans found the body of a young woman, which Madame de L. informs us gave occasion to a number of idle reports; many giving out that it was she herself, or a sister of M. de L. (who had no sister), or a new Joan of Arc, who had kept up the spirit of the peasantry by her enthusiastic predictions. The truth was, that it was the body of an innocent peasant girl, who had always lived a remarkably quiet and pious life, till recently before this action, when she had been seized with an irresistible desire to take a part in the conflict. She had discovered herself some time before to Madame de L.; and begged from her a shift of a peculiar fabric. The night before the battle, she also revealed her secret to M. de L.;—asked him to give her a pair of shoes—and promised to behave herself in such a manner in the morrow's fight, that he should never think of parting with her. Accordingly, she kept near his person through the whole of the battle, and conducted herself with the most heroic bravery. Two or three times, in the very heat of the fight, she said to him, "No, mon, General, you shall not get before me—I shall always be closer up to the enemy even than you." Early in the day, she was hurt pretty seriously in the hand, but held it up laughing to her general, and said, "It is nothing at all." In the end of the battle she was surrounded in a charge, and fell fighting like a desperado. There were about ten other women, who took up arms, Madame de L. says, in this cause;—two sisters, under fifteen—and a tall beauty, who wore the dress of an officer. The priests attended the soldiers in the field, and rallied and exhorted them; but took no part in the combat, nor ever excited them to any acts of inhumanity. There were many boys of the most tender age among the combatants,—some scarcely more than nine or ten years of age.

M. Piron gained a decided victory over the most numerous army of the republic; but their ranks being recruited by the whole garrison of Mentz, which had been liberated on parole, presented again a most formidable front to the insurgents. A great battle was fought in the middle of September at Chollet, where the government army was completely broken, and would have been finally routed, but for the skill and firmness of the celebrated Kleber who commanded it, and successfully maintained a position which covered

its retreat. In the middle of the battle one of the peasants took a flageolet from his pocket, and, in derision, began to play *ça ira*, as he advanced against the enemy. A cannon-ball struck off his horse's head, and brought him to the ground; but he drew his leg from the dead animal, and marched forward on foot, without discontinuing his music. One other picture of detail will give an idea of the extraordinary sort of warfare in which the country was then engaged. Westermann was beat out of Chatillon, and pursued to some distance; but finding that the insurgent forces were withdrawn, he bethought himself of recovering the place by a coup de main. He mounted an hundred grenadiers behind an hundred picked hussars, and sent them at midnight into the city. The peasants, as usual, had no outposts, and were scattered about the streets, overcome with fatigue and brandy. However, they made a stout and bloody resistance. One active fellow received twelve sabre wounds on the same spot; another, after killing a hussar, took up his wounded brother in his arms, placed him on the horse, and sent him out of the city;—then returned to the combat; killed another hussar, and mounted himself on the prize. The republicans, irritated at the resistance they experienced, butchered all that came across them in that night of confusion! All order or discipline was lost in the darkness; and they hacked and fired at each other, or wrestled and fell, man to man, as they chanced to meet, and often without being able to distinguish friend from foe.—An eminent leader of the insurrection was trampled under foot by a party of the republicans, who rushed past him to massacre the whole family where he lodged, who were all zealous republicans.—The town was set on fire in fifty places,—and was at last evacuated by *both* parties, in mutual fear and ignorance of the force to which they were opposed. When the day dawned, however, it was finally reoccupied by the insurgents.

After some more successes, the insurgent chiefs found their armies sorely reduced, and their enemies perpetually increasing in force and numbers. M. de la Charette, upon some misunderstanding, withdrew his corps; and all who looked beyond the present moment, could not fail to perceive, that disasters of the most fatal nature were almost inevitably approaching. A dreadful disaster, at all events, now fell on their fair historian. M. de L. in rallying a party of his men near Tremblaye, was struck with a musket ball on the eyebrow, and instantly fell senseless to the ground. He was not dead, however; and was with difficulty borne through the rout which was the immediate consequence of his fall. His wife, entirely ignorant of what had happened, was forced to move along with the retreating army; and in a miserable little village was called, at midnight, from her bed of straw, to hear mass performed to the soldiers by whom she was surrounded. The solemn ceremony was interrupted by the approaching thunder of artillery, and the perpetual arrival of fugitive and tumultuary parties, with tidings of evil omen. Nobody had the courage to tell this unfortunate woman the calamity that had befallen her, though the priest awakened a vague alarm by solemn encomiums on the piety of M. de L., and the necessity of resignation to the will of Heaven. Next night she found him at Cherdron, scarcely able to move or to articulate,—but suffering more from the idea of her having fallen into the hands of the enemy, than from his own disasters.

The last great battle was fought near Chollet, when the insurgents, after a furious and sanguinary resistance, were at last borne down by the multitude of their opponents, and driven down into the low country on the banks of the Loire. M. de Bonchamp, who had always held out the policy of crossing this river, and the advantages to be derived from uniting themselves to the royalists of Brittany, was mortally wounded in this battle; but his counsels still influenced their proceedings in this emergency; and not only the whole debris and wreck of the army, but a great proportion of the men and women and children of the country, flying in consternation from the burnings and butchery of the government forces, flocked down in agony and despair to the banks of this great river. On gaining the heights of St. Florent, one of the most mournful, and at the same time most magnificent spectacles, burst upon the eye. Those heights form a vast semicircle; at the bottom of which a broad bare plain extends to the edge of the water. Near an hundred thousand unhappy souls now blackened over that dreary expanse,—old men, infants, and women mingled with the half-armed soldiery, caravans, crowded baggage waggons and teams of oxen, all full of despair, impatience, anxiety, and terror.—Behind, were the smokes of their burning villages, and the thunder of the hostile artillery;—before, the broad stream of the Loire, divided by a long low island, also covered with the fugitives—twenty frail barks plying in the stream—and, on the far banks, the disorderly movements of those who had effected the passage, and were waiting there to be rejoined by their companions. Such, Madame de L. assures us, was the tumult and terrror of the scene, and so awful the recollections it inspired, that it can never be effaced from the memory of any of those who beheld it; and that many of its awe-struck spectators have concurred in stating that it brought forcibly to their imaginations the unspeakable terrors of the great day of Judgment! Through this dismayed and bewildered multitude, the disconsolate family of their gallant general made their way silently to the shore;—M. de L. stretched, almost insensible, on a wretched litter,—his wife, three months gone with child, walking by his side,—and, behind her, her faithful nurse, with her helpless and astonished infant in her arms. When they arrived on the beach, they with difficulty got a crazy boat to carry them to the island; but the aged monk who steered it would not venture to cross the larger branch of the stream,—and the poor wounded man was obliged to submit

to the agony of another removal. At length, they were landed on the opposite bank; where wretchedness and desolation appeared still more conspicuous. Thousands of helpless wretches were lying on the grassy shore, or roaming about in search of the friends from whom they had been divided. There was a general complaint of cold and hunger; and nobody in a condition to give any directions, or administer any relief. M. de L. suffered excruciating pain from the piercing air which blew upon his feverish frame;—the poor infant screamed for food, and the helpless mother was left to minister to both;—while her attendant went among the burnt and ruined villages, to seek a drop of milk for the baby. At length they got again in motion for the adjoining village of Varades,—M. de L., borne in a sort of chair upon the pikes of his soldiers, with his wife and the maid-servant walking before him, and supporting his legs, wrapped up in their cloaks. With great difficulty they procured a little room, in a cottage swarming with soldiers,—most of them famishing for want of food, and yet still so mindful of the rights of their neighbours, that they would not take a few potatoes from the garden of the cottage, till Madame de L. had obtained leave of the proprietor.

M. de Bonchamp died as they were taking him out of the boat; and it became necessary to elect another commander. M. de L. roused himself to recommend Henri de Larochejaquelein; and he was immediately appointed. When the election was announced to him, M. de L. desired to see and congratulate his valiant cousin. He was already weeping over him in a dark corner of the room; and now came to express his hopes that he should soon be superseded by his recovery. "No," said M. de L., "that I believe is out of the question: But even if I were to recover, I should never take the place you have now obtained, and should be proud to serve as your aid-de-camp."—The day after, they advanced towards Rennes. M. de L. could find no other conveyance than a baggage-waggon; at every jolt of which he suffered such anguish, as to draw forth the most piercing shrieks even from his manly bosom. After some time, an old chaise was discovered: a piece of artillery was thrown away to supply it with horses, and the wounded general was laid in it,—his head being supported in the lap of Agatha, his mother's faithful waiting-woman, and now the only attendant of his wife and infant. In three painful days they reached Laval;—Madame de L. frequently suffering from absolute want, and sometimes getting nothing to eat the whole day, but one or two sour apples. M. de L. was nearly insensible during the whole journey. He was roused but once, when there was a report that a party of the enemy were in sight. He then called for his musket, and attempted to get out of the carriage;—addressed exhortations and reproaches to the troops that were flying around him, and would not rest till an officer in whom he had confidence came up and restored some order to the detachment.—The alarm turned out to be a false one.

At Laval they halted for several days; and he was so much recruited by the repose, that he was able to get for half an hour on horseback, and seemed to be fairly in the way of recovery; when his excessive zeal, and anxiety for the good behaviour of the troops, tempted him to premature exertions, from the consequences of which he never afterwards recovered. The troops being all collected and refreshed at Laval, it was resolved to turn upon their pursuers, and give battle to the advancing army of the republic. The conflict was sanguinary; but ended most decidedly in favour of the Vendeans. The first encounter was in the night,—and was characterized with more than the usual confusion of night attacks. The two armies crossed each other in so extraordinary a manner, that the artillery of each was supplied, for a part of the battle, from the *caissons* of the enemy; and one of the Vendean leaders, after exposing himself to great hazard in helping a brother officer, as he took him to be, out of a ditch, discovered, by the next flash of the cannon, that he was an enemy—and immediately cut him down. After daybreak, the battle became more orderly, and ended in a complete victory. This was the last grand crisis of the insurrection. The way to La Vendée was once more open; and the fugitives had it in their power to return triumphant to their fastnesses and their homes, after rousing Brittany by the example of their valour and success. M. de L. and Henri both inclined to this course; but other counsels prevailed. Some were for marching on to Nantes—others for proceeding to Rennes—and some, more sanguine than the rest, for pushing directly for Paris. Time was irretrievably lost in these deliberations; and the republicans had leisure to rally, and bring up their reinforcements, before any thing was definitively settled.

In the meantime, M. de L. became visibly worse; and one morning, when his wife alone was in the room, he called her to him, and told her that he felt his death was at hand;—that his only regret was for leaving her in the midst of such a war, with a helpless child, and in a state of pregnancy. For himself, he added, he died happy, and with humble reliance on the Divine mercy;—but her sorrow he could not bear to think of;—and he entreated her pardon for any neglect or unkindness he might ever have shown her. He added many other expressions of tenderness and consolation; and seeing her overwhelmed with anguish at the despairing tone in which he spoke, concluded by saying, that he might perhaps be mistaken in his prognosis;—and hoped still to live for her. Next day they were under the necessity of moving forward; and, on the journey, he learned accidentally from one of the officers, the dreadful details of the Queen's execution, which his wife had been at great pains to keep from his knowledge. This intelligence seemed to bring back his fever—though he still spoke of living to avenge her—"If I do

live," he said, "it shall now be for vengeance only—no more mercy from me!"—That evening, Madame de L., entirely overcome with anxiety and fatigue, had fallen into a deep sleep on a mat before his bed:—And soon after, his condition became altogether desperate. He was now speechless, and nearly insensible;—the sacraments were administered, and various applications made without awaking the unhappy sleeper by his side. Soon after midnight, however, she started up, and instantly became aware of the full extent of her misery. To fill up its measure, it was announced in the course of the morning, that they must immediately resume their march with the last division of the army. The thing appeared altogether impossible; Madame de L. declared she would rather die by the hands of the republicans, than permit her husband to be moved in the condition in which he then was. When she recollected, however, that these barbarous enemies had of late not only butchered the wounded that fell into their power, but mutilated and insulted their remains, she submitted to the alternative, and prepared for this miserable journey with a heart bursting with anguish. The dying man was roused only to heavy moanings by the pain of lifting him into the carriage,—where his faithful Agatha again supported his head, and a surgeon watched all the changes in his condition. Madame de L. was placed on horseback; and, surrounded by her father and mother, and a number of officers, went forward, scarcely conscious of any thing that was passing—only that sometimes, in the bitterness of her heart, when she saw the dead bodies of the republican soldiers on the road, she made her horse trample upon them, as if in vengeance for the slaughter of her husband. In the course of little more than an hour, she thought she heard some little stir in the carriage, and insisted on stopping to inquire into the cause. The officers, however, crowded around her; and then her father came up and said that M. de L. was in the same state as before, but that he suffered dreadfully from the cold, and would be very much distressed if the door was again to be opened. Obliged to be satisfied with this answer, she went on in sullen and gloomy silence for some hours longer in a dark and rainy day of November. It was night when they reached the town of Fougeres; and, when lifted from her horse at the gate, she was unable either to stand or walk:—she was carried into a wretched house, crowded with troops of all descriptions, where she waited two hours in agony till she heard that the carriage with M. de L. was come up. She was left alone for a dreadful moment with her mother; and then M. de Beauvolliers came in, bathed in tears,—and taking both her hands, told her she must now think only of saving the child she carried within her! Her husband had expired when she heard the noise in the carriage, soon after their setting out—and the surgeon had accordingly left it as soon as the order of the march had carried her ahead; but the faithful Agatha, fearful lest her appearance might alarm her mistress in the midst of the journey, had remained alone with the dead body for all the rest of the day! Fatigue, grief, and anguish of mind, now threatened Madame de L. with consequences which it seems altogether miraculous that she should have escaped. She was seized with violent pains, and was threatened with a miscarriage in a room which served as a common passage to the crowded and miserable lodging she had procured. It was thought necessary to bleed her—and, after some difficulty, a surgeon was procured. She can never forget, she says, the formidable apparition of this warlike phlebotomist. A figure six feet high, with ferocious whiskers, a great sabre at his side, and four huge pistols in his belt, stalked up with a fierce and careless air to her bed-side; and when she said she was timid about the operation, answered harshly, "So am not I—I have killed three hundred men and upwards in the field in my time—one of them only this morning—I think then I may venture to bleed a woman—Come, come, let us see your arm." She was bled accordingly—and, contrary to all expectation, was pretty well again in the morning. She insisted for a long time in carrying the body of her husband in the carriage along with her;—but her father, after indulging her for a few days, contrived to fall behind with this precious deposit, and informed her when he came up again, that it had been found necessary to bury it privately in a spot which he would not specify.

This abstract has grown to such a bulk that we find we cannot afford to continue it on the same scale. Nor is this very necessary; for though there is more than a third part of the book, of which we have given no account—and that, to those who have a taste for tales of sorrow, the most interesting portion of it—we believe that most readers will think they have had enough of La Vendée; and that all will now be in a condition to judge of the degree of interest or amusement which the work is likely to afford them. We shall add, however, a brief sketch of the rest of its contents.—After a series of murderous battles, to which the mutual refusal of quarter gave an exasperation unknown in any other history, and which left the field so cumbered with dead bodies that Madame de L. assures us that it was dreadful to feel the lifting of the wheels, and the cracking of the bones, as her heavy carriage passed over them,—the wreck of the Vendeans succeeded in reaching Angers upon the Loire, and trusted to a furious assault upon that place for the means of repassing the river, and regaining their beloved country. The garrison, however, proved stronger and more resolute than they had expected. Their own gay and enthusiastic courage had sunk under a long course of suffering and disaster; and, after losing a great number of men before the walls, they were obliged to turn back in confusion, they did not well know whither, but farther and farther from the land to which all their hopes

and wishes were directed. In the tumult of this retreat, Madame de L. lost sight of her venerable aunt, who had hitherto been the mild and patient companion of their wanderings; and learned afterwards that she had fallen into the hands of the enemy, and, at the age of eighty, been publicly executed at Rennes, for the crime of rebellion! At Fougeres, at Laval, at Dol, and Savenay, the dwindled force of the insurgents had to sustain new attacks from their indefatigable pursuers, in which the officers and most of the soldiery gave still more extraordinary proofs, than any we have yet recorded, of undaunted valour, and constancy worthy of better fortune. The weather was now, in the latter end of November, extremely cold and rainy; the roads almost impassable; and provisions very scarce. Often, after a march of ten hours, Madame de L. has been obliged to fish for a few cold potatoes in the bottom of a dirty cauldron, filled with greasy water, and polluted by the hands of half the army. Her child sickened from its teething, and insufficient nourishment; and every day she witnessed the death of some of those gallant leaders whom the spring had seen assembled in her halls in all the flush of youthful confidence and glory. After many a weary march, and desperate struggle, about ten thousand sad survivors got again to the banks of that fatal Loire, which now seemed to divide them from hope and protection. Henri, who had arranged the whole operation with consummate judgment, found the shores on both sides free of the enemy:—But all the boats had been removed; and, after leaving orders to construct rafts with all possible despatch, he himself, with a few attendants, ventured over in a little wherry, which he had brought with him on a cart, to make arrangements for covering their landing. But they never saw the daring Henri again! The vigilant enemy came down upon them at this critical moment—intercepted his return—and, stationing several armed vessels in the stream, rendered the passage of the army altogether impossible. They fell back in despair upon Savenay; and there the brave and indefatigable Marigny told Madame de L. that all was now over—that it was altogether impossible to resist the attack that would be made next day—and advised her to seek her safety in flight and disguise, without the loss of an instant. She set out accordingly, with her mother, in a gloomy day of December, under the conduct of a drunken peasant; and, after being out most of the night, at length obtained shelter in a dirty farm house,—from which, in the course of the day, she had the misery of seeing her unfortunate countrymen scattered over the whole open country, chased and butchered without mercy by the republicans, who now took a final vengeance for all the losses they had sustained. She had long been clothed in shreds and patches, and needed no disguise to conceal her quality. She was sometimes hidden in the mill, when the troopers came to search for fugitives in her lonely retreat;—and oftener sent, in the midst of winter, to herd the sheep or cattle of her faithful and compassionate host, along with his rawboned daughter.

In this situation they remained till late in the following spring;—and it would be endless to enumerate the hairbreadth 'scapes and unparalleled sufferings to which they were every day exposed—reduced frequently to live upon alms, and forced every two or three days to shift their quarters, in the middle of the night, from one royalist cabin to another. Such was the long-continued and vindictive rigour of the republican party, that the most eager and unrelaxing search was made for fugitives of all descriptions; and every adherent of the insurgent faction who fell into their hands was barbarously murdered, without the least regard to age, sex, or individual innocence! While skulking about in this state of peril and desolation, they had glimpses and occasional rencounters with some of their former companions, whom similar misfortunes had driven upon similar schemes of concealment. In particular, they twice saw the daring and unsubduable M. de Marigny, who had wandered over the whole country from Angers to Nantes; and notwithstanding his gigantic form and remarkable features, had contrived so to disguise himself as to elude all detection or pursuit. He could counterfeit all ages and dialects, and speak in perfection the *patois* of every village. He now appeared before them in the character of an itinerant dealer in poultry; and retired unsuspected by all but themselves. In this wretched condition, the term of Madame de L.'s confinement drew on; and, after a thousand frights and disasters, she was delivered of two daughters, without any other assistance than that of her mother. One of the infants had its wrist dislocated; and so subdued was the poor mother's mind to the level of her fallen fortunes, that she had now no other anxiety, than that she might recover strength enough to carry it herself to the waters of Bareges, which she fancied might be of service to it;—but the poor baby died within a fortnight after it was born.

Towards the end of 1794, their lot was somewhat softened by the compassionate kindness of a Madame Dumoutiers, who offered them an asylum in her house; in which, though still liable to the searches of the blood-hounds of the municipality, they had more assistance in eluding them, and less misery to endure in the intervals. The whole history of their escapes would make the adventures of Caleb Williams appear a cold and barren chronicle; but we have room only to mention, that after the death of Robespierre, there was a great abatement in the rigour of pursuit; and that a general amnesty was speedily proclaimed, for all who had been concerned in the insurrection. After several inward struggles with pride and principle, Madame de L. was prevailed on to repair to Nantes, to avail herself of this amnesty;—but, first of all, she rode in to reconnoitre, and consult with some friends of her hostess; and proceeded boldly through the hostile city, in

the dress of a peasant, with a sack at her back, and a pair of fowls in her hands. She found that the tone was now to flatter and conciliate the insurgents by all sorts of civilities and compliments; and after some time, she and her mother applied for, and obtained, a full pardon for all their offences against the Republican government.

This amnesty drew back to light many of her former friends, who had been universally supposed to be dead; and proved, by the prodigious numbers whom it brought from their hiding-places in the neighbourhood, how generally the lower orders were attached to their cause, or how universal the virtues of compassion and fidelity to confiding misery are in the national character. It also brought to the writer's knowledge many shocking particulars of the cruel executions which so long polluted that devoted city. We may give a few of the instances in her own words, as a specimen of her manner of writing; to which, in our anxiety to condense the information she affords us, we have paid perhaps too little attention.

"Madame de Jourdain fut menée sur la Loire, pour être noyée avec ses trois filles. Un soldat voulut sauver la plus jeune, qui était fort belle. Elle se jeta à l'eau pour partager le sort de sa mère. La malheureuse enfant tomba sur des cadavres, et n'enfonça point. Elle criait: Poussez-moi, je n'ai pas assez d'eau! et elle périt.

"Mademoiselle de Cuissard, âgée de seize ans, qui était plus belle encore, s'attira aussi le même intérêt d'un officier qui passa trois heures à ses pieds, la suppliant de se laisser sauver. Elle était avec une vielle parente que cet homme ne voulait pas se risquer à dérober au supplice. Mademoiselle de Cuissard se précipita dans la Loire avec elle.

"Une mort affreuse fut celle de Mademoiselle de la Roche St. André. Elle était grosse: on l'épargna. On lui laissa nourrir son enfant; mais il mourut, et on la fit périr le lendemain! Au reste, il ne faut pas croire que toutes les femmes enceintes fussent respectées. Cela était même fort rare; plus communément les soldats massacraient femmes et enfants. Il n'y avait que devant les tribunaux, où l'on observait ces exceptions; et on y laissait aux femmes le temps de nourrir leurs enfants, comme étant une *obligation républicaine*. C'est en quoi consistait l'humanité des gens d'alors.

"Ma pauvre Agathe avait couru de bien grands dangers. Elle m'avait quitté à Nort, pour profiter de cette amnistie prétendue, dont on avait parlé dans ce moment. Elle vint à Nantes, et fut conduite devant le général Lamberty, le plus féroce des amis de Carrier. La figure d'Agathe lui plait: 'As-tu peur, brigande?' lui dit-il. 'Non, général,' répondit-elle. 'Hé bien! quand tu auras peur, souviens-toi de Lamberty,' ajouta-t-il. Elle fut conduite à l'entrepôt. C'est la trop fameuse prison où l'on entassoit les victimes destinées à être noyées. Chaque nuit on venait en prendre par centaines, pour les mettre sur les bateaux. Là, on liait les malheureux deux à deux, et on les poussait dans l'eau, à coups de baïonnette. On saisissait indistinctement tout ce qui se trouvait à l'entrepôt; tellement qu'on noya un jour l'état major d'une corvette Anglaise, qui était prisonnier de guerre. Une autre fois, Carrier, voulant donner un exemple de l'austérité des mœurs républicaines, fit enfermer trois cents filles publiques de la ville, et les malheureuses créatures furent noyées! Enfin, l'on estime qu'il a péri à l'entrepôt quinze mille personnes en un mois. Il est vrai qu'outre les supplices, la misère et la maladie ravageaient les prisonniers, qui étaient pressés sur la paille, et qui ne recevaient aucun soin. A peine les connaissait-on. Les cadavres restaient quelquefois plus d'un jour sans qu'on vint les emporter.

"Agathe ne doutant plus d'une mort prochaine, envoya chercher Lamberty. Il la conduisit dans un petit bâtiment à soupape, dans lequel on avait noyé les prêtres, et que Carrier lui avait donné. Il était seul avec elle, et voulut en profiter: elle résista. Lamberty la menaça de la noyer: elle courut pour se jeter elle-même à l'eau. Alors cet homme lui dit: Allons! tu es une brave fille, je te sauverai. Il la laissa huit jours seule dans le bâtiment, où elle entendait les noyades qui se faisaient la nuit; ensuite il la cacha chez un nommé S***, qui était, comme lui, un fidele exécuteur des ordres de Carrier.

"Quelque temps aprés, la discorde divisa les républicains de Nantes. On prit le prétexte d'accuser Lamberty d'avoir dérobé des femmes aux noyades, et d'en avoir noyé qui ne devaient pas l'être. Un jeune homme, nommé Robin, qui était fort dévoué à Lamberty, vint saisir Agathe chez Madame S***, la traîna dans le bateau, et voulut la poignarder, pour faire disparaître une preuve du crime qu'on reprochait à son patron. Agathe se jeta à ses pieds; parvint à l'attendrir, et il la cacha chez un de ses amis, nommé Lavaux, qui était honnête homme, et qui avait déjà recueilli Madame de l'Epinay: mais on sut dès le lendemain l'asile d'Agathe, et on vint l'arrêter.

"Cependant le parti ennemi de Lamberty continuait à vouloir le détruire. Il résulta de cette circonstance, qu'on jeta de l'intérêt sur Agathe. On loua S*** et Lavaux de leur humanité, et l'on parvint à faire périr Lamberty! Peu après arriva la mort de Robespierre. Agathe resta encore quelques mois en prison, puis obtint sa liberté."—Vol. ii. pp. 171—175.

When the means of hearing of her friends were thus suddenly restored, there was little to hear but what was mournful. Her father had taken refuge in a wood with a small party of horsemen, after the rout of Savenay, and afterwards collected a little force, with which they seized on the town of Ancenis, and had nearly forced the passage of the Loire; but they were surrounded, and made prisoners, and all shot in the market-place! The brave Henri de Larochejaquelein had gained the north bank with about twenty followers, and wandered many days over the burnt and bloody solitudes of the once happy La Vendée. Overcome with fatigue and hunger, they at last reached an inhabited farm-house, and fell fast asleep in the barn. They were soon roused, however, by the news that a party of the republicans were approaching the same house; but were so worn out, that they would not rise, even to provide against that extreme hazard. The party accordingly entered; and being almost as much exhausted as the others, threw themselves down, without asking any questions, at the other end of the barn, and slept quietly beside them. Henri afterwards found out M. de la Charrette, by whom he was coldly, and even rudely received; but he soon raised a little army of his own, and became again formidable in the scenes of his first successes:—till one day, riding a little in front of his party, he fell in with two republican soldiers, upon whom his followers were about to fire, when he said, "No, no, they shall have quarter;" and pushing up to them, called upon them to surrender. Without saying a word, one of them raised his piece, and shot him right through the forehead. He fell at once dead before them, and was buried where he fell.

"Ainsi périt, à vingt et un ans, Henri de la Rochejaquelein. Encore à présent, quand les paysans se rappellent l'ardeur et l'éclat de son courage, sa modestie, sa facilité, et ce caractère de guerrier, et de bon enfant, ils parlent de lui avec fierté et avec amour. Il n'est pas un Vendéen dont on ne voie le regard s'animer, quand il raconte comment il a servi sous M. Henri."—Vol. ii. pp. 187, 188.

The fate of the gallant Marigny was still more deplorable. He joined Charrette and Stofflet; but some misunderstanding having arisen among them upon a point of discipline, they took the rash and violent step of bringing him to a court-martial, and sentencing him to death for disobedience. To the horror of all the Vendeans, and the great joy of the republicans, this unjust and imprudent sentence was carried into execution; and the cause deprived of the ablest of its surviving champions.

When they had gratified their curiosity with these melancholy details, Madame de L. and her mother set out for Bourdeaux, and from thence to Spain, where they remained for nearly two years—but were at last permitted to return;—and, upon Bonaparte's accession to the sovereignty, were even restored to a great part of their possessions. On the earnest entreaty of her mother, she was induced at last to give her hand to Louis de Larochejaquelein, brother to the gallant Henri—and the inheritor of his principles and character. This match took place in 1802, and they lived in peaceful retirement till the late movements for the restoration of the house of Bourbon. The notice of this new alliance terminates the original Memoirs; but there is a supplement, containing rather a curious account of the intrigues and communications of the royalist party in Bourdeaux and the South, through the whole course of the Revolution,—and of the proceedings by which they conceive that they accelerated the restoration of the King in 1814. It may not be uninteresting to add, that since the book was published, the second husband of the unfortunate writer fell in battle in the same cause which proved fatal to the first, during the short period of Bonaparte's last reign, and but a few days before the decisive battle of Waterloo.

We have not left room now for any general observations—and there is no need of them. The book is, beyond all question, extremely curious and interesting—and we really have no idea that any reflections of ours could appear half so much so as the abstract we have now given in their stead. One remark, however, we shall venture to make, now that our abstract is done. If all France were like La Vendée in 1793, we should anticipate nothing but happiness from the restoration of the Bourbons and of the old government. But the very fact that the Vendeans were crushed by the rest of the country, proves that this is not the case: And indeed it requires but a moment's reflection to perceive, that the rest of France could not well resemble La Vendée in its royalism, unless it had resembled it in the other peculiarities upon which that royalism was founded—unless it had all its noblesse resident on their estates; and living in their old feudal relations with a simple and agricultural vassalage. The book indeed shows two things very plainly,—and both of them well worth remembering. In the first place, that there may be a great deal of kindness and good affection among a people of insurgents against an established government;—and, secondly, that where there is such an aversion to a government, as to break out in spontaneous insurrection, it is impossible entirely to subdue that aversion, either by severity or forbearance—although the difference of the two courses of policy is, that severity, even when carried to the savage extremity of devastation and indiscriminate slaughter, leads only to the adoption of similar atrocities in return—while forbearance is at least rewarded by the acquiescence of those who are conscious of weakness, and gives time and opportunity for those mutual concessions by which alone contending factions or principles can ever be permanently reconciled.

(November, 1812.)

Mémoires de Frederique Sophie Wilhelmine de Prusse, *Margrave de Bareith, Sœur de Frederic le Grand. Ecrits de sa Main.* 8vo. 2 tomes. Brunswick, Paris, et Londres: 1812.

Philosophers have long considered it as probable, that the private manners of absolute sovereigns are vulgar, their pleasures low, and their dispositions selfish;—that the two extremes of life, in short, approach pretty closely to each other; and that the Masters of mankind, when stripped of the artificial pomp and magnificence which invests them in public, resemble nothing so nearly as the meanest of the multitude. The ground of this opinion is, that the very highest and the very lowest of mankind are equally beyond the influence of that wholesome control, to which all the intermediate classes are subjected, by their mutual dependence, and the need they have for the good will and esteem of their fellows. Those who are at the very bottom of the scale are below the sphere of this influence; and those at the very top are above it. The one have no chance of distinction by any effort they are capable of making; and the other are secure of the highest degree of it, without any. Both therefore are indifferent, or very nearly so, to the opinion of mankind: the former, because the naked subsistence which they earn by their labour will not be affected

by that opinion; and the latter, because their legal power and preeminence are equally independent of it. Those who have nothing to lose, in short, are not very far from the condition of those who have nothing more to gain; and the maxim of reckoning one's-self last, which is the basis of all politeness, and leads, insensibly, from the mere practice of dissimulation, to habits of kindness and sentiments of generous independence, is equally inapplicable to the case of those who are obviously and in reality the last of their kind, and those who are quite indisputably the first. Both therefore are deprived of the checks and of the training, which restrain the selfishness, and call out the sensibilities of other men: And, remote and contrasted as their actual situation must be allowed to be, are alike liable to exhibit that disregard for the feelings of others, and that undisguised preference for their own gratification, which it is the boast of modern refinement to have subdued, or at least effectually concealed, among the happier orders of society. In a free country, indeed, the monarch, if he share at all in the spirit of liberty, may escape this degradation; because he will then feel for how much he is dependent on the good opinion of his countrymen; and, in general, where there is a great ambition for popularity, this pernicious effect of high fortune will be in a great degree avoided. But the ordinary class of arbitrary rulers, who found their whole claim to distinction upon the accident of their birth and station, may be expected to realize all that we have intimated as to the peculiar manners and dispositions of the *Caste*; to sink, like their brethren of the theatre, when their hour of representation is over, into gross sensuality, paltry intrigues, and dishonourable squabbles; and, in short, to be fully more likely to beat their wives and cheat their benefactors, than any other set of persons—out of the condition of tinkers.

But though these opinions have long seemed pretty reasonable to those who presumed to reason at all on such subjects, and even appeared to be tolerably well confirmed by the few indications that could be obtained as to the state of the fact, there was but little prospect of the world at large getting at the exact truth, either by actual observation or by credible report. The tone of adulation and outrageous compliment is so firmly established, and as it were positively prescribed, for all authorized communications from the interior of a palace, that it would be ridiculous even to form a guess, as to its actual condition, from such materials: And, with regard to the casual observers who might furnish less suspected information, a great part are too vain, and too grateful for the opportunities they have enjoyed, to do any thing which might prevent their recurrence; while others are kept silent by a virtuous shame; and the remainder are discredited, and perhaps not always without reason, as the instruments of faction or envy. There seemed great reason to fear, therefore, that this curious branch of Natural History would be left to mere theory and conjecture, and never be elucidated by the testimony of any competent observer; when the volumes before us made their appearance, to set theory and conjecture at rest, and make the private character of such sovereigns a matter of historical record.

They bear to be Memoirs of a Princess of Prussia, written by herself; and are in fact memoirs of the private life of most of the princes of Germany, written by one of their own number—with great freedom indeed—but with an evident partiality to the fraternity; and unmasking more of the domestic manners and individual habits of persons in that lofty station, than any other work with which we are acquainted. It is ushered into the world without any voucher for its authenticity, or even any satisfactory account of the manner in which the manuscript was obtained: But its genuineness, we understand, is admitted even by those whose inclinations would lead them to deny it, and appears to us indeed to be irresistibly established by internal evidence.* It is written in the vulgar gossiping style of a chambermaid; but at the same time with very considerable cleverness and sagacity, as to the conception and delineation of character. It is full of events and portraits—and also of egotism, detraction, and inconsistency; but all delivered with an air of good faith that leaves us little room to doubt of the facts that are reported on the writer's own authority, or, in any case, of her own belief in the justness of her opinions. Indeed, half the edification of the book consists in the lights it affords as to the character of the writer, and consequently as to the effects of the circumstances in which she was placed: nor is there any thing, in the very curious picture it presents, more striking than the part she unintentionally contributes, in the peculiarity of her own taste in the colouring and delineation. The heartfelt ennui, and the affected contempt of greatness, so strangely combined with her tenacity of all its privileges, and her perpetual intrigues and quarrels about precedence—the splendid encomiums on her own inflexible integrity, intermixed with the complacent narrative of perpetual trick and duplicity—her bitter complaints of the want of zeal and devotedness in her friends, and the desolating display of her own utter heartlessness in every page of the history—and,—finally, her outrageous abuse of almost every one with whom she is connected, alternating with professions of the greatest regard, and occasional apologies for the most atrocious among them, when they happen to conduct themselves in conformity to her own little views at the moment—are all, we think, not only irrefragable proofs of the authenticity of the singular work before us, but,

* I have not recently made any enquiries on this subject: and it is possible that the authenticity of this strange book may have been discredited, since the now remote period when I last heard it discussed. It is obvious at first sight that it is full of exaggerations: But *that* is too common a characteristic of genuine memoirs written in the *tranchant* style to which it belongs, to detract much from the credit to which the minuteness and confidence of its details may otherwise be thought to entitle it.

together with the lowness of its style and diction, are features—and pretty prominent ones—in that portraiture of royal manners and dispositions which we conceive it to be its chief office and chief merit to display. In this point of view, we conceive the publication to be equally curious and instructive; and there is a vivacity in the style, and a rapidity in the narrative, which renders it at all events very entertaining, though little adapted for abstract or abridgment.—We must endeavour, however, to give our readers some notion of its contents.

What is now before us is but a fragment, extending from the birth of the author in 1707 to the year 1742, and is chiefly occupied with the court of Berlin, down till her marriage with the Prince of Bareith in 1731. She sets off with a portrait of her father Frederic William, whose peculiarities are already pretty well known by the dutiful commentaries of his son, and Voltaire. His daughter begins with him a little more handsomely; and assures us, that he had "talents of the first order"—"an excellent heart"—and, in short, "all the qualities which go to the constitution of great men." Such is the flattering outline: But candour required some shading; and we must confess that it is laid on freely, and with good effect. His temper, she admits, was ungovernable, and often hurried him into excesses altogether unworthy of his rank and situation. Then it must also be allowed that he was somewhat hard-hearted; and throughout his whole life gave a decided preference to the cardinal virtue of Justice over the weaker attribute of Mercy. Moreover, "his excessive love of money exposed him" (her Royal Highness seems to think very unjustly) "to the imputation of avarice." And, finally, she informs us, without any circumlocution, that he was a crazy bigot in religion—suspicious, jealous, and deceitful—and entertained a profound contempt for the whole sex to which his dutiful biographer belongs.

This "great and amiable" prince was married, as every body knows, to a princess of Hanover, a daughter of our George the First; of whom he was outrageously jealous, and whom he treated with a degree of brutality that would almost have justified *any* form of revenge. The princess, however, seems to have been irreproachably chaste: But had, notwithstanding, some of the usual vices of slaves; and tormented her tyrant to very good purpose by an interminable system of the most crooked and provoking intrigues, chiefly about the marriages of her family, but occasionally upon other subjects, carried on by the basest tools and instruments, and for a long time in confederacy with the daughter who has here recorded their history. But though she had thus the satisfaction of frequently enraging her husband, we cannot help thinking that she had herself by far the worst of the game; and indeed it is impossible to read, without a mixed feeling of pity and contempt, the catalogue of miserable shifts which this poor creature was perpetually forced to employ to avoid detection, and escape the beatings with which it was frequently accompanied!—feigned sicknesses—midnight consultations—hidings behind screens and under beds—spies at her husband's drunken orgies—burning of letters, pocketing of inkstands, and all the paltry apparatus of boarding-school imposture;—together with the more revolting criminality of lies told in the midst of caresses, and lessons of falsehood anxiously inculcated on the minds of her children.—It is edifying to know, that, with all this low cunning, and practice in deceiving, this poor lady was herself the dupe of a preposterous and unworthy confidence. She told every thing to a favourite chambermaid—who told it over again to one of the ministers—who told it to the King: And though the treachery of her confidante was perfectly notorious, and she herself was reduced privately to borrow money from the King of England in order to bribe her to secrecy, she never could keep from her any one thing that it was of importance to conceal.

The ingenious Princess before us had for many years no other brother than the Great Frederic, who afterwards succeeded to the throne, but whose extreme ill health in his childhood seemed to render her accession a matter of considerable probability. Her alliance consequently became an early object of ambition to most of the Protestant princes of her time; and before she was fully eight years old, her father and mother had had fifty quarrels about her marriage. About the same time, she assures us that a Swedish officer, who was a great conjurer, informed her, after inspecting her hand, "that she would be sought in marriage by the Kings of Sweden, England, Russia, and Poland, but would not be united to any of them:"—a prediction, the good Princess declares, that was afterwards verified in a very remarkable manner. The Swedish proposition indeed follows hard upon the prophecy; for the very next year engagements are taken for that match, which are afterwards abandoned on account of the tender age of the parties.—The Princess here regales us with an account of her own vivacity and *angelic* memory at this period, and with a copious interlude of all the court scandal during the first days of her existence. But as we scarcely imagine that the scandalous chronicle of Berlin for the year 1712, would excite much interest in this country in the year 1812, we shall take the liberty to pass over the gallantries of Madame de Blaspil and the treasons of M. Clement; merely noticing, that after the execution of the latter, the King ordered every letter that came to his capital to be opened, and never slept without drawn swords and cocked pistols at his side. But while he was thus trembling at imaginary dangers, he was, if we can believe his infant daughter, upon the very brink of others sufficiently serious. His chief favourites were the Prince of Anhalt, who is briefly characterized in these Memoirs as brutal, cruel and deceitful, and the minister Grumkow, who is represented, on the same authority, as a mere concentration of all the vices. These worthy persons had set their hearts

upon our author's marriage with the nephew of the former, and her ultimate elevation to the throne by the death of her sickly brother. But when that brother begins to improve in health, and the old King not only makes his will without consulting them, but threatens to live to an unreasonable age, they naturally become impatient for the accomplishment of their wishes, and resolve to cut off both father and son, the first time they can catch them together at an exhibition of ropedancing,—with which elegant entertainment it seems the worthy monarch was in the habit of recreating himself almost every evening. The whole of this dreadful plot, we are assured, was revealed to the King, with all its *particularités*, by a lady in the confidence of the conspirators: but they contrive, somehow or other, to play their parts so adroitly, that, after a long investigation, they are reinstated in favour, and their fair accuser sent to pine, on bread and water, in a damp dungeon at Spandau.

In the year 1717, Peter the Great came with his Empress and court to pay a visit at Berlin;—and as the whole scene is described with great vivacity in the work before us, and serves to illustrate its great theme of the private manners of sovereigns, we shall make rather a fuller abstract of it than we can afford for most parts of the narrative. The degrees of grossness and pretension are infinite—and the court of Prussia, where the Sovereign got drunk and kicked his counsellors, and beat the ladies of his family, thought itself entitled to treat Peter and his train as a set of Barbarians!—On his first presentation, the Czar took Frederic firmly by the hand, and said, he was glad to see him; he then offered to kiss the Queen—but she declined the honour. He next presented his son and daughter, and *four hundred* ladies in waiting—the greater part of whom, our Princess assures us, were washerwomen and scullions promoted to that nominal dignity. *Almost every one of them*, however, she adds, had a baby richly dressed in her arms—and when any one asked whose it was, answered with great coolness and complacency, that "the Czar had done her the honour to make her the mother of it."—The Czarine was very short, tawny, and ungraceful—dressed like a provincial German player, in an old fashioned robe, covered with dirt and silver, and with some dozens of medals and pictures of saints strung down the front, which clattered every time she moved, like the bells of a packhorse. She spoke little German, and no French; and finding that she got on but ill with the Queen and her party, she called *her fool* into a corner to come and entertain her in Russian—which she did with such effect, that she kept her in a continual roar of laughter before all the court. The Czar himself is described as tall and rather handsome, though with something intolerably harsh in his physiognomy. On first seeing our royal author he took her up in his arms, and rubbed the skin off her face in kissing her with his rough beard; laughing very heartily at the airs with which she resented this familiarity. He was liable at times to convulsive starts and spasms, and being seized with one of them when at table, with his knife in his hand, put his hosts into no little bodily terror. He told the Queen, however, that he would do her no harm, and took her hand in token of his good humour; but squeezed it so unmercifully that she was forced to cry out—at which he laughed again with great violence, and said, "her bones were not so well knit as his Catherine's." There was to be a grand ball in the evening; but as soon as he had done eating, he got up, and trudged home by himself to his lodgings in the suburbs. Next day they went to see the curiosities of the place.—What pleased him most was a piece of antique sculpture, most grossly indecent. Nothing, however, would serve him but that his wife should kiss this figure; and when she hesitated, he told her he would cut off her head if she refused. He then asked this piece and several other things of value from the King, and packed them off for Petersburgh, without ceremony. In a few days after he took his departure; leaving the palace in which he had been lodged in such a state of filth and dilapidation as to remind one, says the princess, of the desolation of Jerusalem.

We now come to a long chapter of the author's personal sufferings, from a sort of half governess, half chambermaid, of the name of Letti, who employed herself all day in beating and scratching her, for refusing to repeat all that the King and the Queen said in her hearing, and kept her awake all night by snoring like fifty troopers. This accomplished person also invented ingenious nicknames, which seem to have had much currency, for all the leading persons about the court. The Queen she always called *La grande ânesse*, and her two favourites respectively *La grosse vache*, and *La sotte bête*. Sometimes she only kicked the Princess' shins—at other times she pummelled her on the nose till "she bled like a calf;" and occasionally excoriated her face by rubbing it with acrid substances. Such, however, was the magnanimity of her royal pupil, that she never made the least complaint of this dreadful usage; but an old lady found it out, and told the Queen, that "her daughter was beaten every day like plaster," and that she would be brought to her one morning with her bones broken, if she did not get another attendant. So La Letti is dismissed, though with infinite difficulty, and after a world of intrigue; because she had been recommended by my Lady Arlington, who had a great deal to say with the court of England, with which it was, at that time, a main object to keep well! But she is got rid of at last, and decamps with all the Princess' wardrobe, who is left without a rag to cover her nakedness. Soon after this, the King is taken with a colic one very hot June, and is judiciously shut up in a close room with a large comfortable fire; by the side of which he commands his daughter to sit, and watch like a vestal, till her eyes are ready to start from her head; and she falls into a dysentery, of which she gives a long history.

Being now at the ripe age of twelve, her mother takes her into her confidence, and begins with telling her, that there are certain people who are her enemies, to whom she commands her never to show any kindness or civility. She then proceeds to name "three fourths of all Berlin." But her great object is to train her daughter to be a spy on her father, and at the same time to keep every thing secret from him and his counsellors; and to arrange measures for a match between her and her nephew the Duke of Gloucester—afterwards Prince of Wales, on the accession of his father George II. In 1723, George I. comes to visit his daughter at Berlin, and is characterised, we cannot say very favourably, by his grandchild. He was very stupid, she says, with great airs of wisdom—had no generosity but for his favourites, and the mistresses by whom he let himself be governed—spoke little, and took no pleasure in hearing any thing but *niaiseries*:—since his accession to the English throne he had also become insupportably haughty and imperious. When the fair author was presented to him, he took up a candle, held it close to her face, and examined her all over without saying a word: at table he preserved the same magnificent silence; judging wisely, the Princess observes, that it was better to say nothing than to expose himself by talking. Before the end of the repast he was taken ill; and tumbled down on the floor, his hat falling off on one side, and his wig on the other. It was a full hour before he came to himself; and it was whispered that it was a sort of apoplexy: However, he was well enough next day; and arranged every thing for the marriage of the author with his grandson, and of her brother with the Princess Amelia. Obstacles arose, however, to the consummation of this double alliance; and although the two Sovereigns had another meeting on the subject the year after, still the necessity of obtaining the consent of parliament occasioned an obstruction; and in the mean time Frederic having thought fit to seize several tall Hanoverians, and enrol them by force in his regiment of giants, the English monarch resented this outrage, and died of another attack of apoplexy before matters could be restored to a right footing.

Soon after this catastrophe, Frederic takes to drinking with the Imperial ambassador; and, when his stomach gets into disorder, becomes outrageously pious; orders his valet to sing psalms before him, and preaches himself to his family every afternoon. The Princess and her brother are ready to suffocate with laughter at these discourses; but the hypochondria gains ground; and at last the King talks seriously of resigning his crown, and retiring with his family to a small house in the country; where his daughter should take care of the linen, his son of the provisions, and his wife of the kitchen. To divert these melancholy thoughts, he is persuaded to pay a visit to the Elector of Saxony, Augustus King of Poland; and there, large potations of Hungarian wine speedily dissipate all his dreams of devotion. Nothing in modern history, we suppose, comes nears the profligacy of the Court of Dresden at that period. Augustus, who never closed a day in sobriety, openly kept a large seraglio in his palace, and had about three hundred and fifty children by its inhabitants. One of those who had all along been recognized as his daughter, was at this time his favourite mistress; while she, disdaining to be faithful to this incestuous connection, lavished all her favour on a brother, who was her avowed lover, and the rival of their common parent!—Frederic, however, was so much pleased with these doings, that he entered into a treaty for marrying his daughter to this virtuous elector, who was then fifty years of age; and the year after, Augustus came to Berlin, to follow out his suit, where he was received in great state, and the daughter-mistress caressed by the chaste queen and her daughter. There is a good description of a grand court dinner given on this occasion; in which, after a long account of the marshalling of princes and princesses, the business of the day is summed up in the following emphatic words—*On but force santés—on parla peu—et on s'ennuya beaucoup!* The two kings, however, had various *tête-à-tête* parties that were more jolly; and in which they continued at table from one o'clock, which was their hour of dinner, till near midnight. In spite of all this cordiality, however, the treaty of marriage was broken off: the heir-apparent of Augustus having obstinately refused to ratify those articles in it which required his concurrence.

The King now resolved to match his daughter with a poor German prince, called the Duke of Weissenfield; at which his wife, who had been all this time intriguing busily to bring about the union originally projected with the Prince of Wales, is in despair, and persuades him to let her make one effort more to bring her brother of England to a determination. And here we have a very curious piece of secret history, which, though it touches the policy of the Court of England, has hitherto been unknown, we believe, in this country. A confidential agent arrives from Hanover, who informs the Queen, that the Prince of Wales has made up his mind to come immediately to Berlin, and to marry her daughter, without waiting for the formal consent of his father, or the English Parliament, who, however, he has no doubt, will neither of them hesitate to ratify the act when it is once over. The Queen is transported with this news; and is so much intoxicated with joy on the occasion, that she bethinks herself of confiding the whole story in the evening to the English ambassador—who instantly writes home to his Court; and, his letter being addressed to the Secretary of State, produces an immediate mandate to the Prince, to set out for England without the delay of a moment. This mandate arrives just as his Royal Highness is taking post with bridal impatience for Berlin: and, as it is addressed to him through the public offices, requires his implicit obedience. The truth of the matter is, the Princess assures us, that George II. was himself

desirous that the match should be concluded without waiting for the uncertain sanction of his Parliament, and had suggested this device of a seeming *etourderie* on the part of his son; but the indiscretion of her mother, in blabbing the matter to the ambassador, and his communication to the ministry, left the monarch no choice, but to dissemble his mortification, and lend his authority to prevent the execution of a project which had originated with himself.

But, whatever may be the true theory of this disaster, it seems to be certain, that the disappointment put the King of Prussia into exceeding bad humour, and, concurring with an untimely fit of the gout, made the lives of his family still more uncomfortable than he took care at all times to render them. The account indeed which is here given of the domestic habits of this worthy sovereign, though humiliating in some degree to human nature, has yet something in it so extravagant, as to be actually ludicrous and farcical. He ordered his children to come to his apartment at nine o'clock every morning, and kept them close prisoners there the whole day, not letting them once out of his sight, "*pour quelque raison que ce fut.*" His employment was to curse and abuse them with every coarse term of reproach,—his daughter getting no other name than *la Canaille Anglaise*, and his son, *le Coquin de Fritz*. He had always been in the practice of famishing them; partly out of avarice, and partly from the love of tormenting; but now even the soup made of bare bones and salt was retrenched. He often refused to let them have any thing whatsoever; and spit into the dishes out of which he had helped himself, in order to prevent their touching them! At other times he would insist upon their eating all sorts of unwholesome and disgusting compositions—"ce qui nous obligeait quelquefois de rendre, en sa presence, tout ce que nous avions dans le corps!" Even this, however, was not the worst of it. He very frequently threw the plates at their heads; and scarcely ever let his daughter go out of the room, without aiming a sly blow at her with the end of his crutch. The unhappy Frederic he employed himself almost every morning in caning and kicking for a long time together; and was actually, upon one occasion, in the act of strangling him with the cord of a window curtain, when he was interrupted by one of his domestics. To make amends, however, he once hung up himself; when the Queen, by a rare act of folly, was induced to cut him down. When free from gout, he was still more dangerous; for then he could pursue his daughters with considerable agility when they ran away from his blows; and once caught the author, after a chase of this kind, when he clutched her by the hair, and pushed her into the fireplace, till her clothes began to burn. During the heats of summer, he frequently carried his family to a country-house, called Vousterhausen, which was an old ruinous mansion, surrounded with a putrid ditch; and there they dined every day, in a tent pitched on a terrace, with scarcely any thing to eat, and their feet up to the ancles in mud, if the weather happened to be rainy. After dinner, which was served exactly at noon, the good king set himself down to sleep for two hours, in a great chair placed in the full glare of the sun, and compelled all his family to lie on the ground around him, exposed to the same intolerable scorching.

After some little time, England sends another ambassador, who renews in due form the proposal of the double marriage, and offers such baits to the avarice or the King that matters appear once more to be finally adjusted, and the princess is saluted by her household with the title of Princess of Wales. This, however, was not her destiny. Grumkow intrigues with the Imperial ambassador to break off the match—and between them they contrive to persuade the King that he is made a tool of by the Queen and her brother of England: and inflame him to such a rage by producing specimens of their secret correspondence, that when the English ambassador appears next day with decisive proofs of Grumkow's treachery and insolence, the King throws the papers in his face, and actually lifts his foot, as if to give him the family salute of a kick. The blood of the Englishman rouses at this insult; and he puts himself in a posture to return the compliment with interest, when the King makes a rapid retreat—and the ambassador, in spite of the entreaties of the Queen and her children, and various overtures of apology from the King himself, shakes the dust of Berlin from his feet, and sets off in high dudgeon for London. The King then swears that his daughter shall have no husband at all, but that he will make her abbess in the monastery of Herford;—and her brother Frederic, to her great mortification, tells her it is the best thing she can do, and that he sees no other way to restore peace in the family.

We now proceed to the adventures of this brother, which, as their outline is already generally known, need not be fully narrated in this place. Tired of being beaten and kicked and reviled all day long, he resolves to withdraw from his country, and makes some movements to that effect in confederacy with an officer of the name of Katt, who was to have been the companion of his flight. Both, however, are arrested by the King's order, who makes several attempts upon the life of his son, when he is brought as a prisoner before him—and comes home foaming and black with passion, crying out to the Queen that her accursed son was dead at last; and felling his daughter to the earth with his fist, as he tells her to go and bear her brother company. He then gets hold of a box of his son's papers, which had been surprised at Katt's lodgings, and goes out with it in great spirits, exclaiming that he was sure he should find in it enough to justify him in cutting off the heads both of *le Coquin de Fritz*, and *la Canaille de Wilhelmine*. Wilhelmine, however, and her politic mother had been beforehand with him—for they had got hold of this same box the day preceding, and by false keys and seals had taken all the papers out of it, and replaced them by harmless and insignificant letters, which they had fabricated in the course of one day, to the amount of near seven hundred. The King, therefore, found nothing to justify immediate execution; but kept the Prince a close prisoner at Custrin, and shut the Princess up in her own chamber. His son and Katt were afterwards tried for *desertion*, before a court-martial composed of twelve officers: Two were for sparing the life of the Prince, but all the rest were base enough to gratify the sanguinary insanity of their master by condemning them both to death. All Germany, however, exclaimed loudly against this sentence; and made such representations to the King, that he was at last constrained to spare his son. But the unhappy Katt was sacrificed. His scaffold was erected immediately before the window of his unhappy master, who was dressed by force in the same funeral garment with his friend, and was held up at the window by two soldiers, while the executioner struck off the head of his companion. There is no record of such brutal barbarity in the history of Nero or Domitian.

After this, the family feuds about his daughter's marriage revive with double fury. The Queen, whose whole heart is set on the English alliance, continues her petty intrigues to effect that object; while the King, rendered furious by the haughty language adopted by the English ministry on the subject of the insult offered to their ambassador, determines to have her married without a moment's delay; and after threatening the Queen with his cane, sends to offer her the hand of the Prince of Bareith; which she dutifully accepts, in spite of the bitter lamentations and outrageous fury of the Queen. That intriguing princess, however, does not cease to intrigue, though deserted by her daughter—but sends again in greater urgency than ever to England;—and that court, if we are to believe the statement before us, at last seriously afraid of losing a match every way desirable, sends off despatches, containing an entire and unqualified acquiescence in all Frederic's stipulations as to the marriage—which arrive at Berlin the very morning of the day on which the Princess was to be solemnly betrothed to M. de Bareith, but are wickedly kept back by Grumkow and the Imperial Envoy, till after the ceremony had been publicly and irrevocably completed. Their disclosure then throws all parties into rage and despair; and the intriguers are made the ridiculous victims of their own baseness and duplicity. The indefatigable Queen, however, does not despair even yet; but sends off another courier to England, and sets all her emissaries to prepare the King to break off the match in the event of the answer being favourable;—nay, the very night before the marriage, she takes her daughter apart, and begs her to live with her husband as a sister with her brother, for a few days, till the result the embassage is known. But her usual destiny pursues her. The fatal evening arrives; and the Princess, with a train forty-five feet in length, and the spousal crown placed on twenty-four twisted locks of false hair, each thicker than her arm, enters the grand saloon, and takes the irrevocable vow!—and her mother has just put her to bed, when she hears that her courier has arrived, and leaves her in rage and anguish.

The humours of the rest of the family appear to no great advantage during the bridal festivities. In the first place, the Princess' sister, Charlotte, falls in love with the bridegroom, and does her *possible* to seduce him. Then old Frederic cheats the bride in her settlements, which amount to a gross sum of near 500*l.* a year;—and, finally, her brother-in-law, the Margrave of Anspach, rallies her husband so rudely upon his mother's gallantries, that the latter gives him a brave defiance in the face of the whole court: at which the poor Margrave is so dreadfully frightened, that he bursts out into screams and tears, and runs for refuge into the Queen's apartment, where he hides himself behind the arras, from which he is taken in a filthy condition, and carried to his apartments, "où il exhala sa colère par des vomissemens et un diarrhée qui pensa l'envoyer à l'autre monde."—Yet the good Princess assures us, that this reptile had "a good heart and a good understanding,"—with no fault but being a little passionate; and then, in the very next page, she records a malignant and detected falsehood which he had vented against her husband, and which rendered him odious in the eyes of the whole court. Being dissatisfied with her settlements, she puts the King in a good humour by giving a grand dinner to him and his officers, at which they are all "ivres morts;" but having mentioned her distresses through the Queen, he is so much moved with them, that he calls for the settlements, and strikes off about one fourth of her allowance.

All this happened in autumn 1731; and in January 1732, the Princess being far advanced in pregnancy, and the roads almost impassable, it was thought advisable for her to set out for her husband's court at Bareith. She is overturned of course several times, and obliged to walk half the way:—But we pass over the disasters of the journey, to commemorate her arrival in this ancient principality. The first village she reached was Hoff, which is on the frontier—and has also the convenience of being within three miles of the centre of the territory: and here the grand marshal, and all the nobility of the province, are mustered to receive her at the bottom of the staircase, or, in other words, of the wooden ladder which led to her apartments. However, various guns were fired off very successfully, and the chief nobility were invited to dinner. The Princess' description of these personages is really very edifying. They had all faces, she says, which a child could not look on without screaming;—huge masses of hair on their heads, filled with a race of vermin as ancient as their pedigrees;—clothed in old laced suits that had descended through many generations

the most part in rags, and no way fitting their present wearers;—the greater part of them covered with itch;—and their conversation, of oxen. Immediately after dinner they began with the Princess' health in a huge bumper, and proceeded regularly in the same gallant manner through the whole of her genealogy;—so that in less than half an hour she found herself in the middle of thirty-four monsters, so drunk that none of them could articulate, "et rendant les boyaux à tous ces desastreux visages." Next day being Sunday, there was a sermon in honour of the occasion, in which the preacher gave an exact account of all the marriages that had happened in the world, from the days of Adam down to the last of the patriarchs—illustrated with so many circumstantial details as to the antecedents and consequents in each, that the male part of the audience laughed outright, and the female pretended to blush throughout the whole discourse. The dinner scene was the same as on the day preceding; with the addition of the female nobility who came in the evening, with their heads enveloped in greasy wigs like swallows' nests, and ancient embroidered dresses, stuck all over with knots of faded ribands.

The day following, the Margrave, her father-in-law, came himself to meet her. This worthy prince was nearly as amiable, and not quite so wise, as the royal parent she had left. He had read but two books in the world, Telemaque, and Amelot's Roman history, and discoursed out of them so very tediously, that the poor Princess fainted from mere *ennui* at the very first interview;—Then he drank night and day—and occasionally took his cane to the prince his son, and his other favourites. Though living in poverty and absolute discomfort, he gave himself airs of the utmost magnificence—went to dinner with three flourishes of cracked trumpets—received his court, leaning with one hand on a table, in imitation of the Emperor—and conferred his little dignities in harangues so pompous, and so awkwardly delivered, that his daughter-in-law at once laughed and was ashamed of him. He was awkward, too, and embarrassed in the society of strangers of good breeding—but made amends by chattering without end, about himself and his two books, to those who were bound to bear with him. Under the escort of this great potentate the Princess made her triumphal entry into the city of Bareith the next morning: the whole procession consisting of one coach, containing the constituted authorities who had come out to meet her, her own carriage drawn by six carrion post-horses, that containing her attendants, and six or seven wagons loaded with furniture. The Margrave then conducted her from the palace gate in great state to her apartments, through a long passage, hung with cobwebs, and so abominably filthy as to turn her stomach in hurrying through it. This opened into an antechamber, adorned with old tapestry, so torn and faded that the figures on it looked like so many ghosts; and through that into a cabinet furnished with green damask all in tatters. Her bedchamber was also furnished with the same stuff—but in such a condition, that the curtains fell in pieces whenever they were touched. Half of the windows were broken, and there was no fire; though it was midwinter. The dinners were not eatable; and lasted three hours, with thirty flourishes of the old trumpets for the bumper toasts with which they were enlivened: Add to all this, that the poor Princess was very much indisposed—that the Margrave came and talked to her out of Telemaque and Amelot, five or six hours every day—and that she could not muster cash enough to buy herself a gown: and it will not appear wonderful, that in the very midst of the wedding revelries, she spent half her time in bed, weeping over the vanity of human grandeur.

By and by, however, she found occupation in quarrelling with her sisters-in-law, and in making and appeasing disputes between her husband and his father. She agrees so ill, indeed, with all the family, that her proposal of returning to lie-in at Berlin is received with great joy:—but while they are deliberating about raising money for this journey of two hundred miles, she becomes too ill to move. Her sister of Anspach, and her husband, come, and quarrel with her upon points of etiquette; the Margrave falls in love with one of her attendants; and in the midst of all manner of perplexities she is delivered of a daughter. The Margrave, who was in the country, not happening to hear the cannon which proclaimed this great event, conceives that he is treated with great disrespect, and gives orders for having his son imprisoned in one of his fortresses. He relents, however, at the christening; and is put in good humour by a visit from another son and a brother—the first of whom is described as a kind of dwarf and natural fool, who could never take seriously to any employment but catching flies; and the other as a furious madman, in whose company no one was sure of his life. This amiable family party is broken up, by an order on the Princess' husband to join his regiment at Berlin, and another order from her father for her to pay a visit to her sister at Anspach. On her way she visits an ancient beauty, with a nose like a beetroot, and two maids of honour so excessively fat that they could not sit down; and, in stooping to kiss the Princess' hand, fell over, and rolled like balls of flesh on the carpet. At Anspach, she finds the Margrave deep in an intrigue with the housemaid; and consoles her sister under this affliction. She then makes a great effort, and raises money enough to carry her to Berlin; where she is received with coldness and ridicule by the Queen, and neglect and insult by all her sisters. Her brother's marriage with the Princess of Brunswick was just about to take place, and we choose to give in her own words her account of the manner in which she was *talked over* in this royal circle.

"La reine, à table, fit tomber la conversation sur la princesse royale future. 'Votre frère,' me dit-elle en le regardant, 'est au désespoir de l'épouser, et n'a pas tort: *c'est une vraibête;* elle répond à tout ce qu'on lui dit par un oui et un non, accompagné d'un rire niais qui fait mal au cœur.' 'Oh!' dit ma sœur Charlotte, 'votre Majesté ne connoît pas encore tout son mérite. J'ai été un matin à sa toilette; j'ai cru y suffoquer; elle exhaloit une odeur insupportable! Je crois qu'elle a pour le moins dix ou douze fistules—car cela n'est pas naturel. J'ai remarqué aussi qu'elle est contrefaite; son corps de jupe est rembourré d'un côté, et elle a une hanche plus haute que l'autre.' Je fus fort étonnée de ces propos, qui se tenoient en présence des domestiques—et surtout de mon frère! Je m'aperçus qu'ils lui faisoient de la peine et qu'il changeoit de couleur. Il se retira aussitôt après souper. J'en fis autant. Il vint me voir un moment après. Je lui demandai s'il étoit satisfait du roi? Il me répondit que sa situation changeoit à tout moment; que tantôt il étoit en faveur et tantôt en disgrâce; que son plus grand bonheur consistoit dans l'absence; qu'il menoit une vie douce et tranquille à son régiment; que l'étude et la musique y faisoient ses principales occupations; qu'il avoit fait bâtir une maison et fait faire un jardin charmant où il pouvoit lire et se promener. Je le pria de me dire si le portrait que la reine et ma sœur m'avoient fait de la Princesse de Brunswick étoit véritable? 'Nous sommes seuls,' repartit-il, 'et je n'ai rien de caché pour vous. Je vous parlerai avec sincérité. La reine, par ses misérables intrigues, est la seule source de nos malheurs. A peine avez-vous été partie qu'elle a renoué avec l'Angleterre; elle a voulu vous substituer ma sœur Charlotte, et lui faire épouser le Prince de Galles. Vous jugez bien qu'elle a employé tous ses efforts pour faire réussir son plan et pour me marier avec la Princesse Amélie.'"

The poor Prince, however, confesses that he cannot say much for the intellect of his intended bride;—and really does not use a much nobler language than the rest of the family, even when speaking in her presence; for on her first presentation to his sister, finding that she made no answer to the compliments that were addressed to her, the enamoured youth encourages her bridal timidity by this polite exclamation, "Peste soit de la bête!—remercie donc ma sœur!" The account of the festivities which accompanied this marriage really excites our compassion; and is well calculated to disabuse any inexperienced person of the mistake of supposing, that there can be either comfort or enjoyment in the cumbrous splendours of a court. Scanty and crowded dinners at midday—and formal balls and minuets immediately after, in June, followed up with dull gaming in the evening;—the necessity of being up in full dress by three o'clock in the morning to see a review—and the pleasure of being stifled in a crowded tent without seeing any thing, or getting any refreshment for seven or eight hours, and then to return famishing to a dinner of eighty covers;—at other times to travel ten miles at a foot-pace in an open carriage during a heavy rain, and afterwards to stand shivering on the wet grass to see fireworks—to pay twenty visits of ceremony every morning, and to present and be presented in stately silence to persons whom you hate and despise. Such were the general delights of the whole court;—and our Princess had the additional gratification of being forced from a sick-bed to enjoy them, and of undergoing the sneers of her mother, and the slights of her whole generation. Their domestic life, when these galas were over, was nearly as fatiguing, and still more lugubrious The good old custom of famishing was kept up at table; and immediately after dinner the King had his great chair placed right before the fire, and snored in it for three hours, during all which they were obliged to keep silence, for fear of disturbing him. When he awoke, he set to smoking tobacco;—and then sate four hours at supper, listening to long stories of his ancestors, in the taste of those sermons which are prescribed to persons afflicted with insomnolency. Then the troops began their exercise under the windows before four o'clock every morning,—and not only kept the whole household awake from that hour by their firing, but sometimes sent a ramrod through the glass to assist at the Princess' toilette. One afternoon the King was seized with a sort of apoplexy in his sleep, which, as he always snored extremely loud, might have carried him off without much observation, had not his daughter observed him grow black in the face, and restored him by timely applications. She is equally unfortunate about the same time in her father-in-law the Margrave, who is mischievous enough to recover, after breaking a blood-vessel by falling down stairs in a fit of drunkenness. At last she gets away with great difficulty, and takes her second leave of the parental roof, with even less regard for its inhabitants than she had felt on first quitting its shelter.

On her return to Bareith, she finds the old Margrave quite broken in health, but extravagantly and *honourably* in love with a lame, dwarfish, middle-aged lady, the sister of her ancient governess, whom he proposes to marry, to the great discomfiture of the Princess and his son. They remonstrate with the lady, however, on the absurdity of such an union; and she promises to be cruel, and live single. In the mean time, one of the Margrave's daughters is taken with a kind of madness of a very indecorous character; which indicates itself by frequent improprieties of speech, and a habit of giving invitations, of no equivocal sort, to every man that comes near her. The worthy Margrave, at first undertakes to cure this very troublesome complaint by a brisk course of beating; but this not being found to answer, it is thought expedient to try the effect of marriage; and, that there may he no harm done to any body, they look out a certain Duke of Weimar, who is as mad as the lady—though somewhat in a different way. This prince's malady consisted chiefly in great unsteadiness of purpose, and a trick of outrageous and inventive boasting. Both the Princess and her husband, however, take great pains to bring about this well-assorted match; and, by dint of flattery and intimidation, it is actually carried through—though the bridegroom sends a piteous message on the morning of his wedding day, begging to be let off, and keeps them from twelve till four o'clock

in the morning before he can be persuaded to go to bed. In the mean time, the Princess gives great offence to the populace and the preachers of Bareith, by giving a sort of masked ball, and riding occasionally on horseback. Her husband goes to the wars; and returns very much out of humour with her brother Frederic, who talks contemptuously of little courts and little princes. The old Margrave falls into a confirmed hectic, and writes *billets-doux* to his little lady, so tender as to turn one's stomach; but at last dies in an edifying manner, to the great satisfaction of all his friends and acquaintances. Old Frederic promises fair, at the same time, to follow his example; for he is seized with a confirmed dropsy. His legs swell, and burst; and give out so much water, that he is obliged for several days to sit with them in buckets. By a kind of miracle, however, he recovers, and goes a campaigning for several years after.

The Memoirs are rather dull for four or five years after the author's accession to the throne of Bareith. She makes various journeys, and suffers from various distempers—has innumerable quarrels with all the neighbouring potentates about her own precedence and that of her attendants; fits up several villas, gives balls; and sometimes quarrels with her husband, and sometimes nurses him in his illness. In 1740, the King, her father, dies in good earnest; and makes, it must be acknowledged, a truly heroic, though somewhat whimsical, ending. Finding himself fast going, he had himself placed early in the morning in his wheel-chair, and goes himself to tell the Queen that she must rise and see him die. He then takes farewell of his children; and gives some sensible advice to his son, and the ministers and generals whom he had assembled. Afterwards he has his best horse brought, and presents it with a good grace to the oldest of his generals. He next ordered all the servants to put on their best liveries; and, when this was done, he looked on them with an air of derision, and said, "Vanity of vanities!" He then commanded his physician to tell him exactly how long he had to live; and when he was answered, "about half an hour," he asked for a looking-glass, and said with a smile, that he certainly did look ill enough, and saw "*qu'il ferait une vilaine grimace en mourant!*" When the clergymen proposed to come and pray with him, he said, "he knew already all they had to say, and that they might go about their business." In a short time after he expired, in great tranquillity.

Though the new King came to visit his sister soon after his accession, and she went to return the compliment at Berlin, she says there was no longer any cordiality between them; and that she heard nothing but complaints of his avarice, his ill temper, his ingratitude, and his arrogance. She gives him great credit for talents; but entreats her readers to suspend their judgment as to the real character of this celebrated monarch, till they have perused the whole of her Memoirs. What seems to have given her the worst opinion of him, was his impolite habit of making jokes about the small domains and scanty revenues of her husband. For the two following years she travels all over Germany, abusing all the *principautés* she meets with. In 1742, she goes to see the coronation of the new Emperor at Francfort, and has a long negotiation about the ceremony of her introduction to the Empress. After various *projets* had been offered and rejected, she made these three conditions:—1st, That the whole *cortège* of the Empress should receive her at the bottom of the staircase. 2dly, That the Empress herself should come to meet her at the outside of the door of her bed-chamber. And, 3dly, That she should be allowed an arm-chair during the interview. Whole days were spent in the discussion of this proposition; and at last the two first articles were agreed to; but all that she could make of the last was, that she should have a very large chair, without arms; and the Empress a very small one, with them! —Her account of the interview we add in her own words.

"Je vis cette Princesse le jour suivant. J'avoue qu'à sa place j'aurois imaginé toutes les étiquettes et les cérémonies du monde pour m'empêcher de paroître. L'Impératrice est d'une taille au-dessous de la petite, et si puissante qu'elle semble une boule; elle est laide au possible, sans air et sans grace. Son esprit répond à sa figure; elle est bigotte à l'excès, et passe les nuits et les jours dans son oratoire: les vieilles et les laides sont ordinairement le partage du bon Dieu! Elle me reçut en tremblant et d'un air si décontenancé qu'elle ne put me dire un mot. Nous nous assîmes. Après avoir gardé quelque temps le silence, je commençai la conversation en français. Elle me repondit, dans son jargon autrichien, qu'elle n'entendoit pas bien cette langue, et qu'elle me prioit de lui parler en allemand. Cet entretien ne fut pas long. Le dialecte autrichien et le bas-saxon sont si différens, qu'à moins d'y être accoutumé on ne se comprend point. C'est aussi ce qui nous arriva. Nous aurions préparé à rire à un tiers par les coq-à-l'âne que nous faisions, n'entendant que par-ci par-là un mot, qui nous faisoit deviner le reste. Cette princesse étoit si fort esclave de son étiquette qu'elle auroit cru faire un crime de lèse-grandeur en m'entretenant dans une langue étrangère; car elle savoit le français! L'Empereur devoit se trouver à cette visite; mais il étoit tombé si malade qu'on craignoit même pour ses jours."—pp. 345, 346.

After this she comes home in a very bad humour; and the Memoirs break off abruptly with her detection of an intrigue between her husband and her favourite attendant, and her dissatisfaction with the dull formality of the court of Stutgard. We hope the sequel will soon find its way to the public.

Some readers may think we have dwelt too long on such a tissue of impertinencies; and others may think an apology requisite for the tone of levity in which we have spoken of so many atrocities. The truth is, that we think this book of no trifling importance; and that we could not be serious upon the subject of it without being both sad and angry. Before concluding, however, we shall add one word in seriousness—to avoid the misconstructions to which we might otherwise be liable.

We are decidedly of opinion, that Monarchy, and Hereditary Monarchy, is by far the best

form of government that human wisdom has yet devised for the administration of considerable nations; and that it will always continue to be the most perfect which human virtue will admit of. We are not readily to be suspected, therefore, of any wish to produce a distaste or contempt for this form of government; and beg leave to say, that though the facts we have now collected are certainly such as to give no favourable impression of the private manners or personal dispositions of absolute sovereigns, we conceive that good, rather than evil, is likely to result from their dissemination. This we hold, in the first place, on the strength of the general maxim, that all truth must be ultimately salutary, and all deception pernicious. But we think we can see a little how this maxim applies to the particular case before us.

In the first place, then, we think it of service to the cause of royalty, in an age of violent passions and rash experiments, to show that most of the vices and defects which such times are apt to bring to light in particular sovereigns, are owing, not so much to any particular unworthiness or unfitness in the individual, as to the natural operation of the circumstances in which he is placed; and are such, in short, as those circumstances have always generated in a certain degree in those who have been exposed to them. Such considerations, it appears to us, when taken along with the strong and irresistible arguments for monarchical government in general, are well calculated to allay that great impatience and dangerous resentment with which nations in turbulent times are apt to consider the faults of their sovereigns; and to unite with a steady attachment and entire respect for the office, a very great degree of indulgence for the personal defects of the individual who may happen to fill it. Monarchs, upon this view of things, are to be considered as persons who are placed, for the public good, in situations where, not only their comfort, but their moral qualities, are liable to be greatly impaired; and who are poorly paid in empty splendour, and anxious power, for the sacrifice of their affections, and of the many engaging qualities which might have blossomed in a lower region. If we look with indulgence upon the roughness of sailors, the pedantry of schoolmasters, and the frivolousness of beauties, we should learn to regard, with something of the same feelings, the selfishness and the cunning of kings.

In the second place, we presume to think that the general adoption of these opinions as to the personal defects that are likely to result from the possession of sovereign power, may be of use to the sovereigns themselves, from whom the knowledge of their prevalence cannot be very long concealed. Such knowledge, it is evident, will naturally stimulate the better sort of them to counteract the causes which tend to their personal degradation; and enable them more generally to surmount their pernicious operation, by such efforts and reflections, as have every now and then rescued some powerful spirits from their dominion, under all the disadvantages of the delusions with which they were surrounded.

Finally, if the general prevalence of these sentiments as to the private manners and dispositions of sovereigns *should* have the effect of rendering the bulk of their subjects less prone to blind admiration, and what may be called personal attachment to them, we do not imagine that any great harm will be done. The less the public knows or cares about the private wishes of their monarch, and the more his individual will is actually consubstantiated with the deliberate sanctions of his responsible counsellors, the more perfectly will the practice of government correspond with its admitted theory; the more wisely will affairs be administered for the public, and the more harmoniously and securely both for the sovereign and the people. An adventurous warrior may indeed derive signal advantages from the personal devotedness and enthusiastic attachment of his followers; but in the civil office of monarchy, as it exists in modern times, the only safe attachment is to the office, and to the measures which it sanctions. The personal popularity of princes, in so far as we know, has never done any thing but harm: and indeed it seems abundantly evident, that whatever is done merely for the personal gratification of the reigning monarch, that would not have been done at any rate on grounds of public expediency, must be an injury to the community, and a sacrifice of duty to an unreturned affection; and whatever is forborne out of regard to his pleasure, which the interest of the country would otherwise have required, is in like manner an act of base and unworthy adulation. We do not speak, it will be understood, of trifles or things of little moment; but of such public acts of the government as involve the honour or the interest of the nation.

(September, 1828.)

History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus. By Washington Irving. 4 vols. 8vo. London: 1828.

This, on the whole, is an excellent book; and we venture to anticipate that it will be an enduring one. Neither do we hazard this prediction lightly, or without a full consciousness of all that it implies. We are perfectly aware that there are but few modern works that are likely to verify it; and that it probably could not be extended with safety to so many

as one in a hundred even of those which we praise. For we mean, not merely that the book will be familiarly known and referred to some twenty or thirty years hence, and will pass in solid binding into every considerable collection; but that it will supersede all former works on the same subject, and never be itself superseded. The first stage of triumph, indeed, over past or existing competitors, may often be predicted securely of works of no very extraordinary merit; which, treating of a progressive science, merely embody, with some small additions, a judicious digest of all that was formerly known; and are for the time the best works on the subject, merely because they are the last. But the second stage of literary beatitude, in which an author not only eclipses all existing rivals, but obtains an immunity from the effects of all future competition, certainly is not to be so cheaply won; and can seldom, indeed, be secured to any one, unless the intrinsic merit of his production is assisted by the concurrence of some such circumstances as we think now hold out the promise of this felicity to the biographer of Columbus.

Though the event to which his work relates is one which can never sink into insignificance or oblivion, but, on the contrary, will probably excite more interest with every succeeding generation, till the very end of the world, yet its importance has been already long enough apparent to have attracted the most eager attention to every thing connected with its details; and we think we may safely say, that all the documents which relate to it have now been carefully examined, and all the channels explored through which any authentic information was likely to be derived. In addition to the very copious, but rambling and somewhat garrulous and extravagant accounts, which were published soon after the discovery, and and have since been methodised and arranged, Don F. M. Navarette, a Spanish gentleman of great learning, and industry, and secretary to the Royal Academy of History at Madrid, has lately given to the world a very extensive collection of papers, relating to the history and voyages of Columbus; a very considerable portion of which appears not to have been known to any of those who had formerly written on the subject. Mr. Irving's first design was merely to publish a translation of this collection, with occasional remarks; but having, during his residence at Madrid, had access, by the kindness of the Duke of Veraguas, the descendant of the great Admiral, to the archives of his family, and to various other documents, still remaining in manuscript, which had escaped the research even of Navarette, he fortunately turned his thoughts to the compilation of the more comprehensive and original work now before us—in which, by those great helps, he has been enabled, not only to supply many defects, but to correct many errors, and reconcile some apparent contradictions in the earlier accounts.

It was evidently very desirable that such a work should at length be completed; and we think it peculiarly fortunate that the means of completing it should have fallen into such hands as Mr. Irving's. The materials, it was obvious, were only to be found in Spain, and were not perhaps very likely to be intrusted without reserve to a stranger; while there was reason to fear that a Spaniard might not have courage to speak of the errors and crimes of his countrymen in the tone which the truth of history might require; or might not think it safe, even yet, to expose the impolicy, or canvass the pretensions, of the government. By a happy concurrence of circumstances, an elegant writer, altogether unconnected either with Spain or her rivals and enemies, and known all over the civilized world as a man of intelligence and principle, of sound judgment, and a calm and indulgent temper, repaired to Madrid at a time when the publication of Navarette had turned the public attention, in an extraordinary degree, to the memorable era of Columbus; and, by the force of his literary and personal character, obtained the fullest disclosure of every thing that bore upon his history that was ever made, to native or foreigner,—at the same time that he had the means of discussing personally, with the best informed individuals of the nation, all the points on which the written documents might seem to leave room for doubt or explanation.

Of these rare advantages Mr. Irving has availed himself, we think, with singular judgment and ability. He has written the history of the greatest event in the annals of mankind, with the fulness and the feeling it deserved; and has presented us with a flowing and continuous narrative of the events he had to record, far more luminous and comprehensive than any which previously existed, and yet much less diffuse and discursive than the earlier accounts, from which it is mainly derived: While, without sacrificing in any degree the intense interest of personal adventure and individual sympathy, he has brought the lights of a more cultivated age to bear on the obscure places of the story; and touched skilfully on the errors and prejudices of the times—at once to enliven his picture by their singularity, and to instruct us by their explanation or apology. Above all, he has composed the whole work in a temper that is beyond all praise. It breathes throughout a genuine spirit of humanity; and, embellished as it is with beautiful descriptions and wonderful tales, its principal attraction in our eyes consists in its soft-hearted sympathy with suffering, its fearless reprobation of injustice and oppression, and the magnanimous candour of its judgments, even on the delinquent.

But though we think all this of Mr. Irving's work, we suspect it may not be altogether unnecessary to caution our more sensitive and sanguine readers against giving way to certain feelings of disappointment, which it is not impossible they may encounter at the outset of their task; and to which two or three very innocent causes are likely enough to expose them. In the first place, many great admirers of Mr. Irving's former works will probably

miss the brilliant, highly finished, and rythmical style, which attracted them so much in those performances; and may find the less artificial and elaborate diction of this history comparatively weak and careless. In this judgment, however, we can by no means agree. Mr. Irving's former style, though unquestionably very elegant and harmonious, always struck us as somewhat too laboured and exquisite—and, at all events, but ill fitted for an extensive work, where the interest turned too much on the weight of the matter to be safely divided with the mere polish of the diction, or the balance of the periods.—He has done well, therefore, we think, to discard it on this occasion, for the more varied, careless, and natural style, which distinguishes the volumes before us—a style not only without sententious pretension, or antithetical prettiness, but even in some degree loose and unequal—flowing easily on, with something of the fulness and clearness of Herodotus or Boccaccio—sometimes languid, indeed, and often inexact, but furnishing, in its very freshness and variety, the very best mirror, perhaps, in which the romantic adventures, the sweet descriptions, or the soft humanities, with which the author had to deal, could have been displayed.

Another, and perhaps a more general source of disappointment to impatient readers, is likely to be found in the extent and minuteness of the prefatory details, with which Mr. Irving has crowded the foreground of his picture, and detained us, apparently without necessity, from its principal features. The genealogy and education of Columbus—his early love of adventure—his long and vain solicitations at the different European courts—the intrigues and jealousies by which he was baffled—the prejudices against which he had to contend, and the lofty spirit and doubtful logic by which they were opposed,—are all given with a fulness for which, however instructive it may be, the reader, who knows already what it is to end in, will be apt to feel any thing but grateful. *His* mind, from the very title-page, is among the billows of the Atlantic and the islands of the Caribs; and he does not submit without impatience to be informed of all the energy that was to be exerted, and all the obstacles to be overcome, before he can get there. It is only after we have perused the whole work that we perceive the fitness of these introductory chapters; and then, when the whole grand series of sufferings and exploits has been unfolded, and the greatness of the event, and of the character with which it is inseparably blended, have been impressed on our minds, we feel how necessary it was to tell, and how grateful it is to know, all that can now be known of the causes by which both were prepared; and instead of murmuring at the length of these precious details, feel nothing but regret that time should have so grievously abridged them.

The last disappointment, for which the reader should be prepared, will probably fall upon those who expect much new information as to the first great voyage of discovery; or suppose that the chief interest of the work must be exhausted by its completion. That portion of the story of Columbus has always, from obvious causes, been given with more amplitude and fidelity than any other; and Mr. Irving, accordingly, has been able to add but few additional traits of any considerable importance. But it is not there, we think, that the great interest or the true character of the work is to be found. The mere geographical discovery, sublime as it undoubtedly is, is far less impressive, to our minds, than the moral emotions to which it opens the scene. The whole history of the settlement of Hispaniola, and the sufferings of its gentle people—the daring progress of the great discoverer, through unheard-of forms of peril, and the overwhelming disasters that seem at last to weigh him down, constitute the real business of the piece, and are what truly bring out, not only the character of the man, but that of the events with which his memory is identified. It is here, too, that both the power and the beauty of the author's style chiefly display themselves—in his account of the innocence and gentleness of the simple races that were then first introduced to their elder brethren of Europe, and his glowing pictures of the lovely land, which ministered to their primitive luxury—or in his many sketches of the great commander himself, now towering in paternal majesty in the midst of his newly-found children—now invested with the dark gorgeousness of deep and superstitious devotion, and burning thirst of fame—or, still more sublime, in his silent struggles with malevolence and misfortune, and his steadfast reliance on the justice of posterity.

The work before us embodies all these, and many other touching representations; and in the vivacity of its colouring, and the novelty of its scene, possesses all the interests of a novel of invention, with the startling and thrilling assurance of its actual truth and exactness—a sentiment which enhances and every moment presses home to our hearts the deep pity and resentment inspired by the sufferings of the confiding beings it introduces to our knowledge—mingled with a feeling of something like envy and delighted wonder, at the story of their child-like innocence, and humble apparatus of enjoyment. No savages certainly ever were so engaging and loveable as those savages. Affectionate, sociable, and without cunning, sullenness, inconstancy, or any of the savage vices, but an aversion from toil, which their happy climate at once inspired and rendered innoxious, they seem to have passed their days in blissful ignorance of all that human intellect has contrived for human misery; and almost to have enjoyed an exemption from the doom that followed man's first unhallowed appetite for knowledge of good and evil. It is appalling to think with what tremendous rapidity the whole of these happy races were swept away! How soon, after the feet of civilized Christians had touched their shores, those shores were desolate, or filled only with mourning! How soon, how frightfully soon, the swarming myriads of idle

and light-hearted creatures, who came trooping from their fragrant woods to receive them with smiles of welcome and gestures of worship, and whose songs and shoutings first hailed them so sweetly over their fresh and sunny bays, were plunged, by the hands of those fatal visitants, into all the agonies of despair!—how soon released from them by a bloody extermination! It humbles and almost crushes the heart, even at this distance of time, to think of such a catastrophe, brought about by such instruments. The learned, the educated, the refined, the champions of chivalry, the messengers of the gospel of peace, come to the land of the ignorant, the savage, the heathen. They find them docile in their ignorance, submissive in their rudeness, and grateful and affectionate in their darkness:—And the result of the mission is mutual corruption, misery, desolation! The experience or remorse of four centuries has not yet been able to expiate the crime, or to reverse the spell. Those once smiling and swarming shores are still silent and mournful; or resound only to the groans of the slave and the lash of the slave-driver—or to the strange industry of another race, dragged by a yet deeper guilt from a distant land, and now calmly establishing themselves on the graves of their oppressors.

We do not propose to give any thing like an abstract of a story, the abstract of which is already familiar to every one; while the details, like most other details, would lose half their interest, and all their character, by being disjoined from the narrative on which they depend. We shall content ourselves, therefore, by running over some of the particulars that are less generally known, and exhibiting a few specimens of the author's manner of writing and thinking.

Mr. Irving has settled, we think satisfactorily, that Columbus was born in Genoa, about the year 1435. It was fitting that the hemisphere of republics should have been discovered by a republican. His proper name was Colombo, though he is chiefly known among his contemporaries by the Spanish synonyme of Colon. He was well educated, but passed his youth chiefly at sea, and had his full share of the hardships and hazards incident to that vocation. From the travels of Marco Polo he seems first to have imbibed his taste for geographical discovery, and to have derived his grand idea of reaching the eastern shores of India by sailing straight to the west. The spirit of maritime enterprise was chiefly fostered in that age by the magnanimous patronage of Prince Henry of Portugal, and it was to that court, accordingly, that Columbus first offered his services in the year 1470. We will not withhold from our readers the following brief but graphic sketch of his character and appearance at that period:

"He was at that time in the full vigour of manhood, and of an engaging presence. Minute descriptions are given of his person by his son Fernando, by Las Casas, and others of his contemporaries. According to these accounts, he was tall, well-formed, muscular, and of an elevated and dignified demeanour. His visage was long, and neither full nor meagre; his complexion fair and freckled, and inclined to ruddy; his nose aquiline; his cheek-bones were rather high; his eyes light grey, and apt to enkindle; his whole countenance had an air of authority. His hair, in his youthful days, was of a light colour; but care and trouble, according to Las Casas, soon turned it grey, and at thirty years of age it was quite white. He was moderate and simple in diet and apparel, eloquent in discourse, engaging and affable with strangers, and of an amiableness and suavity in domestic life, that strongly attached his household to his person. His temper was naturally irritable; but he subdued it by the magnanimity of his spirit; comporting himself with a courteous and gentle gravity, and never indulging in any intemperance of language. Throughout his life he was noted for a strict attention to the offices of religion, observing rigorously the fasts and ceremonies of the church; nor did his piety consist in mere forms, but partook of that lofty and solemn enthusiasm with which his whole character was strongly tinctured."

For eighteen long years did the proud and ardent spirit of Columbus urge his heroic suit at the courts of most of the European monarchs; and it was not till after encountering in every form the discouragements of withering poverty, insulting neglect, and taunting ridicule, that, in his fifty-sixth year, he at last prevailed with Ferdinand and Isabella, to supply him with three little ships, to achieve for them the dominion of a world! Mr. Irving very strikingly remarks,

"After the great difficulties made by various courts in furnishing this expedition, it is surprising how inconsiderable an armament was required. It is evident that Columbus had reduced his requisitions to the narrowest limits, lest any great expense should cause impediment. Three small vessels were apparently all that he had requested. Two of them were light barques, called caravals, not superior to river and coasting craft of more modern days. Representations of this class of vessels exist in old prints and paintings. They are delineated as open, and without deck in the centre, but built up high at the prow and stern, with forecastles and cabins for the accommodation of the crew. Peter Martyr, the learned contemporary of Columbus, says that only one of the three vessels was decked. The smallness of the vessels was considered an advantage by Columbus, in a voyage of discovery, enabling him to run close to the shores, and to enter shallow rivers and harbours. In his third voyage, when coasting the gulf of Paria, he complained of the size of his ship, being nearly a hundred tons burden. But that such long and perilous expeditions into unknown seas, should be undertaken in vessels without decks, and that they should live through the violent tempests by which they were frequently assailed, remain among the singular circumstances of these daring voyages."

It was on Friday, the 3d of August, 1492, that the bold adventurer sailed forth, with the earliest dawn, from the little port of Palos, on his magnificent expedition; and immediately began a regular journal, addressed to the sovereigns, from the *exordium* of which, as lately printed by Navarette, we receive a strong impression both of the gravity and dignity of his character, and of the importance he attached to his undertaking. We subjoin a short specimen.

"Therefore your highnesses, as Catholic Christians and princes, lovers and promoters of the holy Christian faith, and enemies of the sect of Mahomet, and of all idolatries and heresies, determined to send me, Christopher Columbus, to the

said parts of India, to see the said princes, and the people, and lands, and discover the nature and disposition of them all, and the means to be taken for the conversion of them to our holy faith; and ordered that I should not go by land to the East, by which it is the custom go, but by a voyage to the West, by which course, unto the present time, we do not know for certain that any one hath passed; and for this purpose bestowed great favours upon me, ennobling me, that thenceforward I might style myself Don, appointing me high admiral of the Ocean Sea, and perpetual viceroy and governor of all the islands and continents I should discover and gain, and which henceforward may be discovered and gained, in the Ocean Sea; and that my eldest son should succeed me, and so on, from generation to generation, for ever. I departed, therefore, from the city of Granada on Saturday the 12th of May, of the same year, 1492, to Palos, a sea-port, where I armed three ships well calculated for such service, and sailed from that port well furnished with provisions, and with many seamen, on Friday the 3d of August of the same year, half an hour before sunrise, and took the route for the Canary Islands of your highnesses, to steer my course thence, and navigate until I should arrive at the Indies, and deliver the embassy of your highnesses to those princes, and accomplish that which you had commanded. For this purpose, I intend to write during this voyage very punctually, from day to day, all that I may do, and see, and experience, as will hereafter be seen. Also, my sovereign princes, besides describing each night all that has occurred in the day, and in the day the navigation of the night, I propose to make a chart, in which I will set down the waters and lands of the Ocean Sea, in their proper situations, under their bearings; and, further to compose a book, and illustrate the whole in picture by latitude from the equinoctial, and longitude from the West; and upon the whole it will be essential that I should forget sleep, and attend closely to the navigation, to accomplish these things, which will be a great labour."

As a guide by which to sail, Mr. Irving also informs us, he had prepared "a map, or chart, improved upon that sent him by Paolo Toscanelli. Neither of these now exist; but the globe, or planisphere, finished by Martin Behem in this year of the admiral's first voyage, is still extant, and furnishes an idea of what the chart of Columbus must have been. It exhibits the coasts of Europe and Africa, from the south of Ireland to the end of Guinea; and opposite to them, on the other side of the Atlantic, the extremity of Asia, or, as it was termed, India. Between them is placed the island of Cipango, (or Japan,) which, according to Marco Polo, lay fifteen hundred miles distant from the Asiatic coast. In his computations Columbus advanced this island about a thousand leagues too much to the east; supposing it to lie in the situation of Florida, and at this island he hoped first to arrive."

We pass over the known incidents of this celebrated voyage, which are here repeated with new interest and additional detail; but we cannot refrain from extracting Mr. Irving's account of its fortunate conclusion. The growing panic and discontent of his mutinous crew, and their resolution to turn back if land was not discovered in three days, are well known.

"And when on the evening of the third day they beheld the sun go down upon a shoreless horizon, they broke forth into clamorous turbulence. Fortunately, however, the manifestations of neighbouring land were such on the following day as no longer to admit a doubt. Besides a quantity of fresh weeds, such as grow in rivers, they saw a green fish of a kind which keeps about rocks; then a branch of thorn, with berries on it, and recently separated from the tree, floated by them; then they picked up a reed, a small board, and, above all, a staff artificially carved. All gloom and mutiny now gave way to sanguine expectation; and throughout the day each one was eagerly on the watch, in hopes of being the first to discover the long-sought-for land.

"In the evening, when, according to invariable custom on board of the admiral's ship, *the mariners had sung the* salve regina, *or vesper hymn to the Virgin*, he made an impressive address to his crew. He pointed out the goodness of God in thus conducting them by such soft and favouring breezes across a tranquil ocean, cheering their hopes continually with fresh signs, increasing as their fears augmented, and thus leading and guiding them to a promised land.

"The breeze had been fresh all day, with more sea than usual, and they had made great progress. At sunset they had stood again to the west, and were ploughing the waves at a rapid rate, the Pinta keeping the lead, from her superior sailing. The greatest animation prevailed throughout the ships; not an eye was closed that night. As the evening darkened, Columbus took his station on the top of the castle or cabin on the high poop of his vessel. However he might carry a cheerful and confident countenance during the day, it was to him a time of the most painful anxiety; and now when he was wrapped from observation by the shades of night, he maintained an intense and unremitting watch, ranging his eye along the dusky horizon, in search of the most vague indications of land. Suddenly, about ten o'clock, he thought he beheld a light glimmering at a distance! Fearing that his eager hopes might deceive him, he called to Pedro Gutierrez, gentleman of the king's bed-chamber, and inquired whether he saw a light in that direction; the latter replied in the affirmative. Columbus, yet doubtful whether it might not be some delusion of the fancy, called Rodrigo Sanchez of Segovia, and made the same inquiry. By the time the latter had ascended the round-house, the light had disappeared. They saw it once or twice afterwards in sudden and passing gleams; as it were a torch in the bark of a fisherman, rising and sinking with the waves: or in the hand of some person on shore, borne up and down as he walked from house to house. So transient and uncertain were these gleams, that few attached any importance to them; Columbus, however, considered them as certain signs of land, and moreover, that the land was inhabited.

"They continued their course until two in the morning, when a gun from the Pinta gave the joyful signal of land. It was first discovered by a mariner named Rodrigo de Triana; but the reward was afterwards adjudged to the admiral, for having previously perceived the light. The land was now clearly seen about two leagues distant; whereupon they took in sail and lay-to, waiting impatiently for the dawn.

