THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA

ALUMNUS
BOOK FUND

173

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/contemplatistser00mudfrich

PR5101 M38 C66 1810 MAIN

THE

CONTEMPLATIST;

A

SERIES OF ESSAYS

UPON

Morals and Literature.

BY WILLIAM MUDFORD,

AUTHOR OF NUBILIA, &c. &c.

Neque, te ut miretur turba, labores,
Contentus paucis lectoribus.

HORACE.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY SHERWOOD, NEELY, & JONES,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1810.

Alum Bk. Fund
LOAN STACK
3325 F

Squire and Warwick, Printers,
Furnival's-Inn-Court, London.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE ESSAYS of which the following Volume is composed, were originally published in weekly numbers. How far they might have extended, had their success and popularity been equal to the author's wishes, I am not exactly able to say. They might have been more, or they might have been as few as they now are.

Many years have elapsed since any successful attempt has been made to add one more to our ESSAYISTS; to that body of familiar morals, of innoxious gaiety, and of literary disquisition, for which we are justly celebrated among foreign nations. Adventurers, indeed, have not been wanting; but *they* wanted talents: and I hope it will be considered as no very daring presumption in me to suppose myself equal to those who have failed. If I be not found superior, I must silently take my station with them: but that is a decree yet unpublished.

What my aim is, let me candidly avow. I would endeavour to add one more production to what is already numerous, but not so numerous as to preclude addition, or to forbid hope. I will not, therefore, say that I despair of success: if I did, I would not make the attempt. I commenced my undertaking with a mixture of confidence and of timidity: with confidence in that final equity of public opinion, which, however misled by popularity and fashion, never ultimately denies the meed to merit, or gives it to demerit; and with that timidity which the highest powers of the human mind might not blush to feel, when they address themselves to a competition with such names as Addison and Johnson.

London, Nov. 9, 1810.

CONTENTS.

No. I. Introductory Address .... Page 1

No. II. The Hill of Literature and the Temple of the Essayists, an Allegory 17

No. III. Vindication of Authors by profession 33

No. IV. The Narrative of Julia 49

No. V. The Narrative of Julia continued 65

No. VI. Critical Examination of the styles of Addison, Johnson, and Goldsmith 81

No. VII. Critical Examination of Milton's Samson Agonistes 97

No. VIII. On the Iniquity of Cruelty to Animals; some Considerations on Lord Erskine's Bill 113

No. IX. The Narrative of Julia continued by her Friend 129

No. X. Analysis of the Tragedy of Sir Walter Raleigh, by Sewell 145

No. XI. The Narrative of Julia concluded 161

No. XII. The Enormity of Adultery——Seduction, whether a greater crime? 177

No. XIII. The Dignity of the Human Mind—the Basis of all Man's Superiority 193

No. XIV. Critical Examination of the Poems and Genius of H.K. White 209

No. XV. The same Subject continued 225

No. XVI. The same Subject concluded 241

No. XVII. Matrimonial Infelicity; its probable Causes stated 257

No. XVIII. The Evils of Suspicion, illustrated by a Narrative 273

No. XIX. Considerations on the Utility of the Learned Languages 289

No. XX. Account of John Wilde, Esq. 305

No. XXI. The Difficulty and Importance of Self-Knowledge 321

The Contemplatist.

No. I.

SATURDAY, JUNE 9, 1810.

Hic est, aut nusquam, quod quærimus.
HORACE.

THE stores of learning and the gaiety of humour, the sprightliness of wit, and the sententious gravity of wisdom, have already been displayed in the form of periodical essays, under various appellations. But their destiny has been various. Some, have risen to a proud height of reputation: others, have blossomed only to fade: some, still command delight and admiration: others, exist but in faint applause: they have gained no illustrious name: they have created no em-

pire

pire in the tongues of men. Yet, they may claim the unambitious merit of contributing to amusement by harmless gaiety, of amending the mind by moral truths humbly expressed, and of sometimes rectifying the taste by the communication of familiar knowledge. The voice of posterity, however, has pronounced their sentence: their post has been assigned them; their rank has been declared; and from that decision there is no appeal.

Yet, can it be doubted that the career of each was begun with equal expectations of success; with equal hopes of receiving adulatory distinction from contemporary gratitude; and with an equally ardent anticipation of delighting and instructing succeeding generations, when their authors would be alike insensible to censure and to praise—to preeminence and neglect—to glory and to shame? The glorious visions of imperishable fame flitted before their fancies, and soothed their labours: the present was absorbed in the future, and they solaced themselves with the belief, that after ages would be eager to commemorate

memorate their learning and their genius.—How these flattering hopes have been answered affords a useful lesson to mankind. It teaches us, that though the illusions of pride, the confidence of vanity, or the venial partiality of friendship, may lead to the belief of superior endowments and to the nurture of extensive expectations of renown; yet, merit alone ought to claim or can obtain it: and it may also teach us that the ambition which points to the pinnacle of fame, though failing in its object, may qualify us to hold a useful and a respectable station; may give us energy to reach a height above the ordinary level of human life, if not to blaze as a meteor in the eyes of men. The world awards its honours slowly; seldom unjustly: and it gives permanent celebrity only to that which time has pronounced to be worthy of it.

Let it not, however, be supposed that I would wish to recommend timidity and irresolution to the candidate for fame. It is well that every man, who proposes to call the attention of the world towards himself, should

have a just consciousness of his own powers, and a fit reliance upon them. He should at least regard himself as possessing something worthy of communication: some qualities of mind, some niceties of discrimination, some knowledge of mankind, or some acquirements of study, which may justly entitle him to their attention. Without this necessary confidence he will either sink into despondency as he contemplates his undertaking, or rely too much upon adventitious assistance, where assistance can be given, and which he will be liable to accept with indiscriminate facility. These are the evils to be feared from the influence of such feelings, and they are such as should be sedulously guarded against.

As for myself, neither upborne by the airy, unsubstantial bubbles of imaginary excellence, nor depressed by the gloomy apprehensions of total disqualification, I shall rely, with steady resolution, upon my own exertions: not wholly careless of the applause of my countrymen, but resolved either to deserve it, or to desist from my labours whenever neglect

teaches

teaches me that I have over-valued my pretensions. I shall neither court attention by an alluring display of professions, nor deprecate censure by the shallow artifice of confessing that I deserve it. The one would impose a restraint upon me which I should be unwilling to endure: and the other would betray a duplicity unworthy of a man who means fairly. The question cannot long vibrate between doubt and certainty: a few numbers will ascertain whether my lucubrations be or be not deserving of the attention of the public: and that period I shall pass with few emotions of hope or fear; for I have lived long enough in the world to know that neither hope nor fear can accelerate or retard the decisions of mankind.

It has passed into a custom with my predecessors to occupy their introductory paper with a fictitious account of themselves and coadjutors, corresponding to the character they intended to support. It is a safe political maxim, that what is established should obtain our reverence: but Horace has told us,

that,

that, in literature, novelty should be our aim. It is not, however, always prudent to dispute the power of custom: and I should feel some pleasure in complying with an established mode, could I persuade myself that I should either contribute to the amusement of my readers, or gratify my own inclinations: but I should probably do neither. As to my readers, *they* could derive little benefit or delight from treading again in a path where I could scatter none of the flowers of novelty, where I could lead them into no undiscovered windings, nor amuse them with any yet unseen beauties: and *I* should feel but little exultation in reflecting that I had become, in my outset, an humble imitator, labouring fruitlessly to embellish a road which my predecessors have covered with all that is graceful and interesting. Nor can I think that they, who read the Contemplatist, will read it with a pleasure that rises or sinks in proportion as they know my complexion and my height: whether I am lean or fat; talkative or taciturn; melancholy or humorous. I may be all of these, or none of them: or I may have them only in part.