"The thoughts and feelings of Columbus in this little space of time must have been tumultuous and intense. At length, in spite of every difficulty and danger, he had accomplished his object. The great mystery of the ocean was revealed; his theory, which had been the scoff of sages, was triumphantly established; he had secured to himself a glory which must be as durable as the world itself.

"It is difficult even for the imagination to conceive the feelings of such a man at the moment of so sublime a discovery. What a bewildering crowd of conjectures must have thronged upon his mind, as to the land which lay before him, covered with darkness. That it was fruitful was evident, from the vegetables which floated from its shores. He thought, too, that he perceived in the balmy air the

fragrance of aromatic groves. The moving light which he had beheld, had proved that it was the residence of man. But what were its inhabitants? Were they like those of the other parts of the globe; or were they some strange and monstrous race, such as the imagination in those times was prone to give to all remote and unknown regions? Had he come upon some wild island far in the Indian Sea; or was this the famed Cipango itself, the object of his golden fancies? A thousand speculations of the kind must have swarmed upon him, as, with his anxious crews, he waited for the night to pass away: wondering whether the morning light would reveal a savage wilderness, or dawn upon spicy groves, and glittering fanes, and gilded cities, and all the splendour of oriental civilization.

The land to which he was thus triumphantly borne was the island of San Salvador, since called Cat Island, by the English; and at early dawn he landed with a great company, splendidly armed and attired, and bearing in his hand the royal standard of Castile.

"As they approached the shores, they were refreshed by the sight of the ample forests, which in those climes have extraordinary beauty and vegetation. They beheld fruits of tempting hue, but unknown kind, growing among the trees which overhung the shores. The purity and suavity of the atmosphere, the crystal transparency of the seas which bathe these islands, give them a wonderful beauty, and must have had their effect upon the susceptible feelings of Columbus. No sooner did he land, than he threw himself upon his knees, kissed the earth, and returned thanks to God with tears of joy. His example was followed by the rest, whose hearts indeed overflowed with the same feelings of gratitude."

"The natives of the island, when, at the dawn of day, they had beheld the ships, with their sails set, hovering on their coast, had supposed them some monsters which had issued from the deep during the night. They had crowded to the beach, and watched their movements with awful anxiety. Their veering about, apparently without effort; the shifting and furling of their sails, resembling huge wings, filled them with astonishment. When they beheld their boats approach the shore, and a number of strange beings, clad in glittering steel, or raiment of various colours, landing upon the beach, they fled in affright to their woods. Finding, however, that there was no attempt to pursue nor molest them, they gradually recovered from their terror, and approached the Spaniards with great awe; frequently prostrating themselves on the earth, and making signs of adoration. During the ceremonies of taking possession, they remained gazing in timid admiration at the complexion, the beards, the shining armour, and splendid dress of the Spaniards. The admiral particularly attracted their attention, from his commanding height, his air of authority, his dress of scarlet, and the deference which was paid him by his companions; all which pointed him out to be the commander. When they had still further recovered from their fears, they approached the Spaniards, touched their beards, and examined their hands and faces, admiring their whiteness. Columbus, pleased with their simplicity, their gentleness, and the confidence they reposed in beings who must have appeared to them so strange and formidable, suffered their scrutiny with perfect acquiescence. The wondering savages were won by this benignity; they now supposed that the ships had sailed out of the crystal firmament which bounded their horizon, or that they had descended from above on their ample wings, and that these marvellous beings were inhabitants of the skies."

Nothing is more remarkable in the journal of the great discoverer, than his extraordinary sensibility to the beauty of the scenery, and the charms of the climate, of this new world; and on his arrival at Cuba, these raptures are, if possible, redoubled.

"As he approached this noble island, he was struck with its magnitude, and the grandeur of its features; its high and airy mountains, which reminded him of those of Sicily; its fertile valleys, and long sweeping plains, watered by noble rivers; its stately forests; its bold promontories, and stretching headlands, which melted away into the remotest distance. He anchored in a beautiful river, free from rocks or shoals, of transparent water, its banks overhung with trees. Here, landing, and taking possession of the island, he gave it the name of Juana, in honour of Prince Juan, and to the river the name of San Salvador.

"Returning to his boat, he proceeded for some distance up the river, more and more enchanted with the beauty of the country. The forests which covered each bank were of high and wide-spreading trees; some bearing fruits, others flowers, while in some both fruits and flowers were mingled, bespeaking a perpetual round of fertility: among them were many palms, but differing from those of Spain and Africa; with the great leaves of these the natives thatched their cabins.

"The continual eulogies made by Columbus on the beauty of the scenery were warranted by the kind of scenery he was beholding. There is a wonderful splendour, variety, and luxuriance in the vegetation of those quick and ardent climates. The verdure of the groves, and the colours of the flowers and blossoms, derive a vividness to the eye from the transparent purity of the air, and the deep serenity of the azure heavens. The forests, too, are full of life, swarming with birds of brilliant plumage. Painted varieties of parrots, and wood-peckers, create a glitter amidst the verdure of the grove; and humming-birds rove from flower to flower, resembling, as has well been said, animated particles of a rainbow. The scarlet flamingos, too, seen sometimes through an opening of a forest in a distant savannah, have the appearance of soldiers drawn up in battalion, with an advanced scout on the alert, to give notice of approaching danger. Nor is the least beautiful part of animated nature the various tribes of insects that people every plant, displaying brilliant coats of mail, which sparkle to the eye like precious gems.

"From his continual remarks on the beauty of the scenery, and from the pleasure which he evidently derived from rural sounds and objects, he appears to have been extremely open to those delicious influences, exercised over some spirits by the graces and wonders of nature. He gives utterance to these feelings with characteristic enthusiasm, and at the same time with the artlessness and simplicity of diction of a child. When speaking of some lovely scene among the groves, or along the flowery shore, of this favoured island, he says, 'one could live there for ever.'—Cuba broke upon him like an elysium. 'It is the most beautiful island,' he says, 'that eyes ever beheld, full of excellent ports and profound rivers.' The climate was more temperate here than in the other islands, the nights being neither hot nor cold, while the birds and grasshoppers sang all night long. Indeed there is a beauty in a tropical night, in the depth of the dark-blue sky, the lambient purity of the stars, and the resplendent clearness of the moon, that spreads over the rich landscape and the balmy groves a charm more touching than the splendour of the day.

"In the sweet smell of the woods, and the odour of the flowers, which loaded every breeze, Columbus fancied he perceived the fragrance of oriental spices; and along the shores he found shells of the kind of oyster which produces pearls. From the grass growing to the very edge of the water, he inferred the peacefulness of the ocean which bathes these islands, never lashing the shore with angry

surges. Ever since his arrival among these Antilles, he had experienced nothing but soft and gentle weather, and he concluded that a perpetual serenity reigned over these happy seas. He was little suspicious of the occasional bursts of fury to which they are liable."

Hispaniola was still more enchanting.

"In the transparent atmosphere of the tropics, objects are descried at a great distance, and the purity of the air and serenity of the deep blue sky gave a magical effect to the scenery. Under these advantages, the beautiful island of Hayti revealed itself to the eye as they approached. Its mountains were higher and more rocky than those of the other islands; but the rocks reared themselves from among rich forests. The mountains swept down into luxuriant plains and green savannahs; while the appearance of cultivated fields, with the numerous fires at night, and the columns of smoke which rose in various parts by day, all showed it to be populous. It rose before them in all the splendour of tropical vegetation, one of the most beautiful islands in the world, and doomed to be one of the most unfortunate."

The first interview with the friendly cacique Guacanagari, as well as his generous attentions on the wreck of one of their vessels, are described with great beauty. But we can only find room for the concluding part of it.

"The extreme kindness of the cacique, the gentleness of his people, the quantities of gold which were daily brought to be exchanged for the veriest trifles, and the information continually received of sources of wealth in the bosom of this beautiful island, all contributed to console the admiral for the misfortune he had suffered.

"The shipwrecked crew also, living on shore, and mingling freely with the natives, became fascinated with their easy and idle mode of life. Exempted by their simplicity from the painful cares and toils which civilized man inflicts upon himself by his many artificial wants, the existence of these islanders seemed to the Spaniards like a pleasant dream. They disquieted themselves about nothing. A few fields, cultivated almost without labour, furnished the roots and vegetables which formed a great part of their diet. Their rivers and coasts abounded with fish; their trees were laden with fruits of golden or blushing hue, and heightened by a tropical sun to delicious flavour and fragrance. Softened by the indulgence of nature, a great part of their day was passed in indolent repose—in that luxury of sensation inspired by a serene sky and a voluptuous climate; and in the evenings they danced in their fragrant groves, to their national songs, or the rude sounds of their sylvan drums.

"Such was the indolent and holiday life of these simple people; which, if it had not the great scope of enjoyment, nor the high-seasoned poignancy of pleasure, which attend civilization, was certainly destitute of most of its artificial miseries."

It was from this scene of enchantment and promise, unclouded as yet by any shadow of animosity or distrust, that Columbus, without one drop of blood on his hands, or one stain of cruelty or oppression on his conscience, set sail on his return to Europe, with the proud tidings of his discovery. In the early part of his voyage he fell in with the Carribee Islands, and had some striking encounters with the brave but ferocious tribes who possessed them. The distresses which beset him on his home passage are well known; but we willingly pass these over, to treat our readers with Mr. Irving's splendid description of his magnificent reception by the court at Barcelona.

"It was about the middle of April that Columbus arrived at Barcelona, where every preparation had been made to give him a solemn and magnificent reception. The beauty and serenity of the weather in that genial season and favoured climate, contributed to give splendour to this memorable ceremony. As he drew near the place, many of the more youthful courtiers, and hidalgos of gallant bearing, together with a vast concourse of the populace, came forth to meet and welcome him. His entrance into this noble city has been compared to one of those triumphs which the Romans were accustomed to decree to conquerors. First, were paraded the Indians, painted according to their savage fashion, and decorated with their national ornaments of gold. After these were borne various kinds of live parrots, together with stuffed birds and animals of unknown species, and rare plants, supposed to be of precious qualities; while great care was taken to make a conspicuous display of Indian coronets, bracelets, and other decorations of gold, which might give an idea of the wealth of the newly-discovered regions. After this, followed Columbus on horseback, surrounded by a brilliant cavalcade of Spanish chivalry. The streets were almost impassable from the countless multitude; the windows and balconies were crowded with the fair; the very roofs were covered with spectators. It seemed as if the public eye could not be sated with gazing on these trophies of an unknown world; or on the remarkable man by whom it had been discovered. There was a sublimity in this event that mingled a solemn feeling with the public joy. It was looked upon as a vast and signal dispensation of Providence, in reward for the piety of the monarchs; and the majestic and venerable appearance of the discoverer, so different from the youth and buoyancy that are generally expected from roving enterprise, seemed in harmony with the grandeur and dignity of his achievement.

"To receive him with suitable pomp and distinction, the sovereigns had ordered their throne to be placed in public, under a rich canopy of brocade of gold, in a vast and splendid saloon. Here the king and queen awaited his arrival, seated in state, with the prince Juan beside them, and attended by the dignitaries of their court, and the principal nobility of Castile, Valentia, Catalonia, and Arragon, all impatient to behold the man who had conferred so incalculable a benefit upon the nation. At length Columbus entered the hall, surrounded by a brilliant crowd of cavaliers, among whom, says Las Casas, he was conspicuous for his stately and commanding person, which, with his countenance, rendered venerable by his grey hairs, gave him the august appearance of a senator of Rome; a modest smile lighted up his features, showing that he enjoyed the state and glory in which he came; and certainly nothing could be more deeply moving to a mind inflamed by noble ambition, and conscious of having greatly deserved, than these testimonials of the admiration and gratitude of a nation, or rather of a world. As Columbus approached, the sovereigns rose, as if receiving a person of the highest rank. Bending his knees, he requested to kiss their hands; but there was some hesitation on the part of their majesties to permit this act of vassalage. Raising him in the most gracious manner, they ordered him to seat himself in their presence; a rare honour in this proud and punctilious court."

In his second voyage he falls in again with the Caribs, of whose courage and cannibal propensities he had now sufficient assurance. Mr. Irving's remarks upon this energetic but untameable race are striking, and we think original.

"The warlike and unyielding character of these people, so different from that of the pusillanimous nations around them, and the wide scope of their enterprises and wanderings, like those of the

Nomade tribes of the Old World, entitle them to distinguished attention. They were trained to war from their infancy. As soon as they could walk, their intrepid mothers put in their hands the bow and arrow, and prepared them to take an early part in the hardy enterprises of their fathers. Their distant roamings by sea made them observant and intelligent. The natives of the other islands only knew how to divide time by day and night, by the sun and moon; whereas these had acquired some knowledge of the stars, by which to calculate the times and seasons.

"The traditional accounts of their origin, though of course extremely vague, are yet capable of being verified to a great degree by geographical facts, and open one of the rich veins of curious inquiry and speculation which abound in the New World. They are said to have migrated from the remote valleys embosomed in the Apalachian mountains. The earliest accounts we have of them represent them with their weapons in their hands, continually engaged in wars, winning their way and shifting their abode, until, in the course of time, they found themselves at the extremity of Florida. Here, abandoning the northern continent, they passed over to the Lucayos, and from thence gradually, in the process of years, from island to island of that vast and verdant chain, which links, as it were, the end of Florida to the coast of Paria, on the southern continent. The Archipelago, extending from Porto Rico to Tobago, was their strong hold, and the island of Guadaloupe in a manner their citadel. Hence they made their expeditions, and spread the terror of their name through all the surrounding countries. Swarms of them landed upon the southern continent, and overran some parts of Terra Firma. Traces of them have been discovered far in the interior of the country through which flows the Oroonoko. The Dutch found colonies of them on the banks of the Ikouteka, which empties into the Surinam, along the Esquibi, the Maroni, and other rivers of Guayana, and in the country watered by the windings of the Cayenne; and it would appear that they have extended their wanderings to the shores of the southern ocean, where, among the aboriginals of Brazil, were some who called themselves Caribs, distinguished from the surrounding Indians by their superior hardihood subtlety, and enterprise.

"To trace the footsteps of this roving tribe throughout its wide migrations from the Apalachian mountains of the northern continent, along the clusters of islands which stud the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean sea to the shores of Paria, and so across the vast regions of Guayana and Amazonia to the remote coast of Brazil, would be one of the most curious researches in aboriginal history, and might throw much light upon the mysterious question of the population of the New World."

We pass over the melancholy story of the ruined fort, and murdered garrison, to which our adventurer returned on his second voyage; and of the first dissensions that broke out in his now increasing colony; but must pause for a moment to accompany him on his first march, at the head of four hundred armed followers, into the interior of the country, and to the mountain region of expected gold. For two days the party proceeded up the banks of a stream, which seemed at last to lose itself in a narrow and rocky recess.

"On the following day, the army toiled up this steep defile, and arrived where the gorge of the mountain opened into the interior. Here a land of promise suddenly burst upon their view. It was the same glorious prospect which had delighted Ojeda and his companions. Below lay a vast and delicious plain, painted and enamelled, as it were, with all the rich variety of tropical vegetation. The magnificent forests presented that mingled beauty and majesty of vegetable forms known only to these generous climates. Palms of prodigious height, and spreading mahogany trees, towered from amid a wilderness of variegated foliage. Universal freshness and verdure were maintained by numerous streams, which meandered gleaming through the deep bosom of the woodland; while various villages and hamlets, peeping from among the trees, and the smoke of others rising out of the midst of the forests, gave signs of a numerous population. The luxuriant landscape extended as far as the eye could reach, until it appeared to melt away and mingle with the horizon. The Spaniards gazed with rapture upon this soft voluptuous country, which seemed to realise their ideas of a terrestial paradise; and Columbus, struck with its vast extent, gave it the name of the Vega Real, or Royal Plain.

"Having descended the rugged pass, the army issued upon the plain, in military array, with great clangour of warlike instruments. When the Indians beheld this shining band of warriors, glittering in steel, emerging from the mountains with prancing steeds and flaunting banners, and heard, for the first time, their rocks and forests echoing to the din of drum and trumpet, they might well have taken such a wonderful pageant for a supernatural vision.

"On the next morning they resumed their march up a narrow and steep glen, winding among craggy rocks, where they were obliged to lead the horses. Arrived at the summit, they once more enjoyed a prospect of the delicious Vega, which here presented a still grander appearance, stretching far and wide on either hand, like a vast verdant lake. This noble plain, according to Las Casas, is eighty leagues in length, and from twenty to thirty in breadth, and of incomparable beauty."

"The natives appeared to them a singularly idle and improvident race, indifferent to most of the objects of human anxiety and toil. They were impatient of all kinds of labour, scarcely giving themselves the trouble to cultivate the yuca root, the maize, and the potatoe, which formed the main articles of subsistence. For the rest, their streams abounded with fish; they caught the utia or coney, the guana, and various birds; and they had a perpetual banquet from the fruits spontaneously produced by their groves. Though the air was sometimes cold among the mountains, yet they preferred submitting to a little temporary suffering, rather than take the trouble to weave garments from the gossampine cotton which abounded in their forests. Thus they loitered away existence in vacant inactivity, under the shade of their trees, or amusing themselves occasionally with various games and dances."

"Having accomplished the purposes of his residence in the Vega, Columbus, at the end of a few days, took leave of its hospitable inhabitants, and resumed his march for the harbour, returning with his little army through the lofty and rugged gorge of the mountains called the Pass of the Hidalgos. As we accompany him in imagination over the rocky height, from whence the Vega first broke upon the eye of the Europeans, we cannot help pausing to cast back a look of mingled pity and admiration over this beautiful but devoted region. The dream of natural liberty, of ignorant content, and loitering idleness, was as yet unbroken, but the fiat had gone forth; the white man had penetrated into the land; avarice, and pride, and ambition, and pining care, and sordid labour, were soon to follow, and the indolent paradise of the Indian to disappear for ever!"

There is something to us inexpressibly pleasing in these passages; but we are aware that there are readers to whom they may seem tedious—and believe, at all events, that we have now given a large enough specimen of the kind of beauty they present. For persons of a different taste we ought to have extracted some account of the incredible darings, and romantic adventures, of Alonzo de Ojeda; or of the ruder prowess and wild magnanimity of the cacique Caonabo, who alone of the island chieftains dared to offer any resistance to the invaders. When made prisoner, and carried off from the centre of his dominions, by one of the unimaginable feats of Ojeda, Mr. Irving has reported that

"He always maintained a haughty deportment towards Columbus, while he never evinced the least animosity against Ojeda for the artifice to which he had fallen a victim. It rather increased his admiration of him, as a consummate warrior, looking upon it as the exploit of a master-spirit to have pounced upon him, and borne him off, in this hawk-like manner, from the very midst of his fighting-men. There is nothing that an Indian more admires in warfare, than a deep, well-executed stratagem.

"Columbus was accustomed to bear himself with an air of dignity and authority as admiral and viceroy, and exacted great personal respect. When he entered the apartment therefore where Caonabo was confined, all present rose, according to custom, and paid him reverence. The cacique alone neither moved, nor took any notice of him. On the contrary, when Ojeda entered, though small in person and without external state, Caonabo immediately rose and saluted him with profound respect. On being asked the reason of this, Columbus being Guamiquina, or great chief over all, and Ojeda but one of his subjects, the proud Carib replied, that the admiral had never dared to come personally to his house and seize him, it was only through the valour of Ojeda he was his prisoner; to Ojeda, therefore, he owed reverence, not the admiral."

The insolent licence of the Spaniards, and the laborious searches for gold which they imposed on the natives, had at last overcome their original feelings of veneration; and, trusting to their vast superiority in numbers, they ventured to make war on their heaven-descended visitants. The result was unresisted carnage and hopeless submission! A tax of a certain quantity of gold dust was imposed on all the districts that afforded that substance, and of certain quantities of cotton and of grain on all the others—and various fortresses were erected, and garrisons stationed, to assist the collection of the tribute.

"In this way," says Mr. Irving, "was the yoke of servitude fixed upon the island, and its thraldom effectually ensured. Deep despair now fell upon the natives, when they found a perpetual task inflicted upon them, enforced at stated and frequently recurring periods. Weak and indolent by nature, unused to labour of any kind, and brought up in the untasked idleness of their soft climate and their fruitful groves, death itself seemed preferable to a life of toil and anxiety. They saw no end to this harassing evil, which had so suddenly fallen upon them; no escape from its all-pervading influence; no prospect of return to that roving independence and ample leisure, so dear to the wild inhabitants of the forests. The pleasant life of the island was at an end; the dream in the shade by day; the slumber during the sultry noon-tide heat by the fountain or the stream, or under the spreading palm-tree; and the song, the dance, and the game in the mellow evening, when summoned to their simple amusements by the rude Indian drum. They were now obliged to grope day by day, with bending body and anxious eye, along the borders of their rivers, sifting the sands for the grains of gold which every day grew more scanty; or to labour in their fields beneath the fervour of a tropical sun, to raise food for their task-masters, or to produce the vegetable tribute imposed upon them. They sunk to sleep weary and exhausted at night, with the certainty that the next day was but to be a repetition of the same toil and suffering. Or if they occasionally indulged in their national dances, the ballads to which they kept time were of a melancholy and plaintive character. They spoke of the times that were past before the white men had introduced sorrow and slavery, and weary labour among them; and they rehearsed pretended prophecies, handed down from their ancestors, foretelling the invasion of the Spaniards; that strangers should come into their island, clothed in apparel, with swords capable of cleaving a man asunder at a blow, under whose yoke their posterity should be subdued. These ballads, or areytos, they sang with mournful tunes and doleful voices, bewailing the loss of their liberty and their painful servitude."

There is an interest of another kind in following the daring route of Columbus along the shores of Cuba and Jamaica, and through the turbulent seas that boil among the keys in the gulf of Paria. The shores still afforded the same beauty of aspect—the people the same marks of submission and delighted wonder.

"It is impossible to resist noticing the striking contrasts which are sometimes forced upon the mind. The coast here described as so populous and animated, rejoicing in the visit of the discoverers, is the same that extends westward of the city of Trinidad, along the gulf of Xagua. All is now silent and deserted. Civilization, which has covered some parts of Cuba with glittering cities, has rendered this a solitude. The whole race of Indians has long since passed away, pining and perishing beneath the domination of the strangers whom they welcomed so joyfully to their shores. Before me lies the account of a night recently passed on this very coast, by a celebrated traveller, (Humboldt,) but with what different feelings from those of Columbus! 'I passed,' says he, 'a great part of the night upon the deck. What deserted coasts! not a light to announce the cabin of a fisherman. From Batabano to Trinidad, a distance of fifty leagues, there does not exist a village. Yet in the time of Columbus this land was inhabited even along the margin of the sea. When pits are digged in the soil, or the torrents plough open the surface of the earth, there are often found hatchets of stone and vessels of copper, relics of the ancient inhabitants of the island.'"

We cannot resist the temptation of adding the following full-length picture; which has all the splendour of a romance, with the additional charm of being true.

"One morning, as the ships were standing along the coast, with a light wind and easy sail, they beheld three canoes issuing from among the islands of the bay. They approached in regular order; one, which was very large and handsomely carved and painted, was in the centre, a little in advance of the two others, which appeared to attend and guard it. In this were seated the cacique and his family, consisting of his wife, two daughters, two sons, and five brothers. One of the daughters was eighteen years of age, beautiful in form and countenance; her sister was somewhat younger; both were naked, according to the custom of these islands, but were of modest demeanour. In the prow of the canoe stood the standard-bearer of the cacique, clad in a kind of mantle of variegated feathers, with a tuft of gay plumes on his head, and bearing in his hand a fluttering white banner. Two Indians, with caps or helmets of feathers of uniform shape and colour, and their faces painted in a similar manner, beat upon tabors; two others, with

hats curiously wrought of green feathers, held trumpets of a fine black wood, ingeniously carved; and there were six others, in large hats and white feathers, who appeared to be guests to the cacique. This gallant little armada having arrived alongside of the admiral's ship, the cacique entered on board with all his train. He appeared in his full regalia. Around his head was a band of small stones of various colours, but principally green, symmetrically arranged, with large white stones at intervals, and connected in front by a large jewel of gold. Two plates of gold were suspended to his ears by rings of small green stones. To a necklace of white beads, of a kind deemed precious by them, was suspended a large plate, in the form of a fleur-de-lys, of guanin, an inferior species of gold; and a girdle of variegated stones, similar to those round his head, completed his regal decorations. His wife was adorned in a similar manner, having also a very small apron of cotton, and bands of the same round her arms and legs. The daughters were without ornaments, excepting the eldest and handsomest, who had a girdle of small stones, from which was suspended a tablet, the size of an ivy leaf, composed of various-coloured stones, embroided on net-work of cotton.

"When the cacique entered on board the ship, he distributed presents of the productions of his island among the officers and men. The admiral was at this time in his cabin, engaged in his morning devotions. When he appeared on deck, the chieftain hastened to meet him with an animated countenance. 'My friend,' said he, 'I have determined to leave my country, and to accompany thee. I have heard from these Indians who are with thee, of the irresistible power of thy sovereigns, and of the many nations thou hast subdued in their name. Whoever refuses obedience to thee is sure to suffer. Thou hast destroyed the canoes and dwellings of the Caribs, slaying their warriors, and carrying into captivity their wives and children. All the islands are in dread of thee; for who can withstand thee now, that thou knowest the secrets of the land, and the weakness of the people? Rather, therefore, than thou shouldst take away my dominions, I will embark with all my household in thy ships, and will go to do homage to thy king and queen, and to behold their marvellous country, of which the Indians relate such wonders.' When this speech was explained to Columbus, and he beheld the wife, the sons and daughters of the cacique, and thought upon the snares to which their ignorance and simplicity would be exposed, he was touched with compassion, and determined not to take them from their native land. He replied to the cacique, therefore, that he received him under his protection as a vassal of his sovereigns; but having many lands yet to visit before he returned to his country, he would at some future time fulfil his desire. Then, taking leave with many expressions of amity, the cacique, with his wife and daughters, and all his retinue, re-embarked in the canoes, returning reluctantly to their island, and the ships continued on their course."

But we must turn from these bright legends; and hurry onward to the end of our extracts. It is impossible to give any abstract of the rapid succession of plots, tumults, and desertions, which blighted the infancy of this great settlement; or of the disgraceful calumnies, jealousies, and intrigues, which gradually undermined the credit of Columbus with his sovereign, and ended at last in the mission of Bobadilla, with power to supersede him in command—and in the incredible catastrophe of his being sent home *in chains* by this arrogant and precipitate adventurer! When he arrived on board the caravel which was to carry him to Spain, the master treated him with the most profound respect, and offered instantly to release him from his fetters.

"But to this he would not consent. 'No,' said he proudly, 'their majesties commanded me by letter to submit to whatever Bodadilla should order in their name; by their authority he has put upon me these chains—I will wear them until they shall order them to be taken off, and I will preserve them afterwards as relics and memorials of the reward of my services.'"

"'He did so,' adds his son Fernando; 'I saw them always hanging in his cabinet, and he requested that when he died they might be buried with him!'"

If there is something in this memorable brutality which stirs the blood with intense indignation, there is something soothing and still more touching in the instant retribution.

"The arrival," says Mr. Irving, "of Columbus at Cadiz, a prisoner and in chains, produced almost as great a sensation as his triumphant return from his first voyage. It was one of those striking and obvious facts, which speak to the feelings of the multitude, and preclude the necessity of reflection. No one stopped to inquire into the case. It was sufficient to be told that Columbus was brought home in irons from the world he had discovered! A general burst of indignation arose in Cadiz, and in the powerful and opulent Seville, which was immediately echoed throughout all Spain."

"Ferdinand joined with his generous queen in her reprobation of the treatment of the admiral, and both sovereigns hastened to give evidence to the world that his imprisonment had been without their authority, and contrary to their wishes. Without waiting to receive any documents that might arrive from Bobadilla, they sent orders to Cadiz that the prisoners should be instantly set at liberty, and treated with all distinction. They wrote a letter to Columbus couched in terms of gratitude and affection, expressing their grief at all he had suffered, and inviting him to court. They ordered, at the same time, that two thousand ducats should be advanced to defray his expenses.

"The loyal heart of Columbus was again cheered by this declaration of his sovereigns. He felt conscious of his integrity, and anticipated an immediate restitution of all his rights and dignities. He appeared at court in Granada on the 17th of December, not as a man ruined and disgraced, but richly dressed, and attended by an honourable retinue. He was received by their majesties with unqualified favour and distinction. When the queen beheld this venerable man approach, and thought on all he had deserved and all that he had suffered, she was moved to tears. Columbus had borne up firmly against the stern conflicts of the world,—he had endured with lofty scorn the injuries and insults of ignoble men, but he possessed strong and quick sensibility. When he found himself thus kindly received by his sovereigns, and beheld tears in the benign eyes of Isabella, his long-suppressed feelings burst forth; he threw himself upon his knees, and for some time could not utter a word for the violence of his tears and sobbings!"

In the year 1502, and in the sixty-sixth year of his age, the indefatigable discoverer set out on his fourth and last voyage. In this he reached the coast of Honduras; and fell in with a race somewhat more advanced in civilization than any he had yet encountered in these romote regions. They had mantles of woven cotton and some small utensils of native copper. He then ran down the shore of Veragua, and came through tremendous tempests to Portobello, in search, it appears of a strait or inlet, by which he had persuaded himself he should find a ready way to the shores of the Ganges: The extreme severity of the season, and the miserable condition of his ships, compelled him, however, to abandon this great enterprise; the account of which Mr. Irving winds up with the following quaint and not very felicitous observation: "If he was disappointed in his expectation of finding a strait through the Isthmus of Darien, it was because nature herself had been disappointed—for she appears to have attempted to make one, but to have attempted it in vain."

After this he returned to the coast of Veragua, where he landed, and formed a temporary settlement, with a view of searching for certain gold mines which he had been told were in the neighbourhood. This, however, was but the source of new disasters. The natives, who were of a fierce and warlike character, attacked and betrayed him—and his vessels were prevented from getting to sea, by the formation of a formidable bar at the mouth of the river.

At last, by prodigious exertions, and the heroic spirit of some of his officers, he was enabled to get away. But his altered fortune still pursued him. He was harassed by perpetual storms, and after having beat up nearly to Hispaniola, was assailed by

"A sudden tempest, of such violence, that, according to the strong expression of Columbus, it seemed as if the world would dissolve. They lost three of their anchors almost immediately, and the caravel Bermuda was driven with such violence upon the ship of the admiral, that the bow of the one, and the stern of the other, were greatly shattered. The sea running high, and the wind being boisterous, the vessels chafed and injured each other dreadfully, and it was with great difficulty that they were separated. One anchor only remained to the admiral's ship, and this saved him from being driven upon the rocks; but at daylight the cable was found nearly worn asunder. Had the darkness continued an hour longer, he could scarcely have escaped shipwreck.

"At the end of six days, the weather having moderated, he resumed his course, standing eastward for Hispaniola: 'his people,' as he says, 'dismayed and down-hearted, almost all his anchors lost, and his vessels bored as full of holes as a honeycomb.'"

His proud career seemed now to be hastening to a miserable end. Incapable of struggling longer with the elements, he was obliged to run before the wind to Jamaica, where he was not even in a condition to attempt to make any harbour.

"His ships, reduced to mere wrecks, could no longer keep the sea, and were ready to sink even in port. He ordered them, therefore, to be run aground, within a bow-shot of the shore, and fastened together, side by side. They soon filled with water to the decks. Thatched cabins were then erected at the prow and stern for the accommodation of the crews, and the wreck was placed in the best possible state of defence. Thus castled in the sea, Columbus trusted to be able to repel any sudden attack of the natives, and at the same time to keep his men from roving about the neighbourhood and indulging in their usual excesses. No one was allowed to go on shore without especial licence, and the utmost precaution was taken to prevent any offence from being given to the Indians. Any exasperation of them might be fatal to the Spaniards in their present forlorn situation. A firebrand thrown into their wooden fortress might wrap it in flames, and leave them defenceless amidst hostile thousands."

"The envy," says Mr. Irving, "which had once sickened at the glory and prosperity of Columbus, could scarcely have devised for him a more forlorn heritage in the world he had discovered; the tenant of a wreck on a savage coast, in an untraversed ocean, at the mercy of barbarous hordes, who, in a moment, from precarious friends, might be transformed into ferocious enemies; afflicted, too, by excruciating maladies which confined him to his bed, and by the pains and infirmities which hardship and anxiety had heaped upon his advancing age. But Columbus had not yet exhausted his cup of bitterness. He had yet to experience an evil worse than storm, or shipwreck, or bodily anguish, or the violence of savage hordes, in the perfidy of those in whom he confided."

The account of his sufferings during the twelve long months he was allowed to remain in this miserable condition, is full of the deepest interest, and the strangest variety of adventure. But we can now only refer to it.—Two of his brave and devoted adherents undertook to cross to Hispaniola in a slender Indian canoe, and after incredible miseries, at length accomplished this desperate undertaking—but from the cold-hearted indecision, or paltry jealousy, of the new Governor Ovando, it was not till the late period we have mentioned, that a vessel was at length despatched to the relief of the illustrious sufferer.

But he was not the only, or even the most memorable sufferer. From the time he was superseded in command, the misery and oppression of the natives of Hispaniola had increased beyond all proportion or belief. By the miserable policy of the new governor, their services were allotted to the Spanish settlers, who compelled them to work by the cruel infliction of the scourge; and, withholding from them the nourishment necessary for health, exacted a degree of labour which could not have been sustained by the most vigorous men.

"If they fled from this incessant toil and barbarous coercion, and took refuge in the mountains, they were hunted out like wild beasts, scourged in the most inhuman manner, and laden with chains to prevent a second escape. Many perished long before their term of labour had expired. Those who survived their term of six or eight months, were permitted to return to their homes, until the next term commenced. But their homes were often forty, sixty, and eighty leagues distant. They had nothing to sustain them through the journey but a few roots or agi peppers, or a little cassava-bread. Worn down by long toil and cruel hardships, which their feeble constitutions were incapable of sustaining, many had not strength to perform the journey, but sunk down and died by the way; some by the side of a brook, others under the shade of a tree, where they had crawled for shelter from the sun. 'I have found many dead in the road,' says Las Casas, 'others gasping under the trees, and others in the pangs of death, faintly crying, Hunger; hunger!' Those who reached their homes most commonly found them desolate. During the eight months that they had been absent their wives and children had either perished or wandered away; the fields on which they depended for food were overrun with weeds, and nothing was left them but to lie down, exhausted and despairing, and die at the threshold of their habitations.

It is impossible to pursue any farther the picture drawn by the venerable Las Casas, not of what he had heard, but of what he had seen—nature and humanity revolt at the details. Suffice it to say that, so intolerable were the toils and sufferings inflicted upon this weak and unoffending race, that they sunk under them, dissolving as it were from the face of the earth. Many killed themselves in despair, and even mothers overcame the powerful instinct of nature, and destroyed the infants at their breasts, to spare them a life of wretchedness. Twelve years had not elapsed since the discovery of the island, and several hundred thousands of its native inhabitants had perished, miserable victims to the grasping avarice of the white men."

These pictures are sufficiently shocking; but they do not exhaust the horrors that cover the brief history of this ill-fated people. The province or district of Xaragua, which was ruled over by a princess, called Anacaona, celebrated in all the contemporary accounts for the grace and dignity of her manners, and her confiding attachment to the strangers, had hitherto enjoyed a happy exemption from the troubles which distracted the other parts of the island, and when visited about ten years before by the brother of Columbus, had impressed all the Spaniards with the idea of an earthly paradise: both from the fertility and sweetness of the country, the gentleness of its people, and the beauty and grace of the women. Upon some rumours that the neighbouring caciques were assembling for hostile purposes, Ovando now marched into this devoted region with a well-appointed force of near four hundred men. He was hospitably and joyfully received by the princess: and affected to encourage and join in the festivity which his presence had excited. He was even himself engaged in a sportful game with his officers, when the signal for massacre was given—and the place was instantly covered with blood! Eighty of the caciques were burnt over slow fires! and thousands of the unarmed and unresisting people butchered, without regard to sex or age. "Humanity," Mr. Irving very justly observes, "turns with horror from such atrocities, and would fain discredit them: But they are circumstantially and still more minutely recorded by the venerable Las Casas—who was *resident in the island at the time*, and conversant with the principal actors in the tragedy."

Still worse enormities signalised the final subjugation of the province of Higuey—the last scene of any attempt to resist the tyrannical power of the invaders. It would be idle to detail here the progress of that savage and most unequal warfare: but it is right that the butcheries perpetrated by the victors should not be forgotten—that men may see to what incredible excesses civilised beings may be tempted by the possession of absolute and unquestioned power—and may learn, from indisputable memorials, how far the abuse of delegated and provincial authority may be actually carried. If it be true, as Homer has alleged, that the day which makes a man a slave, takes away half his worth—it seems to be still more infallibly and fatally true, that the master generally suffers a yet larger privation.

"Sometimes," says Mr. Irving, they would hunt down a straggling Indian, and compel him, by torments, to betray the hiding-place of his companions, binding him and driving him before them as a guide. Wherever they discovered one of these places of refuge, filled with the aged and the infirm, with feeble women and helpless children, they massacred them without mercy! They wished to inspire terror throughout the land, and to frighten the whole tribe into submission. They cut off the hands of those whom they took roving at large, and sent them, as they said, to deliver them as letters to their friends, demanding their surrender. Numberless were those, says Las Casas, whose hands were amputated in this manner, and many of them sunk down and died by the way, through anguish and loss of blood.

"The conquerors delighted in exercising strange and ingenious cruelties. They mingled horrible levity with their bloodthirstiness. They erected gibbets long and low, so that the feet of the sufferers might reach the ground, and their death be lingering. They hanged thirteen together, in reverence, says the indignant Las Casas, of our blessed Saviour and the twelve apostles! While their victims were suspended, and still living, they hacked them with their swords, to prove the strength of their arm and the edge of their weapons. They wrapped them in dry straw, and setting fire to it, terminated their existence by the fiercest agony.

"These are horrible details; yet a veil is drawn over others still more detestable. They are related by the venerable Las Casas, *who was an eye-witness of the scenes he describes*. He was young at the time, but records them in his advanced years. 'All these things,' says he, 'and others revolting to human nature, my own eyes beheld! and now I almost fear to repeat them, scarce believing myself, or whether I have not dreamt them.'

"The system of Columbus may have borne hard upon the Indians, born and brought up in untasked freedom; but it was never cruel nor sanguinary. He inflicted no wanton massacres nor vindictive punishments; his desire was to cherish and civilise the Indians, and to render them useful subjects, not to oppress, and persecute, and destroy them. When he beheld the desolation that had swept them from the land during his suspension from authority, he could not restrain the strong expression of his feelings. In a letter written to the king after his return to Spain, he thus expresses himself on the subject: 'The Indians of Hispaniola were and are the riches of the island; for it is they who cultivate and make the bread and the provisions for the Christians, who dig the gold from the mines, and perform all the offices and labours both of men and beasts. I am informed that, since I left this island, (that is, in less than three years,) *six parts out of seven of the natives are dead*, all through ill treatment and inhumanity! some by the sword, others by blows and cruel usage, and others through hunger. The greater part have perished in the mountains and glens, whither they had fled, from not being able to support the labour imposed upon them.'"

The story now draws to a close. Columbus returned to Spain, broken down with age and affliction—and after two years spent in unavailing solicitations at the court of the cold-blooded and ungrateful Ferdinand (his generous patroness, Isabella, having died immediately on his return), terminated with characteristic magnanimity a life of singular energy, splendour, and endurance. Independent of his actual achievements, he was undoubtedly a great and remarkable man; and Mr Irving has summed up his general character in a very eloquent and judicious way.

"His ambition," he observes, "was lofty and noble. He was full of high thoughts, and anxious

to distinguish himself by great achievements. It has been said that a mercenary feeling mingled with his views, and that his stipulations with the Spanish Court were selfish and avaricious. The charge is inconsiderate and unjust. He aimed at dignity and wealth in the same lofty spirit in which he sought renown; and the gains that promised to arise from his discoveries, he intended to appropriate in the same princely and pious spirit in which they were demanded. He contemplated works and achievements of benevolence and religion: vast contributions for the relief of the poor of his native city; the foundation of churches, where masses should be said for the souls of the departed; and armies for the recovery of the holy sepulchre in Palestine.

"In his testament, he enjoined on his son Diego, and whoever after him should inherit his estates, whatever dignities and titles might afterwards be granted by the king, always to sign himself simply 'the Admiral,' by way of perpetuating in the family its real source of greatness."

"He was devoutly pious; religion mingled with the whole course of his thoughts and actions, and shines forth in all his most private and unstudied writings. Whenever he made any great discovery, he celebrated it by solemn thanks to God. The voice of prayer and melody of praise rose from his ships when he first beheld the New World, and his first action on landing was to prostrate himself upon the earth and return thanksgivings. Every evening, the *Salve Regina*, and other vesper hymns, were chanted by his crew, and masses were performed in the beautiful groves that bordered the wild shores of this heathen land. The religion thus deeply seated in the soul, diffused a sober dignity and benign composure over his whole demeanour. His language was pure and guarded, free from all imprecations, oaths, and other irreverent expressions. But his piety was darkened by the bigotry of the age. He evidently concurred in the opinion that all the nations who did not acknowledge the Christian faith were destitute of natural rights; that the sternest measures might be used for their conversion, and the severest punishments inflicted upon their obstinacy in unbelief. In this spirit of bigotry he considered himself justified in making captives of the Indians, and transporting them to Spain to have them taught the doctrines of Christianity, and in selling them for slaves if they pretended to resist his invasions. He was countenanced in these views, no doubt, by the general opinion of the age. But it is not the intention of the author to justify Columbus on a point where it is inexcusable to err. Let it remain a blot on his illustrious name,—and let others derive a lesson from it."

He was a man, too, undoubtedly, as all truly great men have been, of an imaginative and sensitive temperament—something, as Mr. Irving has well remarked, even of a visionary—but a visionary of a high and lofty order, controlling his ardent imagination by a powerful judgment and great practical sagacity, and deriving not only a noble delight but signal accessions of knowledge from this vigour and activity of his fancy.

"Yet, with all this fervour of imagination," as Mr. Irving has strikingly observed, "its fondest dreams fell short of the reality. He died in ignorance of the real grandeur of his discovery. Until his last breath he entertained the idea that he had merely opened a new way to the old resorts of opulent commerce, and had discovered some of the wild regions of the east. He supposed Hispaniola to be the ancient Ophir which had been visited by the ships of Solomon, and that Cuba and Terra Firma were but remote parts of Asia. What visions of glory would have broke upon his mind could he have known that he had indeed discovered a new continent, equal to the whole of the old world in magnitude, and separated by two vast oceans from all the earth hitherto known by civilised man! And how would his magnanimous spirit have been consoled, amidst the afflictions of age and the cares of penury, the neglect of a fickle public, and the injustice of an ungrateful king, could he have anticipated the splendid empires which were to spread over the beautiful world he had discovered; and the nations, and tongues, and languages which were to fill its lands with his renown, and to revere and bless his name to the latest posterity!"

The appendix to Mr. Irving's work, which occupies the greater part of the last volume, contains most of the original matter which his learning and research have enabled him to bring to bear on the principal subject, and constitutes indeed a miscellany of a singularly curious and interesting description. It consists, besides very copious and elaborate accounts of the family and descendants of Columbus, principally of extracts and critiques of the discoveries of earlier or contemporary navigators—the voyages of the Carthaginians and the Scandinavians,—of Behem, the Pinzons, Amerigo Vespucci, and others—with some very curious remarks on the travels of Marco Polo, and Mandeville—a dissertation on the ships used by Columbus and his contemporaries—on the Atalantis of Plato—the imaginary island of St. Brandan, and of the Seven Cities—together with remarks on the writings of Peter Martyr, Oviedo, Herrera, Las Casas, and the other contemporary chroniclers of those great discoveries. The whole drawn up, we think, with singular judgment, diligence, and candour; and presenting the reader, in the most manageable form, with almost all the collateral information which could be brought to elucidate the transactions to which they relate.

Such is the general character of Mr. Irving's book—and such are parts of its contents. We do not pretend to give any view whatever of the substance of four large historical volumes; and fear that the specimens we have ventured to exhibit of the author's way of writing are not very well calculated to do justice either to the occasional force, or the constant variety, of his style. But for judicious readers they will probably suffice—and, we trust, will be found not only to warrant the praise we have felt ourselves called on to bestow, but to induce many to gratify themselves by the perusal of the work at large.

Mr. Irving, we believe, was not in England when his work was printed: and we must say he has been very insufficiently represented by the corrector of the press. We do not recollect ever to have seen so handsome a book with so many gross typographical errors. In many places they obscure the sense—and are very frequently painful and offensive. It will be absolutely necessary that this be looked to in a new impression; and the author would do well to avail himself of the same opportunity, to correct some verbal inaccuracies, and to polish and improve some passages of slovenly writing.

(June, 1827.)

Memoirs of Zehir-ed-din Muhammed Baber, *Emperor of Hindustan, written by himself, in the Jaghatai Turki, and translated, partly by the late* John Leyden, Esq. M.D., *partly by* William Erskine, Esq. *With Notes and a Geographical and Historical Introduction: together with a Map of the Countries between the Oxus and Jaxartes, and a Memoir regarding its Construction, by* Charles Waddington, Esq., *of the East India Company's Engineers.* London: 1826.

This is a very curious, and admirably edited work. But the strongest impression which the perusal of it has left on our minds is the boundlessness of authentic history; and, if we might venture to say it, the uselessness of all history which does not relate to our own fraternity of nations, or even bear, in some way or other, on our own present or future condition.

We have here a distinct and faithful account of some hundreds of battles, sieges, and great military expeditions, and a character of a prodigious number of eminent individuals,—men famous in their day, over wide regions, for genius or fortune—poets, conquerors, martyrs—founders of cities and dynasties—authors of immortal works—ravagers of vast districts abounding in wealth and population. Of all these great personages and events, nobody in Europe, if we except a score or two of studious Orientalists, has ever heard before; and it would not, we imagine, be very easy to show that we are any better for hearing of them now. A few curious traits, that happen to be strikingly in contrast with our own manners and habits, may remain on the memory of a reflecting reader—with a general confused recollection of the dark and gorgeous phantasmagoria. But no one, we may fairly say, will think it worth while to digest or develope the details of the history; or be at the pains to become acquainted with the leading individuals, and fix in his memory the series and connection of events. Yet the effusion of human blood was as copious—the display of talent and courage as imposing—the perversion of high moral qualities, and the waste of the means of enjoyment as unsparing, as in other long-past battles and intrigues and revolutions, over the details of which we still pore with the most unwearied attention; and to verify the dates or minute circumstances of which, is still regarded as a great exploit in historical research, and among the noblest employments of human learning and sagacity.

It is not perhaps very easy to account for the eagerness with which we still follow the fortunes of Miltiades, Alexander, or Cæsar—of the Bruce and the Black Prince, and the interest which yet belongs to the fields of Marathon and Pharsalia, of Crecy and Bannockburn, compared with the indifference, or rather reluctance, with which we listen to the details of Asiatic warfare—the conquests that transferred to the Moguls the vast sovereignties of India, or raised a dynasty of Manchew Tartars to the Celestial Empire of China. It will not do to say, that we want something nobler in character, and more exalted in intellect, than is to be met with among those murderous Orientals—that there is nothing to interest in the contentions of mere force and violence; and that it requires no very fine-drawn reasoning to explain why we should turn with disgust from the story, if it had been preserved, of the savage affrays which have drenched the sands of Africa or the rocks of New Zealand—through long generations of murder—with the blood of their brutish population. This may be true enough of Madagascar or Dahomy; but it does not apply to the case before us. The nations of Asia generally—at least those composing its great states—were undoubtedly more polished than those of Europe, during all the period that preceded their recent connection. Their warriors were as brave in the field, their statesmen more subtle and politic in the cabinet: In the arts of luxury, and all the elegancies of civil life, they were immeasurably superior; in ingenuity of speculation—in literature—in social politeness—the comparison is still in their favour.

It has often occurred to us, indeed, to consider what the effect would have been on the fate and fortunes of the world, if, in the fourteenth, or fifteenth century, when the germs of their present civilisation were first disclosed, the nations of Europe had been introduced to an intimate and friendly acquaintance with the great polished communities of the East, and had been thus led to take *them* for their masters in intellectual cultivation, and their models in all the higher pursuits of genius, polity, and art. The difference in our social and moral condition, it would not perhaps be easy to estimate: But one result, we conceive, would unquestionably have been, to make us take the same deep interest in their ancient story, which we now feel, for similar reasons, in that of the sterner barbarians of early Rome, or the more imaginative clans and colonies of immortal Greece. The experiment, however, though there seemed oftener than once to be some openings for it, was not made. Our crusading ancestors were too rude themselves to estimate or to feel the value of the oriental refinement which presented itself to their passing gaze, and too entirely occupied with war and bigotry, to reflect on its causes or effects; and the first naval adventurers who opened up India to our commerce, were both too few and too far off to communicate to

their brethren at home any taste for the splendours which might have excited their own admiration. By the time that our intercourse with those regions was enlarged, our own career of improvement had been prosperously begun; and our superiority in the art, or at least the discipline of war, having given us a signal advantage in the conflicts to which that extending intercourse immediately led, naturally increased the aversion and disdain with which almost all races of men are apt to regard strangers to their blood and dissenters from their creed. Since that time the genius of Europe has been steadily progressive, whilst that of Asia has been at least stationary, and most probably retrograde; and the descendants of the feudal and predatory warriors of the West have at last attained a decided predominancy over those of their elder brothers in the East; to whom, at that period, they were unquestionably inferior in elegance and ingenuity, and whose hostilities were then conducted on the same system with our own. *They*, in short, have remained nearly where they were; while *we*, beginning with the improvement of our governments and military discipline, have gradually outstripped them in all the lesser and more ornamental attainments in which they originally excelled.

This extraordinary fact of the stationary or degenerate condition of the two oldest and greatest families of mankind—those of Asia and Africa, has always appeared to us a sad obstacle in the way of those who believe in the general progress of the race, and its constant advancement towards a state of perfection. Two or three thousand years ago, those vast communities were certainly in a happier and more prosperous state than they are now; and in many of them we know that their most powerful and flourishing societies have been corrupted and dissolved, not by any accidental or extrinsic disaster, like foreign conquest, pestilence, or elemental devastation, but by what appeared to be the natural consequences of that very greatness and refinement which had marked and rewarded their earlier exertions. In Europe, hitherto, the case has certainly been different: For though darkness did fall upon its nations also, after the lights of Roman civilisation were extinguished, it is to be remembered that they did not burn out of themselves, but were trampled down by hosts of invading barbarians, and that they blazed out anew, with increased splendour and power, when the dulness of that superincumbent mass was at length vivified by their contact, and animated by the fermentation of that leaven which had all along been secretly working in its recesses. In Europe certainly there has been a progress: And the more polished of its present inhabitants have not only regained the place which was held of old by their illustrious masters of Greece and Rome, but have plainly outgone them in the most substantial and exalted of their improvements. Far more humane and refined than the Romans—far less giddy and turbulent and treacherous than the Greeks, they have given a security to life and property that was unknown to the earlier ages of the world—exalted the arts of peace to a dignity with which they were never before invested; and, by the abolition of domestic servitude, for the first time extended to the bulk of the population those higher capacities and enjoyments which were formerly engrossed by a few. By the invention of printing, they have made all knowledge, not only accessible, but imperishable; and by their improvements in the art of war, have effectually secured themselves against the overwhelming calamity of barbarous invasion—the risk of subjugation by mere numerical or animal force: Whilst the alternations of conquest and defeat amongst civilised communities, who alone can now be formidable to each other, though productive of great local and temporary evils, may be regarded on the whole as one of the means of promoting and equalising the general civilisation. Rome polished and enlightened all the barbarous nations she subdued—and was herself polished and enlightened by her conquest of elegant Greece. If the European parts of Russia had been subjected to the dominion of France, there can be no doubt that the loss of national independence would have been compensated by rapid advances both in liberality and refinement; and if, by a still more disastrous, though less improbable contingency, the Moscovite hordes were ever to overrun the fair countries to the south-west of them, it is equally certain that the invaders would speedily be softened and informed by the union; and be infected more certainly than by any other sort of contact, with the arts and the knowledge of the vanquished.

All these great advantages, however—this apparently irrepressible impulse to improvement—this security against backsliding and decay, seems peculiar to Europe,* and not capable of being communicated, even by her, to the most docile races of the other quarters of the world: and it is really extremely difficult to explain, upon what are called philosophical principles, the causes of this superiority. We should be very glad to ascribe it to our greater political Freedom:—and no doubt, as a secondary cause, this is among the most powerful; as it is to the maintenance of that freedom that we are indebted for the self-estimation, the feeling of honour, the general equity of the laws, and the substantial security both from sudden revolution and from capricious oppression, which distinguish our portion of the globe. But we cannot bring ourselves to regard this freedom as a mere accident in our history, that is not itself to be accounted for, as well as its consequences: And when it is said that our greater stability

* When we speak of Europe, it will be understood that we speak, not of the land, but of the people—and include, therefore, all the settlements and colonies of that favoured race, in whatever quarter of the globe they may now be established. Some situations seem more, and some less, favourable to the preservation of the original character. The Spaniards certainly degenerated in Peru—and the Dutch perhaps in Batavia;—but the English remain, we trust, unimpaired in America.

and prosperity is owing to our greater freedom, we are immediately tempted to ask, by what that freedom has itself been produced? In the same way we might ascribe the superior mildness and humanity of our manners, the abated ferocity of our wars, and generally our respect for human life, to the influence of a Religion which teaches that all men are equal in the sight of God, and inculcates peace and charity as the first of our duties. But, besides the startling contrast between the profligacy, treachery, and cruelty of the Eastern Empire after its conversion to the true faith, and the simple and heroic virtues of the heathen republic, it would still occur to inquire, how it has happened that the nations of European descent have alone embraced the sublime truths, and adopted into their practice the mild precepts, of Christianity, while the people of the East have uniformly rejected and disclaimed them, as alien to their character and habits—in spite of all the efforts of the apostles, fathers, and martyrs, in the primitive and most effective periods of their preaching? How, in short, it has happened that the sensual and sanguinary creed of Mahomet has superseded the pure and pacific doctrines of Christianity in most of those very regions where it was first revealed to mankind, and first established by the greatest of existing governments? The Christian revelation is no doubt the most precious of all Heaven's gifts to the benighted world. But it is plain, that there was a greater aptitude to embrace and to profit by it in the European than in the Asiatic race. A free government, in like manner, is unquestionably the most valuable of all human inventions—the great safeguard of all other temporal blessings, and the mainspring of all intellectual and moral improvement:—But such a government is not the result of a lucky thought or happy casualty; and could only be established among men who had previously learned both to relish the benefits it secures, and to understand the connection between the means it employs and the ends at which it aims.

We come then, though a little reluctantly, to the conclusion, that there is a natural and inherent difference in the character and temperament of the European and the Asiatic races—consisting, perhaps, chiefly in a superior capacity of patient and persevering thought in the former—and displaying itself, for the most part, in a more sober and robust understanding, and a more reasonable, principled, and inflexible morality. It is this which has led us, at once to temper our political institutions with prospective checks and suspicious provisions against abuses, and, in our different orders and degrees, to submit without impatience to those checks and restrictions;—to extend our reasonings by repeated observation and experiment, to larger and larger conclusions—and thus gradually to discover the paramount importance of discipline and unity of purpose in war, and of absolute security to person and property in all peaceful pursuits—the folly of all passionate and vindictive assertion of supposed rights and pretensions, and the certain recoil of long-continued injustice on the heads of its authors—the substantial advantages of honesty and fair dealing over the most ingenious systems of trickery and fraud;—and even—though this is the last and hardest, as well as the most precious, of all the lessons of reason and experience—that the toleration even of religious errors is not only prudent and merciful in itself, and most becoming a fallible and erring being, but is the surest and speediest way to compose religious differences, and to extinguish that most formidable bigotry, and those most pernicious errors, which are fed and nourished by persecution. It is the want of this knowledge, or rather of the capacity for attaining it, that constitutes the palpable inferiority of the Eastern races; and, in spite of their fancy, ingenuity, and restless activity, condemns them, it would appear irretrievably, to vices and sufferings, from which nations in a far ruder condition are comparatively free. But we are wandering too far from the magnificent Baber and his commentators,—and must now leave these vague and general speculations for the facts and details that lie before us.

Zehir-ed-din Muhammed, surnamed Baber, or the Tiger, was one of the descendants of Zengiskhan and of Tamerlane; and though inheriting only the small kingdom of Ferghana in Bucharia, ultimately extended his dominions by conquest to Delhi and the greater part of Hindostan; and transmitted to his famous descendants, Akber and Aurengzebe, the magnificent empire of the Moguls. He was born in 1482, and died in 1530. Though passing the greater part of his time in desperate military expeditions, he was an educated and accomplished man; an elegant poet; a minute and fastidious critic in all the niceties and elegances of diction; a curious and exact observer of the statistical phenomena of every region he entered; a great admirer of beautiful prospects and fine flowers; and, though a devoted Mahometan in his way, a very resolute and jovial drinker of wine. Good-humoured, brave, munificent, sagacious, and frank in his character, he might have been a Henry IV. if his training had been in Europe;—and even as he is, is less stained, perhaps, by the Asiatic vices of cruelty and perfidy than any other in the list of her conquerors. The work before us is a faithful translation of his own account of his life and transactions; written, with some considerable blanks, up to the year 1508, in the form of a narrative—and continued afterwards, as a journal, till 1529. It is here illustrated by the most intelligent, learned, and least pedantic notes we have ever seen annexed to such a performance; and by two or three introductory dissertations, more clear, masterly, and full of instruction than any it has ever been our lot to peruse on the history or geography of the East. The translation was begun by the late very learned and enterprising Dr. Leyden. It has been completed, and the whole of the valuable commentary added by Mr. W. Erskine, on the solicitation of the Hon. Mountstewart Elphinstone and Sir John Malcolm, the two individuals in the world best qualified to judge of the value or execution of such a work. The greater part of the translation was finished and transmitted to this country in 1817; but was only committed to the press in the course of last year.

The preface contains a learned account of the Turki language, (in which these memoirs were written,) the prevailing tongue of Central Asia, and of which the Constantinopolitan Turkish is one of the most corrupted dialects,—some valuable corrections of Sir William Jones' notices of the Institutes of Taimûr,—and a very clear explanation of the method employed in the translation, and the various helps by which the great difficulties of the task were relieved. The first Introduction, however, contains much more valuable matters: It is devoted to an account of the great Tartar tribes, who, under the denomination of the Turki, the Moghul, and the Mandshur races, may be said to occupy the whole vast extent of Asia, north of Hindostan and part of Persia, and westward from China. Of these, the Mandshurs, who have long been the sovereigns of China, possess the countries immediately to the north and east of that ancient empire—the Turki, the regions immediately to the north and westward of India and Persia Proper, stretching round the Caspian, and advancing, by the Constantinopolitan tribes, considerably to the southeast of Europe. The Moghuls lie principally between the other two. These three tribes speak, it would appear, totally different languages—the name of Tartar or Tatar, by which they are generally designated in Europe, not being acknowledged by any of them, and appearing to have been appropriated only to a small clan of Moghuls. The Huns, who desolated the declining empire under Attila*, are thought by Mr. Erskine to have been of the Moghul race; and Zengiskhan, the mighty conqueror of the thirteenth century, was certainly of that family. Their princes, however, were afterwards blended, by family alliances, with those of the Turki; and several of them, reigning exclusively over conquered tribes of that descent, came gradually though of proper Moghul ancestry, to reckon themselves as Turki sovereigns. Of this description was Taimur Beg, or Tamerlane, whose family, though descended from Zengis, had long been settled in the Turki kingdom of Samarkand; and from him the illustrious Baber, the hero of the work before us, a decided Turki in language, character, and prejudices, was lineally sprung. The relative condition of these enterprising nations, and their more peaceful brethren in the south, cannot be more clearly or accurately described than in the words of Mr. Erskine:—

"The whole of Asia may be considered as divided into two parts by the great chain of mountains which runs from China and the Birman Empire on the east, to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean on the west. From the eastward, where it is of great breadth, it keeps a north-westerly course, rising in height as it advances, and forming the hill countries of Assâm, Bootân, Nepâl, Sirinagar, Tibet, and Ladâk. It encloses the valley of Kashmîr, near which it seems to have gained its greatest height, and thence proceeds westward, passing to the north of Peshâwer and Kâbul, after which it appears to break into a variety of smaller ranges of hills that proceed in a westerly and south-westerly direction, generally terminating in the province of Khorasân. Near Herât, in that province, the mountains sink away; but the range appears to rise again near Meshhed, and is by some considered as resuming its course, running to the south of the Caspian and bounding Mazenderân, whence it proceeds on through Armenia, and thence into Asia Minor, finding its termination in the mountains of ancient Lycia. This immense range, which some consider as terminating at Herât, while it divides Bengal, Hindustân, the Penjâb, Afghanistân, Persia, and part of the Turkish territory, from the country of the Moghul and Tûrki tribes, which, with few exceptions, occupy the whole extent of country from the borders of China to the sea of Azof, may also be considered as separating in its whole course, nations of comparative civilisation, from uncivilised tribes. To the south of this range, if we perhaps except some part of the Afghân territory, which, indeed, may rather be held as part of the range itself than as south of it, there is no nation which, at some period or other of its history, has not been the seat of a powerful empire, and of all those arts and refinements of life which attend a numerous and wealthy population, when protected by a government that permits the fancies and energies of the human mind to follow their natural bias. The degrees of civilisation and of happiness possessed in these various regions may have been extremely different; but many of the comforts of wealth and abundance, and no small share of the higher treasures of cultivated judgment and imagination, must have been enjoyed by nations that could produce the various systems of Indian philosophy and science, a drama so polished as the Sakontala, a poet like Ferdousi, or a moralist like Sadi. While to the south of this range we every where see flourishing cities, cultivated fields, and all the forms of a regular government and policy, to the north of it, if we except China and the countries to the south of the Sirr or Jaxartes, and along its banks, we find tribes who, down to the present day, wander over their extensive regions as their forefathers did, little if at all more refined than they appear to have been at the very dawn of history. Their flocks are still their wealth, their camp their city, and the same government exists of separate chiefs, who are not much exalted in luxury or information above the commonest of their subjects around them."

These general remarks are followed up by an exact and most luminous geographical enumeration of all the branches of this great northern family,—accompanied with historical notices, and very interesting elucidations of various passages both in ancient and modern writers. The following observations are of more extensive application:—

"The general state of society which prevailed in the age of Baber, within the countries that have been described, will be much better understood from a perusal of the following Memoirs than from any prefatory observations that could be offered. It is evident that, in consequence of the protection which had been afforded to the people of Mâweral-

* The learned translator conceives that the supposed name of this famous barbarian was truly only the denomination of his office. It is known that he succeeded his uncle in the government, though there were children of his alive. It is probable, therefore, that he originally assumed authority in the character of their guardian; and the word *Atalik*, in Tartar, signifies guardian, or *quasi parens*.

nahcr by their regular governments, a considerable degree of comfort, and perhaps still more of elegance and civility, prevailed in the towns. The whole age of Baber, however, was one of great confusion. Nothing contributed so much to produce the constant wars, and eventual devastation of the country, which the Memoirs exhibit, as the want of *some fixed rule of Succession to the Throne.* The ideas of regal descent, according to primogeniture, were very indistinct, as is the case in all Oriental, and, in general, in all purely despotic kingdoms. When the succession to the crown, like every thing else, is subject to the will of the prince, on his death it necessarily becomes the subject of contention;—since the will of a dead king is of much less consequence than the intrigues of an able minister, or the sword of a successful commander. It is the privilege of liberty and of law alone to bestow equal security on the rights of the monarch and of the people. The death of the ablest sovereign was only the signal for a general war. The different parties at court, or in the harem of the prince, espoused the cause of different competitors, and every neighbouring potentate believed himself to be perfectly justified in marching to seize his portion of the spoil. In the course of the Memoirs, we shall find that the grandees of the court, while they take their place by the side of the candidate of their choice, do not appear to believe that fidelity to him is any very necessary virtue. The nobility, unable to predict the events of one twelvemonth, degenerate into a set of selfish, calculating, though perhaps brave partizans. Rank, and wealth, and present enjoyment, become their idols. The prince feels the influence of the general want of stability, and is himself educated in the loose principles of an adventurer. In all about him he sees merely the instruments of his power. The subject, seeing the prince consult only his pleasures, learns on his part to consult only his private convenience. In such societies, the steadiness of principle that flows from the love of right and of our country can have no place. It may be questioned whether the prevalence of the Mahommedan religion, by swallowing up civil in religious distinctions, has not a tendency to increase this indifference to country, wherever it is established."

"That the fashions of the East are unchanged, is, in general, certainly true; because the climate and the despotism, from the one or other of which a very large proportion of them arises, have continued the same. Yet one who observes the way in which a Mussulman of rank spends his day, will be led to suspect that the maxim has sometimes been adopted with too little limitation. Take the example of his pipe and his coffee. The Kalliûn, or Hukkâ, is seldom out of his hand; while the coffee-cup makes its appearance every hour, as if it contained a necessary of life. Perhaps there are no enjoyments the loss of. which he would feel more severely; or which, were we to judge only by the frequency of the call for them, we should suppose to have entered from a more remote period into the system of Asiatic life. Yet we know that the one (which has indeed become a necessary of life to every class of Mussulmans) could not have been enjoyed before the discovery of America; and there is every reason to believe that the other was not introduced into Arabia from Africa, where coffee is indigenous, previously to the sixteenth century;* and what marks the circumstance more strongly, both of these habits have forced their way, in spite of the remonstrances of the rigorists in religion. Perhaps it would have been fortunate for Baber had they prevailed in his age, as they might have diverted him from the immoderate use first of wine, and afterwards of deleterious drugs, which ruined his constitution, and hastened on his end."

* La Roque, Traité Historique de i'Origine et du Progrés du Café, &c. Paris, 1716, 12mo.

The *Yâsi*, or institutions of Chengiz, are often mentioned.

"They seem," says Mr. Erskine, "to have been a collection of the old usages of the Moghul tribes, comprehending some rules of state and ceremony, and some injunctions for the punishment of particular crimes. The punishments were only two—death and the bastinado*; the number of blows extending from seven to seven hundred. There is something very Chinese in the whole of the Moghul system of punishment, even princes advanced in years, and in command of large armies, being punished by bastinado with a stick, by their father's orders.† Whether they received their usage in this respect from the Chinese, or communicated it to them, is not very certain. As the whole body of their laws or customs was formed before the introduction of the Mussulman religion, and was probably in many respects inconsistent with the Koran, as, for instance, in allowing the use of the blood of animals, and in the extent of toleration granted to other religions, it gradually fell into decay."

The present Moghul tribes, it is added, punish most offences by fines of cattle. The art of war in the days of Baber had not been very greatly matured; and though matchlocks and unwieldy cannon had been recently introduced from the West, the arms chiefly relied on were still the bow and the spear, the sabre and the battle-axe. Mining was practised in sieges, and cavalry seems to have formed the least considerable part of the army.

There is a second Introduction, containing a clear and brief abstract of the history of those regions from the time of Tamerlane to that of Baber,—together with an excellent Memoir on the annexed map, and an account of the hills and rivers of Bokara, of which it would be idle to attempt any abstract.

As to the Memoirs themselves, we have already said that we think it in vain to recommend them as a portion of History with which our readers should be acquainted,—or consequently to aim at presenting them with any thing in the nature of an abstract, or connected account of the events they so minutely detail. All that we propose to do, therefore, is, to extract a few of the traits which appear to us the most striking and characteristic, and to endeavour, in a very short compass, to give an idea of whatever curiosity or interest the work possesses. The most remarkable thing about it, or at least that which first strikes us, is the simplicity of the style, and the good sense, varied knowledge, and extraordinary industry of the royal author. It is difficult, indeed, to believe that it is the work of an Asiatic, and a sovereign. Though copiously, and rather diffusely written, it is perfectly free from the ornamental verbosity, the eternal metaphor, and puerile exaggerations of most Oriental compositions; and though savouring so far of royalty as to abound in descriptions of dresses and ceremonies, is yet occupied in the main with concerns greatly too rational and humble to be much in favour with monarchs. As a specimen of the adventurous life of the chieftains

* D'Herbelot, Biblioth. Orient. art. Turk.

† Hist. de Timur Bec, vol. iii. pp. 227. 263. 336, &c.

of those days, and of Baber's manner of describing it, we may pass at once to his account of his being besieged in Samarkand, and the particulars of his flight after he was obliged to abandon it:—

"During the continuance of the siege, the rounds of the rampart were regularly gone, once every night, sometimes by Kâsim Beg, and sometimes by other Begs and captains. From the Firozeh gate to the Sheikh-Zâdeh gate, we were able to go along the ramparts on horseback; everywhere else we were obliged to go on foot. Setting out in the beginning of the night, it was morning before we had completed our rounds.

"One day Sheibâni Khan made an attack between the Iron gate and that of the Sheikh-Zâdeh. As I was with the reverse, I immediately led them to the quarter that was attacked, without attending to the Washing-green gate or the Needlemakers' gate. That same day, from the top of the Sheikh-Zâdeh's gateway, I struck a palish white coloured horse an excellent shot with my cross-bow: it fell dead the moment my arrow touched it; but in the meanwhile they had made such a vigorous attack, near the Camel's Neck, that they effected a lodgment close under the rampart. Being hotly engaged in repelling the enemy where I was, I had entertained no apprehensions of danger on the other side, where they had prepared and brought with them twenty-five or twenty-six scaling-ladders, each of them so broad that two and three men could mount a-breast. He had placed in ambush, opposite to the city-wall, seven or eight hundred chosen men with these ladders, between the Ironsmiths' and Needlemakers' gates, while he himself moved to the other side, and made a false attack. Our attention was entirely drawn off to this attack; and the men in ambush no sooner saw the works opposite to them empty of defenders, by the watch having left them, than they rose from the place where they had lain in ambush, advanced with extreme speed, and applied their scaling-ladders all at once between the two gates that have been mentioned, exactly opposite to Muhammed Mazîd Terkhan's house. The Begs who were on guard had only two or three of their servants and attendants about them. Nevertheless Kuch Beg, Muhammed Kûli Kochin, Shah Sûfi, and another brave cavalier, boldly assailed them, and displayed signal heroism. Some of the enemy had already mounted the wall, and several others were in the act of scaling it, when the four persons who have been mentioned arrived on the spot, fell upon them sword in hand, with the greatest bravery, and dealing out furious blows around them, drove the assailants back over the wall, and put them to flight. Kuch Beg distinguished himself above all the rest; and this was an exploit for ever to be cited to his honour. He twice during this siege performed excellent service by his valour.

"It was now the season of the ripening of the grain, and nobody had brought in any new corn. As the siege had drawn out to great length, the inhabitants were reduced to extreme distress, and things came to such a pass, that the poor and meaner sort were forced to feed on dogs' and asses' flesh. Grain for the horses becoming scarce, they were obliged to be fed on the leaves of trees; and it was ascertained from experience, that the leaves of the mulberry and blackwood answered best. Many used the shavings and raspings of wood, which they soaked in water, and gave to their horses. For three or four months Sheibâni Khan did not approach the fortress, but blockaded it at some distance on all sides, changing his ground from time to time.

"The ancients have said, that in order to maintain a fortress, a head, two hands, and two feet are necessary. The head is a captain, the two hands are two friendly forces that must advance from opposite sides; the two feet are water and stores of provision within the fort. I looked for aid and assistance from the princes my neighbours; but each of them had his attention fixed on some other object. For example, Sultan Hussain Mirza was undoubtedly a brave and experienced monarch, yet neither did he give me assistance, nor even send an ambassador to encourage me."

He is obliged, in consequence, to evacuate the city, and moves off privately in the night. The following account of his flight, we think, is extremely picturesque and interesting.

"Having entangled ourselves among the great branches of the canals of the Soghd, during the darkness of the night, we lost our way, and after encountering many difficulties we passed Khwâjeh Dîdâr about dawn. By the time of early morning prayers, we arrived at the hillock of Karbogh, and passing it on the north below the village of Kherdek, we made for Ilân-ûtî. On the road, I had a race with Kamber Ali and Kâsim Beg. My horse got the lead. As I turned round on my seat to see how far I had left them behind, my saddle-girth being slack, the saddle turned round, and I came to the ground right on my head. Although I immediately sprang up and mounted, yet I did not recover the full possession of my faculties till the evening, and the world, and all that occurred at the time, passed before my eyes and apprehension like a dream, or a phantasy, and disappeared. The time of afternoon prayers was past ere we reached Ilân-ûtî, where we alighted, and having killed a horse, cut him up, and dressed slices of his flesh; we stayed a little time to rest our horses, then mounting again, before day-break we alighted at the village of Khalileh. From Khalileh we proceeded to Dizak. At that time Tâher Dûldai, the son of Hâfez Muhammed Beg Dûldai, was governor of Dizak. Here we found nice fat flesh, bread of fine flour well baked, sweet melons, and excellent grapes in great abundance; thus passing from the extreme of famine to plenty, and from an estate of danger and calamity to peace and ease.

"In my whole life, I never enjoyed myself so much, nor at any period of it felt so sensibly the pleasures of peace and plenty. Enjoyment after suffering, abundance after want, come with increased relish, and afford more exquisite delight. I have four or five times, in the course of my life, passed in a similar manner from distress to ease, and from a state of suffering to enjoyment: but this was the first time that I had ever been delivered at once from the injuries of my enemy, and the pressure of hunger, and passed to the ease of security, and the pleasures of plenty. Having rested and enjoyed ourselves two or three days in Dizak, we proceeded on to Uratippa.

"Dekhat is one of the hill-districts of Uratippa. It lies on the skirts of a very high mountain, immediately on passing which you come on the country of Masîkha. The inhabitants, though Sarts, have large flocks of sheep, and herds of mares, like the Turks. The sheep belonging to Dekhat may amount to forty thousand. We took up our lodgings in the peasants' houses. I lived at the house of one of the head men of the place. He was an aged man, seventy or eighty years old. His mother was still alive, and had attained an extreme old age, being at this time a hundred and eleven years old. One of this lady's relations had accompanied the army of Taimur Beg, when it invaded Hindustân. The circumstances remained fresh in her memory, and she often told us stories on that subject. In the district of Dekhat alone, there still were of this lady's children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren, to the number of ninety-six persons; and including those deceased, the whole amounted to two hundred. One of her great-grandchildren was at this time a young man of twenty-five or twenty-six years of age, with a fine black beard. While I

remained in Dekhat, I was accustomed to walk on foot all about the hills in the neighbourhood. I generally went out barefoot, and, from this habit of walking barefoot, I soon found that our feet became so hardened that we did not mind rock or stone in the least. In one of these walks, between afternoon and evening prayers, we met a man who was going with a cow in a narrow road. I asked him the way. He answered, Keep your eye fixed on the cow; and do not lose sight of her till you come to the issue of the road, when you will know your ground. Khwâjeh Asedûlla, who was with me, enjoyed the joke, observing, What would become of us wise men, were the cow to lose her way?

"It was wonderfully cold, and the wind of Hâderwîsh had here lost none of its violence, and blew keen. So excessive was the cold, that in the course of two or three days we lost two or three persons from its severity. I required to bathe on account of my religious purifications; and went down for that purpose to a rivulet, which was frozen on the banks, but not in the middle, from the rapidity of the current. I plunged myself into the water, and dived sixteen times. The extreme chilliness of the water quite penetrated me."

"It was now spring, and intelligence was brought that Sheibâni Khan was advancing against Uratippa, As Dekhat was in the low country, I passed by Abbûrden and Amâni, and came to the hill country of Masîkha. Abbûrden is a village which lies at the foot of Masîkha. Beneath Abbûrden is a spring, and close by the spring is a tomb. From this spring, towards the upland, the country belongs to Masîkha, but downwards from the spring it depends on Yelghar. On a stone which is on the brink of this spring, on one of its sides, I caused the following verses* to be inscribed:—

I have heard that the exalted Jemshid
Inscribed on a stone beside a fountain,
'Many a man like us has rested by this fountain,
And disappeared in the twinkling of an eye!
Should we conquer the whole world by our manhood and strength,
Yet could we not carry it with us to the grave.'

In this hill-country, the practice of cutting verses and other inscriptions on the rocks is extremely common."

After this, he contrives partly to retrieve his affairs, by uniting himself with a warlike Khan of his family, and takes the field with a considerable force against Tambol. The following account of a night skirmish reminds us of the chivalrous doings of the heroes of Froissart:—

"Just before the dawn, while our men were still enjoying themselves in sleep, Kamber Ali Beg galloped up, exclaiming, 'The enemy are upon us—rouse up!' Having spoken these words, without halting a moment, he passed on. I had gone to sleep, as was my custom even in times of security, without taking off my *jâmâ*, or frock, and instantly arose, girt on my sabre and quiver, and mounted my horse. My standard-bearer seized the standard, but without having time to tie on the horse-tail and colours; but, taking the banner-staff in his hand just as it was, leaped on horseback, and we proceeded towards the quarter from which the enemy were advancing. When I first mounted there were ten or fifteen men with me. By the time I had advanced a bowshot, we fell in with the enemy's skirmishers. At this moment there might be about ten men with me. Riding quick up to them, and giving a discharge of our arrows, we came upon the most advanced of them, attacked and drove them back, and continued to advance, pursuing them for the distance of another bowshot, when we fell in with the main body of the enemy. Sultan Ahmed Tambol was standing, with about a hundred men. Tambol was speaking with another person in the front of the line, and in the act of saying, 'Smite them! Smite them!' but his men were sideling in a hesitating way, as if saying, 'Shall we flee? Let us flee!' but yet standing still. At this instant there were left with me only three persons: one of these was Dost Nâsir, another Mirza Kûli Gokultâsh, and Kerîmdad Khodâidâd, the Turkoman, the third. One arrow, which was then on the notch, I discharged on the helmit of Tambol, and again applied my hand to my quiver, and brought out a green-tipped barbed arrow, which my uncle, the Khan, had given me. Unwilling to throw it away, I returned it to the quiver, and thus lost as much time as would have allowed of shooting two arrows. I then placed another arrow on the string, and advanced, while the other three lagged a little behind me. Two persons came right on to meet me; one of them was Tambol, who preceded the other. There was a highway between us. He mounting on one side of it as I mounted on the other, we encountered on it in such a manner, that my right hand was towards my enemy, and Tambol's right hand towards me. Except the mail for his horse, Tambol had all his armour and accoutrements complete. I had only my sabre and bow and arrows. I drew up to my ear, and sent right for him the arrow which I had in my hand. At that very moment, an arrow of the kind called Sheibah struck me on the right thigh, and pierced through and through. I had a steel cap on my head. Tambol, rushing on, smote me such a blow on it with his sword as to stun me; though not a thread of the cap was penetrated, yet my head was severely wounded. I had neglected to clean my sword, so that it was rusty, and I lost time in drawing it. I was alone and single in the midst of a multitude of enemies. It was no season for standing still; so I turned my bridle round, receiving another sabre stroke on the arrows in my quiver. I had gone back seven or eight paces, when three foot soldiers came up and joined us. Tambol now attacked Dost Nâsir sword in hand. They followed us about a bowshot. Arigh-Jakânshah is a large and deep stream, which is not fordable everywhere; but God directed us right, so that we came exactly upon one of the fords of the river. Immediately on crossing the river, the horse of Dost Nâsir fell from weakness. We halted to remount him, and passing among the hillocks that are between Khirabûk and Feraghîneh, and going from one hillock to another, we proceeded by bye-roads towards Ush."

We shall conclude our warlike extracts with the following graphic and lively account of the author's attack on Akhsi, and his subsequent repulse:—

"Sheikh Bayezîd had just been released, and was entering the gate, when I met him. I immediately drew to the head the arrow which was on my notch, and discharged it full at him. It only grazed his neck, but it was a fine shot. The moment he had entered the gate, he turned short to the right, and fled by a narrow street in great perturbation. I pursued him. Mirza Kuli Gokultâsh struck down one foot-soldier with his mace, and had passed another, when the fellow aimed an arrow at Ibrâhim Beg, who startled him by exclaiming, Hai! Hai! and went forward; after which the man, being about as far off as the porch of a house is from the hall, let fly at me an arrow, which struck me under the arm. I had on a Kalmuk mail; two plates of it were pierced and broken from the blow. After shooting the arrow, he fled, and I discharged an arrow after him. At that very moment a foot-soldier happened to be flying along the rampart, and my arrow pinned his cap to the wall, where it remained shot through and through, and dangling from the parapet. He took off his turban, which he twisted round his arm, and ran away. A man on horseback passed close by me, fleeing up the narrow lane by which Sheikh Bayezîd had escaped. I struck him such a blow on the temples with the point of my sword, that he bent over as if ready to fall from his horse; but supporting himself on the wall of the lane, he did not lose his seat, but escaped with the utmost hazard. Having dispersed all the horse and foot that were at the gate, we took possession of it. There was now no reasonable chance of success; for they had two or three thousand well-armed men in the citadel, while I had only a hundred, or two hundred at most, in the outer stone fort: and, besides, Jehangîr Mirza, about as long before as milk takes to boil, had been beaten and driven out, and half of my men were with him."

* From the Boslan of Sadi.—*Leyden.*

Soon after this there is an unlucky *hiatus* in all the manuscripts of the Memoirs, so that it is to this day unknown by what means the heroic prince escaped from his treacherous associates, only that we find him, the year after, warring prosperously against a new set of enemies. Of his military exploits and adventures, however, we think we have now given a sufficient specimen.

In these we have said he resembles the paladins of Europe, in her days of chivalric enterprise. But we doubt greatly whether any of her knightly adventurers could have given so exact an account of the qualities and productions of the countries they visited as the Asiatic Sovereign has here put on record. Of Kâbul, for example, after describing its boundaries, rivers, and mountains, he says—

"This country lies between Hindustân and Khorasân. It is an excellent and profitable market for commodities. Were the merchants to carry their goods as far as Khitâ or Rûm,* they would scarcely get the same profit on them. Every year, seven, eight, or ten thousand horses arrive in Kâbul. From Hindustân, every year, fifteen or twenty thousand pieces of cloth are brought by caravans. The commodities of Hindustân are slaves, white cloths, sugar-candy, refined and common sugar, drugs, and spices. There are many merchants that are not satisfied with getting thirty or forty for ten.† The productions of Khorasân, Rûm, Irâk, and Chîn‡, may all be found in Kâbul, which is the very emporium of Hindustân. Its warm and cold districts are close by each other. From Kâbul you may in a single day go to a place where snow never falls, and in the space of two astronomical hours, you may reach a spot where snow lies always, except now and then when the summer happens to be peculiarly hot. In the districts dependant on Kâbul, there is great abundance of the fruits both of hot and cold climates, and they are found in its immediate vicinity. The fruits of the cold districts in Kâbul are grapes, pomegranates, apricots, peaches, pears, apples, quinces, jujubes, damsons, almonds, and walnuts; all of which are found in great abundance. I caused the sour-cherry-tree § to be brought here and planted; it produced excellent fruit, and continues thriving. The fruits it possesses peculiar to a warm climate are the orange, citron,‖ the amlûk, and sugar-cane, which are brought from the Lamghanât. I caused the sugar-cane to be brought, and planted it here. They bring the Jelghûzek ¶ from Nijrow. They have numbers of bee-hives, but honey is brought only from the hill-country on the west. The rawâsh * of Kâbul is of excellent quality; its quinces and damask plums are excellent, as well as its bâdrengs.† There is a species of grape which they call the water-grape, that is very delicious; its wines are strong and intoxicating. That produced on the skirt of the mountain of Khwâjeh Khan-Saaîd is celebrated for its potency, though I describe it only from what I have heard:

"The drinker knows the flavour of the wine; how should the sober know it?"

"Kâbul is not fertile in grain; a return of four or five to one is reckoned favourable. The melons too are not good, but those raised from seed brought from Khorasân are tolerable. The climate is extremely delightful, and in this respect there is no such place in the known world. In the nights of summer you cannot sleep without a postîn (or lamb-skin cloak.) Though the snow falls very deep in the winter, yet the cold is never excessively intense. Samarkand and Tabrîz are celebrated for their fine climate, but the winter cold there is extreme beyond measure."

"Opposite to the fort of Adînahpûr,‡ to the south, on a rising ground, I formed a charbagh (or great garden), in the year nine hundred and fourteen (1508). It is called Baghe Vafâ (the Garden of Fidelity). It overlooks the river, which flows between the fort and the palace. In the year in which I defeated Behâr Khan and conquered Lahore and Dibâlpûr, I brought plantains and planted them here. They grew and thrived. The year before I had also planted the sugar-cane in it, which throve remarkably well. I sent some of them to Badakhshân and Bokhâra. It is on an elevated site, enjoys running water, and the climate in the winter season is temperate. In the garden there is a small hillock, from which a stream of water, sufficient to drive a mill, incessantly flows into the garden below. The four-fold field-plot of this garden is situated on this eminence. On the south-west part of this garden is a reservoir of water ten gez square, which is wholly planted round with orange trees; there are likewise pomegranates. All around the piece of water the ground is quite covered with clover. This spot is the very eye of the beauty of the garden. At the time when the orange becomes yellow, the prospect is delightful. Indeed the garden is charmingly laid out. To the south of this garden lies the Koh-e-Sefîd (the White Mountain) of Nangenhâr, which separates Bengash from Nangenhâr. There is no road by which one can pass it on horseback. Nine streams descend from this mountain. The snow on its summit never diminishes, whence probably comes the name of Koh-e-Sefîd§ (the White Mountain). No snow ever falls in the dales at its foot."

"The wine of Dereh-Nûr is famous all over Lamghanât. It is of two kinds, which they term *areh-tâshi* (the stone-saw), and *suhân-tashi* (the stone-file). The stone-saw is of a yellowish colour; the stone-file, of a fine red. The stone-saw, however, is the better wine of the two, though neither of them equals their reputation. Higher up, at the head of the glens, in this mountain, there are some apes to be met with. Apes are found lower down

* Khitâ is Northern China, and its dependent provinces. Rûm is Turkey, particularly the provinces about Trebizond.

† Three or four hundred per cent.

‡ Chîn is all China.

§ Alubâla.

‖ A berry like the karinda.

¶ The jelghûzek is the seed of a kind of pine, the cones of which are as big as a man's two fists.

* The rawâsh is described as a root something like beet-root, but much larger—white and red in colour, with large leaves, that rise little from the ground It has a pleasant mixture of sweet and acid. It may be the rhubarb, râweid.

† The bâdreng is a large green fruit, in shape somewhat like a citron. The name is also applied to a large sort of cucumber.

‡ The fort of Adînahpûr is to the south of the Kâbul river.

§ The Koh-e-Sefîd is a remarkable position in the geography of Afghanistân. It is seen from Peshâwer.

towards Hindustân, but none higher up than this hill. The inhabitants used formerly to keep hogs,* but in my time they have renounced the practice."

His account of the productions of his paternal kingdom of Ferghana is still more minute —telling us even the number of apple-trees in a particular district, and making mention of an excellent way of drying apricots, with almonds put in instead of the stones; and of a wood with a fine red bark, of admirable use for making whip-handles and birds' cages! The most remarkable piece of statistics, however, with which he has furnished us, is in his account of Hindustân, which he first entered as a conqueror in 1525. It here occupies twenty-five closely-printed quarto pages; and contains, not only an exact account of its boundaries, population, resources, revenues, and divisions, but a full enumeration of all its useful fruits, trees, birds, beasts, and fishes; with such a minute description of their several habitudes and peculiarities, as would make no contemptible figure in a modern work of natural history—carefully distinguishing the facts which rest on his own observation from those which he gives only on the testimony of others, and making many suggestions as to the means of improving, or transferring them from one region to another. From the detailed botanical and zoological descriptions, we can afford of course to make no extracts. What follows is more general:—

"Hindustân is situated in the first, second, and third climates. No part of it is in the fourth. It is a remarkably fine country. It is quite a different world, compared with our countries. Its hills and rivers, its forests and plains, its animals and plants, its inhabitants and their languages, its winds and rains, are all of a different nature. Although the Germsîls (or hot districts), in the territory of Kâbul, bear, in many respects, some resemblance to Hindustân, while in other particulars they differ, yet you have no sooner passed the river Sind than the country, the trees, the stones, the wandering tribes,† the manners and customs of the people, are all entirely those of Hindustân. The northern range of hills has been mentioned. Immediately on crossing the river Sind, we come upon several countries in this range of mountains, connected with Kashmîr, such as Pekheli and Shemeng. Most of them, though now independent of Kashmîr, were formerly included in its territories. After leaving Kashmîr, these hills contain innumerable tribes and states, Pergannahs and countries, and extend all the way to Bengal and the shores of the Great Ocean. About these hills are other tribes of men."

"The country and towns of Hindustân are extremely ugly. All its towns and lands have an uniform look; its gardens have no walls; the greater part of it is a level plain. The banks of its rivers and streams, in consequence of the rushing of the torrents that descend during the rainy season, are worn deep into the channel, which makes it generally difficult and troublesome to cross them. In many places the plain is covered by a thorny brush-wood, to such a degree that the people of the Pergannahs, relying on these forests, take shelter in them, and, trusting to their inaccessible situation, often continue in a state of revolt, refusing to pay their taxes. In Hindustân, if you except the rivers, there is little running water.‡ Now and then some standing water is to be met with. All these cities and countries derive their water from wells or tanks, in which it is collected during the rainy season. In Hindustân, the populousness and decay, or total destruction of villages, nay of cities, is almost instantaneous. Large cities that have been inhabited for a series of years, (if, on an alarm, the inhabitants take to flight,) in a single day, or a day and a half, are so completely abandoned, that you can scarcely discover a trace or mark of population."*

The prejudices of the more active and energetic inhabitant of the hill country are still more visible in the following passage:—

"Hindustân is a country that has few pleasures to recommend it.† The people are not handsome. They have no idea of the charms of friendly society, of frankly mixing together, or of familiar intercourse. They have no genius, no comprehension of mind, no politeness of manner, no kindness or fellow-feeling, no ingenuity or mechanical invention in planning or executing their handicraft works, no skill or knowledge in design or architecture; they have no good horses, no good flesh, no grapes or musk-melons‡, no good fruits, no ice or cold water, no good food or bread in their bazars, no baths or colleges, no candles, no torches, not a candlestick."

"The chief excellency of Hindustân is, that it is a large country, and has abundance of gold and silver. The climate during the rains is very pleasant. On some days it rains ten, fifteen, and even twenty times. During the rainy season, inundations come pouring down all at once, and form rivers, even in places where, at other times, there is no water. While the rains continue on the ground, the air is singularly delightful—insomuch, that nothing can surpass its soft and agreeable temperature. Its defect is, that the air is rather moist and damp. During the rainy season, you cannot shoot, even with the bow of our country, and it becomes quite useless. Nor is it the bow alone that becomes useless; the coats of mail, books, clothes, and furniture, all feel the bad effects of the moisture. Their houses, too, suffer from not being substantially built. There is pleasant enough weather in the winter and summer, as well as in the rainy season; but then the north wind always blows, and there is an excessive quantity of earth and dust flying about. When the rains are at hand, this wind blows five or six times with excessive violence, and

* This practice Baber viewed with disgust, the hog being an impure animal in the Muhammedan law.

† "The Ils and Ulûses."

‡ In Persia there are few rivers, but numbers of artifical canals or water-runs for irrigation, and for the supply of water to towns and villages. The same is the case in the valley of Soghd, and the richer parts of Mâweralnaher.

* "This is the *wulsa* or *walsa*, so well described by Colonel Wilks in his Historical Sketches, vol. i. p. 309, note: 'On the approach of an hostile army, the unfortunate inhabitants of India bury under ground their most cumbrous effects, and each individual, man, woman, and child above six years of age, (the infant children being carried by their mothers,) with a load of grain proportioned to their strength, issue from their beloved homes, and take the direction of a country (if such can be found) exempt from the miseries of war; sometimes of a strong fortress, but more generally of the most unfrequented hills and woods, where they prolong a miserable existence until the departure of the enemy; and if this should be protracted beyond the time for which they have provided food, a large portion necessarily dies of hunger.' See the note itself. The Historical Sketches should be read by every one who desires to have an accurate idea of the South of India. It is to be regretted that we do not possess the history of any other part of India, written with the same knowledge or research.'

† Baber's opinions regarding India are nearly the same with those of most Europeans of the upper class, even at the present day.

‡ Grapes and musk-melons, particularly the latter, are now common all over India.

such a quantity of dust flies about that you cannot see one another. They call this an Andhi.* It gets warm during Taurus and Gemini, but not so warm as to become intolerable. The heat cannot be compared to the heats of Balkh and Kandahâr. It is not above half so warm as in these places. Another convenience of Hindustân is, that the workmen of every profession and trade are innumerable and without end. For any work, or any employment, there is always a set ready, to whom the same employment and trade have descended from father to son for ages. In the Zefer-Nâmeh of Mûlla Sherîf-ed-dîn Ali Yezdi, it is mentioned as a surprising fact, that when Taimur Beg was building the Sangîn (or stone) mosque, there were stone-cutters of Azerbaejan, Fârs, Hindustân, and other countries, to the number of two hundred, working every day on the mosque. In Agra alone, and of stone-cutters belonging to that place only, I every day employed on my palaces six hundred and eighty persons; and in Agra, Sîkri, Biâna, Dhulpûr, Guâliâr, and Koel, there were every day employed on my works one thousand four hundred and ninety-one stone-cutters. In the same way, men of every trade and occupation are numberless and without stint in Hindustân.

"The countries from Behreh to Behâr, which are now under my dominion, yield a revenue of fifty-two krors,† as will appear from the particular and detailed statement.‡ Of this amount, Pergannahs to the value of eight or nine krors§ are in the possession of some Rais and Rajas, who from old times have been submissive, and have received these Pergannahs for the purpose of confirming them in their obedience."

These Memoirs contain many hundred characters and portraits of individuals; and it would not be fair not to give our readers one or two specimens of the royal author's minute style of execution on such subjects. We may begin with that of Omer-Sheikh Mirza, his grandfather, and immediate predecessor in the throne of Ferghâna:—

"Omer-Sheikh Mirza was of low stature, had a short bushy beard, brownish hair, and was very corpulent. He used to wear his tunic extremely tight; insomuch, that as he was wont to contract his belly while he tied the strings, when he let himself out again the strings often burst. He was not curious in either his food or dress. He tied his turban in the fashion called *Destâr-pêch* (or plaited turban). At that time, all turbans were worn in the *char-pêch* (or four-plait) style. He wore his without folds, and allowed the end to hang down. During the heats, when out of the Divân, he generally wore the Moghul cap.

"He read elegantly: his general reading was the Khamsahs,‖ the Mesnevis,¶ and books of history; and he was in particular fond of reading the Shahnâmeh.** Though he had a turn for poetry, he did not cultivate it. He was so strictly just, that when the caravan from Khita†† had once reached the hill country to the east of Andejân, and the snow fell so deep as to bury it, so that of the whole only two persons escaped, he no sooner received information of the occurrence, than he despatched overseers to collect and take charge of all the property and effects of the people of the caravan; and, wherever the heirs were not at hand, though himself in great want, his resources being exhausted, he placed the property under sequestration, and preserved it untouched; till, in the course of one or two years, the heirs, coming from Khorasân and Samarkand, in consequence of the intimation which they received, he delivered back the goods safe and uninjured into their hands.* His generosity was large, and so was his whole soul; he was of an excellent temper, affable, eloquent, and sweet in his conversation, yet brave withal, and manly. On two occasions he advanced in front of the troops, and exhibited distinguished prowess; once, at the gates of Akhsi, and once at the gates of Shahrokhîa. He was a middling shot with the bow; he had uncommon force in his fists, and never hit a man whom he did not knock down. From his excessive ambition for conquest, he often exchanged peace for war, and friendship for hostility. In the earlier part of his life he was greatly addicted to drinking bûzeh and talar.† Latterly, once or twice in the week, he indulged in a drinking party. He was a pleasant companion, and in the course of conversation used often to cite, with great felicity, appropriate verses from the poets. In his latter days he was much addicted to the use of Maajûn,‡ while under the influence of which he was subject to a feverish irritability. He was a humane man. He played a great deal at backgammon, and sometimes at games of chance with the dice."

The following is the memorial of Hussain Mirza, king of Khorasân, who died in 1506:

"He had straight narrow eyes, his body was robust and firm; from the waist downwards he was of a slenderer make. Although he was advanced in years, and had a white beard, he dressed in gay-coloured red and green woollen clothes. He usually wore a cap of black lamb's skin, or a kilpak. Now and then, on festival days, he put on a small turban tied in three folds, broad and showy, and having placed a plume nodding over it, went in this style to prayers.