part. My hair may be black and my eyes grey: my legs may be as disproportioned as our stage Richard's: I may be deformed like Pope and Scarron; I may have an asthma like Virgil, and sore eyes like Horace; I may be as ugly as Heidegger, and as morose as Arnauld: or I may have all good qualities of mind and body. No matter. Judge of the soil by the produce: if the harvest be good, the land cannot be barren. Let the curiosity of my readers be excited rather, as Tacitus says of Agricola, *figuram animi magis quam corporis*; and let me own the boast of Jugurtha,

Plurimum faciendo, et nihil de seipso loquendo.

But another motive may be supposed to influence me in this departure from what has been usual. There is a pride, in the mind of man, which makes him ambitious of distinction, and all distinction is founded upon original excellence. No imitator has ever risen to greatness; and, whatever charge of that kind may be urged against me in the progress

of

of my undertaking, I am at least resolved to make an auspicious commencement.

Let it not, however, be supposed that, because I disclaim all limitation, I have no precise idea of what I intend to do: for, much may be conceived in the mind which cannot, easily, be unfolded into particulars. The obscure shadow of something great may fill the imagination, waiting only the progress of time to give it form and animation. I may have traced an extensive outline, embracing many subjects at once interesting, curious, and important: but the colouring, the lights and shades, the smaller objects, the diversification of the scenery, and the harmony of the whole, remain to be supplied as accident may direct, curiosity excite, or adventitious assistance may supply. I have the unwrought materials in store: but know not, yet, into what modes of elegance, fancy, or utility I may transform them. I have accumulated wealth, but am undecided into what channels I shall direct it. Nor must I be condemned for this boastful language: the pride of presumed merit is

sometimes the best stimulus to its real acquisition. Besides, as I must promise something, it is better to promise with that ambiguity which leaves an easy escape from the mortification of failure, than to impose such definite performances upon myself as would demand a rigorous acquittal.

No one, indeed, can trace, with perfect accuracy, the future operations of his own mind: they will often be irregular where he expected correctness; and often incongruous where he looked for congruity. He will be sometimes dull when he expected to pour forth torrents of eloquence, or to dazzle with coruscations of wit: and sometimes discursive and desultory, when he expected concentration of ideas and a skilful propriety of language. To limit the faculty of thought would be ridiculous, if possible: but its rapid combinations mock the vain shackles of man, and prove the divinity of its origin by their superiority over the forms of matter and of life.

While, therefore, I leave to the suggestions of chance, a great part of my future speculations, I have yet imposed *one* rule upon myself, which, though I state it, I trust my readers would have gratuitously assigned to me, had it been omitted. It is, to make the improvement of life and the diffusion of morality my first and greatest object: to inculcate whatever can arm the mind against the passions, or eradicate any unworthy sentiments which may prevail: to watch over the manners of society, and to stigmatise them with fearless severity, whenever they tend to corruption and degeneracy: to furnish arguments for virtue and objections to vice: to seek the purification of the source of action, that by cleansing the spring, the stream may flow undefiled: and, finally, to omit nothing, (speaking with a reference to the individual powers of man) which can either promote our moral happiness in this world, or our eternal welfare in a world to come.

This I could wish to be the distinguishing feature

feature of my labours: for it is one which will fix respectability upon my design if it fail, and give it importance if it succeed. In the event of the former, I shall console myself with the reflection, that I fell from weakness rather than from vice: and in the latter, that I am rewarding patronage by my endeavours to deserve it.