"On first mounting the throne, he took it into his head that he would cause the names of the twelve Imams to be recited in the Khûtbeh. Many used their endeavours to prevent him. Finally, however, he directed and arranged every thing according to the orthodox Sunni faith. From a disorder in his joints, he was unable to perform his prayers, nor could he observe the stated fasts. He was a lively, pleasant man. His temper was rather hasty, and his language took after his temper. In many instances he displayed a profound reverence for the faith; on one occasion, one of his sons having slain a man, he delivered him up to the avengers of blood to be carried before the judgment-seat of the Kazi. For about six or seven years after he first ascended the throne, he was very guarded in abstaining from such things as were forbidden by

* This is still the Hindustâni term for a storm, or tempest.

† About a million and a half sterling, or rather 1,300,000*l.*

‡ This statement unfortunately has not been preserved.

§ About 225,000*l.* sterling.

‖ Several Persian poets wrote *Khamsahs*, or poems, on five different given subjects. The most celebrated is Nezâmi.

¶ The most celebrated of these Mesnevis is the mystical poem of Moulavi Jilûleddin Muhammed. The Sufis consider it as equal to the Koran.

** The *Shahnâmeh*, or Book of Kings, is the famous poem of the great Persian poet Ferdausi, and contains the romantic history of ancient Persia.

†† North China; but often applied to the whole country from China to Terfân, and now even west to the Ala-tagh Mountains.

* This anecdote is erroneously related of Baber himself by Ferishta and others.—See *Dow's Hist. of Hindostan*, vol. ii. p. 218.

† Bûzeh is a sort of intoxicating liquor somewhat resembling beer, made from millet. *Talar* I do not know, but understand it to be a preparation from the poppy. There is, however, nothing about bûzeh or talar in the Persian, which only specifies *sherâb*, wine or strong drink.

‡ Any medical mixture is called a maajûn; but in common speech the term is chiefly applied to intoxicating comfits, and especially those prepared with *bang*.

the law; afterwards he became addicted to drinking wine. During nearly forty years that he was King of Khorasân, not a day passed in which he did not drink after mid-day prayers; but he never drank wine in the morning. His sons, the whole of the soldiery, and the town's-people, followed his example in this respect, and seemed to vie with each other in debauchery and lasciviousness. He was a brave and valiant man. He often engaged sword in hand in fight, nay, frequently distinguished his prowess hand to hand several times in the course of the same fight. No person of the race of Taimur Beg ever equalled Sultan Hussain Mirza in the use of the scymitar. He had a turn for poetry, and composed a Diwân. He wrote in the Tûrki. His poetical name was Hussaini. Many of his verses are far from being bad, but the whole of the Mirza's Diwân is in the same measure. Although a prince of dignity, both as to years and extent of territory, he was as fond as a child of keeping butting rams, and of amusing himself with flying pigeons and cock-fighting."

One of the most striking passages in the work is the royal author's account of the magnificence of the court and city of Herat, when he visited it in 1506; and especially his imposing catalogue of the illustrious authors, artists, and men of genius, by whom it was then adorned.

"The age of Sultan Hussain Mirza was certainly a wonderful age; and Khorasân, particularly the city of Heri, abounded with eminent men of unrivalled acquirements, each of whom made it his aim and ambition to carry to the highest perfection the art to which he devoted himself. Among these was the Moulâna Abdal Rahman Jâmi,* to whom there was no person of that period who could be compared, whether in respect to profane or sacred science. His poems are well known. The merits of the Mûlla are of too exalted a nature to admit of being described by me; but I have been anxious to bring the mention of his name, and an allusion to his excellences, into these humble pages, for a good omen and a blessing!"

He then proceeds to enumerate the names of between thirty and forty distinguished persons; ranking first the sages and theologians, to the number of eight or nine; next the poets, about fifteen; then two or three painters; and five or six performers and composers of music;—of one of these he gives the following instructive anecdote—

"Another was Hussian Udi (the lutanist), who played with great taste on the lute, and composed elegantly. He could play, *using only one string* of his lute at a time. He *had the fault* of giving himself many airs when desired to play. On one occasion Sheibâni Khan desired him to play. After giving much trouble he played very ill, and besides, did not bring his own instrument, but one that was good for nothing. Sheibâni Khan, on learning how matters stood, directed that, at that very party, he should receive a *certain number of blows on the neck*. This was one good deed that Sheibâni Khan did in his day; and indeed the affectation of such people deserves even more severe animadversion."

In the seductions of this luxurious court, Baber's orthodox abhorrence to wine was first assailed with temptation:—and there is something very *naïve*, we think, in his account of his reasonings and feelings on the occasion.

"As we were guests at Mozeffer Mirza's house, Mozeffer Mirza placed me above himself, and having filled up a glass of welcome, the cupbearers in waiting began to supply all who were of the party with pure wine, which they quaffed as if it had been the water of life. The party waxed warm, and the spirit mounted up to their heads. They took a fancy to make me drink too, and bring me into the same circle with themselves. Although, all that time, I had never been guilty of drinking wine, and from never having fallen into the practice was ignorant of the sensations it produced, yet I had a strong lurking inclination to wander in this desert, and my heart was much disposed to pass the stream. In my boyhood I had no wish for it, and did not know its pleasures or pains. When my father at any time asked me to drink wine, I excused myself, and abstained. After my father's death, by the guardian care of Khwâjeh Kazi, I remained pure and undefiled. I abstained even from forbidden foods; how then was I likely to indulge in wine? Afterwards when, from the force of youthful imagination and constitutional impulse, I got a desire for wine, I had nobody about my person to invite me to gratify my wishes; nay, there was not one who even suspected my secret longing for it. Though I had the appetite, therefore, it was difficult for me, unsolicited as I was, to indulge such unlawful desires. It now came into my head, that as they urged me so much, and as, besides, I had come into a refined city like Heri, in which every means of heightening pleasure and gaiety was possessed in perfection; in which all the incentives and apparatus of enjoyment were combined with an invitation to indulgence, if I did not seize the present moment, I never could expect such another. I therefore resolved to drink wine! But it struck me, that as Badîa-ez-zemân Mirza was the eldest brother, and as I had declined receiving it from his hand, and in his house, he might now take offence. I therefore mentioned this difficulty which had occurred to me. My excuse was approved of, and I was not pressed any more, at this party, to drink. It was settled, however, that the next time we met at Badîa-ez-zemân Mirza's, I should drink when pressed by the two Mirzas."

By some providential accident, however, the conscientious prince escaped from this meditated lapse; and it was not till some years after, that he gave way to the long-cherished and resisted propensity. At what particular occasion he first fell into the snare, unfortunately is not recorded—as there is a blank of several years in the Memoirs previous to 1519. In that year, however, we find him a confirmed toper; and nothing, indeed, can be more ludicrous than the accuracy and apparent truth with which he continues to chronicle all his subsequent and very frequent excesses. The Eastern votary of intoxication has a pleasant way of varying his enjoyments, which was never taken in the West. When the fluid elements of drunkenness begin to pall on him, he betakes him to what is learnedly called a *maajûn*, being a sort of electuary or confection, made up with pleasant spices, and rendered potent by a large admixture of opium, bang, and other narcotic ingredients; producing a solid intoxication of a very delightful and desirable description. One of the first drinking matches that is described makes honourable mention of this variety:—

"The maajûn-takers and spirit-drinkers, as they have different tastes, are very apt to take offence with each other. I said, 'Don't spoil the cordiality of the party; whoever wishes to drink spirits, let him drink spirits; and let him that prefers maajûn, take maajûn; and let not the one party give any idle or provoking language to the other.' Some sat down to spirits, some to maajûn. The party went on for some time tolerably well. Bâba Jân Kabûzi had not been in the boat; we had sent for him when we reached the royal tents. He chose to drink spirits. Terdi Muhammed Kipchâk, too, was sent for, and joined the spirit-drinkers. As the spirit-drinkers and maajûn-takers never can agree in one party, the spirit-bibing party began to indulge in foolish and idle conversation, and to make provoking remarks on maajûn and maajûn-takers. Bâba Jân, too, getting drunk, talked very absurdly. The tipplers, filling up glass after glass for Terdi Muhammed, made him drink them off, so that in a very short time he was mad drunk. Whatever exertions I could make to preserve peace, were all unavailing; there was much uproar and wrangling. The party became quite burdensome and unpleasant, and soon broke up."

The second day after, we find the royal bacchanal still more grievously overtaken:

"We continued drinking spirits in the boat till bed-time prayers, when, being completely drunk, we mounted, and taking torches in our hands came at full gallop back to the camp from the river-side, falling sometimes on one side of the horse, and sometimes on the other. I was miserably drunk, and next morning, when they told me of our having galloped into the camp with lighted torches in our hands, I had not the slightest recollection of the circumstance. After coming home, I vomited plentifully."

Even in the middle of a harassing and desultory campaign, there is no intermission of this excessive jollity, though it sometimes puts the parties into jeopardy,—for example:—

"We continued at this place drinking till the sun was on the decline, when we set out. Those who had been of the party were completely drunk. Syed Kâsim was so drunk, that two of his servants were obliged to put him on horseback, and brought him to the camp with great difficulty. Dost Muhammed Bâkir was so far gone, that Amîn Muhammed Terkhân, Masti Chehreh, and those who were along with him, were unable, with all their exertions, to get him on horseback. They poured a great quantity of water over him, but all to no purpose. At this moment a body of Afghâns appeared in sight. Amîn Muhammed Terkhân, being very drunk, gravely gave it as his opinion, that rather than leave him, in the condition in which he was, to fall into the hands of the enemy, it was better at once to cut off his head, and carry it away. Making another exertion, however, with much difficulty, they contrived to throw him upon a horse, which they led along, and so brought him off."

On some occasions they contrive to be drunk four times in twenty-four hours. The gallant prince contents himself with a strong *maajûn* one day; but

"Next morning we had a drinking party in the same tent. We continued drinking till night. On the following morning we again had an early cup, and, getting intoxicated, went to sleep. About noon-day prayers, we left Istâlîf, and I took a maajûn on the road. It was about afternoon prayers before I reached Behzâdi. The crops were extremely good. While I was riding round the harvest-fields, such of my companions as were fond of wine began to contrive another drinking-bout. Although I had taken a maajûn, yet, *as the crops were uncommonly fine!* we sat down under some trees that had yielded a plentiful load of fruit, and began to drink. We kept up the party in the same place till bed-time prayers. Mûll Mahmud Khalîfeh having arrived, we invited him to join us. Abdalla, who had got very drunk, made an observation which affected Khalîfeh. Without recollecting that Mûlla Mahmud was present, he repeated the verse,

(*Persian.*) Examine whom you will, you will find
him suffering from the same wound.

Mûlly Mahmud, who did not drink, reproved Abdalla for repeating this verse with levity.* Abdalla, recovering his judgment, was in terrible perturbation, and conversed in a wonderfully smooth and sweet strain all the rest of the evening."

In a year or two after this, when he seems to be in a course of unusual indulgence, we meet with the following edifying remark: "As I intend, when forty years old, to abstain from wine; and as I now want somewhat less than one year of being forty, *I drink wine most copiously!*" When forty comes, however, we hear nothing of this sage resolution—but have a regular record of the wine and maajûn parties as before, up to the year 1527. In that year, however, he is seized with rather a sudden fit of penitence, and has the resolution to begin a course of rigorous reform. There is something rather picturesque in his very solemn and remarkable account of this great revolution in his habits:

"On Monday the 23d of the first Jemâdi, I had mounted to survey my posts, and, in the course of my ride, was seriously struck with the reflection that I had always resolved, one time or another, to make an effectual repentance, and that some traces of a hankering after the renunciation of forbidden works had ever remained in my heart. Having sent for the gold and silver goblets and cups, with all the other utensils used for drinking parties, I directed them to be broken, and renounced the use of wine—purifying my mind! The fragments of the goblets, and other utensils of gold and silver, I directed to be divided among Derwîshes and the poor. The first person who followed me in my repentance was Asas, who also accompanied me in my resolution of ceasing to cut the beard, and of allowing it to grow.† That night and the following, numbers of Amîrs and courtiers, soldiers and persons not in the service, to the number of nearly three hundred men, made vows of reformation. The wine which we had with us we poured on the ground! I ordered that the wine brought by Bâba Dost should have salt thrown into it, that it might be make into vinegar. On the spot where the wine had been poured out, I directed a wâîn to be sunk and built of stone, and close by the wâîn an almshouse to be erected."

He then issued a magnificent Firman, announcing his reformation, and recommending its example to all his subjects. But he still persists, we find, in the use of a mild maajûn. We are sorry to be obliged to add, that though he had the firmness to persevere to the last in his abstinence from wine, the sacrifice seems to have cost him very dear; and he continued to the very end of his life to hanker after his broken wine-cups, and to look back with fond regret to the delights he had ab-

* No moral poet ever had a higher reputation than Jâmi. His poems are written with great beauty of language and versification, in a captivating strain of religious and philosophic mysticism. He is not merely admired for his sublimity as a poet, but venerated as a saint."

* "This verse, I presume, is from a religious poem, and has a mystical meaning. The profane application of it is the ground of offence."

† "This vow was sometimes made by persons who set out on a war against the Infidels. They did not trim the beard till they returned victorious. Some vows of a similar nature may be found in Scripture."

jured for ever. There is something absolutely pathetic, as well as amiable, in the following candid avowal in a letter written the very year before his death to one of his old drinking companions:—

"In a letter which I wrote to Abdalla, I mentioned that I had much difficulty in reconciling myself to the desert of penitence; but that I had resolution enough to persevere,—

(*Turki verse.*)

I am distressed since I renounced wine;
I am confounded and unfit for business,—
Regret leads me to penitence,
Penitence leads me to regret.

Indeed, last year, my desire and longing for wine and social parties were beyond measure excessive. It even came to such a length that I have found myself shedding tears from vexation and disappointment. In the present year, praise be to God, these troubles are over, and I ascribe them chiefly to the occupation afforded to my mind by a poetical translation, on which I have employed myself. Let me advise you too, to adopt a life of abstinence. Social parties and wine are pleasant, in company with our jolly friends and old boon companions. But with whom can you enjoy the social cup? With whom can you indulge in the pleasures of wine? If you have only Shîr Ahmed, and Haîder Kûlli, for the companions of your gay hours and jovial goblet, you can surely find no great difficulty in consenting to the sacrifice. I conclude with every good wish."

We have mentioned already that Baber appears to have been of a frank and generous character—and there are, throughout the Memoirs, various traits of clemency and tenderness of heart, scarcely to have been expected in an Eastern monarch and professional warrior. He weeps ten whole days for the loss of a friend who fell over a precipice after one of their drinking parties; and spares the lives, and even restores the domains of various chieftains, who had betrayed his confidence, and afterwards fallen into his power. Yet there are traces of Asiatic ferocity, and of a hard-hearted wastefulness of life, which remind us that we are beyond the pale of European gallantry and Christian compassion. In his wars in Afghân and India, the prisoners are commonly butchered in cold blood after the action—and pretty uniformly a triumphal pyramid is erected of their skulls. These horrible executions, too, are performed with much solemnity before the royal pavilion; and on one occasion, it is incidentally recorded, that such was the number of prisoners brought forward for this infamous butchery, that the sovereign's tent had three times to be removed to a different station—the ground before it being so drenched with blood and encumbered with quivering carcasses! On one occasion, and on one only, an attempt was made to poison him—the mother of one of the sovereigns whom he had dethroned having bribed his cooks and tasters to mix death in his repast. Upon the detection of the plot, the taster was cut to pieces, the cook flayed alive, and the scullions trampled to death by elephants. Such, however, was the respect paid to rank, or the indulgence to maternal resentment, that the prime mover of the whole conspiracy, the queen dowager, is merely put under restraint, and has a contribution levied on her private fortune. The following brief anecdote speaks volumes as to the difference of European and Asiatic manners and tempers:—

"Another of his wives was Katak Begum, who was the foster-sister of this same Terkhân Begum. Sultan Ahmed Mirza married her for love. He was prodigiously attached to her, and she governed him with absolute sway. She drank wine. During her life, the Sultan durst not venture to frequent any other of his ladies. At last, however, *he put her to death*, and delivered himself from this reproach."

In several of the passages we have cited, there are indications of this ambitious warrior's ardent love for fine flowers, beautiful gardens, and bright waters. But the work abounds with traits of this amiable and, with reference to some of these anecdotes, apparently ill-sorted propensity. In one place he says—

"In the warm season they are covered with the *chekîn-taleh* grass in a very beautiful manner, and the Aimâks and Tûrks resort to them. In the skirts of these mountains the ground is richly diversified by various kinds of tulips. I once directed them to be counted, and they brought in thirty-two or thirty-three different sorts of tulips. There is one species which has a scent in some degree like the rose, and which I termed *laleh-gul-bûi* (the rose-scented tulip). This species is found only in the Desht-e-Sheikh (the Sheikh's plain), in a small spot of ground, and nowhere else. In the skirts of the same hills below Perwân, is produced the *laleh-sedberg* (or hundred-leaved tulip), which is likewise found only in one narrow spot of ground, as we emerge from the straits of Ghûrbend."

And a little after—

"Few quarters possess a district that can rival Istâlîf. A large river runs through it, and on either side of it are gardens, green, gay, and beautiful. Its water is so cold, that there is no need of icing it; and it is particularly pure. In this district is a garden, called Bagh-e-Kilân (or the Great Garden), which Ulugh Beg Mirza seized upon. I paid the price of the garden to the proprietors, and received from them a grant of it. On the outside of the garden are large and beautiful spreading plane trees, under the shade of which there are agreeable spots finely sheltered. A perennial stream, large enough to turn a mill, runs through the garden; and on its banks are planted planes and other trees. Formerly this stream flowed in a winding and crooked course, but I ordered its course to be altered according to a regular plan, which added greatly to the beauty of the place. Lower down than these villages, and about a koss or a koss and a half above the level plain, on the lower skirts of the hills, is a fountain, named *Khwâjeh-seh-yârân* (Kwâjeh three friends), around which there are three species of trees; above the fountain are many beautiful plane-trees, which yield a pleasant shade. On the two sides of the fountain, on small eminences at the bottom of the hills, there are a number of oak trees; except on these two spots, where there are groves of oak, there is not an oak to be met with on the hills to the west of Kâbul. In front of this fountain, towards the plain, there are many spots covered with the flowery Arghwân* tree, and besides these Arghwân plots, there are none else in the whole country."

We shall add but one other notice of this

* "The name Arghwân is generally applied to the anemone; but in Afghanistân it is given to a beautiful flowering shrub, which grows nearly to the size of a tree."

elegant taste—though on the occasion there mentioned, the flowers were aided by a less delicate sort of excitement.

"This day I ate a maajûn. While under its influence, I visited some beautiful gardens. In different beds, the ground was covered with purple and yellow Arghwân flowers. On one hand were beds of yellow flowers in bloom; on the other hand, red flowers were in blossom. In many places they sprung up in the same bed, mingled together as if they had been flung and scattered abroad. I took my seat on a rising ground near the camp, to enjoy the view of all the flower-pots. On the six sides of this eminence they were formed as into regular beds. On one side were yellow flowers; on another the purple, laid out in triangular beds. On two other sides, there were fewer flowers; but, as far as the eye could reach, there were flower-gardens of a similar kind. In the neighbourhood of Pershâwer, during the spring, the flower-plots are exquisitely beautiful."

We have, now enabled our readers, we think, to judge pretty fairly of the nature of this very curious volume; and shall only present them with a few passages from two letters written by the valiant author in the last year of his life. The first is addressed to his favourite son and successor Hûmâiûn, whom he had settled in the government of Samarcand, and who was at this time a sovereign of approved valour and prudence. There is a very diverting mixture of sound political counsel and minute criticism on writing and composition, in this paternal effusion. We can give but a small part of it.

"In many of your letters you complain of separation from your friends. It is wrong for a prince to indulge in such a complaint.

"There is certainly no greater bondage than that in which a king is placed; but it ill becomes him to complain of inevitable separation.

"In compliance with my wishes, you have indeed written me letters, but you certainly never read them over; for had you attempted to read them, you must have found it absolutely impossible, and would then undoubtedly have put them by. I contrived indeed to decipher and comprehend the meaning of your last letter, but with much difficulty. It is excessively confused and crabbed. Who ever saw a Moâmma (a riddle or a charade) in prose? Your spelling is not bad, yet not quite correct. You have written *iltafat* with a *toe* (instead of a *te*), and *kuling* with a *be* (instead of a *kaf*). Your letter may indeed be read; but in consequence of the far-fetched words you have employed, the meaning is by no means very intelligible. You certainly do not excel in letter-writing, and fail chiefly because you have too great a desire to show your acquirements. For the future, you should write unaffectedly, with clearness, using plain words, which would cost less trouble both to the writer and reader."

The other letter is to one of his old companions in arms;—and considering that it is written by an ardent and ambitious conqueror, from the capital of his new empire of Hindustan, it seems to us a very striking proof, not only of the nothingness of high fortune, but of the native simplicity and amiableness of this Eastern highlander.

"My solicitude to visit my western dominions is boundless, and great beyond expression. The affairs of Hindustan have at length, however, been reduced into a certain degree of order; and I trust in Almighty God that the time is near at hand, when, through the grace of the Most High, every thing will be completely settled in this country. As soon as matters are brought into that state, I shall, God willing, set out for your quarter, without losing a moment's time. How is it possible that the delights of those lands should ever be erased from the heart? Above all, how is it possible for one like me, who have made a vow of abstinence from wine, and of purity of life, to forget the delicious melons and grapes of that pleasant region? They very recently brought me a single musk-melon. While cutting it up, I felt myself affected with *a strong feeling of loneliness, and a sense of my exile from my native country;* and I could not help shedding tears while I was eating it!"

On the whole, we cannot help having a liking for "the Tiger"—and the romantic, though somewhat apocryphal account that is given of his death, has no tendency to diminish our partiality. It is recorded by Abulfazi, and other native historians, that in the year after these Memoirs cease, Hûmâiûn, the beloved son of Baber, was brought to Agra in a state of the most miserable health:

"When all hopes from medicine were over, and while several men of skill were talking to the emperor of the melancholy situation of his son, Abul Baka, a personage highly venerated for his knowledge and piety, remarked to Baber, that in such a case the Almighty had sometimes vouchsafed to receive the most valuable thing possessed by one friend, as an offering in exchange for the life of another. Baber, exclaiming that, of all things, his life was dearest to Hûmâiûn, as Hûmâiûn's was to him, and that, next to the life of Hûmâiûn, his own was what he most valued, devoted his life to Heaven as a sacrifice for his son's! The noblemen around him entreated him to retract the rash vow, and, in place of his first offering, to give the diamond taken at Agra, and reckoned the most valuable on earth: that the ancient sages had said, that it was the dearest of our worldly possessions alone that was to be offered to Heaven. But he persisted in his resolution, declaring that no stone, of whatever value, could be put in competition with his life. He three times walked round the dying prince, a solemnity similar to that used in sacrifices and heave-offerings, and, retiring, prayed earnestly to God. After some time he was heard to exclaim, 'I have borne it away! I have borne it away!' The Mussulman historians assure us, that Hûmâiûn almost immediately began to recover, and that, in proportion as he recovered, the health and strength of Baber visibly decayed. Baber communicated his dying instructions to Khwâjeh Khalîfeh, Kamber Ali Beg, Terdi Beg, and Hindu Beg, who were then at court commending Hûmâiûn to their protection. With that unvarying affection for his family which he showed in all the circumstances of his life, he strongly besought Hûmâiûn to be kind and forgiving to his brothers. Hûmâiûn promised—and, what in such circumstances is rare, kept his promise."

POETRY.

(March, 1819.)

Specimens of the British Poets; with Biographical and Critical Notices, and an Essay on English Poetry. By Thomas Campbell. 7 vols. 8vo. London: 1819.

We would rather see Mr. Campbell as a poet, than as a commentator on poetry:—because we would rather have a solid addition to the sum of our treasures, than the finest or most judicious account of their actual amount. But we are very glad to see him in any way:—and think the work which he has now given us very excellent and delightful. Still, however, we think there is some little room for complaint; and, feeling that we have not got all we were led to expect, are unreasonable enough to think that the learned author still owes us an arrear: which we hope he will handsomely pay up in the next edition.

When a great poet and a man of distinguished talents announces a large selection of English poetry, "with biographical and critical notices," we naturally expect such notices of all, or almost all the authors, of whose works he thinks it worth while to favour us with specimens. The biography sometimes may be unattainable—and it may still more frequently be uninteresting—but the criticism must always be valuable; and, indeed, is obviously that which must be looked to as constituting the chief value of any such publication. There is no author so obscure, if at all entitled to a place in this register, of whom it would not be desirable to know the opinion of such a man as Mr. Campbell—and none so mature and settled in fame, upon whose beauties and defects, and poetical character in general, the public would not have much to learn from such an authority. Now, there are many authors, and some of no mean note, of whom he has not condescended to say one word, either in the Essay, or in the notices prefixed to the citations. Of Jonathan Swift, for example, all that is here recorded is "Born 1667—died 1744;" and Otway is despatched in the same summary manner—"Born 1651—died 1685." Marlowe is commemorated in a single page, and Butler in half of one. All this is rather capricious:—But this is not all. Sometimes the notices are entirely biographical, and sometimes entirely critical. We humbly conceive they ought always to have been of *both* descriptions. At all events, we ought in every case to have had some criticism,—since this could always have been had, and could scarcely have failed to be valuable. Mr. C., we think, has been a little lazy.

If he were like most authors, or even like most critics, we could easily have pardoned this; for we very seldom find any work too short. It is the singular goodness of his criticisms that makes us regret their fewness; for nothing, we think, can be more fair, judicious and discriminating, and at the same time more fine, delicate and original, than the greater part of the discussions with which he has here presented us. It is very rare to find so much sensibility to the beauties of poetry, united with so much toleration for its faults; and so exact a perception of the merits of every particular style, interfering so little with a just estimate of all. Poets, to be sure, are on the whole, we think, very indulgent judges of poetry; and that not so much, we verily believe, from any partiality to their own vocation, or desire to exalt their fraternity, as from their being more constantly alive to those impulses which it is the business of poetry to excite, and more quick to catch and to follow out those associations on which its efficacy chiefly depends. If it be true, as we have formerly endeavoured to show, with reference to this very author, that poetry produces all its greater effects, and works its more memorable enchantments, not so much by the images it directly presents, as by those which it *suggests* to the fancy; and melts or inflames us less by the fires which it applies from without, than by those which it kindles within, and of which the fuel is in our own bosoms,—it will be readily understood how these effects should be most powerful in the sensitive breast of a poet; and how a spark, which would have been instantly quenched in the duller atmosphere of an ordinary brain, may create a blaze in his combustible imagination, to warm and enlighten the world. The greater poets, accordingly, have almost always been the warmest admirers, and the most liberal patrons of poetry. The smaller only—your Laureates and Ballad-mongers—are envious and irritable—jealous even of the dead, and less desirous of the praise of others than avaricious of their own.

But though a poet is thus likely to be a gentler critic of poetry than another, and, by having a finer sense of its beauties, to be better qualified for the most pleasing and important part of his office, there is another requisite in which we should be afraid he

would generally be found wanting, especially in a work of the large and comprehensive nature of that now before us—we mean, in absolute fairness and impartiality towards the different schools or styles of poetry which he may have occasion to estimate and compare. Even the most common and miscellaneous reader has a peculiar taste in this way—and has generally erected for himself some obscure but exclusive standard of excellence, by which he measures the pretensions of all that come under his view. One man admires witty and satirical poetry, and sees no beauty in rural imagery or picturesque description; while another doats on Idyls and Pastorals, and will not allow the affairs of polite life to form a subject for verse. One is for simplicity and pathos; another for magnificence and splendour. One is devoted to the Muse of terror; another to that of love. Some are all for blood and battles, and some for music and moonlight—some for emphatic sentiments, and some for melodious verses. Even those whose taste is the least exclusive, have a leaning to one class of composition rather than to another; and overrate the beauties which fall in with their own propensities and associations—while they are palpably unjust to those which wear a different complexion, or spring from a different race.

But, if it be difficult or almost impossible to meet with an impartial judge for the whole great family of genius, even among those quiet and studious readers who ought to find delight even in their variety, it is obvious that this bias and obliquity of judgment must be still more incident to one who, by being himself a Poet, must not only prefer one school of poetry to all others, but must actually *belong* to it, and be disposed, as a pupil, or still more as a Master, to advance its pretensions above those of all its competitors. Like the votaries or leaders of other sects, successful poets have been but too apt to establish exclusive and arbitrary creeds; and to invent articles of faith, the slightest violation of which effaces the merit of all other virtues. Addicting themselves, as they are apt to do, to the exclusive cultivation of that style to which the bent of their own genius naturally inclines them, they look everywhere for those beauties of which it is peculiarly susceptible, and are disgusted if they cannot be found.—Like discoverers in science, or improvers in art, they see nothing in the whole system but their own discoveries and improvements, and undervalue every thing that cannot be connected with their own studies and glory. As the Chinese mapmakers allot all the lodgeable area of the earth to their own nation, and thrust the other countries of the world into little outskirts and by-corners—so poets are disposed to represent their own little field of exertion as occupying all the sunny part of Parnassus, and to exhibit the adjoining regions under terrible shadows and most unmerciful foreshortenings.

With those impressions of the almost inevitable partiality of poetical judgments in general, we could not recollect that Mr. Campbell was himself a Master in a distinct school of poetry, and distinguished by a very peculiar and fastidious style of composition, without being apprehensive that the effects of this bias would be apparent in his work; and that, with all his talent and discernment, he would now and then be guilty of great, though unintended injustice, to some of those whose manner was most opposite to his own. We are happy to say that those apprehensions have proved entirely groundless; and that nothing in the volumes before us is more admirable, or to us more surprising, than the perfect candour and undeviating fairness with which the learned author passes judgment on all the different authors who come before him;—the quick and true perception he has of the most opposite and almost contradictory beauties—the good-natured and liberal allowance he makes for the disadvantages of each age and individual—and the temperance and brevity and firmness with which he reproves the excessive severity of critics less entitled to be severe. No one indeed, we will venture to affirm, ever placed himself in the seat of judgment with more of a judicial temper—though, to obviate invidious comparisons, we must beg leave just to add, that being called on to pass judgment only on *the dead*, whose faults were no longer corrigible, or had already been expiated by appropriate pains, his temper was less tried, and his severities less provoked, than in the case of living offenders,—and that the very number and variety of the errors that called for animadversion, in the course of his wide survey, must have made each particular case appear comparatively insignificant, and mitigated the sentence of individual condemnation.

It is to this last circumstance, of the large and comprehensive range which he was obliged to take, and the great extent and variety of the society in which he was compelled to mingle, that we are inclined to ascribe, not only the general mildness and indulgence of his judgments, but his happy emancipation from those narrow and limitary maxims by which we have already said that poets are so peculiarly apt to be entangled. As a large and familiar intercourse with men of different habits and dispositions never fails, in characters of any force or generosity, to dispel the prejudices with which we at first regard them, and to lower our estimate of our own superior happiness and wisdom, so, a very ample and extensive course of reading in any department of letters, tends naturally to enlarge our narrow principles of judgment; and not only to cast down the idols before which we had formerly abased ourselves, but to disclose to us the might and the majesty of much that we had mistaken and contemned.

In this point of view, we think such a work as is now before us, likely to be of great use to ordinary readers of poetry—not only as unlocking to them innumerable new springs of enjoyment and admiration, but as having a tendency to correct and liberalize their judgments of their old favourites, and to strengthen and enliven all those faculties by

which they derive pleasure from such studies. Nor would the benefit, if it once extended so far, by any means stop there. The character of our poetry depends not a little on the taste of our poetical readers;—and though some bards have always been before their age, and some behind it, the greater part must be pretty nearly on its level. Present popularity, whatever disappointed writers may say, is, after all, the only safe passage of future glory;—and it is really as unlikely that good poetry should be produced in any quantity where it is not relished, as that cloth should be manufactured and thrust into the market, of a pattern and fashion for which there was no demand. A shallow and uninstructed taste is indeed the most flexible and inconstant—and is tossed about by every breath of doctrine, and every wind of authority; so as neither to derive any permanent delight from the same works, nor to assure any permanent fame to their authors;—while a taste that is formed upon a wide and large survey of enduring models, not only affords a secure basis for all future judgments, but must compel, whenever it is general in any society, a salutary conformity to its great principles from all who depend on its suffrage.—To accomplish such an object, the general study of a work like this certainly is not enough:—But it would form an excellent preparation for more extensive reading—and would, of itself, do much to open the eyes of many self-satisfied persons, and startle them into a sense of their own ignorance, and the poverty and paltriness of many of their ephemeral favourites. Considered as a nation, we are yet but very imperfectly recovered from that strange and ungrateful forgetfulness of our older poets, which began with the Restoration, and continued almost unbroken till after the middle of the last century.—Nor can the works which have chiefly tended to dispel it among the instructed orders, be ranked in a higher class than this which is before us.—Percy's Relics of Antient Poetry produced, we believe, the first revulsion—and this was followed up by Wharton's History of Poetry.—Johnson's Lives of the Poets did something;—and the great effect has been produced by the modern commentators on Shakespeare. Those various works recommended the older writers, and reinstated them in some of their honours;—but still the works themselves were not placed before the eyes of ordinary readers. This was done in part, perhaps overdone, by the entire republication of some of our older dramatists—and with better effect by Mr. Ellis's Specimens. If the former, however, was rather too copious a supply for the returning appetite of the public, the latter was too scanty; and both were confined to too narrow a period of time to enable the reader to enjoy the variety, and to draw the comparisons, by which he might be most pleased and instructed.—Southey's continuation of Ellis did harm rather than good; for though there is some cleverness in the introduction, the work itself is executed in a crude, petulant, and superficial manner,—and bears all the marks of being a mere bookseller's speculation.—As we have heard nothing of it from the time of its first publication, we suppose it has had the success it deserved.

There was great room therefore,—and, we will even say, great occasion, for such a work as this of Mr. Campbell's, in the present state of our literature;—and we are persuaded, that all who care about poetry, and are not already acquainted with the authors of whom it treats—and even all who are—cannot possibly do better than read it fairly through, from the first page to the last—without skipping the extracts which they know, or those which may not at first seem very attractive. There is no reader, we will venture to say, who will rise from the perusal even of these partial and scanty fragments, without a fresh and deep sense of the matchless richness, variety, and originality of English Poetry: while the juxtaposition and arrangement of the pieces not only gives room for endless comparisons and contrasts,—but displays, as it were in miniature, the whole of its wonderful progress; and sets before us, as in a great gallery of pictures, the whole course and history of the art, from its first rude and infant beginnings, to its maturity, and perhaps its decline. While it has all the grandeur and instruction that belongs to such a gallery, it is free from the perplexity and distraction which is generally complained of in such exhibitions; as each piece is necessarily considered separately and in succession, and the mind cannot wander, like the eye, through the splendid labyrinth in which it is enchanted. Nothing, we think, can be more delightful, than thus at our ease to trace, through all its periods, vicissitudes, and aspects, the progress of this highest and most intellectual of all the arts—coloured as it is in every age by the manners of the times which produce it, and embodying, besides those flights of fancy and touches of pathos that constitute its more immediate essence, much of the wisdom and much of the morality that was then current among the people; and thus presenting us, not merely with almost all that genius has ever created for delight, but with a brief chronicle and abstract of all that was once interesting to the generations which have gone by.

The steps of the progress of such an art, and the circumstances by which they have been effected, would form, of themselves, a large and interesting theme of speculation. Conversant as poetry necessarily is with all that touches human feelings, concerns, and occupations, its character must have been impressed by every change in the moral and political condition of society, and must even retain the lighter traces of their successive follies, amusements, and pursuits; while, in the course of ages, the very multiplication and increasing business of the people have forced it through a progress not wholly dissimilar to that which the same causes have produced on the agriculture and landscape of the country;—where at first we had rude and dreary wastes, thinly sprinkled with sunny spots of simple cultivation—then vast forests

and chases, stretching far around feudal castles and pinnacled abbeys—then woodland hamlets, and goodly mansions, and gorgeous gardens, and parks rich with waste fertility, and lax habitations—and, finally, crowded cities, and road-side villas, and brick-walled gardens, and turnip-fields, and canals, and artificial ruins, and ornamented farms, and cottages trellised over with exotic plants!

But, to escape from those metaphors and enigmas to the business before us, we must remark, that in order to give any tolerable idea of the poetry which was thus to be represented, it was necessary that the specimens to be exhibited should be of some compass and extent. We have heard their length complained of—but we think with very little justice. Considering the extent of the works from which they are taken, they are almost all but inconsiderable fragments; and where the original was of an Epic or Tragic character, greater abridgment would have been mere mutilation,—and would have given only such a specimen of the whole, as a brick might do of a building. From the earlier and less familiar authors, we rather think the citations are too short; and, even from those that are more generally known, we do not well see how they could have been shorter, with any safety to the professed object, and only use, of the publication. That object, we conceive, was to give specimens of English poetry, from its earliest to its latest periods; and it would be a strange rule to have followed, in making such a selection, to leave out the best and most popular. The work certainly neither is, nor professes to be, a collection from obscure and forgotten authors—but specimens of all who have merit enough to deserve our remembrance;—and if some few have such redundant merit or good fortune as to be in the hands and the minds of all the world, it was necessary, even then, to give some extracts from them,—that the series might be complete, and that there might be room for comparison with others, and for tracing the progress of the art in the strains of its best models and their various imitators.

In one instance, and one only, Mr. C. has declined doing this duty; and left the place of one great luminary to be filled up by recollections that he must have presumed would be universal. He has given but two pages to SHAKESPEARE—and not a line from any of his plays! Perhaps he has done rightly. A knowledge of Shakespeare may be safely presumed, we believe, in every reader; and, if he had begun to cite his Beauties, there is no saying where he would have ended. A little book, calling itself Beauties of Shakespeare, was published some years ago, and shown, as we have heard, to Mr. Sheridan He turned over the leaves for some time with apparent satisfaction, and then said, "This is very well; but where are the other seven volumes?" There is no other author, however, whose fame is such as to justify a similar *ellipsis*, or whose works can be thus *elegantly understood*, in a collection of good poetry. Mr. C. has complied perhaps too far with the popular prejudice, in confining his citations from Milton to the Comus and the smaller pieces, and leaving the Paradise Lost to the memory of his readers. But though we do not think the extracts by any means too long on the whole, we are certainly of opinion that some are too long and others too short; and that many, especially in the latter case, are not very well selected. There is far too little of Marlowe for instance, and too much of Shirley, and even of Massinger. We should have liked more of Warner, Fairfax, Phineas Fletcher, and Henry More—all poets of no scanty dimensions—and could have spared several pages of Butler, Mason, Whitehead, Roberts, Meston, and Amhurst Selden. We do not think the specimens from Burns very well selected; nor those from Prior—nor can we see any good reason for quoting the whole Castle of Indolence, *and nothing else*, for Thomson—and the whole Rape of the Lock, and nothing else, for Pope.

Next to the impression of the vast fertility, compass, and beauty of our English poetry, the reflection that recurs most frequently and forcibly to us, in accompanying Mr. C. through his wide survey, is that of the perishable nature of poetical fame, and the speedy oblivion that has overtaken so many of the promised heirs of immortality! Of near two hundred and fifty authors, whose works are cited in these volumes, by far the greater part of whom were celebrated in their generation, there are not thirty who now enjoy any thing that can be called popularity—whose works are to be found in the hands of ordinary readers—in the shops of ordinary booksellers—or in the press for republication. About fifty more may be tolerably familiar to men of taste or literature:—the rest slumber on the shelves of collectors, and are partially known to a few antiquaries and scholars. Now, the fame of a Poet is popular, or nothing. He does not address himself, like the man of science, to the learned, or those who desire to learn, but to all mankind; and his purpose being to delight and be praised, necessarily extends to all who can receive pleasure, or join in applause. It is strange, then, and somewhat humiliating, to see how great a proportion of those who had once fought their way successfully to distinction, and surmounted the rivalry of contemporary envy, have again sunk into neglect. We have great deference for public opinion; and readily admit, that nothing but what is good can be permanently popular. But though its *vivat* be generally oracular, its *pereat* appears to us to be often sufficiently capricious; and while we would foster all that it bids to live, we would willingly revive much that it leaves to die. The very multiplication of works of amusement, necessarily withdraws many from notice that deserve to be kept in remembrance; for we should soon find it labour, and not amusement, if we were obliged to make use of them all, or even to take all upon trial. As the materials of enjoyment and instruction accumulate around us, more and more, we fear, must thus be daily rejected, and

left to waste: For while our tasks lengthen, our lives remain as short as ever; and the calls on our time multiply, while our time itself is flying swiftly away. This superfluity and abundance of our treasures, therefore, necessarily renders much of them worthless; and the veriest accidents may, in such a case, determine what part shall be preserved, and what thrown away and neglected. When an army is *decimated*, the very bravest may fall; and many poets, worthy of eternal remembrance, have probably been forgotten, merely because there was not room in our memories for all.

By such a work as the present, however, this injustice of fortune may be partly redressed—some small fragments of an immortal strain may still be rescued from oblivion—and a wreck of a name preserved, which time appeared to have swallowed up for ever. There is something pious we think, and endearing, in the office of thus gathering up the ashes of renown that has passed away; or rather, of calling back the departed life for a transitory glow, and enabling those great spirits which seemed to be *laid* for ever, still to draw a tear of pity, or a throb of admiration, from the hearts of a forgetful generation. The body of their poetry, probably, can never be revived; but some sparks of its spirit may yet be preserved, in a narrower and feebler frame.

When we look back upon the havoc which two hundred years have thus made in the ranks of our immortals—and, above all, when we refer their rapid disappearance to the quick succession of new competitors, and the accumulation of more good works than there is time to peruse, we cannot help being dismayed at the prospect which lies before the writers of the present day. There never was an age so prolific of popular poetry as that in which we now live;—and as wealth, population, and education extend, the produce is likely to go on increasing. The last ten years have produced, we think, an annual supply of about ten thousand lines of good staple poetry—poetry from the very first hands that we can boast of—that runs quickly to three or four large editions—and is as likely to be permanent as present success can make it. Now, if this goes on for a hundred years longer, what a task will await the poetical readers of 1919! Our living poets will then be nearly as old as Pope and Swift are at present—but there will stand between them and that generation nearly ten times as much fresh and fashionable poetry as is now interposed between us and those writers:—and if Scott and Byron and Campbell have already cast Pope and Swift a good deal into the shade, in what form and dimensions are they themselves likely to be presented to the eyes of our great grandchildren? The thought, we own, is a little appalling;—and we confess we see nothing better to imagine than that they may find a comfortable place in some new collection of specimens—the centenary of the present publication. There—if the future editor have any thing like the indulgence and veneration for antiquity of his predecessor—there shall posterity still hang with rapture on the half of Campbell—and the fourth part of Byron—and the sixth of Scott—and the scattered tythes of Crabbe—and the three *per cent.* of Southey,—while some good-natured critic shall sit in our mouldering chair, and more than half prefer them to those by whom they have been superseded!—It is an hyperbole of good nature, however, we fear, to ascribe to them even those dimensions at the end of a century. After a lapse of two hundred and fifty years, we are afraid to think of the space they may have shrunk into. We have no Shakespeare, alas! to shed a never-setting light on his contemporaries:—and if we continue to write and rhyme at the present rate for two hundred years longer, there must be some new art of *short-hand reading* invented—or all reading will be given up in despair. We need not distress ourselves, however, with these afflictions of our posterity:—and it is quite time that the reader should know a little of the work before us.

The Essay on English Poetry is very cleverly, and, in many places, very finely written—but it is not equal, and it is not complete. There is a good deal of the poet's waywardness even in Mr. C.'s prose. His historical Muse is as disdainful of drudgery and plain work as any of her more tuneful sisters;—and so we have things begun and abandoned—passages of great eloquence and beauty followed up by others not a little careless and disorderly—a large outline rather meagerly filled up, but with some morsels of exquisite finishing scattered irregularly up and down its expanse—little fragments of detail and controversy—and abrupt and impatient conclusions. Altogether, however, the work is very spirited; and abounds with the indications of a powerful and fine understanding, and of a delicate and original taste. We cannot now afford to give any abstract of the information it contains—but shall make a few extracts, to show the tone and manner of the composition.

The following sketch of Chaucer, for instance, and of the long interregnum that succeeded his demise, is given with great grace and spirit.

"His first, and long-continued predilection, was attracted by the new and allegorical style of romance, which had sprung up in France, in the thirteenth century, under William de Lorris. We find him, accordingly, during a great part of his poetical career, engaged among the dreams, emblems, flower-worshippings, and amatory parliaments, of that visionary school. This, we may say, was a gymnasium of rather too light and playful exercise for so strong a genius; and it must be owned, that his allegorical poetry is often puerile and prolix. Yet, even in this walk of fiction, we never entirely lose sight of that peculiar grace and gaiety, which distinguish the Muse of Chaucer; and no one who remembers his productions of the House of Fame, and the Flower and the Leaf, will regret that he sported, for a season, in the field of allegory. Even his pieces of this description, the most fantastic in design, and tedious in execution, are generally interspersed with fresh and joyous descriptions of external nature. In this new species of romance, we perceive the youthful Muse of the

language, in love with mystical meanings and forms of fancy, more remote, if possible from reality, than those of the chivalrous fable itself; and we could, sometimes, wish her back from her emblematic castles, to the more solid ones of the elder fable; but still she moves in pursuit of those shadows with an impulse of novelty, and an exuberance of spirit, that is not wholly without its attraction and delight. Chaucer was, afterwards, happily drawn to the more natural style of Boccaccio; and from him he derived the hint of a subject, in which, besides his own original portraits of contemporary life, he could introduce stories of every description, from the most heroic to the most familiar."—pp. 71—73.

"Warton, with great beauty and justice, compares the appearance of Chaucer in our language, to a premature day in an English spring; after which the gloom of winter returns, and the buds and blossoms, which have been called forth by a transient sunshine, are nipped by frosts, and scattered by storms. The causes of the relapse of our poetry, after Chaucer, seem but too apparent in the annals of English history; which, during five reigns of the fifteenth century, continue to display but a tissue of conspiracies, proscriptions, and bloodshed. Inferior even to France in literary progress, England displays in the fifteenth century a still more mortifying contrast with Italy. Italy, too, had her religious schisms and public distractions; but her arts and literature had always a sheltering place. They were even cherished by the rivalship of independent communities, and received encouragement from the opposite sources of commercial and ecclesiastical wealth. But *we* had no Nicholas the Fifth, nor House of Medicis. In England, the evils of civil war agitated society as one mass. There was no refuge from them—no enclosure to fence in the field of improvement—no mound to stem the torrent of public troubles. Before the death of Henry VI. it is said that one half of the nobility and gentry in the kingdom had perished in the field, or on the scaffold!"

The golden age of Elizabeth has often been extolled, and the genius of Spenser delineated, with feeling and eloquence. But all that has been written, leaves the following striking passages as original as they are eloquent.

"In the reign of Elizabeth, the English mind put forth its energies in every direction, exalted by a purer religion, and enlarged by new views of truth. This was an age of loyalty, adventure, and generous emulation. The chivalrous character was softened by intellectual pursuits, while the genius of chivalry itself still lingered, as if unwilling to depart; and paid his last homage to a Warlike and Female reign. A degree of romantic fancy remained, too, in the manners and superstitions of the people; and Allegory might be said to parade the streets in their public pageants and festivities. Quaint and pedantic as those allegorical exhibitions might often be, they were nevertheless more expressive of erudition, ingenuity, and moral meaning, than they had been in former times. The philosophy of the highest minds, on the other hand, still partook of a visionary character. A poetical spirit infused itself into the practical heroism of the age; and some of the worthies of that period seem less like ordinary men, than like beings called forth out of fiction, and arrayed in the brightness of her dreams. They had 'high thoughts seated in hearts of courtesy.' The life of Sir Philip Sydney was poetry put into action.

"The result of activity and curiosity in the public mind was to complete the revival of classical literature, to increase the importation of foreign books, and to multiply translations, from which poetry supplied herself with abundant subjects and materials, and in the use of which she showed a frank and fearless energy, that criticism and satire had not yet acquired power to overawe. Romance came back to us from the southern languages, clothed in new luxury by the warm imagination of the south. The growth of poetry under such circumstances might indeed be expected to be as irregular as it was profuse. The field was open to daring absurdity, as well as to genuine inspiration; and accordingly there is no period in which the extremes of good and bad writing are so abundant."—pp. 120—122.

"The mistaken opinion that Ben Jonson censured the antiquity of the diction in the 'Fairy Queen,' has been corrected by Mr. Malone, who pronounces it to be exactly that of his contemporaries. His authority is weighty; still, however, without reviving the exploded error respecting Jonson's censure, one might imagine the difference of Spenser's style from that of Shakespeare's, whom he so shortly preceded, to indicate that his Gothic subject and story made him lean towards words of the elder time. At all events, much of his expression is now become antiquated; though it is beautiful in its antiquity, and, like the moss and ivy on some majestic building, covers the fabric of his language with romantic and venerable associations.

"His command of imagery is wide, easy, and luxuriant. He threw the soul of harmony into our verse, and made it more warmly, tenderly, and magnificently descriptive than it ever was before, or, with a few exceptions, than it has ever been since. It must certainly be owned, that in description he exhibits nothing of the brief strokes and robust power which characterize the very greatest poets: But we shall nowhere find more airy and expansive images of visionary things, a sweeter tone of sentiment, or a finer flush in the colours of language, than in this Rubens of English poetry. His fancy teems exuberantly in minuteness of circumstance; like a fertile soil sending bloom and verdure through the utmost extremities of the foliage which it nourishes. On a comprehensive view of the whole work, we certainly miss the charm of strength, symmetry, and rapid or interesting progress; for though the plan which the poet designed is not completed, it is easy to see that no additional cantos could have rendered it less perplexed. But still there is a richness in his materials, even where their coherence is loose, and their disposition confused. The clouds of his allegory may seem to spread into shapeless forms, but they are still the clouds of a glowing atmosphere. Though his story grows desultory, the sweetness and grace of his manner still abide by him. We always rise from perusing him with melody in the mind's ear, and with pictures of romantic beauty impressed on the imagination."—pp. 124—127.

In his account of the great dramatic writers of that and the succeeding reign, Mr. C.'s veneration for Shakespeare has made him rather unjust, we think, to the fame of some of his precursors.—We have already said that he passes Marlowe with a very slight notice, and a page of citation.—Greene, certainly a far inferior writer, is treated with the same scanty courtesy—and there is no account and no specimen of Kyd or Lodge, though both authors of very considerable genius and originality.—With the writings of Peele, we do not profess to be acquainted—but the quotations given from him in the Essay should have entitled him to a place in the body of the work.—We must pass over what he says of Shakespeare and Jonson, though full of beauty and feeling.—To the latter, indeed, he is rather more than just.—The account of Beaumont and Fletcher is lively and discriminating.

"The theatre of Beaumont and Fletcher contains all manner of good and evil. The respective shares of those dramatic partners, in the works collectively published with their names, have been stated in a

different part of these volumes. Fletcher's share in them is by far the largest; and he is chargeable with the greatest number of faults, although at the same time his genius was more airy, prolific, and fanciful. There are such extremes of grossness and magnificence in their drama, so much sweetness and beauty interspersed with views of nature either falsely romantic, or vulgar beyond reality; there is so much to animate and amuse us, and yet so much that we would willingly overlook, that I cannot help comparing the contrasted impressions which they make to those which we receive from visiting some great and ancient city, picturesquely but irregularly built, glittering with spires and surrounded with gardens, but exhibiting in many quarters the lanes and hovels of wretchedness. They have scenes of wealthy and high life, which remind us of courts and palaces frequented by elegant females and high-spirited gallants, whilst their noble old martial characters, with Caractacus in the midst of them, may inspire us with the same sort of regard which we pay to the rough-hewn magnificence of an ancient fortress.

"Unhappily, the same simile, without being hunted down, will apply but too faithfully to the *nuisances* of the drama. Their language is often basely profligate. Shakespeare's and Jonson's indelicacies are but casual blots; whilst theirs are sometimes essential colours of their painting, and extend, in one or two instances, to entire and offensive scenes. This fault has deservedly injured their reputation; and, saving a very slight allowance for the fashion and taste of their age, admits of no sort of apology. Their drama, nevertheless, is a very wide one, and '*has ample room and verge enough*' to permit the attention to wander from these, and to fix on more inviting peculiarities—as on the great variety of their fables and personages, their spirited dialogue, their wit, pathos, and humour. Thickly sown as their blemishes are, their merits will bear great deductions, and still remain great. We never can forget such beautiful characters as their Cellide, their Aspatia and Bellario, or such humorous ones as their La Writ and Cacafogo. Awake they will always keep us, whether to quarrel or to be pleased with them. Their invention is fruitful; its beings are on the whole an active and sanguine generation; and their scenes are crowded to fulness with the warmth, agitation, and interest of actual life."—pp. 210—213.

Some of the most splendid passages in the Essay are dedicated to the fame of Milton—and are offerings not unworthy of the shrine.

"In Milton," he says, "there may be traced obligations to several minor English poets: But his genius had too great a supremacy to belong to any school. Though he acknowledged a filial reverence for Spenser as a poet, he left no Gothic irregular tracery in the design of his own great work, but gave a classical harmony of parts to its stupendous pile. It thus resembles a dome, the vastness of which is at first sight concealed by its symmetry, but which expands more and more to the eye while it is contemplated. His early poetry seems to have neither disturbed nor corrected the bad taste of his age.—Comus came into the world unacknowledged by its author, and Lycidas appeared at first only with his initials. These, and other exquisite pieces, composed in the happiest years of his life, at his father's country-house at Horton, were collectively published, with his name affixed to them, in 1645; but that precious volume, which included L'Allegro and Il Penseroso did not (I believe) come to a second edition, till it was republished by himself at the distance of eight-and-twenty years. Almost a century elapsed before his minor works obtained their proper fame.

"Even when Paradise Lost first appeared, though it was not neglected, it attracted no crowd of imitators, and made no visible change in the poetical practice of the age. He stood alone, and aloof above his times; the bard of immortal subjects, and, as far as there is perpetuity in language, of immortal fame. The very choice of those subjects bespoke a contempt for any species of excellence that was attainable by other men. There is something that overawes the mind in conceiving his long-deliberated selection of that theme—his attempting it after his eyes were shut upon the face of nature—his dependence, we might almost say, on supernatural inspiration, and in the calm air of strength with which he opens Paradise Lost, beginning a mighty performance without the appearance of an effort."

"The warlike part of Paradise Lost was inseparable from its subject. Whether it could have been differently managed, is a problem which our reverence for Milton will scarcely permit us to state. I feel that reverence too strongly to suggest even the possibility that Milton could have improved his poem, by having thrown his angelic warfare into more remote perspective: But it seems to me to be most sublime when it is least distinctly brought home to the imagination. What an awful effect has the dim and undefined conception of the conflict, which we gather from the retrospects in the first book! There the veil of mystery is left undrawn between us and a subject which the powers of description were inadequate to exhibit. The ministers of divine vengeance and pursuit had been recalled—the thunders had ceased

'To bellow through the vast and boundless deep,'

(in that line what an image of sound and space is conveyed!)—and our terrific conception of the past is deepened by its indistinctness. In optics there are some phenomena which are beautifully deceptive at a certain distance, but which lose their illusive charm on the slightest approach to them that changes the light and position in which they are viewed. Something like this takes place in the phenomena of fancy. The array of the fallen angels in hell—the unfurling of the standard of Satan—and the march of his troops

'In perfect phalanx, to the Dorian mood
Of flutes and soft recorders'—

all this human pomp and circumstance of war is magic and overwhelming illusion. The imagination is taken by surprise. But the noblest efforts of language are tried with very unequal effect, to interest us in the immediate and close view of the battle itself in the sixth book; and the martial demons, who charmed us in the shades of hell, lose some portion of their sublimity, when their artillery is discharged in the daylight of heaven.

"If we call diction the garb of thought, Milton, in his style, may be said to wear the costume of sovereignty. The idioms even of foreign languages contributed to adorn it. He was the most learned of poets; yet his learning interferes not with his substantial English purity. His simplicity is unimpaired by glowing ornament,—like the bush in the sacred flame, which burnt but 'was not consumed.'

"In delineating the blessed spirits, Milton has exhausted all the conceivable variety that could be given to pictures of unshaded sanctity; but it is chiefly in those of the fallen angels that his excellence is conspicuous above every thing ancient or modern. Tasso had, indeed, portrayed an infernal council, and had given the hint to our poet of ascribing the origin of pagan worship to those reprobate spirits. But how poor and squalid in comparison of the Miltonic Pandæmonium are the Scyllas, the Cyclopses, and the Chimeras of the Infernal Council of the Jerusalem! Tasso's conclave of fiends is a den of ugly incongruous monsters. The powers of Milton's hell are godlike shapes and forms. Their appearance dwarfs every other poetical conception, when we turn our dilated eyes from contemplating them. It is not their external attributes alone which expand the imagination, but their souls, which are as colossal as their stature—their '*thoughts that wander through eternity*'—the pride that burns amidst the ruins of their divine natures, and their genius, that feels with the ardour and debates with the eloquence of heaven."
pp. 242, 247.

We have already said, that we think Shirley overpraised—but he is praised with great eloquence. There is but little said of Dryden in the Essay—but it is said with force and with judgment. In speaking of Pope and his contemporaries, Mr. C. touches on debateable ground: And we shall close our quotations from this part of his work, with the passage in which he announces his own indulgent, and, perhaps, latitudinarian opinions.

"There are exclusionists in taste, who think that they cannot speak with sufficient disparagement of the English poets of the first part of the eighteenth century; and they are armed with a noble provocative to English contempt, when they have it to say that those poets belong to a French school. Indeed Dryden himself is generally included in that school; though more genuine English is to be found in no man's pages. But in poetry 'there are many mansions.' I am free to confess, that I can pass from the elder writers, and still find a charm in the correct and equable sweetness of Parnell. Conscious that his diction has not the freedom and volubility of the better strains of the elder time, I cannot but remark his exemption from the quaintness and false metaphor which so often disfigure the style of the preceding age; nor deny my respect to the select choice of his expression, the clearness and keeping of his imagery, and the pensive dignity of his moral feeling.

"Pope gave our heroic couplet its strictest melody and tersest expression.

D'un mot mis en sa place il enseigne le pouvoir.

If his contemporaries forgot other poets in admiring him, let him not be robbed of his just fame on pretence that a part of it was superfluous. The public ear was long fatigued with repetitions of his manner; but if we place ourselves in the situation of those to whom his brilliancy, succinctness and animation were wholly new, we cannot wonder at their being captivated to the fondest admiration.—In order to do justice to Pope, we should forget his imitators, if that were possible; but it is easier to remember than to forget by an effort—to acquire associations than to shake them off. Every one may recollect how often the most beautiful air has palled upon his ear, and grown insipid, from being played or sung by vulgar musicians. It is the same thing with regard to Pope's versification. That his peculiar rhythm and manner are the very best in the whole range of our poetry need not be asserted. He has a gracefully peculiar manner, though it is not calculated to be an universal one; and where, indeed, shall we find the style of poetry that could be pronounced an exclusive model for every composer? His pauses have little variety, and his phrases are too much weighed in the balance of antithesis. But let us look to the spirit that points his antithesis, and to the rapid precision of his thoughts, and we shall forgive him for being too antithetic and sententious."—pp. 259—262.

And to this is subjoined a long argument, to show that Mr. Bowles is mistaken in supposing that a poet should always draw his images from the works of nature, and not from those of art. We have no room at present for any discussion of the question; but we do not think it is quite fairly stated in the passage to which we have referred; and confess that we are rather inclined, on the whole, to adhere to the creed of Mr. Bowles.

Of the Specimens, which compose the body of the work, we cannot pretend to give any account. They are themselves but tiny and slender fragments of the works from which they are taken; and to abridge them further would be to reduce them to mere dust and rubbish. Besides, we are not called upon to review the poets of England for the last four hundred years!—but only the present editor and critic. In the little we have yet to say, therefore, we shall treat only of the merits of Mr. Campbell. His account of Hall and Chamberlayn is what struck us most in his first volumes—probably because neither of the writers whom he so judiciously praises were formerly familiar to us. Hall, who was the founder of our satirical poetry, wrote his satires about the year 1597, when only twenty-three years old; and whether we consider the age of the man or of the world, they appear to us equally wonderful. In this extraordinary work,

"He discovered," says Mr. C. "not only the early vigour of his own genius, but the power and pliability of his native tongue: for in the point, and volubility and vigour of Hall's numbers, we might frequently imagine ourselves perusing Dryden. This may be exemplified in the harmony and picturesqueness of the following description of a magnificent rural mansion, which the traveller approaches in the hopes of reaching the seat of ancient hospitality, but finds it deserted by its selfish owner.

Beat the broad gates, a goodly hollow sound,
With double echoes, doth again rebound;
But not a dog doth bark to welcome thee,
Nor churlish porter canst thou chafing see.
All dumb and silent, like the dead of night,
Or dwelling of some sleepy Sybarite;
The marble pavement hid with desert weed,
With house-leek, thistle, dock, and hemlock seed.
* * * * * * * *
Look to the tow'red chimnies, which should be
The wind-pipes of good hospitality,
Through which it breatheth to the open air,
Betokening life and liberal welfare,
Lo, there th' unthankful swallow takes her rest,
And fills the tunnel with her circled nest.

"His satires are neither cramped by personal hostility, nor spun out to vague declamations on vice; but give us the form and pressure of the times, exhibited in the faults of coeval literature, and in the foppery or sordid traits of prevailing manners. The age was undoubtedly fertile in eccentricity."
Vol. ii. pp. 257, 258.

What he says of Chamberlayn, and the extracts he has made from his Pharonnida, have made us quite impatient for an opportunity of perusing the whole poem.

The poetical merits of Ben Jonson are chiefly discussed in the Essay; and the Notice is principally biographical. It is very pleasingly written, though with an affectionate leaning towards his hero. The following short passage affords a fair specimen of the good sense and good temper of all Mr. Campbell's apologies.

"The poet's journey to Scotland (1617) awakens many pleasing recollections, when we conceive him anticipating his welcome among a people who might be proud of a share in his ancestry, and setting out, with manly strength, on a journey of four hundred miles, on foot. We are assured, by one who saw him in Scotland, that he was treated with respect and affection among the nobility and gentry; nor

was the romantic scenery of the country lost upon his fancy. From the poem which he meditated on Lochlomond, it is seen that he looked on it with a poet's eye. But, unhappily, the meagre anecdotes of Drummond have made this event of his life too prominent, by the over-importance which has been attached to them. Drummond, a smooth and sober gentleman, seems to have disliked Jonson's indulgence in that conviviality which Ben had shared with his Fletcher and Shakespeare at the Mermaid. In consequence of those anecdotes, Jonson's memory has been damned for brutality, and Drummond's for perfidy. Jonson drank freely at Hawthornden, and talked big—things neither incredible nor unpardonable. Drummond's perfidy amounted to writing a letter, beginning Sir, with one very kind sentence in it, to the man whom he had described unfavourably in a private memorandum, which he never meant for publication. As to Drummond's decoying Jonson under his roof with any premeditated design on his reputation, no one can seriously believe it."—Vol. iii. pp. 150, 151.

The notice of Cotton may be quoted, as a perfect model for such slight memorials of writers of the middle order.

"There is a careless and happy humour in this poet's Voyage to Ireland, which seems to anticipate the manner of Anstey, in the Bath Guide. The tasteless indelicacy of his parody of the Æneid has found but too many admirers. His imitations of Lucian betray the grossest misconception of humorous effect, when he attempts to burlesque that which is ludicrous already. He was acquainted with French and Italian; and among several works from the former language, translated the Horace of Corneille, and Montaigne's Essays.

"The father of Cotton is described by Lord Clarendon as an accomplished and honourable man, who was driven by domestic afflictions to habits which rendered his age less reverenced than his youth, and made his best friends wish that he had not lived so long. From him our poet inherited an incumbered estate, with a disposition to extravagance little calculated to improve it. After having studied at Cambridge, and returned from his travels abroad, he married the daughter of Sir Thomas Owthorp, in Nottinghamshire. He went to Ireland as a captain in the army; but of his military progress nothing is recorded. Having embraced the soldier's life merely as a shift in distress, he was not likely to pursue it with much ambition. It was probably in Ireland that he met with his second wife, Mary, Countess-Dowager of Ardglass, the widow of Lord Cornwall. She had a jointure of 1500*l.* a year, secured from his imprudent management. He died insolvent, at Westminster. One of his favourite recreations was angling; and his house, which was situated on the Dove, a fine trout stream which divides the counties of Derby and Stafford, was the frequent resort of his friend Isaac Walton. There he built a fishing house, 'Piscatoribus sacrum,' with the initials of honest Isaac's name and his own united in ciphers over the door. The walls were painted with fishing-scenes, and the portraits of Cotton and Walton were upon the beaufet.—pp. 293, 294.

There is a very beautiful and affectionate account of Parnell.—But there is more power of writing, and more depth and delicacy of feeling, in the following masterly account and estimate of Lillo.

"George Lillo, was the son of a Dutch jeweller, who married an Englishwoman, and settled in London. Our poet was born near Moorfields, was bred to his father's business, and followed it for many years. The story of his dying in distress was a fiction of Hammond, the poet; for he bequeathed a considerable property to his nephew, whom he made his heir. It has been said, that this bequest was in consequence of his finding the young man disposed to lend him a sum of money at a time when he thought proper to feign pecuniary distress, in order that he might discover the sincerity of those calling themselves his friends. Thomas Davies, his biographer and editor, professes to have got this anecdote from a surviving partner of Lillo. It bears, however, an intrinsic air of improbability. It is not usual for sensible tradesmen to affect being on the verge of bankruptcy; and Lillo's character was that of an uncommonly sensible man. Fielding, his intimate friend, ascribes to him a manly simplicity of mind, that is extremely unlike such a stratagem.

"Lillo is the tragic poet of middling and familiar life. Instead of heroes from romance and history, he gives the merchant and his apprentice; and the Macbeth of his '*Fatal Curiosity*' is a private gentleman, who has been reduced by his poverty to dispose of his copy of Seneca for a morsel of bread. The mind will be apt, after reading his works, to suggest to itself the question, how far the graver drama would gain or lose by a more general adoption of this plebeian principle. The cares, it may be said, that are most familiar to our existence, and the distresses of those nearest to ourselves in situation, ought to lay the strongest hold upon our sympathies; and the general mass of society ought to furnish a more express image of man than any detached or elevated portion of the species. But, notwithstanding the power of Lillo's works, we entirely miss in them that romantic attraction which invites to repeated perusal of them. They give us life in a close and dreadful semblance of reality, but not arrayed in the magic illusion of poetry. His strength lies in conception of situations, not in beauty of dialogue, or in the eloquence of the passions. Yet the effect of his plain and homely subjects was so strikingly superior to that of the vapid and heroic productions of the day, as to induce some of his contemporary admirers to pronounce, that he had reached the acmè of dramatic excellence, and struck into the best and most genuine path of tragedy. George Barnwell, it was observed, drew more tears than the rants of Alexander. This might be true; but it did not bring the comparison of humble and heroic subjects to a fair test; for the tragedy of Alexander is bad, not from its subject, but from the incapacity of the poet who composed it. It does not prove that heroes, drawn from history or romance, are not at least as susceptible of high and poetical effect, as a wicked apprentice, or a distressed gentleman pawning his moveables. It is a different question whether Lillo has given to his subjects from private life, the degree of beauty of which they are susceptible. He is a master of terrific, but not of tender impressions. We feel a harshness and gloom in his genius, even while we are compelled to admire its force and originality.

"The peculiar choice of his subjects was, at all events, happy and commendable, as far as it regarded himself; for his talents never succeeded so well when he ventured out of them. But it is another question, whether the familiar cast of those subjects was fitted to constitute a more genuine, or only a subordinate walk in tragedy. Undoubtedly the genuine delineation of the human heart will please us, from whatever station or circumstances of life it is derived: and, in the simple pathos of tragedy, probably very little difference will be felt from the choice of characters being pitched above or below the line of mediocrity in station. But something more than pathos is required in tragedy; and the very pain that attends our sympathy, would seem to require agreeable and romantic associations of the fancy to be blended with its poignancy. Whatever attaches ideas of importance, publicity, and elevation to the object of pity, forms a brightening and alluring medium to the imagination. Athens herself, with all her simplicity and democracy, delighted on the stage to

'Let gorgeous Tragedy
In scepter'd pall come sweeping by.'

"Even situations far depressed beneath the familiar mediocrity of life, are more picturesque and poetical than its ordinary level. It is certainly on the virtues of the middling rank of life, that the strength and comforts of society chiefly depend, in the same way as we look for the harvest, not on cliffs and precipices, but on the easy slope and the uniform plain. But the painter does not in general fix on level countries for the subjects of his noblest landscapes. There is an analogy, I conceive, to this in the moral painting of tragedy. Disparities of station give it boldness of outline. The commanding situations of life are its mountain scenery—the region where its storm and sunshine may be portrayed in their strongest contrast and colouring."
Vol. v. pp. 58—62.

Nothing, we think, can be more exquisite than this criticism,—though we are far from being entire converts to its doctrines; and are moreover of opinion, that the merits of Lillo, as a poet at least, are considerably overrated. There is a flatness and a weakness in his diction, that we think must have struck Mr. C. more than he has acknowledged,—and a tone, occasionally, both of vulgarity and of paltry affectation, that counteracts the pathetic effect of his conceptions, and does injustice to the experiment of domestic tragedy.

The critique on Thomson is distinguished by the same fine tact, candour, and conciseness.

"Habits of early admiration teach us all to look back upon this poet as the favourite companion of our solitary walks, and as the author who has first or chiefly reflected back to our minds a heightened and refined sensation of the delight which rural scenery affords us. The judgment of cooler years may somewhat abate our estimation of him, though it will still leave us the essential features of his poetical character to abide the test of reflection. The unvaried pomp of his diction suggests a most unfavourable comparison with the manly and idiomatic simplicity of Cowper: at the same time, the pervading spirit and feeling of his poetry is in general more bland and delightful than that of his great rival in rural description. Thomson seems to contemplate the creation with an eye of unqualified pleasure and ecstasy, and to love its inhabitants with a lofty and hallowed feeling of religious happiness; Cowper has also his philanthropy, but it is dashed with religious terrors, and with themes of satire, regret, and reprehension. Cowper's image of nature is more curiously distinct and familiar. Thomson carries our associations through a wider circuit of speculation and sympathy. His touches cannot be more faithful than Cowper's, but they are more soft and select, and less disturbed by the intrusion of homely objects. It is but justice to say, that amidst the feeling and fancy of the Seasons, we meet with interruptions of declamation, heavy narrative, and unhappy digression—with a parhelion eloquence that throws a counterfeit glow of expression on common-place ideas—as when he treats us to the solemnly ridiculous bathing of Musidora; or draws from the classics instead of nature; or, after invoking inspiration from her hermit seat, makes his dedicatory bow to a patronizing countess, or speaker of the House of Commons. As long as he dwells in the pure contemplation of nature, and appeals to the universal poetry of the human breast, his redundant style comes to us as something venial and adventitious—it is the flowing vesture of the druid; and perhaps to the general experience is rather imposing; but when he returns to the familiar narrations or courtesies of life, the same diction ceases to seem the mantle of inspiration, and only strikes us by its unwieldy difference from the common costume of expression."—pp. 215—218.

There is the same delicacy of taste, and beauty of writing, in the following remarks on Collins—though we think the Specimens afterwards given from this exquisite poet are rather niggardly.

"Collins published his Oriental Eclogues while at college, and his lyrical poetry at the age of twenty-six. Those works will abide comparison with whatever Milton wrote under the age of thirty. If they have rather less exuberant wealth of genuis, they exhibit more exquisite touches of pathos. Like Milton, he leads us into the haunted ground of imagination; like him, he has the rich economy of expression haloed with thought, which by single or few words often hints entire pictures to the imagination. In what short and simple terms, for instance, does he open a wide and majestic landscape to the mind, such as we might view from Benlomond or Snowden—when he speaks of the hut

'That from some mountain's side
Views wilds and swelling floods.'

And in the line, 'Where faint and sickly winds for ever howl around,' he does not seem merely to describe the sultry desert, but brings it home to the senses.

"A cloud of obscurity sometimes rests on his highest conceptions, arising from the fineness of his associations, and the daring sweep of his illusions; but the shadow is transitory, and interferes very little with the light of his imagery, or the warmth of his feelings. The absence of even this speck of mysticism from his Ode on the Passions is perhaps the happy circumstance that secured its unbounded popularity. Nothing, however, is common-place in Collins. The pastoral eclogue, which is insipid in all other English hands, assumes in his a touching interest, and a picturesque air of novelty. It seems that he himself ultimately undervalued those eclogues, as deficient in characteristic manners; but surely no just reader of them cares any more about this circumstance than about the authenticity of the tale of Troy.

"In his Ode to Fear he hints at his dramatic ambition; and he planned several tragedies. Had he lived to enjoy and adorn existence, it is not easy to conceive his sensitive spirit and harmonious ear descending to mediocrity in any path of poetry; yet it may be doubted if his mind had not a passion for the visionary and remote forms of imagination, too strong and exclusive for the general purposes of the drama. His genius loved to breathe rather in the preternatural and ideal element of poetry, than in the atmosphere of imitation, which lies closest to real life; and his notions of poetical excellence, whatever vows he might address to 'the manners,' were still tending to the vast, the undefinable, and the abstract. Certainly, however, he carried sensibility and tenderness into the highest regions of abstracted thought: His enthusiasm spreads a glow even amongst 'the shadowy tribes of mind,' and his allegory is as sensible to the heart as it is visible to the fancy."—pp. 310, 312.

Though we are afraid our extracts are becoming unreasonable, we cannot resist indulging our own nationality, by producing this specimen of Mr. Campbell's.

"The admirers of the Gentle Shepherd must perhaps be contented to share some suspicion of national partiality, while they do justice to their own feeling of its merit. Yet as this drama is a picture of rustic Scotland, it would perhaps be saying little for its fidelity, if it yielded no more agreeableness to the breast of a native than he could expound to a stranger by the strict letter of criticism. We should think the painter had finished the likeness of a mother very indifferently, if it

did not bring home to her children traits of undefinable expression which had escaped every eye but that of familiar affection. Ramsay had not the force of Burns; but, neither, in just proportion to his merits, is *he* likely to be felt by an English reader. The fire of Burns' wit and passion glows through an obscure dialect by its confinement to short and concentrated bursts. The interest which Ramsay excites is spread over a long poem, delineating manners more than passions, and the mind must be at home both in the language and manners, to appreciate the skill and comic archness with which he has heightened the display of rustic character without giving it vulgarity, and refined the view of peasant life by situations of sweetness and tenderness, without departing in the least degree from its simplicity. The Gentle Shepherd stands quite apart from the general pastoral poetry of modern Europe. It has no satyrs, nor featureless simpletons, nor drowsy and still landscapes of nature, but distinct characters and amusing incidents. The principal shepherd never speaks out of consistency with the habits of a peasant; but he moves in that sphere with such a manly spirit, with so much cheerful sensibility to its humble joys, with maxims of life so rational and independent, and with an ascendency over his fellow swains so well maintained by his force of character, that if we could suppose the pacific scenes of the drama to be suddenly changed into situations of trouble and danger, we should, in exact consistency with our former idea of him, expect him to become the leader of the peasants, and the Tell of his native hamlet. Nor is the character of his mistress less beautifully conceived. She is represented, like himself, as elevated, by a fortunate discovery, from obscure to opulent life, yet as equally capable of being the ornament of either. A Richardson or a D'Arblay, had they continued her history, might have heightened the portrait, but they would not have altered its outline. Like the poetry of Tasso and Ariosto, that of the Gentle Shepherd is engraven on the memory, and has sunk into the heart, of its native country. Its verses have passed into proverbs, and it continues to be the delight and solace of the peasantry whom it describes."—pp. 344—346.

We think the merits of Akenside underrated, and those of Churchill exaggerated: But we have found no passage in which the amiable but equitable and reasonable indulgence of Mr. Campbell's mind is so conspicuous, as in his account of Chatterton—and it is no slight thing for a poet to have kept himself cool and temperate, on a theme which has hurried so many inferior spirits into passion and extravagance.

"When we conceive," says Mr. C., "the inspired boy transporting himself in imagination back to the days of his fictitious Rowley, embodying his ideal character, and giving to airy nothing a 'local habitation and a name,' we may forget the impostor in the enthusiast, and forgive the falsehood of his reverie for its beauty and ingenuity. One of his companions has described the air of rapture and inspiration with which he used to repeat his passages from Rowley, and the delight which he took to contemplate the church of St. Mary Redcliffe, while it awoke the associations of antiquity in his romantic mind. There was one spot in particular, full in view of the church, where he would often lay himself down, and fix his eyes, as it were, in a trance. On Sundays, as long as daylight lasted, he would walk alone in the country around Bristol, taking drawings of churches, or other objects that struck his imagination.

"During the few months of his existence in London, his letters to his mother and sister, which were always accompanied with presents, expressed the most joyous anticipations. But suddenly all the flush of his gay hopes and busy projects terminated in despair. The particular causes which led to his catastrophe have not been distinctly traced. His own descriptions of his prospects are but little to be trusted; for while apparently exchanging his shadowy visions of Rowley for the real adventures of life, he was still moving under the spell of an imagination that saw every thing in exaggerated colours. Out of this dream he was at length awakened, when he found that he had miscalculated the chances of patronage and the profits of literary labour.

"The heart which can peruse the fate of Chatterton without being moved, is little to be envied for its tranquillity; but the intellects of those men must be as deficient as their hearts are uncharitable, who, confounding all shades of moral distinction, have ranked his literary fiction of Rowley in the same class of crimes with pecuniary forgery; and have calculated that if he had not died by his own hand he would have probably ended his days upon a gallows! This disgusting sentence has been pronounced upon a youth who was exemplary for severe study, temperance, and natural affection. His Rowléian forgery must indeed be pronounced improper by the general law which condemns all serious and deliberate falsifications; but it deprived no man of his fame; it had no sacrilegious interference with the memory of departed genius; it had not, like Lauder's imposture, any malignant motive to rob a party, or a country, of a name which was its pride and ornament.

"Setting aside the opinion of those uncharitable biographers, whose imaginations have conducted him to the gibbet, it may be owned that his unformed character exhibited strong and conflicting elements of good and evil. Even the momentary project of the infidel boy to become a Methodist preacher, betrays an obliquity of design and a contempt of human credulity that is not very amiable. But had he been spared, his pride and ambition would probably have come to flow in their proper channels. His understanding would have taught him the practical value of truth and the dignity of virtue, and he would have despised artifice, when he had felt the strength and security of wisdom. In estimating the promises of his genius, I would rather lean to the utmost enthusiasm of his admirers, than to the cold opinion of those who are afraid of being blinded to the defects of the poems attributed to Rowley, by the veil of obsolete phraseology which is thrown over them.

"The inequality of Chatterton's various productions may be compared to the disproportions of the ungrown giant. His works had nothing of the definite neatness of that precocious talent which stops short in early maturity. His thirst for knowledge was that of a being taught by instinct to lay up materials for the exercise of great and undeveloped powers. Even in his favourite maxim, pushed it might be to hyperbole, that a man by abstinence and perseverance might accomplish whatever he pleased, may be traced the indications of a genius which nature had meant to achieve works of immortality. Tasso alone can be compared to him as a juvenile prodigy. No English poet ever equalled him at the same age."—Vol. vi. pp. 156—162.

The account of Gray is excellent, and that of Goldsmith delightful. We can afford to give but an inconsiderable part of it.

"Goldsmith's poetry enjoys a calm and steady popularity. It inspires us, indeed, with no admiration of daring design, or of fertile invention; but it presents, within its narrow limits, a distinct and unbroken view of poetical delightfulness. His descriptions and sentiments have the pure zest of nature. He is refined without false delicacy, and correct without insipidity. Perhaps there is an intellectual composure in his manner, which may, in some passages, be said to approach to the reserved and pro-

saic; but he unbends from this graver strain of reflection, to tenderness, and even to playfulness, with an ease and grace almost exclusively his own: and connects extensive views of the happiness and interests of society, with pictures of life, that touch the heart by their familiarity. His language is certainly simple, though it is not cast in a rugged or careless mould. He is no disciple of the gaunt and famished school of simplicity. Deliberately as he wrote, he cannot be accused of wanting natural and idiomatic expression; but still it is select and refined expression. He uses the ornaments which must always distinguish true poetry from prose; and when he adopts colloquial plainness, it is with the utmost care and skill, to avoid a vulgar humility. There is more of this elegant simplicity, of this chaste economy and choice of words, in Goldsmith, than in any modern poet, or perhaps than would be attainable or desirable as a standard for every writer of rhyme. In extensive narrative poems such a style would be too difficult. There is a noble propriety even in the careless strength of great poems as in the roughness of castle walls; and, generally speaking, where there is a long course of story, or observation of life to be pursued, such exquisite touches as those of Goldsmith would be too costly materials for sustaining it. The tendency towards abstracted observation in his poetry agrees peculiarly with the compendious form of expression which he studied; whilst the homefelt joys, on which his fancy loved to repose, required at once the chastest and sweetest colours of language, to make them harmonize with the dignity of a philosophical poem. His whole manner has a still depth of feeling and reflection, which gives back the image of nature unruffled and minutely. He has no redundant thoughts, or false transports; but seems on every occasion to have weighed the impulse to which he surrendered himself. Whatever ardour or casual felicities he may have thus sacrificed, he gained a high degree of purity and self-possession. His chaste pathos makes him an insinuating moralist; and throws a charm of Claude-like softness over his descriptions of homely objects, that would seem only fit to be the subjects of Dutch painting. But his quiet enthusiasm leads the affections to humble things without a vulgar association; and he inspires us with a fondness to trace the simplest recollections of Auburn, till we count the furniture of its alehouse, and listen to the 'varnished clock that clicked behind the door.'"—pp. 261—263.

There is too much of William Whitehead, and almost too much of Richard Glover,—and a great deal too much of Amhurst Selden, Bramston, and Meston. Indeed the *ne quid nimis* seems to have been more forgotten by the learned editor in the last, than in any of the other volumes. Yet there is by no means too much of Burns, or Cowper, or even of the Wartons. The abstract of Burns' life is beautiful; and we are most willing to acknowledge that the defence of the poet, against some of the severities of this Journal, is substantially successful. No one who reads *all* that we have written of Burns, will doubt of the sincerity of our admiration for his genius, or of the depth of our veneration and sympathy for his lofty character and his untimely fate. We still think he had a vulgar taste in letter-writing; and too frequently patronized the belief of a connection between licentious indulgences and generosity of character. But, on looking back on what we have said on these subjects, we are sensible that we have expressed ourselves with too much bitterness, and made the words of our censure far more comprehensive than our meaning. A certain tone of exaggeration is incident, we fear, to the sort of writing in which we are engaged. Reckoning a little too much, perhaps, on the dulness of our readers, we are often led, unconsciously, to overstate our sentiments, in order to make them understood; and, where a little controversial warmth is added to a little love of effect, an excess of colouring is apt to steal over the canvass which ultimately offends no eye so much as our own. We gladly make this expiation to the shade of our illustrious countryman.

In his observations on Joseph Warton, Mr. C. resumes the controversy about the poetical character of Pope, upon which he had entered at the close of his Essay; and as to which we hope to have some other opportunity of giving our opinions. At present, however, we must hasten to a conclusion; and shall make our last extracts from the notice of Cowper, which is drawn up on somewhat of a larger scale than any other in the work. The abstract of his life is given with great tenderness and beauty, and with considerable fulness of detail. But the remarks on his poetry are the most precious,—and are all that we have now room to borrow.

"The nature of Cowper's works makes us peculiarly identify the poet and the man in perusing them. As an individual, he was retired and weaned from the vanities of the world; and, as an original writer, he left the ambitious and luxuriant subjects of fiction and passion, for those of real life and simple nature, and for the development of his own earnest feelings, in behalf of moral and religious truth. His language has such a masculine idiomatic strength, and his manner, whether he rises into grace or falls into negligence, has so much plain and familiar freedom, that we read no poetry with a deeper conviction of its sentiments having come from the author's heart; and of the enthusiasm, in whatever he describes, having been unfeigned and unexaggerated. He impresses us with the idea of a being, whose fine spirit had been long enough in the mixed society of the world to be polished by its intercourse, and yet withdrawn so soon as to retain an unworldly degree of purity and simplicity. He was advanced in years before he became an author; but his compositions display a tenderness of feeling so youthfully preserved, and even a vein of humour so far from being extinguished by his ascetic habits, that we can scarcely regret his not having written them at an earlier period of life. For he blends the determination of age with an exquisite and ingenuous sensibility; and though he sports very much with his subjects, yet, when he is in earnest, there is a gravity of long-felt conviction in his sentiments, which gives an uncommon ripeness of character to his poetry.

"It is due to Cowper to fix our regard on this unaffectedness and authenticity of his works, considered as representations of himself, because he forms a striking instance of genius writing the history of its own secluded feelings, reflections, and enjoyments, in a shape so interesting as to engage the imagination like a work of fiction. He has invented no character in fable, nor in the drama; but he has left a record of his own character, which forms not only an object of deep sympathy, but a subject for the study of human nature. His verse it is true, considered as such a record, abounds with opposite traits of severity and gentleness, of playfulness and superstition, of solemnity and mirth, which appear almost anomalous; and there is, undoubtedly, sometimes an air of moody versatility in the extreme contrasts of his feelings. But looking

to his poetry as an entire structure, it has a massive air of sincerity. It is founded in steadfast principles of belief; and, if we may prolong the architectural metaphor, though its arches may be sometimes gloomy, its tracery sportive, and its lights and shadows grotesquely crossed, yet altogether it still forms a vast, various, and interesting monument of the builder's mind. Young's works are as devout, as satirical, sometimes as merry, as those of Cowper; and, undoubtedly, more witty. But the melancholy and wit of Young do not make up to us the idea of a conceivable or natural being. He has sketched in his pages the ingenious, but incongruous form of a fictitious mind—Cowper's soul speaks from his volumes."

"Considering the tenor and circumstances of his life, it is not much to be wondered at, that some asperities and peculiarities should have adhered to the strong stem of his genius, like the moss and fungus that cling to some noble oak of the forest, amidst the damps of its unsunned retirement. It is more surprising that he preserved, in such seclusion, so much genuine power of comic observation. There is much of the full distinctness of Theophrastus, and of the nervous and concise spirit of La Bruyère, in his piece entitled 'Conversation,' with a cast of humour superadded, which is peculiarly English, and not to be found out of England."—Vol. vii. pp. 357, 358.

Of his greatest work, The Task, he afterwards observes,

"His whimsical outset in a work, where he promises so little and performs so much, may be advantageously contrasted with those magnificent commencement of poems, which pledge both the reader and the writer, in good earnest, to a task. Cowper's poem, on the contrary, is like a river, which rises from a playful little fountain, and gathers beauty and magnitude as it proceeds. He leads us abroad into his daily walks; he exhibits the landscapes which he was accustomed to contemplate, and the trains of thought in which he habitually indulged. No attempt is made to interest us in legendary fictions, or historical recollections connected with the ground over which he expatiates; all is plainness and reality: But we instantly recognise the true poet, in the clearness, sweetness, and fidelity of his scenic draughts; in his power of giving novelty to what is common; and in the high relish, the exquisite enjoyment of rural sights and sounds, which he communicates to the spirit. 'His eyes drink the rivers with delight.' He excites an idea, that almost amounts to sensation, of the freshness and delight of a rural walk, even when he leads us to the wasteful common, which

—— 'Overgrown with fern, and rough
With prickly gorse, that, shapeless and deform'd,
And dang'rous to the touch, has yet its bloom,
And decks itself with ornaments of gold,
Yields no unpleasing ramble. There the turf
Smells fresh, and, rich in odorif'rous herbs
And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense
With luxuries of unexpected sweets.'

"His rural prospects have far less variety and compass than those of Thomson; but his graphic touches are more close and minute: not that Thomson was either deficient or undelightful in circumstantial traits of the beauty of nature, but he looked to her as a whole more than Cowper. His genius was more excursive and philosophical. The poet of Olney, on the contrary, regarded human philosophy with something of theological contempt. To his eye, the great and little things of this world were levelled into an equality, by his recollection of the power and purposes of Him who made them. They are, in his view, only as toys spread on the lap and carpet of nature, for this childhood of our immortal being. This religious indifference to the world is far, indeed, from blunting his sensibility to the genuine and simple beauties of creation; but it gives his taste a contentment and fellowship with humble things. It makes him careless of selecting and refining his views of nature beyond their actual appearances. He contemplated the face of plain rural English life, in moments of leisure and sensibility, till its minutest features were impressed upon his fancy; and he sought not to embellish what he loved. Hence his landscapes have less of the ideally beautiful than Thomson's; but they have an unrivalled charm of truth and reality.

"He is one of the few poets, who have indulged neither in descriptions nor acknowledgments of the passion of love; but there is no poet who has given us a finer conception of the amenity of female influence. Of all the verses that have been ever devoted to the subject of domestic happiness, those in his winter evening, at the opening of the fourth book of The Task, are perhaps the most beautiful. In perusing that scene of 'intimate delights,' 'fireside enjoyments,' and 'home-born happiness,' we seem to recover a part of the forgotten value of existence; when we recognise the means of its blessedness so widely dispensed, and so cheaply attainable, and find them susceptible of description at once so enchanting and so faithful.

"Though the scenes of The Task are laid in retirement, the poem affords an amusing perspective of human affairs. Remote as the poet was from the stir of the great Babel, from the '*confusæ sonus Urbis, et illætabile murmur*,' he glances at most of the subjects of public interest which engaged the attention of his contemporaries. On those subjects, it is but faint praise to say that he espoused the side of justice and humanity. Abundance of mediocrity of talent is to be found on the same side, rather injuring than promoting the cause, by its officious declamation. But nothing can be further from the stale commonplace and cuckooism of sentiment, than the philanthropic eloquence of Cowper—he speaks 'like one having authority.' Society is his debtor. Poetical expositions of the horrors of slavery may, indeed, seem very unlikely agents in contributing to destroy it; and it is possible that the most refined planter in the West Indies, may look with neither shame nor compunction on his own image in the pages of Cowper. But such appeals to the heart of the community are not lost! They fix themselves silently in the popular memory; and they become, at last, a part of that public opinion, which must, sooner or later, wrench the lash from the hand of the oppressor."—pp. 359—364.

But we must now break away at once from this delightful occupation; and take our final farewell of a work, in which, what is original, is scarcely less valuable than what is republished, and in which the genius of a living Poet has shed a fresh grace over the fading glories of so many of his departed brothers. We wish somebody would continue the work, by furnishing us with Specimens of our Living Poets. It would be more difficult, to be sure, and more dangerous; but, in some respects, it would also be more useful. The beauties of the unequal and voluminous writers would be more conspicuous in a selection; and the different styles and schools of poetry would be brought into fairer and nearer terms of comparison, by the mere juxtaposition of their best productions; while a better and clearer view would be obtained, both of the general progress and apparent tendencies of the art, than can easily be gathered from the separate study of each important production. The mind of the critic, too, would be at once enlightened and tranquillized by the very greatness of the horizon thus subjected to his survey; and he would probably regard, both with less enthusiasm and less offence, those contrasted and compensating beauties and defects, when presented together, and as it were in combination, than he can ever do when they come upon him in distinct masses, and without the relief and softening of so varied an assemblage. On the other hand, it cannot be dissembled, that such a work would be very trying to the unhappy editor's prophetic reputation, as well as to his impartiality and temper; and would, at all events, subject him to the most furious imputations of unfairness and malignity. In point of courage and candour, we do not know anybody who would do it much better than ourselves! And if Mr. Campbell could only impart to us a fair share of his elegance, his fine perceptions, and his conciseness, we should like nothing better than to suspend, for a while, these periodical lucubrations, and furnish out a gallery of Living Bards, to match this exhibition of the Departed.

(August, 1811.)

The Dramatic Works of John Ford; *with an Introduction and Explanatory Notes.* By Henry Weber, Esq. 2 vols. 8vo. pp. 950. Edinburgh and London: 1811.

All true lovers of English poetry have been long in love with the dramatists of the time of Elizabeth and James; and must have been sensibly comforted by their late restoration to some degree of favour and notoriety. If there was any good reason, indeed, to believe that the notice which they have recently attracted proceeded from any thing but that indiscriminate rage for editing and annotating by which the present times are so happily distinguished, we should be disposed to hail it as the most unequivocal symptom of improvement in public taste that has yet occurred to reward and animate our labours. At all events, however, it gives us a chance for such an improvement; by placing in the hands of many, who would not otherwise have heard of them, some of those beautiful performances which we have always regarded as among the most pleasing and characteristic productions of our native genius.

Ford certainly is not the best of those neglected writers,—nor Mr. Weber by any means the best of their recent editors: But we cannot resist the opportunity which this publication seems to afford, of saying a word or two of a class of writers, whom we have long worshipped in secret with a sort of idolatrous veneration, and now find once more brought forward as candidates for public applause. The æra to which they belong, indeed, has always appeared to us by far the brightest in the history of English literature,—or indeed of human intellect and capacity. There never was, any where, any thing like the sixty or seventy years that elapsed from the middle of Elizabeth's reign to the period of the Restoration. In point of real force and originality of genius, neither the age of Pericles, nor the age of Augustus, nor the times of Leo X., nor of Louis XIV., can come at all into comparison: For, in that short period, we shall find the names of almost all the very great men that this nation has ever produced,—the names of Shakespeare, and Bacon, and Spenser, and Sydney,—and Hooker, and Taylor, and Barrow, and Raleigh,—and Napier, and Milton, and Cudworth, and Hobbes, and many others;—men, all of them, not merely of great talents and accomplishments, but of vast compass and reach of understanding, and of minds truly creative and original;—not perfecting art by the delicacy of their taste, or digesting knowledge by the justness of their reasonings; but making vast and substantial additions to the materials upon which taste and reason must hereafter be employed,—and enlarging, to an incredible and unparalleled extent, both the stores and the resources of the human faculties.

Whether the brisk concussion which was given to men's minds by the force of the Reformation had much effect in producing this sudden development of British genius, we cannot undertake to determine. For our own part, we should be rather inclined to hold, that the Reformation itself was but one symptom or effect of that great spirit of progression and improvement which had been set in operation by deeper and more general causes; and which afterwards blossomed out into this splendid harvest of authorship. But whatever may have been the causes that determined the appearance of those great works, the fact is certain, not only that they appeared together in great numbers, but that they possessed a common character, which, in spite of the great diversity of their subjects and designs, would have made them be classed together as the works of the same order or description of men, even if they had appeared at the most distant intervals of time. They are the works of Giants, in short,—and of Giants of one nation and family;—and their characteristics are, great force, boldness, and originality; together with a certain raciness of English peculiarity, which distinguishes them from all those performances that have since been produced among ourselves, upon a more vague and general idea of European excellence. Their sudden appearance, indeed, in all this splendour of native luxuriance, can only be com

pared to what happens on the breaking up of a virgin soil,—where all the indigenous plants spring up at once with a rank and irrepressible fertility, and display whatever is peculiar or excellent in their nature, on a scale the most conspicuous and magnificent. The crops are not indeed so clean, as where a more exhausted mould has been stimulated by systematic cultivation; nor so profitable, as where their quality has been varied by a judicious admixture of exotics, and accommodated to the demands of the universe by the combinations of an unlimited trade. But to those whose chief object of admiration is the living power and energy of vegetation, and who take delight in contemplating the various forms of her unforced and natural perfection, no spectacle can be more rich, splendid, or attractive.

In the times of which we are speaking, classical learning, though it had made great progress, had by no means become an exclusive study; and the ancients had not yet been permitted to subdue men's minds to a sense of hopeless inferiority, or to condemn the moderns to the lot of humble imitators. They were resorted to, rather to furnish materials and occasional ornaments, than as models for the general style of composition; and, while they enriched the imagination, and insensibly improved the taste of their successors, they did not at all restrain their freedom, or impair their originality. No common standard had yet been erected, to which all the works of European genius were required to conform; and no general authority was acknowledged, by which all private or local ideas of excellence must submit to be corrected. Both readers and authors were comparatively few in number. The former were infinitely less critical and difficult than they have since become; and the latter, if they were not less solicitous about fame, were at least much less jealous and timid as to the hazards which attended its pursuit. Men, indeed, seldom took to writing in those days, unless they had a great deal of matter to communicate; and neither imagined that they could make a reputation by delivering commonplaces in an elegant manner, or that the substantial value of their sentiments would be disregarded for a little rudeness or negligence in the finishing. They were habituated, therefore, both to depend upon their own resources, and to draw upon them without fear or anxiety; and followed the dictates of their own taste and judgment, without standing much in awe of the ancients, of their readers, or of each other.