I cannot refrain from stating, also, what will be another prominent character of my future labours. I mean *Literary Criticism.* But I shall sedulously abstain from contemporary writers; for I cannot flatter, and I will not lie. No man loves censure: no man loves the hand that plucks a feather from the plumage which a delighted world is surveying with ecstacy: and the magnanimous humility which gratefully acknowledges correction, may dwell upon the lip, but it rarely finds shelter in the heart. The brief honours which they have, or may acquire, shall therefore be unquestioned by me: their claims to renown I will not dispute: nor, though I may be accused

cused of envy, shall I dilate upon their merits. I know no safer method by which to secure my own peace, their fame, and my reader's advantage. I shall find, among the illustrious *dead*, subjects of investigation yet unexplored: or, if explored, something may be left which an inquiring mind will easily discover. If I can thus improve the taste, or enlarge the knowledge of those who peruse my papers, I shall consider myself as not having written in vain.

I am aware, however, of the difficulty which attends the communication of knowledge; a difficulty which arises as often from the unskilfulness of the teacher as from the inaptitude of the recipient. It was justly and delicately observed by Pope, that

> Men must be taught as though you taught them not,
> And things *unknown* proposed as things *forgot*.

In fact, pride, under some one or other of its various modifications, attends us all, through

through life: and the pride of knowledge is, perhaps, of all others the most arrogant. It is not that men are unwilling to learn, but they are averse from being regarded as learners, as it implies an inferiority from which most minds revolt. They think it a diminution of what they possess, if there be any one who can say *I gave it*. But it would serve much to repress this idle and injudicious vanity, were they duly to reflect, that almost all general knowledge is received by communication: we give and receive: it is an intellectual barter which is founded upon the eternal fitness of things: no man towers so high above his fellows, as to be incapable of instruction from them: there is no pre-eminence so exalted from which the ignorance of some things is excluded: the meanest artificer might be able to correct the notions of a Newton in details with which he could not, necessarily, be familiar. Men, mutually dependent in all other things, are no less so in the wants of mind: and these wants constitute a strong link in the

boundless

boundless chain of social habits and affections.

It is of obvious importance, however, that we should employ, in our endeavours to facilitate the interchange of ideas, those means which may be best calculated to produce the desired effect. Hence, I have adopted the form of an *Essayist*, that my lucubrations may neither offend the learned, who might otherwise expect in me unity of design, nor alarm those who would tremble to sit down to a laboured, connected, and extensive system of ethics. I have yet another motive: to administer to the wants of that class of readers who have only strength enough to make short flights into the regions of knowledge, and who wish, notwithstanding, to be considered as men of observation. They will be thus enabled to acquire a store of ideas with little trouble, and they will insensibly become qualified to pass for men of learning, amid the noisy conviviality of a club, the polite discourse of a fashionable assembly,

or

or the desultory conversation of a tea-table.

Such are my views. If I have promised more than I shall perform, it is from an ambition to please: and should I fail, in my endeavours, it will be from that want of ability for which no labour can compensate.

*** *To anticipate cavilling, I think it right to state, that a few of the Essays, which will appear in the course of this work, have already been published in a periodical miscellany: but they will necessarily receive much alteration, and, it is hoped, improvement.*

The Contemplatist.

No. II.

SATURDAY, JUNE 16, 1810.

Omnia quæ sensu volvuntur vota diurno,
Tempore nocturno, reddit amica quies.
Venator, defessa toro cum membra reponit,
Mens tamen ad silvas, et sua lustra redit.
Judicibus lites, aurigæ somnia currus,
Vanaque nocturnis meta cavetur equis.
Furto gaudet amans; permutat navita merces:
Et vigil elapsas quærit avarus opes.
Blandaque largitur frustra sitienbus ægris,
Irriguus gelido pocula fonte sopor.
Me quoque musarum studium, sub nocte silenti,
Artibus assiduis, sollicitare solet.

CLAUDIAN.