The achievements of Bacon, and those who set free our understandings from the shackles of Papal and of tyrannical imposition, afford sufficient evidence of the benefit which resulted to the reasoning faculties from this happy independence of the first great writers of this nation. But its advantages were, if possible, still more conspicuous in the mere literary character of their productions. The quantity of bright thoughts, of original images, and splendid expressions, which they poured forth upon every occasion, and by which they illuminated and adorned the darkest and most rugged topics to which they had happened to turn themselves, is such as has never been equalled in any other age or country; and places them at least as high, in point of fancy and imagination, as of force of reason, or comprehensiveness of understanding. In this highest and most comprehensive sense of the word, a great proportion of the writers we have alluded to were *Poets:* and, without going to those who composed in metre, and chiefly for purposes of delight, we will venture to assert, that there is in any one of the prose folios of Jeremy Taylor more fine fancy and original imagery—more brilliant conceptions and glowing expressions—more new figures, and new applications of old figures—more, in short, of the body and the soul of poetry, than in all the odes and the epics that have since been produced in Europe. There are large portions of Barrow, and of Hooker and Bacon, of which we may say nearly as much: nor can any one have a tolerably adequate idea of the riches of our language and our native genius, who has not made himself acquainted with the prose writers, as well as the poets, of this memorable period.

The civil wars, and the fanaticism by which they were fostered, checked all this fine bloom of the imagination, and gave a different and less attractive character to the energies which they could not extinguish. Yet, those were the times that matured and drew forth the dark, but powerful genius of such men as Cromwell, and Harrison, and Fleetwood, &c. —the milder and more generous enthusiasm of Blake, and Hutchison, and Hampden—and the stirring and indefatigable spirit of Pym, and Hollis, and Vane—and the chivalrous and accomplished loyalty of Strafford and Falkland; at the same time that they stimulated and repaid the severer studies of Coke, and Selden, and Milton. The Drama, however, was entirely destoyed, and has never since regained its honours; and Poetry, in general, lost its ease, and its majesty and force, along with its copiousness and originality.

The Restoration made things still worse: for it broke down the barriers of our literary independence, and reduced us to a province of the great republic of Europe. The genius and fancy which lingered through the usurpation, though soured and blighted by the severities of that inclement season, were still genuine English genius and fancy; and owned no allegiance to any foreign authorities. But the Restoration brought in a French taste upon us, and what was called a classical and a polite taste; and the wings of our English Muses were clipped and trimmed, and their flights regulated at the expense of all that was peculiar, and much of what was brightest in their beauty. The King and his courtiers, during their long exile, had of course imbibed the taste of their protectors; and, coming from the gay court of France, with something of that additional profligacy that belonged to their outcast and adventurer

character, were likely enough to be revolted by the peculiarities, and by the very excellences, of our native literature. The grand and sublime tone of our greater poets, appeared to them dull, morose, and gloomy; and the fine play of their rich and unrestrained fancy, mere childishness and folly: while their frequent lapses and perpetual irregularity were set down as clear indications of barbarity and ignorance. Such sentiments, too, were natural, we must admit, for a few dissipated and witty men, accustomed all their days to the regulated splendour of a court—to the gay and heartless gallantry of French manners—and to the imposing pomp and brilliant regularity of French poetry. But, it may appear somewhat more unaccountable that they should have been able to impose their sentiments upon the great body of the nation. A court, indeed, never has so much influence as at the moment of a restoration: but the influence of an English court has been but rarely discernible in the literature of the country; and had it not been for the peculiar circumstances in which the nation was then placed, we believe it would have resisted this attempt to naturalise foreign notions, as sturdily as it was done on almost every other occasion.

At this particular moment, however, the native literature of the country had been sunk into a very low and feeble state by the rigours of the usurpation,—the best of its recent models laboured under the reproach of republicanism,—and the courtiers were not only disposed to see all its peculiarities with an eye of scorn and aversion, but had even a good deal to say in favour of that very opposite style to which they had been habituated. It was a witty, and a grand, and a splendid style. It showed more scholarship and art, than the luxuriant negligence of the old English school; and was not only free from many of its hazards and some of its faults, but possessed merits of its own, of a character more likely to please those who had then the power of conferring celebrity, or condemning to derision. Then it was a style which it was peculiarly easy to justify by argument; and in support of which great authorities, as well as imposing reasons, were always ready to be produced. It came upon us with the air and the pretension of being the style of cultivated Europe, and a true copy of the style of polished antiquity. England, on the other hand, had had but little intercourse with the rest of the world for a considerable period of time: Her language was not at all studied on the Continent, and her native authors had not been taken into account in forming those ideal standards of excellence which had been recently constructed in France and Italy upon the authority of the Roman classics, and of their own most celebrated writers. When the comparison came to be made, therefore, it is easy to imagine that it should generally be thought to be very much to our disadvantage, and to understand how the great multitude, even among ourselves, should be dazzled with the pretensions of the fashionable style of writing, and actually feel ashamed of their own richer and more varied productions.

It would greatly exceed our limits to describe accurately the particulars in which this new Continental style differed from our old insular one: But, for our present purpose, it may be enough perhaps to say, that it was more worldly, and more townish,—holding more of reason, and ridicule, and authority—more elaborate and more assuming—addressed more to the judgment than to the feelings, and somewhat ostentatiously accommodated to the habits, or supposed habits, of persons in fashionable life. Instead of tenderness and fancy, we had satire and sophistry—artificial declamation, in place of the spontaneous animation of genius—and for the universal language of Shakespeare, the personalities, the party politics, and the brutal obscenities of Dryden. Nothing, indeed, can better characterize the change which had taken place in our national taste, than the alterations and additions which this eminent person presumed —and thought it necessary—to make on the productions of Shakespeare and Milton. The heaviness, the coarseness, and the bombast of that abominable travestie, in which he has exhibited the Paradise Lost in the form of an opera, and the atrocious indelicacy and compassionable stupidity of the new characters with which he has polluted the enchanted solitude of Miranda and Prospero in the Tempest, are such instances of degeneracy as we would be apt to impute rather to some transient hallucination in the author himself, than to the general prevalence of any systematic bad taste in the public, did we not know that Wycherly and his coadjutors were in the habit of converting the neglected dramas of Beaumont and Fletcher into popular plays, merely by leaving out all the romantic sweetness of their characters—turning their melodious blank verse into vulgar prose—and aggravating the indelicacy of their lower characters, by lending a more disgusting indecency to the whole *dramatis personæ*.

Dryden was, beyond all comparison, the greatest poet of his own day; and, endued as he was with a vigorous and discursive imagination, and possessing a mastery over his language which no later writer has attained, if he had known nothing of foreign literature, and been left to form himself on the models of Shakespeare, Spenser, and Milton; or if he had lived in the country, at a distance from the pollutions of courts, factions, and playhouses, there is reason to think that he would have built up the pure and original school of English poetry so firmly, as to have made it impossible for fashion, or caprice, or prejudice of any sort, ever to have rendered any other popular among our own inhabitants. As it is, he has not written one line that is pathetic, and very few that can be considered as sublime.

Addison, however, was the consummation of this Continental style; and if it had not been redeemed about the same time by the fine talents of Pope, would probably have so

far discredited it, as to have brought us back to our original faith half a century ago. The extreme caution, timidity, and flatness of this author in his poetical compositions—the narrowness of his range in poetical sentiment and diction, and the utter want either of passion or of brilliancy, render it difficult to believe that he was born under the same sun with Shakespeare, and wrote but a century after him. His fame, at this day stands solely upon the delicacy, the modest gaiety, and ingenious purity of his prose style;—for the occasional elegance and small ingenuity of his poems can never redeem the poverty of their diction, and the tameness of their conception. Pope has incomparably more spirit and taste and animation: but Pope is a satirist, and a moralist, and a wit, and a critic, and a fine writer, much more than he is a poet. He has all the delicacies and proprieties and felicities of diction—but he has not a great deal of fancy, and scarcely ever touches any of the greater passions. He is much the best, we think, of the classical Continental school; but he is not to be compared with the masters—nor with the pupils—of that Old English one from which there had been so lamentable an apostacy. There are no pictures of nature or of simple emotion in all his writings. He is the poet of town life, and of high life, and of literary life; and seems so much afraid of incurring ridicule by the display of natural feeling or unregulated fancy, that it is difficult not to imagine that he would have thought such ridicule very well directed.

The best of what we copied from the Continental poets, on this desertion of our own great originals, is to be found, perhaps, in the lighter pieces of Prior. That tone of polite raillery—that airy, rapid, picturesque narrative, mixed up with wit and *naïveté*—that style, in short, of good conversation concentrated into flowing and polished verses, was not within the vein of our native poets; and probably never would have been known among us, if we had been left to our own resources. It is lamentable that this, which alone was worth borrowing, is the only thing which has not been retained. The tales and little apologues of Prior are still the only examples of this style in our language.

With the wits of Queen Anne this foreign school attained the summit of its reputation; and has ever since, we think, been declining, though by slow and almost imperceptible gradations. Thomson was the first writer of any eminence who seceded from it, and made some steps back to the force and animation of our original poetry. Thomson, however, was educated in Scotland, where the new style, we believe, had not yet become familiar; and lived, for a long time, a retired and unambitious life, with very little intercourse with those who gave the tone in literature at the period of his first appearance. Thomson, accordingly, has always been popular with a much wider circle of readers, than either Pope or Addison; and, in spite of considerable vulgarity and signal cumbrousness of diction, has drawn, even from the fastidious, a much deeper and more heartfelt admiration.

Young exhibits, we think, a curious combination, or contrast rather, of the two styles of which we have been speaking. Though incapable either of tenderness or passion, he had a richness and activity of fancy that belonged rather to the days of James and Elizabeth, than to those of George and Anne:—But then, instead of indulging it, as the older writers would have done, in easy and playful inventions, in splendid descriptions, or glowing illustrations, he was led, by the restraints and established taste of his age, to work it up into strange and fantastical epigrams, or into cold and revolting hyperboles. Instead of letting it flow gracefully on, in an easy and sparkling current, he perpetually forces it out in jets, or makes it stagnate in formal canals; and thinking it necessary to write like Pope, when the bent of his genius led him rather to copy what was best in Cowley and most fantastic in Shakespeare, he has produced something which excites wonder instead of admiration, and is felt by every one to be at once ingenious, incongruous, and unnatural.

After Young, there was a plentiful lack of poetical talent, down to a period comparatively recent. Akenside and Gray, indeed, in the interval, discovered a new way of imitating the ancients;—and Collins and Goldsmith produced some small specimens of exquisite and original poetry. At last, Cowper threw off the whole trammels of French criticism and artificial refinement; and, setting at defiance all the imaginary requisites of poetical diction and classical imagery—dignity of style, and politeness of phraseology—ventured to write again with the force and the freedom which had characterised the old school of English literature, and been so unhappily sacrificed, upwards of a century before. Cowper had many faults, and some radical deficiencies;—but this atoned for all. There was something so delightfully refreshing, in seeing natural phrases and natural images again displaying their unforced graces, and waving their unpruned heads in the enchanted gardens of poetry, that no one complained of the taste displayed in the selection;—and Cowper is, and is likely to continue, the most popular of all who have written for the present or the last generation.

Of the poets who have come after him, we cannot, indeed, say that they have attached themselves to the school of Pope and Addison; or that they have even failed to show a much stronger predilection for the native beauties of their great predecessors. Southey, and Wordsworth, and Coleridge, and Miss Baillie, have all of them copied the manner of our older poets; and, along with this indication of good taste, have given great proofs of original genius. The misfortune is, that their copies of those great originals are liable to the charge of extreme affectation. They do not write as those great poets would have written: they merely mimic their manner, and ape their peculiarities;—and consequently, though they profess to imitate the freest and

most careless of all versifiers, their style is more remarkably and offensively artificial than that of any other class of writers. They have mixed in, too, so much of the mawkish tone of pastoral innocence and babyish simplicity, with a sort of pedantic emphasis and ostentatious glitter, that it is difficult not to be disgusted with their perversity, and with the solemn self-complacency, and keen and vindictive jealousy, with which they have put in their claims on public admiration. But we have said enough elsewhere of the faults of those authors; and shall only add, at present, that, notwithstanding all these faults, there is a fertility and a force, a warmth of feeling and an exaltation of imagination about them, which classes them, in our estimation, with a much higher order of poets than the followers of Dryden and Addison; and justifies an anxiety for their fame, in all the admirers of Milton and Shakespeare.

Of Scott, or of Campbell, we need scarcely say any thing, with reference to our present object, after the very copious accounts we have given of them on former occasions. The former professes to copy something a good deal older than what we consider as the golden age of English poetry,—and, in reality, has copied every style, and borrowed from every manner that has prevailed, from the times of Chaucer to his own;—illuminating and uniting, if not harmonizing them all, by a force of colouring, and a rapidity of succession, which is not to be met with in any of his many models. The latter, we think, can scarcely be said to have copied his pathos, or his energy, from any models whatever, either recent or early. The exquisite harmony of his versification is elaborated, perhaps, from the Castle of Indolence of Thomson, and the serious pieces of Goldsmith;—and it seems to be his misfortune, not to be able to reconcile himself to any thing which he cannot reduce within the limits of this elaborate harmony. This extreme fastidiousness, and the limitation of his efforts to themes of unbroken tenderness or sublimity, distinguish him from the careless, prolific, and miscellaneous authors of our primitive poetry;—while the enchanting softness of his pathetic passages, and the power and originality of his more sublime conceptions, place him at a still greater distance from the wits, as they truly called themselves, of Charles II. and Queen Anne.

We do not know what other apology to offer for this hasty, and, we fear, tedious sketch of the history of our poetry, but that it appeared to us to be necessary, in order to explain the peculiar merit of that class of writers to which the author before us belongs; and that it will very greatly shorten what we have still to say on the characteristics of our older dramatists. An opinion prevails very generally on the Continent, and with foreign-bred scholars among ourselves, that our national taste has been corrupted chiefly by our idolatry of Shakespeare;—and that it is our patriotic and traditional admiration of that singular writer, that reconciles us to the monstrous compound of faults and beauties that occur in his performances, and must to all impartial judges appear quite absurd and unnatural. Before entering upon the character of a contemporary dramatist, it was of some importance, therefore, to show that there was a distinct, original, and independent school of literature in England in the time of Shakespeare; to the general tone of whose productions his works were sufficiently conformable; and that it was owing to circumstances in a great measure accidental, that this native school was superseded about the time of the Restoration, and a foreign standard of excellence intruded on us, not in the drama only, but in every other department of poetry. This new style of composition, however, though adorned and recommended by the splendid talents of many of its followers, was never perfectly naturalised, we think, in this country; and has ceased, in a great measure, to be cultivated by those who have lately aimed with the greatest success at the higher honours of poetry. Our love of Shakespeare, therefore, is not a *monomania* or solitary and unaccountable infatuation; but is merely the natural love which all men bear to those forms of excellence that are accommodated to their peculiar character, temperament, and situation; and which will always return, and assert its power over their affections, long after authority has lost its reverence, fashions been antiquated, and artificial tastes passed away. In endeavouring, therefore, to bespeak some share of favour for such of his contemporaries as had fallen out of notice, during the prevalence of an imported literature, we conceive that we are only enlarging that foundation of native genius on which alone any lasting superstructure can be raised, and invigorating that deep-rooted stock upon which all the perennial blossoms of our literature must still be engrafted.

The notoriety of Shakespeare may seem to make it superfluous to speak of the peculiarities of those old dramatists, of whom he will be admitted to be so worthy a representative. Nor shall we venture to say any thing of the confusion of their plots, the disorders of their chronology, their contempt of the unities, or their imperfect discrimination between the provinces of Tragedy and Comedy. Yet there are characteristics which the lovers of literature may not be displeased to find enumerated, and which may constitute no dishonourable distinction for the whole fraternity, independent of the splendid talents and incommunicable graces of their great chieftain.

Of the old English dramatists, then, including under this name (besides Shakespeare), Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Jonson, Ford, Shirley, Webster, Dekkar, Field, and Rowley, it may be said, in general, that they are more poetical, and more original in their diction, than the dramatists of any other age or country. Their scenes abound more in varied images, and gratuitous excursions of fancy. Their illustrations, and figures of speech, are more borrowed from rural life, and from the simple occupations or universal feelings of mankind. They are not confined

to a certain range of dignified expressions, nor restricted to a particular assortment of imagery, beyond which it is not lawful to look for embellishments. Let any one compare the prodigious variety, and wide-ranging freedom of Shakespeare, with the narrow round of flames, tempests, treasons, victims, and tyrants, that scantily adorn the sententious pomp of the French drama, and he will not fail to recognise the vast superiority of the former, in the excitement of the imagination, and all the diversities of poetical delight. That very mixture of styles, of which the French critics have so fastidiously complained, forms, when not carried to any height of extravagance, one of the greatest charms of our ancient dramatists. It is equally sweet and natural for personages toiling on the barren heights of life, to be occasionally recalled to some vision of pastoral innocence and tranquillity, as for the victims or votaries of ambition to cast a glance of envy and agony on the joys of humble content.

Those charming old writers, however, have a still more striking peculiarity in their conduct of the dialogue. On the modern stage, every scene is *visibly* studied and digested beforehand,—and every thing from beginning to end, whether it be description, or argument, or vituperation, is very obviously and ostentatiously set forth in the most advantageous light, and with all the decorations of the most elaborate rhetoric. Now, for mere rhetoric, and fine composition, this is very right;—but, for an imitation of nature, it is not quite so well: And however we may admire the skill of the artist, we are not very likely to be moved with any very lively sympathy in the emotions of those very rhetorical interlocutors. When we come to any important part of the play, on the Continental or modern stage, we are sure to have a most complete, formal, and exhausting discussion of it, in long flourishing orations;—argument after argument propounded and answered with infinite ingenuity, and topic after topic brought forward in well-digested method, without any deviation that the most industrious and practised pleader would not approve of,—till nothing more remains to be said, and a new scene introduces us to a new set of gladiators, as expert and persevering as the former. It is exactly the same when a story is to be told,—a tyrant to be bullied,—or a princess to be wooed. On the old English stage, however, the proceedings were by no means so regular. There the discussions always appear to be casual, and the argument quite artless and disorderly. The persons of the drama, in short, are made to speak like men and women who meet without preparation, in real life. Their reasonings are perpetually broken by passion, or left imperfect for want of skill. They constantly wander from the point in hand, in the most unbusinesslike manner in the world;—and after hitting upon a topic that would afford a judicious playwright room for a magnificent seesaw of pompous declamation, they have generally the awkwardness to let it slip, as if perfectly unconscious of its value; and uniformly leave the scene without exhausting the controversy, or stating half the plausible things for themselves that any ordinary advisers might have suggested—after a few weeks' reflection. As specimens of eloquent argumentation, we must admit the signal inferiority of our native favourites; but as true copies of nature,—as vehicles of passion, and representations of character, we confess we are tempted to give them the preference. When a dramatist brings his chief characters on the stage, we readily admit that he must give them something to say,—and that this something must be interesting and characteristic;—but he should recollect also, that they are supposed to come there without having anticipated all they were to hear, or meditated on all they were to deliver; and that it cannot be characteristic, therefore, because it must be glaringly unnatural, that they should proceed regularly through every possible view of the subject, and exhaust, in set order, the whole magazine of reflections that can be brought to bear upon their situation.

It would not be fair, however, to leave this view of the matter, without observing, that this unsteadiness and irregularity of dialogue, which gives such an air of nature to our older plays, and keeps the curiosity and attention so perpetually awake, is frequently carried to a most blameable excess; and that, independent of their passion for verbal quibbles, there *is* an inequality and a capricious uncertainty in the taste and judgment of these good old writers, which excites at once our amazement and our compassion. If it be true, that no other man has ever written so finely as Shakespeare has done in his happier passages, it is no less true that there is not a scribbler now alive who could possibly write worse than he has sometimes written,—who could, on occasion, devise more contemptible ideas, or misplace them so abominably, by the side of such incomparable excellence. That there were no critics, and no critical readers in those days appears to us but an imperfect solution of the difficulty. He who could write so admirably, must have been a critic to himself. *Children* indeed, may play with the most precious gems, and the most worthless pebbles, without being aware of any difference in their value; but the fiery powers which are necessary to the production of intellectual excellence, must enable the possessor to recognise it as excellence; and he who knows when he succeeds, can scarcely be unconscious of his failures. Unaccountable, however, as it is, the fact is certain, that almost all the dramatic writers of this age appear to be alternately inspired, and bereft of understanding; and pass, apparently without being conscious of the change, from the most beautiful displays of genius to the most melancholy exemplifications of stupidity.

There is only one other peculiarity which we shall notice in those ancient dramas; and that is, the singular, though very beautiful style, in which the greater part of them are composed,—a style which we think must be felt as peculiar by all who peruse them, though

it is by no means easy to describe in what its peculiarity consists. It is not, for the most part, a lofty or sonorous style,—nor can it be said generally to be finical or affected,—or strained, quaint, or pedantic:—But it is, at the same time, a style full of turn and contrivance,—with some little degree of constraint and involution,—very often characterised by a studied briefness and simplicity of diction, yet relieved by a certain indirect and figurative cast of expression,—and almost always coloured with a modest tinge of ingenuity, and fashioned, rather too visibly, upon a particular model of elegance and purity. In scenes of powerful passion, this sort of artificial prettiness is commonly shaken off; and, in Shakespeare, it disappears under all his forms of animation: But it sticks closer to most of his contemporaries. In Massinger (who has no passion), it is almost always discernable; and, in the author before us, it gives a peculiar tone to almost all the estimable parts of his productions.—It is now time, however, and more than time, that we should turn to this author.

His biography will not detain us long; for very little is known about him. He was born in Devonshire, in 1586; and entered as a student in the Middle Temple; where he began to publish poetry, and probably to write plays, soon after his twenty-first year. He did not publish any of his dramatic works, however, till 1629; and though he is supposed to have written fourteen or fifteen pieces for the theatres, only nine appear to have been printed, or to have found their way down to the present times. He is known to have written in conjunction with Rowley and Dekkar, and is supposed to have died about 1640;—and this is the whole that the industry of Mr. Weber, assisted by the researches of Steevens and Malone, has been able to discover of this author.

It would be useless, and worse than useless, to give our readers an abstract of the fable and management of each of the nine plays contained in the volumes before us. A very few brief remarks upon their general character, will form a sufficient introduction to the extracts, by which we propose to let our readers judge for themselves of the merits of their execution. The comic parts are all utterly bad. With none of the richness of Shakespeare's humour, the extravagant merriment of Beaumont and Fletcher, or the strong colouring of Ben Johnson, they are as heavy and as indecent as those of Massinger, and not more witty, though a little more varied, than the buffooneries of Wycherley or Dryden. Fortunately, however, the author's merry vein is not displayed in very many parts of his performances. His plots are not very cunningly digested; nor developed, for the most part, by a train of probable incidents. His characters are drawn rather with occasional felicity, than with general sagacity and judgment. Like those of Massinger, they are very apt to startle the reader with sudden and unexpected transformations, and to turn out, in the latter half of the play, very differently from what they promised to do in the beginning. This kind of surprise has been represented by some as a master-stroke of art in the author, and a great merit in the performance. We have no doubt at all, however, that it is to be ascribed merely to the writer's carelessness, or change of purpose; and have never failed to feel it a great blemish in every serious piece where it occurs.

The author has not much of the oratorical stateliness and imposing flow of Massinger; nor a great deal of the smooth and flexible diction, the wandering fancy, and romantic sweetness of Beaumont and Fletcher; and yet he comes nearer to these qualites than to any of the distinguishing characteristics of Jonson or Shakespeare. He excels most in representing the pride and gallantry, and high-toned honour of youth, and the enchanting softness, or the mild and graceful magnanimity of female character. There is a certain melancholy air about his most striking representations; and, in the tender and afflicting pathetic, he appears to us occasionally to be second only to him who has never yet had an equal. The greater part of every play, however, is bad; and there is not one which does not contain faults sufficient to justify the derision even of those who are incapable of comprehending its contrasted beauties.

The diction we think for the most part beautiful, and worthy of the inspired age which produced it. That we may not be suspected of misleading our readers by partial and selected quotations, we shall lay before them the very first sentence of the play which stands first in this collection. The subject is somewhat revolting; though managed with great spirit, and, in the more dangerous parts, with considerable dignity. A brother and sister fall mutually in love with each other, and abandon themselves, with a sort of splendid and perverted devotedness, to their incestuous passion. The sister is afterwards married, and their criminal intercourse detected by her husband,—when the brother, perceiving their destruction inevitable, first kills her, and then throws himself upon the sword of her injured husband. The play opens with his attempting to justify his passion to a holy friar, his tutor—who thus addresses him.

"*Friar.* Dispute no more in this; nor know,
young man,
These are no school points; Nice philosophy
May tolerate unlikely arguments,
But heaven admits no jest. Wits that presum'd
On wit too much, by striving how to prove
There was no God, with foolish grounds of art,
Discover'd first the nearest way to hell,
And filled the world with dev'lish atheism.
Such questions, youth, are fond: for better 'tis
To bless the sun, than reason why it shines
Yet he thou talk'st of is above the sun.
No more! I may not hear it.
Gio. Gentle father,
To you I have unclasp'd my burden'd soul,
Emptied the storehouse of my thoughts and heart,
Made myself poor of secrets; have not left
Another word untold, which hath not spoke
All what I ever durst, or think, or know;
And yet is here the comfort I shall have?
Must I not do what all men else may,—love?

No, father! in your eyes I see the change
Of pity and compassion; from your age,
As from a sacred oracle, distils
The life of counsel. Tell me, holy man,
What cure shall give me ease in these extremes?
Friar. Repentance, son, and sorrow for this sin:
For thou hast mov'd a majesty above
With thy unranged, almost, blasphemy.
Gio. O do not speak of that, dear confessor.
Friar. Then I have done, and in thy wilful flames
Already see thy ruin; Heaven is just.
Yet hear my counsel!
Gio. As a voice of life.
Friar. Hie to thy father's house; there lock thee
Alone within thy chamber; then fall down [fast
On both thy knees, and grovel on the ground;
Cry to thy heart; wash every word thou utter'st
In tears (and if 't be possible) of blood:
Beg Heaven to cleanse the leprosy of love
That rots thy soul; weep, sigh, pray
Three times a day, and three times every night:
For seven days' space do this; then, if thou find'st
No change in thy desires, return to me;
I'll think on remedy. Pray for thyself
At home, whilst I pray for thee here. Away!
My blessing with thee! We have need to pray."
Vol. i. pp. 9—12.

In a subsequent scene with the sister, the same holy person maintains the dignity of his style.

Friar. I am glad to see this penance; for, believe
You have unripp'd a soul so foul and guilty, [me
As I must tell you true, I marvel how
The earth hath borne you up; but weep, weep on,
These tears may do you good; weep faster yet,
Whilst I do read a lecture.
Ann. Wretched creature!
Friar. Ay, you are wretched, miserably wretch-
Almost condemned alive. There is a place, [ed,
List, daughter,) in a black and hollow vault,
Where day is never seen; there shines no sun,
But flaming horror of consuming fires;
A lightless sulphur, chok'd with smoky fogs
Of an infected darkness; in this place
Dwell many thousand thousand sundry sorts
Of never-dying deaths. There damned souls
Roar without pity; there are gluttons fed
With toads and adders; there is burning oil
Pour'd down the drunkard's throat; the usurer
Is forc'd to sup whole draughts of molten gold;
There is the murderer for ever stabb'd,
Yet can he never die; there lies the wanton
On racks of burning steel, whilst in his soul
He feels the torment of his raging lust.
Ann. Mercy! oh mercy! [things,
Friar. There stand these wretched
Who have dream'd out whole years in lawless sheets
And secret incests, cursing one another." &c.
Vol. i. pp. 63, 64.

The most striking scene of the play, however, is that which contains the catastrophe of the lady's fate. Her husband, after shutting her up for some time in gloomy privacy, invites her brother, and all his family, to a solemn banquet; and even introduces him, before it is served up, into her private chamber, where he finds her sitting on her marriage-bed, in splendid attire, but filled with boding terrors and agonising anxiety. He, though equally aware of the fate that was prepared for them, addresses her at first with a kind of wild and desperate gaiety, to which she tries for a while to answer with sober and earnest warnings,—and at last exclaims impatiently,

"*Ann.* O let's not waste
These precious hours in vain and useless speech.
Alas, these gay attires were not put on
But to some end; this sudden solemn feast
Was not ordain'd to riot in expense;
I that have now been chamber'd here alone,
Barr'd of my guardian, or of any else,
Am not for nothing at an instant freed
To fresh access. Be not deceiv'd, my brother;
This banquet is an harbinger of Death
To you and me! resolve yourself it is,
And be prepar'd to welcome it. [face
Gio. Look up, look here; what see you in my
Ann. Distraction and a troubled countenance.
Gio. Death and a swift repining wrath!—Yet
What see you in mine eyes? [look,
Ann. Methinks you weep.
Gio. I do indeed. These are the funeral tears
Shed on your grave! These furrow'd up my cheeks
When first I lov'd and knew not how to woo.
Fair Annabella! should I here repeat
The story of my life, we might lose time!
Be record, all the spirits of the air,
And all things else that are, that day and night,
Early and late, the tribute which my heart
Hath paid to Annabella's sacred love [now!
Hath been these tears,—which are her mourners
Never till now did nature do her best
To show a matchless beauty to the world,
Which in an instant, ere it scarce was seen,
The jealous destinies require again.
Pray, Annabella, pray! since we must part,
Go thou, white in thy soul, to fill a throne
Of innocence and sanctity in heaven.
Pray, pray, my sister.
Ann. Then I see your drift;
Ye blessed angels, guard me!
Gio. So say I.
Kiss me! If ever after-times should hear
Of our fast-knit affections, though perhaps
The laws of conscience and of civil use
May justly blame us, yet when they but know
Our loves, that love will wipe away that rigour,
Which would in other incests be abhorr'd.
Give me your hand. How sweetly life doth run
In these well-colour'd veins! how constantly
These palms do promise health! but I could chide
With nature for this cunning flattery.—
Kiss me again!—forgive me!
Ann. With my heart.
Gio. Farewell.
Ann. Will you be gone?
Gio. Be dark, bright sun,
And make this mid-day night, that thy gilt rays
May not behold a deed will turn their splendour
More sooty than the poets feign their Styx!
One other kiss, my sister!
Ann. What means this?
Gio. To save thy fame, and kill thee in a kiss!
[*Stabs her.*
Thus die! and die by me, and by my hand!
Ann. Oh brother, by your hand!
Gio. When thou art dead
I'll give my reasons for't; for to dispute
With thee, even in thy death, most lovely beauty,
Would make me stagger to perform this act
Which I most glory in.
Ann. Forgive him, Heaven—and me my sins!
Farewell.
Brother unkind, unkind,—mercy, great Heaven,—
oh—oh. [*Dies.*
Gio. She's dead, alas, good soul! This marriage
In all her best, bore her alive and dead. [bed,
Soranzo, thou hast miss'd thy aim in this;
I have prevented now thy reaching plots,
And kill'd a love, for whose each drop of blood
I would have pawn'd my heart. Fair Annabella,
How over-glorious art thou in thy wounds,
Triumphing over infamy and hate!
Shrink not, courageous hand; stand up, my heart,
And boldly act my last, and greater part!"
—Vol. i. pp. 98—101. [*Exit with the body.*

There are few things finer than this in Shakespeare. It bears an obvious resemblance

indeed to the death of Desdemona; and, taking it as a detached scene, we think it rather the more beautiful of the two. The sweetness of the diction—the natural tone of tenderness and passion—the strange perversion of kind and magnanimous natures, and the horrid catastrophe by which their guilt is at once consummated and avenged, have not often been rivalled, in the pages either of the modern or the ancient drama.

The play entitled "The Broken Heart," is in our author's best manner; and would supply more beautiful quotations than we have left room for inserting. The story is a little complicated; but the following slight sketch of it will make our extracts sufficiently intelligible. Penthea, a noble lady of Sparta, was betrothed, with her father's approbation and her own full consent, to Orgilus; but being solicited, at the same time, by Bassanes, a person of more splendid fortune, was, after her father's death, in a manner compelled by her brother Ithocles to violate her first engagement, and yield him her hand. In this ill-sorted alliance, though living a life of unimpeachable purity, she was harassed and degraded by the perpetual jealousies of her unworthy husband; and pined away, like her deserted lover, in sad and bitter recollections of the happy promise of their youth. Ithocles, in the meantime, had pursued the course of ambition with a bold and commanding spirit, and had obtained the highest honours of his country; but too much occupied in the pursuit to think of the misery to which he had condemned the sister who was left to his protection: At last, however, in the midst of his proud career, he is seized with a sudden passion for Calantha, the heiress of the sovereign; and, after many struggles, is reduced to ask the intercession and advice of his unhappy sister, who was much in favour with the princess. The following is the scene in which he makes this request;—and to those who have learned, from the preceding passages, the lofty and unbending temper of the suppliant, and the rooted and bitter anguish of her whom he addresses, it cannot fail to appear one of the most striking in the whole compass of dramatic composition.*

"*Ith.* Sit nearer, sister, to me!—nearer yet!
We had one father; in one womb took life;
Were brought up twins together;—Yet have liv'd
At distance, like two strangers! I could wish
That the first pillow, whereon I was cradled,
Had proved to me a grave!
Pen. You had been happy!
Then had you never known that sin of life
Which blots all following glories with a vengeance,
For forfeiting the last will of the dead,
From whom you had your being.
Ith. Sad Penthea!
Thou canst not be too cruel; my rash spleen
Hath with a violent hand pluck'd from thy bosom
A love-blest heart, to grind it into dust—
For which mine's now a-breaking.
Pen. Not yet, heaven
I do beseech thee! first, let some wild fires
Scorch, not consume it! may the heat be cherish'd
With desires infinite, but hopes impossible!
Ith. Wrong'd soul, thy prayers are heard.
Pen. Here, lo, I breathe,
A miserable creature, led to ruin
By an unnatural brother!
Ith. I consume
In languishing affections of that trespass;
Yet cannot die.
Pen. The handmaid to the wages,
The untroubled but of country toil, drinks streams
With leaping kids and with the bleating lambs,
And so allays her thirst secure; whilst I
Quench my hot sighs with fleetings of my tears.
Ith. The labourer doth eat his coarsest bread,
Earn'd with his sweat, and lies him down to sleep;
Whilst every bit I touch turns in digestion
To gall, as bitter as Penthea's curse.
Put me to any penance for my tyranny
And I will call thee merciful.
Pen. Pray kill me!
Rid me from living with a jealous husband,
Then we will join in friendship, be again
Brother and sister.—Kill me, pray! nay, will ye?
Ith. Thou shalt stand
A deity, my sister, and be worshipp'd
For thy resolved martyrdom: wrong'd maids
And married wives shall to thy hallow'd shrine
Offer their orisons, and sacrifice
Pure turtles, crown'd with myrtle, if thy pity
Unto a yielding brother's pressure, tend
One finger but, to ease it.
Pen. Who is the saint you serve? [daughter!
Ith. Calantha 'tis!—the princess! the king's
Sole heir of Sparta.—Me, most miserable!—
Do I now love thee? For my injuries
Revenge thyself with bravery, and gossip
My treasons to the king's ears! Do!—Calantha
Knows it not yet; nor Prophilus, my nearest.
Pen. We are reconcil'd!—
Alas, sir, being children, but two branches
Of one stock, 'tis not fit we should divide:
Have comfort; you may find it.
Ith. Yes, in thee;
Only in thee, Penthea mine!
Pen. If sorrows
Have not too much dull'd my infected brain,
I'll cheer invention for an active strain.
Ith. Mad man! why have I wrong'd a maid so
excellent?" Vol. i. pp. 273—277.

We cannot resist the temptation of adding a part of the scene in which this sad ambassadress acquits herself of the task she had undertaken. There is a tone of heart-struck sorrow and female gentleness and purity about it that is singularly engaging, and contrasts strangely with the atrocious indecencies with which the author has polluted his paper in other parts of the same play.—The princess says,

"*Cal.* Being alone, Penthea, you now have
The opportunity you sought; and might [granted
At all times have commanded.
Pen. 'Tis a benefit
Which I shall owe your goodness even in death for:
My glass of life, sweet princess, hath few minutes
Remaining to run down; the sands are spent;
For by an inward messenger I feel
The summons of departure short and certain.
Cal. You feed too much your melancholy.
Pen. Glories
Of human greatness are but pleasing dreams
And shadows soon decaying. On the stage
Of my mortality, my youth hath acted
Some scenes of vanity, drawn out at length
By varied pleasures, sweetened in the mixture,
But tragical in issue. Beauty, pomp,

* I have often fancied what a splendid effect Mrs. Siddons and John Kemble would have given to the opening of this scene, in actual representation!—with the deep throb of their low voices, their pathetic pauses, and majestic attitudes and movements!

With every sensuality our giddiness
Doth frame an idol, are unconstant friends,
When any troubled passion makes us halt
On the unguarded castle of the mind.
Cal. To what end
Reach all these moral texts?
Pen. To place before ye
A perfect mirror, wherein you may see
How weary I am of a lingering life;
Who count the best a misery.
Cal. Indeed
You have no little cause; yet none so great
As to distrust a remedy.
Pen. That remedy
Must be a winding sheet! a fold of lead,
And some untrod-on corner of the earth.—
Not to detain your expectation, princess,
I have an humble suit.
Cal. Speak; and enjoy it.
Pen. Vouchsafe, then, to be my executrix,
And take that trouble on you to dispose
Such legacies as I bequeath, impartially;
I have not much to give; the pains are easy,
Heav'n will reward your piety, and thank it
When I am dead; for sure I must not live:
I hope I cannot."

After leaving her fame, her youth, &c. in some very pretty but fantastical verses, she proceeds—

"*Pen.* 'Tis long agone, since first I lost my heart;
Long have I lived without it; else for certain
I should have given that too; But instead
Of it, to great Calantha, Sparta's heir,
By service bound, and by affection vow'd,
I do bequeath in holiest rites of love
Mine only brother, Ithocles.
Cal. What say'st thou?
Pen. I must leave the world
To revel in Elysium; and 'tis just
To wish my brother some advantage here;
Yet by my best hopes, Ithocles is ignorant
Of this pursuit.
Cal. You have forgot, Penthea,
How still I have a father.
Pen. But remember
I am a sister, though to me this brother
Hath been, you know, unkind! Oh, most unkind!"
Vol. i. pp. 291—293.

There are passages of equal power and beauty in the plays called "Love's Sacrifice," "The Lover's Melancholy," and in "Fancies Chaste and Noble." In Perkin Warbeck, there is a more uniform and sustained elevation of style. But we pass all those over, to give our readers a word or two from "The Witch of Edmonton," a drama founded upon the recent execution of a miserable old woman for that fashionable offence; and in which the devil, in the shape of a black dog, is a principal performer! The greater part of the play, in which Ford was assisted by Dekkar and Rowley, is of course utterly absurd and contemptible—though not without its value as a memorial of the strange superstition of the age; but it contains some scenes of great interest and beauty, though written in a lower and more familiar tone than most of those we have already exhibited. As a specimen of the range of the author's talents, we shall present our readers with one of these. Frank Thorney had privately married a woman of inferior rank; and is afterwards strongly urged by his father, and his own inclination, to take a second wife, in the person of a rich yeoman's daughter whose affections were fixed upon him. After taking this unjustifiable step, he is naturally troubled with certain inward compunctions, which manifest themselves in his exterior, and excite the apprehensions of his innocent bride. It is her dialogue with him that we are now to extract; and we think the picture that it affords of unassuming innocence and singleness of heart, is drawn with great truth, and even elegance. She begins with asking him why he changes countenance so suddenly. He answers—

"Who, I? For nothing.
Sus. Dear, say not so: a spirit of your constancy
Cannot endure this change for nothing. I've observ'd
Strange variations in you.
Frank. In me?
Sus. In you, sir.
Awake, you seem to dream, and in your sleep
You utter sudden and distracted accents, [band,
Like one at enmity with peace. Dear loving husIf I may dare to challenge any interest
In you, give me thee fully! you may trust
My breast as safely as your own.
Frank. With what?
You half amaze me; pr'ythee—
Sus. Come, you shall not,
Indeed you shall not shut me from partaking
The least dislike that grieves you. I'm all yours.
Frank. And I all thine.
Sus. You are not; if you keep
The least grief from me: but I know the cause;
It grows from me.
Frank. From you?
Sus. From some distaste
In me or my behaviour: you're not kind
In the concealment. 'Las, sir, I am young,
Silly and plain; more strange to those contents
A wife should offer. Say but in what I fail,
I'll study satisfaction.
Frank. Come; in nothing.
Sus. I know I do: knew I as well in what,
You should not long be sullen. Pr'ythee, love,
If I have been immodest or too bold,
Speak't in a frown; if peevishly too nice,
Shew't in a smile. Thy liking is a glass
By which I'll habit my behaviour.
Frank. Wherefore
Dost weep now?
Sus. You, sweet, have the power
To make me passionate as an April day.
Now smile, then weep; now pale, then crimson red.
You are the powerful moon of my blood's sea,
To make it ebb or flow into my face,
As your looks change.
Frank. Change thy conceit, I pr'ythee:
Thou'rt all perfection: Diana herself
Swells in thy thoughts and moderates thy beauty.
Within thy clear eye amorous Cupid sits
Feathering love-shafts, whose golden heads he dips
In thy chaste breast.
Sus. Come, come: these golden strings of flattery
Shall not tie up my speech, sir; I must know
The ground of your disturbance.
Frank. Then look here;
For here, here is the fen in which this hydra
Of discontent grows rank.
Sus. Heaven shield it! Where!
Frank. In mine own bosom! here the cause has root;
The poisoned leeches twist about my heart,
And will, I hope, confound me.
Sus. You speak riddles."
Vol. ii. pp. 437—440.

The unfortunate bigamist afterwards resolves to desert this innocent creature; but, in the act of their parting, is moved by the devil, who rubs against him in the shape of a dog! to murder her. We are tempted to give the greater part of this scene, just to show how much beauty of diction and natural expression of character may be combined with the most revolting and degrading absurdities. The unhappy bridegroom says—

"Why would you delay? we have no other business
Now, but to part. [time?
Sus. And will not that, sweet-heart, ask a long
Methinks it is the hardest piece of work
That e'er I took in hand.
Frank. Fie, fie! why look,
I'll make it plain and easy to you. Farewell.
[*Kisses her.*
Sus. Ah, 'las! I'm not half perfect in it yet.
I must have it thus read an hundred times.
Pray you take some pains, I confess my dulness.
Frank. Come! again and again, farewell. [*Kisses her.*] Yet wilt return?
All questions of my journey, my stay, employment,
And revisitation, fully I have answered all.
There's nothing now behind but—
Sus. But this request—
Frank. What is't? [more,
Sus. That I may bring you thro' one pasture
Up to yon knot of trees: amongst those shadows
I'll vanish from you; they shall teach me how.
Frank. Why 'tis granted: come, walk then.
Sus. Nay, not too fast:
They say, slow things have best perfection;
The gentle show'r wets to fertility,
The churlish storm makes mischief with his bounty.
Frank. Now, your request
Is out: yet will you leave me?
Sus. What? so churlishly!
You'll make me stay for ever,
Rather than part with such a sound from you.
Frank. Why, you almost anger me.—'Pray you
You have no company, and 'tis very early; [begone.
Some hurt may betide you homewards.
Sus. Tush! I fear none:
To leave you is the greatest I can suffer.
Frank. So! I shall have more trouble."

Here the dog rubs against him; and, after some more talk, he stabs her!

"*Sus.* Why then I thank you;
You have done lovingly, leaving yourself,
That you would thus bestow me on another.
Thou art my husband, Death! I embrace thee
With all the love I have. Forget the stain
Of my unwitting sin: and then I come
A crystal virgin to thee. My soul's purity
Shall, with bold wings, ascend the doors of mercy;
For innocence is ever her companion.
Frank. Not yet mortal? I would not linger you,
Or leave you a tongue to blab. [*Stabs her again.*
Sus. Now heaven reward you ne'er the worse for
I did not think that death had been so sweet, [me!
Nor I so apt to love him. I could ne'er die better,
Had I stay'd forty years for preparation:
For I'm in charity with all the world.
Let me for once be thine example, heaven;
Do to this man as I, forgive him freely,
And may he better die, and sweeter live. [*Dies.*"
Vol. ii. pp. 452—445.

We cannot afford any more space for Mr. Ford; and what we have said, and what we have shown of him, will probably be thought enough, both by those who are disposed to scoff, and those who are inclined to admire. It is but fair, however, to intimate, that a thorough perusal of his works will afford more exercise to the former disposition than to the latter. His faults are glaring and abundant; but we have not thought it necessary to produce any specimens of them, because they are exactly the sort of faults which every one acquainted with the drama of that age reckons upon finding. No body doubts of the existence of such faults: But there are many who doubt of the existence of any counterbalancing beauties; and therefore it seemed worth while to say a word or two in their explanation. There is a great treasure of poetry, we think, still to be brought to light in the neglected writers of the age to which this author belongs; and poetry of a kind which, if purified and improved, as the happier specimens show that it is capable of being, would be far more delightful to the generality of English readers than any other species of poetry. We shall readily be excused for our tediousness by those who are of this opinion; and should not have been forgiven, even if we had not been tedious, by those who look upon it as a heresy.

(August, 1817.)

Characters of Shakespeare's Plays. By WILLIAM HAZLITT. 8vo. pp. 352. London: 1817.*

THIS is not a book of black-letter learning, or historical elucidation;—neither is it a metaphysical dissertation, full of wise perplexities and elaborate reconcilements. It is, in truth, rather an encomium on Shakespeare, than a commentary or critique on him—and is written, more to show extraordinary love, than extraordinary knowledge of his productions. Nevertheless, it is a very pleasing book—and, we do not hesitate to say, a book of very considerable originality and genius. The author is not merely an admirer of our great dramatist, but an Idolater of him; and openly professes his idolatry. We have ourselves too great a leaning to the same superstition, to blame him very much for his error: and though we think, of course, that our own admiration is, on the whole, more discriminating and judicious, there are not many points on which, especially after reading his eloquent

* It may be thought that enough had been said of our early dramatists, in the immediately preceding article; and it probably is so. But I could not resist the temptation of thus renewing, in my own name, that vow of allegiance, which I had so often taken anonymously, to the only true and lawful King of our English Poetry! and now venture, therefore, fondly to replace this slight and perishable wreath on his august and undecaying shrine: with no farther apology than that it presumes to direct attention but to one, and that, as I think, a comparatively neglected, aspect of his universal genius.

exposition of them, we should be much inclined to disagree with him.

The book, as we have already intimated, is written less to tell the reader what Mr. H. *knows* about Shakespeare or his writings, than to explain to them what he *feels* about them—and *why* he feels so—and thinks that all who profess to love poetry should feel so likewise. What we chiefly look for in such a work, accordingly, is a fine sense of the beauties of the author, and an eloquent exposition of them; and all this, and more, we think, may be found in the volume before us. There is nothing niggardly in Mr. H.'s praises, and nothing affected in his raptures. He seems animated throughout with a full and hearty sympathy with the delight which his author should inspire, and pours himself gladly out in explanation of it, with a fluency and ardour, obviously much more akin to enthusiasm than affectation. He seems pretty generally, indeed, in a state of happy intoxication—and has borrowed from his great original, not indeed the force or brilliancy of his fancy, but something of its playfulness, and a large share of his apparent joyousness and self-indulgence in its exercise. It is evidently a great pleasure to him to be fully possessed with the beauties of his author, and to follow the impulse of his unrestrained eagerness to impress them upon his readers.

When we have said that his observations are generally right, we have said, in substance, that they are not generally original; for the beauties of Shakespeare are not of so dim or equivocal a nature as to be visible only to learned eyes—and undoubtedly his finest passages are those which please all classes of readers, and are admired for the same qualities by judges from every school of criticism. Even with regard to those passages, however, a skilful commentator will find something worth hearing to tell. Many persons are very sensible of the effect of fine poetry on their feelings, who do not well know how to refer these feelings to their causes; and it is always a delightful thing to be made to see clearly the sources from which our delight has proceeded—and to trace back the mingled stream that has flowed upon our hearts, to the remoter fountains from which it has been gathered. And when this is done with warmth as well as precision, and embodied in an eloquent description of the beauty which is explained, it forms one of the most attractive, and not the least instructive, of literary exercises. In all works of merit, however, and especially in all works of original genius, there are a thousand retiring and less obtrusive graces, which escape hasty and superficial observers, and only give out their beauties to fond and patient contemplation;—a thousand slight and harmonising touches, the merit and the effect of which are equally imperceptible to vulgar eyes; and a thousand indications of the continual presence of that poetical spirit, which can only be recognised by those who are in some measure under its influence, or have prepared themselves to receive it, by worshipping meekly at the shrines which it inhabits.

In the exposition of these, there is room enough for originality,—and more room than Mr. H. has yet filled. In many points, however, he has acquitted himself excellently;—partly in the development of the principal characters with which Shakespeare has peopled the fancies of all English readers—but principally, we think, in the delicate sensibility with which he has traced, and the natural eloquence with which he has pointed out that fond familiarity with beautiful forms and images—that eternal recurrence to what is sweet or majestic in the simple aspects of nature—that indestructible love of flowers and odours, and dews and clear waters, and soft airs and sounds, and bright skies, and woodland solitudes, and moonlight bowers, which are the Material elements of Poetry—and that fine sense of their undefinable relation to mental emotion, which is its essence and vivifying Soul—and which, in the midst of Shakespeare's most busy and atrocious scenes, falls like gleams of sunshine on rocks and ruins—contrasting with all that is rugged and repulsive, and reminding us of the existence of purer and brighter elements!—which HE ALONE has poured out from the richness of his own mind, without effort or restraint; and contrived to intermingle with the play of all the passions, and the vulgar course of this world's affairs, without deserting for an instant the proper business of the scene, or appearing to pause or digress, from the love of ornament or need of repose!—HE ALONE, who, when the object requires it, is always keen and worldly and practical—and who yet, without changing his hand, or stopping his course, scatters around him, as he goes, all sounds and shapes of sweetness—and conjures up landscapes of immortal fragrance and freshness, and peoples them with Spirits of glorious aspect and attractive grace—and is a thousand times more full of fancy and imagery, and splendour, than those who, in pursuit of such enchantments, have shrunk back from the delineation of character or passion, and declined the discussion of human duties and cares. More full of wisdom and ridicule and sagacity, than all the moralists and satirists that ever existed—he is more wild, airy, and inventive, and more pathetic and fantastic, than all the poets of all regions and ages of the world:—and has all those elements so happily mixed up in him, and bears his high faculties so temperately, that the most severe reader cannot complain of him for want of strength or of reason—nor the most sensitive for defect of ornament or ingenuity. Every thing in him is in unmeasured abundance, and unequalled perfection—but every thing so balanced and kept in subordination, as not to jostle or disturb or take the place of another. The most exquisite poetical conceptions, images, and descriptions, are given with such brevity, and introduced with such skill, as merely to adorn, without loading the sense they accompany. Although his sails are purple and perfumed, and his prow of beaten gold, they waft him on his voyage, not less, but more rapidly and directly than if

they had been composed of baser materials. All his excellences, like those of Nature herself, are thrown out together; and, instead of interfering with, support and recommend each other. His flowers are not tied up in garlands, nor his fruits crushed into baskets—but spring living from the soil, in all the dew and freshness of youth; while the graceful foliage in which they lurk, and the ample branches, the rough and vigorous stem, and the wide-spreading roots on which they depend, are present along with them, and share, in their places, the equal care of their Creator.

What other poet has put all the charm of a Moonlight landscape into a single line?—and that by an image so true to nature, and so simple, as to seem obvious to the most common observation?—

"See how the Moonlight SLEEPS on yonder bank!"

Who else has expressed, in three lines, all that is picturesque and lovely in a Summer's Dawn?—first setting before our eyes, with magical precision, the visible appearances of the infant light, and then, by one graceful and glorious image, pouring on our souls all the freshness, cheerfulness, and sublimity of returning morning?—

——"See, love! what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder East!
Night's candles* are burnt out,—and jocund Day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops!"

Where shall we find sweet sounds and odours so luxuriously blended and illustrated, as in these few words of sweetness and melody, where the author says of soft music—

"O it came o'er my ear, like the sweet South
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour!"

This is still finer, we think, than the noble speech on Music in the Merchant of Venice, and only to be compared with the enchantments of Prospero's island; where all the effects of sweet sounds are expressed in miraculous numbers, and traced in their operation on all the gradations of being, from the delicate Arial to the brutish Caliban, who, savage as he is, is still touched with those supernatural harmonies; and thus exhorts his less poetical associates—

"Be not afraid, the isle is full of noises,
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twanging instruments
Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices,
That if I then had waked after a long sleep,
Would make me sleep again."

Observe, too, that this and the other poetical speeches of this incarnate demon, are not mere ornaments of the poet's fancy, but explain his character, and describe his situation more briefly and effectually, than any other words could have done. In this play, indeed, and in the Midsummer-Night's Dream, all Eden is unlocked before us, and the whole treasury of natural and supernatural beauty poured out profusely, to the delight of all our faculties. We dare not trust ourselves with quotations; but we refer to those plays generally—to the forest scenes in As You Like It—the rustic parts of the Winter's Tale—several entire scenes in Cymbeline, and in Romeo and Juliet—and many passages in all the other plays—as illustrating this love of nature and natural beauty of which we have been speaking—the power it had over the poet, and the power it imparted to him. Who else would have thought, on the very threshold of treason and midnight murder, of bringing in so sweet and rural an image as this, at the portal of that blood-stained castle of Macbeth?

"This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve
By his loved masonry that heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here. No jutting frieze,
Buttress, nor coigne of vantage, but this bird
Has made his pendent bed, and procreant cradle."

Nor is this brought in for the sake of an elaborate contrast between the peaceful innocence of this exterior, and the guilt and horrors that are to be enacted within. There is no hint of any such suggestion—but it is set down from the pure love of nature and reality—because the kindled mind of the poet brought the whole scene before his eyes, and he painted all that he saw in his vision. The same taste predominates in that emphatic exhortation to evil, where Lady Macbeth says,

——"Look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under it."

And in that proud boast of the bloody Richard—

"But I was *born* so high:
Our aery buildeth in the cedar's top,
And dallies with the wind, and scorns the sun!"

The same splendour of natural imagery, brought simply and directly to bear upon stern and repulsive passions, is to be found in the cynic rebukes of Apemantus to Timon.

"Will these moist trees
That have out-liv'd the eagle, page thy heels,
And skip when thou point'st out? will the cold brook,
Candied with ice, candle thy morning taste
To cure thine o'er-night's surfeit?"

No one but Shakespeare would have thought of putting this noble picture into the taunting address of a snappish misanthrope—any more than the following into the mouth of a mercenary murderer.

* If the advocates for the grand style object to this expression, we shall not stop to defend it: But to us, it seems equally beautiful, as it is obvious and natural, to a person coming out of a lighted chamber into the pale dawn. The word candle, we admit, is rather homely in modern language, while lamp is sufficiently dignified for poetry. The moon hangs her silver lamp on high, in every schoolboy's copy of verses; and she could not be called the candle of heaven without manifest absurdity. Such are the caprices of usage. Yet we like the passage before us much better as it is, than if the candles were changed into lamps. If we should read, "The lamps of heaven are quenched," or "wax dim," it appears to us that the whole charm of the expression would be lost: as our fancies would no longer be recalled to the privacy of that dim-lighted chamber which the lovers were so reluctantly leaving.

Their lips were four red roses on a stalk,
And *in their summer beauty* kissed each other!"

Or this delicious description of concealed love, into that of a regretful and moralizing parent.

"But he, his own affections Counsellor,
Is to himself so secret and so close,
As is the bud bit with an envious worm
Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air,
Or dedicate his beauty to the sun."

And yet all these are so far from being unnatural, that they are no sooner put where they are, than we feel at once their beauty and their effect; and acknowledge our obligations to that exuberant genius which alone could thus throw out graces and atractions where there seemed to be neither room nor call for them. In the same spirit of prodigality he puts this rapturous and passionate exaltation of the beauty of Imogen, into the mouth of one who is not even a lover.

—"It is her breathing that
Perfumes the chamber thus! the flame o' th' taper
Bows towards her! and would under-peep her lids
To see th' enclosed lights, now canopied
Under the windows, white and azure, laced
With blue of Heaven's own tinct!—on her left breast
A mole cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops
I' the bottom of a cowslip!"

But we must break at once away from these manifold enchantments—and recollect that our business is with Mr. Hazlitt, and not with the great and gifted author on whom he is employed: And, to avoid the danger of any further preface, we shall now let him speak a little for himself. In his remarks on Cymbeline, which is the first play in his arrangement, he takes occasion to make the following observations on the female characters of his author.

"It is the peculiar characteristic of Shakespeare's heroines, that they seem to exist only in their attachment to others. They are pure abstractions of the affections. We think as little of their persons as they do themselves; because we are let into the secrets of their hearts, which are more important. We are too much interested in their affairs to stop to look at their faces, except by stealth and at intervals. No one ever hit the true perfection of the female character, the sense of weakness leaning on the strength of its affections for support, so well as Shakespeare—no one ever so well painted natural tenderness free from affectation and disguise—no one else ever so well showed how delicacy and timidity, when driven to extremity, grow romantic and extravagant: For the romance of his heroines (in which they abound) is only an excess of the habitual prejudices of their sex; scrupulous of being false to their vows or truant to their affections, and taught by the force of feeling when to forego the forms of propriety for the essence of it. His women were in this respect exquisite logicians; for there is nothing so logical as passion. Cibber, in speaking of the early English stage, accounts for the want of prominence and theatrical display in Shakespeare's female characters, from the circumstance, that women in those days were not allowed to play the parts of women, which made it necessary to keep them a good deal in the back ground. Does not this state of manners itself, which prevented their exhibiting themselves in public, and confined them to the relations and charities of domestic life, afford a truer explanation of the matter? His women are certainly very unlike stage heroines."—pp. 3, 4.

His remarks on Macbeth are of a higher and bolder character. After noticing the wavering and perplexity of Macbeth's resolution, "driven on, as it were, by the violence of his Fate, and staggering under the weight of his own purposes," he strikingly observes,

"This part of his character is admirably set off by being brought in connection with that of Lady Macbeth, whose obdurate strength of will and masculine firmness give her the ascendancy over her husband's faltering virtue. She at once seizes on the opportunity that offers for the accomplishment of their wished-for greatness; and never flinches from her object till all is over. The magnitude of her resolution almost covers the magnitude of her guilt. She is a great bad woman, whom we hate, but whom we fear more than we hate. She does not excite our loathing and abhorrence like Regan and Gonnerill. She is only wicked to gain a great end; and is perhaps more distinguished by her commanding presence of mind and inexorable self-will, which do not suffer her to be diverted from a bad purpose, when once formed, by weak and womanly regrets, than by the hardness of her heart or want of natural affections."—pp. 18, 19.

But the best part perhaps of this critique, is the comparison of the Macbeth with the Richard of the same author.

"The leading features in the character of Macbeth are striking enough, and they form what may be thought at first only a bold, rude, Gothic outline. By comparing it with other characters of the same author we shall perceive the absolute truth and identity which is observed in the midst of the giddy whirl and rapid career of events. Thus he is as distinct a being from Richard III. as it is possible to imagine, though these two characters in common hands, and indeed in the hands of any other poet, would have been a repetition of the same general idea, more or less exaggerated. For both are tyrants, usurpers, murderers,—both aspiring and ambitious,—both courageous, cruel, treacherous. But Richard is cruel from nature and constitution. Macbeth becomes so from accidental circumstances. Richard is from his birth deformed in body and mind, and naturally incapable of good. Macbeth is full of "the milk of human kindness," is frank, sociable, generous. He is tempted to the commission of guilt by golden opportunities, by the instigations of his wife, and by prophetic warnings. 'Fate and metaphysical aid' conspire against his virtue and his loyalty. Richard on the contrary needs no prompter; but wades through a series of crimes to the height of his ambition, from the ungovernable violence of his temper and a reckless love of mischief. He is never gay but in the prospect or in the success of his villanies: Macbeth is full of horror at the thoughts of the murder of Duncan, which he is with difficulty prevailed on to commit; and of remorse after its perpetration. Richard has no mixture of common humanity in his composition, no regard to kindred or posterity—he owns no fellowship with others; he is 'himself alone.' Macbeth is not destitute of feelings of sympathy, is accessible to pity, is even made in some measure the dupe of his uxoriousness; ranks the loss of friends, of the cordial love of his followers, and of his good name, among the causes which have made him weary of life; and regrets that he has ever seized the Crown by unjust means, since he cannot transmit it to his posterity. There are other decisive differences inherent in the two characters. Richard may be regarded as a man of the world, a plotting hardened knave, wholly regardless of everything but his own ends, and the means to secure them.—Not so Macbeth. The superstitions of the age, the rude state of society, the local scenery and customs, all give a wildness and imaginary grandeur to his character. From the

strangeness of the events that surround him, he is full of amazement and fear; and stands in doubt between the world of reality and the world of fancy. He sees sights not shown to mortal eye, and hears unearthly music. All is tumult and disorder within and without his mind; his purposes recoil upon himself, are broken and disjointed; he is the double thrall of his passions and his destiny. Richard is not a character either of imagination or pathos, but of pure self-will. There is no conflict of opposite feelings in his breast. In the busy turbulence of his projects he never loses his self-possession, and makes use of every circumstance that happens as an instrument of his long-reaching designs. In his last extremity we regard him but as a wild beast taken in the toils: But we never entirely lose our concern for Macbeth; and he calls back all our sympathy by that fine close of thoughtful melancholy.

"My way of life
Is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have! But in their stead,
Curses not loud but deep; mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dares not!"— pp. 26—30.

In treating of the Julius Cæsar, Mr. H. extracts the following short scene, and praises it so highly, and, in our opinion, so justly, that we cannot resist the temptation of extracting it too—together with his brief commentary.

"*Brutus.* The games are done, and Cæsar is returning. [sleeve,
Cassius. As they pass by, pluck Casca by the
And he will, after his sour fashion, tell you
What has proceeded worthy note to-day.
Brutus. I will do so; but look you, Cassius—
The angry spot doth glow on Cæsar's brow,
And all the rest look like a chidden train.
Calphurnia's cheek is pale; and Cicero
Looks with such ferret and such fiery eyes,
As we have seen him in the Capitol,
Being crost in conference by some senator.
Cassius. Casca will tell us what the matter is.
Cæsar. Antonius——
Antony. Cæsar?
Cæsar. Let me have men about me that are fat,
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep a-nights:
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look,
He thinks too much; such men are dangerous.
Antony. Fear him not, Cæsar, he's not dangerous:
He is a noble Roman, and well given. [not:
Cæsar. Would he were fatter! But I fear him
Yet if my name were liable to fear,
I do not know the man I should avoid
So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much;
He is a great observer; and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men. He loves no plays,
As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music:
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort,
As if he mock'd himself, and scorned his spirit,
That could be moved to smile at any thing.
Such men as he be never at heart's ease
Whilst they behold a greater than themselves;
And therefore are they very dangerous.
I rather tell thee what is to be fear'd
Than what I fear; for always I am Cæsar.
Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,
And tell me truly what thou think'st of him."

"We know hardly any passage more expressive of the genius of Shakespeare than this. It is as if he had been actually present, had known the different characters and what they thought of one another, and had taken down what he heard and saw, their looks, words, and gestures, just as they happened."—pp. 36, 37.

We may add the following as a specimen of the moral and political reflections which this author has intermixed with his criticisms.

"Shakespeare has in this play and elsewhere shown the same penetration into political character and the springs of public events as into those of every-day life. For instance, the whole design to liberate their country fails from the generous temper and overweening confidence of Brutus in the goodness of their cause and the assistance of others. Thus it has always been. Those who mean well themselves think well of others, and fall a prey to their security. The friends of liberty trust to the professions of others, because they are themselves sincere, and endeavour to secure the public good with the least possible hurt to its enemies, who have no regard to any thing but their own unprincipled ends, and stick at nothing to accomplish them. Cassius was better cut out for a conspirator. His heart prompted his head. His habitual jealousy made him fear the worst that might happen, and his irritability of temper added to his inveteracy of purpose, and sharpened his patriotism. The mixed nature of his motives made him fitter to contend with bad men. The vices are never so well employed as in combating one another. Tyranny and servility are to be dealt with after their own fashion: otherwise, they will triumph over those who spare them, and finally pronounce their funeral panegyric, as Antony did that of Brutus.

"All the conspirators, save only he,
Did that they did in envy of great Cæsar:
He only in a general honest thought
Of common good to all, made one of them.
pp. 38, 39.

The same strain is resumed in his remarks on Coriolanus.

"Shakespeare seems to have had a leaning to the arbitrary side of the question; perhaps from some feeling of contempt for his own origin; and to have spared no occasion of baiting the rabble. What he says of them is very true: what he says of their betters is also very true; But he dwells less upon it.—The cause of the people is indeed but little calculated as a subject for poetry: it admits of rhetoric, which goes into argument and explanation, but it presents no immediate or distinct images to the mind. The imagination is an exaggerating and exclusive faculty. The understanding is a dividing and measuring faculty. The one is an aristocratical, the other a republican faculty. The principle of poetry is a very anti-levelling principle. It aims at effect, and exists by contrast. It is every thing by excess. It puts the individual for the species, the one above the infinite many, might before right. A lion hunting a flock of sheep is a more poetical object than they; and we even take part with the lordly beast, because our vanity or some other feeling makes us disposed to place ourselves in the situation of the strongest party. There is nothing heroical in a multitude of miserable rogues not wishing to be starved, or complaining that they are like to be so: but when a single man comes forward to brave their cries and to make them submit to the last indignities, from mere pride and self-will, our admiration of his prowess is immediately converted into contempt for their pusillanimity. We had rather, in short, be the oppressor than the oppressed. The love of power in ourselves and the admiration of it in others are both natural to man: But the one makes him a tyrant, the other a slave."—pp. 69—72.

There are many excellent remarks and several fine quotations, in the discussions on Troilus and Cressida. As this is no longer an acted play, we venture to give one extract, with Mr. H.'s short observations, which perfectly express our opinion of its merits.

"It cannot be said of Shakespeare, as was said of some one, that he was 'without o'erflowing full.' He was full, even to o'erflowing. He gave heaped measure, running over. This was his greatest fault. He was only in danger 'of losing distinction in his thoughts' (to borrow his own expression)

"As doth a battle when they charge on heaps
The enemy flying."

"There is another passage, the speech of Ulysses to Achilles, showing him the thankless nature of popularity, which has a still greater depth of moral observation and richness of illustration than the former.

"*Ulysses.* Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back,
Wherein he puts alms for Oblivion;
A great-siz'd monster of ingratitudes;
Those scraps are good deeds past;
Which are devour'd as fast as they are made,
Forgot as soon as done: Persev'rance, dear my lord,
Keeps Honour bright: *to have done*, is to hang
Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail
In monumental mockery. Take the instant way;
For Honour travels in a strait so narrow,
That one but goes abreast; keep then the path,
For Emulation hath a thousand sons,
That one by one pursue; if you give way,
Or hedge aside from the direct forth-right,
Like to an entered tide they all rush by,
And leave you hindmost;——
Or, like a gallant horse fall'n in first rank,
O'er-run and trampled on: then what they do in present,
Tho' less than yours in past, must o'ertop yours:
For Time is like a fashionable host,
That slightly shakes his parting guest by th' hand,
And with his arms outstretch'd as he would fly,
Grasps in the comer: thus Welcome ever smiles,
And Farewel goes out sighing. O, let not virtue seek
Remuneration for the thing it was; For beauty, wit,
High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all
To envious and calumniating time:
One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.
That all, with one consent, praise new born gauds,
Though they are made and moulded of things past."

"The throng of images in the above lines is prodigious; and though they sometimes jostle against one another, they everywhere raise and carry on the feeling, which is metaphsically true and profound."—pp. 85—87.

This Chapter ends with an ingenious parallel between the genius of Chaucer and that of Shakespeare, which we have not room to insert.

The following observations on Hamlet are very characteristic of Mr. H.'s manner of writing in the work now before us; in which he continually appears acute, desultory, and capricious—with great occasional felicity of conception and expression—frequent rashness and carelessness—constant warmth of admiration for his author—and some fits of extravagance and folly, into which he seems to be hurried, either by the hasty kindling of his zeal as he proceeds, or by a selfwilled determination not to be balked or baffled in any thing he has taken it into his head he should say.

"Hamlet is a name: his speeches and sayings but the idle coinage of the poet's brain. But are they not real? They are as real as our own thoughts. Their reality is in the reader's mind. It is *we* who are Hamlet. This play has a prophetic truth, which is above that of history. Whoever has become thoughtful and melancholy through his own mishaps or those of others; whoever has borne about with him the clouded brow of reflection, and thought himself 'too much i' th' sun;' whoever has seen the golden lamp of day dimmed by envious mists rising in his own breast, and could find in the world before him only a dull blank, with nothing left remarkable in it; whoever has known 'the pangs of despised love, the insolence of office, or the spurns which patient merit of the unworthy takes;' he who has felt his mind sink within him, and sadness cling to his heart like a malady; who has had his hopes blighted and his youth staggered by the apparitions of strange things; who cannot be well at ease, while he sees evil hovering near him like a spectre; whose powers of action have been eaten up by thought; he to whom the universe seems infinite, and himself nothing; whose bitterness of soul makes him careless of consequences, and who goes to a play, as his best resource to shove off, to a second remove, the evils of life, by a mock-representation of them.——This is the true Hamlet.

"We have been so used to this tragedy, that we hardly know how to criticise it, any more than we should know how to describe our own faces. But we must make such observations as we can. It is the one of Shakespeare's plays that we think of oftenest because it abounds most in striking reflections on human life, and because the distresses of Hamlet are transferred, by the turn of his mind, to the general account of humanity. Whatever happens to him, we apply to ourselves; because he applies it so himself as a means of general reasoning. He is a great moralizer, and what makes him worth attending to is, that he moralizes on his own feelings and experience. He is not a commonplace pedant. If *Lear* shows the greatest depth of passion, HAMLET is the most remarkable for the ingenuity, originality, and unstudied development of character. There is no attempt to force an interest: every thing is left for time and circumstances to unfold. The attention is excited without effort; the incidents succeed each other as matters of course; the characters think, and speak, and act, just as they might do if left entirely to themselves. There is no set purpose, no straining at a point. The observations are suggested by the passing scene—the gusts of passion come and go like sounds of music borne on the wind. The whole play is an exact transcript of what might be supposed to have taken place at the court of Denmark, at the remote period of time fixed upon, before the modern refinements in morals and manners were heard of. It would have been interesting enough to have been admitted as a by-stander in such a scene, at such a time, to have heard and seen something of what was going on. But here we are more than spectators. We have not only 'the outward pageants and the signs of grief,' but 'we have that within which passes show.' We read the thoughts of the heart, we catch the passions living as they rise. Other dramatic writers give us very fine versions and paraphrases of nature; but Shakespeare, together with his own comment, gives us the original text, that we may judge for ourselves. This is a great advantage.

"The character of Hamlet is itself a pure effusion of genius. It is not a character marked by strength of will, or even of passion, but by refinement of thought and sentiment. Hamlet is as little of the hero as a man can well be: but he is a young and princely novice, full of high enthusiasm and quick sensibility,—the sport of circumstances, questioning with fortune, and refining on his own feelings; and forced from the natural bias of his disposition by the strangeness of his situation."—pp. 104—107.

His account of the Tempest is all pleasingly written, especially his remarks on Caliban; but we rather give our readers his speculations on Bottom and his associates.

"Bottom the Weaver is a character that has not had justice done him. He is the most romantic of

mechanics; He follows a sedentary trade, and he is accordingly represented as conceited, serious, and fantastical. He is ready to undertake any thing and every thing, as if it was as much a matter of course as the motion of his loom and shuttle. He is for playing the tyrant, the lover, the lady, the lion. 'He will roar that it shall do any man's heart good to hear him;' and this being objected to as improper, he still has a resource in his good opinion of himself, and 'will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.' Snug the Joiner is the moral man of the piece, who proceeds by measurement and discretion in all things. You see him with his rule and compasses in his hand. 'Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.'—'You may do it extempore,' says Quince, 'for it is nothing but roaring.' Starveling the Tailor keeps the peace, and objects to the lion and the drawn sword. 'I believe we must leave the killing out when all's done.' Starveling, however, does not start the objections himself, but seconds them when made by others, as if he had no spirit to express his fears without encouragement. It is too much to suppose all this intentional: but it very luckily falls out so."—pp. 126, 127.

Mr. H. admires Romeo and Juliet rather too much—though his encomium on it is about the most eloquent part of his performance: But we really cannot sympathise with all the conceits and puerilities that occur in this play; for instance, this exhortation to Night, which Mr. H. has extracted for praise!—

"Give me my Romeo—and when he shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine,
That all the world will be in love with Night," &c.

We agree, however, with less reservation, in his rapturous encomium on Lear—but can afford no extracts. The following speculation on the character of Falstaff is a striking, and, on the whole, a favourable specimen of our author's manner.

"Wit is often a meagre substitute for pleasureable sensation; an effusion of spleen and petty spite at the comforts of others, from feeling none in itself. Falstaff's wit is an emanation of a fine constitution; an exuberance of good-humour and good-nature; an overflowing of his love of laughter, and good-fellowship; a giving vent to his heart's ease and over-contentment with himself and others.—He would not be in character if he were not so fat as he is; for there is the greatest keeping in the boundless luxury of his imagination and the pampered self-indulgence of his physical appetites. He manures and nourishes his mind with jests, as he does his body with sack and sugar. He carves out his jokes, as he would a capon, or a haunch of venison, where there is *cut and come again:* and lavishly pours out upon them the oil of gladness. His tongue drops fatness, and in the chambers of his brain 'it snows of meat and drink.' He keeps up perpetual holiday and open house, and we live with him in a round of invitations to a rump and dozen.—Yet we are not left to suppose that he was a mere sensualist. All this is as much in imagination as in reality. His sensuality does not engross and stupify his other faculties, but 'ascends me into the brain, clears away all the dull, crude vapours that environ it, and makes it full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes.' His imagination keeps up the ball long after his senses have done with it. He seems to have even a greater enjoyment of the freedom from restraint, of good cheer, of his ease, of his vanity, in the ideal and exaggerated descriptions which he gives of them, than in fact. He never fails to enrich his discourse with allusions to eating and drinking; but we never see him at table. He carries his own larder about with him, and he is himself 'a tun of man.' His pulling out the bottle in the field of battle is a joke to show his contempt for glory accompanied with danger, his systematic adherence to his Epicurean philosophy in the most trying circumstances. Again, such is his deliberate exaggeration of his own vices, that it does not seem quite certain whether the account of his hostess' bill, found in his pocket, with such an out-of-the-way charge for capons and sack with only one half-penny-worth of bread, was not put there by himself, as a trick to humour the jest upon his favourite propensities, and as a conscious caricature of himself.

"The secret of Falstaff's wit is for the most part a masterly presence of mind, an absolute self-possession, which nothing can disturb. His repartees are involuntary suggestions of his self-love; instinctive evasions of every thing that threatens to interrupt the career of his triumphant jollity and self-complacency. His very size floats him out of all his difficulties in a sea of rich conceits; and he turns round on the pivot of his convenience, with every occasion and at a moment's warning. His natural repugnance to every unpleasant thought or circumstance, of itself makes light of objections, and provokes the most extravagant and licentious answers in his own justification. His indifference to truth puts no check upon his invention; and the more improbable and unexpected his contrivances are, the more happily does he seem to be delivered of them, the anticipation of their effect acting as a stimulus to the gaiety of his fancy. The success of one adventurous sally gives him spirits to undertake another: he deals always in round numbers, and his exaggerations and excuses are 'open, palpable, monstrous as the father that begets them.'"
pp. 189—192.

It is time, however, to make an end of this. We are not in the humour to discuss points of learning with this author; and our readers now see well enough what sort of book he has written. We shall conclude with his remarks on Shakespeare's style of Comedy, introduced in the account of the Twelfth Night.

"This is justly considered as one of the most delightful of Shakespeare's comedies. It is full of sweetness and pleasantry. It is perhaps too good-natured for comedy. It has little satire, and no spleen. It aims at the ludicrous rather than the ridiculous. It makes us laugh at the follies of mankind; not despise them, and still less bear any ill-will towards them. Shakespeare's comic genius resembles the bee rather in its power of extracting sweets from weeds or poisons, than in leaving a sting behind it. He gives the most amusing exaggeration of the prevailing foibles of his characters, but in a way that they themselves, instead of being offended at, would almost join in to humour; he rather contrives opportunities for them to show themselves off in the happiest lights, than renders them contemptible in the perverse construction of the wit or malice of others.

"There is a certain stage of society, in which people become conscious of their peculiarities and absurdities, affect to disguise what they are, and set up pretensions to what they are not. This gives rise to a corresponding style of comedy, the object of which is to detect the disguises of self-love, and to make reprisals on these preposterous assumptions of vanity, by marking the contrast between the real and the affected character as severely as possible, and denying to those, who would impose on us for what they are not, even the merit which they have. This is the comedy of artificial life, of wit and satire, such as we see in Congreve, Wycherley, Vanbrugh, &c. But there is a period in the progress of manners anterior to this, in which the foibles and follies of individuals are of nature's planting, not the growth of art or study; in which they are therefore

unconscious of them themselves, or care not who knows them, if they can but have their whim out; and in which, as there is no attempt at imposition, the spectators rather receive pleasure from humouring the inclinations of the persons they laugh at, than wish to give them pain by exposing their absurdity. This may be called the comedy of nature; and it is the comedy which we generally find in Shakespeare.—Whether the analysis here given be just or not, the spirit of his comedies is evidently quite distinct from that of the authors above mentioned; as it is in its essence the same with that of Cervantes, and also very frequently of Molière, though he was more systematic in his extravagance than Shakespeare. Shakespeare's comedy is of a pastoral and poetical cast. Folly is indigenous to the soil, and shoots out with native, happy, unchecked luxuriance. Absurdity has every encouragement afforded it; and nonsense has room to flourish in. Nothing is stunted by the churlish, icy hand of indifference or severity. The poet runs riot in a conceit, and idolizes a quibble. His whole object is to turn the meanest or rudest objects to a pleasurable account. And yet the relish which he has of a pun, or of the quaint humour of a low character, does not interfere with the delight with which he describes a beautiful image, or the most refined love. The clown's forced jests do not spoil the sweetness of the character of Viola. The same house is big enough to hold Malvolio, the Countess Maria, Sir Toby, and Sir Andrew Aguecheek. For instance, nothing can fall much lower than this last character in intellect or morals: yet how are his weaknesses nursed and dandled by Sir Toby into something 'high fantastical;' when on Sir Andrew's commendation of himself for dancing and fencing, Sir Toby answers,—'Wherefore are these things hid? Wherefore have these gifts a curtain before them? Are they like to take dust, like Mrs. Moll's picture? Why dost thou not go to church in a galliard, and come home in a coranto? My very walk should be a jig! I would not so much as make water but in a cinque-pace. What dost thou mean? Is this a world to hide virtues in? I did think by the excellent constitution of thy leg, it was framed under the star of a galliard!'—How Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and the Clown afterwards *chirp over their cups!* how they 'rouse the night-owl in a catch, able to draw three ouls out of one weaver!' What can be better than Sir Toby's unanswerable answer to Malvolio, 'Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?'—In a word, the best turn is given to everything, instead of the worst. There is a constant infusion of the romantic and enthusiastic, in proportion as the characters are natural and sincere: whereas, in the more artificial style of comedy, everything gives way to ridicule and indifference; there being nothing left but affectation on one side, and incredulity on the other."—pp. 255—259.

(February, 1822.)

Sardanapalus, a Tragedy. The Two Foscari, a Tragedy. Cain, a Mystery. By Lord Byron. 8vo. pp. 440. Murray. London: 1822.*

It must be a more difficult thing to write a good play—or even a good dramatic poem—than we had imagined. Not that we should, *a priori*, have imagined it to be very easy: But it is impossible not to be struck with the fact, that, in comparatively rude times, when the resources of the art had been less carefully considered, and Poetry certainly had not collected all her materials, success seems to have been more frequently, and far more easily obtained. From the middle of Elizabeth's reign till the end of James', the drama formed by far the most brilliant and beautiful part of our poetry,—and indeed of our literature in general. From that period to the Revolution, it lost a part of its splendour and originality; but still continued to occupy the most conspicuous and considerable place in our literary annals. For the last century, it has been quite otherwise. Our poetry has ceased almost entirely to be dramatic; and, though men of great name and great talent have occasionally adventured into this once fertile field, they have reaped no laurels, and left no trophies behind them. The genius of Dryden appears nowhere to so little advantage as in his tragedies; and the contrast is truly humiliating when, in a presumptuous attempt to heighten the colouring, or enrich the simplicity of Shakespeare, he bedaubs with obscenity, or deforms with rant, the genuine passion and profligacy of Antony and Cleopatra—or intrudes on the enchanted solitude of Prospero and his daughter, with the tones of worldly gallantry, or the caricatures of affected simplicity. Otway, with the sweet and mellow diction of the former age, had none of its force, variety, or invention. Its decaying fires burst forth in some strong and irregular flashes, in the disorderly scenes of Lee; and sunk at last in the ashes, and scarcely glowing embers, of Rowe.

Since his time—till very lately—the school of our ancient dramatists has been deserted: and we can scarcely say that any new one has been established. Instead of the irregular and comprehensive plot—the rich discursive dialogue—the ramblings of fancy—the magic creations of poetry—the rapid succession of incidents and characters—the soft, flexible, and ever-varying diction—and the flowing, continuous, and easy versification, which characterised those masters of the golden time, we have had tame, formal, elaborate, and stately compositions—meagre stories—few personages—characters decorous and consistent, but without nature or spirit—a guarded, timid, classical diction—ingenious and methodical disquisitions—turgid or sententious declamations—and a solemn and monotonous strain of versification. Nor can this be ascribed, even plausibly, to any decay of genius among us; for the most remarkable failures have fallen on the highest talents. We have already hinted at the miscarriages of Dryden.

* I have thought it best to put all my *Dramatical* criticisms in one series: and, therefore, I take the tragedies of Lord Byron in this place—and apart from his other poetry.

The exquisite taste and fine observation of Addison, produced only the solemn mawkishness of Cato. The beautiful fancy, the gorgeous diction, and generous affections of Thomson, were chilled and withered as soon as he touched the verge of the Drama; where his name is associated with a mass of verbose puerility, which it is difficult to conceive could ever have proceeded from the author of the Seasons and the Castle of Indolence. Even the mighty intellect, the eloquent morality, and lofty style of Johnson, which gave too tragic and magnificent a tone to his ordinary writing, failed altogether to support him in his attempt to write actual tragedy; and Irene is not only unworthy of the imitator of Juvenal and the author of Rasselas and the Lives of the Poets, but is absolutely, and in itself, nothing better than a tissue of wearisome and unimpassioned declamations. We have named the most celebrated names in our literature, since the decline of the drama, almost to our own days; and if *they* have neither lent any new honours to the stage, nor borrowed any from it, it is needless to say, that those who adventured with weaker powers had no better fortune. The Mourning Bride of Congreve, the Revenge of Young, and the Douglas of Home [we cannot add the Mysterious Mother of Walpole—even to please Lord Byron], are almost the only tragedies of the last age that are familiar to the present; and they are evidently the works of a feebler and more effeminate generation—indicating, as much by their exaggerations as by their timidity, their own consciousness of inferiority to their great predecessors—whom they affected, however, not to imitate, but to supplant.

But the native taste of our people was not thus to be seduced and perverted; and when the wits of Queen Anne's time had lost the authority of living authors, it asserted itself by a fond recurrence to its original standards, and a resolute neglect of the more regular and elaborate dramas by which they had been succeeded. Shakespeare, whom it had long been the fashion to decry and even ridicule, as the poet of a rude and barbarous age*, was reinstated in his old supremacy: and when his legitimate progeny could no longer be found at home, his spurious issue were hailed with rapture from foreign countries, and invited and welcomed with the most eager enthusiasm on their arrival. The German imitations, of Schiller and Kotzebue, caricatured and distorted as they were by the aberrations of a vulgar and vitiated taste, had still so much of the raciness and vigour of the old English drama, from which they were avowedly derived, that they instantly became more popular in England than any thing that her own artists had recently produced; and served still more effectually to recal our affections to their native and legitimate rulers. Then followed republications of Massinger, and Beaumont and Fletcher, and Ford, and their contemporaries—and a host of new tragedies, all written in avowed and elaborate imitation of the ancient models. Miss Baillie, we rather think, had the merit of leading the way in this return to our old allegiance—and then came a volume of plays by Mr. Chenevix, and a succession of single plays, all of considerable merit, from Mr. Coleridge, Mr. Maturin, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Barry Cornwall, and Mr. Milman. The first and the last of these names are the most likely to be remembered; but none of them, we fear, will ever be ranked with the older worthies; nor is it conceivable that any age should ever class them together.

We do not mean, however, altogether to deny, that there may be some illusion, in our habitual feelings, as to the merits of the great originals—consecrated as they are, in our imaginations, by early admiration, and associated, as all their peculiarities, and the mere accidents and oddities of their diction now are, with the recollection of their intrinsic excellences. It is owing to this, we suppose, that we can scarcely venture to ask ourselves, steadily, and without an inward startling and feeling of alarm, what reception one of Shakespeare's irregular plays—the Tempest for example, or the Midsummer Night's Dream—would be likely to meet with, if it were *now* to appear for the first time, without name, notice, or preparation? Nor can we pursue the hazardous supposition through all the possibilities to which it invites us, without something like a sense of impiety and profanation. Yet, though some little superstition may mingle with our faith, we must still believe it to be the true one. Though time may have hallowed many things that were at first but common, and accidental associations imparted a charm to much that was in itself indifferent, we cannot but believe that there was an original sanctity, which time only matured and extended—and an inherent charm from which the association derived all its power. And when we look candidly and calmly to the works of our early dramatists, it is impossible, we think, to dispute, that after criticism has done its worst on them—after all deductions for impossible plots and fantastical characters, unaccountable forms of speech, and occasional extravagance, indelicacy, and horrors—there is a facility and richness about them, both of thought and of diction—a force of invention, and a depth of sagacity—an originality of conception, and a play of fancy—a nakedness and energy of passion, and, above all, a copiousness of imagery, and a sweetness and flexibility of verse, which is altogether unri-

* It is not a little remarkable to find such a man as Goldsmith joining in this pitiful sneer. In his Vicar of Wakefield, he constantly represents his famous town ladies, Miss Carolina Amelia Wilhelmina Skeggs, and the other, as discoursing about "high life, *Shakespeare*, and the musical glasses!"—And, in a more serious passage, he introduces a player as astonishing the Vicar, by informing him that "Dryden and Rowe's manner were quite out of fashion—our taste has gone back a whole century; Fletcher, Ben Jonson, and, above all, the *plays of Shakespeare*, are the only things that go down." "How!" says the Vicar, "is it possible that the present age can be pleased with *that antiquated dialect*, that *obsolete humour*, and those *overcharged characters* which abound in the works you mention?" No writer of name, who was not aiming at a paradox, would venture to say this now

valled, in earlier or in later times;—and places them, in our estimation, in the very highest and foremost place among ancient or modern poets.

It is in these particulars that the inferiority of their recent imitators is most apparent—in the want of ease and variety—originality and grace. There is, in all their attempts, whatever may be their other merits or defects, an air of anxiety and labour—and indications, by far too visible, at once of timidity and ambition. This may arise, in part, from the fact of their being, too obviously and consciously, imitators. They do not aspire so much to rival the genius of their originals, as to copy their manner. They do not write as *they* would have written in the present day, but as they imagine they themselves would have written two hundred years ago. They revive the antique phraseology, repeat the venerable oaths, and emulate the quaint familiarities of that classical period—and wonder that they are not mistaken for new incarnations of its departed poets! One great cause why they are not, is, that they speak an unnatural dialect, and are constrained by a masquerade habit; in neither of which it is possible to display that freedom, and those delicate traits of character, which are the life of the drama, and were among the chief merits of those who once exalted it so highly. Another bad effect of imitation, and especially of the imitation of unequal and irregular models in a critical age, is, that nothing is thought fit to be copied but the exquisite and shining passages;—from which it results, in the *first* place, that all our rivalry is reserved for occasions in which its success is most hopeless; and, in the *second* place, that instances, even of occasional success, want their proper grace and effect, by being deprived of the relief, shading, and preparation, which they would naturally have received in a less fastidious composition; and, instead of the warm and native and ever-varying graces of a spontaneous effusion, the work acquires the false and feeble brilliancy of a prize essay in a foreign tongue—a collection of splendid patches of different texture and pattern.

At the bottom of all this—and perhaps as its most efficient cause—there lurks, we suspect, an unreasonable and undue dread of criticism;—not the deliberate and indulgent criticism which *we* exercise, rather for the encouragement of talent than its warning—but the vigilant and paltry derision which is perpetually stirring in idle societies, and but too continually present to the spirits of all who aspire to their notice. There is nothing so certain, we take it, as that those who are the most alert in discovering the faults of a work of genius, are the least touched with its beauties. Those who admire and enjoy fine poetry, in short, are quite a different class of persons from those who find out its flaws and defects—who are sharp at detecting a plagiarism or a grammatical inaccuracy, and laudably industrious in bringing to light an obscure passage—sneering at an exaggerated one—or wondering at the meaning of some piece of excessive simplicity. It is in vain to expect the praises of such people; for they never praise;—and it is truly very little worth while to disarm their censure. It is only the praises of the real lovers of poetry that ever give it true fame or popularity—and these are little affected by the cavils of the fastidious. Yet the genius of most modern writers seems to be rebuked under that of those pragmatical and insignificant censors. They are so much afraid of faults, that they will scarcely venture upon beauties; and seem more anxious in general to be *safe*, than original. They dare not indulge in a florid and magnificent way of writing, for fear of being charged with bombast by the cold-blooded and malignant. They must not be tender, lest they should be laughed at for puling and whining; nor discursive and fanciful like their great predecessors, under pain of being held out to derision, as ingenious gentlemen who have dreamed that the gods have made them poetical!

Thus, the dread of ridicule, which they have ever before their eyes, represses all the emotions, on the expression of which their success entirely depends; and in order to escape the blame of those to whom they can give no pleasure, and through whom they can gain no fame, they throw away their best chance of pleasing those who are capable of relishing their excellences, and on whose admiration alone their reputation must at all events be founded. There is a great want of magnanimity, we think, as well as of wisdom, in this sensitiveness to blame; and we are convinced that no modern author will ever write with the grace and vigour of the older ones, who does not write with some portion of their fearlessness and indifference to censure. *Courage*, in short, is at least as necessary as genius to the success of a work of imagination; since, without this, it is impossible to attain that freedom and self-possession, without which no talents can ever have fair play, and, far less, that inward confidence and exaltation of spirit which must accompany all the higher acts of the understanding. The earlier writers had probably less occasion for courage to secure them these advantages; as the public was far less critical in their day, and much more prone to admiration than to derision: But we can still trace in their writings the indications both of a proud consciousness of their own powers and privileges, and of a brave contempt for the cavils to which they might expose themselves. In our own times, we know but one writer who is emancipated from this slavish awe of vulgar detraction—this petty timidity about being detected in blunders and faults—and that is the illustrious author of Waverley, and the other novels that have made an era in our literature as remarkable, and as likely to be remembered, as any which can yet be traced in its history. We shall not now say how large a portion of his success we ascribe to this intrepid temper of his genius; but we are confident that no person can read any one of his wonderful works, without feeling that their author was utterly careless of the reproach of small imperfections; disdained the inglorious labour of perpetual correctness, and has *consequently* imparted to his productions that spirit and ease and variety, which reminds us of better times, and gives lustre and effect to those rich and resplendent passages to which it left him free to aspire.

Lord Byron, in some respects, may appear not to have been wanting in intrepidity. He has not certainly been very tractable to advice, nor very patient of blame. But this, in him, we fear, is not superiority to censure, but aversion to it; and, instead of proving that he is indifferent to detraction, shows only, that the dread and dislike of it operate with more than common force on his mind. A critic, whose object was to give pain, would desire no better proof of the efficacy of his inflictions, than the bitter scorn and fierce defiance with which they are encountered; and the more vehemently the noble author protests that he despises the reproaches that have been bestowed on him, the more certain it is that he suffers from their severity, and would be glad to escape, if he cannot overbear, them. But however this may be, we think it is certain that his late dramatic efforts have not been made carelessly, or without anxiety. To us, at least, they seem very elaborate and hard-wrought compositions; and this indeed we take to be their leading characteristic, and the key to most of their peculiarities.

Considered as Poems, we confess they appear to us to be rather heavy, verbose, and inelegant—deficient in the passion and energy which belongs to the other writings of the noble author—and still more in the richness of imagery, the originality of thought, and the sweetness of versification for which he used to be distinguished. They are for the most part solemn, prolix, and ostentatious—lengthened out by large preparations for catastrophes that never arrive, and tantalizing us with slight specimens and glimpses of a higher interest, scattered thinly up and down many weary pages of declamation. Along with the concentrated pathos and homestruck sentiments of his former poetry, the noble author seems also, we cannot imagine why, to have discarded the spirited and melodious versification in which they were embodied, and to have formed to himself a measure equally remote from the spring and vigour of his former compositions, and from the softness and flexibility of the ancient masters of the drama. There are some sweet lines, and many of great weight and energy; but the general march of the verse is cumbrous and unmusical. His lines do not vibrate like polished lances, at once strong and light, in the hands of his persons, but are wielded like clumsy batons in a bloodless affray. Instead of the graceful familiarity and idiomatical melodies of Shakespeare, they are apt, too, to fall into clumsy prose, in their approaches to the easy and colloquial style; and, in the loftier passages, are occasionally deformed by low and common images, that harmonize but ill with the general solemnity of the diction.

As Plays, we are afraid we must also say that the pieces before us are wanting in interest, character, and action:—at least we must say this of the three last of them—for *there is* interest in Sardanapalus—and beauties besides, that make us blind to its other defects. There is, however, throughout, a want of dramatic effect and variety; and we suspect there is something in the character or habit of Lord Byron's genius which will render this unattainable. He has too little sympathy with the ordinary feelings and frailties of humanity, to succeed well in their representation—"His soul is like a star, and dwells apart." It does not "hold the mirror up to nature," nor catch the hues of surrounding objects; but, like a kindled furnace, throws out its intense glare and gloomy grandeur on the narrow scene which it irradiates. He has given us, in his other works, some glorious pictures of nature—some magnificent reflections, and some inimitable delineations of character: But the same feelings prevail in them all; and his portraits in particular, though a little varied in the drapery and attitude, seem all copied from the same original. His Childe Harold, his Giaour, Conrad, Lara, Manfred, Cain, and Lucifer—are all one individual. There is the same varnish of voluptuousness on the surface—the same canker of misanthropy at the core, of all he touches. He cannot draw the changes of many-coloured life, nor transport himself into the condition of the infinitely diversified characters by whom a stage should be peopled. The very intensity of his feelings—the loftiness of his views—the pride of his nature or his genius—withhold him from this identification; so that in personating the heroes of the scene, he does little but repeat himself. It would be better for him, we think, if it were otherwise. We are sure it would be better for his readers. He would get more fame, and things of far more worth than fame, if he would condescend to a more extended and cordial sympathy with his fellow-creatures; and we should have more variety of fine poetry, and, at all events, better tragedies. We have no business to read him a homily on the sinfulness of pride and uncharity; but we have a right to say, that it argues a poorness of genius to keep always to the same topics and persons; and that the world will weary at last of the most energetic pictures of misanthropes and madmen—outlaws and their mistresses!