THE mind of a periodical Essayist can expect but short intervals of rest. It must be perpetually vigilant to discover new objects for investigation and new topics for amusement. The forms of life and the stores of imagination must be incessantly inspected, that nothing may escape which can contribute to the great end of his labours. Nothing in the moral world can be indifferent to him: events must be viewed through a new medium, and applied to new purposes: the gold must be taken as it is found, mingled with

rubbish, sand, and baser metal: it must be refined in the intellectual crucible: the dross must be separated and rejected, and what remains must be worked into taste, elegance, and refinement. The united efforts of the chemist and the artist must be called into action: and the utmost skill of both must be diligently employed, before the object of their labours be dismissed from their hands.

Such must be the ceaseless exertions of him who undertakes to furnish successive subjects of amusement and instruction from his own stores. He can allow himself but few moments of total abstraction from his task, the consciousness of which weighs upon him with a pertinacity equal to that of a fond wife round the neck of a husband. But I cannot pretend to decide whether the latter would as willingly escape from his burden as I would from mine, for patience is a virtue which marriage is supposed greatly to promote, and patience delights in the endurance of evils, by which alone it can be proved and exercised.

Fully aware of this condition into which I have thus voluntarily brought myself, I was pondering, in my elbow chair, upon the progress of my undertaking, and the subjects of which

it should be composed, when the powers of sleep overcame me: I insensibly fell into a slumber: the pen dropped from my hand: and in this situation the following dream presented itself to my mind.

I was, methought, transported into the middle of a spacious plain, through which ran several paths. At one extremity, a lofty hill began to ascend, the lower part of which was extremely irregular, steep, and slippery: but, near the middle, it became apparently more smooth and easy, and so continued to the top, where might be beheld a magnificent structure, which seemed to tower into the skies. The grandeur of its appearance was so impressive that I could scarcely withdraw my eyes from the contemplation of it, to notice the other objects which courted my attention.

To the right and left of the plain there were other hills, surmounted by other edifices, and on these I beheld countless crowds who were toiling to gain the ascent. But what most astonished me was the various success with which these attempts were attended. Some commenced their endeavours with a steady and solemn pace: their progress was slow, but it was constant: and if the eye

was turned from them for a while, it was sure to see them advanced when it again looked upon them: there was, also, a calm expression of contentment in their countenances, which seemed to indicate that they were satisfied with their progress, though they continued to direct their view towards the top with such vehemence of hope as shewed that they were not indolently satisfied with their condition.

Others there were who sprung forth rapidly at their outset, looking with scorn upon those they left behind, and with eagerness towards those who were before: but their vigour seemed to be exhausted by a single effort: they stopped: they recoiled: and though a few who were about them tried to push them forwards, and to hold them up yet a little longer, they rolled down, with incredible celerity, into a wide abyss which surrounded the hill and which was covered with a thick vapour, and were seen to rise no more. But their place was supplied by fresh adventurers, upon whom the fate of their predecessors seemed to make no impression. They commenced with the same ardour, and sunk with the same rapidity.

A third set rushed forward with astonish-

ing velocity, and gained, at one effort, the middle of the hill, but went no further: they did not indeed recede, neither did they advance, though they tried, with much exertion, to ascend a little higher: but every attempt was fruitless: mortification and envy were pourtrayed in their countenances: and when they found that it was absolutely unavailing to make any further trials, they employed themselves in obstructing the progress of those who were proceeding beyond them, by a thousand little impediments which they threw in their way. In this too they were frustrated, and I then beheld them gradually enveloped in a thick mist, which overspread the place where they were, and I saw no more of them: for when the mist disappeared, the ground was vacant.

I observed, indeed, that very few reached the summit. The greater part remained stationary between the bottom and the centre: some few passed the latter, and reposed, with apparent satisfaction, a short distance above it. A small number reclined upon the very top, and seemed, by their actions, to encourage those who were near them to continue their labour and perseverance. I could not help

observing, with astonishment, that a few who seemed to repose with contented dignity at almost the very bottom, sprung, in an instant, beyond the middle, and sometimes even reached the most elevated point. I saw many who strove to hurl others down, but, losing their own balance, they were themselves precipitated into the gulph below. On every side, indeed, I beheld strife and contention, and a confused noise of vociferous voices struck upon my ear.

As I stood contemplating this scene of tumult and discord, a youth passed quickly by me, and was directing his steps towards the theatre of competition. I stopped him, and inquired the meaning of what I saw. Having looked at me, for some time, with a supercilious aspect, he replied, "This, Sir, is the HILL OF LITERATURE, and they, whom you see upon it, are authors. They are all striving for the TEMPLE OF IMMORTALITY, which you may behold on the top: but the GODDESS OF OBLIVION, who dwells in that murky abyss which you see round the hill, marks many of them for her prey: she is never visible, but always encompassed in mist and vapour, and sweeps her victims from notice

with unrelenting severity: there is a great deal of hostility among the candidates, as you may perceive, Sir: they all dread the yawning pit which seems to gape for them, and they all try to save themselves by their neighbour's downfal: but the GODDESS OF OBLIVION fears no power except that of GENIUS, and whoever is accompanied by that celestial guide may scorn her malice: for my own part, I am quite fearless of any thing she can do to me."—"What, then," said I, "is GENIUS thy guide?" He looked at me with astonishment as I asked him this question, and with a disdainful toss of his head tripped away. I watched his motions with curiosity. He soon reached the hill, and began to ascend with confidence and rapidity. He was gazed at by his competitors with a mixture of envy and surprise: but, when he had nearly reached the middle, I saw him totter, his foot slipped, and he was plunged into that gulph whose terrors he had so confidently despised as he began his career.

I now directed my attention once more towards the first hill, but did not perceive any one near it. I could not imagine why it was so utterly neglected, for it appeared to be, in

many respects, more desirable than the other eminences. It had more verdure, and was more grateful to the sight from the various shrubbery which ornamented its sides: yet, it was wholly deserted. The splendid structure which adorned its summit seemed to have been raised in vain: no one sought to approach it. But I felt within myself a rising desire to inspect a building which must have been erected for some purpose, and whose magnificence strongly excited my attention; and, as I stood lost in contemplation, and doubtful whether to make the attempt, I beheld three majestic females approaching towards me. Their port was stately, their looks commanding, and their motions graceful. But there was a striking difference between each of them; and, as they approached nearer, I observed more leisurely their discrepancies.

There was, in the looks of the first, a severe and awful majesty, a decorum, a sobriety, and a solemnity, which inspired a mingled feeling of delight and reverence. The fixed gaze of her look seemed to pierce me through: her features were composed and sedate: her step slow, direct, and steady; the colour of her garment was of spotless white, and her waist

was encircled with a zone beset with innumerable eyes; her form was athletic: and there was a certain ineffable grace emanating from her countenance, which was irresistibly fascinating. In her right hand she carried a transparent wand, and in her left a massy shield, on which was inscribed, in letters of living gold, the word TRUTH.

The next figure had less dignity and less solemnity in her appearance. She leaned on TRUTH for her support, and seemed, indeed, unable to walk steadily without her. There was a degree of vivacity in her countenance, though it was constantly chastened by a prevailing sobriety of look. Her eyes glanced from side to side with rapidity: and a beam of joy sometimes played across her features when she looked upon TRUTH, and read a tacit approval in her face. Her step was light and fantastic: her vest shewed a thousand brilliant hues, glancing from all parts, as she moved along: she carried in her hand a shield of burnished silver, embossed with groupes of antic figures; and in the centre was engraven the word WIT, encircled with emeralds, topaz, sapphires, amethysts, and other precious stones.