A man gifted as he is, when he aspires at dramatic fame, should emulate the greatest of dramatists. Let Lord Byron then think of Shakespeare—and consider what a noble range of character, what a freedom from mannerism and egotism, there is in him! How much he seems to have studied nature; how little to have thought about himself; how seldom to have repeated or glanced back at his own most successful inventions! Why indeed should he? Nature was still open before him, and inexhaustible; and the freshness and variety that still delight his readers, must have had constant atractions for himself. Take his Hamlet, for instance. What

a character is there!—how full of thought and refinement, and fancy and individuality! "How infinite in faculties! In form and motion how express and admirable! The beauty of the universe, the paragon of animals!" Yet close the play, and we meet with him no more—neither in the author's other works, nor any where else! A common uthor who had hit upon such a character, would have dragged it in at every turn, and worn it to very tatters. Sir John Falstaff, again, is a world of wit and humour in himself. But except in the two parts of Henry IV., there would have been no trace of such a being, had not the author been "ordered to continue him" in the Merry Wives of Windsor. He is not the least like Benedick, or Mercutio, or Sir Toby Belch, or any of the other witty and jovial personages of the same author—nor are they like each other. Othello is one of the most striking and powerful inventions on the stage. But when the play closes, we hear no more of him! The poet's creation comes no more to life again, under a fictitious name, than the real man would have done. Lord Byron in Shakespeare's place, would have peopled the world with black Othellos! What indications are there of Lear in any of his earlier plays? What traces of it in any that he wrote afterwards? None. It might have been written by any other man, he is so little conscious of it. He never once returns to that huge sea of sorrow; but has left it standing by itself, shoreless and unapproachable! Who else could have afforded not to have "drowned the stage with tears" from such a source? But we must break away from Shakespeare, and come at last to the work before us.

In a very brief preface, Lord Byron renews his protest against looking upon any of his plays, as having been composed "with the most remote view to the stage"—and, at the same time, testifies in behalf of the *Unities*, as essential to the existence of the drama—according to what "was, till lately, the law of literature throughout the world, and is still so, in the more civilised parts of it." We do not think those opinions very consistent; and we think that neither of them could possibly find favour with a person whose genius had a truly dramatic character. We should as soon expect an orator to compose a speech altogether unfit to be spoken. A drama is not merely a dialogue, but *an action*: and necessarily supposes that something is to pass before the eyes of assembled spectators. Whatever is peculiar to its written part, should derive its peculiarity from this consideration. Its style should be throughout an accompaniment to action—and should be calculated to excite the emotions, and keep alive the attention, of gazing multitudes. If an author does not bear this continually in his mind, and does not write in the ideal presence of an eager and diversified assemblage, he may be a poet perhaps, but assuredly he never will be a dramatist. If Lord Byron really does not wish to impregnate his elaborate scenes with the living spirit of the drama—if he has no hanker[ing] after stage-effect—if he is not haunted with the visible presentment of the persons he has created—if, in setting down a vehement [in]vective, he does not fancy the tone in which Mr. Kean would deliver it, and anticipate the long applauses of the pit, then he may be sure that neither his feelings nor his gestures are in unison with the stage at all. Why, then, should he affect the form, without the power of tragedy? He may, indeed, produce a mystery like Cain, or a far sweeter vision like Manfred, without subjecting himself to the censure of legitimate criticism: But if with a regular subject before him, capable of all the strength and graces of the drama, he does not feel himself able or willing to draw forth its resources so as to affect an audience with terror and delight, he is not the man we want—and his time and talents are wasted here. Didactic reasoning and eloquent description will not compensate, in a play, for a dearth of dramatic spirit and invention: and besides, sterling sense and poetry, as such, ought to stand by themselves, without the unmeaning mockery of a *dramatis persona*.

As to Lord Byron's pretending to set up the *Unities* at this time of day, as "the law of literature throughout the world," it is mere caprice and contradiction. He, if ever man was, is *a law to himself*—"a chartered libertine;"—and now, when he is tired of this unbridled licence, he wants to do penance within the *Unities!* This certainly looks very like affectation; or, if there is any thing sincere in it, the motive must be, that, by getting rid of so much story and action, in order to simplify the plot and bring it within the prescribed limits, he may fill up the blank spaces with long discussions, and have nearly all the talk to himself! For ourselves we will confess that we have had a considerable contempt for those same *Unities*, ever since we read Dennis' Criticism on Cato in our boyhood—except indeed the unity of action, which Lord Byron does not appear to set much store by. Dr. Johnson, we conceive, has pretty well settled this question: and if Lord Byron chooses to grapple with him, he will find that it requires a stronger arm than that with which he puts down our Laureates. We shall only add, that when the moderns tie themselves down to write tragedies of the same length, and on the same simple plan, in other respects, with those of Sophocles and Æschylus, we shall not object to their adhering to the Unities; for there can, in that case, be no sufficient inducement for violating them. But, in the mean time, we hold that English dramatic poetry soars *above the Unities*, just as the imagination does. The only pretence for insisting on them is, that we suppose the stage itself to be, actually and really, the very spot on which a given action is performed; and, if so, this space cannot be removed to another. But the supposition is manifestly quite contrary to truth and experience. The stage is considered merely as a place in which any given action *ad libitum* may be performed; and accordingly may be shifted, and is

so in imagination, as often as the action requires it. That any writer should ever have insisted on such an unity as this, must appear sufficiently preposterous; but, that the defence of it should be taken up by an author whose plays are never to be acted at all, and which, therefore, have nothing more than a nominal reference to any stage or locality whatever, must strike one as absolutely incredible.

It so happens, however, that the disadvantage, and, in truth, absurdity of sacrificing higher objects to a formality of this kind, is strikingly displayed in one of these dramas—THE TWO FOSCARI. The whole interest here turns upon the younger of them having returned from banishment, in defiance of the law and its consequences, from an unconquerable longing after his native country. Now, the only way to have made this sentiment palpable, the practicable foundation of stupendous sufferings, would have been, to have presented him to the audience wearing out his heart in exile—and forming his resolution to return, at a distance from his country, or hovering, in excruciating suspense, within sight of its borders. We might then have caught some glimpse of the nature of his motives, and of so extraordinary a character. But as this would have been contrary to one of the Unities, we first meet with him led from "the Question," and afterwards taken back to it in the Ducal Palace, or clinging to the dungeon-walls of his native city, and expiring from his dread of leaving them; and therefore feel more wonder than sympathy, when we are told in a Jeremiad of wilful lamentations, that these agonising consequences have resulted, not from guilt or disaster, but merely from the intensity of his love for his country.

But we must now look at the other Tragedies; and on turning again to SARDANAPALUS, we are half inclined to repent of the severity of some of our preceding remarks, or to own at least that they are not strictly applicable to this performance. It is a work beyond all question of great beauty and power; and though the heroine has many traits in common with the Medoras and Gulnares of Lord Byron's undramatic poetry, the hero must be allowed to be a new character in his hands. He has, indeed, the scorn of war, and glory, and priestcraft, and regular morality, which distinguishes the rest of his Lordship's favourites; but he has no misanthropy, and very little pride—and may be regarded, on the whole, as one of the most truly good-humoured, amiable, and respectable voluptuaries to whom we have ever been presented. In this conception of his character, the author has very wisely followed nature and fancy rather than history. *His* Sardanapalus is not an effeminate, worn-out debauchee, with shattered nerves and exhausted senses, the slave of indolence and vicious habits; but a sanguine votary of pleasure, a princely epicure, indulging, revelling in boundless luxury while he can, but with a soul so inured to voluptuousness, so saturated with delights, that pain and danger, when they come uncalled for, give him neither concern nor dread; and he goes forth, from the banquet to the battle, as to a dance or measure, attired by the Graces, and with youth, joy, and love for his guides. He dallies with Bellona as her bridegroom—for his sport and pastime; and the spear or fan, the shield or shining mirror, become his hands equally well. He enjoys life, in short, and triumphs over death; and whether in prosperous or adverse circumstances, his soul smiles out superior to evil. The Epicurean philosophy of Sardanapalus gives him a fine opportunity, in his conferences with his stern and confidential adviser, Salemenes, to contrast his own imputed and fatal vices of ease and love of pleasure with the boasted virtues of his predecessors, War and Conquest; and we may as well begin with a short specimen of this characteristic discussion. Salemenes is brother to the neglected queen; and the controversy originates in the monarch's allusion to her.

"*Sard.* Thou think'st that I have wrong'd the queen: is't not so?
Sale. Think! Thou hast wrong'd her!
Sard. Patience, prince, and hear me
She has all power and splendour of her station,
Respect, the tutelage of Assyria's heirs,
The homage and the appanage of sovereignty.
I married her, as monarchs wed—for state,
And loved her, as most husbands love their wives.
If she or thou supposedst I could link me
Like a Chaldean peasant to his mate,
Ye knew nor me, nor monarchs, nor mankind.
Sale. I pray thee, change the theme; my blood disdains
Complaint, and Salemenes' sister seeks not
Reluctant love, even from Assyria's lord!
Nor would she deign to accept divided passion
With foreign strumpets and Ionian slaves.
The queen is silent.
Sard. And why not her brother?
Sale. I only echo thee the voice of empires,
Which he who long neglects not long will govern.
Sard. The ungrateful and ungracious slaves! they murmur
Because I have not shed their blood, nor led them
To dry into the desert's dust by myriads,
Or whiten with their bones the banks of Ganges;
Nor decimated them with savage laws,
Nor sweated them to build up pyramids,
Or Babylonian walls.
Sale. Yet these are trophies
More worthy of a people and their prince
Than songs, and lutes, and feasts, and concubines,
And lavish'd treasures, and contemned virtues.
Sard. Oh! for my trophies I have founded cities:
There's Tarsus and Anchialus, both built
In one day—what could that blood-loving beldame,
My martial grandam, chaste Semiramis,
Do more—except destroy them?
Sale. 'Tis most true;
I own thy merit in those founded cities,
Built for a whim, recorded with a verse
Which shames both them and thee to coming ages.
Sard. Shame me! By Baal, the cities, though ill built,
Are not more goodly than the verse! Say what
Thou wilt against the truth of that brief record,
Why, those few lines contain the history
Of all things human; hear—'Sardanapalus
The king, and Son of Anacyndaraxes,
In one day built Anchialus and Tarsus.
Eat, drink, and love! the rest's not worth a fillip.
Sale. A worthy moral, and a wise inscription,
For a king to put up before his subjects!
Sard. Oh, thou wouldst have me doubtless set up edicts—

Obey the king—contribute to his treasure—
Recruit his phalanx—spill your blood at bidding—
Fall down and worship, or get up and toil.'
Or thus—' Sardanapalus on this spot
Slew fifty thousand of his enemies.
These are their sepulchres, and this his trophy.'
I leave such things to conquerors; enough
For me, if I can make my subjects feel
The weight of human misery less, and glide
Ungroaning to the tomb; I take no licence
Which I deny to them. We all are men.
Sale. Thy sires have been revered as gods—
Sard. In dust
And death—where they are neither gods nor men.
Talk not of such to me! the worms are gods;
At least they banqueted upon your gods,
And died for lack of farther nutriment.
Those gods were merely men; look to their issue—
I feel a thousand mortal things about me,
But nothing godlike—unless it may be
The thing which you condemn, a disposition
To love and to be merciful; to pardon
The follies of my species, and (that's human)
To be indulgent to my own.''—pp. 18—21.

But the chief charm and vivifying angel of the piece is MYRRHA, the Greek slave of Sardanapalus—a beautiful, heroic, devoted, and ethereal being—in love with the generous and infatuated monarch—ashamed of loving a barbarian—and using all her influence over him to ennoble as well as to adorn his existence, and to arm him against the terrors of its close. Her voluptuousness is that of the heart—her heroism of the affections. If the part she takes in the dialogue be sometimes too subdued and submissive for the lofty daring of her character, it is still such as might become a Greek slave—a lovely Ionian girl, in whom the love of liberty and the scorn of death, was tempered by the consciousness of what she regarded as a degrading passion, and an inward sense of fitness and decorum with reference to her condition. The development of this character and its consequences form so material a part of the play, that most of the citations with which we shall illustrate our abstract of it will be found to bear upon it.

Salemenes, in the interview to which we have just alluded, had driven "the Ionian minion" from the royal presence by his reproaches. After his departure, the Monarch again recalls his favourite, and reports to her the warning he had received. Her answer lets us at once into the nobleness and delicacy of her character.

" *Myr.* He did well.
Sard. And say'st *thou* so?
Thou whom he spurn'd so harshly, and now dared
Drive from our presence with his savage jeers,
And made thee weep and blush?
Myr. *I should do both*
More frequently! and he did well to call me
Back to my duty. But thou spakest of peril—
Peril to thee—
Sard. Ay, from dark plots and snares
From Medes—and discontented troops and nations.
I know not what—a labyrinth of things—
A maze of mutter'd threats and mysteries:
Thou know'st the man—it is his usual custom.
But he is honest. Come, we'll think no more on't—
But of the midnight festival.
Myr. 'Tis time
To think of aught save festivals. Thou hast not
Spurn'd his sage cautions?
Sard. What?—and dost thou fear?
Myr. Fear!—I'm a Greek, and how should I
fear death?
A slave, and wherefore should I dread my freedom?
Sard. Then wherefore dost thou turn so pale?
Myr. I love—
Sard. And do not I? I love thee far—far more
Than either the brief life or the wide realm,
Which, it may be, are menaced: yet I blanch not.
Myr. When he who is their ruler
Forgets himself, will they remember him?
Sard. Myrrha!
Myr. Frown not upon me: you have smiled
Too often on me, not to make those frowns
Bitterer to bear than any punishment
Which they may augur.—King, I am your subject!
Master, I am your slave! Man, I have loved you!—
Loved you, I know not by what fatal weakness,
Although a Greek, and born a foe to monarchs—
A slave, and hating fetters—an Ionian,
And, therefore, when I love a stranger, more
Degraded by that passion than by chains!
Still I have loved you. If that love were strong
Enough to overcome all former nature,
Shall it not claim the privilege to save you!
Sard. Save me, my beauty! Thou art very fair,
And what I seek of thee is love—not safety.
Myr. And without love where dwells security!
Sard. I speak of woman's love.
Myr. The very first
Of human life must spring from woman's breast;
Your first small words are taught you from her lips,
Your first tears quench'd by her, and your last sighs
Too often breathed out in a woman's hearing,
When men have shrunk from the ignoble care
Of watching the last hour of him who led them.
Sard. My eloquent Ionian! thou speak'st music!
The very chorus of the tragic song
I have heard thee talk of as the favourite pastime
Of thy far father-land. Nay, weep not—calm thee.
Myr. I weep not—But I pray thee, do not speak
About my fathers, or their land!
Sard. Yet oft
Thou speakest of them.
Myr. True—true! constant thought
Will overflow in words unconsciously;
But when another speaks of Greece, it wounds me.
Sard. Well, then, how wouldst thou *save* me, as
thou saidst? [founders.
Myr. Look to the annals of thine empire's
Sard. They are so blotted over with blood, I
cannot. [fed.
But what wouldst have? the empire *has been* found-
I cannot go on multiplying empires.
Myr. Preserve thine own.
Sard. At least I will enjoy it.
Come, Myrrha, let us on to the Euphrates;
The hour invites, the galley is prepared,
And the pavilion, deck'd for our return,
In fit adornment for the evening banquet,
Shall blaze with beauty and with light, until
It seems unto the stars which are above us
Itself an opposite star; and we will sit
Crown'd with fresh flowers like——
Myr. Victims.
Sard. No, like sovereigns,
The shepherd kings of patriarchal times,
Who knew no brighter gems than summer wreaths.
And none but tearless triumphs. Let us on."
pp. 31—36.

The second act, which contains the details of the conspiracy of Arbaces, its detection by the vigilance of Salamenes, and the too rash and hasty forgiveness of the rebels by the King, is, on the whole, heavy and uninteresting. Early in the third act, the royal banquet is disturbed by sudden tidings of treason and revolt; and then the reveller blazes out into the hero, and the Greek blood of Myrrha mounts to its proper office! The

following passages are striking. A messenger says,

" Prince Salemenes doth implore the king
To arm himself, although but for a moment,
And show himself unto the soldiers: his
Sole presence in this instant might do more
Than hosts can do in his behalf.
Sard. What, ho!
My armour there.
Myr. And wilt thou?
Sard. Will I not?
Ho, there!—But seek not for the buckler; 'tis
Too heavy:—a light cuirass and my sword.
Myr. How I do love thee!
Sard. I ne'er doubted it.
Myr. But now I know thee.
Sard. (*arming himself*)
Give me the cuirass—so: my baldric! now
My sword: I had forgot the helm, where is it?
That's well—no, 'tis too heavy: you mistake, too—
It was not this I meant, but that which bears
A diadem around it.
Sfero. Sire, I deem'd
That too conspicuous from the precious stones
To risk your sacred brow beneath—and, trust me,
This is of better metal though less rich.
Sard. You deem'd! Are you too turn'd a rebel? Fellow!
Your part is to obey: return, and—no—
It is too late—I will go forth without it.
Sfero. At least wear this.
Sard. Wear Caucasus! why, 'tis
A mountain on my temples.
Myrrha, retire unto a place of safety.
Why went you not forth with the other damsels?
Myr. Because my place is here.
I dare all things
Except survive what I have loved, to be
A rebel's booty: forth, and do your bravest."
pp. 85—89.

The noise of the conflict now reaches her in doubtful clamour; and a soldier comes in, of whom she asks how the King bears himself—and is answered,

" *Alt.* Like a king. I must find Sfero,
And bring him a new spear and his own helmet.
He fights till now bare-headed, and by far
Too much exposed. The soldiers knew his face,
And the foe too; and in the moon's broad light,
His silk tiara and his flowing hair
Make him a mark too royal. Every arrow
Is pointed at the fair hair and fair features,
And the broad fillet which crowns both.
The king! the king fights as he revels.
Myr. 'Tis no dishonour—no—
'Tis no dishonour! to have loved this man.
I almost wish now, what I never wish'd
Before, that he were Grecian. If Alcides
Were shamed in wearing Lydian Omphale's
She-garb, and wielding her vile distaff; surely
He, who springs up a Hercules at once,
Nurs'd in effeminate arts from youth to manhood,
And rushes from the banquet to the battle,
As though it were a bed of love, deserves
That a Greek girl should be his paramour,
And a Greek bard his minstrel, a Greek tomb
His monument!"—pp. 92, 93.

Soon after, she rushes out in agony to meet the fate that seemed impending. The King, however, by his daring valour, restores the fortune of the fight; and returns, with all his train, to the palace. The scene that ensues is very masterly and characteristic. Turning to Myrrha—

" Know'st thou, my brother, where I lighted on
This minion?
Sale. Herding with the other females
Like frighten'd antelopes.
Sard. No: Like the dam
Of the young lion, femininely raging,
She urged on, with her voice and gesture, and
Her floating hair and flashing eyes, the soldiers
In the pursuit.
Sale. Indeed!
Sard. You see, this night
Made warriors of more than me. I paused
To look upon her, and her kindled cheek;
Her large black eyes, that flash'd through her long hair
As it stream'd o'er her; her blue veins that rose
Along her most transparent brow; her nostril
Dilated from its symmetry; her lips
Apart; her voice that clove through all the din,
As a lute's pierceth through the cymbal's clash,
Jarr'd but not drown'd by the loud brattling; her
Waved arms, more dazzling with their own born whiteness
Than the steel her hand held, which she caught up
From a dead soldier's grasp; all these things made
Her seem unto the troops a prophetess
Of victory, or Victory herself
Come down to hail us hers.
Sale. (*in retiring.*) Myrrha!
Myr. Prince.
Sale. You have shown a soul to-night,
Which, were he not my sister's lord——But now
I have no time: thou lov'st the king?
Myr. I love
Sardanapalus.
Sale. But wouldst have him king still?
Myr. I would not have him less than what he should be.
Sale. Well, then, to have him king, and yours, and all
He should, or should not be; to have him *live*,
Let him not sink back into luxury.
You have more power upon his spirit than
Wisdom within these walls, or fierce rebellion
Raging without: look well that he relapse not.
[*Exit* SALEMENES.
Sard. Myrrha! what, at whispers
With my stern brother? I shall soon be jealous.
Myr. (*smiling.*) You have cause, sire; for on the earth there breathes not
A man more worthy of a woman's love—
A soldier's trust—a subject's reverence—
A king's esteem—the whole world's admiration!
Sard. Praise him, but not so warmly. I must not
Hear those sweet lips grow eloquent in aught
That throws me into the shade; yet you speak truth."—pp. 100—105.

After this, there is an useless and unnatural scene with the Queen, whose fondness her erring husband meets with great kindness and remorse. It is carefully, but rather tediously written; and ends, a great deal too long after it ought to have ended, by Salemenes carrying off his sister in a fit.

The fifth act gives, rather languidly, the consummation of the rebellion. Salemenes is slain; and the King, in spite of a desperate resistance, driven back to his palace and its gardens. He then distributes his treasure to his friends, and forces them to embark on the river, which is still open for their escape; only requiring, as the last service of his faithful veterans, that they should build up a huge pile of combustibles around the throne in his presence-chamber, and leave him there with Myrrha alone; and commanding them, when they had cleared the city with their galleys, to sound their trumpets as a signal of safety. We shall close our extracts with a few frag-

ments of the final scene. This is his farewell to the troops.

"*Sard.* My best! my last friends!
Let's not unman each other—part at once:
All farewells should be sudden, when for ever,
Else they make an eternity of moments,
And clog the last sad sands of life with tears.
Hence, and be happy: trust me, I am not
Now to be pitied; or far more for what
Is past than present;—for the future, 'tis
In the hands of the deities, if such [well.
There be: I shall know soon. Farewell—fare-
[*Exeunt* PANIA *and Soldiers.*
Myr. These men were honest: It is comfort still
That our last looks should be on loving faces. [me!
Sard. And *lovely* ones, my beautiful!—but hear
If at this moment, for we now are on
The brink, thou feel'st an inward shrinking from
This leap through flame into the future, say it:
I shall not love thee less; nay, perhaps more,
For yielding to thy nature: and there's time
Yet for thee to escape hence.
Myr. Shall I light
One of the torches which lie heap'd beneath
The ever-burning lamp that burns without,
Before Baal's shrine, in the adjoining hall?
Sard. Do so. Is that thy answer?
Myr. Thou shalt see."—pp. 162, 163.

There is then a long invocation to the shades of his ancestors; at the end of which, Myrrha returns with a lighted torch and a cup of wine—and says,

"Lo!
I've lit the lamp which lights us to the stars.
Sard. And the cup?
Myr. 'Tis my country's custom to
Make a libation to the gods.
Sard. And mine
To make libations amongst men. I've not
Forgot the custom; and although alone,
Will drain one draught in memory of many
A joyous banquet past.
Yet pause,
My Myrrha! dost thou truly follow me,
Freely and fearlessly?
Myr. And dost thou think
A Greek girl dare not do for love, that which
An Indian widow braves for custom?
Sard. Then
We but await the signal.
Myr. It is long
In sounding.
Sard. Now, farewell; one last embrace.
Myr. Embrace, but *not* the last; there is one
more. [ashes.
Sard. True, the commingling fire will mix our
Myr. Then farewell, thou earth!
And loveliest spot of earth! *farewell Ionia!*
Be thou still free and beautiful, and far
Aloof from desolation! My last prayer [thee!
Was for thee, my last thoughts, save *one*, were of
Sard. And that?
Myr. Is yours.
[*The trumpet of* PANIA *sounds without.*
Sard. Hark!
Myr. *Now!*
Sard. Adieu, Assyria!
I loved thee well, my own, my fathers' land,
And better as my country than my kingdom.
I satiated thee with peace and joys; and this
Is my reward! and now I owe thee nothing.
Not even a grave.
[*He mounts the pile.*
Now, Myrrha!
Myr. Art thou ready!
Sard. As the torch in thy grasp.
[MYRRHA *fires the pile.*
Myr. 'Tis fired! I come.
[*As* MYRRHA *springs forward to throw herself into the flames, the Curtain falls.*"
pp. 164—167.

Having gone so much at length into the drama, which we take to be much the best of the volume, we may be excused for saying little of the others. "The two Foscari," we think, is a failure. The interest is founded upon feelings so peculiar or overstrained, as to engage no sympathy; and the whole story turns on incidents that are neither pleasing nor natural. The *Younger Foscari* undergoes the rack twice (once in the hearing of the audience), merely because he has chosen to feign himself a traitor, that he might be brought back from undeserved banishment, and dies at last of pure dotage on this sentiment; while the Elder Foscari submits, in profound and immovable silence, to this treatment of his son, lest, by seeming to feel for his unhappy fate, he should be implicated in his guilt—though he is supposed guiltless.

The "Marino Faliero"—though rather more vigorously written—is scarcely more successful. The story, in so far as it is original in our drama, is extremely improbable; though like most other very improbable stories, derived from authentic sources: But, in the main, it is not original—being indeed merely another Venice Preserved; and continually recalling, though certainly without eclipsing, the memory of the first. Except that Jaffier is driven to join the conspirators by the natural impulse of love and misery, and the Doge by a resentment so outrageous as to excite all sympathy—and that the disclosure, which is produced by love in the old play, is here ascribed (with less likelihood) to mere friendship, the general action and catastrophe of the two pieces are almost identical—while with regard to the writing and management, it must be owned that, if Lord Byron has more sense and vigour, Otway has by far the more passion and pathos; and that, though our new conspirators are better orators and reasoners than the gang of Pierre and Reynault, the tenderness of Belvidera is as much more touching, as it is more natural than the stoical and self-satisfied decorum of Angiolina. The abstract, or argument of the piece, is shortly as follows.

Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice, and nearly fourscore years of age, marries a young beauty of the name of Angiolina—and, soon after their union, a giddy young nobleman, who he had had occasion to rebuke in public, scribbles up some indecent lines on his chair of state, purporting that he was the husband of a fair wife, whom he had the honour of keeping for the benefit of others. The Doge having discovered the author of this lampoon, complains of him to the Senate—who, upon proof of the charge, sentence him to a month's confinement. The Doge, considering this as altogether inadequate to the reparation of his injured honour, immediately conceives a most insane and unintelligible animosity at the whole body of the nobility—and, in spite of the dignified example and gentle soothing of Angiolina, puts himself at the head of a conspiracy, which had just been organised for the overthrow of the government by certain plebeian malecontents, who had more substantial wrongs and grievances to complain of. One of the faction, however, had a friend in the Senate whom he wished to preserve; and goes to him, on the eve of the insurrection, with words of warning, which lead to its timely detection. The Doge and his associates are arrested and brought to trial; and the former, after a vain intercession from Angiolina, who candidly admits the enormity of his guilt, and prays only for his life, is led, in his ducal robes, to the place where he was first consecrated a sovereign, and there publicly decapitated by the hands of the executioner.

We can afford but a few specimens of the execution. The following passage, in which the ancient Doge, while urging his gentle spouse to enter more warmly into his resentment, reminds her of the motives that had led him to seek her alliance, (her father's request, and his own desire to afford her orphan helplessness the highest and most unsuspected protection,) though not perfectly dramatic, has great sweetness and dignity; and reminds us, in its rich verbosity, of the moral and mellifluous parts of Massinger.

"*Doge.* For love, romantic love, which in my
I knew to be illusion, and ne'er saw [youth
Lasting, but often fatal, it had been
No lure for me, in my most passionate days,
And could not be so now, did such exist.
But such respect, and mildly paid regard
As a true feeling for your welfare, and
A free compliance with all honest wishes;
A kindness to your virtues, watchfulness
Not shown, but shadowing o'er such little failings
As youth is apt in, so as not to check
Rashly, but win you from them ere you knew
You had been won, but thought the change your
choice;
A pride not in your beauty, but your conduct—
A trust in you—a patriarchal love,
And not a doting homage—friendship, faith—
Such estimation in your eyes as these
Might claim, I hoped for."—
"I trusted to the blood of Loredano
Pure in your veins; I trusted to the soul [you—
God gave you—to the truths your father taught
To your belief in heaven—to your mild virtues—
To your own faith and honour, for my own.—
Where light thoughts are lurking, or the vanities
Of worldly pleasure rankle in the heart,
Or sensual throbs convulse it, well I know
'Twere hopeless for humanity to dream
Of honesty in such infected blood,
Although 'twere wed to him it covets most:
An incarnation of the poet's god
In all his marble-chisell'd beauty, or
The demi-deity, Alcides, in
His majesty of superhuman manhood,
Would not suffice to bind where virtue is not."
pp, 50—53.

The fourth Act opens with the most poetical and brilliantly written scene in the play—though it is a soliloquy, and altogether alien from the business of the piece. Lioni, a young nobleman, returns home from a splendid assembly, rather out of spirits; and, opening his palace window for air, contrasts the tranquillity of the night scene which lies before him, with the feverish turbulence and glittering enchantments of that which he has just quitted. Nothing can be finer than this picture in both its compartments. There is a truth and a luxuriance in the description of the rout, which mark at once the hand of a master, and raise it to a very high rank as a piece of poetical painting—while the moonlight view from the window is equally grand and beautiful, and reminds us of those magnificent and enchanting lookings forth in Manfred, which have left, we will confess, far deeper traces on our fancy, than any thing in the more elaborate work before us. Lioni says,

"——I will try
Whether the air will calm my spirits: 'tis
A goodly night; the cloudy wind which blew
From the Levant has crept into its cave, [ness!
And the broad moon has brighten'd. What a still-
[*Goes to an open lattice.*
And what a contrast with the scene I left,
Where the tall torches' glare, and silver lamps'
More pallid gleam, along the tapestried walls,
Spread over the reluctant gloom which haunts
Those vast and dimly-latticed galleries
A dazzling mass of artificial light, [&c.
Which show'd all things, but nothing as they were,
The music, and the banquet, and the wine—
The garlands, the rose odours, and the flowers—
The sparkling eyes and flashing ornaments—
The white arms and the raven hair—the braids
And bracelets; swanlike bosoms, and the necklace,
An India in itself, yet dazzling not
The eye like what it circled; the thin robes
Floating like light clouds 'twixt our gaze and heaven·
The many-twinkling feet, so small and sylphlike,
Suggesting the more secret symmetry
Of the fair forms which terminate so well!
All the delusion of the dizzy scene,
Its false and true enchantments—art and nature,
Which swam before my giddy eyes, that drank
The sight of beauty as the parch'd pilgrim's
On Arab sands the false mirage, which offers
A lucid lake to his eluded thirst,
Are gone.—Around me are the stars and waters—
Worlds mirror'd in the ocean! goodlier sight
Than torches glared back by a gaudy glass;
And the great element, which is to space
What ocean is to earth, spreads its blue depths,
Soften'd with the first breathings of the spring;
The high moon sails upon her beauteous way,
Serenely smoothing o'er the lofty walls
Of those tall piles and sea-girt palaces,
Whose porphyry pillars, and whose costly fronts,
Fraught with the orient spoil of many marbles,
Like altars ranged along the broad canal,
Seem each a trophy of some mighty deed
Rear'd up from out the waters, scarce less strangely
Than those more massy and mysterious giants
Of architecture, those Titanian fabrics,
Which point in Egypt's plains to times that have
No other record! All is gentle: nought
Stirs rudely; but, congenial with the night,
Whatever walks is gliding like a spirit.
The tinklings of some vigilant guitars
Of sleepless lovers to a wakeful mistress,
And cautious opening of the casement, showing
That he is not unheard; while her young hand,
Fair as the moonlight of which it seems part,
So delicately white, it trembles in
The act of opening the forbidden lattice,
To let in love through music, makes his heart
Thrill like his lyre-strings at the sight!—the dash
Phosphoric of the oar, or rapid twinkle
Of the far lights of skimming gondolas,
And the responsive voices of the choir
Of boatmen, answering back with verse for verse
Some dusky shadow chequering the Rialto;
Some glimmering palace roof, or tapering spire,
Are all the sights and sounds which here pervade
The ocean-born and earth-commanding city."
pp. 98—101.

We can now afford but one other extract;—and we take it from the grand and prophetic rant of which the unhappy Doge delivers himself at the place of execution. He asks whether he may speak; and is told he may, but that the people are too far off to hear him. He then says,

"I speak to Time and to Eternity,
Of which I grow a portion—not to man!
Ye elements! in which to be resolved
I hasten! Ye blue waves! which bore my banner,
Ye winds! which flutter'd o'er as if you loved it,
And fill'd my swelling sails, as they were wafted
To many a triumph! Thou, my native earth,
Which I have bled for, and thou foreign earth,
Which drank this willing blood from many a wound! [Thou!
Thou sun! which shinest on these things, and
Who kindlest and who quenchest suns!—Attest!
I am not innocent—But are these guiltless?
I perish: But not unavenged: For ages
Float up from the abyss of time to be,
And show these eyes, before they close, the doom
Of this proud city!—Yes, the hours
Are silently engendering of the day,
When she, who built 'gainst Attila a bulwark,
Shall yield, and bloodlessly and basely yield
Unto a bastard Attila; without
Shedding so much blood in her last defence
As these old veins, oft drain'd in shielding her,
Shall pour in sacrifice.—She shall be *bought!*
Then, when the Hebrews in thy palaces,
The Hun in thy high places, and the Greek
Walks o'er thy mart, and smiles on it for his;
When thy patricians beg their bitter bread
In narrow streets, and in their shameful need
Make their nobility a plea for pity;—when
Thy sons are in the lowest scale of being,
Slaves turn'd o'er to the vanquish'd by the victors,
Despised by cowards for greater cowardice,
And scorn'd even by the vicious for their vices,
When all the ills of conquer'd states shall cling thee,
Vice without splendour, sin without relief;
When these and more are heavy on thee, when
Smiles without mirth, and pastimes without pleasure,
Youth without honour, age without respect, [sure,
Meanness and weakness, and a sense of woe
'Gainst which thou *wilt* not strive, and *dar'st* not murmur,
Have made thee last and worst of peopled deserts,
Then—in the last gasp of thine agony,
Amidst thy many murders, think of *mine!*
Thou den of drunkards with the blood of princes!
Gehenna of the waters! thou sea Sodom!
Thus I devote thee to the infernal gods!
Thee and thy serpent seed!
[*Here the* Doge *turns, and addresses the Executioner.*
Slave, do thine office!
Strike as I struck the foe! Strike as I would
Have struck those tyrants! Strike deep as my curse!
Strike—and but once!—pp. 162—165.

It will not now be difficult to estimate the character of this work.—As a play, it is deficient in the attractive passions; in probability, and in depth and variety of interest; and revolts throughout, by the extravagant disproportion which the injury bears to the unmeasured resentment with which it is pursued. Lord Byron is, undoubtedly, a poet of the very first order—and has talents to reach the very highest honours of the drama. But he must not again disdain love and ambition and jealousy. He must not substitute what is merely *bizarre* and extraordinary, for what is naturally and universally interesting—nor expect, by any exaggerations, so to rouse and rule our sympathies, by the senseless anger of an old man, and the prudish proprieties of an untempted woman, as by the agency of the great and simple passions with which, in some of their degrees, all men are familiar, and by which alone the Dramatic Muse has hitherto wrought her miracles.

Of "Cain, a Mystery," we are constrained to say, that, though it abounds in beautiful passages, and shows more *power* perhaps than any of the author's dramatical compositions, we regret very much that it should ever have been published. It will give great scandal and offence to pious persons in general—and may be the means of suggesting the most painful doubts and distressing perplexities to hundreds of minds that might never otherwise have been exposed to such dangerous disturbance. It is nothing less than absurd, in such a case, to observe, that Lucifer cannot well be expected to talk like an orthodox divine—and that the conversation of the first Rebel and the first Murderer was not likely to be very unexceptionable—or to plead the authority of Milton, or the authors of the old mysteries, for such offensive colloquies. The fact is, that here *the whole argument*—and a very elaborate and specious argument it is—is directed against the goodness or the power of the Deity, and against the reasonableness of religion in general; and there is no answer so much as attempted to the offensive doctrines that are so strenuously inculcated. The Devil and his pupil have the field entirely to themselves—and are encountered with nothing but feeble obtestations and unreasoning horrors. Nor is this argumentative blasphemy a mere incidental deformity that arises in the course of an action directed to the common sympathies of our nature. It forms, on the contrary, the great staple of the piece—and occupies, we should think, not less than two thirds of it; so that it is really difficult to believe that it was written for any other purpose than to inculcate these doctrines—or at least to discuss the question on which they bear. Now, we can certainly have no objection to Lord Byron writing an Essay on the Origin of Evil—and sifting the whole of that vast and perplexing subject with the force and the freedom that would be expected and allowed in a fair philosophical discussion. But we do not think it fair, thus to argue it partially and *con amore*, in the name of Lucifer and Cain; without the responsibility or the liability to answer that would attach to a philosophical disputant—and in a form which both doubles the danger, if the sentiments are pernicious, and almost precludes his opponents from the possibility of a reply.

Philosophy and Poetry are both very good things in their way; but, in our opinion, they do not go very well together. It is but a poor and pedantic sort of poetry that seeks chiefly to embody metaphysical subtilties and abstract deductions of reason—and a very suspicious philosophy that aims at establishing its doctrines by appeals to the passions and the fancy. Though such arguments, however,

are worth little in the schools, it does not follow that their effect is inconsiderable in the world. On the contrary, it is the mischief of all poetical paradoxes, that, from the very limits and end of poetry, which deals only in obvious and glancing views, they are never brought to the fair test of argument. An allusion to a doubtful topic will often pass for a definitive conclusion on it; and, when clothed in beautiful language, may leave the most pernicious impressions behind. In the courts of morality, poets are unexceptionable *witnesses;* they may give in the evidence, and depose to facts whether good or ill; but we demur to their arbitrary and self-pleasing summings up. They are suspected *judges*, and not very often safe advocates; where great questions are concerned, and universal principles brought to issue. But we shall not press this point farther at present.

We shall give but one specimen, and that the least offensive we can find, of the prevailing tone of this extraordinary drama. It is the address (for we cannot call it prayer) with which Cain accompanies the offering of his sheaves on the altar—and directed to be delivered, standing erect.

"Spirit! whate'er or whosoe'er thou art,
Omnipotent, it may be—and, if good,
Shown in the exemption of thy deeds from evil;
Jehovah upon earth! and God in heaven!
And it may be with other names, because
Thine attributes seem many, as thy works:—
If thou must be propitiated with prayers,
Take them! If thou must be induced with altars,
And soften'd with a sacrifice, receive them!
Two beings here erect them unto thee. [smokes
If thou lov'st blood, the shepherd's shrine, which
On my right hand, hath shed it for thy service,
In the first of his flock, whose limbs now reek
In sanguinary incense to thy skies;
Or if the sweet and blooming fruits of earth,
And milder seasons, which the unstain'd turf
I spread them on now offers in the face
Of the broad sun which ripen'd them, may seem
Good to thee, inasmuch as they have not
Suffer'd in limb or life, and rather form
A sample of thy works, than supplication
To look on ours! If a shrine without victim,
And altar without gore, may win thy favour,
Look on it! and for him who dresseth it,
He is—such as thou mad'st him; and seeks nothing
Which must be won by kneeling. If he's evil,
Strike him! thou art omnipotent, and may'st,—
For what can he oppose? If he be good,
Strike him, or spare him, as thou wilt! since all
Rests upon thee; and good and evil seem
To have no power themselves, save in thy will;
And whether that be good or ill I know not,
Not being omnipotent, nor fit to judge
Omnipotence; but merely to endure
Its mandate—which thus far I have endured."
pp. 424, 425.

The catastrophe follows soon after, and is brought about with great dramatic skill and effect. The murderer is sorrowful and confounded—his parents reprobate and renounce him—his wife clings to him with eager and unhesitating affection; and they wander forth together into the vast solitude of the universe.

We have now gone through the poetical part of this volume, and ought here, perhaps, to close our account of it. But there are a few pages in prose that are more talked of than all the rest; and which lead irresistibly to topics, upon which it seems at last necessary that we should express an opinion. We allude to the concluding part of the Appendix to "The Two Foscari," in which Lord Byron resumes his habitual complaint of the hostility which he has experienced from the writers of his own country—makes reprisals on those who have assailed his reputation—and inflicts, in particular, a memorable chastisement upon the unhappy Laureate, interspersed with some political reflections of great weight and authority.

It is not however with these, or the merits of the treatment which Mr. Southey has either given or received, that we have now any concern. But we have a word or two to say on the griefs of Lord Byron himself. He complains bitterly of the detraction by which he has been assailed—and intimates that his works have been received by the public with far less cordiality and favour than he was entitled to expect. We are constrained to say that this appears to us a very extraordinary mistake. In the whole course of our experience, we cannot recollect a single author who has had so little reason to complain of his reception—to whose genius the public has been so early and so constantly just—to whose faults they have been so long and so signally indulgent. From the very first, he must have been aware that he offended the principles and shocked the prejudices of the majority, by his sentiments, as much as he delighted them by his talents. Yet there never was an author so universally and warmly applauded, so gently admonished—so kindly entreated to look more heedfully to his opinions. He took the praise, as usual, and rejected the advice. As he grew in fame and authority, he aggravated all his offences—clung more fondly to all he had been reproached with—and only took leave of Childe Harold to ally himself to Don Juan! That he has since been talked of, in public and in private, with less unmingled admiration—that his name is now mentioned as often for censure as for praise—and that the exultation with which his countrymen once hailed the greatest of our living poets, is now alloyed by the recollection of the tendency of his writings—is matter of notoriety to all the world; but matter of surprise, we should imagine, to nobody but Lord Byron himself.

He would fain persuade himself, indeed, that for this decline of his popularity—or rather this stain upon its lustre—for he is still popular beyond all other example—and it is only because he is so that we feel any interest in this discussion;—he is indebted, not to any actual demerits of his own, but to the jealousy of those he has supplanted, the envy of those he has outshone, or the party rancour of those against whose corruptions he has testified;—while, at other times, he seems inclined to insinuate, that it is chiefly because he is a *Gentleman* and a *Nobleman* that plebeian censors have conspired to bear him down! We scarcely think, however, that these theories will pass with Lord Byron himself—we are

sure they will pass with no other person.—They are so manifestly inconsistent, as mutually to destroy each other—and so weak, as to be quite insufficient to account for the fact, even if they could be effectually combined for that purpose. *The party* that Lord Byron has chiefly offended, bears no malice to Lords and Gentlemen. Against its rancour, on the contrary, these qualities have undoubtedly been his best protection; and had it not been for them, he may be assured that he would, long ere now, have been shown up in the pages of the Quarterly, with the same candour and liberality that has there been exercised towards his friend Lady Morgan. That the base and the bigoted—those whom he has darkened by his glory, spited by his talent, or mortified by his neglect—have taken advantage of the prevailing disaffection, to vent their puny malice in silly nicknames and vulgar scurrility, is natural and true. But Lord Byron may depend upon it, that the dissatisfaction is not confined to them—and, indeed, that they would never have had the courage to assail one so immeasurably their superior, if he had not at once made himself vulnerable by his errors, and alienated his natural defenders by his obstinate adherence to them. *We* are not bigots or rival poets. We have not been detractors from Lord Byron's fame, nor the friends of his detractors; and *we* tell him—far more in sorrow than in anger—that we verily believe the great body of the English nation—the religious, the moral, and the candid part of it—consider the tendency of his writings to be immoral and pernicious—and look upon his perseverance in that strain of composition with regret and reprehension.

He has no priestlike cant or priestlike reviling to apprehend from us. We do not charge him with being either a disciple or an apostle of Satan; nor do we describe his poetry as a mere compound of blasphemy and obscenity. On the contrary, we are inclined to believe that he wishes well to the happiness of mankind—and are glad to testify, that his poems abound with sentiments of great dignity and tenderness, as well as passages of infinite sublimity and beauty. But their general tendency we believe to be in the highest degree pernicious; and we even think that it is chiefly by means of the fine and lofty sentiments they contain, that they acquire their most fatal power of corruption. This may sound at first, perhaps, like a paradox; but we are mistaken if we shall not make it intelligible enough in the end.

We think there are indecencies and indelicacies, seductive descriptions and profligate representations, which are extremely reprehensible; and also audacious speculations, and erroneous and uncharitable assertions, equally indefensible. But if these had stood alone, and if the whole body of his works had been made up of gaudy ribaldry and flashy scepticism, the mischief, we think, would have been much less than it is. He is not more obscene, perhaps, than Dryden or Prior, and other classical and pardoned writers · nor is there any passage in the history even of Don Juan, so offensively degrading as Tom Jones' affair with Lady Bellaston. It is no doubt a wretched apology for the indecencies of a man of genius, that equal indecencies have been forgiven to his predecessors: But the precedent of lenity might have been followed; and we might have passed both the levity and the voluptuousness—the dangerous warmth of his romantic situations, and the scandal of his cold-blooded dissipation. It might not have been so easy to get over his dogmatic scepticism—his hard-hearted maxims of misanthropy—his cold-blooded and eager expositions of the non-existence of virtue and honour. Even this, however, might have been comparatively harmless, if it had not been accompanied by that which may look, at first sight, as a palliation—the frequent presentment of the most touching pictures of tenderness, generosity, and faith.

The charge we bring against Lord Byron, in short, is, that his writings have a tendency to destroy all belief in the reality of virtue—and to make all enthusiasm and constancy of affection ridiculous; and this, not so much by direct maxims and examples, of an imposing or seducing kind, as by the constant exhibition of the most profligate heartlessness in the persons who had been transiently represented as actuated by the purest and most exalted emotions—and in the lessons of that very teacher who had been, but a moment before, so beautifully pathetic in the expression of the loftiest conceptions. When a gay voluptuary descants, somewhat too freely, on the intoxications of love and wine, we ascribe his excesses to the effervescence of youthful spirits, and do not consider him as seriously impeaching either the value or the reality of the severer virtues; and in the same way, when the satirist deals out his sarcasms against the sincerity of human professions, and unmasks the secret infirmities of our bosoms, we consider this as aimed at hypocrisy, and not at mankind: or, at all events, and in either case, we consider the Sensualist and the Misanthrope as wandering each in his own delusion—and are contented to pity those who have never known the charms of a tender or generous affection—The true antidote to such seductive or revolving views of human nature, is to turn to the scenes of its nobleness and attraction; and to reconcile ourselves again to our kind, by listening to the accents of pure affection and incorruptible honour. But if those accents have flowed in all their sweetness, from the very lips that instantly open again to mock and blaspheme them, the antidote is mingled with the poison, and the draught is the more deadly for the mixture!

The reveller may pursue his orgies, and the wanton display her enchantments, with comparative safety to those around them, as long as they know or believe that there are purer and higher enjoyments, and teachers and followers of a happier way. But if the Priest pass from the altar, with persuasive exhortations to peace and purity still trembling on his tongue, to join familiarly in the grossest and most pro-

fane debauchery—if the Matron, who has charmed all hearts by the lovely sanctimonies of her conjugal and maternal endearments, glides out from the circle of her children, and gives bold and shameless way to the most abandoned and degrading vices—our notions of right and wrong are at once confounded—our confidence in virtue shaken to the foundation—and our reliance on truth and fidelity at an end for ever.

This is the charge which we bring against Lord Byron. We say that, under some strange misapprehension as to the truth, and the duty of proclaiming it, he has exerted all the powers of his powerful mind to convince his readers, both directly and indirectly, that all ennobling pursuits, and disinterested virtues, are mere deceits or illusions—hollow and despicable mockeries for the most part, and, at best, but laborious follies. Religion, love, patriotism, valour, devotion, constancy, ambition—all are to be laughed at, disbelieved in, and despised!—and nothing is really good, so far as we can gather, but a succession of dangers to stir the blood, and of banquets and intrigues to soothe it again! If this doctrine stood alone, with its examples, it would revolt, we believe more than it would seduce:—But the author of it has the unlucky gift of personating all those sweet and lofty illusions, and that with such grace and force, and truth to nature, that it is impossible not to suppose, for the time, that he is among the most devoted of their votaries—till he casts off the character with a jerk—and, the moment after he has moved and exalted us to the very height of our conception, resumes his mockery at all things serious or sublime—and lets us down at once on some coarse joke, hard-hearted sarcasm, or fierce and relentless personality—as if on purpose to show

"Whoe'er was edified, himself was not"—

or to demonstrate practically as it were, and by example, how possible it is to have all fine and noble feelings, or their appearance, for a moment, and yet retain no particle of respect for them—or of belief in their intrinsic worth or permanent reality. Thus, we have an indelicate but very clever scene of young Juan's concealment in the bed of an amorous matron, and of the torrent of "rattling and audacious eloquence" with which she repels the too just suspicions of her jealous lord. All this is merely comic, and a little coarse:—But then the poet chooses to make this shameless and abandoned woman address to her young gallant an epistle breathing the very spirit of warm, devoted, pure, and unalterable love—thus profaning the holiest language of the heart, and indirectly associating it with the most hateful and degrading sensuality. In like manner, the sublime and terrific description of the Shipwreck is strangely and disgustingly broken by traits of low humour and buffoonery;—and we pass immediately from the moans of an agonising father fainting over his famished son, to facetious stories of Juan's begging a paw of his father's dog—and refusing a slice of his tutor!—as if it were a fine thing to be hard-hearted—and pity and compassion were fit only to be laughed at. In the same spirit, the glorious Ode on the aspirations of Greece after Liberty, is instantly followed up by a strain of dull and cold-blooded ribaldry;—and we are hurried on from the distraction and death of Haidee to merry scenes of intrigue and masquerading in the seraglio. Thus all good feelings are excited only to accustom us to their speedy and complete extinction; and we are brought back, from their transient and theatrical exhibition, to the staple and substantial doctrine of the work—the non-existence of constancy in women or honour in men, and the folly of expecting to meet with any such virtues, or of cultivating them, for an undeserving world;—and all this mixed up with so much wit and cleverness, and knowledge of human nature, as to make it irresistibly pleasant and plausible—while there is not only no antidote supplied, but every thing that might have operated in that way has been anticipated, and presented already in as strong and engaging a form as possible—but under such associations as to rob it of all efficacy, or even turn it into an auxiliary of the poison.

This is our sincere opinion of much of Lord Byron's most splendid poetry—a little exaggerated perhaps in the expression, from a desire to make our exposition clear and impressive—but, in substance, we think merited and correct. We have already said, and we deliberately repeat, that we have no notion that Lord Byron had any mischievous intention in these publications—and readily acquit him of any wish to corrupt the morals or impair the happiness of his readers. Such a wish, indeed, is in itself altogether inconceivable; but it is our duty, nevertheless, to say, that much of what he has published appears to us to have this tendency—and that we are acquainted with no writings so well calculated to extinguish in young minds all generous enthusiasm and gentle affection—all respect for themselves, and all love for their kind—to make them practise and profess hardily what it teaches them to suspect in others—and actually to persuade them that it is wise and manly and knowing to laugh, not only at self-denial and restraint, but at all aspiring ambition, and all warm and constant affection.

How opposite to this is the system, or the temper, of the great author of Waverley—the only living individual to whom Lord Byron must submit to be ranked as inferior in genius—and still more deplorably inferior in all that makes genius either amiable in itself, or useful to society! With all his unrivalled power of invention and judgment, of pathos and pleasantry, the tenor of his sentiments is uniformly generous, indulgent, and good-humoured; and so remote from the bitterness of misanthropy, that he never indulges in sarcasm, and scarcely, in any case, carries his merriment so far as derision. But the peculiarity by which he stands most broadly and proudly distinguished from Lord Byron is, that, beginning as he frequently does, with some ludicrous or satirical theme, he never fails to raise out of it some feelings of a gener-

ous or gentle kind, and to end by exciting our tender pity, or deep respect, for those very individuals or classes of persons who seemed at first to be brought on the stage for our mere sport and amusement—thus making the ludicrous itself subservient to the cause of benevolence—and inculcating, at every turn, and as the true end and result of all his trials and experiments, the love of our kind, and the duty and delight of a cordial and genuine sympathy with the joys and sorrows of every condition of men. It seems to be Lord Byron's way, on the contrary, never to excite a kind or a noble sentiment, without making haste to obliterate it by a torrent of unfeeling mockery or relentless abuse, and taking pains to show how well those passing fantasies may be reconciled to a system of resolute misanthropy, or so managed as even to enhance its merits or confirm its truth. With what different sensations, accordingly, do we read the works of those two great writers!—With the one, we seem to share a gay and gorgeous banquet—with the other, a wild and dangerous intoxication. Let Lord Byron bethink him of this contrast—and its causes and effects. Though he scorns the precepts, and defies the censure of ordinary men, he may yet be moved by the *example* of his only superior!—In the mean time, we have endeavoured to point out the canker that stains the splendid flowers of his poetry—or, rather, the serpent that lurks beneath them. If it will not listen to the voice of the charmer, that brilliant garden, gay and glorious as it is, must be deserted, and its existence deplored, as a snare to the unwary.

(August, 1817.)

Manfred; a Dramatic Poem. By Lord Byron. 8vo. pp. 75. London: 1811.

This is a very strange—not a very pleasing—but unquestionably a very powerful and most poetical production. The noble author, we find, still deals with that dark and overawing Spirit, by whose aid he has so often subdued the minds of his readers, and in whose might he has wrought so many wonders. In Manfred, we recognise at once the gloom and potency of that soul which burned and blasted and fed upon itself in Harold, and Conrad, and Lara—and which comes again in this piece, more in sorrow than in anger—more proud, perhaps, and more awful than ever—but with the fiercer traits of its misanthropy subdued, as it were, and quenched in the gloom of a deeper despondency. Manfred does not, like Conrad and Lara, wreak the anguish of his burning heart in the dangers and daring of desperate and predatory war—nor seek to drown bitter thoughts in the tumult of perpetual contention—nor yet, like Harold, does he sweep over the peopled scenes of the earth with high disdain and aversion, and make his survey of the business and pleasures and studies of man an occasion for taunts and sarcasms, and the food of an immeasurable spleen. He is fixed by the genius of the poet in the majestic solitudes of the central Alps—where, from his youth up, he has lived in proud but calm seclusion from the ways of men; conversing only with the magnificent forms and aspects of nature by which he is surrounded, and with the Spirits of the Elements over whom he has acquired dominion, by the secret and unhallowed studies of Sorcery and Magic. He is averse indeed from mankind, and scorns the low and frivolous nature to which he belongs; but he cherishes no animosity or hostility to that feeble race. Their concerns excite no interest—their pursuits no sympathy—their joys no envy. It is irksome and vexatious for him to be crossed by them in his melancholy musings,—but he treats them with gentleness and pity; and, except when stung to impatience by too importunate an intrusion, is kind and considerate of the comforts of all around him.

This piece is properly entitled a Dramatic Poem—for it is merely poetical, and is not at all a drama or play in the modern acceptation of the term. It has no action; no plot—and no characters; Manfred merely muses and suffers from the beginning to the end. His distresses are the same at the opening of the scene and at its closing—and the temper in which they are borne is the same. A hunter and a priest, and some domestics, are indeed introduced; but they have no connection with the passions or sufferings on which the interest depends; and Manfred is substantially *alone* throughout the whole piece. He holds no communion but with the memory of the Being he had loved; and the immortal Spirits whom he evokes to reproach with his misery, and their inability to relieve it. These unearthly beings approach nearer to the character of persons of the drama—but still they are but choral accompaniments to the performance; and Manfred is, in reality, the only actor and sufferer on the scene. To delineate his character indeed—to render conceivable his feelings—is plainly the whole scope and design of the poem; and the conception and execution are, in this respect, equally admirable. It is a grand and terrific vision of a being invested with superhuman attributes, in order that he may be capable of more than human sufferings, and be sustained under them by more than human force and pride. To object to the improbability of the fiction is, we think, to mistake the end and aim of the author. Probabilities, we apprehend, did not enter at all into his consideration—his object was, to produce effect—to exalt and dilate the character through whom he was to interest or appal us—and to raise our conception of it, by all the helps that could be derived from the majesty of nature, or the dread of superstition. It is enough, therefore, if the situation in which he has placed him is *conceivable*—and if the supposition of its reality enhances our emotions and kindles our imagination;—for it is Manfred only that we are required to fear, to pity, or admire. If we can once conceive of him as a real existence, and enter into the depth and the height of his pride and his sorrows, we may deal as we please with the means that have been used to furnish us with this impression, or to enable us to attain to this conception. We may regard them but as types, or metaphors, or allegories: But *he* is the thing to be expressed; and the feeling and the intellect, of which all these are but shadows.

The events, such as they are, upon which the piece may be said to turn, have all taken place long before its opening, and are but dimly shadowed out in the casual communications of the agonising being to whom they relate. Nobly born and trained in the castle of his ancestors, he had very soon sequestered himself from the society of men; and, after running through the common circle of human sciences, had dedicated himself to the worship of the wild magnificence of nature, and to those forbidden studies by which he had learned to command its presiding powers.—One companion, however, he had, in all his tasks and enjoyments—a female of kindred genius, taste, and capacity—lovely too beyond all loveliness; but, as we gather, too nearly related to be lawfully beloved. The catastrophe of their unhappy passion is insinuated in the darkest and most ambiguous terms—all that we make out is, that she died untimely and by violence, on account of this fatal attachment—though not by the act of its object. He killed her, he says, not with his hand—but his heart; and her blood was shed, though not by him! From that hour, life is a burden to him, and memory a torture—and the extent of his power and knowledge serves only to show him the hopelessness and endlessness of his misery.

The piece opens with his evocation of the Spirits of the Elements, from whom he demands the boon of forgetfulness—and questions them as to his own immortality. The scene is in his Gothic tower at midnight—and opens with a soliloquy that reveals at once the state of the speaker, and the genius of the author.

> "The lamp must be replenish'd—but even then
> It will not burn so long as I must watch!
> Philosophy and science, and the springs
> Of wonder, and the wisdom of the world,
> I have essayed, and in my mind there is
> A power to make these subject to itself—
> But they avail not: I have done men good,
> And I have met with good even among men—
> But this avail'd not: I have had my foes,
> And none have baffled, many fallen before me—
> But this avail'd not:—Good, or evil, life,
> Powers, passions, all I see in other beings,
> Have been to me as rain unto the sands,
> Since that all-nameless hour! I have no dread,
> And feel the curse to have no natural fear,
> Nor flattering throb, that beats with hopes or wishes,
> Or lurking love of something on the earth.—
> Now to my task."—pp. 7, 8.

When his evocation is completed, a star is seen at the far end of a gallery, and celestial voices are heard reciting a great deal of poetry. After they have answered that the gift of oblivion is not at their disposal, and intimated that death itself could not bestow it on him, they ask if he has any further demand to make of them. He answers,

> "No, none: yet stay!—one moment, ere we
> I would behold ye face to face. I hear [part—
> Your voices, sweet and melancholy sounds
> As music on the waters; and I see
> The steady aspect of a clear large star;
> But nothing more. Approach me as ye are,
> Or one, or all, in your accustom'd forms.
> *Spirit.* We have no forms beyond the elements
> Of which we are the mind and principle:
> But choose a form—in that we will appear.
> *Man.* I have no choice; there is no form on earth
> Hideous or beautiful to me. Let him
> Who is most powerful of ye, take such aspect
> As unto him may seem most fitting.—Come!
> *Seventh Spirit.* (*Appearing in the shape of a beautiful female figure.*) Behold!
> *M.* Oh God! if it be thus, and *thou*
> Art not a madness and a mockery,
> I yet might be most happy.—I will clasp thee,
> And we again will be— [*The figure vanishes.*
> My heart is crush'd!
> [Manfred *falls senseless.*"—pp. 15, 16.

The first scene of this extraordinary performance ends with a long poetical incantation, sung by the invisible spirits over the senseless victim before them. The second shows him in the bright sunshine of morning, on the top of the Jungfrau mountain, meditating self-destruction—and uttering forth in solitude as usual the voice of his habitual despair, and those intermingled feelings of love and admiration for the grand and beautiful objects with which he is environed, that unconsciously win him back to a certain kindly sympathy with human enjoyments.

> "*Man.* The spirits I have raised abandon me—
> The spells which I have studied baffle me—
> The remedy I reck'd of tortured me;
> I lean no more on superhuman aid:
> It hath no power upon the past, and for
> The future, till the past be gulf'd in darkness,
> It is not of my search.—My mother Earth!
> And thou fresh breaking Day, and you, ye Moun [tains
> Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love ye.
> And thou, the bright eye of the universe,
> That openest over all, and unto all
> Art a delight—thou shin'st not on my heart.
> And you, ye crags, upon whose extreme edge
> I stand, and on the torrent's brink beneath
> Behold the tall pines dwindled as to shrubs
> In dizziness of distance; when a leap,
> A stir, a motion, even a breath, would bring
> My breast upon its rocky bosom's bed
> To rest for ever—wherefore do I pause?
> ——— Ay,
> Thou winged and cloud-cleaving minister,
> [*An eagle passes*
> Whose happy flight is highest into heaven,
> Well may'st thou swoop so near me—I should be
> Thy prey, and gorge thine eaglets! thou art gone
> Where the eye cannot follow thee; but thine eye
> Yet piercest downward, onward, or above
> With a pervading vision.—Beautiful!
> How beautiful is all this visible world!

How glorious in its action and itself!
But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns, we,
Half dust, half deity, alike unfit
To sink or soar, with our mix'd essence make
A conflict of its elements, and breathe
The breath of degradation and of pride,
Contending with low wants and lofty will
Till our mortality predominates,
And men are—what they name not to themselves,
And trust not to each other. Hark! the note,
[*The shepherd's pipe in the distance is heard.*
The natural music of the mountain reed—
For here the patriarchal days are not
A pastoral fable—pipes in the liberal air,
Mix'd with the sweet bells of the sauntering herd;
My soul would drink those echoes!—Oh, that I were
The viewless spirit of a lovely sound,
A living voice, a breathing harmony,
A bodiless enjoyment—born and dying
With the blest tone which made me!"—pp. 20—22.

At this period of his soliloquy, he is descried by a Chamois hunter, who overhears its continuance.

"To be thus—
Grey-hair'd with anguish, like these blasted pines,
Wrecks of a single winter, barkless, branchless,
A blighted trunk upon a cursed root,
Which but supplies a feeling to decay—
And to be thus, eternally but thus,
Having been otherwise!
Ye topling crags of ice!
Ye avalanches, whom a breath draws down
In mountainous o'erwhelming, come and crush me!
I hear ye momently above, beneath,
Crash with a frequent conflict; but ye pass,
And only fall on things which still would live;
On the young flourishing forest, or the hut
And hamlet of the harmless villager.
The mists boil up around the glaciers! clouds
Rise curling fast beneath me, white and sulphury,
Like foam from the roused ocean of deep Hell,
Whose every wave breaks on a living shore,
Heaped with the damn'd like pebbles—I am giddy!"
pp. 23, 24.

Just as he is about to spring from the cliff, he is seized by the hunter, who forces him away from the dangerous place in the midst of the rising tempest. In the second act, we find him in the cottage of this peasant, and in a still wilder state of disorder. His host offers him wine; but, upon looking at the cup, he exclaims—

"Away, away! there's blood upon the brim!
Will it then never—never sink in the earth?
C. Hun. What dost thou mean? thy senses wander from thee.
Man. I say 'tis blood—my blood! the pure warm stream
Which ran in the veins of my fathers, and in ours
When we were in our youth, and had one heart,
And loved each other—as we should not love!—
And this was shed: but still it rises up,
Colouring the clouds that shut me out from heaven,
Where thou art not—and I shall never be!
C. Hun. Man of strange words, and some half-maddening sin, &c.
Man. Think'st thou existence doth depend on time?
It doth; but actions are our epochs: mine
Have made my days and nights imperishable,
Endless, and all alike, as sands on the shore,
Innumerable atoms; and one desert,
Barren and cold, on which the wild waves break,
But nothing rests, save carcasses and wrecks,
Rocks, and the salt-surf weeds of bitterness.
C. Hun. Alas! he's mad—but yet I must not leave him.
Man. I would I were—for then the things I see
Would be but a distempered dream.
C. Hun. What is it
That thou dost see, or think thou look'st upon?
Man. Myself, and thee—a peasant of the Alps
Thy humble virtues, hospitable home,
And spirit patient, pious, proud and free;
Thy self-respect, grafted on innocent thoughts;
Thy days of health, and nights of sleep; thy toils,
By danger dignified, yet guiltless; hopes
Of cheerful old age and a quiet grave,
With cross and garland over its green turf,
And thy grandchildren's love for epitaph;
This do I see—and then I look within—
It matters not—my soul was scorch'd already!"
pp. 27—29.

The following scene is one of the most poetical and most sweetly written in the poem. There is a still and delicious witchery in the tranquillity and seclusion of the place, and the celestial beauty of the Being who reveals herself in the midst of these visible enchantments. In a deep valley among the mountains, Manfred appears alone before a lofty cataract, pealing in the quiet sunshine down the still and everlasting rocks; and says—

"It is not noon—the sunbow's rays still arch
The torrent with the many hues of heaven,
And roll the sheeted silver's waving column
O'er the crag's headlong perpendicular,
And fling its lines of foaming light along,
And to and fro, like the pale courser's tail,
The Giant steed, to be bestrode by Death,
As told in the Apocalypse. No eyes
But mine now drink this sight of loveliness;
I should be sole in this sweet solitude,
And with the Spirit of the place divide
The homage of these waters.—I will call her.
[*He takes some of the water into the palm of his hand, and flings it in the air, muttering the adjuration. After a pause, the* Witch of the Alps *rises beneath the arch of the sunbow of the torrent.*]
Man. Beautiful Spirit! with thy hair of light,
And dazzling eyes of glory! in whose form
The charms of Earth's least-mortal daughters grow
To an unearthly stature, in an essence
Of purer elements; while the hues of youth,—
Carnation'd like a sleeping infant's cheek,
Rock'd by the beating of her mother's heart,
Or the rose tints, which summer's twilight leaves
Upon the lofty glacier's virgin snow,
The blush of earth embracing with her heaven,—
Tinge thy celestial aspect, and make tame
The beauties of the sunbow which bends o'er thee!
Beautiful Spirit! in thy calm clear brow,
Wherein is glass'd serenity of soul,
Which of itself shows immortality,
I read that thou wilt pardon to a Son
Of Earth, whom the abstruser Powers permit
At times to commune with them—if that he
Avail him of his spells—to call thee thus,
And gaze on thee a moment.
Witch. Son of Earth!
I know thee, and the Powers which give thee power!
I know thee for a man of many thoughts,
And deeds of good and ill, extreme in both,
Fatal and fated in thy sufferings.
I have expected this—what wouldst thou with me?
Man. To look upon thy beauty!—nothing further."—pp. 31, 32.

There is something exquisitely beautiful, to our taste, in all this passage; and both the apparition and the dialogue are so managed, that the sense of their improbability is swallowed up in that of their beauty;—and, without actually believing that such spirits exist or communicate themselves, we feel for the moment as if we stood in their presence.

What follows, though extremely powerful, and more laboured in the writing, has less charm for us. He tells his celestial auditor the brief story of his misfortune; and when he mentions the death of the only being he had ever loved, the beauteous Spirit breaks in with her superhuman pride.

"And for this—
A being of the race thou dost despise,
The order which thine own would rise above,
Mingling with us and ours, thou dost forego
The gifts of our great knowledge, and shrink'st back
To recreant mortality——Away! [hour—
Man. Daughter of Air! I tell thee, since that
But words are breath!—Look on me in my sleep,
Or watch my watchings—Come and sit by me!
My solitude is solitude no more,
But peopled with the Furies!—I have gnash'd
My teeth in darkness till returning morn,
Then cursed myself till sunset;—I have pray'd
For madness as a blessing—'tis denied me.
I have affronted Death—but in the war
Of elements the waters shrunk from me,
And fatal things pass'd harmless."—pp. 36, 37.

The third scene is the boldest in the exhibition of supernatural persons. The three Destinies and Nemesis meet, at midnight, on the top of the Alps, on their way to the hall of Arimanes, and sing strange ditties to the moon, of their mischiefs wrought among men. Nemesis being rather late, thus apologizes for keeping them waiting.

"I was detain'd repairing shattered thrones,
Marrying fools, restoring dynasties,
Avenging men upon their enemies,
And making them repent their own revenge;
Goading the wise to madness; from the dull
Shaping out oracles to rule the world
Afresh; for they were waxing out of date,
And mortals dared to ponder for themselves,
To weigh kings in the balance, and to speak
Of freedom, the forbidden fruit.—Away!
We have outstaid the hour—mount we our clouds!"
p. 44.

This we think is out of place at least, if we must not say out of character; and though the author may tell us that human calamities are naturally subjects of derision to the Ministers of Vengeance, yet we cannot be persuaded that satirical and political allusions are at all compatible with the feelings and impressions which it was here his business to maintain. When the Fatal Sisters are again assembled before the throne of Arimanes, Manfred suddenly appears among them, and refuses the prostrations which they require. The first Destiny thus loftily announces him.

"Prince of the Powers invisible! This man
Is of no common order, as his port
And presence here denote; his sufferings
Have been of an immortal nature, like
Our own; his knowledge and his powers and will,
As far as is compatible with clay,
Which clogs the etherial essence, have been such
As clay hath seldom borne; his aspirations
Have been beyond the dwellers of the earth,
And they have only taught him what we know—
That knowledge is not happiness; and science
But an exchange of ignorance for that
Which is another kind of ignorance.
This is not all;—the passions, attributes [being,
Of earth and heaven, from which no power, nor
Nor breath, from the worm upwards, is exempt,
Have pierced his heart; and in their consequence
Made him a thing, which I, who pity not,
Yet pardon those who pity. He is mine,
And thine, it may be—be it so, or not,
No other Spirit in this region hath
A soul like his—or power upon his soul."
pp. 47, 48.

At his desire, the ghost of his beloved Astarte is then called up, and appears—but refuses to speak at the command of the Powers who have raised her, till Manfred breaks out into this passionate and agonising address.

"Hear me, hear me—
Astarte! my beloved! speak to me!
I have so much endured—so much endure—
Look on me! the grave hath not changed thee more
Than I am changed for thee. Thou lovedst me
Too much, as I loved thee: we were not made
To torture thus each other, though it were
The deadliest sin to love as we have loved.
Say that thou loath'st me not—that I do bear
This punishment for both—that thou wilt be
One of the blessed—and that I shall die!
For hitherto all hateful things conspire
To bind me in existence—in a life
Which makes me shrink from immortality—
A future like the past! I cannot rest.
I know not what I ask, nor what I seek:
I feel but what thou art—and what I am;
And I would hear yet once, before I perish,
The voice which was my music.—Speak to me!
For I have call'd on thee in the still night,
Startled the slumbering birds from the hush'd boughs,
And woke the mountain wolves, and made the caves
Acquainted with thy vainly echoed name,
Which answered me—many things answered me—
Spirits and men—but thou wert silent still!
Yet speak to me! I have outwatch'd the stars,
And gazed o'er heaven in vain in search of thee.
Speak to me! I have wandered o'er the earth
And never found thy likeness.—Speak to me!
Look on the fiends around—they feel for me:
I fear them not, and feel for thee alone.—
Speak to me! though it be in wrath;—but say—
I reck not what—but let me hear thee once—
This once!—once more!
Phantom of Astarte. Manfred!
Man. Say on, say on—
I live but in the sound—it is thy voice! [ills.
Phan. Manfred! To-morrow ends thine earthly
Farewell!
Man. Yet one word more—am I forgiven?
Phan. Farewell!
Man. Say, shall we meet again?
Phan. Farewell!
Man. One word for mercy! Say, thou lovest me!
Phan. Manfred!
[*The Spirit of* Astarte *disappears.*
Nem. She's gone, and will not be recalled."
pp. 50—52.

The last act, though in many passages very beautifully written, seems to us less powerful. It passes altogether in Manfred's castle, and is chiefly occupied in two long conversations between him and a holy abbot, who comes to exhort and absolve him, and whose counsel he repels with the most reverent gentleness, and but few bursts of dignity and pride. The following passages are full of poetry and feeling.

"Ay—father! I have had those earthly visions,
And noble aspirations in my youth;
To make my own the mind of other men,
The enlightener of nations; and to rise
I knew not whither—it might be to fall;
But fall, even as the mountain-cataract,
Which having leapt from its more dazzling height
Even in the foaming strength of its abyss,

(Which casts up misty columns that become
Clouds raining from the re-ascended skies),
Lies low but mighty still.—But this is past!
My thoughts mistook themselves.
Abbott. And why not live and act with other men?
Man. Because my nature was averse from life;
And yet not cruel; for I would not make,
But find a desolation:—like the wind,
The red-hot breath of the most lone Simoom,
Which dwells but in the desert, and sweeps o'er
The barren sands which bear no shrubs to blast,
And revels o'er their wild and arid waves,
And seeketh not, so that it is not sought,
But being met is deadly! Such hath been
The course of my existence; but there came
Things in my path which are no more."—
pp. 59, 60.

There is also a fine address to the setting sun—aud a singular miscellaneous soliloquy, in which one of the author's Roman recollections is brought in, we must say somewhat unnaturally.

"The stars are forth, the moon above the tops
Of the snow-shining mountains.—Beautiful!
I linger yet with Nature, for the night
Hath been to me a more familiar face
Than that of man; and in her starry shade
Of dim and solitary loveliness,
I learn'd the language of another world!
I do remember me, that in my youth,
When I was wandering—upon such a night
I stood within the Colosseum's wall,
Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome;
The trees which grew along the broken arches
Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the stars
Shone through the rents of ruin; from afar
The watchdog bayed beyond the Tiber; and
More near, from out the Cæsars' palace came
The owl's long cry, and, interruptedly,
Of distant sentinels the fitful song
Begun and died upon the gentle wind.
Some cypresses beyond the time-worn breach
Appear'd to skirt the horizon; yet they stood
Within a bowshot.—
And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon! upon
All this, and cast a wide and tender light,
Which soften'd down the hoar austerity
Of rugged desolation, and fill'd up,
As 'twere, anew, the gaps of centuries;
Leaving that beautiful which still was so,
And making that which was not, till the place
Became religion, and the heart ran o'er
With silent worship of the great of old!"—
pp. 68, 69.

In his dying hour he is beset with Demons, who pretend to claim him as their forfeit;—but he indignantly and victoriously disputes their claim, and asserts his freedom from their thraldom.

"Must crimes be punish'd but by other crimes,
And greater criminals?—Back to thy hell!
Thou hast no power upon me, *that* I feel;
Thou never shalt possess me, *that* I know:
What I have done is done; I bear within
A torture which could nothing gain from thine:
The mind which is immortal makes itself
Requital for its good or ill—derives
No colour from the fleeting things without;
But is absorb'd in sufferance or in joy,
Born from the knowledge of its own desert.
Thou didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me:
I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey—
But was my own destroyer, and will be
My own hereafter.—Back, ye baffled fiends!
The hand of death is on me—but not yours!
[*The Demons disappear.*"—pp. 74, 75.

There are great faults, it must be admitted, in this poem;—but it is undoubtedly a work of genius and originality. Its worst fault, perhaps, is, that it fatigues and overawes us by the uniformity of its terror and solemnity. Another is the painful and offensive nature of the circumstance on which its distress is ultimately founded. It all springs from the disappointment or fatal issue of an incestuous passion; and incest, according to our modern ideas—for it was otherwise in antiquity—is not a thing to be at all brought before the imagination. The lyrical songs of the Spirits are too long; and not all excellent. There is something of pedantry in them now and then; and even Manfred deals in classical allusions a little too much. If we were to consider it as a proper drama, or even as a finished poem, we should be obliged to add, that it is far too indistinct and unsatisfactory. But this we take to be according to the design and conception of the author. He contemplated but a dim and magnificent sketch of a subject which did not admit of a more accurate drawing, or more brilliant colouring. Its obscurity is a part of its grandeur;—and the darkness that rests upon it, and the smoky distance in which it is lost, are all devices to increase its majesty, to stimulate our curiosity, and to impress us with deeper awe.

It is suggested, in an ingenious paper, in a late Number of the Edinburgh Magazine, that the general conception of this piece, and much of what is excellent in the manner of its execution, have been borrowed from "the Tragical History of Dr. Faustus" of Marlowe; and a variety of passages are quoted, which the author considers as similar, and, in many respects, superior to others in the poem before us. We cannot agree in the general terms of this conclusion;—but there is, no doubt, a certain resemblance, both in some of the topics that are suggested, and in the cast of the diction in which they are expressed. Thus, to induce Faustus to persist in his unlawful studies, he is told that the Spirits of the Elements will serve him—

"Sometimes like women, or unwedded maids,
Shadowing more beauty in their ayrie browes
Than have the white breasts of the Queene o
Love."

And again, when the amorous sorcerer commands Helen of Troy to be revived, as his paramour, he addresses her, on her first appearance, in these rapturous lines—

"Was this the face that launcht a thousand ships
And burn'd the toplesse towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen! make me immortal with a kiss!
Her lips sucke forth my soule!—see where it flies!
Come, Helen, come, give me my soule againe!
Here will I dwell, for heaven is in that lip,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
O! thou art fairer than the evening ayre,
Clad in the beauty of a thousand starres;
More lovely than the monarch of the skyes
In wanton Arethusa's azure arms!"

The catastrophe, too, is bewailed in verses of great elegance and classical beauty.

"Cut is the branch that might have growne full straight,
And burned is Apollo's laurel bough
That sometime grew within this learned man.
Faustus is gone?—regard his hellish fall,
Whose fiendful torture may exhort the wise,
Only to wonder at unlawful things."

But these, and many other smooth and fanciful verses in this curious old drama, prove nothing, we think, against the originality of Manfred; for there is nothing to be found there of the pride, the abstraction, and the heart-rooted misery in which that originality consists. Faustus is a vulgar sorcerer, tempted to sell his soul to the Devil for the ordinary price of sensual pleasure, and earthly power and glory—and who shrinks and shudders in agony when the forfeit comes to be exacted. The style, too, of Marlowe, though elegant and scholarlike, is weak and childish compared with the depth and force of much of what we have quoted from Lord Byron; and the disgusting buffoonery and low farce of which his piece is principally made up, place it much more in contrast, than in any terms of comparison, with that of his noble successor. In the tone and pitch of the composition, as well as in the character of the diction in the more solemn parts, the piece before us reminds us much more of the Prometheus of Æschylus, than of any more modern performance. The tremendous solitude of the principal person—the supernatural beings with whom alone he holds communion—the guilt—the firmness—the misery—are all points of resemblance, to which the grandeur of the poetic imagery only gives a more striking effect. The chief differences are, that the subject of the Greek poet was sanctified and exalted by the established belief of his country; and that his terrors are nowhere tempered with the sweetness which breathes from so many passages of his English rival.

(January, 1809.)

Reliques of Robert Burns, *consisting chiefly of Original Letters, Poems, and Critical Observations on Scottish Songs. Collected and published by* R. H. Cromek. 8vo. pp. 450. London: 1808.

Burns is certainly by far the greatest of our poetical prodigies—from Stephen Duck down to Thomas Dermody. *They* are forgotten already; or only remembered for derision. But the name of Burns, if we are not mistaken, has not yet "gathered all its fame;" and will endure long after those circumstances are forgotten which contributed to its first notoriety. So much indeed are we impressed with a sense of his merits, that we cannot help thinking it a derogation from them to consider him as a prodigy at all; and are convinced that he will never be rightly estimated as a poet, till that vulgar wonder be entirely repressed which was raised on his having been a ploughman. It is true, no doubt, that he was born in an humble station; and that much of his early life was devoted to severe labour, and to the society of his fellow-labourers. But he was not himself either uneducated or illiterate; and was placed in a situation more favourable, perhaps, to the development of great poetical talents, than any other which could have been assigned him. He was taught, at a very early age, to read and write; and soon after acquired a competent knowledge of French, together with the elements of Latin and Geometry. His taste for reading was encouraged by his parents and many of his associates; and, before he had ever composed a single stanza, he was not only familiar with many prose writers, but far more intimately acquainted with Pope, Shakespeare, and Thomson, than nine tenths of the youth that now leave our schools for the university. Those authors, indeed, with some old collections of songs, and the lives of Hannibal and of Sir William Wallace, were his habitual study from the first days of his childhood; and, co-operating with the solitude of his rural occupations, were sufficient to rouse his ardent and ambitious mind to the love and the practice of poetry. He had about as much scholarship, in short, we imagine, as Shakespeare; and far better models to form his ear to harmony, and train his fancy to graceful invention.

We ventured, on a former occasion, to say something of the effects of regular education, and of the general diffusion of literature, in repressing the vigour and originality of all kinds of mental exertion. That speculation was perhaps carried somewhat too far; but if the paradox have proof any where, it is in its application to poetry. Among well educated people, the standard writers of this description are at once so venerated and so familiar, that it is thought equally impossible to rival them, as to write verses without attempting it. If there be one degree of fame which excites emulation, there is another which leads to despair: Nor can we conceive any one less likely to be added to the short list of original poets, than a young man of fine fancy and delicate taste, who has acquired a high relish for poetry, by perusing the most celebrated writers, and conversing with the most intelligent judges. The head of such a person is filled, of course, with all the splendid passages of ancient and modern authors, and with the fine and fastidious remarks which have been made even on those passages. When he turns his eyes, therefore, on his own conceptions or designs, they can scarcely fail to appear rude and contemptible. He is perpetually haunted and depressed by the ideal presence of those great masters, and their exacting critics. He is aware to what

comparisons his productions will be subjected among his own friends and associates; and recollects the derision with which so many rash adventurers have been chased back to their obscurity. Thus, the merit of his great predecessors chills, instead of encouraging his ardour; and the illustrious names which have already reached to the summit of excellence, act like the tall and spreading trees of the forest, which overshadow and strangle the saplings which may have struck root in the soil below—and afford efficient shelter to nothing but creepers and parasites.

There is, no doubt, in some few individuals, "that strong divinity of soul"—that decided and irresistible vocation to glory, which, in spite of all these obstructions, calls out, perhaps once or twice in a century, a bold and original poet from the herd of scholars and academical literati. But the natural tendency of their studies, and by far their most common effect, is to repress originality, and discourage enterprise; and either to change those whom nature meant for poets, into mere readers of poetry, or to bring them out in the form of witty parodists, or ingenious imitators. Independent of the reasons which have been already suggested, it will perhaps be found, too, that necessity is the mother of invention, in this as well as in the more vulgar arts; or, at least, that inventive genius will frequently slumber in inaction, where the preceding ingenuity has in part supplied the wants of the owner. A solitary and uninstructed man, with lively feelings and an inflammable imagination, will often be irresistibly led to exercise those gifts, and to occupy and relieve his mind in poetical composition: But if his education, his reading, and his society supply him with an abundant store of images and emotions, he will probably think but little of those internal resources, and feed his mind contentedly with what has been provided by the industry of others.

To say nothing, therefore, of the distractions and the dissipation of mind that belong to the commerce of the world, nor of the cares of minute accuracy and high finishing which are imposed on the professed scholar, there seem to be deeper reasons for the separation of originality and accomplishment; and for the partiality which has led poetry to choose almost all her prime favourites among the recluse and uninstructed. A youth of quick parts, in short, and creative fancy—with just so much reading as to guide his ambition, and roughhew his notions of excellence—if his lot be thrown in humble retirement, where he has no reputation to lose, and where he can easily hope to excel all that he sees around him, is much more likely, we think, to give himself up to poetry, and to train himself to habits of invention, than if he had been encumbered by the pretended helps of extended study and literary society.

If these observations should fail to strike of themselves, they may perhaps derive additional weight from considering the very remarkable fact, that almost all the great poets of every country have appeared in an early stage of their history, and in a period comparatively rude and unlettered. Homer went forth, like the morning star, before the dawn of literature in Greece, and almost all the great and sublime poets of modern Europe are already between two and three hundred years old. Since that time, although books and readers, and opportunities of reading, are multiplied a thousand fold, we have improved chiefly in point and terseness of expression, in the art of raillery, and in clearness and simplicity of thought. Force, richness, and variety of invention, are now at least as rare as ever. But the literature and refinement of the age does not exist at all for a rustic and illiterate individual; and, consequently, the present time is to him what the rude times of old were to the vigorous writers which adorned them.

But though, for these and for other reasons, we can see no propriety in regarding the poetry of Burns chiefly as the wonderful work of a peasant, and thus admiring it much in the same way as if it had been written with his toes; yet there are peculiarities in his works which remind us of the lowness of his origin, and faults for which the defects of his education afford an obvious cause, if not a legitimate apology. In forming a correct estimate of these works, it is necessary to take into account those peculiarities.

The first is, the undisciplined harshness and acrimony of his invective. The great boast of polished life is the delicacy, and even the generosity of its hostility—that quality which is still the characteristic, as it furnishes the denomination, of a gentleman—that principle which forbids us to attack the defenceless, to strike the fallen, or to mangle the slain—and enjoins us, in forging the shafts of satire, to increase the polish exactly as we add to their keenness or their weight. For this, as well as for other things, we are indebted to chivalry; and of this Burns had none. His ingenious and amiable biographer has spoken repeatedly in praise of his talents for satire—we think, with a most unhappy partiality. His epigrams and lampoons appear to us, one and all, unworthy of him;—offensive from their extreme coarseness and violence—and contemptible from their want of wit or brilliancy. They seem to have been written, not out of playful malice or virtuous indignation, but out of fierce and ungovernable anger. His whole raillery consists in railing; and his satirical vein displays itself chiefly in calling names and in swearing. We say this mainly with a reference to his personalities. In many of his more general representations of life and manners, there is no doubt much that may be called satirical, mixed up with admirable humour, and description of inimitable vivacity.

There is a similar want of polish, or at least of respectfulness, in the general tone of his gallantry. He has written with more passion, perhaps, and more variety of natural feeling, on the subject of love, than any other poet whatever—but with a fervour that is sometimes indelicate, and seldom accommodated to the timidity and "sweet austere composure" of women of refinement. He has expressed admirably the feelings of an enamoured peasant, who, however refined or eloquent he may be, always approaches his mistress on a footing of equality; but has never caught that tone of chivalrous gallantry which uniformly abases itself in the presence of the object of its devotion. Accordingly, instead of suing for a smile, or melting in a tear, his muse deals in nothing but locked embraces and midnight rencontres; and, even in his complimentary effusions to ladies of the highest rank, is for straining them to the bosom of her impetuous votary. It is easy, accordingly, to see from his correspondence, that many of his female patronesses shrunk from the vehement familiarity of his admiration; and there are even some traits in the volumes before us, from which we can gather, that he resented the shyness and estrangement to which those feelings gave rise, with at least as little chivalry as he had shown in producing them.

But the leading vice in Burns' character, and the cardinal deformity, indeed, of all his productions, was his contempt, or affectation of contempt, for prudence, decency, and regularity; and his admiration of thoughtlessness, oddity, and vehement sensibility;—his belief, in short, in *the dispensing power* of genius and social feeling, in all matters of morality and common sense. This is the very slang of the worst German plays, and the lowest of our town-made novels; nor can any thing be more lamentable, than that it should have found a patron in such a man as Burns, and communicated to many of his productions a character of immorality, at once contemptible and hateful. It is but too true, that men of the highest genius have frequently been hurried by their passions into a violation of prudence and duty; and there is something generous, at least, in the apology which their admirers may make for them, on the score of their keener feelings and habitual want of reflection. But this apology, which is quite unsatisfactory in the mouth of another, becomes an insult and an absurdity whenever it proceeds from their own. A man may say of his friend, that he is a noble-hearted fellow—too generous to be just, and with too much spirit to be always prudent and regular. But he cannot be allowed to say even this of himself; and still less to represent himself as a hairbrained sentimental soul, constantly carried away by fine fancies and visions of love and philanthropy, and born to confound and despise the cold-blooded sons of prudence and sobriety. This apology, indeed, evidently destroys itself: For it shows that conduct to be the result of deliberate system, which it affects at the same time to justify as the fruit of mere thoughtlessness and casual impulse. Such protestations, therefore, will always be treated, as they deserve, not only with contempt, but with incredulity; and their magnanimous authors set down as determined profligates, who seek to disguise their selfishness under a name somewhat less revolting. That profligacy is almost always selfishness, and that the excuse of impetuous feeling can hardly ever be justly pleaded for those who neglect the ordinary duties of life, must be apparent, we think, even to the least reflecting of those sons of fancy and song. It requires no habit of deep thinking, nor any thing more, indeed, than the information of an honest heart, to perceive that it is cruel and base to spend, in vain superfluities, that money which belongs of right to the pale industrious tradesman and his famishing infants; or that it is a vile prostitution of language, to talk of that man's generosity or goodness of heart, who sits raving about friendship and philanthropy in a tavern, while his wife's heart is breaking at her cheerless fireside, and his children pining in solitary poverty.

This pitiful cant of careless feeling and eccentric genius, accordingly, has never found much favour in the eyes of English sense and morality. The most signal effect which it ever produced, was on the muddy brains of some German youth, who are said to have left college in a body to rob on the highway! because Schiller had represented the captain of a gang as so very noble a creature.—But in this country, we believe, a predilection for that honourable profession must have preceded this admiration of the character. The style we have been speaking of, accordingly, is now the heroics only of the hulks and the house of correction; and has no chance, we suppose, of being greatly admired, except in the farewell speech of a young gentleman preparing for Botany Bay.

It is humiliating to think how deeply Burns has fallen into this debasing error. He is perpetually making a parade of his thoughtlessness, inflammability, and imprudence, and talking with much complacency and exultation of the offence he has occasioned to the sober and correct part of mankind. This odious slang infects almost all his prose, and a very great proportion of his poetry; and is, we are persuaded, the chief, if not the only source of the disgust with which, in spite of his genius, we know that he is regarded by many very competent and liberal judges. His apology, too, we are willing to believe, is to be found in the original lowness of his situation, and the slightness of his acquaintance with the world. With his talents and powers of observation, he could not have seen *much* of the beings who echoed this raving, without feeling for them that distrust and contempt which would have made him blush to think he had ever stretched over them the protecting shield of his genius.

Akin to this most lamentable trait of vulgarity, and indeed in some measure arising out of it, is that perpetual boast of his own independence, which is obtruded upon the readers of Burns in almost every page of his writings. The sentiment itself is noble, and it is often finely expressed;—but a gentleman would only have expressed it when he was insulted or provoked; and would never have made it a spontaneous theme to those friends in whose estimation he felt that his honour stood clear. It is mixed up, too, in Burns

with too fierce a tone of defiance; and indicates rather the pride of a sturdy peasant, than the calm and natural elevation of a generous mind.

The last of the symptoms of rusticity which we think it necessary to notice in the works of this extraordinary man, is that frequent mistake of mere exaggeration and violence, for force and sublimity, which has defaced so much of his prose composition, and given an air of heaviness and labour to a good deal of his serious poetry. The truth is, that his *forte* was in humour and in pathos—or rather in tenderness of feeling; and that he has very seldom succeeded, either where mere wit and sprightliness, or where great energy and weight of sentiment were requisite. He had evidently a very false and crude notion of what constituted *strength* of writing; and instead of that simple and brief directness which stamps the character of vigour upon every syllable, has generally had recourse to a mere accumulation of hyperbolical expressions, which encumber the diction instead of exalting it, and show the determination to be impressive, without the power of executing it. This error also we are inclined to ascribe entirely to the defects of his education. The value of simplicity in the expression of passion, is a lesson, we believe, of nature and of genius;—but its importance in mere grave and impressive writing, is one of the latest discoveries of rhetorical experience.

With the allowances and exceptions we have now stated, we think Burns entitled to the rank of a great and original genius. He has in all his compositions great force of conception; and great spirit and animation in its expression. He has taken a large range through the region of Fancy, and naturalized himself in almost all her climates. He has great humour—great powers of description—great pathos—and great discrimination of character. Almost every thing that he says has spirit and originality; and every thing that he says well, is characterized by a charming facility, which gives a grace even to occasional rudeness, and communicates to the reader a delightful sympathy with the spontaneous soaring and conscious inspiration of the poet.

Considering the reception which these works have met with from the public, and the long period during which the greater part of them have been in their possession, it may appear superflous to say any thing as to their characteristic or peculiar merit. Though the ultimate judgment of the public, however, be always sound, or at least decisive as to its general result, it is not always very apparent upon what grounds it has proceeded; nor in consequence of what, or in spite of what, it has been obtained. In Burns' works there is much to censure, as well as much to praise; and as time has not yet separated his ore from its dross, it may be worth while to state, in a very general way, what we presume to anticipate as the result of this separation. Without pretending to enter at all into the comparative merit of particular passages we may venture to lay it down as our opinion—that his poetry is far superior to his prose; that his Scottish compositions are greatly to be preferred to his English ones; and that his Songs will probably outlive all his other productions. A very few remarks on each of these subjects will comprehend almost all that we have to say of the volumes now before us.

The prose works of Burns consist almost entirely of his letters. They bear, as well as his poetry, the seal and the impress of his genius; but they contain much more bad taste, and are written with far more apparent labour. His poetry was almost all written primarily from feeling, and only secondarily from ambition. His letters seem to have been nearly all composed as exercises, and for display. There are few of them written with simplicity or plainness; and though natural enough as to the sentiment, they are generally very strained and elaborate in the expression. A very great proportion of them, too, relate neither to facts nor feelings peculiarly connected with the author or his correspondent—but are made up of general declamation, moral reflections, and vague discussions—all evidently composed for the sake of effect, and frequently introduced with long complaints of having nothing to say, and of the necessity and difficulty of letter-writing.

By far the best of those compositions, are such as we should consider as exceptions from this general character—such as contain some specific information as to himself, or are suggested by events or observations directly applicable to his correspondent. One of the best, perhaps, is that addressed to Dr. Moore, containing an account of his early life, of which Dr. Currie has made such a judicious use in his Biography. It is written with great clearness and characteristic effect, and contains many touches of easy humour and natural eloquence. We are struck, as we open the book accidentally, with the following original application of a classical image, by this unlettered rustic. Talking of the first vague aspirations of his own gigantic mind, he says—we think very finely—"I had felt some early stirrings of ambition; but they were the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclop round the walls of his cave!" Of his other letters, those addressed to Mrs. Dunlop are, in our opinion, by far the best. He appears, from first to last, to have stood somewhat in awe of this excellent lady; and to have been no less sensible of her sound judgment and strict sense of propriety, than of her steady and generous partiality. The following passage we think is striking and characteristic:—

"I own myself so little a Presbyterian, that I approve of set times and seasons of more than ordinary acts of devotion, for breaking in on that habituated routine of life and thought which is so apt to reduce our existence to a kind of instinct, or even sometimes, and with some minds, to a state very little superior to mere machinery.

"This day; the first Sunday of May; a breezy, blue-skyed noon, some time about the beginning, and a hoary morning and calm sunny day about the end of autumn;—these, time out of mind, have been with me a kind of holiday.

"I believe I owe this to that glorious paper in the Spectator, 'The Vision of Mirza;' a piece that struck my young fancy before I was capable of fixing an idea to a word of three syllables. 'On the 5th day of the moon, which, according to the custom of my forefathers, I always *keep holy*, after having washed myself, and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hill of Bagdat, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer.'

"We know nothing, or next to nothing, of the substance or structure of our souls, so cannot account for those seeming caprices in them, that one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which, on minds of a different cast, makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favourite flowers in spring; among which are the mountain-daisy, the hare-bell, the fox-glove, the wild brier-rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never hear the loud, solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of grey plover in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul, like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like the Eolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident? Or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod?"—Vol. ii. pp. 195—197.

To this we may add the following passage, as a part, indeed, of the same picture:—

"There is scarcely any earthly object gives me more—I do not know if I should call it pleasure—but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me—than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood, or high plantation, in a cloudy winter-day, and hear the stormy wind howling among the trees, and raving over the plain. It is my best season for devotion: my mind is wrapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to *Him*, who, in the pompous language of the Hebrew bard, "walks on the wings of the wind."—Vol. ii. p. 11.

The following is one of the best and most striking of a whole series of eloquent hypochondriasm.

"After six weeks' confinement, I am beginning to walk across the room. They have been six horrible weeks;—anguish and low spirits made me unfit to read, write, or think.

"I have a hundred times wished that one could resign life as an officer resigns a commission: for I would not *take in* any poor, ignorant wretch, by *selling out*. Lately I was a sixpenny private; and, God knows, a miserable soldier enough: now I march to the campaign, a starving cadet—a little more conspicuously wretched.

"I am ashamed of all this; for though I do want bravery for the warfare of life, I could wish, like some other soldiers, to have as much fortitude or cunning as to dissemble or conceal my cowardice."
Vol. ii. pp. 127, 128.

One of the most striking letters in the collection, and, to us, one of the most interesting, is the earliest of the whole series; being addressed to his father in 1781, six or seven years before his name had been heard of out of his own family. The author was then a common flax-dresser, and his father a poor peasant;—yet there is not one trait of vulgarity, either in the thought or the expression; but, on the contrary, a dignity and elevation of sentiment, which must have been considered as of good omen in a youth of much higher condition. The letter is as follows:—

"Honoured Sir,—I have purposely delayed writing, in the hope that I should have the pleasure of seeing you on New-year's Day; but work comes so hard upon us, that I do not choose to be absent on that account, as well as for some other little reasons, which I shall tell you at meeting. My health is nearly the same as when you were here, only my sleep is a little sounder, and, on the whole, I am rather better than otherwise, though I mend by very slow degrees. The weakness of my nerves has so debilitated my mind, that I dare neither review past wants, nor look forward into futurity; for the least anxiety or perturbation in my breast produces most unhappy effects on my whole frame. Sometimes, indeed, when for an hour or two my spirits are a little lightened, I *glimmer* a little into futurity; but my principal, and indeed my only pleasurable employment, is looking backwards and forwards, in a moral and religious way. I am quite transported at the thought, that ere long, perhaps very soon, I shall bid an eternal adieu to all the pains, and uneasinesses, and disquietudes of this weary life; for I assure you I am heartily tired of it; and, if I do not very much deceive myself, I could contentedly and gladly resign it.

'The soul, uneasy, and confin'd at home
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.'

"It is for this reason I am more pleased with the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses of the 7th chapter of the Revelations, than with any ten times as many verses in the whole Bible, and would not exchange the noble enthusiasm with which they inspire me for all that this word has to offer. As for this world, I despair of ever making a figure in it. I am not formed for the bustle of the busy, nor the flutter of the gay. I shall never again be capable of entering into such scenes. Indeed I am altogether unconcerned for the thoughts of this life. I foresee that poverty and obscurity probably await me; and I am in some measure prepared, and daily preparing to meet them. I have but just time and paper to return to you my grateful thanks for the lessons of virtue and piety you have given me; which were too much neglected at the time of giving them, but which, I hope, have been remembered ere it is yet too late."—Vol. i. pp. 99—101.

Before proceeding to take any particular notice of his poetical compositions, we must take leave to apprise our Southern readers, that all his best pieces are written in Scotch; and that it is impossible for them to form any adequate judgment of their merits, without a pretty long residence among those who still use that language. To be able to translate the words, is but a small part of the knowledge that is necessary. The whole genius and idiom of the language must be familiar; and the characters, and habits, and associations of those who speak it. We beg leave too, in passing, to observe, that this Scotch is not to be considered as a provincial dialect—the vehicle only of rustic vulgarity and rude local humour. It is the language of a whole country—long an independent kingdom, and still separate in laws, character, and manners. It is by no means peculiar to the vulgar; but is the common speech of the whole nation in early life—and, with many of its most exalted and accomplished individuals, throughout their whole existence; and, though it be true that, in later times, it has been, in some measure, laid aside by the more ambitious and aspiring of the present generation, it is still recollected, even by them, as the familiar language of their childhood, and of those who were the earliest objects of their love and

veneration. It is connected, in their imagination, not only with that olden time which is uniformly conceived as more pure, lofty and simple than the present, but also with all the soft and bright colours of remembered childhood and domestic affection. All its phrases conjure up images of schoolday innocence, and sports, and friendships which have no pattern in succeeding years. Add to all this, that it is the language of a great body of poetry, with which almost all Scotchmen are familiar; and, in particular, of a great multitude of songs, written with more tenderness, nature, and feeling, than any other lyric compositions that are extant—and we may perhaps be allowed to say, that the Scotch is, in reality, a highly poetical language; and that it is an ignorant, as well as an illiberal prejudice, which would seek to confound it with the barbarous dialects of Yorkshire or Devon. In composing his Scottish poems, therefore, Burns did not merely make an instinctive and necessary use of the only dialect he could employ. The last letter which we have quoted, proves, that before he had penned a single couplet, he could write in the dialect of England with far greater purity and propriety than nine tenths of those who are called well educated in that country. He wrote in Scotch, because the writings which he most aspired to imitate were composed in that language; and it is evident, from the variations preserved by Dr. Currie, that he took much greater pains with the beauty and purity of his expressions in Scotch than in English; and, every one who understands both, must admit, with infinitely better success.

But though we have ventured to say thus much in praise of the Scottish poetry of Burns, we cannot presume to lay many specimens of it before our readers; and, in the few extracts we may be tempted to make from the volumes before us, shall be guided more by a desire to exhibit what may be intelligible to all our readers, than by a feeling of what is in itself of the highest excellence.

We have said that Burns is almost equally distinguished for his tenderness and his humour:—we might have added, for a faculty of combining them both in the same subject, not altogether without parallel in the older poets and ballad-makers, but altogether singular, we think, among modern writers. The passages of pure humour are entirely Scottish—and untranslateable. They consist in the most picturesque representations of life and manners, enlivened, and even exalted by traits of exquisite sagacity, and unexpected reflection. His tenderness is of two sorts; that which is combined with circumstances and characters of humble, and sometimes ludicrous simplicity; and that which is produced by gloomy and distressful impressions acting on a mind of keen sensibility. The passages which belong to the former description are, we think, the most exquisite and original, and, in our estimation, indicate the greatest and most amiable turn of genius; both as being accompanied by fine and feeling pictures of humble life, and as requiring that delicacy, as well as justness of conception, by which alone the fastidiousness of an ordinary reader can be reconciled to such representations. The exquisite description of "The Cotter's Saturday Night" affords, perhaps, the finest example of this sort of pathetic. Its whole beauty cannot, indeed, be discerned but by those whom experience has enabled to judge of the admirable fidelity and completeness of the picture. But, independent altogether of national peculiarities, and even in spite of the obscurity of the language, we think it impossible to peruse the following stanzas without feeling the force of tenderness and truth:—

"November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose:
The toil-worn *Cotter* frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the *morn* in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

"At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
Th' expectant *wee-things*, toddling, stacher thro'
To meet their Dad, wi' flicherin noise an' glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonnily,
His clean hearth-stane, his thriftie *wifie's* smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
An' makes him quite forget his labour an' his toil.

"Belyve the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun';
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A canna errand to a neebor town:
Their eldest hope, their *Jenny*, woman grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps, to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposite her sair-won penny fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

"But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad came o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in *Jenny's* e'e, and flush her cheek;
With heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,
While *Jenny* hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleas'd, the mother hears its nae wild, worthless rake.

"Wi' kindly welcome *Jenny* brings him ben:
A srappan youth; he taks the mother's eye;
Blythe *Jenny* sees the visit's no ill ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate and laithfu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave; [the lave.
Weel pleas'd to think her *bairn's* respected like

"The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big *ha'-Bible*, ance his father's pride:
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care; [lair.
And '*Let us worship* GOD!' he says, with solemn

"They chaunt their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim," &c.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent pair their *secret homage* pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request
That *He* who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way his wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But chiefly, in their hearts, with *grace divine* preside." Vol. iii. pp. 174—181.

The charm of the fine lines written on turning up a mouse's nest with a plough, will also be found to consist in the simple tenderness of the delineation.

"Thy wee bit *housie*, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the wins are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
Baith snell and keen!

"Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
'Till crash! the cruel *coulter* past
Out thro' thy cell.

"That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An cranreuch cauld!" Vol. iii. pp. 147.

The verses to a Mountain Daisy, though more elegant and picturesque, seem to derive their chief beauty from the same tone of sentiment.

"Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem;
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonnie gem!

"Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie *Lark*, companion meet!
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet!
Wi' spreckl'd breast,
When upward-springing, blythe to greet
The purpling east.

"Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent earth,
Thy tender form.

"There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the *share* uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!" Vol. iii. pp. 201, 202.

There are many touches of the same kind in most of the popular and beautiful poems in this collection, especially in the Winter Night—the address to his old Mare—the address to the Devil, &c.;—in all which, though the greater part of the piece be merely ludicrous and picturesque, there are traits of a delicate and tender feeling, indicating that unaffected softness of heart which is always so enchanting. In the humorous address to the Devil, which we have just mentioned, every Scottish reader must have felt the effect of this relenting nature in the following stanzas:—

"Lang syne, in *Eden's* bonie yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
An' all the soul of love they shar'd,
The raptur'd hour,
Sweet on the fragrant, flow'ry swaird,
In shady bower:

"Then you, ye auld, snic-drawing dog!
Ye came to Paradise incog,
An' gied the infant warld a shog,
'Maist ruin'd a.

"But, fare you weel, auld *Nickie-ben!*
O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
Still hae a *stake*—
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Ev'n for your sake!" Vol. iii. pp. 74—76.

The finest examples, however, of this simple and unpretending tenderness is to be found in those songs which are likely to transmit the name of Burns to all future generations. He found this delightful trait in the old Scottish ballads which he took for his model, and upon which he has improved with a felicity and delicacy of imitation altogether unrivalled in the history of literature. Sometimes it is the brief and simple pathos of the genuine old ballad; as,

"But I look to the West when I lie down to rest,
That happy my dreams and my slumbers may be;
For far in the West lives he I love best,
The lad that is dear to my baby and me."

Or, as in this other specimen—

"Drumossie moor, Drumossie day!
A waefu' day it was to me;
For there I lost my father dear,
My father dear, and brethren three.

"Their winding sheet the bluidy clay,
Their graves are growing green to see;
And by them lies the dearest lad
That ever blest a woman's e'e!
Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,
A bluidy man I trow thou be;
For mony a heart thou hast made sair,
That ne'er did wrong to thine or thee."
Vol. iv. p. 337.

Sometimes it is animated with airy narrative, and adorned with images of the utmost elegance and beauty. As a specimen taken at random, we insert the following stanzas:—

"And ay she wrought her mammie's wark:
And ay she sang sae merrilie:
The blythest bird upon the bush
Had ne'er a lighter heart than she.

"But hawks will rob the tender joys
That bless the little lintwhite's nest;
And frost will blight the fairest flowers,
And love will break the soundest rest.

"Young Robie was the brawest lad,
The flower and pride of a' the glen;
And he had owsen, sheep, and kye,
And wanton naigies nine or ten.

"He gaed wi' Jeanie to the tryste,
He danc'd wi' Jeanie on the down;
And lang ere witless Jeanie wist,
Her heart was tint, her peace was stown.

"*As in the bosom o' the stream*
The moon-beam dwells at dewy e'en;
So trembling, pure, was infant love
Within the breast o' bonie Jean!
Vol. iv. p. 80.

Sometimes, again, it is plaintive and mournful—in the same strain of unaffected simplicity.

"O stay, sweet warbling wood-lark, stay,
Nor quit for me the trembling spray!
A hapless lover courts thy lay,
Thy soothing fond complaining.

"Again, again that tender part
That I may catch thy melting art;
For surely that would touch her heart,
Wha kills me wi' disdaining.

"Say, was thy little mate unkind,
And heard thee as the careless wind?
Oh, nocht but love and sorrow join'd,
Sic notes o' woe could wauken.

"Thou tells o' never-ending care;
O' speechless grief, and dark despair;
For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair!
Or my poor heart is broken!"
Vol. iv. pp. 226, 227.

We add the following from Mr. Cromek's new volume; as the original form of the very popular song given at p. 325, of Dr. Currie's fourth volume:—

"Ye flowery banks o' bonie Doon,
How can ye blume sae fair;
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care!

"Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days
When my fause luve was true.

"Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird
That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate.

"Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon,
To see the woodbine twine,
And ilka bird sang o' its love,
And sae did I o' mine.

"Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Frae aff its thorny tree,
And my fause luver staw the rose,
But left the thorn wi' me."
Vol. v. pp. 17, 18.

Sometimes the rich imagery of the poet's fancy overshadows and almost overcomes the leading sentiment.

"The merry ploughboy cheers his team,
Wi' joy the tentie seedsman stalks,
But life to me's a weary dream,
A dream of ane that never wauks.

The wanton coot the water skims,
Amang the reeds the ducklings cry,
The stately swan majestic swims,
And every thing is blest but I.

"The sheep-herd steeks his faulding slap,
And owre the moorlands whistles shrill;
Wi' wild, unequal, wand'ring step
I meet him on the dewy hill.

"And when the lark, 'tween light and dark,
Blythe waukens by the daisy's side,
And mounts and sings on flittering wings,
A woe-worn ghaist I hameward glide."—
Vol. iii. pp. 284, 285.

The sensibility which is thus associated with simple imagery and gentle melancholy, is to us the most winning and attractive. But Burns has also expressed it when it is merely the instrument of torture—of keen remorse, and tender and agonising regret. There are some strong traits of the former feeling, in the poems entitled the Lament, Despondency, &c.; when, looking back to the times

"When love's luxurious pulse beat high,"

he bewails the consequences of his own irregularities. There is something cumbrous and inflated, however, in the diction of these pieces. We are infinitely more moved with his Elegy upon Highland Mary. Of this first love of the poet, we are indebted to Mr. Cromek for a brief, but very striking account, from the pen of the poet himself. In a note on an early song inscribed to this mistress, he had recorded in a manuscript book—

"My Highland lassie was a warm-hearted, charming young creature as ever blessed a man with generous love. After a pretty long tract of the most ardent reciprocal attachment, we met, by appointment, on the second Sunday of May, in a sequestered spot by the Banks of Ayr, where we spent the day in taking a farewell before she should embark for the West Highlands, to arrange matters among her friends for our projected change of life. At the close of Autumn following, she crossed the sea to meet me at Greenock: where she had scarce landed when she was seized with a malignant fever, which hurried my dear girl to the grave in a few days!—before I could even hear of her illness."
Vol. v. pp. 237, 238.

Mr. Cromek has added, in a note, the following interesting particulars; though without specifying the authority upon which he details them:—

"This adieu was performed with all those simple and striking ceremonials which rustic sentiment has devised to prolong tender emotions and to inspire awe. The lovers stood on each side of a small purling brook; they laved their hands in its limpid stream, and holding a Bible between them, pronounced their vows to be faithful to each other. They parted—never to meet again!

"The anniversary of *Mary Campbell*'s death (for that was her name) awakening in the sensitive mind of *Burns* the most lively emotion, he retired from his family, then residing on the farm of Ellisland, and wandered, solitary, on the banks of the Nith, and about the farm yard, in the extremest agitation of mind, nearly the whole of the night: His agitation was so great, that he threw himself on the side of a corn stack, and there conceived his sublime and tender elegy—his address *To Mary in Heaven*."
Vol. v. p. 238.

The poem itself is as follows:—

"Thou lingering star, with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn!

"O Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend this breast?

"That sacred hour can I forget,
Can I forget the hallowed grove,
Where by the winding Ayr we met,
To live one day of parting love!

"Eternity will not efface
Those records dear of transports past;

Thy image at our last embrace;
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

'Ayr gurgling kiss'd his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods, thickening, green,
The fragrant birch, and hawthorn hoar,
Twin'd amorous round the raptured scene.

'The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,
The birds sang love on every spray,
Till too, too soon, the glowing west
Proclaim'd the speed of winged day!

"Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care;
Time but the impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.

"My Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?"
Vol. i. pp. 125, 126.

Of his pieces of humour, the tale of Tam o' Shanter is probably the best: though there are traits of infinite merit in Scotch Drink, the Holy Fair, the Hallow E'en, and several of the songs; in all of which, it is very remarkable, that he rises occasionally into a strain of beautiful description or lofty sentiment, far above the pitch of his original conception. The poems of observation on life and characters, are the Twa Dogs and the various Epistles—all of which show very extraordinary sagacity and powers of expression. They are written, however, in so broad a dialect, that we dare not venture to quote any part of them. The only pieces that can be classed under the head of pure fiction, are the Two Bridges of Ayr, and the Vision. In the last, there are some vigorous and striking lines. We select the passage in which the Muse describes the early propensities of her favourite, rather as being more generally intelligible, than as superior to the rest of the poem.

"I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar;
Or when the North his fleecy store
Drove through the sky,
I saw grim Nature's visage hoar
Struck thy young eye.

"Or when the deep-green mantl'd earth
Warm cherish'd ev'ry flow'ret's birth,
And joy and music pouring forth
In ev'ry grove,
I saw thee eye the gen'ral mirth
With boundless love.

"When ripen'd fields, and azure skies,
Call'd forth the reapers' rustling noise,
I saw thee leave their ev'ning joys,
And lonely stalk,
To vent thy bosom's swelling rise
In pensive walk.

"When youthful love, warm, blushing, strong,
Keen-shivering shot thy nerves along,
Those accents grateful to thy tongue,
Th' adored *Name*,
I taught thee how to pour in song,
To sooth thy flame.

"I saw thy pulse's maddening play,
Wild send thee Pleasure's devious way,
Misled by Fancy's meteor-ray,
By Passion driven;
But yet the *light* that led astray
Was *light* from heaven!"
Vol. iii. pp. 109, 110.

There is another fragment, called also a Vision, which belongs to a higher order of poetry. If Burns had never written any thing else, the power of description, and the vigour of the whole composition, would have entitled him to the remembrance of posterity.

"The winds were laid, the air was still,
The stars they shot alang the sky;
The fox was howling on the hill,
And the distant-echoing glens reply.

"The stream adown its hazelly path,
Was rushing by the ruin'd wa's,
Hasting to join the sweeping Nith,
Whase distant roaring swells an' fa's.

"The cauld blue north was streaming forth
Her lights, wi' hissing eerie din;
Athort the lift they start and shift,
Like fortune's favours, tint as win!

"By heedless chance I turn'd mine eyes,
And by the moon-beam, shook, to see
A stern and stalwart ghaist arise,
Attir'd as minstrels wont to be.

"Had I a statue been o' stane,
His darin' look had daunted me;
And on his bonnet grav'd was plain,
The sacred posy—Liberty!

"And frae his harp sic strains did flow,
Might rous'd the slumbering dead to hear;
But oh, it was a tale of woe,
As ever met a Briton's ear!

"He sang wi' joy the former day,
He weeping wail'd his latter times—
But what he said, it was nae play,
I winna ventur't in my rhymes."
Vol. iv. 344—346.

Some verses, written for a Hermitage, sound like the best parts of Grongar Hill. The reader may take these few lines as a specimen:—

"As thy day grows warm and high,
Life's meridian flaming nigh,
Dost thou spurn the humble vale?
Life's proud summits wouldst thou scale?
Dangers, eagle-pinion'd, bold,
Soar around each cliffy hold,
While cheerful peace, with linnet song,
Chants the lowly dells among."—Vol. iii. p. 299.

There is a little copy of Verses upon a Newspaper at p. 355, of Dr. Currie's fourth volume, written in the same condensed style, and only wanting translation into English to be worthy of Swift.

The finest piece, of the strong and nervous sort, however, is undoubtedly the address of Robert Bruce to his army at Bannockburn, beginning, "Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace Bled. The Death Song, beginning,

"Farewell, thou fair day, thou green earth and ye skies,
Now gay with the bright setting sun."

is to us less pleasing. There are specimens, however, of such vigour and emphasis scattered through his whole works, as are sure to make themselves and their author remembered; for instance, that noble description of a dying soldier.

"Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings teaze him:
Death comes! wi' fearless eye he sees him;
Wi' bluidy hand a welcome gi'es him;
An' when he fa's,

His latest draught o' breathin lea'es him
In faint huzzas!"—Vol. iii. p. 27.

The whole song of "For a' that," is written with extraordinary spirit. The first stanza ends—

"For rank is but the guinea stamp;
The *man's* the goud, for a' that."

—All the songs, indeed, abound with traits of this kind. We select the following at random:

"O woman, lovely woman, fair!
An angel form's faun to thy share;
'Twad been o'er meikle to've gi'en thee mair,
I mean an angel mind."—Vol. iv. p. 330.

We dare not proceed further in specifying the merits of pieces which have been so long published. Before concluding upon this subject, however, we must beg leave to express our dissent from the poet's amiable and judicious biographer, in what he says of the general harshness and rudeness of his versification. Dr. Currie, we are afraid, was scarcely Scotchman enough to comprehend the whole prosody of the verses to which he alluded. Most of the Scottish pieces are, in fact, much more carefully versified than the English; and we appeal to our Southern readers, whether there be any want of harmony in the following stanza:—

"Wild beats my heart to trace your steps,
Whose ancestors, in days of yore,
Thro' hostile ranks and ruin'd gaps,
Old *Scotia's* bloody lion bore:
Even *I* who sing in rustic lore,
Haply *my sires* have left their shed,
And fac'd grim danger's loudest roar,
Bold-following where *your* fathers led!"
Vol. iii. p. 233.

The following is not quite English; but it is intelligible to all readers of English, and may satisfy them that the Scottish song-writer was not habitually negligent of his numbers:—

"Their groves o' sweet myrtle let foreign lands reckon,
Where bright-beaming summers exalt the perfume;
Far dearer to me yon lone glen o' green breckan,
Wi' the burn stealing under the lang yellow broom.
Far dearer to me are yon humble broom bowers,
Where the blue bell and gowan lurk lowly unseen:
For there, lightly tripping amang the wild flowers,
A-listening the linnet, aft wanders my Jean.

"Tho' rich is the breeze in their gay sunny vallies,
And cauld, Caledonia's blast on the wave;
Their sweet-scented woodlands that skirt the proud palace,
What are they? The haunt o' the tyrant and slave!
The slave's spicy forests, and gold-bubbling fountains,
The brave Caledonian views wi' disdain;
He wanders as free as the winds of his mountains,
Save love's willing fetters, the chains o' his Jean."—Vol. iv. pp. 228, 229.

If we have been able to inspire our readers with any portion of our own admiration for this extraordinary writer, they will readily forgive us for the irregularity of which we have been guilty, in introducing so long an account of his whole works, under colour of the additional volume of which we have prefixed the title to this article. The truth is, however, that unless it be taken in connection with his other works, the present volume has little interest, and could not be made the subject of any intelligible observations. It is made up of some additional letters, of middling merit—of complete copies of others, of which Dr. Currie saw reason to publish only extracts—of a number of remarks, by Burns, on old Scottish songs—and, finally, of a few additional poems and songs, certainly not disgraceful to the author, but scarcely fitted to add to his reputation. The world, however, is indebted, we think, to Mr. Cromek's industry for this addition to so popular an author;—and the friends of the poet, we are sure, are indebted to his good taste, moderation, and delicacy, for having confined it to the pieces which are now printed. Burns wrote many rash—many violent, and many indecent things; of which we have no doubt many specimens must have fallen into the hands of so diligent a collector. He has, however, carefully suppressed every thing of this description; and shown that tenderness for his author's memory, which is the best proof of the veneration with which he regards his talents. We shall now see if there be any thing in the volume which deserves to be particularly noticed.

The Preface is very amiable, and well written. Mr. Cromek speaks with becoming respect and affection of Dr. Currie, the learned biographer and first editor of the poet, and with great modesty of his own qualifications.

"As an apology (he says) for any defects of my own that may appear in this publication, I beg to observe that I am by profession an artist, and not an author. In the manner of laying them before the public, I honestly declare that I have done my best; and I trust I may fairly presume to hope, that the man who has contributed to extend the bounds of literature, by adding another genuine volume to the writings of Robert Burns, has some claim on the gratitude of his countrymen. On this occasion, I certainly feel something of that sublime and heart-swelling gratification, which he experiences who casts another stone on the CAIRN of a great and lamented chief."—Preface, pp. xi. xii.

Of the Letters, which occupy nearly half the volume, we cannot, on the whole, express any more favourable opinion than that which we have already ventured to pronounce on the prose compositions of this author in general. Indeed they abound, rather more than those formerly published, in ravings about sensibility and imprudence—in common swearing, and in professions of love for whisky. By far the best, are those which are addressed to Miss Chalmers; and that chiefly because they seem to be written with less effort, and at the same time with more respect for his correspondent. The following was written at a most critical period of his life; and the good feelings and good sense which it displays, only make us regret more deeply that they were not attended with greater firmness.

"Shortly after my last return to Ayrshire, I married 'my Jean.' This was not in consequence of the attachment of romance perhaps; but I had a long and much lov'd fellow-creature's happiness or misery in my determination, and I durst not trifle with so important a deposite. Nor have I any cause to repent it. If I have not got polite tattle, modish manners, and fashionable dress, I am not sickened and disgusted with the multiform curse of boarding-school affectation; and I have got the handsomest figure, the sweetest temper, the soundest constitution, and the kindest heart in the county! Mrs. Burns believes, as firmly as her creed, that I am *le plus bel esprit, et le plus honnête homme* in the universe; although she scarcely ever in her life, except the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and the Psalms of David in metre, spent five minutes together on either prose or verse.—I must except also from this last, a certain late publication of Scots Poems, which she has perused very devoutly, and all the ballads in the country, as she has (O the partial lover! you will cry) the finest "wood-note wild" I ever heard.—I am the more particular in this lady's character, as I know she will henceforth have the honour of a share in your best wishes. She is still at Mauchline, as I am building my house: for this hovel that I shelter in while occasionally here, is pervious to every blast that blows, and every shower that falls; and I am only preserved from being chilled to death, by being suffocated with smoke. I do not find my farm that pennyworth I was taught to expect; but I believe, in time, it may be a saving bargain. You will be pleased to hear that I have laid aside idle *éclat*, and bind every day after my reapers.

"To save me from that horrid situation of at any time going down, in a losing bargain of a farm, to misery, I have taken my excise instructions, and have my commission in my pocket for any emergency of fortune! If I could set *all* before your view, whatever disrespect you, in common with the world, have for this business, I know you would approve of my idea."—Vol. v. pp. 74, 75.

We may add the following for the sake of connection.

"I know not how the word exciseman, or still more opprobrious, gauger, will sound in your ears. I too have seen the day when my auditory nerves would have felt very delicately on this subject; but a wife and children are things which have a wonderful power in blunting these kind of sensations. Fifty pounds a year for life, and a provision for widows and orphans, you will allow, is no bad settlement for a *poet*. For the ignominy of the profession, I have the encouragement which I once heard a recruiting serjeant give to a numerous, if not a respectable audience, in the streets of Kilmarnock—'Gentlemen, for your further and better encouragement, I can assure you that our regiment is the most blackguard corps under the crown, and consequently with us an honest fellow has the surest chance of preferment.'"—Vol. v. pp. 99, 100.

It would have been as well if Mr. Cromek had left out the history of Mr. Hamilton's dissensions with his parish minister,—Burns' apology to a gentleman with whom he had a drunken squabble,—and the anecdote of his being used to *ask for more liquor*, when visiting in the country, under the pretext of fortifying himself against the terrors of a little wood he had to pass through in going home. The most interesting passages, indeed, in this part of the volume, are those for which we are indebted to Mr. Cromek himself. He informs us, for instance, in a note,

"One of Burns' remarks, when he first came to Edinburgh, was, that between the Men of rustic life, and the polite world, he observed little difference—that in the former, though unpolished by fashion, and unenlightened by science, he had found much observation and much intelligence;—but a refined and accomplished Woman was a being almost new to him, and of which he had formed but a very inadequate idea."—Vol. v. pp. 68, 69.

He adds also, in another place, that "the poet, when questioned about his habits of composition, replied,—'All my poetry is the effect of easy composition, but of laborious correction.'" It is pleasing to know those things—even if they were really as trifling as to a superficial observer they may probably appear. There is a very amiable letter from Mr. Murdoch, the poet's early preceptor, at p. 111; and a very splendid one from Mr. Bloomfield, at p. 135. As nothing is more rare, among the minor poets, than a candid acknowledgment of their own inferiority, we think Mr. Bloomfield well entitled to have his magnanimity recorded.

"The illustrious soul that has left amongst us the name of Burns, has often been lowered down to a comparison with me; but the comparison exists more in circumstances than in essentials. That man stood up with the stamp of superior intellect on his brow; a visible greatness: and great and patriotic subjects would only have called into action the powers of his mind, which lay inactive while he played calmly and exquisitely the pastoral pipe.

"The letters to which I have alluded in my preface to the 'Rural Tales,' were friendly warnings, pointed with immediate reference to the fate of that extraordinary man. 'Remember Burns,' has been the watchword of my friends. I do remember Burns; but I *am not* Burns! I have neither his fire to fan, or to quench; nor his passions to control! Where then is my merit, if I make a peaceful voyage on a smooth sea, and with no mutiny on board?"—Vol. v. pp. 135, 136.

The observations on Scottish songs, which fill nearly one hundred and fifty pages, are, on the whole, minute and trifling; though the exquisite justness of the poet's taste, and his fine relish of simplicity in this species of composition, is no less remarkable here than in his correspondence with Mr. Thomson. Of all other kinds of poetry, he was so indulgent a judge, that he may almost be termed an indiscriminate admirer. We find, too, from these observations, that several songs and pieces of songs, which he printed as genuine antiques, were really of his own composition.

The commonplace book, from which Dr. Currie had formerly selected all that he thought worth publication, is next given entire by Mr. Cromek. We were quite as well, we think, with the extracts;—at all events, there was no need for reprinting what had been given by Dr. Currie; a remark which is equally applicable to the letters of which we had formerly extracts.

Of the additional poems which form the concluding part of the volume, we have but little to say. We have little doubt of their authenticity; for, though the editor has omitted, in almost every instance, to specify the source from which they were derived, they certainly bear the stamp of the author's manner and genius. They are not, however, of his purest metal, nor marked with his finest die: several of them have appeared in print already; and the songs are, as usual, the best. This little lamentation of a desolate damsel, is tender and pretty.

"My father put me frae his door,
My friends they hae disown'd me a';
But I hae ane will tak my part,
The bonnie lad that's far awa.

"A pair o' gloves he gave to me,
And silken snoods he gave me twa;
And I will wear them for his sake,
The bonnie lad that's far awa.

"The weary winter soon will pass,
And spring will cleed the birken-shaw;
And my sweet babie will be born,
And he'll come hame that's far awa."

Vol. v. pp. 432, 433.

We now reluctantly dismiss this subject.—We scarcely hoped, when we began our critical labours, that an opportunity would ever occur of speaking of Burns as we wished to speak of him; and therefore, we feel grateful to Mr. Cromek for giving us this opportunity. As we have no means of knowing, with precision, to what extent his writings are known and admired in the southern part of the kingdom, we have perhaps fallen into the error of quoting passages that are familiar to most of our readers, and dealing out praise which every one of them had previously awarded. We felt it impossible, however, to resist the temptation of transcribing a few of the passages which struck us the most, on turning over the volumes; and reckon with confidence on the gratitude of those to whom they are new,—while we are not without hopes of being forgiven by those who have been used to admire them.

We shall conclude with two general remarks—the one national, the other critical.—The first is, that it is impossible to read the productions of Burns, along with his history, without forming a higher idea of the intelligence, taste, and accomplishments of our peasantry, than most of those in the higher ranks are disposed to entertain. Without meaning to deny that he himself was endowed with rare and extraordinary gifts of genius and fancy, it is evident, from the whole details of his history, as well as from the letters of his brother, and the testimony of Mr. Murdoch and others, to the character of his father, that the whole family, and many of their associates, who never emerged from the native obscurity of their condition, possessed talents, and taste, and intelligence, which are little suspected to lurk in those humble retreats.—His epistles to brother poets, in the rank of small farmers and shopkeepers in the adjoining villages,—the existence of a book-society and debating-club among persons of that description, and many other incidental traits in his sketches of his youthful companions,—all contribute to show, that not only good sense, and enlightened morality, but literature, and talents for speculation, are far more generally diffused in society than is commonly imagined; and that the delights and the benefits of those generous and humanising pursuits, are by no means confined to those whom leisure and affluence have courted to their enjoyment. That much of this is peculiar to Scotland, and may be properly referred to our excellent institutions for parochial education, and to the natural sobriety and prudence of our nation, may certainly be allowed: but we have no doubt that there is a good deal of the same principle in England, and that the actual intelligence of the lower orders will be found, there also, very far to exceed the ordinary estimates of their superiors. It is pleasing to know, that the sources of rational enjoyment are so widely disseminated; and in a free country, it is comfortable to think, that so great a proportion of the people is able to appreciate the advantages of its condition, and fit to be relied on, in all emergencies where steadiness and intelligence may be required.

Our other remark is of a more limited application; and is addressed chiefly to the followers and patrons of that new school of poetry, against which we have thought it our duty to neglect no opportunity of testifying. Those gentlemen are outrageous for simplicity; and we beg leave to recommend to them the simplicity of Burns. He has copied the spoken language of passion and affection, with infinitely more fidelity than they have ever done, on all occasions which properly admitted of such adaptation: But he has not rejected the helps of elevated language and habitual associations; nor debased his composition by an affectation of babyish interjections, and all the puling expletives of an old nursery-maid's vocabulary. They may look long enough among his nervous and manly lines, before they find any "Good lacks!"—"Dear hearts!"—or "As a body may says," in them; or any stuff about dancing daffodils and sister Emmelines. Let them think, with what infinite contempt the powerful mind of Burns would have perused the story of Alice Fell and her duffle cloak,—of Andrew Jones and the half-crown,—or of Little Dan without breeches, and his thievish grandfather. Let them contrast their own fantastical personages of hysterical school-masters and sententious leechgatherers, with the authentic rustics of Burns's Cotters' Saturday Night, and his inimitable songs; and reflect on the different reception which those personifications have met with from the public. Though they will not be reclaimed from their puny affectations by the example of their learned predecessors, they may, perhaps, submit to be admonished by a self-taught and illiterate poet, who drew from Nature far more directly than they can do, and produced something so much liker the admired copies of the masters whom they have abjured.

(April, 1809.)

Gertrude of Wyoming, a Pennsylvanian Tale; and other Poems. By THOMAS CAMPBELL, *author of "The Pleasures of Hope," &c.* 4to. pp. 136. London: Longman & Co.: 1809.

We rejoice once more to see a polished and pathetic poem—in the old style of English pathos and poetry. This is of the pitch of the Castle of Indolence, and the finer parts of Spenser; with more feeling, in many places, than the first, and more condensation and diligent finishing than the latter. If the true tone of nature be not everywhere maintained, it gives place, at least, to art only, and not to affectation—and, least of all, to affectation of singularity or rudeness.

Beautiful as the greater part of this volume is, the public taste, we are afraid, has of late been too much accustomed to beauties of a more obtrusive and glaring kind, to be fully sensible of its merit. Without supposing that this taste has been in any great degree vitiated, or even imposed upon, by the babyism or the antiquarianism which have lately been versified for its improvement, we may be allowed to suspect, that it has been somewhat dazzled by the splendour, and bustle and variety of the most popular of our recent poems; and that the more modest colouring of truth and nature may, at this moment, seem somewhat cold and feeble. We have endeavoured, on former occasions, to do justice to the force and originality of some of those brilliant productions, as well as to the genius (fitted for much higher things) of their authors—and have little doubt of being soon called upon for a renewed tribute of applause. But we cannot help saying, in the mean time, that the work before us belongs to a class which comes nearer to our conception of pure and perfect poetry. Such productions do not, indeed, strike so strong a blow as the vehement effusions of our modern *Trouveurs;* but they are calculated, we think, to please more deeply, and to call out more permanently, those trains of emotion, in which the delight of poetry will probably be found to consist. They may not be so loudly nor so universally applauded; but their fame will probably endure longer, and they will be oftener recalled to mingle with the reveries of solitary leisure, or the consolations of real sorrow.

There is a sort of poetry, no doubt, as there is a sort of flowers, which can bear the broad sun and the ruffling winds of the world,—which thrive under the hands and eyes of indiscriminating multitudes, and please as much in hot and crowded saloons, as in their own sheltered repositories; but the finer and the purer sorts blossom only in the shade; and never give out their sweets but to those who seek them amid the quiet and seclusion of the scenes which gave them birth. There are torrents and cascades which attract the admiration of tittering parties, and of which even the busy must turn aside to catch a transient glance: But "the haunted stream" steals through a still and a solitary landscape; and its beauties are never revealed, but to him who strays, in calm contemplation, by its course, and follows its wanderings with undistracted and unimpatient admiration. There is a reason, too, for all this, which may be made more plain than by metaphors.

The highest delight which poetry produces, does not arise from the mere passive perception of the images or sentiments which it presents to the mind; but from the excitement which is given to its own internal activity, and the character which is impressed on the train of its spontaneous conceptions. Even the dullest reader generally sees more than is directly presented to him by the poet; but a lover of poetry always sees infinitely more; and is often indebted to his author for little more than an impulse, or the key-note of a melody which his fancy makes out for itself. Thus, the effect of poetry, depends more on the *fruitfulness* of the impressions to which it gives rise, than on their own individual force or novelty; and the writers who possess the greatest powers of fascination, are not those who present us with the greatest number of lively images or lofty sentiments, but who most successfully impart their own impulse to the current of our thoughts and feelings, and give the colour of their brighter conceptions to those which they excite in their readers. Now, upon a little consideration, it will probably appear, that the dazzling, and the busy and marvellous scenes which constitute the whole charm of some poems, are not so well calculated to produce this effect, as those more intelligible delineations which are borrowed from ordinary life, and coloured from familiar affections. The object is, to awaken in our minds a train of kindred emotions, and to excite our imaginations to work out for themselves a tissue of pleasing or impressive conceptions. But it seems obvious, that this is more likely to be accomplished by surrounding us gradually with those objects, and involving us in those situations with which we have long been accustomed to associate the feelings of the poet,—than by startling us with some tale of wonder, or attempting to engage our affections for personages, of whose character and condition we are unable to form any distinct conception. These, indeed, are more sure than the other to produce a momentary sensation, by the novelty and exaggeration with which they are commonly attended; but their power is spent at the first impulse: they do not strike

root and germinate in the mind, like the seeds of its native feelings; nor propagate throughout the imagination that long series of delightful movements, which is only excited when the song of the poet is the echo of our familiar feelings.

It appears to us, therefore, that by far the most powerful and enchanting poetry is that which depends for its effect upon the just representation of common feelings and common situations; and not on the strangeness of its incidents, or the novelty or exotic splendour of its scenes and characters. The difficulty is, no doubt, to give the requisite force, elegance and dignity to these ordinary subjects, and to win a way for them to the heart, by that true and concise expression of natural emotion, which is among the rarest gifts of inspiration. To accomplish this, the poet must do much; and the reader something. The one must practise enchantment, and the other submit to it. The one must purify his conceptions from all that is low or artificial; and the other must lend himself gently to the impression, and refrain from disturbing it by any movement of worldly vanity, derision or hard heartedness. In an advanced state of society, the expression of simple emotion is so obstructed by ceremony, or so distorted by affectation, that though the sentiment itself be still familiar to the greater part of mankind, the verbal representation of it is a task of the utmost difficulty. One set of writers, accordingly, finding the whole language of men and women too sophisticated for this purpose, have been obliged to go to the nursery for a more suitable phraseology; another has adopted the style of courtly Arcadians; and a third, that of mere Bedlamites. So much more difficult is it to express natural feelings, than to narrate battles, or describe prodigies!

But even when the poet has done his part, there are many causes which may obstruct his immediate popularity. In the first place, it requires a certain degree of sensibility to perceive his merit. There are thousands of people who can admire a florid description, or be amused with a wonderful story, to whom a pathetic poem is quite unintelligible. In the second place, it requires a certain degree of leisure and tranquillity in the reader. A picturesque stanza may be well enough relished while the reader is getting his hair combed; but a scene of tenderness or emotion will not do, even for the corner of a crowded drawing-room. Finally, it requires a certain degree of courage to proclaim the merits of such a writer. Those who feel the most deeply, are most given to disguise their feelings; and derision is never so agonising as when it pounces on the wanderings of misguided sensibility. Considering the habits of the age in which we live, therefore, and the fashion, which, though not immutable, has for some time run steadily in an opposite direction, we should not be much surprised if a poem, whose chief merit consisted in its pathos, and in the softness and exquisite tenderness of its representations of domestic life and romantic seclusion, should meet with less encouragement than it deserves. If the volume before us were the work of an unknown writer, indeed, we should feel no little apprehension about its success; but Mr. Campbell's name has power, we are persuaded, to insure a very partial and a very general attention to whatever it accompanies, and, we would fain hope, influence enough to reclaim the public taste to a juster standard of excellence. The success of his former work, indeed, goes far to remove our anxiety for the fortune of this. It contained, perhaps, more brilliant and bold passages than are to be found in the poem before us: But it was inferior, we think, in softness and beauty; and, being necessarily of a more desultory and didactic character, had far less pathos and interest than this very simple tale. Those who admired the Pleasures of Hope for the passages about Brama and Kosciusko, may perhaps be somewhat disappointed with the gentler tone of Gertrude; but those who loved that charming work for its pictures of infancy and of maternal and connubial love, may read on here with the assurance of a still higher gratification.

The story is of very little consequence in a poem of this description; and it is here, as we have just hinted, extremely short and simple. Albert, an English gentleman of high character and accomplishment, had emigrated to Pennsylvania about the year 1740, and occupied himself, after his wife's death, in doing good to his neighbours, and in educating his infant and only child, Gertrude. He had fixed himself in the pleasant township of Wyoming, on the banks of the Susquehanna; a situation which at that time might have passed for an earthly paradise, with very little aid from poetical embellishment. The beauty and fertility of the country,—the simple and unlaborious plenty which reigned among the scattered inhabitants,—but, above all, the singular purity and innocence of their manners, and the tranquil and unenvious equality in which they passed their days, form altogether a scene, on which the eye of philanthropy is never wearied with gazing, and to which, perhaps, no parallel can be found in the annals of the fallen world. The heart turns with delight from the feverish scenes of European history, to the sweet repose of this true Atlantis; but sinks to reflect, that though its reality may still be attested by surviving witnesses, no such spot is *now* left, on the whole face of the earth, as a refuge from corruption and misery!

The poem opens with a fine description of this enchanting retirement. One calm summer morn, a friendly Indian arrives in his canoe, bringing with him a fair boy, who, with his mother, were the sole survivors of an English garrison which had been stormed by a hostile tribe. The dying mother had commended her boy to the care of her wild deliverers; and their chief, in obedience to her solemn bequest, now delivers him into the hands of the most respected of the adjoining settlers. Albert recognises the unhappy orphan as the son of a beloved friend; and

rears young Henry Waldegrave as the happy playmate of Gertrude, and sharer with her in the joys of their romantic solitude, and the lessons of their venerable instructor. When he is scarcely entered upon manhood, Henry is sent for by his friends in England, and roams over Europe in search of improvement for eight or nine years,—while the quiet hours are sliding over the father and daughter in the unbroken tranquillity of their Pennsylvanian retreat. At last, Henry, whose heart had found no resting place in all the world besides, returns in all the mature graces of manhood, and marries his beloved Gertrude. Then there is bliss beyond all that is blissful on earth,—and more feelingly described than mere genius can ever hope to describe any thing. But the war of emancipation begins; and the dream of love and enjoyment is broken by alarms and dismal forebodings. While they are sitting one evening enjoying those tranquil delights, now more endeared by the fears which gather around them, an aged Indian rushes into their habitation, and, after disclosing himself for Henry's ancient guide and preserver, informs them, that a hostile tribe which had exterminated his whole family, is on its march towards their devoted dwellings. With considerable difficulty they effect their escape to a fort at some distance in the woods; and at sunrise, Gertrude, and her father and husband, look from its battlements over the scene of desolation which the murderous Indians had already spread over the pleasant groves and gardens of Wyoming. While they are standing wrapt in this sad contemplation, an Indian marksman fires a mortal shot from his ambush at Albert; and as Gertrude clasps him in agony to her heart, another discharge lays her bleeding by his side! She then takes farewell of her husband, in a speech more sweetly pathetic than any thing ever written in rhyme. Henry prostrates himself on her grave in convulsed and speechless agony; and his Indian deliverer, throwing his mantle over him, watches by him a while in gloomy silence; and at last addresses him in a sort of wild and energetic descant, exciting him, by his example, to be revenged, and to die! The poem closes with this vehement and impassioned exhortation.

Before proceeding to lay any part of the poem itself before our readers, we should try to give them some idea of that delighful harmony of colouring and of expression, which serves to unite every part of it for the production of one effect; and to make the description, narrative, and reflections, conspire to breathe over the whole a certain air of pure and tender enchantment, which is not once dispelled, through the whole length of the poem, by the intrusion of any discordant impression. All that we can now do, however, is to tell them that this was its effect upon our feelings; and to give them their chance of partaking in it, by a pretty copious selection of extracts.

The descriptive stanzas in the beginning, which set out with an invocation to Wyoming, though in some places a little obscure and overlaboured, are, to our taste, very soft and beautiful.

"On Susquehanna's side, fair Wyoming!
Although the wild-flower on thy ruin'd wall
And roofless homes, a sad remembrance bring
Of what thy gentle people did befall,
Yet thou wert once the loveliest land of all
That see the Atlantic wave their morn restore.
Sweet land! may I thy lost delights recall,
And paint thy Gertrude in her bowers of yore,
Whose beauty was the love of Pennsylvania's shore!

"It was beneath thy skies that, but to prune
His autumn fruits, or skim the light canoe,
Perchance, along thy river calm, at noon,
The happy shepherd swain had nought to do,
From morn till evening's sweeter pastime grew;
Their timbrel, in the dance of forests brown
When lovely maidens prankt in flowrets new;
And aye, those sunny mountains half way down
Would echo flagelet from some romantic town.

"Then, where of Indian hills the daylight takes
His leave, how might you the flamingo see
Disporting like a meteor on the lakes—
And playful squirrel on his nut-grown tree:
And ev'ry sound of life was full of glee,
From merry mock-bird's song, or hum of men;
While heark'ning, fearing nought their revelry,
The wild deer arch'd his neck from glades—and, then
Unhunted, sought his woods and wilderness again.

"And scarce had Wyoming of war or crime
Heard but in transatlantic story rung," &c.
pp. 5—7.

The account of the German, Spanish, Scottish, and English settlers, and of the patriarchal harmony in which they were all united, is likewise given with great spirit and brevity, as well as the portrait of the venerable Albert, their own elected judge and adviser. A sudden transition is then made to Gertrude.

"Young, innocent! on whose sweet forehead mild
The parted ringlet shone in simplest guise,
An inmate in the home of Albert smil'd,
Or blest his noonday-walk—she was his only child!

"The rose of England bloom'd on Gertrude's cheek—
What though these shades had seen her birth," &c.
p. 11.

After mentioning that she was left the only child of her mother, the author goes on in these sweet verses.

"A lov'd bequest! and I may half impart,
To them that feel the strong paternal tie,
How like a new existence to his heart
Uprose that living flower beneath his eye!
Dear as she was, from cherub infancy,
From hours when she would round his garden play,
To time when, as the rip'ning years went by,
Her lovely mind could culture well repay,
And more engaging grew from pleasing day to day

"I may not paint those thousand infant charms;
(Unconscious fascination, undesign'd!)
The orison repeated in his arms,
For God to bless her sire and all mankind!
The book, the bosom on his knee reclin'd,
Or how sweet fairy-lore he heard her con,
(The playmate ere the teacher of her mind);
All uncompanion'd else her years had gone
Till now in Gertrude's eyes their ninth blue summer shone.

"And summer was the tide, and sweet the hour,
When sire and daughter saw, with fleet descent,
An Indian from his bark approach their bow'r," &c.
pp. 12, 13.

This is the guide and preserver of young Henry Waldegrave; who is somewhat fantastically described as appearing

"Led by his dusky guide, like Morning brought by Night."

The Indian tells his story with great animation—the storming and blowing up of the English fort—and the tardy arrival of his friendly and avenging warriors. They found all the soldiers slaughtered.

"'And from the tree we with her child unbound
A lonely mother of the Christian land—
Her lord—the captain of the British band—
Amidst the slaughter of his soldiers lay;
Scarce knew the widow our delivering hand:
Upon her child she sobb'd, and swoon'd away;
Or shriek'd unto the God to whom the Christians pray.—

"'Our virgins fed her with their kindly bowls
Of fever balm, and sweet sagamité;
But she was journeying to the land of souls,
And lifted up her dying head to pray
That we should bid an antient friend convey
Her orphan to his home of England's shore;
And take, she said, this token far away
To one that will remember us of yore,
When he beholds the ring that Waldegrave's Julia wore.—'"
pp. 16, 17.

Albert recognises the child of his murdered friend, with great emotion; which the Indian witnesses with characteristic and picturesque composure.

"Far differently the Mute Oneyda took
His calumet of peace, and cup of joy;
As monumental bronze unchang'd his look:
A soul that pity touch'd, but never shook:
Train'd, from his tree-rock'd cradle to his bier,
The fierce extremes of good and ill to brook
Impassive—fearing but the shame of fear—
A stoic of the woods—a man without a tear.—"
p. 20.

This warrior, however, is not without high feelings and tender affections.

"He scorn'd his own, who felt another's woe:
And ere the wolf-skin on his back he flung,
Or laced his mocasins, in act to go,
A song of parting to the boy he sung,
Who slept on Albert's couch, nor heard his friendly tongue.

"'Sleep, wearied one! and in the dreaming land
Should'st thou the spirit of thy mother greet,
Oh! say, to-morrow, that the white man's hand
Hath pluck'd the thorns of sorrow from thy feet;
While I in lonely wilderness shall meet
Thy little foot-prints—or by traces know
The fountain, where at noon I thought it sweet
To feed thee with the quarry of my bow,
And pour'd the lotus-horn, or slew the mountain roe.

Adieu? sweet scion of the rising sun!"" &c.
pp. 21, 22.

The Second part opens with a fine description of Albert's sequestered dwelling. It reminds us of that enchanted landscape in which Thomson has embosomed his Castle of Indolence. We can make room only for the first stanza.

"A valley from the river shore withdrawn
Was Albert's home two quiet woods between,
Whose lofty verdure overlook'd his lawn;
And waters to their resting-place serene,
Came, fresh'ning and reflecting all the scene:
(A mirror in the depth of flowery shelves;)
So sweet a spot of earth, you might (I ween)
Have guess'd some congregation of the elves
To sport by summer moons, had shap'd it for themselves."—p. 27.

The effect of this seclusion on Gertrude is beautifully represented.

"It seem'd as if those scenes sweet influence had
On Gertrude's soul, and kindness like their own
Inspir'd those eyes affectionate and glad,
That seem'd to love whate'er they look'd upon!
Whether with Hebe's mirth her features shone,
Or if a shade more pleasing them o'ercast,
(As if for heav'nly musing meant alone;)
Yet so becomingly the expression past,
That each succeeding look was lovelier than the last.

"Nor guess I, was that Pennsylvanian home,
With all its picturesque and balmy grace,
And fields that were a luxury to roam,
Lost on the soul that look'd from such a face!
Enthusiast of the woods! when years apace
Had bound thy lovely waist with woman's zone,
The sunrise path, at morn, I see thee trace
To hills with high magnolia overgrown;
And joy to breathe the groves, romantic and alone."—pp. 29, 30.

The morning scenery, too, is touched with a delicate and masterly hand.

"While yet the wild deer trod in spangling dew,
While boatman caroll'd to the fresh-blown air,
And woods a horizontal shadow threw,
And early fox appear'd in momentary view."
p. 32.

The reader is left rather too much in the dark as to Henry's departure for Europe;—nor, indeed, are we apprised of his absence, till we come to the scene of his unexpected return. Gertrude was used to spend the hot part of the day in reading in a lonely and rocky recess in those safe woods; which is described with Mr. Campbell's usual felicity.

——"Rocks sublime
To human art a sportive semblance wore;
And yellow lichens colour'd all the clime,
Like moonlight battlements, and towers decayed by time.

"But high, in amphitheatre above,
His arms the everlasting aloes threw:
Breath'd but an air of heav'n, and all the grove
As if instinct with living spirit grew,
Rolling its verdant gulfs of every hue;
And now suspended was the pleasing din,
Now from a murmur faint it swell'd anew,
Like the first note of organ heard within
Cathedral aisles—ere yet its symphony begin."
p. 33.

In this retreat, which is represented as so solitary, that except her own,

——"scarce an ear had heard
The stock-dove plaining through its gloom profound,
Or winglet of the fairy humming bird,
Like atoms of the rainbow fluttering round."—
p. 34.

—a stranger of lofty port and gentle manners surprises her, one morning, and is conducted to her father. They enter into conversation on the subject of his travels.

"And much they lov'd his fervid strain—
While he each fair variety retrac'd
Of climes, and manners, o'er the eastern main.
Now happy Switzer's hills—romantic Spain—
Gay lilied fields of France—or, more refin'd,
The soft Ausonia's monumental reign;
Nor less each rural image he design'd,
Than all the city's pomp and home of human kind.

"Anon some wilder portraiture he draws!
Of nature's savage glories he would speak—
The loneliness of earth that overawes!—
Where, resting by some tomb of old cacique
The lama-driver on Peruvia's peak,
Nor voice nor living motion marks around;
But storks that to the boundless forest shriek;
Or wild-cane arch high flung o'er gulf profound,
That fluctuates when the storms of El Dorado sound."—pp. 36, 37.

Albert, at last, bethinks him of inquiring after his stray ward young Henry; and entertains his guest with a short summary of his history.

"His face the wand'rer hid;—but could not hide
A tear, a smile, upon his cheek that dwell!—
'And speak, mysterious stranger!' (Gertrude cried)
'It is!—it is!—I knew—I knew him well!
'Tis Waldegrave's self, of Waldegrave come to [tell!'
A burst of joy the father's lips declare;
But Gertrude speechless on his bosom fell:
At once his open arms embrac'd the pair;
Was never group more blest, in this wide world of care!'"—p. 39

The first overflowing of their joy and artless love is represented with all the fine colours of truth and poetry; but we cannot now make room for it. The Second Part ends with this stanza:—

"'Then would that home admit them—happier far
Than grandeur's most magnificent saloon—
While, here and there, a solitary star
Flush'd in the dark'ning firmament of June;
And silence brought the soul-felt hour full soon,
Ineffable—which I may not pourtray!
For never did the Hymenean moon
A paradise of hearts more sacred sway,
In all that slept beneath her soft voluptuous ray."—
p. 43.

The Last Part sets out with a soft but spirited sketch of their short-lived felicity.

"Three little moons, how short! amidst the grove,
And pastoral savannas they consume!
While she, beside her buskin'd youth to rove,
Delights, in fancifully wild costume,
Her lovely brow to shade with Indian plume;
And forth in hunter-seeming vest they fare;
But not to chase the deer in forest gloom!
'Tis but the breath of heav'n—the blessed air—
And interchange of hearts, unknown, unseen to share.

"What though the sportive dog oft round them note,
Or fawn, or wild bird bursting on the wing;
Yet who, in love's own presence, would devote
To death those gentle throats that wake the spring?
Or writhing from the brook its victim bring?
No!—nor let fear one little warbler rouse;
But, fed by Gertrude's hand, still let them sing,
Acquaintance of her path, amidst the boughs,
That shade ev'n now her love, and witness'd first her vows."—pp. 48, 49.

The transition to the melancholy part of the story is introduced with great tenderness and dignity.

But mortal pleasure, what art thou in truth?
The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below!
And must I change my song? and must I show,
Sweet Wyoming! the day, when thou wert doom'd,
Guiltless, to mourn thy loveliest bow'rs laid low!
When, where of yesterday a garden bloom'd,
Death overspread his pall, and black'ning ashes gloom'd?—

"Sad was the year, by proud Oppression driv'n,
When Transatlantic Liberty arose;
Not in the sunshine, and the smile of heav'n,
But wrapt in whirlwinds, and begirt with woes:
Amidst the strife of fratricidal foes,
Her birth star was the light of burning plains;
Her baptism is the weight of blood that flows
From kindred hearts—the blood of British veins!—
And famine tracks her steps, and pestilential pains!"
pp. 50, 51.

Gertrude's alarm and dejection at the prospect of hostilities are well described:

"O, meet not thou," she cries, "thy kindred foe!
But peaceful let us seek fair England's strand," &c.

—as well as the arguments and generous sentiments by which her husband labours to reconcile her to a necessary evil. The nocturnal irruption of the old Indian is given with great spirit:—Age and misery had so changed his appearance, that he was not at first recognised by any of the party.

"'And hast thou then forgot'—he cried forlorn,
And ey'd the group with half indignant air),
'Oh! hast thou, Christian chief, forgot the morn
When I with thee the cup of peace did share?
Then stately was this head, and dark this hair,
That now is white as Appalachia's snow!
But, if the weight of fifteen years' despair,
And age hath bow'd me, and the tort'ring foe,
Bring me my Boy—and he will his deliverer know!'—

"It was not long, with eyes and heart of flame,
Ere Henry to his lov'd Oneyda flew: [came,
'Bless thee, my guide!'—but, backward, as he
The chief his old bewilder'd head withdrew,
And grasp'd his arm, and look'd and look'd him through.
'Twas strange—nor could the group a smile control,
The long, the doubtful scrutiny to view:—
At last delight o'er all his features stole, [soul.—
'It is—my own!' he cried, and clasp'd him to his

"'Yes! thou recall'st my pride of years; for then
The bowstring of my spirit was not slack, [men,
When, spite of woods, and floods, and ambush'd
I bore thee like the quiver on my back,
Fleet as the whirlwind hurries on the rack;
Nor foeman then, nor cougar's crouch I fear'd,
For I was strong as mountain cataract;
And dost thou not remember how we cheer'd
Upon the last hill-top, when white men's huts appear'd?'"—pp. 54—56.

After warning them of the approach of their terrible foe, the conflagration is seen, and the whoops and scattering shot of the enemy heard at a distance. The motley militia of the neigbourhood flock to the defence of Albert. the effect of their shouts and music on the old Indian is fine and striking.

"Rous'd by their warlike pomp, and mirth, and cheer, [Outalissi woke his battle song,
And beating with his war-club cadence strong,
Tells how his deep-stung indignation smarts," &c.
p. 61.

Nor is the contrast of this savage enthusiasm with the venerable composure of Albert less beautifully represented.

" Calm, opposite the Christian Father rose,
Pale on his venerable brow its rays
Of martyr light the conflagration throws;
One hand upon his lovely child he lays,
And one th' uncover'd crowd to silence sways;
While, though the battle flash is faster driv'n—
Unaw'd, with eye unstartled by the blaze,
He for his bleeding country prays to Heaven—
Prays that the men of blood themselves may be
forgiven."—p. 62.

They then speed their night march to the distant fort, whose wedged ravelins and redoubts

" Wove like a diadem, its tracery round
The lofty summit of that mountain green"—

and look back from its lofty height on the desolated scenes around them. We will not separate, nor apologize for the length of the fine passage that follows; which alone, we think, might justify all we have said in praise of the poem.

" A scene of death! where fires beneath the sun,
And blended arms, and white pavilions glow;
And for the business of destruction done,
Its requiem the war-horn seem'd to blow.
There, sad spectatress of her country's woe!
The lovely Gertrude, safe from present harm,
Had laid her cheek, and clasp'd her hands of snow
On Waldegrave's shoulder, half within his arm
Enclos'd, that felt her heart and hush'd its wild
alarm!

" But short that contemplation! sad and short
The pause to bid each much-lov'd scene adieu!
Beneath the very shadow of the fort, [flew,
Where friendly swords were drawn, and banners
Ah! who could deem that foot of Indian crew
Was near?—Yet there, with lust of murd'rous
deeds,
Gleam'd like a basilisk, from woods in view,
The ambush'd foeman's eye—his volley speeds!
And Albert—Albert—falls! the dear old father
bleeds!

" And tranc'd in giddy horror Gertrude swoon'd!
Yet, while she clasps him lifeless to her zone,
Say, burst they, borrow'd from her father's wound,
Those drops?—O God! the life-blood is her own!
And falt'ring, on her Waldegrave's bosom thrown—
'Weep not, O Love!'—she cries, 'to see me
bleed—
Thee, Gertrude's sad survivor, thee alone—
Heaven's peace commiserate! for scarce I heed
These wounds!—Yet thee to leave is death, is
death indeed.

" 'Clasp me a little longer, on the brink
Of fate! while I can feel thy dear caress;
And, when this heart hath ceas'd to beat—oh! think,
And let it mitigate thy woe's excess,
That thou hast been to me all tenderness,
And friend to more than human friendship just.
Oh! by that retrospect of happiness,
And by the hopes of an immortal trust, [dust!
And by the pangs—when I am laid in
God shall assuage thy pangs—when I am laid in

" 'Go, Henry, go not back, when I depart!
The scene thy bursting tears too deep will move,
Where my dear father took thee to his heart,
And Gertrude thought it ecstasy to rove
With thee, as with an angel, through the grove
Of peace—imagining her lot was cast
In heav'n! for ours was not like earthly love!
And must this parting be our very last? [past.—
No! I shall love thee still, when death itself is

" 'Half could I bear, methinks, to leave this earth—
And thee, more lov'd than aught beneath the sun!
Could I have liv'd to smile but on the birth
Of one dear pledge!—But shall there then be none,
In future times—no gentle little one,
To clasp thy neck, and look, resembling me!
Yet seems it, ev'n while life's last pulses run,
A sweetness in the cup of death to be,
Lord of my bosom's love! to die beholding thee!"

" Hush'd were his Gertrude's lips! but still their bland
And beautiful expression seem'd to melt
With love that could not die! and still his hand
She presses to the heart no more that felt.
Ah heart! where once each fond affection dwelt,
And features yet that spoke a soul more fair!"
pp. 64—68.

The funeral is hurried over with pathetic brevity; and the desolate and all-enduring Indian brought in again with peculiar beauty.

" Touch'd by the music, and the melting scene,
Was scarce one tearless eye amidst the crowd;—
Stern warriors, resting on their swords, were seen
To veil their eyes, as pass'd each much-lov'd
shroud—
While woman's softer soul in woe dissolv'd aloud.

" Then mournfully the parting bugle bid
Its farewell o'er the grave of worth and truth.
Prone to the dust, afflicted Waldegrave hid
His face on earth?—Him watch'd in gloomy ruth,
His woodland guide; but words had none to sooth
The grief that knew not consolation's name!
Casting his Indian mantle o'er the youth,
He watch'd beneath its folds, each burst that came
Convulsive, ague-like, across his shuddering frame!"
p. 69.

After some time spent in this mute and awful pause, this stern and heart-struck comforter breaks out into the following touching and energetic address, with which the poem closes, with great spirit and abruptness:—

" 'And *I* could weep;'—th' Oneyda chief
His descant wildly thus began:
'But that I may not stain with grief
The death-song of my father's son!
Or bow his head in woe;
For by my wrongs, and by my wrath!
To-morrow Areouski's breath
(That fires yon heaven with storms of death)
Shall light us to the foe:
And we shall share, my Christian boy!
The foeman's blood, the avenger's joy!—

" 'But thee, my flow'r! whose breath was giv'n
By milder genii o'er the deep,
The spirits of the white man's heav'n
Forbid not *thee* to weep!—
Nor will the Christian host,
Nor will thy father's spirit grieve
To see thee, on the battle's eve,
Lamenting take a mournful leave
Of her who lov'd thee most:
She was the rainbow to thy sight!
Thy sun—thy heav'n—of lost delight!—

" 'To-morrow let us do or die!
But when the bolt of death is hurl'd,
Ah! whither then with thee to fly,
Shall Outalissa roam the world?
Seek we thy once-lov'd home?—
The hand is gone that cropt its flowers!
Unheard their clock repeats its hours.—
Cold is the hearth within their bow'rs!—
And should we thither roam,
Its echoes, and its empty tread,
Would sound like voices from the dead!

" 'But hark, the trump!—to-morrow thou
In glory's fires shalt dry thy tears:
Ev'n from the land of shadows now
My father's awful ghost appears,
Amidst the clouds that round us roll!

He bids my soul for battle thirst—
He bids me dry the last—the first—
The *only* tears that ever burst—
From Outalissi's soul!—
Because I may not stain with grief
The death-song of an Indian chief!'"—pp. 70–73.

It is needless, after these extracts, to enlarge upon the beauties of this poem. They consist chiefly in the feeling and tenderness of the whole delineation, and the taste and delicacy with which all the subordinate parts are made to contribute to the general effect. Before dismissing it, however, we must say a little of its faults, which are sufficiently obvious and undeniable. In the first place, the narrative is extremely obscure and imperfect; and has greater blanks in it than could be tolerated even in lyric poetry. We hear absolutely nothing of Henry, from the day the Indian first brings him from the back country, till he returns from Europe fifteen years thereafter. It is likewise a great oversight in Mr. Campbell to separate his lovers, when only *twelve* years of age—a period at which it is utterly inconceivable that any permanent attachment could have been formed. The greatest fault, however, of the work, is the occasional constraint and obscurity of the diction, proceeding apparently from too laborious an effort at emphasis or condensation. The metal seems in several places to have been so much overworked, as to have lost not only its ductility, but its lustre; and, while there are passages which can scarcely be at all understood after the most careful consideration, there are others which have an air so elaborate and artificial, as to destroy all appearance of nature in the sentiment. Our readers may have remarked something of this sort, in the first extracts with which we have presented them; but there are specimens still more exceptionable. In order to inform us that Albert had lost his wife, Mr. Campbell is pleased to say, that

——" Fate had reft his mutual heart;"

and in order to tell us something else—though what, we are utterly unable to conjecture—he concludes a stanza on the delights of mutual love, with these three lines:—

" 'Roll on, ye days of raptur'd influence, shine?
Nor, blind with ecstasy's celestial fire, [pire.'"
Shall love behold the spark of earth-born time ex-

The whole twenty-second stanza of the first part is extremely incorrect; and the three concluding lines are almost unintelligible.

" 'But where was I when Waldegrave was no more?
And thou didst pale thy gentle head extend,
In woes, that ev'n the tribe of deserts was thy friend!'"

If Mr. Campbell had duly considered the primary necessity of perspicuity—especially in compositions which aim only at pleasing—we are persuaded that he would never have left these and some other passages in so very questionable a state. There is still a good deal for him to do, indeed, in a new edition: and working—as he must work—in the true spirit and pattern of what is before him, we hope he will yet be induced to make considerable additions to a work, which will please those most who are most worthy to be pleased; and always seem most beautiful to those who give it the greatest share of their attention.

Of the smaller pieces which fill up the volume, we have scarce left ourselves room to say any thing. The greater part of them have been printed before; and there are probably few readers of English poetry who are not already familiar with the Lochiel and the Hohinlinden—the one by far the most spirited and poetical denunciation of coming woe, since the days of Cassandra; the other the only representation of a modern battle, which possesses either interest or sublimity. The song to "the Mariners of England," is also very generally known. It is a splendid instance of the most magnificent diction adapted to a familiar and even trivial metre. Nothing can be finer than the first and the last stanzas.

" Ye mariners of England!
That guard our native seas;
Whose flag has braved, a thousand years,
The battle, and the breeze!
Your glorious standard launch again
To match another foe!
And sweep through the deep," &c.—p. 101.

" The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn;
Till danger's troubled night depart,
And the star of peace return.
Then, then, ye ocean warriors!
Our song and feast shall flow
To the fame of your name,
When the storm has ceas'd to blow;
When the fiery fight is heard no more,
And the storm has ceas'd to blow."—pp. 103, 104.

"The Battle of the Baltic," though we think it has been printed before, is much less known. Though written in a strange, and we think an unfortunate metre, it has great force and grandeur, both of conception and expression—that sort of force and grandeur which results from the simple and concise expression of great events and natural emotions, altogether unassisted by any splendour or amplification of expression. The characteristic merit, indeed, both of this piece and of Hohinlinden, is, that, by the forcible delineation of one or two great circumstances, they give a clear and most energetic representation of events as complicated as they are impressive—and thus impress the mind of the reader with all the terror and sublimity of the subject, while they rescue him from the fatigue and perplexity of its details. Nothing in our judgment can be more impressive than the following very short and simple description of the British fleet bearing up to close action:

" As they drifted on their path,
There was silence deep as death!
And the boldest held his breath
For a time."—p. 109.

The description of the battle itself (though it begins with a tremendous line) is in the same spirit of homely sublimity; and worth a thousand stanzas of thunder, shrieks, shouts, tridents, and heroes.

" 'Hearts of oak,' our captains cried! when
From its adamantine lips [each gun
Spread a death-shade round the ships!
Like the hurricane eclipse
Of the sun.—

" Again! again! again!
And the havoc did not slack,
Till a feebler cheer the Dane
To our cheering sent us back;—
Their shots along the deep slowly boom:—
Then cease!—and all is wail,
As they strike the shatter'd sail;
Or, in conflagration pale,
Light the gloom.—"

There are two little ballad pieces, published for the first time, in this collection, which have both very considerable merit, and afford a favourable specimen of Mr. Campbell's powers in this new line of exertion. The longest is the most beautiful; but we give our readers the shortest, because we can give it entire.

" O heard ye yon pibrach sound sad in the gale,
Where a band cometh slowly with weeping and wail?
'Tis the chief of Glenara laments for his dear;
And her sire, and the people, are called to her bier.

" Glenara came first with the mourners and shroud;
Her kinsmen they follow'd, but mourn'd not aloud:
Their plaids all their bosoms were folded around:
They march'd all in silence—they look'd on the ground.

" In silence they reach'd over mountain and moor,
To a heath, where the oak-tree grew lonely and hoar;
Now here let us place the grey stone of her cairn:
'Why speak ye no word?'—said Glenara the stern.

" 'And tell me, I charge you! ye clan of my spouse,
Why fold you your mantles, why cloud ye your brows?'
So spake the rude chieftain:—no answer is made,
But each mantle unfolding, a dagger display'd.

" 'I dreamt of my lady, I dreamt of her shroud,'
Cried a voice from the kinsmen, all wrathful and loud;
'And empty that shroud, and that coffin did seem;
Glenara! Glenara! now read me my dream!'

" O! pale grew the cheek of that chieftain, I ween,
When the shroud was unclos'd, and no lady was seen;
When a voice from the kinsmen spoke louder in scorn,
'Twas the youth who had lov'd the fair Ellen of Lorn:

" 'I dreamt of my lady, I dreamt of her grief,
I dreamt that her lord was a barbarous chief;
On a rock of the ocean fair Ellen did seem;
Glenara! Glenara! now read me my dream!'

" In dust low the traitor has knelt to the ground,
And the desert reveal'd where his lady was found;
From a rock of the ocean that beauty is borne,
Now joy to the house of fair Ellen of Lorn!"

pp. 105—107.

We close this volume, on the whole, with feelings of regret for its shortness, and of admiration for the genius of its author. There are but two noble sorts of poetry—the pathetic and the sublime; and we think he has given very extraordinary proofs of his talents for both. There is something, too, we will venture to add, in the style of many of his conceptions, which irresistibly impresses us with the conviction, that he can do much greater things than he has hitherto accomplished; and leads us to regard him, even yet, as a poet of still greater promise than performance. It seems to us, as if the natural force and boldness of his ideas were habitually checked by a certain fastidious timidity, and an anxiety about the minor graces of correct and chastened composition. Certain it is, at least, that his greatest and most lofty flights have been made in those smaller pieces, about which, it is natural to think, he must have felt least solicitude; and that he has succeeded most splendidly where he must have been most free from the fear of failure. We wish any praises or exhortations of ours had the power to give him confidence in his own great talents; and hope earnestly, that he will now meet with such encouragement, as may set him above all restraints that proceed from apprehension; and induce him to give free scope to that genius, of which we are persuaded that the world has hitherto seen rather the grace than the richness.

(January, 1825.)

Theodric, a Domestic Tale: with other Poems. By Thomas Campbell. 12mo. pp. 150. London: 1824.

If Mr. Campbell's poetry was of a kind that could be forgotten, his long fits of silence would put him fairly in the way of that misfortune. But, in truth, he is safe enough;—and has even acquired, by virtue of his exemplary laziness, an assurance and pledge of immortality which he could scarcely have obtained without it. A writer who is still fresh in the mind and favour of the public, after twenty years' intermission, may reasonably expect to be remembered when death shall have finally sealed up the fountains of his inspiration; imposed silence on the cavils of envious rivals, and enhanced the value of those relics to which it excludes the possibility of any future addition. At all events, he has better proof of the permanent interest the public take in his productions, than those ever can have who are more diligent in their multiplication, and keep themselves in the recollection of their great patron by more frequent intimations of their existence. The experiment, too, though not without its hazards, is advantageous in another respect;—for the re-appearance of such an author, after those long periods of occultation, is naturally hailed as a novelty—and he receives the double welcome, of a celebrated stranger, and

a remembered friend. There is, accordingly, no living poet, we believe, whose advertisement excites greater expectation than Mr. Campbell's:—and a new poem from him is waited for with even more eagerness (as it is certainly for a much longer time) than a new novel from the author of Waverley. Like all other human felicities, however, this high expectation and prepared homage has its drawbacks and its dangers. A popular author, as we have been led to remark on former occasions, has no rival so formidable as his former self—and no comparison to sustain half so dangerous as that which is always made between the average merit of his new work, and the remembered beauties—for little else is ever remembered—of his old ones.

How this comparison will result in the present instance, we do not presume to predict with confidence—but we doubt whether it will be, at least in the beginning, altogether in favour of the volume before us. The poems of this author, indeed, are generally more admired the more they are studied, and rise in our estimation in proportion as they become familiar. Their novelty, therefore, is always rather an obstruction than a help to their popularity;—and it may well be questioned, whether there be any thing in the novelties now before us that can rival in our affections the long-remembered beauties of the Pleasures of Hope—of Gertrude—of O'Connor's Child—the Song of Linden—The Mariners of England—and the many other enchanting melodies that are ever present to the minds of all lovers of poetry.

The leading piece in the present volume is an attempt at a very difficult kind of poetry; and one in which the most complete success can hardly ever be so splendid and striking as to make amends for the difficulty. It is entitled "a Domestic Story"—and it is so;—turning upon few incidents—embracing few characters—dealing in no marvels and no terrors—displaying no stormy passions. Without complication of plot, in short, or hurry of action—with no atrocities to shudder at, or feats of noble daring to stir the spirits of the ambitious—it passes quietly on, through the shaded paths of private life, conversing with gentle natures and patient sufferings—and unfolding, with serene pity and sober triumph, the pangs which are fated at times to wring the breast of innocence and generosity, and the courage and comfort which generosity and innocence can never fail to bestow. The taste and the feeling which led to the selection of such topics, could not but impress their character on the style in which they are treated. It is distinguished accordingly by a fine and tender finish, both of thought and of diction—by a chastened elegance of words and images—a mild dignity and tempered pathos in the sentiments, and a general tone of simplicity and directness in the conduct of the story, which, joined to its great brevity, tends at first perhaps to disguise both the richness and the force of the genius required for its production. But though not calculated to strike at once on the dull palled ear of an idle and occupied world, it is of all others perhaps the kind of poetry best fitted to win on our softer hours, and to sink deep into vacant bosoms—unlocking all the sources of fond recollection, and leading us gently on through the mazes of deep and engrossing meditation—and thus ministering to a deeper enchantment and more lasting delight than can ever be inspired by the more importunate strains of more ambitious authors.

There are no doubt peculiar and perhaps insuperable difficulties in the management of themes so delicate, and requiring so fine and so restrained a hand—nor are we prepared to say that Mr. Campbell has on this occasion entirely escaped them. There are passages that are somewhat *fade*:—there are expressions that are trivial:—But the prevailing character is sweetness and beauty; and it prevails over all that is opposed to it. The story, though abundantly simple, as our readers will immediately see, has two distinct compartments—one relating to the Swiss maiden, the other to the English wife. The former, with all its accompaniments, we think nearly perfect. It is full of tenderness, purity, and pity; and finished with the most exquisite elegance, in few and simple touches. The other, which is the least considerable, has more decided blemishes. The diction is in many places too familiar, and the incidents too common—and the cause of distress has the double misfortune of being unpoetical in its nature, and improbable in its result. But the shortest way is to give our readers a slight account of the poem, with such specimens as may enable them to judge fairly of it for themselves.

It opens, poetically, with the description of a fine scene in Switzerland, and of a rustic church-yard; where the friend of the author points out to him the flowery grave of a maiden, who, though gentle and fair, had died of unrequited love:—and so they proceed, between them, for the matter is left poetically obscure, to her history. Her fancy had been early captivated by the tales of heroic daring and chivalric pride, with which her country's annals abounded—and she disdained to give her love to any one who was not graced with the virtues and glories of those heroic times This exalted mood was unluckily fostered by her brother's youthful ardour in praise of the commander under whom he was serving abroad—by whom he was kindly tended when wounded, and whose picture he brought back with him on his return to his paternal home, to renew, and seemingly to realize, the day-dreams of his romantic sister. This picture, and the stories her brother told of the noble Theodric, completed the poor girl's fascination. Her heart was kindled by her fancy; and her love was already fixed on a being she had never seen! In the mean time, Theodric, who had promised a visit to his young *protegé*, passes over to England, and is betrothed to a lady of that country of infinite worth and amiableness. He then repairs to Switzerland, where, after a little time, he discovers the love of Julia, which he gently, but firmly re-

bukes- returns to England, and is married. His wife has uncomfortable relations—quarrelsome, selfish, and envious; and her peace is sometimes wounded by their dissensions and unkindness. War breaks out anew, too, in Theodric's country; and as he is meditating a journey to that quarter, he is surprised by a visit from Julia's brother, who informs him, that, after a long struggle with her cherished love, her health had at last sunk under it, and that she now prayed only to see him once more before she died! His wife generously urges him to comply with this piteous request. He does so; and arrives, in the midst of wintry tempests, to see this pure victim of too warm an imagination expire, in smiles of speechless gratitude and love. While mourning over her, he is appalled by tidings of the dangerous illness of his beloved Constance—hurries to England—and finds her dead!—her fate having been precipitated, if not occasioned, by the harsh and violent treatment she had met with from her heartless relations. The piece closes with a very touching letter she had left for her husband—and an account of its soothing effects on his mind.

This, we confess, is slight enough, in the way of fable and incident: But it is not in those things that the merit of such poems consists; and what we have given is of course a mere naked outline, or argument rather, intended only to explain and connect our extracts.

For these, we cannot possibly do better than begin with the beginning.

"'Twas sunset, and the Ranz des Vaches was sung,
And lights were o'er th' Helvetian mountains flung,
That gave the glacier tops their richest glow,
And ting'd the lakes like molten gold below.
Warmth flush'd the wonted regions of the storm,
Where, Phœnix-like, you saw the eagle's form,
That high in Heav'ns vermilion wheel'd and soar'd!
Woods nearer frown'd; and cataracts dash'd and roar'd,
From heights brouzed by the bounding bouquetin;
Herds tinkling roam'd the long-drawn vales between, [green.
And hamlets glitter'd white, and gardens flourish'd
'Twas transport to inhale the bright sweet air!
The mountain-bee was revelling in its glare,
And roving with his minstrelsy across
The scented wild weeds, and enamell'd moss.
Earth's features so harmoniously were link'd,
She seem'd one great glad form, with life instinct,
That felt Heav'n's ardent breath, and smil'd below
Its flush of love with consentaneous glow.
A Gothic church was near; the spot around
Was beautiful, ev'n though sepulchral ground;
For there nor yew nor cypress spread their gloom,
But roses blossom'd by each rustic tomb.
Amidst them one of spotless marble shone—
A maiden's grave—and 'twas inscrib'd thereon,
That young and lov'd she died whose dust was there:

"'Yes,' said my comrade, 'young she died, and fair!
Grace form'd her, and the soul of gladness play'd
Once in the blue eyes of that mountain-maid!
Her fingers witch'd the chords they passed along,
And her lips seem'd to kiss the soul in song:
Yet woo'd and worshipp'd as she was, till few
Aspir'd to hope, 'twas sadly, strangely true,
That heart, the martyr of its fondness burn'd
And died of love that could not be return'd.

"'Her father dwelt where yonder Castle shines
O'er clust'ring trees and terrace-mantling vines
As gay as ever, the laburnum's pride [glide—
Waves o'er each walk where she was wont to
And still the garden whence she grac'd her bower
As lovely blooms, though trode by strangers now
How oft from yonder window o'er the lake,
Her song, of wild Helvetian swell and shake,
Has made the rudest fisher bend his ear,
And rest enchanted on his oar to hear!
Thus bright, accomplish'd, spirited, and bland,
Well-born, and wealthy for that simple land,
Why had no gallant native youth the art
To win so warm—so exquisite a heart?
She, midst these rocks inspir'd with feeling strong
By mountain-freedom—music—fancy—song,
Herself descended from the brave in arms,
And conscious of romance-inspiring charms,
Dreamt of Heroic beings; hoped to find
Some extant spirit of chivalric kind;
And scorning wealth, look'd cold ev'n on the chief
Of manly worth, that lack'd the wreath of Fame.
pp. 3–.

We pass over the animated picture of the brother's campaigns, and of the fame of Theodric, and the affectionate gratitude of parent and sister for his care and praises of the noble boy. We must make room, however, for this beautiful sketch of his return.

"In time, the stripling, vigorous and heal'd,
Resum'd his barb and banner in the field,
And bore himself right soldier-like, till now
The third campaign had manlier bronz'd his brow
When peace, though but a scanty pause for breath
A curtain-drop between the acts of death—
A check in frantic war's unfinished game,
Yet dearly bought, and direly welcome, came.
The camp broke up, and Udolph left his chief
As with a son's or younger brother's grief:
But journeying home, how rapt his spirits rose!
How light his footsteps crush'd St. Gothard's snows!
How dear seem'd ev'n the waste and wild Simmenhorn,
Though wrapt in clouds, and frowning as in scorn
Upon a downward world of pastoral charms;
Where, by the very smell of dairy-farms,
And fragrance from the mountain-herbage blown,
Blindfold his native hills he could have known!

"His coming down yon lake—his boat in view
Of windows where love's flutt'ring kerchief flew—
The arms spread out for him—the tears that burn—
('Twas Julia's, 'twas his sister's met him first)
Their pride to see war's medal at his breast,
And all their rapture's greeting, may be guess'd.
pp. 12, 13

At last the generous warrior appears in person among those innocent beings, to whom he had so long furnished the grand theme of discourse and meditation.

"The boy was half beside himself—the sire,
All frankness, honour, and Helvetian fire,
Of speedy parting would not hear him speak;
And tears bedew'd and brighten'd Julia's cheek.

"Thus, loth to wound their hospitable pride,
A month he promis'd with them to abide;
As blithe he trod the mountain-sward as they,
And felt his joy make ev'n the young more gay.
How jocund was their breakfast parlour, fann'd
By yon blue water's breath!—their walks how bland!
Fair Julia seem'd her brother's soften'd spirit—
A gem reflecting Nature's purest light—
And with her graceful wit there was inwrought
A wildly sweet unworldliness of thought,
That almost child-like to his kindness drew,
And twain with Udolph in his friendship grew.
But did his thoughts to love one moment range?
No! he who had lov'd Constance could not change
Besides, till grief betray'd her undesign'd,

Th' unlikely thought could scarcely reach his mind,
That eyes so young on years like his should beam
Unwoo'd devotion back for pure esteem."
pp. 17, 18.

Symptoms still more unequivocal, however, at last make explanations necessary; and he is obliged to disclose to her the secret of his love and engagement in England. The effects of this disclosure, and all the intermediate events, are described with the same grace and delicacy. But we pass at once to the close of poor Julia's pure-hearted romance.

"That winter's eve how darkly Nature's brow
Scowl'd on the scenes it lights so lovely now!
The tempest, raging o'er the realms of ice,
Shook fragments from the rifted precipice;
And whilst their falling echoed to the wind,
The wolf's long howl in dismal discord join'd,
While white yon water's foam was rais'd in clouds
That whirl'd like spirits wailing in their shrouds:
Without was Nature's elemental din—
And Beauty died, and Friendship wept within!

"Sweet Julia, though her fate was finish'd half,
Still knew him—smil'd on him with feeble laugh—
And blest him, till she drew her latest sigh!

"But lo! while Udolph's bursts of agony,
And age's tremulous wailings, round him rose,
What accents pierced him deeper yet than those!
'Twas tidings—by his English messenger
Of Constance—brief and terrible they were," &c.
pp. 35, 36.

These must suffice as specimens of the Swiss part of the poem, which we have already said we consider as on the whole the most perfect. The English portion is undoubtedly liable to the imputation of being occupied with scenes too familiar, and events too trivial, to admit of the higher embellishments of poetry. The occasion of Theodric's first seeing Constance—in the streets of London on a night of public rejoicing—certainly trespasses on the borders of this wilful stooping of the Muses' flight—though the scene itself is described with great force and beauty.

"'Twas a glorious sight!
At eve stupendous London, clad in light,
Pour'd out triumphant multitudes to gaze;
Youth, age, wealth, penury, smiling in the blaze!
Th' illumin'd atmosphere was warm and bland,
And Beauty's groups the fairest of the land,
Conspicuous, as in some wide festive room,
In open chariots pass'd, with pearl and plume.
Amidst them he remark'd a lovelier mien," &c.
p. 15.

The description of Constance herself, however, is not liable to this, or to any other objection.

——"And to know her well
Prolong'd, exalted, bound, enchantment's spell;
For with affections warm, intense, refin'd,
She mix'd such calm and holy strength of mind,
That, like Heav'n's image in the smiling brook,
Celestial peace was pictur'd in her look.
Hers was the brow, in trials unperplex'd,
That cheer'd the sad and tranquilliz'd the vex'd.
She studied not the meanest to eclipse,
And yet the wisest listen'd to her lips;
She sang not, knew not Music's magic skill,
But yet her voice had tones that sway'd the will."
p. 16.

"To paint that being to a grov'ling mind
Were like pourtraying pictures to the blind.
'Twas needful ev'n infectiously to feel
Her temper's fond, and firm, and gladsome zeal,
To share existence with her, and to gain
Sparks from her love's electrifying chain,
Of that pure pride, which, less'ning to her breast
Life's ills, gave all its joys a treble zest,
Before the mind completely understood
That mighty truth—how happy are the good!"
p. 25.

All this, we think, is dignified enough for poetry of any description; but we really cannot extend the same indulgence to the small *tracassaries* of this noble creature's unworthy relations—their peevish quarrels, and her painful attempts to reconcile them—her husband's grudges at her absence on those errands—their teazing visits to him—and his vexation at their false reports that she was to spend "yet a fortnight" away from him. We object equally to the substance and the diction of the passages to which we now refer. There is something questionable even in the fatal indications by which, on approaching his home, he was first made aware of the calamity which had befallen him—though undoubtedly there is a terrible truth and impressive brevity in the passage.

"Nor hope left utterly his breast,
Till reaching home, terrific omen! there
The straw-laid street preluded his despair—
The servant's look—the table that reveal'd
His letter sent to Constance last, still seal'd,
Though speech and hearing left him, told too clear
That he had now to suffer—not to fear!"—p. 37.

We shall only add the pathetic letter in which this noble spirit sought, from her deathbed, to soothe the beloved husband she was leaving with so much reluctance.

"'Theodric! this is destiny above
Our power to baffle! Bear it then, my love!
Your soul, I know, as firm is knit to mine
As these clasp'd hands in blessing you now join:
Shape not imagin'd horrors in my fate—
Ev'n now my suff'rings are not very great;
And when your grief's first transports shall subside,
I call upon your strength of soul and pride
To pay my memory, if 'tis worth the debt
Love's glorifying tribute—not forlorn regret:
I charge my name with power to conjure up
Reflection's balmy, not its bitter cup.
My pard'ning angel, at the gates of Heaven,
Shall look not more regard than you have given
To me: and our life's union has been clad
In smiles of bliss as sweet as life e'er had.
Shall gloom be from such bright remembrance cast?
Shall bitterness outflow from sweetness past?
No! imaged in the sanctuary of your breast,
There let me smile, amidst high thoughts at rest;
And let contentment on your spirit shine,
As if its peace were still a part of mine:
For if you war not proudly with your pain,
For you I shall have worse than liv'd in vain.
But I conjure your manliness to bear
My loss with noble spirit—not despair:
I ask you by our love to promise this!
And kiss these words, where I have left a kiss—
The latest from my living lips for yours?'"
pp. 39—41.

The tone of this tender farewell must remind all our readers of the catastrophe of Gertrude; and certainly exposes the author to the charge of some poverty of invention in the structure of his pathetic narratives—a charge from which we are not at this moment particularly solicitous to defend him.

The minor poems which occupy the rest of

the volume are of various character, and of course of unequal merit; though all of them are marked by that exquisite melody of versification, and general felicity of diction, which makes the mere recitation of their words a luxury to readers of taste, even when they pay but little attention to their sense. Most of them, we believe, have already appeared in occasional publications, though it is quite time that they should be collected and engrossed in a less perishable record. If they are less brilliant, on the whole, than the most exquisite productions of the author's earlier days, they are generally marked, we think, by greater solemnity and depth of thought, a vein of deeper reflection, and more intense sympathy with human feelings, and, if possible, by a more resolute and entire devotion to the cause of liberty. Mr. Campbell, we rejoice to say, is not among those poets whose hatred of oppression has been chilled by the lapse of years, or allayed by the suggestions of a base self-interest. He has held on his course through good and through bad report, unseduced, unterrified; and is now found in his duty, testifying as fearlessly against the invaders of Spain, in the volume before us, as he did against the spoilers of Poland in the very first of his publications. It is a proud thing indeed for England, for poetry, and for mankind, that all the illustrious poets of the present day—Byron, Moore, Rogers, Campbell—are distinguished by their zeal for freedom, and their scorn for courtly adulation; while those who have deserted that manly and holy cause have, from that hour, felt their inspiration withdrawn, their harp-strings broken, and the fire quenched in their censers! Even the Laureate, since his unhappy Vision of Judgment, has ceased to sing; and fallen into undutiful as well as ignoble silence, even on court festivals. As a specimen of the tone in which an unbought Muse can yet address herself to public themes, we subjoin a few stanzas of a noble ode to the Memory of the Spanish Patriots who died in resisting the late atrocious invasion.

"Brave men who at the Trocadero fell
Beside your cannons—conquer'd not, though slain!
There is a victory in dying well
For Freedom—and ye have not died in vain;
For come what may, there shall be hearts in Spain
To honour, ay, embrace your martyr'd lot,
Cursing the Bigot's and the Bourbon's chain,
And looking on your graves, though trophied not,
As holier, hallow'd ground than priests could make the spot!"

"Yet laugh not in your carnival of crime
Too proudly, ye oppressors!—Spain *was* free;
Her soil *has* felt the foot-prints, and her clime
Been winnow'd by the wings of Liberty!
And these, even parting, scatter as they flee
Thoughts—influences, to live in hearts unborn,
Opinions that shall wrench the prison-key
From Persecution—show her mask off-torn,
And tramp her bloated head beneath the foot of Scorn.

"Glory to them that die in this great cause!
Kings, Bigots, can inflict no brand of shame,
Or shape of death, to shroud them from applause:—
No!—manglers of the martyr's earthly frame!
Your hangman fingers cannot touch his fame.
Still in your prostrate land there shall be some
Proud hearts, the shrines of Freedom's vestal flame.
Long trains of ill may pass unheeded, dumb,
But Vengeance is behind, and Justice is to come."
pp. 78—81.

Mr. Campbell's muse, however, is by no means habitually political; and the greater part of the pieces in this volume have a purely moral or poetical character. The exquisite stanzas to the Rainbow, we believe, are in every body's hands; but we cannot resist the temptation of transcribing the latter part of them.

"When o'er the green undelug'd earth
Heaven's covenant thou didst shine,
How came the world's grey fathers forth
To watch thy sacred sign?

"And when its yellow lustre smil'd
O'er mountains yet untrod,
Each mother held aloft her child
To bless the bow of God!

"Methinks, thy jubilee to keep,
The first-made anthem rang,
On earth deliver'd from the deep,
And the first poet sang.

"Nor ever shall the Muse's eye
Unraptur'd greet thy beam:
Theme of primeval prophecy,
Be still the poet's theme!

"The earth to thee her incense yields,
The lark thy welcome sings,
When glitt'ring in the freshen'd fields
The snowy mushroom springs!

"How glorious is thy girdle cast
O'er mountain, tower, and town,
Or mirror'd in the ocean vast,
A thousand fathoms down!

"As fresh in yon horizon dark,
As young thy beauties seem,
As when the eagle from the ark
First sported in thy beam.

"For, faithful to its sacred page,
Heaven still rebuilds thy span,
Nor lets thy type grow pale with age
That first spoke peace to man."
pp. 52—55.

The beautiful verses on Mr. Kemble's retirement from the stage afford a very remarkable illustration of the tendency of Mr. Campbell's genius to raise ordinary themes into occasions of pathetic poetry, and to invest trivial occurrences with the mantle of solemn thought. We add a few of the stanzas.

"His was the spell o'er hearts
Which only acting lends—
The youngest of the sister Arts,
Where all their beauty blends:
For ill can Poetry express,
Full many a tone of thought sublime,
And Painting, mute and motionless,
Steals but a glance of time.
But by the mighty Actor brought,
Illusion's perfect triumphs come—
Verse ceases to be airy thought,
And Sculpture to be dumb."

"High were the task—too high,
Ye conscious bosoms here!
In words to paint your memory
Of Kemble and of Lear!
But who forgets that white discrowned head,
Those bursts of Reason's half-extinguish'd glare;
Those tears upon Cordelia's bosom shed,
In doubt more touching than despair,
If 'twas reality he felt?"

"And there was many an hour
Of blended kindred fame,
When Siddons's auxiliar power
And sister magic came.
Together at the Muse's side
The tragic paragons had grown—
They were the children of her pride,
The columns of her throne!
And undivided favour ran
From heart to heart in their applause,
Save for the gallantry of man,
In lovelier woman's cause."—pp. 64—67.

We have great difficulty in resisting the temptation to go on: But in conscience we must stop here. We are ashamed, indeed, to think how considerable a proportion of this little volume we have already transferred into our extracts. Nor have we much to say of the poems we have not extracted. "The Ritter Bann" and "Reullura" are the two longest pieces, after Theodric—but we think not the most successful. Some of the songs are exquisite—and most of the occasional poems too good for occasions.

The volume is very small—and it contains all that the distinguished author has written for many years. We regret this certainly:—but we do not presume to complain of it. The service of the Muses is a free service—and all that we receive from their votaries is a free gift, for which we are bound to them in gratitude—not a tribute, for the tardy rendering of which they are to be threatened or distrained. They stand to the public in the relation of benefactors, not of debtors. They shower their largesses on unthankful heads; and disclaim the trammels of any sordid contract. They are not articled clerks, in short, whom we are entitled to scold for their idleness, but the liberal donors of immortal possessions; for which they require only the easy quit-rent of our praise. If Mr. Campbell is lazy, therefore, he has a right to enjoy his laziness, unmolested by our importunities. If, as we rather presume is the case, he prefer other employments to the feverish occupation of poetry, he has a right surely to choose his employments—and is more likely to choose well, than the herd of his officious advisers. For our own parts, we are ready at all times to hail his appearances with delight—but we wait for them with respect and patience; and conceive that we have no title to accelerate them by our reproaches.

Before concluding, we would wish also to protect him against another kind of injustice. Comparing the small bulk of his publications with the length of time that elapses between them, people are apt to wonder that so little has been produced after so long an incubation, and that poems are not better which are the work of so many years—absurdly supposing, that the ingenious author is actually labouring all the while at what he at last produces, and has been diligently at work during the whole interval in perfecting that which is at last discovered to fall short of perfection! To those who know the habits of literary men, nothing however can be more ridiculous than this supposition. Your true drudges, with whom all that is intellectual moves most wretchedly slow, are the quickest and most regular with their publications; while men of genius, whose thoughts play with the ease and rapidity of lightning, often seem tardy to the public, because there are long intervals between the flashes! We are far from undervaluing that care and labour without which no finished performance can ever be produced by mortals; and still farther from thinking it a reproach to any author, that he takes pains to render his works worthy of his fame. But when the slowness and the size of his publications are invidiously put together in order to depreciate their merits, or to raise a doubt as to the force of the genius that produced them, we think it right to enter our caveat against a conclusion, which is as rash as it is ungenerous; and indicates a spirit rather of detraction than of reasonable judgment.

(April, 1805.)

The Lay of the Last Minstrel: a Poem. By Walter Scott, Esq. 4to. pp. 318. Edinburgh, Constable and Co.: London, Longman and Co.: 1805.*

We consider this poem as an attempt to transfer the refinements of modern poetry to the matter and the manner of the ancient metrical romance. The author, enamoured of the lofty visions of chivalry, and partial to the strains in which they were formerly

* The Novels of Sir Walter Scott have, no doubt, cast his Poetry into the shade: And it is beyond question that *they* must always occupy the highest and most conspicuous place in that splendid trophy which his genius has reared to his memory. Yet, when I recollect the vehement admiration it once excited, I cannot part with the belief that there is much in his poetry also, which our age should not allow to be forgotten. And it is under this impression that I now venture to reprint my contemporary notices of the two poems which I think produced the greatest effect at the time: the one as *the first* and most strikingly original of the whole series: the other as being on the whole the best; and also as having led me to make some remarks, not only on the general character of the author's genius, but on the peculiar perils of *very popular* poetry—of which the time that has since elapsed has afforded some curious illustrations.

embodied, seems to have employed all the resources of his genius in endeavouring to recall them to the favour and admiration of the public; and in adapting to the taste of modern readers a species of poetry which was once the delight of the courtly, but has long ceased to gladden any other eyes than those of the scholar and the antiquary. This is a romance, therefore, composed by a minstrel of the present day: or such a romance as we may suppose would have been written in modern times, if that style of composition had continued to be cultivated, and partaken consequently of the improvements which every branch of literature has received since the time of its desertion.