But how shall I describe the third? Where shall I find words to express the strange combination of qualities which distinguished her? There was a comic archness in her looks that spoke a volume: the smile of gaiety was constantly on her face: her motions were full of airiness and vigour: her step was elastic: her gestures often grotesque and sometimes ludicrous: her garments were profusely decked with dazzling ornaments, which struck upon the sight with such a blaze of splendour, that the eye was wearied with dwelling long upon her, and frequently turned away to repose upon the sober majesty of TRUTH, or the chaste vivacity of WIT, as we withdraw our sight from the ardent glories of the sun to enjoy the refreshing verdure of nature. Sometimes, when her actions were preposterous, and excited disgust rather than merriment, a sudden effulgence from her vestments threw round her a deceitful glare, which concealed her irregularities; and when this lustre had subsided, she appeared, again, in all her native attractions. On her left arm she bore a shield, whose shape defied definition: it was wildly ornamented, and I could perceive the word

HUMOUR in the centre, engraven in a strange fashion.

I stood still with awe as I gazed upon them. They approached within a few paces of me, and I shrunk back appalled. TRUTH stretched forth her hand with a bewitching smile, and an air of kind encouragement: but I still hesitated, when WIT, advancing on the other side, seized me by the hand, and gently led me forward. They were silent, and a sort of reverential fear forbade me to utter a word. We proceeded slowly along towards the deserted hill which I had before contemplated, while HUMOUR gamboled before us with a thousand wild frolics. We gained the bottom of the ascent, and I was astonished at the facility with which, thus supported, I passed over the awful chasms and fearful obstructions that seemed to forbid all progress. As we approached the centre, the sight was gratefully relieved by a charming verdure, by meads decked with flowers which stretched, in wide prospect, beneath me, by gently-murmuring streams, by groves that seemed to offer a delicious shelter, and within whose embowering roofs birds of choicest song were heard.

I now began to have a clearer view of the magnificent temple that crowned the summit, and I observed, also, that every step we advanced, after having passed the middle, was encumbered with numerous and increasing difficulties: the hill itself became almost perpendicular, and the surface was so slippery, that all possibility of reaching its top, unless supported as I was, seemed to be utterly excluded. I gained, however, the utmost height, and stood wrapped in silent admiration as I gazed upon the superb structure that was now before me.

But I was not permitted long to gaze. My celestial guides led me into the interior of the temple, where new wonders burst upon my astonished sight. All was splendour, and grandeur, and pomp: vaulted roofs fretted with gold: rich tapestries inwrought with diamonds and other precious stones: pillars of marble and porphyry, exquisitely polished, supported the cieling: and on each side spread long arcades that led to delightful groves and shady walks. Mysterious music floated on the air, which wafted perfumes of charming fragrance. Every thing which could captivate the senses was profusely lavished forth,

and I should have stopped in a silent ecstacy of enjoyment, had not my guides continued to lead me onwards.

I was conducted through many rooms of this description, till we arrived, at last, at one more lofty and spacious than the rest. It was more superbly decorated also, and, at the further extremity, I beheld a pyramidal ascent of thrones, each overhung by a rich canopy bedropped with pearls. My guides marked the astonishment that this wrought in me, but they did not speak; and as I approached nearer I perceived, with amazement, that each throne was filled with a figure which I easily recognised.

On the topmost seat, which was composed of two thrones, sat ADDISON and JOHNSON: the former, in an easy and graceful attitude: the latter, with composed and austere dignity. ADDISON seemed to regard me with a smile of kind encouragement: his look was playful and benevolent; and his eyes had a mixture of serenity and gaiety in them that was uncommonly interesting: while the brow of JOHNSON seemed sometimes to scowl upon me as an intruder.

Immediately beneath these, on thrones less

gorgeously splendid, sat STEELE, HAWKSWORTH, and WARTON, with their eyes turned, from time to time, upon ADDISON and JOHNSON. In the countenance of STEELE mirth was the prevailing feature, while HAWKSWORTH's had an agreeable and attractive sobriety in it: they both smiled upon me as I advanced, and seemed rejoiced at my appearance. Under them again, with diminished splendour, I recognized LLOYD, COLMAN, CAMBRIDGE, MOORE, and CHESTERFIELD, in all of whom there was so great a similarity that I was unable to perceive any striking distinction.