Upon this supposition, it was evidently Mr. Scott's business to retain all that was good, and to reject all that was bad in the models upon which he was to form himself; adding, at the same time, all the interest and beauty which could possibly be assimilated to the manner and spirit of his originals. It was his duty, therefore, to reform the rambling, obscure, and interminable narratives of the ancient romancers—to moderate their digressions—to abridge or retrench their unmerciful or needless descriptions—and to expunge altogether those feeble and prosaic passages, the rude stupidity of which is so apt to excite the derision of a modern reader. At the same time, he was to rival, if he could, the force and vivacity of their minute and varied representations—the characteristic simplicity of their pictures of manners—the energy and conciseness with which they frequently describe great events—and the lively colouring and accurate drawing by which they give the effect of reality to every scene they undertake to delineate. In executing this arduous task, he was permitted to avail himself of all that variety of style and manner which had been sanctioned by the ancient practice; and bound to embellish his performance with all the graces of diction and versification which could be reconciled to the simplicity and familiarity of the minstrel's song.

With what success Mr. Scott's efforts have been attended in the execution of this adventurous undertaking, our readers will be better able to judge in the sequel: but, in the mean time, we may safely venture to assert, that he has produced a very beautiful and entertaining poem, in a style which may fairly be considered as original; and which will be allowed to afford satisfactory evidence of the genius of the author, even though he should not succeed in converting the public to his own opinion as to the interest or dignity of the subject. We are ourselves inclined indeed to suspect that his partiality for the strains of antiquity has imposed a little upon the severity of his judgment, and impaired the beauty of the present imitation, by directing his attention rather to what was characteristic, than to what was unexceptionable in his originals. Though he has spared too many of their faults, however, he has certainly improved upon their beauties: and while we can scarcely help regretting, that the feuds of Border chieftains should have monopolised as much poetry as might have served to immortalise the whole baronage of the empire, we are the more inclined to admire the interest and magnificence which he has contrived to communicate to a subject so unpromising.

Whatever may be thought of the conduct of the main story, the manner of introducing it must be allowed to be extremely poetical. An aged minstrel who had "harped to King Charles the Good," and learned to love his art at a time when it was honoured by all that was distinguished in rank or in genius, having fallen into neglect and misery in the evil days of the usurpation, and the more frivolous gaieties or bitter contentions of the succeeding reigns, is represented as wandering about the Border in poverty and solitude, a few years after the Revolution. In this situation he is driven, by want and weariness, to seek shelter in the Border castle of the Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth; and being cheered by the hospitality of his reception, offers to sing "an ancient strain," relating to the old warriors of her family; and after some fruitless attempts to recall the long-forgotten melody, pours forth "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," in six cantos, very skilfully divided by some recurrence to his own situation, and some complimentary interruptions from his noble auditors.

The construction of a fable seems by no means the *forte* of our modern poetical writers; and no great artifice, in that respect, was to be expected, perhaps, from an imitator of the ancient romancers. Mr. Scott, indeed, has himself insinuated, that he considered the story as an object of very subordinate importance; and that he was less solicitous to deliver a regular narrative, than to connect such a series of incidents as might enable him to introduce the manners he had undertaken to delineate, and the imagery with which they were associated. Though the conception of the fable is, probably from these causes, exceedingly defective, it is proper to lay a short sketch of it before our readers, both for the gratification of their curiosity, and to facilitate the application of the remarks we may be afterwards tempted to offer.

Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch, the Lord of Branksome, was slain in a skirmish with the Cars, about the middle of the sixteenth century. He left a daughter of matchless beauty, an infant son, and a high-minded widow, who, though a very virtuous and devout person, was privately addicted to the study of Magic, in which she had been initiated by her father. Lord Cranstoun their neighbour was at feud with the whole clan of Scott; but had fallen desperately in love with the daughter, who returned his passion with equal sincerity and ardour, though withheld, by her duty to her mother, from uniting her destiny with his. The poem opens with a description of the warlike establishment of Branksome-hall; and the first incident which occurs is a dialogue between the *Spirits* of the adjoining mountain and river, who, after consulting the stars, declare that no good fortune can ever bless the

mansion "till pride be quelled, and love be free." The lady, whose forbidden studies had taught her to understand the language of such speakers, overhears this conversation; and vows, if possible, to retain her purpose in spite of it. She calls a gallant knight of her train, therefore, and directs him to ride immediately to the abbey of Melrose, and there to ask, from the monk of St. Mary's aisle, the mighty book that was hid in the tomb of the wizard Michael Scott. The remainder of the first canto is occupied with the night journey of the warrior. When he delivers his message, the monk appears filled with consternation and terror, but leads him at last through many galleries and chapels to the spot where the wizard was interred; and, after some account of his life and character, the warrior heaves up the tomb-stone, and is dazzled by the streaming splendour of an ever-burning lamp, which illuminates the sepulchre of the enchanter. With trembling hand he takes the book from the side of the deceased, and hurries home with it in his bosom.

In the mean time, Lord Cranstoun and the lovely Margaret have met at dawn in the woods adjacent to the castle, and are repeating their vows of true love, when they are startled by the approach of a horseman. The lady retreats; and the lover advancing, finds it to be the messenger from Branksome, with whom, as an hereditary enemy, he thinks it necessary to enter immediately into combat. The poor knight, fatigued with his nocturnal adventures, is dismounted at the first shock, and falls desperately wounded to the ground; while Lord Cranstoun, relenting towards the kinsman of his beloved, directs his page to attend him to the castle, and gallops home before any alarm can be given. Lord Cranstoun's page is something unearthly. It is a little misshapen dwarf, whom he found one day when he was hunting, in a solitary glen, and took home with him. It never speaks, except now and then to cry "Lost! lost! lost!" and is, on the whole, a hateful, malicious little urchin, with no one good quality but his unaccountable attachment and fidelity to his master. This personage, on approaching the wounded Borderer, discovers the mighty book in his bosom, which he finds some difficulty in opening, and has scarcely had time to read a single spell in it, when he is struck down by an invisible hand, and the clasps of the magic volume shut suddenly more closely than ever. This one spell, however, enables him to practice every kind of illusion. He lays the wounded knight on his horse, and leads him into the castle, while the warders see nothing but a wain of hay. He throws him down, unperceived, at the door of the lady's chamber, and turns to make good his retreat. In passing through the court, however, he sees the young heir of Buccleuch at play, and, assuming the form of one of his companions, tempts him to go out with him to the woods, where, as soon as they pass a rivulet, he resumes his own shape, and bounds away. The bewildered child is met by two English archers, who make prize of him, and carry him off, while the goblin page returns to the castle; where he personates the young baron, to the great annoyance of the whole inhabitants.

The lady finds the wounded knight, and eagerly employs charms for his recovery, that she may learn the story of his disaster. The lovely Margaret, in the mean time, is sitting in her turret, gazing on the western star, and musing on the scenes of the morning, when she discovers the blazing beacons that announce the approach of an English enemy. The alarm is immediately given, and bustling preparation made throughout the mansion for defence. The English force under the command of the Lords Howard and Dacre speedily appears before the castle, leading with them the young Buccleuch; and propose that the lady should either give up Sir William of Deloraine (who had been her messenger to Melrose), as having incurred the guilt of march treason, or receive an English garrison within her walls. She answers, with much spirit, that her kinsman will clear himself of the imputation of treason by single combat, and that no foe shall ever get admittance into her fortress. The English Lords, being secretly apprised of the approach of powerful succours to the besieged, agree to the proposal of the combat; and stipulate that the boy shall be restored to liberty or detained in bondage, according to the issue of the battle. The lists are appointed for the ensuing day; and a truce being proclaimed in the mean time, the opposite bands mingle in hospitality and friendship.

Deloraine being wounded, was expected to appear by a champion; and some contention arises for the honour of that substitution.—This, however, is speedily terminated by a person in the armour of the warrior himself, who encounters the English champion, slays him, and leads his captive young chieftain to the embraces of his mother. At this moment Deloraine himself appears, half-clothed and unarmed, to claim the combat which has been terminated in his absence! and all flock around the stranger who had personated him so successfully. He unclasps his helmet; and behold! Lord Cranstoun of Teviotside! The lady, overcome with gratitude, and the remembrance of the spirits' prophecy, consents to forego the feud, and to give the fair hand of Margaret to that of the enamoured Baron. The rites of betrothment are then celebrated with great magnificence; and a splendid entertainment given to all the English and Scottish chieftains whom the alarm had assembled at Branksome. Lord Cranstoun's page plays several unlucky tricks during the festival, and breeds some dissension among the warriors. To soothe their ireful mood, the minstrels are introduced, who recite three ballad pieces of considerable merit. Just as their songs are ended, a supernatural darkness spreads itself through the hall; a tremendous flash of lightning and peal of thunder ensue, which break just on the spot where the goblin page had been seated, who is heard to cry "Found! found! found!"

'The feast was over in Branksome tower;
And the Ladye had gone to her secret bower;
Her bower, that was guarded by word and by [spell
Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell—
Jesu Maria, shield us well!
No living wight, save the Ladye alone,
Had dar'd to cross the threshold stone.

'The tables were drawn, it was idlesse all;
Knight, and page, and household squire,
Loiter'd through the lofty hall,
Or crowded round the ample fire.
The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretch'd upon the rushy floor,
And urg'd in dreams the forest race,
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor."
pp. 9, 10.

After a very picturesque representation of the military establishment of this old baronial fortress, the minstrel proceeds,

"Many a valiant knight is here;
But he, the Chieftain of them all,
His sword hangs rusting on the wall,
Beside his broken spear!
Bards long shall tell,
How Lord Walter fell!
When startled burghers fled, afar,
The furies of the Border war;
When the streets of high Dunedin
Saw lances gleam, and falchions redden,
And heard the slogan's deadly yell—
Then the Chief of Branksome fell!

"Can piety the discord heal,
Or staunch the death-feud's enmity?
Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
Can love of blessed charity?
No! vainly to each holy shrine,
In mutual pilgrimage, they drew;
Implor'd, in vain, the grace divine
For chiefs, their own red falchions slew.
While Cessford owns the rule of Car,
While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,
The slaughter'd chiefs, the mortal jar,
The havoc of the feudal war,
Shall never, never be forgot!

"In sorrow o'er Lord Walter's bier,
The warlike foresters had bent;
And many a flower and many a tear,
Old Teviot's maids and matron's lent:
But, o'er her warrior's bloody bier,
The Ladye dropp'd nor sigh nor tear!
Vengeance, deep-brooding o'er the slain,
Had lock'd the source of softer woe;
And burning pride, and high disdain,
Forbade the rising tear to flow;
Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
Her son lisp'd from the nurse's knee—
'And, if I live to be a man,
My father's death reveng'd shall be!'
Then fast the mother's tears did seek
To dew the infant's kindling cheek."—pp. 12—15.

There are not many passages in English poetry more impressive than some parts of this extract. As another illustration of the prodigious improvement which the style of the old romance is capable of receiving from a more liberal admixture of pathetic sentiments and gentle affections, we insert the following passage; where the effect of the picture is finely assisted by the contrast of its two compartments.

"So pass'd the day—the ev'ning fell,
'Twas near the time of curfew bell;
The air was mild, the wind was calm,
The stream was smooth, the dew was balm;
Ev'n the rude watchman, on the tower,
Enjoy'd and blessed the lovely hour.
Far more fair Margaret lov'd and bless'd
The hour of silence and of rest.

On the high turret, sitting lone,
She wak'd at times the lute's soft tone;
Touch'd a wild note, and all between
Thought of the bower of hawthorns green;
Her golden hair stream'd free from band,
Her fair cheek rested on her hand,
Her blue eye sought the west afar,
For lovers love the western star.

"Is yon the star o'er Penchryst-Pen,
That rises slowly to her ken,
And, spreading broad its wav'ring light,
Shakes its loose tresses on the night?
Is yon red glare the western star?—
Ah! 'tis the beacon-blaze of war!
Scarce could she draw her tighten'd breath;
For well she knew the fire of death!

"The warder view'd it blazing strong,
And blew his war-note loud and long,
Till, at the high and haughty sound,
Rock, wood, and river, rung around;
The blast alarm'd the festal hall,
And startled forth the warriors all;
Far downward in the castle-yard,
Full many a torch and cresset glar'd;
And helms and plumes, confusedly toss'd,
Were in the blaze half seen, half lost;
And spears in wild disorder shook,
Like reeds beside a frozen brook.

"The Seneschal, whose silver hair,
Was redden'd by the torches' glare,
Stood in the midst, with gesture proud,
And issued forth his mandates loud—
'On Penchryst glows a bale of fire,
And three are kindling on Priesthaughswire,'
&c.—pp. 83—85.

In these passages, the poetry of Mr. Scott is entitled to a decided preference over that of the earlier minstrels; not only from the greater consistency and condensation of his imagery, but from an intrinsic superiority in the nature of his materials. From the improvement of taste, and the cultivation of the finer feelings of the heart, poetry acquires, in a refined age, many new and invaluable elements, which are necessarily unknown in a period of greater simplicity. The description of external objects, however, is at all times equally inviting, and equally easy; and many of the pictures which have been left by the ancient romancers must be admitted to possess, along with great diffuseness and homeliness of diction, an exactness and vivacity which cannot be easily exceeded. In this part of his undertaking, Mr. Scott therefore had fewer advantages; but we do not think that his success has been less remarkable. In the following description of Melrose, which introduces the second canto, the reader will observe how skilfully he calls in the aid of sentimental associations to heighten the effect of the picture which he presents to the eye:

"If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight:
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild, but to flout, the ruins gray.
When the broken arches are black in night,
And each shafted oriel glimmers white;
When the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruin'd central tower;
When buttress and buttress, alternately,
Seem fram'd of ebon and ivory;
When silver edges the imagery,

And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave;
Then go!—but go alone the while—
Then view St. David's ruined pile!
And, home returning, soothly swear,
Was never scene so sad and fair!" pp. 35, 36.

In the following passage he is less ambitious; and confines himself, as an ancient minstrel would have done on the occasion, to a minute and picturesque representation of the visible object before him:—

"When for the lists they sought the plain,
The stately Ladye's silken rein
Did noble Howard hold;
Unarmed by her side he walk'd,
And much, in courteous phrase, they talk'd
Of feats of arms of old.
Costly his garb—his Flemish ruff
Fell o'er his doublet shap'd of buff,
With satin slash'd, and lin'd;
Tawny his boot, and gold his spur,
His cloak was all of Poland fur,
His hose with silver twin'd;
His Bilboa blade, by Marchmen felt,
Hung in a broad and studded belt;
Hence, in rude phrase, the Bord'rers still
Call'd noble Howard, Belted Will."—p. 141.

The same scrupulous adherence to the style of the old romance, though greatly improved in point of brevity and selection, is discernible in the following animated description of the feast, which terminates the poem:—

"The spousal rites were ended soon;
'Twas now the merry hour of noon,
And in the lofty-arched hall
Was spread the gorgeous festival:
Steward and squire, with heedful haste,
Marshall'd the rank of every guest;
Pages, with ready blade, were there,
The mighty meal to carve and share.
O'er capon, heron-shew, and crane,
And princely peacock's gilded train,
And o'er the boar's head, garnish'd brave,
And cygnet from St. Mary's wave;
O'er ptarmigan and venison,
The priest had spoke his benison.
Then rose the riot and the din,
Above, beneath, without, within!
For, from the lofty balcony,
Rung trumpet, shalm, and psaltery;
Their clanging bowls old warriors quaff'd,
Loudly they spoke, and loudly laugh'd;
Whisper'd young knights, in tone more mild,
To ladies fair, and ladies smil'd.
The hooded hawks, high perch'd on beam,
The clamour join'd with whistling scream,
And flapp'd their wings, and shook their bells,
In concert with the staghound's yells.
Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
From Bourdeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine;
Their tasks the busy sewers ply,
And all is mirth and revelry."—pp. 166, 167.

The following picture is sufficiently antique in its conception, though the execution is evidently modern:—

"Ten of them were sheath'd in steel,
With belted sword, and spur on heel:
They quitted not their harness bright,
Neither by day, nor yet by night;
They lay down to rest
With corslet laced,
Pillow'd on buckler cold and hard;
They carv'd at the meal
With gloves of steel, [met barr'd."
And they drank the red wine through the hel-

The whole scene of the duel, or judicial combat, is conducted according to the strict ordinances of chivalry, and delineated with all the minuteness of an ancient romancer. The modern reader will probably find it rather tedious; all but the concluding stanzas, which are in a loftier measure.

"'Tis done, 'tis done! that fatal blow
Has stretch'd him on the bloody plain;
He strives to rise—Brave Musgrave, no!
Thence never shalt thou rise again!
He chokes in blood—some friendly hand
Undo the visor's barred band,
Unfix the gorget's iron clasp,
And give him room for life to gasp!—
In vain, in vain—haste, holy friar,
Haste, ere the sinner shall expire!
Of all his guilt let him be shriven,
And smooth his path from earth to heaven!

"In haste the holy friar sped;
His naked foot was dyed with red,
As through the lists he ran;
Unmindful of the shouts on high,
That hail'd the conqueror's victory,
He rais'd the dying man;
Loose wav'd his silver beard and hair,
As o'er him he kneel'd down in prayer.
And still the crucifix on high,
He holds before his dark'ning eye,
And still he bends an anxious ear,
His falt'ring penitence to hear;
Still props him from the bloody sod,
Still, even when soul and body part,
Pours ghostly comfort on his heart,
And bids him trust in God!
Unheard he prays; 'tis o'er, 'tis o'er!
Richard of Musgrave breathes no more."
p. 145—147.

We have already made so many extracts from this poem, that we can now only afford to present our readers with one specimen of the songs which Mr. Scott has introduced in the mouths of the minstrels in the concluding canto. It is his object, in those pieces, to exemplify the different styles of ballad narrative which prevailed in this island at different periods, or in different conditions of society. The first is constructed upon the rude and simple model of the old Border ditties, and produces its effect by the direct and concise narrative of a tragical occurrence. The second, sung by Fitztraver, the bard of the accomplished Surrey, has more of the richness and polish of the Italian poetry, and is very beautifully written, in a stanza resembling that of Spenser. The third is intended to represent that wild style of composition which prevailed among the bards of the northern continent, somewhat softened and adorned by the minstrel's residence in the south. We prefer it, upon the whole, to either of the two former, and shall give it entire to our readers; who will probably be struck with the poetical effect of the dramatic form into which it is thrown, and of the indirect description by which every thing is most expressively told, without one word of distinct narrative.

"O listen, listen, ladies gay!
No haughty feat of arms I tell;
Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

"—Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!
And, gentle Ladye, deign to stay!

Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
Nor tempt the stormy frith to-day.

'The black'ning wave is edg'd with white;
To inch* and rock the sea-mews fly;
The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,
Whose screams forbode that wreck is nigh.

'Last night the gifted seer did view
A wet shroud roll'd round Ladye gay:
Then stay thee, fair, in Ravensheuch;
Why cross the gloomy frith to-day?"

—"'Tis not because Lord Lind'say's heir
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my Ladye-mother there
Sits lonely in her castle hall.

"'Tis not because the ring they ride,
And Lind'say at the ring rides well!
But that my sire the wine will chide,
If 'tis not fill'd by Rosabelle."—

'O'er Roslin all that dreary night
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
'Twas broader than the watch-fire light,
And brighter than the bright moonbeam.

"It glar'd on Roslin's castled rock,
It redden'd all the copse-wood glen;
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,
And seen from cavern'd Hawthornden.

'Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd lie;
Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheath'd in his iron panoply.

"Seem'd all on fire within, around,
Both vaulted crypt and altar's pale;
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
And glimmer'd all the dead-men's mail.

"Blaz'd battlement and pinnet high,
Blaz'd every rose-carv'd buttress fair—
So still they blaze when fate is nigh
The lordly line of high St. Clair!

"There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
Lie buried within that proud chapelle;
Each one the holy vault doth hold—
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle!

"And each St. Clair was buried there,
With candle, with book, and with knell;
But the Kelpy rung, and the Mermaid sung
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle!"—pp. 181-184.

From the various extracts we have now given, our readers will be enabled to form a tolerably correct judgment of this poem; and if they are pleased with these portions of it which have now been exhibited, we may venture to assure them that they will not be disappointed by the perusal of the whole. The whole night-journey of Deloraine—the opening of the wizard's tomb—the march of the English battle—and the parley before the walls of the castle, are all executed with the same spirit and poetical energy, which we think is conspicuous in the specimens we have already extracted; and a great variety of short passages occur in every part of the poem, which are still more striking and meritorious, though it is impossible to detach them, without injury, in the form of a quotation. It is but fair to apprise the reader, on the other hand, that he will meet with very heavy passages, and with a variety of details which are not likely to interest any one but a Borderer or an antiquary. We like very well to hear "of the Gallant Chief of Otterburne," or "the Dark Knight of Liddisdale," and feel the elevating power of great names, when we read of the tribes that mustered to the war, "beneath the crest of old Dunbar, and Hepburn's mingled banners." But we really cannot so far sympathise with the local peculiarities of the author, as to feel any glow of patriotism or ancient virtue in hearing of the *Todrig* or *Johnston* clans, or of *Elliots, Armstrongs*, and *Tinlinns;* still less can we relish the introduction of *Black John of Athelstane, Whitslade the Hawk, Arthur-fire-the-braes*, Red *Roland Forster*, or any other of those worthies who

"Sought the beeves that made their broth,
In Scotland and in England both,"

into a poem which has any pretensions to seriousness or dignity. The ancient metrical romance might have admitted those homely personalities; but the present age will not endure them: And Mr. Scott must either sacrifice his Border prejudices, or offend all his readers in the other parts of the empire.

There are many passages, as we have already insinuated, which have the general character of heaviness, such is the minstrel's account of his preceptor, and Deloraine's lamentation over the dead body of Musgrave: But the goblin page is, in our opinion, the capital deformity of the poem. We have already said that the whole machinery is useless: but the magic studies of the lady, and the rifled tomb of Michael Scott, give occasion to so much admirable poetry, that we can on no account consent to part with them. The page, on the other hand, is a perpetual burden to the poet, and to the reader: it is an undignified and improbable fiction, which excites neither terror, admiration, nor astonishment; but needlessly debases the strain of the whole work, and excites at once our incredulity and contempt. He is not a "tricksy spirit," like Ariel, with whom the imagination is irresistibly enamoured; nor a tiny monarch, like Oberon, disposing of the destinies of mortals: He rather appears to us to be an awkward sort of a mongrel between Puck and Caliban; of a servile and brutal nature; and limited in his powers to the indulgence of petty malignity, and the infliction of despicable injuries. Besides this objection to his character, his existence has no support from any general or established superstition. Fairies and devils, ghosts, angels, and witches, are creatures with whom we are all familiar, and who excite in all classes of mankind emotions with which we can easily be made to sympathise. But the story of Gilpin Horner can never have been believed out of the village where he is said to have made his appearance; and has no claims upon the credulity of those who were not originally of his acquaintance. There is nothing at all interesting or elegant in the scenes of which he is the hero; and in reading those passages, we really could not help suspecting that they did not stand in the romance when the aged minstrel recited it to the royal Charles and his

*Isle.

mighty earls, but were inserted afterwards to suit the taste of the cottagers among whom he begged his bread on the Border. We entreat Mr. Scott to inquire into the grounds of this suspicion; and to take advantage of any decent pretext he can lay hold of for purging "The Lay" of this ungraceful intruder. We would also move for a *Quo Warranto* against the spirits of the river and the mountain; for though they are come of a very high lineage, we do not know what lawful business they could have at Branksome castle in the year 1550.

Of the diction of this poem we have but little to say. From the extracts we have already given, our readers will perceive that the versification is in the highest degree irregular and capricious. The nature of the work entitled Mr. Scott to some licence in this respect, and he often employs it with a very pleasing effect; but he has frequently exceeded its just limits, and presented us with such combinations of metre, as must put the teeth of his readers, we think, into some jeopardy. He has, when he pleases, a very melodious and sonorous style of versification; but often composes with inexcusable negligence and rudeness. There is a great number of lines in which the verse can only be made out by running the words together in a very unusual manner; and some appear to us to have no pretension to the name of verses at all. What apology, for instance, will Mr. Scott make for the last of these two lines?—

"For when in studious mood he pac'd
St. Kentigern's hall."

or for these?—

"How the brave boy in future war,
Should tame the unicorn's pride."

We have called the negligence which could leave such lines as these in a poem of this nature inexcusable; because it is perfectly evident, from the general strain of his composition, that Mr. Scott has a very accurate ear for the harmony of versification, and that he composes with a facility which must lighten the labour of correction. There are some smaller faults in the diction which might have been as well corrected also: there is too much alliteration; and he reduplicates his words too often. We have "never, never," several times; besides "'tis o'er, 'tis o'er"—"in vain, in vain"—"'tis done, 'tis done;" and several other echoes as ungraceful.

We will not be tempted to say any thing more of this poem. Although it does not contain any great display of what is properly called invention, it indicates perhaps as much vigour and originality of poetical genius as any performance which has been lately offered to the public. The locality of the subject is likely to obstruct its popularity; and the author, by confining himself in a great measure to the description of manners and personal adventures, has forfeited the attraction which might have been derived from the delineation of rural scenery. But he has manifested a degree of genius which cannot be overlooked, and given indication of talents that seem well worthy of being enlisted in the service of the epic muse.

The notes, which contain a great treasure of Border history and antiquarian learning, are too long, we think, for the general reader. The form of the publication is also too expensive; and we hope soon to see a smaller edition, with an abridgement of the notes, for the use of the mere lovers of poetry.

(August, 1810.)

The Lady of the Lake: a Poem. By Walter Scott. Second Edition. 8vo. pp. 434: 1810.

Mr. Scott, though living in an age unusually prolific of original poetry, has manifestly outstripped all his competitors in the race of popularity; and stands already upon a height to which no other writer has attained in the memory of any one now alive. We doubt, indeed, whether any English poet *ever* had so many of his books sold, or so many of his verses read and admired by such a multitude of persons in so short a time. We are credibly informed that nearly thirty thousand copies of "The Lay" have been already disposed of in this country; and that the demand for Marmion, and the poem now before us, has been still more considerable,—a circulation we believe, altogether without example, in the case of a bulky work, not addressed to the bigotry of the mere mob, either religious or political.

A popularity so universal is a pretty sure proof of extraordinary merit,—a far surer one, we readily admit, than would be afforded by any praises of ours: and, therefore, though we pretend to be privileged, in ordinary cases, to foretell the ultimate reception of all claims on public admiration, our function may be thought to cease, where the event is already so certain and conspicuous. As it is a sore thing, however, to be deprived of our privileges on so important an occasion, we hope to be pardoned for insinuating, that, even in such a case, the office of the critic may not be altogether superfluous. Though the success of the author be decisive, and even likely to be permanent, it still may not be without its use to point out, in consequence of what, and in spite of what, he has succeeded; nor altogether uninstructive to trace the precise limits of the connection which, even in this dull world, indisputably subsists between success

and desert, and to ascertain how far unexampled popularity does really imply unrivalled talent.

As it is the object of poetry to give pleasure, it would seem to be a pretty safe conclusion, that that poetry must be the best which gives the greatest pleasure to the greatest number of persons. Yet we must pause a little, before we give our assent to so plausible a proposition. It would not be quite correct, we fear, to say that those are invariably the best judges who are most easily pleased. The great multitude, even of the reading world, must necessarily be uninstructed and injudicious; and will frequently be found, not only to derive pleasure from what is worthless in finer eyes, but to be quite insensible to those beauties which afford the most exquisite delight to more cultivated understandings. True pathos and sublimity will indeed charm every one: but, out of this lofty sphere, we are pretty well convinced, that the poetry which appears most perfect to a very refined taste, will not often turn out to be very popular poetry.

This, indeed, is saying nothing more, than that the ordinary readers of poetry have not a very refined taste; and that they are often insensible to many of its highest beauties, while they still more frequently mistake its imperfections for excellence. The fact, when stated in this simple way, commonly excites neither opposition nor surprise: and yet, if it be asked, why the taste of a few individuals, who do not perceive beauty where many others perceive it, should be exclusively dignified with the name of a good taste; or why poetry, which gives pleasure to a very great number of readers, should be thought inferior to that which pleases a much smaller number,—the answer, perhaps, may not be quite so ready as might have been expected from the alacrity of our assent to the first proposition. That there is a good answer to be given, however, we entertain no doubt: and if that which we are about to offer should not appear very clear or satisfactory, we must submit to have it thought, that the fault is not altogether in the subject.

In the first place, then, it should be remembered, that though the taste of very good judges is necessarily the taste of a few, it is implied, in their description, that they are persons eminently qualified, by natural sensibility, and long experience and reflection, to perceive all beauties that really exist, as well as to settle the relative value and importance of all the different sorts of beauty;—they are in that very state, in short, to which all who are in any degree capable of tasting those refined pleasures would certainly arrive, if their sensibility were increased, and their experience and reflection enlarged. It is difficult, therefore, in following out the ordinary analogies of language, to avoid considering them as in the right, and calling their taste the true and the just one; when it appears that it is such as is uniformly produced by the cultivation of those faculties upon which all our perceptions of taste so obviously depend.

It is to be considered also, that though it be the end of poetry to please, one of the parties whose pleasure, and whose notions of excellence, will always be primarily consulted in its composition, is the poet himself; and as he must necessarily be more cultivated than the great body of his readers, the presumption is that he will always belong, comparatively speaking, to the class of good judges, and endeavour, consequently, to produce that sort of excellence which is likely to meet with their approbation. When authors, therefore, and those of whose suffrages authors are most ambitious, thus conspire to fix upon the same standard of what is good in taste and composition, it is easy to see how it should come to bear this name in society, in preference to what might afford more pleasure to individuals of less influence. Besides all this, it is obvious that it must be infinitely more difficult to produce any thing conformable to this exalted standard, than merely to fall in with the current of popular taste. To attain the former object, it is necessary, for the most part, to understand thoroughly all the feelings and associations that are modified or created by cultivation:—To accomplish the latter, it will often be sufficient merely to have observed the course of familiar preferences. Success, however, is rare, in proportion as it is difficult; and it is needless to say, what a vast addition rarity makes to value,—or how exactly our admiration at success is proportioned to our sense of the difficulty of the undertaking.

Such seem to be the most general and immediate causes of the apparent paradox, of reckoning that which pleases the greatest number as inferior to that which pleases the few; and such the leading grounds for fixing the standard of excellence, in a question of mere feeling and gratification, by a different rule than that of the quantity of gratification produced. With regard to some of the fine arts—for the distinction between popular and actual merit obtains in them all—there are no other reasons, perhaps, to be assigned; and, in Music for example, when we have said that it is the *authority* of those who are best qualified by nature and study, and the *difficulty* and *rarity* of the attainment, that entitles certain exquisite performances to rank higher than others that give far more general delight, we have probably said all that can be said in explanation of this mode of speaking and judging. In poetry, however, and in some other departments, this familiar, though somewhat extraordinary rule of estimation, is justified by other considerations.

As it is the cultivation of natural and perhaps universal capacities, that produces that refined taste which takes away our pleasure in vulgar excellence, so, it is to be considered, that there is an universal tendency to the propagation of such a taste; and that, in times tolerably favourable to human happiness, there is a continual progress and improvement in this, as in the other faculties of nations and large assemblages of men. The number of intelligent judges may therefore be regarded as perpetually on the increase. The inner

circle, to which the poet delights chiefly to pitch his voice, is perpetually enlarging; and, looking to that great futurity to which his ambition is constantly directed, it may be found, that the most refined style of composition to which he can attain, will be, at the last, the most extensively and permanently popular. This holds true, we think, with regard to all the productions of art that are open to the inspection of any considerable part of the community; but, with regard to poetry in particular, there is one circumstance to be attended to, that renders this conclusion peculiarly safe, and goes far indeed to reconcile the taste of the multitude with that of more cultivated judges.

As it seems difficult to conceive that mere cultivation should either absolutely create or utterly destroy any natural capacity of enjoyment, it is not easy to suppose, that the qualities which delight the uninstructed should be *substantially* different from those which give pleasure to the enlightened. They may be arranged according to a different scale,—and certain shades and accompaniments may be more or less indispensable; but the qualities in a poem that give most pleasure to the refined and fastidious critic, are in substance, we believe, the very same that delight the most injudicious of its admirers:—and the very wide difference which exists between their usual estimates, may be in a great degree accounted for, by considering, that the one judges absolutely, and the other relatively—that the one attends only to the intrinsic qualities of the *work*, while the other refers more immediately to the merit of the *author*. The most popular passages in popular poetry, are in fact, for the most part, very beautiful and striking; yet they are very often such passages as could never be ventured on by any writer who aimed at the praise of the judicious; and this, for the obvious reason, that they are trite and hackneyed,—that they have been repeated till they have lost all grace and propriety,—and, instead of exalting the imagination by the impression of original genius or creative fancy, only nauseate and offend, by the association of paltry plagiarism and impudent inanity. It is only, however, on those who have read and remembered the original passages, and their better imitations, that this effect is produced. To the ignorant and the careless, the twentieth imitation has all the charm of an original; and that which oppresses the more experienced reader with weariness and disgust, rouses them with all the force and vivacity of novelty. It is not then, because the ornaments of popular poetry are deficient in intrinsic worth and beauty, that they are slighted by the critical reader, but because he at once recognises them to be stolen, and perceives that they are arranged without taste or congruity. In his indignation at the dishonesty, and his contempt for the poverty of the collector, he overlooks altogether the value of what he has collected, or remembers it only as an aggravation of his offence,—as converting larceny into sacrilege, and adding the guilt of profanation to the folly of unsuitable finery. There are other features, no doubt, that distinguish the idols of vulgar admiration from the beautiful exemplars of pure taste; but this is so much the most characteristic and remarkable, that we know no way in which we could so shortly describe the poetry that pleases the multitude, and displeases the select few, as by saying that it consisted of all the most known and most brilliant parts of the most celebrated authors,—of a splendid and unmeaning accumulation of those images and phrases which had long charmed every reader in the works of their original inventors.

The justice of these remarks will probably be at once admitted by all who have attended to the history and effects of what may be called *Poetical diction* in general, or even of such particular phrases and epithets as have been indebted to their beauty for too great a notoriety. Our associations with all this class of expressions, which have become trite only in consequence of their intrinsic excellence, now suggest to us no ideas but those of schoolboy imbecility and childish affectation. We look upon them merely as the common, hired, and tawdry trappings of all who wish to put on, for the hour, the masquerade habit of poetry; and, instead of receiving from them any kind of delight or emotion, do not even distinguish or attend to the signification of the words of which they consist. The ear is so palled with their repetition, and so accustomed to meet with them as the habitual expletives of the lowest class of versifiers, that they come at last to pass over it without exciting any sort of conception whatever, and are not even so much attended to as to expose their most gross incoherence or inconsistency to detection. It is of this quality that Swift has availed himself in so remarkable a manner, in his famous "Song by a person of quality," which consists entirely in a selection of some of the most trite and well-sounding phrases and epithets in the poetical lexicon of the time, strung together without any kind of meaning or consistency, and yet so disposed, as to have been perused, perhaps by one half of their readers, without any suspicion of the deception. Most of those phrases, however, which had thus become sickening, and almost insignificant, to the intelligent readers of poetry in the days of Queen Anne, are in themselves beautiful and expressive, and, no doubt, retain much of their native grace in those ears that have not been alienated by their repetition.

But it is not merely from the use of much excellent diction, that a modern poet is thus debarred by the lavishness of his predecessors. There is a certain range of subjects and characters, and a certain manner and tone, which were probably, in their origin, as graceful and attractive, which have been proscribed by the same dread of imitation. It would be too long to enter, in this place, into any detailed examination of the peculiarities—originating chiefly in this source—which distinguish ancient from modern poetry. It may be enough just to remark, that, as the elements of poet-

ical emotion are necessarily limited, so it was natural for those who first sought to excite it, to avail themselves of those subjects, situations, and images, that were most obviously calculated to produce that effect; and to assist them by the use of all those aggravating circumstances that most readily occurred as likely to heighten their operation. In this way, they may be said to have got possession of all the choice materials of their art; and, working without fear of comparisons, fell naturally into a free and graceful style of execution, at the same time that the profusion of their resources made them somewhat careless and inexpert in their application. After-poets were in a very different situation. They could neither take the most natural and general topics of interest, nor treat them with the ease and indifference of those who had the whole store at their command—because this was precisely what had been already done by those who had gone before them: And they were therefore put upon various expedients for attaining their object, and yet preserving their claim to originality. Some of them accordingly set themselves to observe and delineate both characters and external objects with greater minuteness and fidelity,—and others to analyse more carefully the mingling passions of the heart, and to feed and cherish a more limited train of emotion, through a longer and more artful succession of incidents,—while a third sort distorted both nature and passion, according to some fantastical theory of their own; or took such a narrow corner of each, and dissected it with such curious and microscopic accuracy, that its original form was no longer discernible by the eyes of the uninstructed. In this way we think that modern poetry has both been enriched with more exquisite pictures, and deeper and more sustained strains of pathetic, than were known to the less elaborate artists of antiquity; at the same time that it has been defaced with more affectation, and loaded with far more intricacy. But whether they failed or succeeded,—and whether they distinguished themselves from their predecessors by faults or by excellences, the later poets, we conceive, must be admitted to have almost always written in a more constrained and narrow manner than their originals, and to have departed farther from what was obvious, easy, and natural. Modern poetry, in this respect, may be compared, perhaps, without any great impropriety, to modern sculpture. It is greatly inferior to the ancient in freedom, grace, and simplicity; but, in return, it frequently possesses a more decided expression, and more fine finishing of less suitable embellishments.

Whatever may be gained or lost, however, by this change of manner, it is obvious, that poetry must become less popular by means of it: For the most natural and obvious manner, is always the most taking;—and whatever costs the author much pains and labour, is usually found to require a corresponding effort on the part of the reader,—which all readers are not disposed to make. That they who seek to be original by means of affectation, should revolt more by their affectation than they attract by their originality, is just and natural; but even the nobler devices that win the suffrages of the judicious by their intrinsic beauty, as well as their novelty, are apt to repel the multitude, and to obstruct the popularity of some of the most exquisite productions of genius. The beautiful but minute delineations of such admirable observers as Crabbe or Cowper, are apt to appear tedious to those who take little interest in their subjects, and have no concern about their art;—and the refined, deep, and sustained pathetic of Campbell, is still more apt to be mistaken for monotony and languor by those who are either devoid of sensibility, or impatient of quiet reflection. The most popular style undoubtedly is that which has great variety and brilliancy, rather than exquisite finish in its images and descriptions; and which touches lightly on many passions, without raising any so high as to transcend the comprehension of ordinary mortals—or dwelling on it so long as to exhaust their patience.

Whether Mr. Scott holds the same opinion with us upon these matters, and has intentionally conformed his practice to this theory,—or whether the peculiarities in his compositions have been produced merely by following out the natural bent of his genius, we do not presume to determine: But, that he has actually made use of all our recipes for popularity, we think very evident; and conceive, that few things are more curious than the singular skill, or good fortune, with which he has reconciled his claims on the favour of the multitude, with his pretensions to more select admiration. Confident in the force and originality of his own genius, he has not been afraid to avail himself of common-places both of diction and of sentiment, whenever they appeared to be beautiful or impressive,—using them, however, at all times, with the skill and spirit of an inventor; and, quite certain that he could not be mistaken for a plagiarist or imitator, he has made free use of that great treasury of characters, images, and expressions, which had been accumulated by the most celebrated of his predecessors,—at the same time that the rapidity of his transitions, the novelty of his combinations, and the spirit and variety of his own thoughts and inventions, show plainly that he was a borrower from any thing but poverty, and *took* only what he would have *given*, if he had been born in an earlier generation. The great secret of his popularity, however, and the leading characteristic of his poetry, appear to us to consist evidently in this, that he has made more use of common topics, images, and expressions, than any original poet of later times; and, at the same time, displayed more genius and originality than any recent author who has worked in the same materials. By the latter peculiarity, he has entitled himself to the admiration of every description of readers;—by the former, he is recommended in an especial manner to the inexperienced—at the hazard of some little offence to the more cultivated and fastidious.

In the choice of his subjects, for example,

he does not attempt to interest merely by fine observation or pathetic sentiment, but takes the assistance of a story, and enlists the reader's curiosity among his motives for attention. Then his characters are all selected from the most common *dramatis personæ* of poetry;—kings, warriors, knights, outlaws, nuns, minstrels, secluded damsels, wizards, and true lovers. He never ventures to carry us into the cottage of the modern peasant, like Crabbe or Cowper; nor into the bosom of domestic privacy, like Campbell; nor among creatures of the imagination, like Southey or Darwin. Such personages, we readily admit, are not in themselves so interesting or striking as those to whom Mr. Scott has devoted himself; but they are far less familiar in poetry—and are therefore more likely, perhaps, to engage the attention of those to whom poetry is familiar. In the management of the passions, again, Mr. Scott appears to us to have pursued the same popular, and comparatively easy course. He has raised all the most familiar and poetical emotions, by the most obvious aggravations, and in the most compendious and judicious ways. He has dazzled the reader with the splendour, and even warmed him with the transient heat of various affections; but he has nowhere fairly kindled him with enthusiasm, or melted him into tenderness. Writing for the world at large, he has wisely abstained from attempting to raise any passion to a height to which worldly people could not be transported; and contented himself with giving his reader the chance of feeling, as a brave, kind, and affectionate gentleman must often feel in the ordinary course of his existence, without trying to breathe into him either that lofty enthusiasm which disdains the ordinary business and amusements of life, or that quiet and deep sensibility which unfits for most of its pursuits. With regard to diction and imagery, too, it is quite obvious that Mr. Scott has not aimed at writing either in a very pure or a very consistent style. He seems to have been anxious only to strike, and to be easily and universally understood; and, for this purpose, to have culled the most glittering and conspicuous expressions of the most popular authors, and to have interwoven them in splendid confusion with his own nervous diction and irregular versification. Indifferent whether he coins or borrows, and draying with equal freedom on his memory and his imagination, he goes boldly forward, in full reliance on a never-failing abundance; and dazzles, with his richness and variety, even those who are most apt to be offended with his glare and irregularity. There is nothing, in Mr. Scott, of the severe and majestic style of Milton—or of the terse and fine composition of Pope—or of the elaborate elegance and melody of Campbell—or even of the flowing and redundant diction of Southey.—But there is a medley of bright images and glowing words, set carelessly and loosely together—a diction, tinged successively with the careless richness of Shakespeare, the harshness and antique simplicity of the old romances, the homeliness of vulgar ballads and anecdotes, and the sentimental glitter of the most modern poetry,—passing from the borders of the ludicrous to those of the sublime—alternately minute and energetic—sometimes artificial, and frequently negligent—but always full of spirit and vivacity,—abounding in images that are striking, at first sight, to minds of every contexture—and never expressing a sentiment which it can cost the most ordinary reader any exertion to comprehend.

Such seem to be the leading qualities that have contributed to Mr. Scott's popularity; and as some of them are obviously of a kind to diminish his merit in the eyes of more fastidious judges, it is but fair to complete this view of his peculiarities by a hasty notice of such of them as entitle him to unqualified admiration;—and here it is impossible not to be struck with that vivifying spirit of strength and animation which pervades all the inequalities of his composition, and keeps constantly on the mind of the reader the impression of great power, spirit and intrepidity. There is nothing cold, creeping, or feeble, in all Mr. Scott's poetry;—no laborious littleness, or puling classical affectation. He has his failures, indeed, like other people; but he always attempts vigorously: And never fails in his immediate object, without accomplishing something far beyond the reach of an ordinary writer. Even when he wanders from the paths of pure taste, he leaves behind him the footsteps of a powerful genius; and moulds the most humble of his materials into a form worthy of a nobler substance. Allied to this inherent vigour and animation, and in a great degree derived from it, is that air of facility and freedom which adds so peculiar a grace to most of Mr. Scott's compositions. There is certainly no living poet whose works seem to come from him with so much ease, or who so seldom appears to labour, even in the most burdensome parts of his performance. He seems, indeed, never to think either of himself or his reader, but to be completely identified and lost in the personages with whom he is occupied; and the attention of the reader is consequently either transferred, unbroken, to their adventures, or, if it glance back for a moment to the author, it is only to think how much more might be done, by putting forth that strength at full, which has, without effort, accomplished so many wonders. It is owing partly to these qualities, and partly to the great variety of his style, that Mr. Scott is much less frequently tedious than any other bulky poet with whom we are acquainted. His store of images is so copious, that he never dwells upon one long enough to produce weariness in the reader; and, even where he deals in borrowed or in tawdry wares, the rapidity of his transitions, and the transient glance with which he is satisfied as to each, leave the critic no time to be offended, and hurry him forward, along with the multitude, enchanted with the brilliancy of the exhibition. Thus, the very frequency of his deviations from pure taste, comes, in some sort, to constitute their apology; and the pro-

fusion and variety of his faults to afford a new proof of his genius.

These, we think, are the general characteristics of Mr. Scott's poetry. Among his minor peculiarities, we might notice his singular talent for description, and especially for the description of scenes abounding in *motion* or *action* of any kind. In this department, indeed, we conceive him to be almost without a rival, either among modern or ancient poets; and the character and process of his descriptions are as extraordinary as their effect is astonishing. He places before the eyes of his readers a more distinct and complete picture, perhaps, than any other artist ever presented by mere words; and yet he does not (like Crabbe) enumerate all the visible parts of the subjects with any degree of minuteness, nor confine himself, by any means, to what is visible. The singular merit of his delineations, on the contrary, consists in this, that, with a few bold and abrupt strokes, he finishes a most spirited outline,—and then instantly kindles it by the sudden light and colour of some moral affection. There are none of his fine descriptions, accordingly, which do not derive a great part of their clearness and picturesque effect, as well as their interest, from the quantity of character and moral expression which is thus blended with their details, and which, so far from interrupting the conception of the external object, very powerfully stimulate the fancy of the reader to complete it; and give a grace and a spirit to the whole representation, of which we do not know where to look for any other example.

Another very striking peculiarity in Mr. Scott's poetry, is the air of freedom and nature which he has contrived to impart to most of his distinguished characters; and with which no poet more modern than Shakespeare has ventured to represent personages of such dignity. We do not allude here merely to the genuine familiarity and homeliness of many of his scenes and dialogues, but to that air of gaiety and playfulness in which persons of high rank seem, from time immemorial, to have thought it necessary to array, not their courtesy only, but their generosity and their hostility. This tone of good society, Mr. Scott has shed over his higher characters with great grace and effect; and has, in this way, not only made his representations much more faithful and true to nature, but has very agreeably relieved the monotony of that tragic solemnity which ordinary writers appear to think indispensable to the dignity of poetical heroes and heroines. We are not sure, however, whether he has not occasionally exceeded a little in the use of this ornament; and given, now and then, too coquettish and trifling a tone to discussions of weight and moment.

Mr. Scott has many other characteristic excellences:—But we have already detained our readers too long with this imperfect sketch of his poetical character, and must proceed, without further delay, to give them some account of the work which is now before us. Of this, upon the whole, we are inclined to think more highly than of either of his former publications. We are more sure, however, that it has fewer faults, than that it has greater beauties; and as its beauties bear a strong resemblance to those with which the public has already been made familiar in those celebrated works, we should not be surprised if its popularity were less splendid and remarkable. For our own parts, however, we are of opinion, that it will be oftener read hereafter than either of them; and, that, if it had appeared first in the series, *their* reception would have been less favourable than that which it has experienced. It is more polished in its diction, and more regular in its versification; the story is constructed with infinitely more skill and address; there is a greater proportion of pleasing and tender passages, with much less antiquarian detail; and, upon the whole, a larger variety of characters, more artfully and judiciously contrasted. There is nothing so fine, perhaps, as the battle in Marmion—or so picturesque as some of the scattered sketches in the Lay; but there is a richness and a spirit in the whole piece, which does not pervade either of these poems—a profusion of incident, and a shifting brilliancy of colouring, that reminds us of the witchery of Ariosto—and a constant elasticity, and occasional energy, which seem to belong more peculiarly to the author now before us.

It may appear superfluous, perhaps, for us to present our readers with any analysis of a work, which is probably, by this time, in the hands of as many persons as are likely to see our account of it. As these, however, may not be the same persons, and as, without making some such abstract, we could not easily render the few remarks we have to offer intelligible, we shall take the liberty of beginning with a short summary of the fable.

The first canto, which is entitled The Chase, begins with a pretty long description of a stag-hunt in the Highlands of Perthshire. As the chase lengthens, the sportsmen drop off; till at last the foremost huntsman is left alone; and his horse, overcome with fatigue, stumbles, and dies in a rocky valley. The adventurer pursues a little wild path, through a deep ravine; and at last, climbing up a craggy eminence, discovers, by the light of the evening sun, Loch Katrine, with all its woody islands and rocky shores, spread out in glory before him. After gazing with admiration on this beautiful scene, which is described with greater spirit than accuracy, the huntsman winds his horn, in the hope of being heard by some of his attendants; and sees, to his infinite surprise, a little skiff, guided by a lovely woman, glide from beneath the trees that overhang the water, and approach the shore at his feet. The lady calls to her father; and, upon the stranger's approach, pushes her shallop from the shore in alarm. After holding a short parley with him, however, from the water, she takes him into the boat, and carries him to a woody island; where she leads him into a sort of sylvan mansion, rudely constructed of trunks of trees, moss, and thatch, and hung round, within, with trophies of war, and of the chase. An elderly lady is

introduced at supper; and the stranger, after disclosing himself to be "James Fitz-James, the knight of Snowdoun," tries in vain to discover the name and history of the ladies, whose manners discover them to be of high rank and quality. He then retires to sleep, and is disturbed with distressful visions—rises and tranquillises himself, by looking out on the lovely moonlight landscape—says his prayers, and sleeps till the heathcock crows on the mountains behind him:—And thus closes the first canto.

The second opens with a fine picture of the aged harper, Allan-bane, sitting on the island beach with the damsel, watching the skiff which carries the stranger back again to land. The minstrel sings a sweet song; and a conversation ensues, from which the reader gathers, that the lady is a daughter of the house of Douglas, and that her father, having been exiled by royal displeasure from the court, had been fain to accept of this asylum from Sir Roderick Dhu, a Highland chieftain, who had long been outlawed for deeds of blood, but still maintained his feudal sovereignty in the fastnesses of his native mountains. It appears also, that this dark chief is in love with his fair *protegée;* but that her affections are engaged to Malcolm Græme, a younger and more amiable mountaineer, the companion and guide of her father in his hunting excursions. As they are engaged in this discourse, the sound of distant music is heard on the lake; and the barges of Sir Roderick are discovered, proceeding in triumph to the island. Her mother calls Ellen to go down with her to receive him; but she, hearing her father's horn at that instant on the opposite shore, flies to meet him and Malcolm Græme, who is received with cold and stately civility by the lord of the isle. After some time, Sir Roderick informs the Douglas, that his retreat has been discovered by the royal spies, and that he has great reason to believe that the King (James V.), who, under pretence of hunting, had assembled a large force in the neighbourhood, was bent upon their destruction. He then proposes, somewhat impetuously, that they should unite their fortunes indissolubly by his marriage with Ellen, and rouse the whole Western Highlands to repress the invasion. The Douglas, with many expressions of gratitude, declines both the war and the alliance; and, intimating that his daughter has repugnances which she cannot overcome, and that he, though ungratefully used by his sovereign, will never lift his arm against him, declares that he will retire to a cave in the neighbouring mountains, till the issue of the threat is seen. The strong heart of Roderick is wrung with agony at this rejection; and, when Malcolm advances to offer his services, as Ellen rises to retire, he pushes him violently back—and a scuffle ensues, of no very dignified character, which is with difficulty appeased by the giant arm of Douglas. Malcolm then withdraws in proud resentment; and, refusing to be indebted to the surly chief even for the use of his boat, plunges into the water, and swims over by moonlight to the mainland:—And, with the description of this feat, the second canto concludes.

The third canto, which is entitled "The Gathering," opens with a long and rather tedious account of the ceremonies employed by Sir Roderick, in preparing for the summoning or gathering of his clan. This is accomplished by the consecration of a small wooden cross, which, with its points scorched and dipped in blood, is circulated with incredible celerity through the whole territory of the chieftain. The eager fidelity with which this fatal signal is hurried on and obeyed, is represented with great spirit and felicity. A youth starts from the side of his father's coffin, to bear it forward; and having run his stage, delivers it into the hands of a young bridegroom returning from church; who instantly binds his plaid around him, and rushes onward from his bride. In the mean time, Douglas and his daughter had taken refuge in the mountain cave; and Sir Roderick, passing near their retreat in his way to the muster, hears Ellen's voice singing her evening hymn to the Virgin. He does not obtrude on her devotions, but hurries to the place of rendezvous, where his clan receive him with a shout of acclamation, and then couch on the bare heath for the night.—This terminates the third canto.

The fourth begins with more incantations. Some absurd and disgusting ceremonies are gone through, by a wild hermit of the clan, with a view to ascertain the issue of the impending war;—and this oracular response is obtained—"that the party shall prevail which first sheds the blood of its adversary." We are then introduced to the minstrel and Ellen, whom he strives to comfort for the alarming disappearance of her father, by singing a long fairy ballad to her; and just as the song is ended, the knight of Snowdoun again appears before her, declares his love, and urges her to put herself under his protection. Ellen, alarmed, throws herself on his generosity—confesses her attachment to Græme—and with difficulty prevails on him to seek his own safety by a speedy retreat from those dangerous confines. The gallant stranger at last complies; but, before he goes, presents her with a ring, which he says he had received from the hand of King James, with a promise to grant any boon that should be asked by the person producing it. As he is pursuing his way through the wild, his suspicions are excited by the conduct of his guide, and confirmed by the musical warnings of a mad woman, who sings to him about the toils that are set, and the knives that are whetted against him. He then threatens his false guide, who discharges an arrow at him, which kills the maniac. The knight slays the murderer; and learning from the expiring victim that her brain had been turned by the cruelty of Sir Roderick, he vows vengeance on his head; and proceeds with grief and apprehension along his dangerous way. When chilled with the midnight cold, and exhausted with want and fatigue, he suddenly comes upon a chief reposing by a lonely watch-fire;

and, though challenged in the name of Roderick Dhu, boldly avows himself his enemy. The clansman, however, disdains to take advantage of a worn-out wanderer; and pledges himself to escort him safe out of Sir Roderick's territory; after which, he tells him he must answer with his sword for the defiance he had uttered against the chieftain. The stranger accepts his courtesy upon those chivalrous terms; and the warriors sup, and sleep together on the plaid of the mountaineer.

They rouse themselves by dawn, at the opening of the fifth canto, entitled "The Combat," and proceed towards the Lowland frontier; the Highland warrior seeking, by the way, at once to vindicate the character of Sir Roderick, and to justify the predatory habits of his clan. Fitz-James expresses freely his detestation of both; and the dispute growing warm, he says, that never lover longed so to see the lady of his heart, as he to see before him this murderous chief and his myrmidons. "Have then thy wish!" answers his guide; and giving a loud whistle, a whole legion of armed men start up at once from their mountain ambush in the heath; while the chief turns proudly, and says, those are the warriors of Clan-Alpine—and "I am Roderick Dhu!"—The Lowland knight, though startled, repeats his defiance; and Sir Roderick, respecting his valour, by a signal dismisses his men to their concealment, and assures him anew of his safety till they pass his frontier. Arrived on this equal ground, the chief now demands satisfaction; and forces the knight, who tries all honourable means of avoiding the combat with so generous an adversary, to stand upon his defence. Roderick, after a tough combat, is laid wounded on the ground; and Fitz-James, sounding his bugle, brings four squires to his side; and after giving the wounded chief into their charge, gallops rapidly on towards Stirling. As he ascends the hill to the castle, he descries the giant form of Douglas approaching to the same place; and the reader is then told, that this generous lord had taken the resolution of delivering himself up voluntarily, with a view to save Malcolm Græme, and if possible Sir Roderick also, from the impending danger. As he draws near to the castle, he sees the King and his train descending to grace the holyday sports of the commonalty, and resolves to mingle in them, and present himself to the eye of his alienated sovereign as victor in those humbler contentions. He wins the prize accordingly, in archery, wrestling, and pitching the bar; and receives his reward from the hand of the prince; who does not condescend to recognise his former favourite by one glance of affection. Roused at last by an insult from one of the royal grooms, he proclaims himself aloud; is ordered into custody by the King, and represses a tumult of the populace which is excited for his rescue. At this instant, a messenger arrives with tidings of an approaching battle between the clan of Roderick and the King's lieutenant, the Earl of Mar; and is ordered back to prevent the combat, by announcing that both Sir Roderick and Lord Douglas are in the hands of their sovereign.

The sixth and last canto, entitled "The Guard Room," opens with a very animated description of the motley mercenaries that formed the royal guard, as they appeared at early dawn, after a night of stern debauch. While they are quarrelling and singing, the sentinels introduce an old minstrel and a veiled maiden, who had been forwarded by Mar to the royal presence; and Ellen, disclosing her countenance, awes the ruffian soldiery into respect and pity, by her grace and liberality. She is then conducted to a more seemly waiting-place, till the King should be visible; and Allan-bane, asking to be taken to the prison of his captive lord, is led, by mistake, to the sick chamber of Roderick Dhu, who is dying of his wounds in a gloomy apartment of the castle. The high-souled chieftain inquires eagerly after the fortunes of his clan, the Douglas, and Ellen; and, when he learns that a battle has been fought with a doubtful success, entreats the minstrel to sooth his parting spirit with a description of it, and with the victor song of his clan. Allan-bane complies; and the battle is told in very animated and irregular verse. When the vehement strain is closed, Roderick is found cold; and Allan mourns him in a pathetic lament. In the mean time, Ellen hears the voice of Malcolm Græme lamenting his captivity from an adjoining turret of the palace; and, before she has recovered from her agitation, is startled by the appearance of Fitz-James, who comes to inform her that the court is assembled, and the King at leisure to receive her suit. He conducts her trembling steps to the hall of presence, round which Ellen casts a timid and eager glance for the monarch; But all the glittering figures are uncovered, and James Fitz-James alone wears his cap and plume in the brilliant assembly! The truth immediately rushes on her imagination:—The knight of Snowdoun is the King of Scotland! and, struck with awe and terror, she falls speechless at his feet, clasping her hands, and pointing to the ring in breathless agitation. The prince raises her with eager kindness—declares aloud that her father is forgiven, and restored to favour—and bids her ask a boon for some other person. The name of Græme trembles on her lips; but she cannot trust herself to utter it, and begs the grace of Roderick Dhu. The king answers, that he would give his best earldom to restore him to life, and presses her to name some other boon. She blushes, and hesitates; and the king, in playful vengeance, condemns Malcolm Græme to fetters—takes a chain of gold from his own neck, and throwing it over that of the young chief, puts the clasp into the hand of Ellen!

Such is the brief and naked outline of the story, which Mr. Scott has embellished with such exquisite imagery, and enlarged by so many characteristic incidents, as to have rendered it one of the most attractive poems in the language. That the story, upon the whole, is well digested and happily carried on, is evident from the hold it keeps of the reader's attention through every part of its progress. It has the fault, indeed, of all stories that turn upon an *anagnorisis* or recognition, that the curiosity which is excited during the first reading is extinguished for ever when we arrive at the discovery. This, however, is an objection which may be made, in some degree, to almost every story of interest; and we must say for Mr. Scott, that his secret is very discreetly kept, and most felicitously revealed. If we were to scrutinize the fable with malicious severity, we might also remark, that Malcolm Græme has too insignificant a part assigned him, considering the favour in which he is held both by Ellen and the author; and that, in bringing out the shaded and imperfect character of Roderick Dhu, as a contrast to the purer virtue of his rival, Mr. Scott seems to have fallen into the common error, of making him more interesting than him whose virtues he was intended to set off, and converted the villain of the piece in some measure into its hero. A modern poet, however, may perhaps be pardoned for an error, of which Milton himself is thought not to have kept clear; and for which there seems so natural a cause, in the difference between poetical and amiable characters. There are several improbabilities, too, in the story, which might disturb a scrupulous reader. Allowing that the king of Scotland might have twice disappeared for several days, without exciting any disturbance or alarm in his court, it is certainly rather extraordinary, that neither the Lady Margaret, nor old Allan-bane, nor any of the attendants at the isle, should have recognised his person; and almost as wonderful, that he should have found any difficulty in discovering the family of his entertainers. There is something rather awkward, too, in the sort of blunder or misunderstanding (for it is no more) which gives occasion to Sir Roderick's Gathering and all its consequences; nor can any machinery be conceived more clumsy for effecting the deliverance of a distressed hero, than the introduction of a mad woman, who, without knowing or caring about the wanderer, warns him, *by a song*, to take care of the ambush that was set for him. The Maniacs of poetry have indeed had a prescriptive right to be musical, since the days of Ophelia downwards; but it is rather a rash extension of this privilege, to make them sing good sense, and to make sensible people be guided by them.

Before taking leave of the fable, we must be permitted to express our disappointment and regret at finding the general cast of the characters and incidents so much akin to those of Mr. Scott's former publications. When we heard that the author of the Lay and of Marmion was employed upon a *Highland* story, we certainly expected to be introduced to a new creation; and to bid farewell, for awhile, to the knights, squires, courtiers, and chivalry of the low country:—But here they are all upon us again, in their old characters, and nearly in their old costume. The same age—the same sovereign—the same manners—the same ranks of society—the same tone, both for courtesy and for defiance. Loch Katrine, indeed, is more picturesque than St. Mary's Loch: and Roderick Dhu and his clan have some features of novelty:—But the Douglas and the King are the leading personages; and the whole interest of the story turns upon persons and events having precisely the same character and general aspect with those which gave their peculiar colour to the former poems. It is honourable to Mr. Scott's genius, no doubt, that he has been able to interest the public so deeply with this third presentment of the same chivalrous scenes; but we cannot help thinking, that both his glory and our gratification would have been greater, if he had changed his hand more completely, and actually given us a true Celtic story, with all its drapery and accompaniments in a corresponding style of decoration.

Such a subject, we are persuaded, has very great capabilities, and only wants to be introduced to public notice by such a hand as Mr. Scott's, to make a still more powerful impression than he has already effected by the resurrection of the tales of romance. There are few persons, we believe, of any degree of poetical susceptibility, who have wandered among the secluded valleys of the Highlands, and contemplated the singular people by whom they are still tenanted—with their love of music and of song—their hardy and irregular life, so unlike the unvarying toils of the Saxon mechanic—their devotion to their chiefs—their wild and lofty traditions—their national enthusiasm—the melancholy grandeur of the scenes they inhabit—and the multiplied superstitions which still linger among them,—without feeling, that there is no existing people so well adapted for the purposes of poetry, or so capable of furnishing the occasions of new and striking inventions.* The great and continued popularity of Macpherson's Ossian (though discredited as a memorial of antiquity, at least as much as is warranted by any evidence yet before the public), proves how very fascinating a fabric might be raised upon that foundation by a more powerful or judicious hand. That celebrated translation, though defaced with the most childish and offensive affectations, still charms with occasional gleams of a tenderness beyond all other tenderness, and a sublimity of a new character of dreariness and elevation; and, though patched with pieces of the most barefaced plagiarism, still maintains a tone of originality which has recommended it in every nation of the civilised world. The cultivated literati of England, indeed, are struck with the affectation and the plagiarism, and renounce the whole work as tawdry and factitious; but the multitude at home, and almost all classes of readers abroad, to whom those defects are less perceptible, still continue to admire; and

* *The Tartan fever* excited in the South (and not yet eradicated) by the Highland scenes and characters of Waverly, seems fully to justify this suggestion; and makes it rather surprising that no other great writer has since repeated the experiment.

few of our classical poets have so sure and regular a sale, both in our own and in other languages, as the singular collection to which we have just alluded. A great part of its charm, we think, consists in the novelty of its Celtic characters and scenery, and their singular aptitude for poetic combinations; and therefore it is that we are persuaded, that if Mr. Scott's powerful and creative genius were to be turned in good earnest to such a subject, something might be produced still more impressive and original than even this age has yet witnessed.

It is now time, however, that we should lay before our readers some of the passages in the present poem which appear to us most characteristic of the peculiar genius of the author;—and the first that strikes us, in turning over the leaves, is the following fine description of Sir Roderick's approach to the isle, as described by the aged minstrel, at the close of his conversation with Ellen. The moving picture—the effect of the sounds—and the wild character and strong and peculiar nationality of the whole procession, are given with inimitable spirit and power of expression.

—— "But hark, what sounds are these?
My dull ears catch no falt'ring breeze,
No weeping birch nor aspen's wake;
Nor breath is dimpling in the lake;
Still is the canna's hoary beard,
Yet, by my minstrel faith, I heard—
And hark again! some pipe of war
Sends the bold pibroch from afar."—

"Far up the lengthen'd lake were spied
Four dark'ning specks upon the tide,
That, slow, enlarging on the view,
Four mann'd and masted barges grew,
And bearing downwards from Glengyle,
Steer'd full upon the lonely isle;
The point of Brianchoil they pass'd,
And, to the windward as they cast,
Against the sun they gave to shine
The bold Sir Rod'rick's banner'd Pine!
Nearer and nearer as they bear,
Spears, pikes, and axes flash in air.
Now might you see the tartans brave,
And plaids and plumage dance and wave;
Now see the bonnets sink and rise,
As his tough oar the rower plies;
See flashing at each sturdy stroke
The wave ascending into smoke!
See the proud pipers on the bow,
And mark the gaudy streamers flow
From their loud chanters down, and sweep,
The furrow'd bosom of the deep,
As, rushing through the lake amain,
They plied the ancient Highland strain.

"Ever, as on they bore, more loud
And louder rung the pibroch proud.
At first the sounds, by distance tame,
Mellow'd along the waters came,
And ling'ring long by cape and bay,
Wail'd every harsher note away;
Then, bursting bolder on the ear,
The clan's shrill Gath'ring they could hear;
Those thrilling sounds, that call the might
Of old Clan-Alpine to the fight.
Thick beat the rapid notes, as when
The must'ring hundreds shake the glen,
And, hurrying at the signal dread,
The batter'd earth returns their tread!
Then prelude light, of livelier tone,
Express'd their merry marching on,
Ere peal of closing battle rose,
With mingled outcry, shrieks, and blows;
And mimic din of stroke and ward,
As broad-sword upon target jarr'd;
And groaning pause, ere yet again,
Condens'd, the battle yell'd amain;
The rapid charge, the rallying shout,
Retreat borne headlong into rout,
And bursts of triumph to declare
Clan-Alpine's conquest—all were there!
Nor ended thus the strain; but slow,
Sunk in a moan prolong'd and low,
And chang'd the conquering clarion swel
For wild lament o'er those that fell.

"The war-pipes ceas'd; but lake and hill
Were busy with their echoes still;
And, when they slept, a vocal strain
Bade their hoarse chorus wake again,
While loud an hundred clansmen raise
Their voices in their Chieftain's praise.
Each boatman, bending to his oar,
With measur'd sweep the burthen bore,
In such wild cadence, as the breeze
Makes through December's leafless trees.
The chorus first could Allan know,
'Rod'righ Vich Alpine, ho! ierо!'
And near, and nearer as they row'd,
Distinct the martial ditty flow'd.

"Boat Song.

"Hail to the chief who in triumph advances!
Honour'd and bless'd be the ever-green Pine!
Long may the Tree in his banner that glances,
Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!"—

"Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,
Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade;
When the whirlwind has stripp'd ev'ry leaf on the mountain,
The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.
Moor'd in the rifted rock,
Proof to the tempest's shock,
Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow;
Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
Echo his praise agen,
'Rod'righ Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'

"Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands!
Stretch to your oars, for the ever-green Pine!
O! that the rose-bud that graces yon islands,
Were wreath'd in a garland around him to twine!
O that some seedling gem,
Worthy such noble stem,
Honour'd and bless'd in their shadow might grow
Loud should Clan-Alpine then
Ring from her deepmost glen,
'Rod'righ Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'"

pp. 65—71.

The reader may take next the following general sketch of Loch Katrine:—

"One burnish'd sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him roll'd;
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light;
And mountains, that like giants stand,
To sentinel enchanted land.
High on the south, huge Benvenue
Down to the lake in masses threw
Crags, knolls, and mounds, confusedly hurl'd
The fragments of an earlier world!
A wild'ring forest feather'd o'er
His ruin'd sides and summit hoar;
While on the north, through middle air,
Ben-an heav'd high his forehead bare."—pp. 18, 19.

The next is a more minute view of the same scenery in a summer dawn—closed with a fine picture of its dark lord.

"The summer dawn's reflected hue
To purple chang'd Loch Katrine blue;
Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kiss'd the lake, just stirr'd the trees;
And the pleas'd lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled but dimpled not for joy!
The mountain shadows on her breast
Were neither broken nor at rest;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to Fancy's eye!
The water lily to the light
Her chalice rear'd of silver bright;
The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
Begemm'd with dew-drops, led her fawn,
The grey mist left the mountain side,
The torrent show'd its glistening pride;
Invisible in flecked sky,
The lark sent down her revelry;
The black-bird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush;
In answer coo'd the cushat dove
Her notes of peace, and rest, and love.

"No thought of peace, no thought of rest,
Assuag'd the storm in Rod'rick's breast.
With sheathed broad-sword in his hand,
Abrupt he pac'd the islet strand:
The shrinking band stood oft aghast
At the impatient glance he cast;—
Such glance the mountain eagle threw,
As, from the cliffs of Ben-venue,
She spread her dark sails on the wind,
And, high in middle heaven reclin'd,
With her broad shadow on the lake,
Silenc'd the warblers of the brake."—pp. 98–100.

The following description of the starting of "the fiery cross," bears more marks of labour than most of Mr. Scott's poetry, and borders, perhaps, upon straining and exaggeration; yet it shows great power.

"Then Rod'rick, with impatient look,
From Brian's hand the symbol took:
'Speed, Malise, speed!' he said, and gave
The crosslet to his henchman brave.
'The muster-place be Lanric mead—
Instant the time—speed, Malise, speed!'
Like heath-bird, when the hawks pursue,
The barge across Loch Katrine flew;
High stood the henchman on the prow;
So rapidly the bargemen row,
The bubbles, where they launch'd the boat,
Were all unbroken and afloat,
Dancing in foam and ripple still,
When it had near'd the mainland hill!
And from the silver beach's side
Still was the prow three fathom wide,
When lightly bounded to the land,
The messenger of blood and brand.
'Speed, Malise, speed! the dun deer's hide
On fleeter foot was never tied.
Speed, Malise, speed! such cause of haste
Thine active sinews never brac'd.
Bend 'gainst the steepy hill thy breast,
Burst down like torrent from its crest;
With short and springing footstep pass
The trembling bog and false morass;
Across the brook like roe-buck bound,
And thread the brake like questing hound;
The crag is high, the scaur is deep,
Yet shrink not from the desperate leap;
Parch'd are thy burning lips and brow,
Yet by the fountain pause not now;
Herald of battle, fate, and fear,
Stretch onward in thy fleet career!
The wounded hind thou track'st not now,
Pursu'st not maid through greenwood bough,
Nor pliest thou now thy flying pace
With rivals in the mountain race;
But danger, death, and warrior deed,
Are in thy course—Speed, Malise, speed!'"

pp. 112—114.

The following reflections on an ancient field of battle afford one of the most remarkable instances of false taste in all Mr. Scott's writings. Yet the brevity and variety of the images serve well to show, as we have formerly hinted, that even in his errors there are traces of a powerful genius.

—— "a dreary glen,
Where scatter'd lay the bones of men,
In some forgotten battle slain,
And bleach'd by drifting wind and rain.
It might have tam'd a warrior's heart,
To view such mockery of his art!
The knot-grass fetter'd there the hand,
Which once could burst an iron band;
Beneath the broad and ample bone,
That buckler'd heart to fear unknown,
A feeble and a timorous guest,
The field-fare fram'd her lowly nest!
There the slow blind-worm left his slime
On the fleet limbs that mock'd at time;
And there, too, lay the leader's skull,
Still wreath'd with chaplet flush'd and full,
For heath-bell, with her purple bloom,
Supplied the bonnet and the plume."—pp. 102, 103

But one of the most striking passages in the poem, certainly, is that in which Sir Roderick is represented as calling up his men suddenly from their ambush, when Fitz-James expressed his impatience to meet, face to face, that murderous chieftain and his clan.

"'Have, then, thy wish!'—He whistled shrill:
And he was answer'd from the hill!
Wild as the scream of the curlew,
From crag to crag the signal flew.
Instant, through copse and heath, arose
Bonnets and spears and bended bows!
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe;
From shingles grey their lances start,
The bracken-bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,
And ev'ry tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warrior arm'd for strife.
That whistle garrison'd the glen
At once with full five hundred men.
As if the yawning hill to heaven
A subterranean host had given.
Watching their leader's beck and will,
All silent there they stood and still.
Like the loose crags whose threat'ning mass
Lay tott'ring o'er the hollow pass,
As if an infant's touch could urge
Their headlong passage down the verge,
With step and weapon forward flung,
Upon the mountain-side they hung.
The mountaineer cast glance of pride
Along Benledi's living side;
Then fix'd his eye and sable brow
Full on Fitz-James—"How say'st thou now?
These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;
And, Saxon,—*I* am Roderick Dhu!"—

"Fitz-James was brave:—Though to his heart
The life-blood thrill'd with sudden start,
He mann'd himself with dauntless air,
Return'd the Chief his haughty stare,
His back against a rock he bore,
And firmly plac'd his foot before:—
'Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I.'—
Sir Roderick mark'd—and in his eyes
Respect was mingled with surprise,
And the stern joy which warriors feel
In foeman worthy of their steel.
Short space he stood—then wav'd his hand:
Down sunk the disappearing band!
Each warrior vanish'd where he stood,

In broom or bracken, heath or wood
Sunk brand and spear and bended bow,
In osiers pale and copses low;
It seem'd as if their mother Earth
Had swallow'd up her warlike birth!
The wind's last breath had toss'd in air,
Pennon, and plaid, and plumage fair—
The next but swept a lone hill-side,
Where heath and fern were waving wide;
The sun's last glance was glinted back,
From spear and glaive, from targe and jack—
The next, all unreflected, shone
On bracken green, and cold grey stone."
pp. 202—205.

The following picture is of a very different character; but touched also with the hand of a true poet:—

"Yet ere his onward way he took,
The Stranger cast a ling'ring look,
Where easily his eye might reach
The Harper on the islet beach,
Reclin'd against a blighted tree,
As wasted, grey, and worn as he.
To minstrel meditation given,
His rev'rend brow was rais'd to heaven,
As from the rising sun to claim
A sparkle of inspiring flame.
His hand, reclin'd upon the wire,
Seem'd watching the awak'ning fire;
So still he sate, as those who wait
Till judgment speak the doom of fate;
So still, as if no breeze might dare
To lift one lock of hoary hair;
So still, as life itself were fled,
In the last sound his harp had sped.
Upon a rock with lichens wild,
Beside him Ellen sate and smil'd," &c.
pp. 50, 51.

Though these extracts have already extended this article beyond all reasonable bounds, we cannot omit Ellen's introduction to the court, and the transformation of Fitz-James into the King of Scotland. The unknown prince, it will be recollected, himself conducts her into the royal presence:—

"With beating heart, and bosom wrung,
As to a brother's arm she clung,
Gently he dried the falling tear,
And gently whisper'd hope and cheer;
Her falt'ring steps half led, half staid,
Through gallery fair and high arcade,
Till, at his touch, its wings of pride
A portal arch unfolded wide.

"Within 'twas brilliant all and light,
A throngingscene of figures bright;
It glow'd on Ellen's dazzled sight,
As when the setting sun has given
Ten thousand hues to summer even,
And, from their tissue fancy frames
Aërial knights and fairy dames.
Still by Fitz-James her footing staid;
A few faint steps she forward made,
Then slow her drooping head she rais'd,
And fearful round the presence gaz'd;
For him she sought, who own'd this state,
The dreaded prince, whose will was fate!
She gaz'd on many a princely port,
Might well have rul'd a royal court;
On many a splendid garb she gaz'd—
Then turn'd bewilder'd and amaz'd,
For all stood bare; and, in the room,
Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume!
To him each lady's look was lent,
On him each courtier's eye was bent;
Midst furs and silks and jewels sheen,
He stood, in simple Lincoln green,
The centre of the glitt'ring ring!—
And Snowdoun's Knight is Scotland's King!

"As wreath of snow on mountain breast,
Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
And at the Monarch's feet she lay;
No word her choking voice commands—
She show'd the ring—she clasp'd her hands.
O! not a moment could he brook,
The gen'rous prince, that suppliant look!
Gently he rais'd her—and the while
Check'd with a glance the circle's smile;
Graceful, but grave, her brow he kiss'd,
And bade her terrors be dismiss'd:—
'Yes, Fair! the wand'ring poor Fitz-James
The fealty of Scotland claims.
To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring;
He will redeem his signet ring,'" &c.
pp. 281—284.

We cannot resist adding the graceful winding up of the whole story:—

"'Malcolm, come forth!'—And, and at the word
Down kneel'd the Græme to Scotland's Lord.
'For thee, rash youth, no suppliant sues,
From thee may Vengeance claim her dues,
Who, nurtur'd underneath our smile,
Has paid our care by treach'rous wile,
And sought, amid thy faithful clan,
A refuge for an outlaw'd man,
Dishonouring thus thy loyal name.—
Fetters and warder for the Græme!'
His chain of gold the King unstrung,
The links o'er Malcolm's neck he flung,
Then gently drew the glitt'ring band;
And laid the clasp on Ellen's hand!"—p. 288.

There are no separate introductions to the cantos of this poem; but each of them begins with one or two stanzas in the measure of Spenser, usually containing some reflections connected with the subject about to be entered on; and written, for the most part, with great tenderness and beauty. The following, we think is among the most striking:—

"Time rolls his ceaseless course! The race of yore
Who danc'd our infancy upon their knee,
And told our marvelling boyhood legends store,
Of their strange ventures happ'd by land or sea,
How are they blotted from the things that be!
How few, all weak and wither'd of their force,
Wait, on the verge of dark eternity,
Like stranded wrecks—the tide returning hoarse,
To sweep them from our sight! Time rolls his ceaseless course!

"Yet live there still who can remember well,
How, when a mountain chief his bugle blew,"
&c.—pp. 97, 98.

There is an invocation to the Harp of the North, prefixed to the poem; and a farewell subjoined to it in the same measure, written and versified, it appears to us, with more than Mr. Scott's usual care. We give two of the three stanzas that compose the last:—

"Harp of the North, farewell! The hills grow dark,
On purple peaks a deeper shade descending;
In twilight copse the glow-worm lights her spark;
The deer, half-seen, are to the covert wending.
Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain lending.
And the wild breeze, thy wilder minstrelsy;
Thy numbers sweet with Nature's vespers blending,
With distant echo from the fold and lea,
And herd-boy's evening pipe, and hum of housing bee.

"Hark! as my ling'ring footsteps slow retire,
Some Spirit of the Air has wak'd thy string!
'Tis now a Seraph bold, with touch of fire;
'Tis now the brush of Fairy's frolic wing.

Receding now, the dying numbers ring
Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell!
And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring
A wand'ring witch-note of the distant spell—
And now, 'tis silent all!—Enchantress, fare thee well!"—pp. 289, 290.

These passages, though taken with very little selection, are favourable specimens, we think, on the whole, of the execution of the work before us. We had marked several of an opposite character; but, fortunately for Mr. Scott, we have already extracted so much, that we shall scarcely have room to take any notice of them; and must condense all our vituperation into a very insignificant compass. One or two things, however, we think it our duty to point out. Though great pains have evidently been taken with Brian the Hermit, we think his whole character a failure, and mere deformity—hurting the interest of the story by its improbability, and rather heavy and disagreeable, than sublime or terrible in its details. The quarrel between Malcolm and Roderick, in the second canto, is also ungraceful and offensive. There is something foppish, and out of character, in Malcolm's rising to lead out Ellen from her own parlour; and the sort of wrestling match that takes place between the rival chieftains on the occasion is humiliating and indecorous. The greatest blemish in the poem, however, is the ribaldry and dull vulgarity which is put into the mouths of the soldiery in the guard-room. Mr. Scott has condescended to write a song for them, which will be read with pain, we are persuaded, even by his warmest admirers: and his whole genius, and even his power of versification, seems to desert him when he attempts to repeat their conversation. Here is some of the stuff which has dropped, in this inauspicious attempt, from the pen of one of the first poets of his age or country:—

"'Old dost thou wax, and wars grow sharp;
Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp,
Get thee an ape, and trudge the land,
The leader of a juggler band.'—

"'No, comrade!—no such fortune mine.
After the fight, these sought our line.
That aged harper and the girl;
And, having audience of the Earl,
Mar bade I should purvey them steed,
And bring them hitherward with speed.
Forbear your mirth and rude alarm,
For none shall do them shame or harm.'—
'Hear ye his boast!' cried John of Brent,
Ever to strife and jangling bent:
'Shall he strike doe beside our lodge,
And yet the jealous niggard grudge
To pay the forester his fee!
I'll have my share, howe'er it be.'"
pp. 250, 251.

His Highland freebooters, indeed, do not use a much nobler style. For example:—

"'It is, because last evening-tide
Brian an augury hath tried,
Of that dread kind which must not be
Unless in dread extremity,
The Taghairm call'd; by which, afar,
Our sires foresaw the events of war.
Duncraggan's milk-white bull they slew.'—
'Ah! well the gallant brute I knew;
The choicest of the prey we had,
When swept our merry-men Gallangad.
Sore did he cumber our retreat;
And kept our stoutest kernes in awe,
Even at the pass of Beal'maha.'"—pp. 146, 147.

Scarcely more tolerable are such expressions as—

"For life is Hugh of Larbert lame;"—

Or that unhappy couplet, where the King himself is in such distress for a rhyme, as to be obliged to apply to one of the most obscure saints on the calendar.

"'Tis James of Douglas, *by Saint Serle;*
The uncle of the banish'd Earl."

We would object, too, to such an accumulation of strange words as occurs in these three lines:—

"'Fleet foot on the *correi;*
Sage counsel *in Cumber;*
Red hand in the *foray,*'" &c.

Nor can we relish such babyish verses as

"'He will return:—dear lady, trust:—
With joy, return. He will—he must.'"

"'Nay, lovely Ellen! Dearest! nay.'"

These, however, and several others that might be mentioned, are blemishes which may well be excused in a poem of more than five thousand lines, produced so soon after another still longer: and though they are blemishes which it is proper to notice, because they are evidently of a kind that may be corrected, it would be absurd, as well as unfair, to give them any considerable weight in our general estimate of the work, or of the powers of the author. Of these, we have already spoken at sufficient length; and must now take an abrupt leave of Mr. Scott, by expressing our hope, and tolerably confident expectation, of soon meeting with him again. That he may injure his popularity by the mere profusion of his publications, is no doubt possible; though many of the most celebrated poets have been among the most voluminous: but, that the public must gain by this liberality, does not seem to admit of any question. If our poetical treasures were increased by the publication of Marmion and the Lady of the Lake, notwithstanding the existence of great faults in both those works, it is evident that we should be still richer if we possessed fifty poems of the same merit; and, therefore, it is for our interest, whatever it may be as to his, that their author's muse should continue as prolific as she has hitherto been. If Mr. Scott will only vary his subjects a little more, indeed, we think we might engage to insure his own reputation against any material injury from their rapid parturition; and, as we entertain very great doubts whether much greater pains would enable him to write much better poetry, we would rather have two beautiful poems, with the present *quantum* of faults—than one, with only one-tenth part less alloy. He will always be a poet, we fear, to whom the fastidious will make great objections; but he may easily find, in his popularity, a compensation for their scruples. He has *the jury* hollow in his favour; and though *the court* may think that its directions have not been sufficiently attended to, it will not quarrel with the verdict.

(April, 1808.)

Poems. By the Reverend GEORGE CRABBE. 8vo. pp. 260. London, 1807.*

WE receive the proofs of Mr. Crabbe's poetical existence, which are contained in this volume, with the same sort of feeling that would be excited by tidings of an ancient friend, whom we no longer expected to hear of in this world. We rejoice in his resurrection, both for his sake and for our own: But we feel also a certain movement of self-condemnation, for having been remiss in our inquiries after him, and somewhat too negligent of the honours which ought, at any rate, to have been paid to his memory.

It is now, we are afraid, upwards of twenty years since we were first struck with the vigour, originality, and truth of description of "The Village;" and since, we regretted that an author, who could write so well, should have written so little. From that time to the present, we have heard little of Mr. Crabbe; and fear that he has been in a great measure lost sight of by the public, as well as by us. With a singular, and scarcely pardonable indifference to fame, he has remained, during this long interval, in patient or indolent repose; and, without making a single movement to maintain or advance the reputation he had acquired, has permitted others to usurp the attention which he was sure of commanding, and allowed himself to be nearly forgotten by a public, which reckons upon being reminded of all the claims which the living have on its favour. His former publications, though of distinguished merit, were perhaps too small in volume to remain long the objects of general attention, and seem, by some accident, to have been jostled aside in the crowd of more clamorous competitors.

Yet, though the name of Crabbe has not hitherto been very common in the mouths of our poetical critics, we believe there are few real lovers of poetry to whom some of his sentiments and descriptions are not secretly familiar. There is a truth and a force in many of his delineations of rustic life, which is calculated to sink deep into the memory; and, being confirmed by daily observation, they are recalled upon innumerable occasions—when the ideal pictures of more fanciful authors have lost all their interest. For ourselves at least, we profess to be indebted to Mr. Crabbe for many of these strong impressions; and have known more than one of our unpoetical acquaintances, who declared they could never pass by a parish workhouse without thinking of the description of it they had read at school in the Poetical Extracts. The volume before us will renew, we trust, and extend many such impressions. It contains all the former productions of the author, with about double their bulk of new matter; most of it in the same taste and manner of composition with the former; and some of a kind, of which we have had no previous example in this author. The whole, however, is of no ordinary merit, and will be found, we have little doubt, a sufficient warrant for Mr. Crabbe to take his place as one of the most original, nervous, and pathetic poets of the present century.

His characteristic, certainly, is force, and truth of description, joined for the most part to great selection and condensation of expression;—that kind of strength and originality which we meet with in Cowper, and that sort of diction and versification which we admire in "The Deserted Village" of Goldsmith, or "The Vanity of Human Wishes" of Johnson. If he can be said to have imitated the manner of any author, it is Goldsmith, indeed, who has been the object of his imitation; and yet his general train of thinking, and his views of society, are so extremely opposite, that, when "The Village" was first published, it was commonly considered as an antidote or an answer to the more captivating representations of "The Deserted Village." Compared with this celebrated author, he will be found, we think, to have more vigour and less delicacy; and while he must be admitted to be inferior in the fine finish and uniform beauty of his composition, we cannot help considering him as superior, both in the variety and the truth of his pictures. Instead of that uniform tint of pensive tenderness which overspreads the whole poetry of Goldsmith, we find in Mr. Crabbe many gleams of gaiety and humour. Though his habitual views of life are more gloomy than those of his rival, his poetical temperament seems far more cheerful; and when the occasions of sorrow and rebuke are gone by, he can collect himself for sarcastic pleasantry, or unbend in innocent playfulness. His diction, though generally pure and powerful, is sometimes harsh, and sometimes quaint; and he has occasionally admitted a couplet or two in a state so unfinished, as to give a character of inelegance to the passages in which they occur. With a taste less disciplined and less fastidious than that of Goldsmith, he has, in our apprehension, a keener eye for observation, and a readier hand for the delineation of what he has observed. There is less poetical keeping in his whole performance; but the groups of which it consists are conceived, we think, with equal genius, and drawn with greater spirit as well as far greater fidelity.

It is not quite fair, perhaps, thus to draw a detailed parallel between a living poet, and one whose reputation has been sealed by death, and by the immutable sentence of a surviving generation. Yet there are so few of his contemporaries to whom Mr. Crabbe bears any resemblance, that we can scarcely explain our opinion of his merit, without comparing him to some of his predecessors. There is one set of writers, indeed, from whose works those of Mr. Crabbe might receive all that elucidation which results from contrast, and from an entire opposition in all points of taste and opinion. We allude now to the Wordsworths, and the Southeys, and Coleridges, and all that ambitious fraternity, that, with good intentions and extraordinary talents, are labouring to bring back our poetry to the fantastical oddity and puling childishness of Withers, Quarles, or Marvel. These gentlemen write a great deal about rustic life, as well as Mr. Crabbe; and they even agree with him in dwelling much on its discomforts; but nothing can be more opposite than the views they take of the subject, or the manner in which they execute their representations of them.

Mr. Crabbe exhibits the common people of England pretty much as they are, and as they must appear to every one who will take the trouble of examining into their condition; at the same time that he renders his sketches in a very high degree interesting and beautiful—by selecting what is most fit for description—by grouping them into such forms as must catch the attention or awake the memory—and by scattering over the whole such traits of moral sensibility, of sarcasm, and of deep reflection, as every one must feel to be natural, and own to be powerful. The gentlemen of the new school, on the other hand, scarcely ever condescend to take their subjects from any description of persons at all known to the common inhabitants of the world; but invent for themselves certain whimsical and unheard-of beings, to whom they impute some fantastical combination of feelings, and then labour to excite our sympathy for them, either by placing them in incredible situations, or by some strained and exaggerated moralisation of a vague and tragical description. Mr. Crabbe, in short, shows us something which we have all seen, or may see, in real life; and draws from it such feelings and such reflections as every human being must acknowledge that it is calculated to excite. He delights us by the truth, and vivid and picturesque beauty of his representations, and by the force and pathos of the sensations with which we feel that they are connected. Mr. Wordsworth and his associates, on the other hand, introduce us to beings whose existence was not previously suspected by the acutest observers of nature; and excite an interest for them—where they do excite any interest—more by an eloquent and refined analysis of their own capricious feelings, than by any obvious or intelligible ground of sympathy in their situation.

Those who are acquainted with the Lyrical Ballads, or the more recent publications of Mr. Wordsworth, will scarcely deny the justice of this representation; but in order to vindicate it to such as do not enjoy that advantage, we must beg leave to make a few hasty references to the former, and by far the least exceptionable of those productions.

A village schoolmaster, for instance, is a pretty common poetical character. Goldsmith has drawn him inimitably; so has Shenstone, with the slight change of sex; and Mr. Crabbe, in two passages, has followed their footsteps. Now, Mr. Wordsworth has a village schoolmaster also—a personage who makes no small figure in three or four of his poems. But by what traits is this worthy old gentleman delineated by the new poet? No pedantry—no innocent vanity of learning—no mixture of indulgence with the pride of power, and of poverty with the consciousness of rare acquirements. Every feature which belongs to the situation, or marks the character in common apprehension, is scornfully discarded by Mr. Wordsworth; who represents his grey-haired rustic pedagogue as a sort of half crazy, sentimental person, overrun with fine feelings, constitutional merriment, and a most humorous melancholy. Here are the two stanzas in which this consistent and intelligible character is pourtrayed. The diction is at least as new as the conception.

"The sighs which Matthew heav'd were sighs
Of one tir'd out with *fun* and *madness*;
The tears which came to Matthew's eyes
Were tears of light—*the oil of gladness*.

"Yet sometimes, when the secret cup
Of still and serious thought went round
He seem'd as if he *drank it up*,
He felt with spirit so profound.
Thou *soul* of God's best *earthly mould*," &c.

* I have given a larger space to Crabbe in this republication than to any of his contemporary poets; not merely because I think more highly of him than of most of them, but also because I fancy that he has had less justice done him. The nature of his subjects was not such as to attract either imitators or admirers, from among the ambitious or fanciful lovers of poetry; or, consequently, to set him at the head of a School, or let him surround himself with the zealots of a Sect: And it must also be admitted, that his claims to distinction depend fully as much on his great powers of observation, his skill in touching the deeper sympathies of our nature, and his power of inculcating, by their means, the most impressive lessons of humanity, as on any fine play of fancy, or grace and beauty in his delineations. I have great faith, however, in the intrinsic worth and ultimate success of those more substantial attributes; and have, accordingly, the strongest impression that the citations I have here given from Crabbe will strike more, and sink deeper into the minds of readers to whom they are new (or by whom they may have been partially forgotten), than any I have been able to present from other writers. It probably is idle enough (as well as a little presumptuous) to suppose that a publication like this will afford many opportunities of testing the truth of this prediction. But, as the experiment is to be made, there can be no harm in mentioning this as one of its objects.

It is but candid, however, after all, to add, that my concern for Mr. Crabbe's reputation would scarcely have led me to devote near one hundred pages to the estimate of his poetical merits, had I not set some value on the speculations as to the elements of poetical excellence in general, and its moral bearings and affinities—for the introduction of which this estimate seemed to present an occasion, or apology.

A frail damsel again is a character common enough in all poems; and one upon which many fine and pathetic lines have been expended. Mr. Wordsworth has written more than three hundred on the subject: but, instead of new images of tenderness, or delicate representation of intelligible feelings, he has contrived to tell us nothing whatever of the unfortunate fair one, but that her name is Martha Ray; and that she goes up to the top of a hill, in a red cloak, and cries "O misery!" All the rest of the poem is filled with a description of an old thorn and a pond, and of the silly stories which the neighbouring old women told about them.

The sports of childhood, and the untimely death of promising youth, is also a common topic of poetry. Mr. Wordsworth has made some blank verse about it; but, instead of the delightful and picturesque sketches with which so many authors of moderate talents have presented us on this inviting subject, all that he is pleased to communicate of *his* rustic child, is, that he used to amuse himself with shouting to the owls, and hearing them answer. To make amends for this brevity, the process of his mimicry is most accurately described.

——"With fingers interwoven, both hands
Press'd closely palm to palm, and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him."—

This is all we hear of him; and for the sake of this one accomplishment, we are told, that the author has frequently stood mute, and gazed on his grave for half an hour together!

Love, and the fantasies of lovers, have afforded an ample theme to poets of all ages. Mr. Wordsworth, however, has thought fit to compose a piece, illustrating this copious subject by one single thought. A lover trots away to see his mistress one fine evening, gazing all the way on the moon; when he comes to her door,

"O mercy! to myself I cried,
If Lucy should be dead!"

And there the poem ends!

Now, we leave it to any reader of common candour and discernment to say, whether these representations of character and sentiment are drawn from that eternal and universal standard of truth and nature, which every one is knowing enough to recognise, and no one great enough to depart from with impunity; or whether they are not formed, as we have ventured to allege, upon certain fantastic and affected peculiarities in the mind or fancy of the author, into which it is most improbable that many of his readers will enter, and which cannot, in some cases, be comprehended without much effort and explanation. Instead of multiplying instances of these wide and wilful aberrations from ordinary nature, it may be more satisfactory to produce the author's own admission of the narrowness of the plan upon which he writes, and of the very extraordinary circumstances which he himself sometimes thinks it necessary for his readers to keep in view, if they would wish to understand the beauty or propriety of his delineations.

A pathetic tale of guilt or superstition may be told, we are apt to fancy, by the poet himself, in his general character of poet, with full as much effect as by any other person. An old nurse, at any rate, or a monk or parish clerk, is always at hand to give grace to such a narration. None of these, however, would satisfy Mr. Wordsworth. He has written a long poem of this sort, in which he thinks it indispensably necessary to apprise the reader, that he has endeavoured to represent the language and sentiments of a particular character—of which character, he adds, "the reader will have a general notion, if he has ever known a man, *a captain of a small trading vessel*, for example, who being *past the middle age of life*, has retired upon *an annuity, or small independent income*, to some *village* or country, of which he was *not a native*, or in which he had not been accustomed to live!"

Now, we must be permitted to doubt, whether, among all the readers of Mr. Wordsworth (few or many), there is a single individual who has had the happiness of knowing a person of this very peculiar description; or who is capable of forming any sort of conjecture of the particular disposition and turn of thinking which such a combination of attributes would be apt to produce. To us, we will confess, the *annonce* appears as ludicrous and absurd as it would be in the author of an ode or an epic to say, "Of this piece the reader will necessarily form a very erroneous judgment, unless he is apprised, that it was written by a pale man in a green coat—sitting cross-legged on an oaken stool—with a scratch on his nose, and a spelling dictionary on the table."*

* Some of our readers may have a curiosity to know in what manner this old annuitant captain does actually express himself in the village of his adoption. For their gratification, we annex the two first stanzas of his story; in which, with all the attention we have been able to bestow, we have been utterly unable to detect any traits that can be supposed to characterise either a seaman, an annuitant, or a stranger in a country town. It is a style, on the contrary, which we should ascribe, without hesitation, to a certain poetical fraternity in the West of England; and which, we verily believe, never was, and never will be, used by any one out of that fraternity.

"There is a thorn—it looks so old,
In truth you'd find it hard to say,
How it could ever have been young!
It looks so old and grey.
Not higher than a two-years' child,
It stands erect; this aged thorn!
No leaves it has, no thorny points;
It is a mass of knotted joints:
A wretched thing forlorn,
It stands erect; and like a stone,
With lichens it is overgrown.

"*Like rock or stone, it is o'ergrown*
With lichens;—to the very top;
And hung with heavy tufts of moss
A melancholy crop.
Up from the earth these mosses creep,
And *this poor thorn*, they clasp it round
So close, you'd say that they were bent,
With plain and manifest intent!
To drag it to the ground;
And all had join'd in one endeavour,
To bury *this poor thorn* for ever."

And this it seems, is Nature, and Pathos, and Poetry!

From these childish and absurd affectations, we turn with pleasure to the manly sense and correct picturing of Mr. Crabbe; and, after being dazzled and made giddy with the elaborate raptures and obscure originalities of these new artists, it is refreshing to meet again with the spirit and nature of our old masters, in the nervous pages of the author now before us.

The poem that stands first in the volume, is that to which we have already alluded as having been first given to the public upwards of twenty years ago. It is so old, and has of late been so scarce, that it is probably new to many of our readers. We shall venture, therefore, to give a few extracts from it as a specimen of Mr. Crabbe's original style of composition. We have already hinted at the description of the Parish Workhouse, and insert it as an example of no common poetry:—

"Theirs is yon house that holds the parish poor,
Whose walls of mud scarce bear the broken door;
There, where the putrid vapours flagging play,
And the dull wheel hums doleful through the day;
There children dwell who know no parents' care;
Parents, who know no children's love, dwell there;
Heart-broken matrons on their joyless bed,
Forsaken wives, and mothers never wed;
Dejected widows with unheeded tears,
And crippled age with more than childhood-fears;
The lame, the blind, and, far the happiest they!
The moping idiot and the madman gay.
"Here, too, the sick their final doom receive,
Here brought amid the scenes of grief, to grieve;
Where the loud groans from some sad chamber flow,
Mixt with the clamours of the crowd below.
"Say ye, opprest by some fantastic woes,
Some jarring nerve that baffles your repose;
Who with sad prayers the weary doctor tease,
To name the nameless ever-new disease;
How would ye bear in real pain to lie,
Despis'd, neglected, left alone to die?
How would ye bear to draw your latest breath,
Where all that's wretched paves the way for death?
"Such is that room which one rude beam divides,
And naked rafters form the sloping sides;
Where the vile bands that bind the thatch are seen,
And lath and mud are all that lie between;
Save one dull pane, that, coarsely patch'd, gives
To the rude tempest, yet excludes the day:
Here, on a matted flock, with dust o'erspread,
The drooping wretch reclines his languid head;
For him no hand the cordial cup applies," &c.
pp. 12—14.

The consequential apothecary, who gives an impatient attendance in these abodes of misery, is admirably described; but we pass to the last scene:—

"Now to the church behold the mourners come,
Sedately torpid and devoutly dumb;
The village children now their games suspend,
To see the bier that bears their ancient friend;
For he was one in all their idle sport,
And like a monarch rul'd their little court;
The pliant bow he form'd, the flying ball,
The bat, the wicket, were his labours all;
Him now they follow to his grave, and stand,
Silent and sad, and gazing, hand in hand;
While bending low, their eager eyes explore
The mingled relics of the parish poor!
The bell tolls late, the moping owl flies round,
Fear marks the flight and magnifies the sound;
The busy priest, detain'd by weightier care,
Defers his duty till the day of prayer;
And waiting long, the crowd retire distrest,
To think a poor man's bones should lie unblest."
pp. 16, 17.

The scope of the poem is to show, that the villagers of real life have no resemblance to the villagers of poetry; that poverty, in sober truth, is very uncomfortable; and vice by no means confined to the opulent. The following passage is powerfully, and finely written:—

"Or will you deem them amply paid in health,
Labour's fair child, that languishes with wealth?
Go then! and see them rising with the sun,
Through a long course of daily toil to run;
See them beneath the dog-star's raging heat,
When the knees tremble and the temples beat;
Behold them, leaning on their scythes, look o'er
The labour past, and toils to come explore;
Through fens and marshy moors their steps pursue,
When their warm pores imbibe the evening dew.
"There may you see the youth of slender frame
Contend with weakness, weariness, and shame;
Yet urg'd along, and proudly loath to yield,
He strives to join his fellows of the field;
Till long-contending nature droops at last;
Declining health rejects his poor repast!
His cheerless spouse the coming danger sees,
And mutual murmurs urge the slow disease.
"Yet grant them health, 'tis not for us to tell,
Though the head droops not, that the heart is well;
Or will you praise that homely, healthy fare,
Plenteous and plain, that happy peasants share?
Oh! trifle not with wants you cannot feel!
Nor mock the misery of a stinted meal;
Homely not wholesome—plain not plenteous—such
As you who praise would never deign to touch!
"Ye gentle souls, who dream of rural ease,
Whom the smooth stream and smoother sonnet please;
Go! if the peaceful cot your praises share,
Go look within, and ask if peace be there:
If peace be his—that drooping, weary sire,
Or theirs, that offspring round their feeble fire!
Or hers, that matron pale, whose trembling hand
Turns on the wretched hearth th' expiring brand."
pp. 8—10.

We shall only give one other extract from this poem; and we select the following fine description of that peculiar sort of barrenness which prevails along the sandy and thinly inhabited shores of the Channel:—

"Lo! where the heath, with with'ring brake grown o'er,
Lends the light turf that warms the neighbouring poor;
From thence a length of burning sand appears,
Where the thin harvest waves its wither'd ears;
There thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,
And to the ragged infant threaten war;
There poppies nodding, mock the hope of toil,
There the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil:
Hardy and high, above the slender sheaf,
The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf;
O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a shade,
And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade;
With mingled tints the rocky coasts abound,
And a sad splendour vainly shines around."
pp. 5, 6.

The next poem, and the longest in the volume, is now presented for the first time to the public. It is dedicated, like the former, to the delineation of rural life and characters,

and is entitled, "The Village Register;" and, upon a very simple but singular plan, is divided into three parts, viz. Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials. After an introductory and general view of village manners, the reverend author proceeds to present his readers with an account of all the remarkable baptisms, marriages, and funerals, that appear on his register for the preceding year; with a sketch of the character and behaviour of the respective parties, and such reflections and exhortations as are suggested by the subject. The poem consists, therefore, of a series of portraits taken from the middling and lower ranks of rustic life, and delineated on occasions at once more common and more interesting, than any other that could well be imagined. They are selected, we think, with great judgment, and drawn with inimitable accuracy and strength of colouring. They are finished with much more minuteness and detail, indeed, than the more general pictures in "The Village;" and, on this account, may appear occasionally deficient in comprehension, or in dignity. They are, no doubt, executed in some instances with too much of a Chinese accuracy; and enter into details which many readers may pronounce tedious and unnecessary. Yet there is a justness and force in the representation which is entitled to something more than indulgence; and though several of the groups are composed of low and disagreeable subjects, still, we think that some allowance is to be made for the author's plan of giving a full and exact view of village life, which could not possibly be accomplished without including those baser varieties. He aims at an important moral effect by this exhibition; and must not be defrauded either of that, or of the praise which is due to the coarser efforts of his pen, out of deference to the sickly delicacy of his more fastidious readers. We admit, however, that there is more carelessness, as well as more quaintness in this poem than in the other; and that he has now and then apparently heaped up circumstances rather to gratify his own taste for detail and accumulation, than to give any additional effect to his description. With this general observation, we beg the reader's attention to the following abstract and citations.

The poem begins with a general view, first of the industrious and contented villager, and then of the profligate and disorderly. The first compartment is not so striking as the last. Mr. Crabbe, it seems, has a set of smugglers among his flock, who inhabit what is called the Street in his village. There is nothing comparable to the following description, but some of the prose sketches of Mandeville:—

"Here, in cabal, a disputatious crew
Each evening meet; the sot, the cheat, the shrew;
Riots are nightly heard—the curse, the cries
Of beaten wife, perverse in her replies:
Boys in their first stol'n rags, to steal begin,
And girls, who know not sex, are skill'd in gin!
Snarers and smugglers here their gains divide,
Ensnaring females here their victims hide;
And here is one, the Sibyl of the Row,
Who knows all secrets, or affects to know.—
"See! on the floor, what frowzy patches rest!
What nauseous fragments on yon fractur'd chest!
What downy-dust beneath yon window-seat!
And round these posts that serve this bed for feet.
This bed where all those tatter'd garments lie,
Worn by each sex, and now perforce thrown by.
"See! as we gaze, an infant lifts its head,
Left by neglect, and burrow'd in that bed;
The mother-gossip has the love suppress,
An infant's cry once waken'd in her breast," &c.
"Here are no wheels for either wool or flax,
But packs of cards—made up of sundry packs;
Here are no books, but ballads on the wall,
Are some abusive, and indecent all;
Pistols are here, unpair'd; with nets and hooks,
Of every kind, for rivers, ponds, and brooks;
An ample flask that nightly rovers fill,
With recent poison from the Dutchman's still;
A box of tools with wires of various size,
Frocks, wigs, and hats, for night or day disguise,
And bludgeons stout to gain or guard a prize.—
"Here his poor bird, th' inhuman cocker bring
Arms his hard heel, and clips his golden wings;
With spicy food th' impatient spirit feeds,
And shouts and curses as the battle bleeds:
Struck through the brain, depriv'd of both his eyes,
The vanquish'd bird must combat till he dies!
Must faintly peck at his victorious foe,
And reel and stagger at each feeble blow;
When fall'n, the savage grasps his dabbled plumes,
His blood-stain'd arms, for other deaths assumes;
And damns the craven-fowl, that lost his stake,
And *only* bled and perish'd for his sake!"
pp. 40—44.

Mr. Crabbe now opens his chronicle; and the first babe that appears on the list is a natural child of the miller's daughter. This damsel fell in love with a sailor; but her father refused his consent, and no priest would unite them without it. The poor girl yielded to her passion; and her lover went to sea, to seek a portion for his bride:—

"Then came the days of shame, the grievous night,
The varying look, the wand'ring appetite;
The joy assum'd, while sorrow dimm'd the eyes,
The forc'd sad smiles that follow'd sudden sighs,
And every art, long us'd, but us'd in vain,
To hide thy progress, Nature, and thy pain.
"Day after day were past in grief and pain,
Week after week, nor came the youth again;
Her boy was born:—No lads nor lasses came
To grace the rite or give the child a name;
Nor grave conceited nurse, of office proud,
Bore the young Christian, roaring through the crowd;
In a small chamber was my office done,
Where blinks, through paper'd panes, the setting sun;
Where noisy sparrows, perch'd on penthouse near,
Chirp tuneless joy, and mock the frequent tear."—
"Throughout the lanes, she glides at evening's close,
There softly lulls her infant to repose;
Then sits and gazes, but with viewless look,
As gilds the moon the rimpling of the brook;
Then sings her vespers, but in voice so low,
She hears their murmurs as the waters flow;
And she too murmurs, and begins to find
The solemn wand'rings of a wounded mind!
pp. 47—49.

We pass the rest of the Baptisms; and proceed to the more interesting chapter of Marriages. The first pair here is an old snug bachelor, who, in the first days of dotage, had married his maid-servant. The reverend Mr. Crabbe is very facetious on this match; and not very scrupulously delicate.

The following picture, though liable in part to the same objection, is perfect, we think, in that style of drawing:—

"Next at our altar stood a luckless pair,
Brought by strong passions—and a warrant—there;
By long rent cloak, hung loosely, strove the bride,
From ev'ry eye, what all perceiv'd to hide;
While the boy-bridegroom, shuffling in his pace,
Now hid awhile, and then expos'd his face;
As shame alternately with anger strove
The brain, confus'd with muddy ale, to move!
In haste and stamm'ring he perform'd his part,
And look'd the rage that rankled in his heart.
Low spake the lass, and lisp'd and minc'd the while;
Look'd on the lad, and faintly try'd to smile;
With soft'ned speech and humbled tone she strove
To stir the embers of departed love;
While he, a tyrant, frowning walk'd before.
Felt the poor purse, and sought the public door;
She sadly following in submission went,
And saw the final shilling foully spent!
Then to her father's hut the pair withdrew,
And bade to love and comfort long adieu!"
pp. 74, 75

The next bridal is that of Phœbe Dawson, the most innocent and beautiful of all the village maidens. We give the following pretty description of her courtship:—

"Now, through the lane, up hill, and cross the green,
(Seen but by few, and blushing to be seen—
Dejected, thoughtful, anxious and afraid,)
Led by the lover, walk'd the silent maid:
Slow through the meadows rov'd they, many a mile,
Toy'd by each bank, and trifled at each stile;
Where, as he painted every blissful view,
And highly colour'd what he strongly drew,
The pensive damsel, prone to tender fears,
Dimm'd the fair prospect with prophetic tears."
pp. 76, 77.

This is the taking side of the picture: At the end of two years, here is the reverse. Nothing can be more touching, we think, than the quiet suffering and solitary hysterics of this ill-fated young woman:—

"Lo! now with red rent cloak and bonnet black,
And torn green gown, loose hanging at her back,
One who an infant in her arms sustains,
And seems, with patience, striving with her pains;
Pinch'd are her looks, as one who pines for bread.
Whose cares are growing, and whose hopes are fled!
Pale her parch'd lips, her heavy eyes sunk low,
And tears unnotic'd from their channels flow;
Serene her manner, till some sudden pain
Frets the meek soul, and then she's calm again!—
Her broken pitcher to the pool she takes,
And every step with cautious terror makes;
For not alone that infant in her arms,
But nearer cause, maternal fear, alarms!
With water burden'd, then she picks her way,
Slowly and cautious, in the clinging clay;
Till in mid-green she trusts a place unsound,
And deeply plunges in th' adhesive ground;
From whence her slender foot with pain she takes," &c.
"And now her path, but not her peace, she gains,
Safe from her task, but shiv'ring with her pains;—
Her home she reaches, open leaves the door,
And placing first her infant on the floor,
She bares her bosom to the wind, and sits,
And sobbing struggles with the rising fits!
In vain!—they come—she feels th' inflaming grief,
That shuts the swelling bosom from relief;
That speaks in feeble cries a soul distrest,
Or the sad laugh that cannot be repress;
The neighbour-matron leaves her wheel, and flies
With all the aid her poverty supplies;
Unfee'd, the calls of nature she obeys,
Nor led by profit, nor allur'd by praise;
And waiting long, till these contentions cease,
She speaks of comfort, and departs in peace."
pp. 77, 78.

The ardent lover, it seems, turned out a brutal husband:—

"If present, railing, till he saw her pain'd;
If absent, spending what their labours gain'd:
Till that fair form in want and sickness pin'd,
And hope and comfort fled that gentle mind."
p. 79.

It may add to the interest which some readers will take in this simple story, to be told, that it was the last piece of poetry that was read to Mr. Fox during his fatal illness; and that he examined and made some flattering remarks on the manuscript of it a few days before his death.

We are obliged to pass over the rest of the Marriages, though some of them are extremely characteristic and beautiful, and to proceed to the Burials. Here we have a great variety of portraits,—the old drunken innkeeper—the bustling farmer's wife—the infant—and next the lady of the manor. The following description of her deserted mansion is striking, and in the good old taste of Pope and Dryden:—

——— "Forsaken stood the hall,
Worms ate the floors, the tap'stry fled the wall;
No fire the kitchen's cheerless grate display'd;
No cheerful light the long-clos'd sash convey'd;
The crawling worm that turns a summer fly,
Here spun his shroud and laid him up to die
The winter-death;—upon the bed of state,
The bat, shrill-shrieking, woo'd his flick'ring mate:
To empty rooms, the curious came no more,
From empty cellars, turn'd the angry poor,
And surly beggars curs'd the ever-bolted door.
To one small room the steward found his way,
Where tenants follow'd, to complain and pay."
pp. 104, 105.

The old maid follows next to the shades of mortality. The description of her house, furniture, and person, is admirable, and affords a fine specimen of Mr. Crabbe's most minute finishing; but it is too long for extracting. We rather present our readers with a part of the character of Isaac Ashford:—

"Next to these ladies, but in nought allied,
A noble peasant, Isaac Ashford, died.
Noble he was—contemning all things mean,
His truth unquestion'd, and his soul serene:
Of no man's presence Isaac felt afraid:
At no man's question Isaac look'd dismay'd:
Shame knew him not, he dreaded no disgrace," &c.
"Were others joyful, he look'd smiling on,
And gave allowance where he needed none;
Yet far was he from stoic-pride remov'd;
He felt, with many, and he warmly lov'd:
I mark'd his action, when his infant died,
And an old neighbour for offence was tried;
The still tears, stealing down that furrow'd cheek,
Spoke pity, plainer than the tongue can speak," &c.
pp. 111, 112

The rest of the character is drawn with equal spirit: but we can only make room for the author's final commemoration of him.

"I feel his absence in the hours of prayer,
And view his seat, and sigh for Isaac there!
I see, no more, those white locks thinly spread,
Round the bald polish of that honour'd head;
No more that awful glance on playful wight,
Compell'd to kneel and tremble at the sight;
To fold his fingers all in dread the while,
Till Mr. Ashford soften'd to a smile!

No more that meek, that suppliant look in prayer,
Nor that pure faith, that gave it force—are there:—
But he is blest; and I lament no more,
A wise good man contented to be poor."—p. 114.

We then bury the village midwife, superseded in her old age by a volatile doctor; then a surly rustic misanthrope; and last of all, the reverend author's ancient sexton, whose chronicle of his various pastors is given rather at too great length. The poem ends with a simple recapitulation.

We think this the most important of the new pieces in the volume; and have extended our account of it so much, that we can afford to say but little of the others. "The Library" and "The Newspaper" are republications. They are written with a good deal of terseness, sarcasm, and beauty; but the subjects are not very interesting, and they will rather be approved, we think, than admired or delighted in. We are not much taken either with "The Birth of Flattery." With many nervous lines and ingenious allusions, it has something of the languor which seems inseparable from an allegory which exceeds the length of an epigram.

"Sir Eustace Grey" is quite unlike any of the preceding compositions. It is written in a sort of lyric measure; and is intended to represent the perturbed fancies of the most terrible insanity settling by degrees into a sort of devotional enthusiasm. The opening stanza, spoken by a visiter in the madhouse, is very striking.

"I'll see no more!—the heart is torn
By views of woe we cannot heal;
Long shall I see these *things* forlorn,
And oft again their griefs shall feel,
As each upon the mind shall steal;
That wan projector's mystic style,
That lumpish idiot leering by,
That peevish idler's ceaseless wile,
And *that poor maiden's half-form'd smile,*
While struggling for the full-drawn sigh!
I'll know no more!"—p. 217.

There is great force, both of language and conception, in the wild narrative Sir Eustace gives of his frenzy; though we are not sure whether there is not something too elaborate, and too much worked up, in the picture. We give only one image, which we think is original. He supposed himself hurried along by two tormenting demons.

"Through lands we fled, o'er seas we flew,
And halted on a boundless plain;
Where nothing fed, nor breath'd, nor grew,
But silence rul'd the still domain.

"Upon that boundless plain, below,
The setting sun's last rays were shed,
And gave a mild and sober glow,
Where all were still, asleep, or dead;
Vast ruins in the midst were spread,
Pillars and pediments sublime,
Where the grey moss had form'd a bed,
And cloth'd the crumbling spoils of Time.

"There was I fix'd, I know not how,
Condemn'd for untold years to stay;
Yet years were not;—one dreadful *now*,
Endur'd no change of night or day;
The same mild evening's sleeping ray
Shone softly-solemn and serene,
And all that time I gaz'd away,
The setting sun's sad rays were seen."
p. 226.

"The Hall of Justice," or the story of the Gipsy Convict, is another experiment of Mr. Crabbe's. It is very nervous—very shocking—and very powerfully represented. The woman is accused of stealing, and tells her story in impetuous and lofty language.

"My crime! this sick'ning child to feed,
I seiz'd the food your witness saw;
I knew your laws forbade the deed,
But yielded to a stronger law!"—

"But I have griefs of other kind,
Troubles and sorrows more severe;
Give me to ease my tortur'd mind,
Lend to my woes a patient ear;
And let me—if I may not find
A friend to help—find one to hear.

"My mother dead, my father lost,
I wander'd with a vagrant crew;
A common care, a common cost,
Their sorrows and their sins I knew;
With them on want and error forc'd,
Like them, I base and guilty grew!

"So through the land I wand'ring went,
And little found of grief or joy;
But lost my bosom's sweet content,
When first I lov'd the gypsy boy.

"A sturdy youth he was and tall,
His looks would all his soul declare,
His piercing eyes were deep and small,
And strongly curl'd his raven hair.

"Yes, Aaron had each manly charm,
All in the May of youthful pride;
He scarcely fear'd his father's arm,
And every other arm defied.—
Oft when they grew in anger warm,
(Whom will not love and power divide!)
I rose, their wrathful souls to calm,
Not yet in sinful combat tried."
pp. 240—242.

The father felon falls in love with the betrothed of his son, whom he despatches on some distant errand. The consummation of his horrid passion is told in these powerful stanzas:—

"The night was dark, the lanes were deep,
And one by one they took their way;
He bade me lay me down and sleep!
I only wept, and wish'd for day.

Accursed be the love he bore—
Accursed was the force he us'd—
So let him of his God implore
For mercy!—and be so refus'd!"—p. 243.

It is painful to follow the story out. The son returns, and privately murders his father; and then marries his widow! The profligate barbarity of the life led by those outcasts is forcibly expressed by the simple narrative of the lines that follow:—

"I brought a lovely daughter forth,
His father's child, in Aaron's bed!
He took her from me in his wrath,
'Where is my child?'—'Thy child is dead.'

"'Twas false! We wander'd far and wide,
Through town and country, field and fen,
Till Aaron fighting, fell and died,
And I became a wife again."—p. 248.

We have not room to give the sequel of this dreadful ballad. It certainly is not pleasing

reading; but it is written with very unusual power of language, and shows Mr. Crabbe to have great mastery over the tragic passions of pity and horror. The volume closes with some verses of no great value in praise of Women.

We part with regret from Mr. Crabbe; but we hope to meet with him again. If his muse, to be sure, is prolific only once in twenty-four years, we can scarcely expect to live long enough to pass judgment on her future progeny: But we trust, that a larger portion of public favour than has hitherto been dealt to him will encourage him to greater efforts; and that he will soon appear again among the worthy supporters of the old poetical establishment, and come in time to surpass the revolutionists in fast firing, as well as in weight of metal.

(April, 1810.)

The Borough: a Poem, in Twenty-four Letters. By the Rev. George Crabbe, LL.B. 8vo. pp. 344. London: 1810.

We are very glad to meet with Mr. Crabbe so soon again; and particularly glad to find, that his early return has been occasioned, in part, by the encouragement he received on his last appearance. This late spring of public favour, we hope, he will yet live to see ripen into mature fame. We scarcely know any poet who deserves it better; and are quite certain there is none who is more secure of keeping with posterity whatever he may win from his contemporaries.

The present poem is precisely of the character of The Village and The Parish Register. It has the same peculiarities, and the same faults and beauties; though a severe critic might perhaps add, that its peculiarities are more obtrusive, its faults greater, and its beauties less. However that be, both faults and beauties are so plainly produced by the peculiarity, that it may be worth while, before giving any more particular account of it, to try if we can ascertain in what that consists.

And here we shall very speedily discover, that Mr. Crabbe is distinguished from all other poets, both by the choice of his subjects, and by his manner of treating them. All his persons are taken from the lower ranks of life; and all his scenery from the most ordinary and familiar objects of nature or art. His characters and incidents, too, are as common as the elements out of which they are compounded are humble; and not only has he nothing prodigious or astonishing in any of his representations, but he has not even attempted to impart any of the ordinary colours of poetry to those vulgar materials. He has no moralising swains or sentimental tradesmen; and scarcely ever seeks to charm us by the artless graces or lowly virtues of his personages. On the contrary, he has represented his villagers and humble burghers as altogether as dissipated, and more dishonest and discontented, than the profligates of higher life; and, instead of conducting us through blooming groves and pastoral meadows, has led us along filthy lanes and crowded wharfs, to hospitals, alms-houses, and gin-shops. In some of these delineations, he may be considered as the Satirist of low life—an occupation sufficiently arduous, and, in a great degree, new and original in our language. But by far the greater part of his poetry is of a different and a higher character; and aims at moving or delighting us by lively, touching, and finely contrasted representations of the dispositions, sufferings, and occupations of those ordinary persons who form the far greater part of our fellow-creatures. This, too, he has sought to effect, merely by placing before us the clearest, most brief, and most striking sketches of their external condition—the most sagacious and unexpected strokes of character—and the truest and most pathetic pictures of natural feeling and common suffering. By the mere force of his art, and the novelty of his style, he forces us to attend to objects that are usually neglected, and to enter into feelings from which we are in general but too eager to escape;—and then trusts to nature for the effect of the representation.

It is obvious, at first sight, that this is not a task for an ordinary hand; and that many ingenious writers, who make a very good figure with battles, nymphs, and moonlight landscapes, would find themselves quite helpless, if set down among streets, harbours, and taverns. The difficulty of such subjects, in short, is sufficiently visible—and some of the causes of that difficulty: But they have their advantages also;—and of these, and their hazards, it seems natural to say a few words, before entering more minutely into the merits of the work before us.

The first great advantage of such familiar subjects is, that every one is necessarily well acquainted with the originals; and is therefore sure to feel all that pleasure, from a faithful representation of them, which results from the perception of a perfect and successful imitation. In the kindred art of painting, we find that this single consideration has been sufficient to stamp a very high value upon accurate and lively delineations of objects, in themselves uninteresting, and even disagreeable; and no very inconsiderable part of the pleasure which may be derived from Mr Crabbe's poetry may probably be referred to its mere truth and fidelity; and to the brevity and clearness with which he sets before his readers, objects and characters with which they have been all their days familiar.

In his happier passages, however, he has a

higher merit, and imparts a far higher gratification. The chief delight of poetry consists, not so much in what it directly supplies to the imagination, as in what it enables it to supply to itself;—not in warming the heart by its passing brightness, but in kindling its own latent stores of light and heat;—not in hurrying the fancy along by a foreign and accidental impulse, but in setting it agoing, by touching its internal springs and principles of activity. Now, this highest and most delightful effect can only be produced by the poet's striking a note to which the heart and the affections naturally vibrate in unison;—by rousing one of a large family of kindred impressions;—by dropping the rich seed of his fancy upon the fertile and sheltered places of the imagination. But it is evident, that the emotions connected with common and familiar objects—with objects which fill every man's memory, and are necessarily associated with all that he has ever really felt or fancied, are of all others the most likely to answer this description, and to produce, where they can be raised to a sufficient height, this great effect in its utmost perfection. It is for this reason that the images and affections that belong to our *universal* nature, are always, if tolerably represented, infinitely more captivating, in spite of their apparent commonness and simplicity, than those that are peculiar to certain situations, however they may come recommended by novelty or grandeur. The familiar feeling of maternal tenderness and anxiety, which is every day before our eyes, even in the brute creation—and the enchantment of youthful love, which is nearly the same in all characters, ranks, and situations—still contribute far more to the beauty and interest of poetry than all the misfortunes of princes, the jealousies of heroes, and the feats of giants, magicians, or ladies in armour. Every one can enter into the former set of feelings; and but a few into the latter. The one calls up a thousand familiar and long-remembered emotions—which are answered and reflected on every side by the kindred impressions which experience or observation have traced upon every memory: while the other lights up but a transient and unfruitful blaze, and passes away without perpetuating itself in any kindred and native sensation.

Now, the delineation of all that concerns the lower and most numerous classes of society, is, in this respect, on a footing with the pictures of our primary affections—that their originals are necessarily familiar to all men, and are inseparably associated with their own most interesting impressions. Whatever may be our own condition, we all live surrounded with the poor, from infancy to age;—we hear daily of their sufferings and misfortunes;—and their toils, their crimes, or their pastimes, are our hourly spectacle. Many diligent readers of poetry know little, by their own experience, of palaces, castles, or camps; and still less of tyrants, warriors, and banditti;—but every one understands about cottages, streets, and villages; and conceives, pretty correctly, the character and condition of sailors, ploughmen, and artificers. If the poet can contrive, therefore, to create a sufficient interest in subjects like these, they will infallibly sink deeper into the mind, and be more prolific of kindred trains of emotion, than subjects of greater dignity. Nor is the difficulty of exciting such an interest by any means so great as is generally imagined. For it is common human nature, and common human feelings, after all, that form the true source of interest in poetry of every description;—and the splendour and the marvels by which it is sometimes surrounded, serve no other purpose than to fix our attention on those workings of the heart, and those energies of the understanding, which alone command all the genuine sympathies of human beings—and which may be found as abundantly in the breasts of cottagers as of kings. Wherever there are human beings, therefore, with feelings and characters to be represented, our attention may be fixed by the art of the poet—by his judicious selection of circumstances—by the force and vivacity of his style, and the clearness and brevity of his representations.

In point of fact, we are all touched more deeply, as well as more frequently, in real life, with the sufferings of peasants than of princes; and sympathise much oftener, and more heartily, with the successes of the poor, than of the rich and distinguished. The occasions of such feelings are indeed so many, and so common, that they do not often leave any very permanent traces behind them, but pass away, and are effaced by the very rapidity of their succession. The business and the cares, and the pride of the world, obstruct the development of the emotions to which they would naturally give rise; and press so close and thick upon the mind, as to shut it, at most seasons, against the reflections that are perpetually seeking for admission. When we have leisure, however, to look quietly into our hearts, we shall find in them an infinite multitude of little fragments of sympathy with our brethren in humble life—abortive movements of compassion, and embryos of kindness and concern, which had once fairly begun to live and germinate within them, though withered and broken off by the selfish bustle and fever of our daily occupations. Now, all these may be revived and carried on to maturity by the art of the poet;—and, therefore, a powerful effort to interest us in the feelings of the humble and obscure, will usually call forth more deep, more numerous, and more permanent emotions, than can ever be excited by the fate of princesses and heroes. Independent of the circumstances to which we have already alluded, there are causes which make us at all times more ready to enter into the feelings of the humble, than of the exalted part of our species. Our sympathy with their enjoyments is enhanced by a certain mixture of pity for their general condition, which, by purifying it from that taint of envy which almost always adheres to our admiration of the great, renders it more welcome and satisfactory to our bosoms; while our concern for their sufferings is at once softened and endeared to us, by the recollection of our own exemption from them, and by the feeling, that we frequently have it in our power to relieve them.

From these, and from other causes, it appears to us to be certain, that where subjects, taken from humble life, can be made sufficiently interesting to overcome the distaste and the prejudices with which the usages of polished society too generally lead us to regard them, the interest which they excite will commonly be more profound and more lasting than any that can be raised upon loftier themes; and the poet of the Village and the Borough be oftener, and longer read, than the poet of the Court or the Camp. The most popular passages of Shakespeare and Cowper, we think, are of this description: and there is much, both in the volume before us, and in Mr. Crabbe's former publications, to which we might now venture to refer, as proofs of the same doctrine. When such representations have once made an impression on the imagination, they are remembered daily, and for ever. We can neither look around, nor within us, without being reminded of their truth and their importance; and, while the more brilliant effusions of romantic fancy are recalled only at long intervals, and in rare situations, we feel that we cannot walk a step from our own doors, nor cast a glance back on our departed years, without being indebted to the poet of vulgar life for some striking image or touching reflection, of which the occasions were always before us, but—till he taught us how to improve them—were almost always allowed to escape.

Such, we conceive, are some of the advantages of the subjects which Mr. Crabbe has in a great measure introduced into modern poetry;—and such the grounds upon which we venture to predict the durability of the reputation which he is in the course of acquiring. That they have their disadvantages also, is obvious; and it is no less obvious, that it is to these we must ascribe the greater part of the faults and deformities with which this author is fairly chargeable. The two great errors into which he has fallen, are—that he has described many things not worth describing;—and that he has frequently excited disgust, instead of pity or indignation, in the breasts of his readers. These faults are obvious—and, we believe, are popularly laid to his charge: Yet there is, in so far as we have observed, a degree of misconception as to the true grounds and limits of the charge, which we think it worth while to take this opportunity of correcting.

The poet of humble life *must* describe a great deal—and must even describe, minutely, many things which possess in themselves no beauty or grandeur. The reader's fancy must be awaked—and the power of his own pencil displayed:—a distinct locality and imaginary reality must be given to his characters and agents: and the ground colour of their common condition must be laid in, before his peculiar and selected groups can be presented with any effect or advantage. In the same way, he must study characters with a minute and anatomical precision; and must make both himself and his readers familiar with the ordinary traits and general family features of the beings among whom they are to move, before they can either understand, or take much interest in the individuals who are to engross their attention. Thus far, there is no excess or unnecessary minuteness. But this faculty of observation, and this power of description, hold out great temptations to go further. There is a pride and a delight in the exercise of all peculiar power; and the poet, who has learned to describe external objects exquisitely, with a view to heighten the effect of his moral designs, and to draw characters with accuracy, to help forward the interest or the pathos of the picture, will be in great danger of describing scenes, and drawing characters, for no other purpose, but to indulge his taste, and to display his talents. It cannot be denied, we think, that Mr. Crabbe has, on many occasions, yielded to this temptation. He is led away, every now and then, by his lively conception of external objects, and by his nice and sagacious observation of human character; and wantons and luxuriates in descriptions and moral portrait painting, while his readers are left to wonder to what end so much industry has been exerted.

His chief fault, however, is his frequent lapse into disgusting representations; and this, we will confess, is an error for which we find it far more difficult either to account or to apologise. We are not, however, of the opinion which we have often heard stated, that he has represented human nature under too unfavourable an aspect; or that the distaste which his poetry sometimes produces, is owing merely to the painful nature of the scenes and subjects with which it abounds. On the contrary, we think he has given a juster, as well as a more striking picture, of the true character and situation of the lower orders of this country, than any other writer, whether in verse or in prose; and that he has made no more use of painful emotions than was necessary to the production of a pathetic effect.

All powerful and pathetic poetry, it is obvious, abounds in images of distress. The delight which it bestows partakes strongly of pain; and, by a sort of contradiction, which has long engaged the attention of the reflecting, the compositions that attract us most powerfully, and detain us the longest, are those that produce in us most of the effects of actual suffering and wretchedness. The solution of this paradox is to be found, we think, in the simple fact, that pain is a far stronger sensation than pleasure, in human existence; and that the cardinal virtue of all things that are intended to delight the mind, is to produce a strong sensation. Life itself appears to consist in sensation; and the universal passion of all beings that have life, seems to be, that they should be made intensely conscious of it, by a succession of powerful and engrossing emotions. All the mere gratifications or natural pleasures that are in the power even of the most fortunate, are quite insufficient to fill this

vast craving for sensation: And accordingly, we see every day, that a more violent stimulus is sought for by those who have attained the vulgar heights of life, in the pains and dangers of war—the agonies of gaming—or the feverish toils of ambition. To those who have tasted of those potent cups, where the bitter, however, so obviously predominates, the security, the comforts, and what are called the enjoyments of common life, are intolerably insipid and disgusting. Nay, we think we have observed, that even those who, without any effort or exertion, have experienced unusual misery, frequently appear, in like manner, to acquire a sort of taste or craving for it; and come to look on the tranquillity of ordinary life with a kind of indifference not unmingled with contempt. It is certain, at least, that they dwell with most apparent satisfaction on the memory of those days, which have been marked by the deepest and most agonising sorrows; and derive a certain delight from the recollections of those overwhelming sensations which once occasioned so fierce a throb in the languishing pulse of their existence.

If any thing of this kind, however, can be traced in real life—if the passion for emotion be so strong as to carry us, not in imagination, but in reality, over the rough edge of present pain—it will not be difficult to explain, why it should be so attractive in the copies and fictions of poetry. There, as in real life, the great demand is for emotion; while the pain with which it may be attended, can scarcely, by any possibility, exceed the limits of endurance. The recollection, that it is but a copy and a fiction, is quite sufficient to keep it down to a moderate temperature, and to make it welcome as the sign or the harbinger of that agitation of which the soul is avaricious. It is not, then, from any peculiar quality in painful emotions that they become capable of affording the delight which attends them in tragic or pathetic poetry—but merely from the circumstance of their being more intense and powerful than any other emotions of which the mind is susceptible. If it was the constitution of our nature to feel joy as keenly, or to sympathise with it as heartily as we do with sorrow, we have no doubt that no other sensation would ever be intentionally excited by the artists that minister to delight. But the fact is, that *the pleasures* of which we are capable are slight and feeble compared with *the pains* that we may endure; and that, feeble as they are, the sympathy which they excite falls much more short of the original emotion. When the object, therefore, is to obtain sensation, there can be no doubt to which of the two fountains we should repair; and if there be but few pains in real life which are not, in some measure, endeared to us by the emotions with which they are attended, we may be pretty sure, that the more distress we introduce into poetry, the more we shall rivet the attention and attract the admiration of the reader.

There is but one exception to this rule—and it brings us back from the apology of Mr. Crabbe, to his condemnation. Every form of distress, whether it proceed from passion or from fortune, and whether it fall upon vice or virtue, adds to the interest and the charm of poetry—except only that which is connected with ideas of *Disgust*—the least taint of which disenchants the whole scene, and puts an end both to delight and sympathy. But what is it, it may be asked, that is the proper object of disgust? and what is the precise description of things which we think Mr. Crabbe so inexcusable for admitting? It is not easy to define a term at once so simple and so significant; but it may not be without its use, to indicate, in a general way, our conception of its true force and comprehension.

It is needless, we suppose, to explain what are the objects of disgust in physical or external existences. These are sufficiently plain and unequivocal; and it is universally admitted, that all mention of them must be carefully excluded from every poetical description. With regard, again, to human character, action, and feeling, we should be inclined to term every thing disgusting, which represented misery, without making any appeal to our love, respect, or admiration. If the suffering person be amiable, the delightful feeling of love and affection tempers the pain which the contemplation of suffering has a tendency to excite, and enhances it into the stronger, and therefore more attractive, sensation of pity. If there be great power or energy, however, united to guilt or wretchedness, the mixture of admiration exalts the emotion into something that is sublime and pleasing: and even in cases of mean and atrocious, but efficient guilt, our sympathy with the victims upon whom it is practised, and our active indignation and desire of vengeance, reconcile us to the humiliating display, and make a compound that, upon the whole, is productive of pleasure.

The only sufferers, then, upon whom we cannot bear to look, are those that excite pain by their wretchedness, while they are too depraved to be the objects of affection, and too weak and insignificant to be the causes of misery to others, or, consequently, of indignation to the spectators. Such are the depraved, abject, diseased, and neglected poor—creatures in whom every thing amiable or respectable has been extinguished by sordid passions or brutal debauchery;—who have no means of doing the mischief of which they are capable—whom every one despises, and no one can either love or fear. On the characters, the miseries, and the vices of such beings, we look with *disgust* merely: and, though it may perhaps serve some *moral* purpose, occasionally to set before us this humiliating spectacle of human nature sunk to utter worthlessness and insignificance, it is altogether in vain to think of exciting either pity or horror, by the truest and most forcible representations of their sufferings or their enormities. They have no hold upon any of the feelings that lead us to take an interest in our fellow-creatures;—we turn away from them, therefore, with loathing and dispassionate aversion;—we feel our imaginations polluted by the intrusion of any images connected with them; and are offended and disgusted when we are forced to look closely upon those festering heaps of moral filth and corruption.

It is with concern we add, that we know no writer who has sinned so deeply in this respect as Mr. Crabbe—who has so often presented us with spectacles which it is purely painful and degrading to contemplate, and bestowed such powers of conception and expression in giving us distinct ideas of what we must ever abhor to remember. If Mr. Crabbe had been a person of ordinary talents, we might have accounted for his error, in some degree, by supposing, that his frequent success in treating of subjects which had been usually rejected by other poets, had at length led him to disregard, altogether, the common impressions of mankind as to what was allowable and what inadmissible in poetry; and to reckon the unalterable laws by which nature has regulated our sympathies, among the prejudices by which they were shackled and impaired. It is difficult, however, to conceive how a writer of his quick and exact observation should have failed to perceive, that there is not a single instance of a serious interest being excited by an object of disgust; and that Shakespeare himself, who has ventured every thing, has never ventured to shock our feelings with the crimes or the sufferings of beings absolutely without power or principle. Independent of universal practice, too, it is still more difficult to conceive how he should have overlooked the reason on which this practice is founded; for though it be generally true, that poetical representations of suffering and of guilt produce emotion, and consequently delight, yet it certainly did not require the penetration of Mr. Crabbe to discover, that there is a degree of depravity which counteracts our sympathy with suffering, and a degree of insignificance which extinguishes our interest in guilt. We abstain from giving any extracts in support of this accusation; but those who have perused the volume before us, will have already recollected the story of Frederic Thompson, of Abel Keene, of Blaney, of Benbow, and a good part of those of Grimes and Ellen Orford—besides many shorter passages. It is now time, however, to give the reader a more particular account of the work which contains them.

The Borough of Mr. Crabbe, then, is a detailed and minute account of an ancient English sea-port town, of the middling order; containing a series of pictures of its scenery, and of the different classes and occupations of its inhabitants. It is thrown into the form of letters, though without any attempt at the epistolary character; and treats of the vicar and curate—the sectaries—the attornies—the apothecaries; and the inns, clubs, and strolling-players, that make a figure in the place:—but more particularly of the poor, and their characters and treatment; and of almshouses, prisons, and schools. There is, of course, no unity or method in the poem—which consists altogether of a succession of unconnected descriptions, and is still more miscellaneous in reality, than would be conjectured from the titles of its twenty-four separate compartments. As it does not admit of analysis, therefore, or even of a much more particular description, we can only give our readers a just idea of its execution, by extracting a few of the passages that appear to us most characteristic in each of the many styles it exhibits.

One of the first that strikes us, is the following very touching and beautiful picture of innocent love, misfortune and resignation—all of them taking a tinge of additional sweetness and tenderness from the humble condition of the parties; and thus affording a striking illustration of the remarks we have ventured to make on the advantages of such subjects. The passage occurs in the second letter, where the author has been surveying, with a glance half pensive and half sarcastical, the monuments erected in the churchyard. He then proceeds:—

"Yes! there are real Mourners—I have seen
A fair sad Girl, mild, suffering, and serene;
Attention (through the day) her duties claim'd,
And to be useful as resign'd she aim'd;
Neatly she dress'd, nor vainly seem'd t' expect
Pity for grief, or pardon for neglect;
But when her wearied Parents sunk to sleep,
She sought this place to meditate and weep;
Then to her mind was all the past display'd,
That faithful Memory brings to Sorrow's aid:
For then she thought on one regretted Youth,
Her tender trust, and his unquestion'd truth;
In ev'ry place she wander'd, where they'd been,
And sadly-sacred held the parting-scene
Where last for sea he took his leave;—that place
With double interest would she nightly trace," &c.
"Happy he sail'd; and great the care she took,
That he should softly sleep, and smartly look;
White was his better linen, and his check
Was made more trim than any on the deck;
And every comfort Men at Sea can know,
Was hers to buy, to make, and to bestow:
For he to Greenland sail'd, and much she told,
How he should guard against the climate's cold;
Yet saw not danger; dangers he'd withstood,
Nor could she trace the Fever in his blood:
His Messmates smil'd at flushings in his cheek,
And he too smil'd, but seldom would he speak;
For now he found the danger, felt the pain,
With grievous symptoms he could not explain.
"He call'd his friend, and prefac'd with a sigh
A Lover's message—'*Thomas!* I must die!
Would I could see my *Sally!* and could rest
My throbbing temples on her faithful breast,
And gazing go!—if not, this trifle take,
And say till death, I wore it for her sake:
Yes! I must die! blow on, sweet breeze, blow on!
Give me one look, before my life be gone,
Oh! give me that! and let me not despair—
One last fond look!—and now repeat the prayer.'
"He had his wish; had more; I will not paint
The Lover's meeting: she beheld him faint—
With tender fears, she took a nearer view,
Her terrors doubling as her hopes withdrew;
He tried to smile, and, half succeeding, said,
'Yes! I must die;—and hope for ever fled!'
"Still long she nurs'd him; tender thoughts meantime
Were interchang'd, and hopes and views sublime.
To her he came to die; and every day
She took some portion of the dread away!
With him she pray'd, to him his Bible read,
Sooth'd the faint heart, and held the aching head:

She came with smiles the hour of pain to cheer;
Apart she sigh'd; alone, she shed the tear;
Then, as if breaking from a cloud, she gave
Fresh light, and gilt the prospect of the grave.
"One day he lighter seem'd, and they forgot
The care, the dread, the anguish of their lot;
They spoke with cheerfulness, and seem'd to think,
Yet said not so—'perhaps he will not sink.'
A sudden brightness in his look appear'd,—
A sudden vigour in his voice was heard;
She had been reading in the Book of Prayer,
And led him forth, and plac'd him in his chair;
Lively he seem'd, and spoke of all he knew,
The friendly many, and the favourite few;
Nor one that day did he to mind recall,
But she has treasur'd, and she loves them all;
When in her way she meets them, they appear
Peculiar people—death has made them dear!
He nam'd his friend, but then his hand she prest,
And fondly whisper'd, 'Thou must go to rest.'
'I go!' he said; but, as he spoke, she found
His hand more cold, and flutt'ring was the sound;
Then gaz'd affrighten'd; but she caught at last
A dying look of love—and all was past!—
"She plac'd a decent stone his grave above,
Neatly engrav'd—an offering of her Love;
For that she wrought, for that forsook her bed,
Awake alike to duty and the dead;
She would have griev'd, had friends presum'd to spare
The least assistance—'twas her proper care.
"Here will she come, and on the grave will sit,
Folding her arms, in long abstracted fit;
But if observer pass, will take her round,
And careless seem, for she would not be found;
Then come again, and thus her hour employ,
While visions please her, and while woes destroy."
pp. 23—27.

There is a passage in the same tone, in the letter on Prisons. It describes the dream of a felon under sentence of death; and though the exquisite accuracy and beauty of the landscape painting are such as must have recommended it to notice in poetry of any order, it seems to us to derive an unspeakable charm from the lowly simplicity and humble content of the characters—at least we cannot conceive any walk of *ladies and gentlemen* that should furnish out so sweet a picture as terminates the following extract. It is only doing Mr. Crabbe justice to present along with it a part of the dark foreground which he has drawn, in the waking existence of the poor dreamer.

"When first I came
Within his view, I fancied there was shame,
I judg'd Resentment; I mistook the air—
These fainter passions live not with Despair;
Or but exist and die:—Hope, Fear and Love,
Joy, Doubt, and Hate, may other spirits move,
But touch not his, who every waking hour
Has one fix'd dread, and always feels its power.
He takes his tasteless food; and, when 'tis done,
Counts up his meals, now lessen'd by that one;
For Expectation is on Time intent,
Whether he brings us Joy or Punishment.
"Yes! e'en in sleep th' impressions all remain;
He hears the sentence, and he feels the chain;
He seems the place for that sad act to see,
And dreams the very thirst which then will be!
A priest attends—it seems the one he knew
In his best days, beneath whose care he grew.
"At this his terrors take a sudden flight—
He sees his native village with delight;
The house, the chamber, where he once array'd
His youthful person: where he knelt and pray'd:
Then too the comforts he enjoy'd at home,
The days of joy; the joys themselves are come;—
The hours of innocence;—the timid look
Of his lov'd maid, when first her hand he took
And told his hope; her trembling joy appears,
Her forc'd reserve, and his retreating fears.
"Yes! all are with him now, and all the while
Life's early prospects and his *Fanny* smile:
Then come his sister and his village friend,
And he will now the sweetest moments spend
Life has to yield:—No! never will he find
Again on earth such pleasure in his mind. [among,
He goes through shrubby walks these friends
Love in their looks and pleasure on the tongue.
Pierc'd by no crime, and urg'd by no desire
For more than true and honest hearts require,
They feel the calm delight, and thus proceed
Through the green lane,—then linger in the mead,—
Stray o'er the heath in all its purple bloom,
And pluck the blossom where the wild-bees hum;
Then through the broomy bound with ease they pass,
And press the sandy sheep-walk's slender grass,
Where dwarfish flowers among the gorse are spread,
And the lamb brouzes by the linnet's bed! [way
Then 'cross the bounding brook they make their
O'er its rough bridge—and there behold the bay!—
The ocean smiling to the fervid sun—
The waves that faintly fall and slowly run—
The ships at distance, and the boats at hand:
And now they walk upon the sea-side sand,
Counting the number, and what kind they be,
Ships softly sinking in the sleepy sea:
Now arm in arm, now parted, they behold
The glitt'ring waters on the shingles roll'd:
The timid girls, half dreading their design,
Dip the small foot in the retarded brine,
And search for crimson weeds, which spreading
Or lie like pictures on the sand below; [flow,
With all those bright red pebbles, that the sun
Through the small waves so softly shines upon;
And those live lucid jellies which the eye
Delights to trace as they swim glitt'ring by:
Pearl-shells and rubied star-fish they admire,
And will arrange above the parlour fire—
Tokens of bliss!"—pp. 323—326.

If these extracts do not make the reader feel how deep and peculiar an interest may be excited by humble subjects, we should almost despair of bringing him over to our opinion, even by Mr. Crabbe's inimitable description and pathetic pleading for the parish poor. The subject is one of those, which to many will appear repulsive, and, to some fastidious natures perhaps, disgusting. Yet, if the most admirable painting of external objects—the most minute and thorough knowledge of human character—and that warm glow of active and rational benevolence which lends a guiding light to observation, and an enchanting colour to eloquence, can entitle a poet to praise, as they do entitle him to more substantial rewards, we are persuaded that the following passage will not be speedily forgotten.

"Your plan I love not:—with a number you
Have plac'd your poor, your pitiable few;
There, in one house, for all their lives to be,
The pauper-palace, which they hate to see!
That giant building, that high bounding wall,
Those bare-worn walks, that lofty thund'ring hall!
That large loud clock, which tolls each dreaded hour,
Those gates and locks, and all those signs of power:
It is a prison, with a milder name,
Which few inhabit without dread or shame."—
"Alas! their sorrows in their bosoms dwell,
They've much to suffer, but have nought to tell
They have no evil in the place to state,
And care not say, it is the house they hate:
They own there's granted all such place can give,
But live repining,—for 'tis there they live! [see,
"Grandsires are there, who now no more must
No more must nurse upon the trembling knee,
The lost lov'd daughter's infant progeny!
Like death's dread mansion, this allows not place
For joyful meetings of a kindred race.
"Is not the matron there, to whom the son
Was wont at each declining day to run;
He (when his toil was over) gave delight,
By lifting up the latch, and one 'Good night?'
Yes, she is here; but nightly to her door
The son, still lab'ring, can return no more.
"Widows are here, who in their huts were left,
Of husbands, children, plenty, ease, bereft;
Yet all that grief within the humble shed
Was soften'd, soften'd in the humbled bed:
But here, in all its force, remains the grief,
And not one soft'ning object for relief.
"Who can, when here, the social neighbour
Who learn the story current in the street? [meet?
Who to the long-known intimate impart
Facts they have learn'd, or feelings of the heart?—
They talk, indeed; but who can choose a friend,
Or seek companions, at their journey's end?"—
"What, if no grievous fears their lives annoy,
Is it not worse, no prospects to enjoy?
'Tis cheerless living in such bounded view,
With nothing dreadful, but with nothing new;
Nothing to bring them joy, to make them weep—
The day itself is, like the night, asleep;
Or on the sameness, if a break be made,
'Tis by some pauper to his grave convey'd;
By smuggled news from neighb'ring village told,
News never true, or truth a twelvemonth old!
By some new inmate doom'd with them to dwell,
Or justice come to see that all goes well;
Or change of room, or hour of leave to crawl
On the black footway winding with the wall,
'Till the stern bell forbids, or master's sterner call.
"Here the good pauper, loosing all the praise
By worthy deeds acquir'd in better days,
Breathes a few months; then, to his chamber led,
Expires—while strangers prattle round his bed."—
pp. 241—244.

These we take to be specimens of Mr. Crabbe's best style;—but he has great variety;—and some readers may be better pleased with his satirical vein—which is both copious and original. The Vicar is an admirable sketch of what must be very difficult to draw;—a good, easy man, with no character at all. His little, humble vanity;—his constant care to offend no one;—his mawkish and feeble gallantry—indolent good nature, and love of gossipping and trifling—are all very exactly, and very pleasingly delineated.

To the character of Blaney, we have already objected, as offensive, from its extreme and impotent depravity. The first part of his history, however, is sketched with a masterly hand; and affords a good specimen of that sententious and antithetical manner by which Mr. Crabbe sometimes reminds us of the style and versification of Pope.

"*Blaney*, a wealthy heir at twenty-one,
At twenty-five was ruin'd and undone:
These years with grievous crimes we need not load,
He found his ruin in the common road;
Gam'd without skill, without inquiry bought,
Lent without love, and borrow'd without thought.
But, gay and handsome, he had soon the dower
Of a kind wealthy widow in his power;
Then he aspir'd to loftier flights of vice!
To singing harlots of enormous price:
And took a jockey in his gig to buy
An horse, so valued, that a duke was shy:
To gain the plaudits of the knowing few,
Gamblers and grooms, what would not *Blaney* do?"—
"Cruel he was not.—If he left his wife,
He left her to her own pursuits in life;
Deaf to reports, to all expenses blind,
Profuse, not just—and careless but not kind."
pp. 193, 194.

Clelia is another worthless character, drawn with infinite spirit, and a thorough knowledge of human nature. She began life as a sprightly, talking, flirting girl, who passed for a wit and a beauty in the half-bred circles of the borough; and who, in laying herself out to entrap a youth of better condition, unfortunately fell a victim to his superior art, and forfeited her place in society. She then became the smart mistress of a dashing attorney—then tried to teach a school—lived as the favourite of an innkeeper—let lodgings—wrote novels—set up a toyshop—and, finally, was admitted into the almshouse. There is nothing very interesting perhaps in such a story; but the details of it show the wonderful accuracy of the author's observation of character; and give it, and many of his other pieces, a value of the same kind that some pictures are thought to derive from the truth and minuteness of the *anatomy* which they display. There is something original, too, and well conceived, in the tenacity with which he represents this frivolous person, as adhering to her paltry characteristics, under every change of circumstances. The concluding view is as follows.

"Now friendless, sick, and old, and wanting bread,
The first-born tears of fallen pride were shed—
True, bitter tears; and yet that wounded pride,
Among the poor, for poor distinctions sigh'd!
Though now her tales were to her audience fit;
Though loud her tones, and vulgar grown her wit;
Though now her dress—(but let me not explain
The piteous patchwork of the needy vain,
The flirtish form to coarse materials lent,
And one poor robe through fifty fashions sent);
Though all within was sad, without was mean—
Still 'twas her wish, her comfort to be seen:
She would to plays on lowest terms resort,
Where once her box was to the beaux a court;
And, strange delight! to that same house, where
Join'd in the dance, all gaiety and glee, [she
Now with the menials crowding to the wall,
She'd see, not share, the pleasures of the ball,
And with degraded vanity unfold,
How she too triumph'd in the years of old."
pp. 209, 210.

The graphic powers of Mr. Crabbe, indeed, are too frequently wasted on unworthy subjects. There is not, perhaps, in all English poetry a more complete and highly finished piece of painting, than the following description of a vast old boarded room or warehouse, which was let out, it seems, in the borough, as a kind of undivided lodging, for beggars and vagabonds of every description. No Dutch painter ever presented an interior more distinctly to the eye; or ever gave half such a group to the imagination.

"That window view!—oil'd paper and old glass
Stain the strong rays, which, though impeded, pass,
And give a dusty warmth to that huge room,
The conquer'd sunshine's melancholy gloom;

When all those western rays, without so bright,
Within become a ghastly glimm'ring light,
As pale and faint upon the floor they fall,
Or feebly gleam on the opposing wall:
That floor, once oak, now piec'd with fir unplan'd,
Or, where not piec'd, in places bor'd and stain'd;
That wall once whiten'd, now an odious sight,
Stain'd with all hues, except its ancient white.
"Where'er the floor allows an even space,
Chalking and marks of various games have place;
Boys, without foresight, pleas'd in halters swing!
On a fix'd hook men cast a flying ring;
While gin and snuff their female neighbours share,
And the black beverage in the fractur'd ware.
"On swinging shelf are things incongruous stor'd;
Scraps of their food—the cards and cribbage board—
With pipes and pouches; while on peg below,
Hang a lost member's fiddle and its bow:
That still reminds them how he'd dance and play,
Ere sent untimely to the Convict's Bay!
"Here by a curtain, by a blanket there,
Are various beds conceal'd, but none with care;
Where some by day and some by night, as best
Suit their employments, seek uncertain rest;
The drowsy children at their pleasure creep
To the known crib, and there securely sleep.
"Each end contains a grate, and these beside
Are hung utensils for their boil'd and fry'd—
All us'd at any hour, by night, by day,
As suit the purse, the person, or the prey.
"Above the fire, the mantel-shelf contains
Of china-ware some poor unmatch'd remains;
There many a tea-cup's gaudy fragment stands,
All plac'd by Vanity's unwearied hands;
For here she lives, e'en here she looks about,
To find small some consoling objects out.
"High hung at either end, and next the wall,
Two ancient mirrors show the forms of all."
pp. 249—251.

The following picture of a calm sea fog is by the same powerful hand:—

"When all you see through densest fog is seen;
When you can hear the fishers near at hand
Distinctly speak, yet see not where they stand;
Or sometimes them and not their boat discern,
Or half-conceal'd some figure at the stern;
Boys who, on shore, to sea the pebble cast,
Will hear it strike against the viewless mast;
While the stern boatman growls his fierce disdain,
At whom he knows not, whom he threats in vain.
"'Tis pleasant then to view the nets float past,
Net after net till you have seen the last;
And as you wait till all beyond you slip,
A boat comes gliding from an anchor'd ship,
Breaking the silence with the dipping oar,
And their own tones, as labouring for the shore;
Those measur'd tones with which the scene agree,
And give a sadness to serenity.—pp. 123, 124.

We add one other sketch of a similar character, which though it be introduced as the haunt and accompaniment of a desponding spirit, is yet chiefly remarkable for the singular clearness and accuracy with which it represents the dull scenery of a common tide river. The author is speaking of a solitary and abandoned fisherman, who was compelled—

"At the same times the same dull views to see,
The bounding marsh-bank and the blighted tree;
The water only, when the tides were high,
When low, the mud half-covered and half-dry;
The sun-burn'd tar that blisters on the planks,
And bank-side stakes in their uneven ranks:
Heaps of entangled weeds that slowly float,
As the tide rolls by the impeded boat.
"When tides were neap, and, in the sultry day,
Through the tall bounding mud-banks made their way,
Which on each side rose swelling, and below
The dark warm flood ran silently and slow;
There anchoring, *Peter* chose from man to hide,
There hang his head, and view the lazy tide
In its hot slimy channel slowly glide;
Where the small eels that left the deeper way
For the warm shore, within the shallows play,
Where gaping muscles, left upon the mud,
Slope their slow passage to the fallen flood;—
Here dull and hopeless he'd lie down and trace
How sidelong crabs had scrawl'd their crooked race;
Or sadly listen to the tuneless cry
Of fishing *Gull* or clanging *Golden Eye*."
pp. 305, 306.

Under the head of Amusements, we have a spirited account of the danger and escape of a party of pleasure, who landed, in a fine evening, on a low sandy island, which was covered with the tide at high water, and were left upon it by the drifting away of their boat.

"On the bright sand they trode with nimble feet,
Dry shelly sand that made the summer seat;
The wond'ring mews flew flutt'ring o'er their head,
And waves ran softly up their shining bed."—p. 127.

While engaged in their sports, they discover their boat floating at a distance, and are struck with instant terror.

"Alas! no shout the distant land can reach,
Nor eye behold them from the foggy beach;
Again they join in one loud powerful cry,
Then cease, and eager listen for reply.
None came—the rising wind blew sadly by.
They shout once more, and then they turn aside,
To see how quickly flow'd the coming tide:
Between each cry they find the waters steal
On their strange prison, and new horrors feel;
Foot after foot on the contracted ground
The billows fall, and dreadful is the sound!
Less and yet less the sinking isle became,
And there was wailing, weeping, wrath, and blame.
Had one been there, with spirit strong and high,
Who could observe, as he prepar'd to die,
He might have seen of hearts the varying kind,
And trac'd the movement of each different mind:
He might have seen, that not the gentle maid
Was more than stern and haughty man afraid," &c.
"Now rose the water through the less'ning sand,
And they seem'd sinking while they yet could stand!
The sun went down, they look'd from side to side,
Nor aught except the gath'ring sea descry'd;
Dark and more dark, more wet, more cold it grew,
And the most lively bade to hope adieu;
Children, by love, then lifted from the seas,
Felt not the waters at the parent's knees,
But wept aloud; the wind increas'd the sound,
And the cold billows as they broke around.
——But hark! an oar,
That sound of bliss! comes dashing to their shore:
Still, still the water rises, 'Haste!' they cry,
'Oh! hurry, seamen, in delay we die!'
(Seamen were these who in their ship perceiv'd
The drifted boat, and thus her crew reliev'd.)
And now the keel just cuts the cover'd sand,
Now to the gunwale stretches every hand;
With trembling pleasure all confus'd embark,
And kiss the tackling of their welcome ark;
While the most giddy, as they reach the shore,
Think of their danger, and their God adore."
pp. 127—130.

In the letter on Education, there are some fine descriptions of boarding-schools for both sexes, and of the irksome and useless restraints which they impose on the bounding spirits and open affections of early youth. This is followed by some excellent remarks on the *ennui* which so often falls to the lot of the learned—or that description at least of the

learned that are bred in English universities. But we have no longer left room for any considerable extracts; though we should have wished to lay before our readers some part of the picture of the secretaries—the description of the inns—the strolling players—and the clubs. The poor man's club, which partakes of the nature of a friendly society, is described with that good-hearted indulgence which marks all Mr. Crabbe's writings.

"The printed rules he guards in painted frame,
And shows his children where to read his name."

We have now alluded, we believe, to what is best and most striking in this poem; and, though we do not mean to quote any part of what we consider as less successful, we must say, that there are large portions of it which appear to us considerably inferior to most of the author's former productions. The letter on the *Election*, we look on as a complete failure—or at least as containing scarcely any thing of what it ought to have contained.—The letters on Law and Physic, too, are tedious; and the general heads of Trades, Amusements, and Hospital Government, by no means amusing. The Parish Clerk, too, we find dull, and without effect; and have already given our opinion of Peter Grimes, Abel Keene, and Benbow. We are struck, also, with several omissions in the picture of a maritime borough. Mr. Crabbe might have made a great deal of a press-gang; and, at all events, should have given us some wounded veteran sailors, and some voyagers with tales of wonder from foreign lands.

The style of this poem is distinguished, like all Mr. Crabbe's other performances, by great force and compression of diction—a sort of sententious brevity, once thought essential to poetical composition, but of which he is now the only living example. But though this is almost an unvarying characteristic of his style, it appears to us that there is great variety, and even some degree of unsteadiness and inconsistency in the tone of his expression and versification. His taste seems scarcely to be sufficiently fixed and settled as to these essential particulars; and, along with a certain quaint, broken, and harsh manner of his own, we think we can trace very frequent imitations of poets of the most opposite character. The following antithetical and half-punning lines of Pope, for instance:—

"Sleepless himself, to give his readers sleep;"

and—

"Whose trifling pleases, and whom trifles please;—

have evidently been copied by Mr. Crabbe in the following, and many others:—

"And in the restless ocean, seek for rest."
"Denying her who taught thee to deny."
"Scraping they liv'd, but not a scrap they gave."
"Bound for a friend, whom honour could not bind."
"Among the poor, for poor distinctions sigh'd."

In the same way, the common, nicely balanced line of two members, which is so characteristic of the same author, has obviously been the model of our author in the following:—

"That woe could wish, or vanity devise."
"Sick without pity, sorrowing without hope."
"Gloom to the night, and pressure to the chain"—

and a great multitude of others.

On the other hand, he appears to us to be frequently misled by Darwin into a sort of mock-heroic magnificence, upon ordinary occasions. The poet of the Garden, for instance, makes his nymphs

"Present the fragrant quintessence of tea."

And the poet of the Dock-yards makes his carpenters

"Spread the warm pungence of o'erboiling tar."

Mr. Crabbe, indeed, does not scruple, on some occasions, to adopt the mock-heroic in good earnest. When the landlord of the Griffin becomes bankrupt, he says—

"The insolvent Griffin struck her wings sublime,"

and introduces a very serious lamentation over the learned poverty of the curate, with this most misplaced piece of buffoonery:—

"Oh! had he learn'd to make the wig he wears!"

One of his letters, too, begins with this wretched quibble—

"From Law to Physic stepping at our ease,
We find a way to finish—by *Degrees*."

There are many imitations of the peculiar rhythm of Goldsmith and Campbell, too, as our readers must have observed in some of our longer specimens;—but these, though they do not always make a very harmonious combination, are better, at all events, than the tame heaviness and vulgarity of such verses as the following:—

——"As soon
Could he have thought gold issued from the moon."
"A seaman's body—*there'll be more* to-night."
"Those who will not to any guide submit,
Nor find one creed to their conceptions fit—
True *Independents:* while they *Calvin* hate,
They heed as little what *Socinians* state."—p. 54.
"Here pits of crag, with spongy, plashy base,
To some enrich th' uncultivated space," &c. &c.

Of the sudden, harsh turns, and broken conciseness which we think peculiar to himself, the reader may take the following specimens:—

"Has your wife's brother, or your uncle's son,
Done aught amiss; or is he thought t' have done?"
"Stepping from post to post he reach'd the chair;
And there he now reposes:—that's the Mayor!"

He has a sort of jingle, too, which we think is of his own invention;—for instance,

"For forms and feasts that sundry times have past,
And formal feasts that will for ever last."
"We term it free and easy; and yet we
Find it no easy matter to be free."

We had more remarks to make upon the taste and diction of this author; and had noted several other little blemishes, which we meant

to have pointed out for his correction: but we have no longer room for such minute criticism—from which, indeed, neither the author nor the reader would be likely to derive any great benefit. We take our leave of Mr. Crabbe, therefore, by expressing our hopes that, since it is proved that he *can* write fast, he will not allow his powers to languish for want of exercise; and that we shall soon see him again repaying the public approbation, by entitling himself to a still larger share of it. An author generally knows his own forte so much better than any of his readers, that it is commonly a very foolish kind of presumption to offer any advice as to the direction of his efforts; but we own we have a very strong desire to see Mr. Crabbe apply his great powers to the construction of some interesting and connected story. He has great talents for narration; and that unrivalled gift in the delineation of character, which is now used only for the creation of detached portraits, might be turned to admirable account in maintaining the interest and enhancing the probability, of an extended train of adventures. At present, it is impossible not to regret, that so much genius should be wasted in making us perfectly acquainted with individuals, of whom we are to know nothing but the characters. In such a poem, however, Mr. Crabbe must entirely lay aside the sarcastic and jocose style to which he has rather too great a propensity; but which we know, from what he has done in Sir Eustace Grey, that he can, when he pleases, entirely relinquish. That very powerful and original performance, indeed, the chief fault of which is, to be set too thick with images—to be too strong and undiluted, in short, for the digestion of common readers—makes us regret, that its author should ever have stopped to be trifling and ingenious—or condescended to tickle the imaginations of his readers, instead of touching the higher passions of their nature.

(November, 1812.)

Tales. By the Reverend George Crabbe. 8vo. pp. 398. London: 1812.

We are very thankful to Mr. Crabbe for these Tales; as we must always be for any thing that comes from his hands. But they are not exactly the tales which we wanted. We did not, however, wish him to write an Epic—as he seems from his preface to have imagined. We are perfectly satisfied with the length of the pieces he has given us; and delighted with their number and variety. In these respects the volume is exactly as we could have wished it. But we should have liked a little more of the deep and tragical passions; of those passions which exalt and overwhelm the soul—to whose stormy seat the modern muses can so rarely raise their flight—and which he has wielded with such terrific force in his Sir Eustace Grey, and the Gipsy Woman. What we wanted, in short, were tales something in the style of those two singular compositions—with less jocularity than prevails in the rest of his writings—rather more incidents—and rather fewer details.

The pieces before us are not of this description;—they are mere supplementary chapters to "The Borough," or "The Parish Register." The same tone—the same subjects—the same style, measure, and versification;—the same finished and minute delineation of things ordinary and common—generally very engaging when employed upon external objects, but often fatiguing when directed merely to insignificant characters and habits;—the same strange mixture too of feelings that tear the heart and darken the imagination, with starts of low humour and patches of ludicrous imagery;—the same kindly sympathy with the humble and innocent pleasures of the poor and inelegant, and the same indulgence for their venial offences, contrasted with a strong sense of their frequent depravity, and too constant a recollection of the sufferings it produces;—and, finally, the same honours paid to the delicate affections and ennobling passions of humble life, with the same generous testimony to their frequent existence; mixed up as before, with a reprobation sufficiently rigid, and a ridicule sufficiently severe, of their excesses and affectations.

If we were required to make a comparative estimate of the merits of the present publication, or to point out the shades of difference by which it is distinguished from those that have gone before it, we should say that there are a greater number of instances on which he has combined the natural language and manners of humble life with the energy of true passion, and the beauty of generous affection;—in which he has traced out the course of those rich and lovely veins in the rude and unpolished masses that lie at the bottom of society;—and unfolded, in the middling orders of the people, the workings of those finer feelings, and the stirrings of those loftier emotions which the partiality of other poets had attributed, almost exclusively, to actors on a higher scene.

We hope, too, that this more amiable and consoling view of human nature will have the effect of rendering Mr. Crabbe still more popular than we know that he already is, among that great body of the people, from among whom almost all his subjects are taken, and for whose use his lessons are chiefly intended: and we say this, not only on account of the moral benefit which we think they may derive from them, but because we are persuaded that they will derive more pleasure

from them than readers of any other description. Those who do not belong to that rank of society with which this powerful writer is chiefly conversant in his poetry, or who have not at least gone much among them, and attended diligently to their characters and occupations, can neither be half aware of the exquisite fidelity of his delineations, nor feel in their full force the better part of the emotions which he has suggested. Vehement passion indeed is of all ranks and conditions; and its language and external indications nearly the same in all. Like highly rectified spirit, it blazes and inflames with equal force and brightness, from whatever materials it is extracted. But all the softer and kindlier affections, all the social anxieties that mix with our daily hopes, and endear our homes, and colour our existence, wear a different livery, and are written in a different character in almost every great *caste* or division of society; and the heart is warmed, and the spirit touched by their delineation, exactly in the proportion in which we are familiar with the types by which they are represented.—When Burns, in his better days, walked out in a fine summer morning with Dugald Stewart, and the latter observed to him what a beauty the scattered cottages, with their white walls and curling smoke shining in the silent sun, imparted to the landscape, the present poet answered, that *he* felt that beauty ten times more strongly than his companion could do; and that it was necessary to be a cottager to know what pure and tranquil pleasures often nestled below those lowly roofs, or to read, in their external appearance, the signs of so many heartfelt and long-remembered enjoyments. In the same way, the humble and patient hopes—the depressing embarrassments—the little mortifications—the slender triumphs, and strange temptations which arise in middling life, and are the theme of Mr. Crabbe's finest and most touching representations—can only be guessed at by those who glitter in the higher walks of existence; while they must raise many a tumultuous throb and many a fond recollection in the breasts of those to whom they reflect so truly the image of their own estate, and reveal so clearly the secrets of their habitual sensations.

We cannot help thinking, therefore, that though such writings as are now before us must give great pleasure to all persons of taste and sensibility, they will give by far the greatest pleasure to those whose condition is least remote from that of the beings with whom they are occupied. But we think also, that it was wise and meritorious in Mr. Crabbe to occupy himself with such beings. In this country, there probably are not less than three hundred thousand persons who read for amusement or instruction, among the middling classes* of society. In the higher classes, there are not as many as thirty thousand. It is easy to see therefore which a poet should choose to please, for his own glory and emolument, and which he should wish to delight and amend, out of mere philanthropy. The fact too we believe is, that a great part of the larger body are to the full as well educated and as high-minded as the smaller; and, though their taste may not be so correct and fastidious, we are persuaded that their sensibility is greater. The misfortune is, to be sure, that they are extremely apt to affect the taste of their superiors, and to counterfeit even that absurd disdain of which they are themselves the objects; and that poets have generally thought it safest to invest their interesting characters with all the trappings of splendid fortune and high station, chiefly because those who know least about such matters think it unworthy to sympathise in the adventures of those who are without them! For our own parts, however, we are quite positive, not only that persons in middling life would naturally be most touched with the emotions that belong to their own condition, but that those emotions are in themselves the most powerful, and consequently the best fitted for poetical or pathetic representation. Even with regard to the heroic and ambitious passions, as the vista is longer which leads from humble privacy to the natural objects of such passions; so, the career is likely to be more impetuous, and its outset more marked by striking and contrasted emotions:—and as to all the more tender and less turbulent affections, upon which the beauty of the pathetic is altogether dependant, we apprehend it to be quite manifest, that their proper soil and *nidus* is the privacy and simplicity of humble life;—that their very elements are dissipated by the variety of objects that move for ever in the world of fashion; and their essence tainted by the cares and vanities that are diffused in the atmosphere of that lofty region. But we are wandering into a long dissertation, instead of making our readers acquainted with the book before us. The most satisfactory thing we can do, we believe, is to give them a plain account of its contents, with such quotations and remarks as may occur to us as we proceed.

The volume contains twenty-one tales;—the first of which is called "The Dumb Orators." This is not one of the most engaging; and is not judiciously placed at the portal, to tempt hesitating readers to go forward. The second, however, entitled "The Parting Hour," is of a far higher character, and contains some passages of great beauty and pathos. The story is simply that of a youth and a maiden in humble life, who had loved each other from their childhood, but were too poor to marry. The youth goes to the West Indies to push his fortune; but is captured by the Spaniards and carried to Mexico, where, in the course of time, though still sighing for his first love, he marries a Spanish girl, and lives twenty years with her and his children—he is then impressed, and car-

* By the middling classes, we mean almost all those who are below the sphere of what is called fashionable or public life, and who do not aim at distinction or notoriety beyond the circle of their equals in fortune and situation.

ried round the world for twenty years longer; and is at last moved by an irresistible impulse, when old and shattered and lonely, to seek his native town, and the scene of his youthful vows. He comes and finds his Judith like himself in a state of widowhood, but still brooding, like himself, over the memory of their early love. She had waited twelve anxious years without tidings of him, and then married: and now when all passion, and fuel for passion, is extinguished within them, the memory of their young attachment endears them to each other, and they still cling together in sad and subdued affection, to the exclusion of all the rest of the world. The history of the growth and maturity of their innocent love is beautifully given: but we pass on to the scene of their parting.

"All things prepar'd, on the expected day
Was seen the vessel anchor'd in the bay.
From her would seamen in the evening come,
To take th' advent'rous *Allen* from his home;
With his own friends the final day he pass'd,
And every painful hour, except the last.
The grieving Father urg'd the cheerful glass,
To make the moments with less sorrow pass;
Intent the Mother look'd upon her son,
And wish'd th' assent withdrawn, the deed undone;
The younger Sister, as he took his way,
Hung on his coat, and begg'd for more delay;
But his own *Judith* call'd him to the shore,
Whom he must meet—for they might meet no more!—
And there he found her—faithful, mournful, true,
Weeping and waiting for a last adieu!
The ebbing tide had left the sand, and there
Mov'd with slow steps the melancholy pair:
Sweet were the painful moments—but how sweet,
And without pain, when they again should meet!"
p. 29.

The sad and long-delayed return of this ardent adventurer is described in a tone of genuine pathos, and in some places with such truth and force of colouring, as to outdo the efforts of the first dramatic representation.

"But when return'd the Youth?—the *Youth* no more
Return'd exulting to his native shore! [more
But forty years were past; and then there came
A worn-out man, with wither'd limbs and lame!
Yes! old and griev'd, and trembling with decay,
Was *Allen* landing in his native bay:
In an autumnal eve he left the beach,
In such an eve he chanc'd the port to reach:
He was alone; he press'd the very place
Of the sad parting, of the last embrace:
There stood his parents, there retir'd the Maid,
So fond, so tender, and so much afraid;
And on that spot, through many a year, his mind
Turn'd mournful back, half sinking, half resign'd.
"No one was present; of its crew bereft,
A single boat was in the billows left;
Sent from some anchor'd vessel in the bay,
At the returning tide to sail away:
O'er the black stern the moonlight softly play'd,
The loosen'd foresail flapping in the shade
All silent else on shore; but from the town
A drowsy peal of distant bells came down:
From the tall houses, here and there, a light
Serv'd some confus'd remembrance to excite:
'There,' he observ'd, and new emotions felt,
'Was my first home—and yonder *Judith* dwelt,' &c.
A swarthy matron he beheld, and thought
She might unfold the very truths he sought;
Confus'd and trembling, he the dame address'd:
'The *Booths!* yet live they?' pausing and oppress'd:
Then spake again:—'Is there no ancient man,
David his name?—assist me, if you can.—
Flemings there were!—and *Judith!* doth she live?
The woman gaz'd, nor could an answer give;
Yet wond'ring stood, and all were silent by,
Feeling a strange and solemn sympathy."
pp 31, 32.

The meeting of the lovers is briefly told.

"But now a Widow, in a village near,
Chanc'd of the melancholy man to hear:
Old as she was, to *Judith's* bosom came
Some strong emotions at the well-known name;
He was her much-lov'd *Allen!* she had stay'd
Ten troubled years, a sad afflicted maid," &c.
"The once-fond Lovers met: Nor grief nor age,
Sickness or pain, their hearts could disengage:
Each had immediate confidence; a friend
Both now beheld, on whom they might depend:
'Now is there one to whom I can express
My nature's weakness, and my soul's distress.'"

There is something sweet and touching, and in a higher vein of poetry, in the story which he tells to Judith of all his adventures, and of those other ties, of which it still wrings her bosom to hear him speak.—We can afford but one little extract.

"There, hopeless ever to escape the land,
He to a Spanish maiden gave his hand;
In cottage shelter'd from the blaze of day,
He saw his happy infants round him play;
Where summer shadows, made by lofty trees,
Wav'd o'er his seat, and sooth'd his reveries;
E'en then he thought of *England*, nor could sigh,
But his fond *Isabel* demanded 'Why?'
Griev'd by the story, she the sigh repaid,
And wept in pity for the English Maid."
pp. 35, 36.

The close is extremely beautiful, and leaves upon the mind just that impression of sadness which is both salutary and delightful, because it is akin to pity, and mingled with admiration and esteem.

"Thus silent, musing through the day, he sees
His children sporting by those lofty trees,
Their mother singing in the shady scene,
Where the fresh springs burst o'er the lively green;
So strong his eager fancy, he affrights
The faithful widow by its pow'rful flights;
For what disturbs him he aloud will tell,
And cry—''Tis she, my wife! my *Isabel!*'—
'Where are my children?'—*Judith* grieves to hear
How the soul works in sorrows so severe;—
Watch'd by her care, in sleep, his spirit takes
Its flight, and watchful finds her when he wakes.
"'Tis now her office; her attention see!
While her friend sleeps beneath that shading tree,
Careful, she guards him from the glowing heat,
And pensive muses at her *Allen's* feet. [scenes
"And where is he? Ah! doubtless in those
Of his best days, amid the vivid greens,
Fresh with unnumber'd rills, where ev'ry gale
Breathes the rich fragrance of the neighb'ring vale;
Smiles not his wife?—and listens as there comes
The night-bird's music from the thick'ning glooms?
And as he sits with all these treasures nigh,
Gleams not with fairy-light the phosphor fly,
When like a sparkling gem it wheels illumin'd by?
This is the joy that now so plainly speaks
In the warm transient flushing of his cheeks;
For he is list'ning to the fancied noise
Of his own children, eager in their joys!—
All this he feels; a dream's delusive bliss
Gives the expression, and the glow like this.
And now his *Judith* lays her knitting by,
These strong emotions in her friend to spy;
For she can fully of their nature deem ——
But see! he breaks the long protracted theme,
And wakes and cries—'My God! 'twas but a dream!'"—pp. 39, 40.

The third tale is "The Gentleman Farmer," and is of a coarser texture than that we have just been considering—though full of acute observation, and graphic delineation of ordinary characters. The hero is not a farmer turned gentleman, but a gentleman turned farmer—a conceited, active, talking, domineering sort of person—who plants and eats and drinks with great vigour—keeps a mistress, and speaks with audacious scorn of the tyranny of wives, and the impositions of priests, lawyers, and physicians. Being but a shallow fellow however at bottom, his confidence in his opinions declines gradually as his health decays; and, being seized with some maladies in his stomach, he ends with marrying his mistress, and submitting to be triply governed by three of her confederates; in the respective characters of a quack doctor, a methodist preacher, and a projecting land steward. We cannot afford any extracts from this performance.

The next, which is called "Procrastination," has something of the character of the "Parting Hour;" but more painful, and less refined. It is founded like it on the story of a betrothed youth and maiden, whose marriage is prevented by their poverty; and this youth, too, goes to pursue his fortune at sea; while the damsel awaits his return, with an old female relation at home. He is crossed with many disasters, and is not heard of for many years. In the mean time, the virgin gradually imbibes her aunt's paltry love for wealth and finery; and when she comes, after long sordid expectation, to inherit her hoards, feels that those new tastes have supplanted every warmer emotion in her bosom; and, secretly hoping never more to see her youthful lover, gives herself up to comfortable gossiping and formal ostentatious devotion. At last, when she is set in her fine parlour, with her china and toys, and prayer-books around her, the impatient man bursts into her presence, and reclaims her vows! She answers coldly, that she has now done with the world, and only studies how to prepare to die! and exhorts him to betake himself to the same needful meditations. We shall give the conclusion of the scene in the author's own words. The faithful and indignant lover replies:—

"Heav'n's spouse thou art not: nor can I believe
That God accepts her, who will Man deceive:
True I am shatter'd, I have service seen,
And service done, and have in trouble been;
My cheek (it shames me not) has lost its red,
And the brown buff is o'er my features spread;
Perchance my speech is rude; for I among
Th' untam'd have been, in temper and in tongue;
But speak my fate! For these my sorrows past,
Time lost, youth fled, hope wearied, and at last
This doubt of thee—a childish thing to tell,
But certain truth—my very throat they swell;
They stop the breath, and but for shame could I
Give way to weakness, and with passion cry;
These are unmanly struggles, but I feel
This hour must end them, and perhaps will heal."—
"Here *Dinah* sigh'd as if afraid to speak—
And then repeated—'They were frail and weak;
His soul she lov'd; and hop'd he had the grace
To fix his thoughts upon a better place.'"
pp. 72, 73.

Nothing can be more forcible or true to nature, than the description of the effect of this cold-blooded cant on the warm and unsuspecting nature of her disappointed suitor.

"She ceased:—With steady glance, as if to see
The very root of this hypocrisy,—
He her small fingers moulded in his hard
And bronz'd broad hand; then told her his regard,
His best respect were gone, but Love had still
Hold in his heart, and govern'd yet the will—
Or he would curse her!—Saying this, he threw
The hand in scorn away, and bade adieu
To every ling'ring hope, with every care in view.
"In health declining as in mind distress'd,
To some in power his troubles he confess'd,
And shares a parish-gift. At prayers he sees
The pious *Dinah* dropp'd upon her knees;
Thence as she walks the street with stately air,
As chance directs, oft meet the parted pair!
When he, with thickset coat of Badge-man's blue,
Moves near her shaded silk of changeful hue;
When his thin locks of grey approach her braid
(A costly purchase made in beauty's aid);
When his frank air, and his unstudied pace,
Are seen with her soft manner, air, and grace,
And his plain artless look with her sharp meaning
It might some wonder in a stranger move, [face;
How these together could have talk'd of love!"
pp. 73, 74.

"The Patron," which is next in order, is also very good; and contains specimens of very various excellence. The story is that of a young man of humble birth, who shows an early genius for poetry; and having been, with some inconvenience to his parents, provided with a frugal, but regular education, is at last taken notice of by a nobleman in the neighbourhood, who promises to promote him in the church, and invites him to pass an autumn with him at his seat in the country. Here the youth, in spite of the admirable admonitions of his father, is gradually overcome by a taste for elegant enjoyments, and allows himself to fall in love with the enchanting sister of his protector. When the family leave him with indifference to return to town, he feels the first pang of humiliation and disappointment; and afterwards, when he finds that all his noble friend's fine promises end in obtaining for him a poor drudging place in the Customs, he pines and pines till he falls into insanity; and recovers, only to die prematurely in the arms of his disappointed parents. We cannot make room for the history of the Poet's progress—the father's warnings—or the blandishments of the careless syren by whom he was enchanted—though all are excellent. We give however the scene of the breaking up of that enchantment;—a description which cannot fail to strike, if it had no other merit, from its mere truth and accuracy.

"Cold grew the foggy morn; the day was brief;
Loose on the cherry hung the crimson leaf;
The dew dwelt ever on the herb; the woods
Roar'd with strong blasts, with mighty showers the floods;
All green was vanish'd, save of pine and yew,
That still display'd their melancholy hue;

Save the green holly with its berries red,
And the green moss that o'er the gravel spread.
"To public views my Lord must soon attend;
And soon the Ladies—would they leave their friend?
The time was fix'd—approach'd—was near—was come!
The trying time that fill'd his soul with gloom;
Thoughtful our Poet in the morning rose,
And cried, "One hour my fortune will disclose.'
"The morning meal was past; and all around
The mansion rang with each discordant sound;
Haste was in every foot, and every look
The trav'llers' joy for London-journey spoke:
Not so our Youth; whose feelings at the noise
Of preparation had no touch of joys;
He pensive stood, and saw each carriage drawn,
With lackies mounted, ready on the lawn:
The Ladies came; and *John* in terror threw
One painful glance, and then his eyes withdrew;
Not with such speed, but he in other eyes
With anguish read—'I pity, but despise—
Unhappy boy! presumptuous scribbler!—you,
To dream such dreams—be sober, and adieu!'"
pp. 93, 94.

"The Frank Courtship," which is the next in order, is rather in the merry vein; and contains even less than Mr. Crabbe's usual moderate allowance of incident. The whole of the story is, that the daughter of a rigid Quaker, having been educated from home, conceives a slight prejudice against the ungallant manners of the sect, and is prepared to be very contemptuous and uncomplying when her father proposes a sober youth of the persuasion for a husband;—but is so much struck with the beauty of his person, and the cheerful reasonableness of his deportment at their first interview, that she instantly yields her consent. There is an excellent description of the father and the unbending elders of his tribe; and some fine traits of natural coquetry.

"The Widow's Tale" is also rather of the facetious order. It contains the history of a farmer's daughter, who comes home from her boarding-school a great deal too fine to tolerate the gross habits, or submit to the filthy drudgery of her father's house; but is induced, by the warning history and sensible exhortations of a neighbouring widow, in whom she expected to find a sentimental companion, to reconcile herself to all those abominations, and marry a jolly young farmer in the neighbourhood. The account of her horrors, on first coming down, is in Mr. Crabbe's best style of Dutch painting—a little coarse, and needlessly minute—but perfectly true, and marvellously coloured.

"Us'd to spare meals, dispos'd in manner pure,
Her father's kitchen she could ill endure;
Where by the steaming beef he hungry sat,
And laid at once a pound upon his plate;
Hot from the field, her eager brothers seiz'd
An equal part, and hunger's rage appeas'd;—
When one huge wooden bowl before them stood,
Fill'd with huge balls of farinaceous food;
With bacon, mass saline, where never lean
Beneath the brown and bristly rind was seen;
When from a single horn the party drew
Their copious draughts of heavy ale and new;
She could not breathe; but, with a heavy sigh,
Rein'd the fair neck, and shut the offended eye;
She minc'd the sanguine flesh in frustums fine,
And wonder'd much to see the creatures dine."
pp. 128, 129.

"The Lover's Journey" is a pretty fancy, and very well executed—at least as to the descriptions it contains.—A lover takes a long ride to see his mistress; and passing, in full hope and joy, through a barren and fenny country, finds beauty in every thing. Being put out of humour, however, by missing the lady at the end of this stage, he proceeds through a lovely landscape, and finds every thing ugly and disagreeable. At last he meets his fair one—is reconciled—and returns along with her; when the landscape presents neither beauty nor deformity; and excites no emotion whatever in a mind engrossed with more lively sensations. There is nothing in this volume, or perhaps in any part of Mr. Crabbe's writings, more exquisite than some of the descriptions in this story. The following, though by no means the best, is too characteristic of the author to be omitted:—

"First o'er a barren heath beside the coast
Orlando rode, and joy began to boast. [bloom,
"'This neat low gorse,' said he, 'with golden
Delights each sense, is beauty, is perfume;
And this gay ling, with all its purple flowers,
A man at leisure might admire for hours;
This green-fring'd cup-moss has a scarlet tip,
That yields to nothing but my *Laura's* lip;
And then how fine this herbage! men may say
A heath is barren; nothing is so gay.'
"Onward he went, and fiercer grew the heat,
Dust rose in clouds beneath the horse's feet;
For now he pass'd through lanes of burning sand,
Bounds to thin crops or yet uncultur'd land;
Where the dark poppy flourish'd on the dry
And sterile soil, and mock'd the thin-set rye.
"The Lover rode as hasty lovers ride,
And reach'd a common pasture wild and wide;
Small black-legg'd sheep devour with hunger keen
The meager herbage; fleshless, lank and lean:
He saw some scatter'd hovels; turf was pil'd
In square brown stacks; a prospect bleak and wild!
A mill, indeed, was in the centre found,
With short sear herbage withering all around;
A smith's black shed oppos'd a wright's long shop,
And join'd an inn where humble travellers stop."
pp. 176, 177.

The features of the fine country are less perfectly drawn: But what, indeed, could be made of the vulgar fine country of *Englan*? If Mr. Crabbe had had the good fortune to live among *our* Highland hills, and lakes, and upland woods—our living floods sweeping through forests of pine—our lonely vales and rough copse-covered cliffs; what a delicious picture would his unrivalled powers have enabled him to give to the world!—But we have no right to complain, while we have such pictures as this of a group of Gipsies. It is evidently finished *con amore;* and does appear to us to be absolutely perfect, both in its moral and its physical expression.

"Again the country was enclos'd; a wide
And sandy road has banks on either side;
Where, lo! a hollow on the left appear'd,
And there a Gipsy-tribe their tent had rear'd;
'Twas open spread, to catch the morning sun,
And they had now their early meal begun,
When two brown Boys just left their grassy seat,
The early Trav'ller with their pray'rs to greet:
While yet *Orlando* held his pence in hand,
He saw their sister on her duty stand;
Some twelve years old, demure, affected, sly,
Prepar'd the force of early powers to try:

Sudden a look of languor he descries,
And well-feign'd apprehension in her eyes;
Train'd, but yet savage, in her speaking face,
He mark'd the features of her vagrant race;
When a light laugh and roguish leer express'd
The vice implanted in her youthful breast!
Within, the Father, who from fences nigh
Had brought the fuel for the fire's supply, [by:
Watch'd now the feeble blaze, and stood dejected
On ragged rug, just borrow'd from the bed,
And by the hand of coarse indulgence fed,
In dirty patchwork negligently dress'd,
Reclin'd the Wife, an infant at her breast;
In her wild face some touch of grace remain'd,
Of vigour palsied and of beauty stain'd;
Her blood-shot eyes on her unheeding mate [state,
Were wrathful turn'd, and seem'd her wants to
Cursing his tardy aid—her Mother there
With Gipsy-state engross'd the only chair;
Solemn and dull her look: with such she stands,
And reads the Milk-maid's fortune, in her hands,
Tracing the lines of life; assum'd through years,
Each feature now the steady falsehood wears;
With hard and savage eye she views the food,
And grudging pinches their intruding brood!
Last in the group, the worn-out Grandsire sits
Neglected, lost, and living but by fits;
Useless, despis'd, his worthless labours done,
And half protected by the vicious Son,
Who half supports him! He with heavy glance,
Views the young ruffians who around him dance;
And, by the sadness in his face, appears
To trace the progress of their future years;
Through what strange course of misery, vice, deceit,
Must wildly wander each unpractis'd cheat;
What shame and grief, what punishment and pain,
Sport of fierce passions, must each child sustain—
Ere they like him approach their latter end,
Without a hope, a comfort, or a friend!"
pp. 180—182.

The next story, which is entitled "Edward Shore," also contains many passages of exquisite beauty. The hero is a young man of aspiring genius and enthusiastic temper, with an ardent love of virtue, but no settled principles either of conduct or opinion. He first conceives an attachment for an amiable girl, who is captivated with his conversation;—but being too poor to marry, soon comes to spend more of his time in the family of an elderly sceptic (though we really see no object in giving him that character) of his acquaintance, who had recently married a young wife, and placed unbounded confidence in her virtue, and the honour of his friend. In a moment of temptation, they abuse this confidence. The husband renounces him with dignified composure; and he falls at once from the romantic pride of his virtue. He then seeks the company of the dissipated and gay; and ruins his health and fortune, without regaining his tranquillity. When in gaol, and miserable, he is relieved by an unknown hand; and traces the benefaction to the friend whose former kindness he had so ill repaid. This humiliation falls upon his proud spirit and shattered nerves with an overwhelming force; and his reason fails beneath it. He is for some time a raving maniac; and then falls into a state of gay and compassionable imbecility, which is described with inimitable beauty in the close of this story. We can afford but a few extracts. The nature of the seductions which led to his first fatal lapse are well intimated in the following short passage:—

"Then as the Friend repos'd, the younger Pair
Sat down to cards, and play'd beside his chair;
Till he awaking, to his books applied,
Or heard the music of th' obedient bride:
If mild th' evening, in the fields they stray'd,
And their own flock with partial eye survey'd;
But oft the Husband, to indulgence prone,
Resum'd his book, and bade them walk alone.
"This was obey'd; and oft when this was done
They calmly gaz'd on the declining sun;
In silence saw the glowing landscape fade,
Or, sitting, sang beneath the arbour's shade:
Till rose the moon, and on each youthful face,
Shed a soft beauty, and a dangerous grace."
pp. 198, 199.

The ultimate downfall of this lofty mind, with its agonising gleams of transitory recollection, form a picture, than which we do not know if the whole range of our poetry, rich as it is in representations of disordered intellect, furnishes any thing more touching, or delineated with more truth and delicacy.

"Harmless at length th' unhappy man was found,
The spirit settled, but the reason drown'd;
And all the dreadful tempest died away,
To the dull stillness of the misty day!
"And now his freedom he attain'd—if free
The lost to reason, truth and hope, can be;
The playful children of the place he meets;
Playful with them he rambles through the streets;
In all they need, his stronger arm he lends,
And his lost mind to these approving friends.
"That gentle Maid, whom once the Youth had
Is now with mild religious pity mov'd; [lov'd,
Kindly she chides his boyish flights, while he
Will for a moment fix'd and pensive be;
And as she trembling speaks, his lively eyes
Explore her looks, he listens to her sighs;
Charm'd by her voice, th' harmonious sounds invade
His clouded mind, and for a time persuade:
Like a pleas'd Infant, who has newly caught
From the maternal glance, a gleam of thought;
He stands enrapt, the half-known voice to hear,
And starts, half-conscious, at the falling tear!
"Rarely from town, nor then unwatch'd, he goes,
In darker mood, as if to hide his woes;
But soon returning, with impatience seeks [speaks;
His youthful friends, and shouts, and sings, and
Speaks a wild speech, with action all as wild—
The children's leader, and himself a child;
He spins their top, or at their bidding, bends
His back, while o'er it leap his laughing friends;
Simple and weak, he acts the boy once more,
And heedless children call him *Silly Shore*."
pp. 206, 207.

"Squire Thomas" is not nearly so interesting. This is the history of a mean domineering spirit, who, having secured the succession of a rich relation by assiduous flattery, looks about for some obsequious and yielding fair one, from whom he may exact homage in his turn. He thinks he has found such a one in a lowly damsel in his neighbourhood, and marries her without much premeditation;—when he discovers, to his consternation, not only that she has the spirit of a virago, but that she and her family have decoyed him into the match, to revenge, or indemnify themselves for his having run away with the whole inheritance of their common relative. She hopes to bully him into a separate maintenance—but his avarice refuses to buy his peace at such a price; and they continue to live together, on a very successful system of mutual tormenting.

"Jesse and Colin" pleases us much better