Having gazed for some time upon this spectacle, and felt a sort of sacred awe creeping over me, I turned round to TRUTH, who stood at my right hand, with the hope that she would explain to me this mysterious vision. She seemed to anticipate my wishes, and, after a solemn pause, she thus addressed me:

"Presumptuous mortal, whose temerity hath led thee to the confines of this temple, which is sacred to us, neither thy hopes nor thy designs are unknown to me. But, I dare not unveil the volume of futurity: I dare not unclose the book of destiny, to

know whether thou wilt succeed, or add one more to the many who have sought, in vain, to gain this temple. I have deigned, however, to shew thee the reward of success. Behold that vacant throne rising, a small degree, above the immortal two who sit at top: that yet remains unfilled. I see consternation and dismay in thy countenance at the thought of transcending those exalted names: but an humbler reward awaits humbler merit. He who is denied the highest pinnacle of fame, may yet find an inferior station that may well reward his labours. Behold then, on thy right hand and on thy left, other vacant thrones that will be, one day, filled perhaps: let these tempt your ambition: let these fire your breast with generous emulation, and strive to become one of this august few. Your looks betray hope: encourage it: the first step to excellence is to believe that you are capable of it."

As she pronounced these words she conducted me up the marble steps that led to the top, and, at her command, I knelt before ADDISON, JOHNSON, and HAWKSWORTH, who all placed their hands upon my head. WIT then advanced, and under her guidance

I bent before COLMAN, LLOYD, and CHESTERFIELD, who repeated the same ceremony: finally, HUMOUR seizing me by the hand, led me, with a gay, good-natured smile, to the feet of ADDISON once more, who again placed his hand upon my head. After this, I was reconducted down the steps, and TRUTH again addressed me:

" Thus gifted, go forth: remember this thy solemn initiation, and receive from me this celestial mirror, by which thou wilt be enabled to pierce through the envelopements of passion, prejudice, and error, and read the HEART of man, AS IT IS."

I stretched forth my hand with eagerness to receive the precious gift, when methought a false step threw me headlong on the ground: in an instant the temple, thrones, and guides vanished from my sight: and I found, to my great mortification, that I had been enjoying a comfortable nap in my arm chair; and that when I thought I was seizing the mirror, my head had only slipped from its corner, by which I had nearly been precipitated upon the floor.

The Contemplatist.

No. III.

SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 1810.

Mihi rectius videtur, ingenii, quam virium opibus gloriam quærere; et, quoniam vita ipsa qua fruimur, brevis est, memoriam nostri quam maxume longam efficere.——SALLUST.

I HAVE often observed, and with no ordinary emotions of resentment, the popular inclination which there is to cast a shade of odium and ridicule upon the profession of an author; an inclination which betrays (as I hope to shew in the course of this paper) so striking an abdication of common sense and common liberality, that it is matter of astonishment that it should ever be found in those who seek to establish their own importance upon superiority of mind. There is, also,

something remarkable in this propensity, which deserves to be noticed.

It is sufficiently common in the world to satirize professions. The tailor disdains the cobbler, and the cobbler returns thanks to heaven that he does not love *cabbage:* the apothecary descants forcibly upon the iniquities of the lawyer; and the lawyer, unmindful of his own unworthiness, proclaims loudly the enormous abuses of the man of drugs: and thus it is through every gradation of society. But, in all their rage of malevolence against each other, in all their rancour of opposition, we never find them hostile to themselves: we never hear a tailor stigmatise a tailor, by calling him the ninth part of a man; nor an attorney condemn an attorney for acts of avowed dishonesty. No: they are thoroughly imbued with what the French denominate the *esprit de corps,* and thus far, perhaps, they merit praise. But it is otherwise with authors; for, I believe the keenest sarcasms, the most insulting taunts, and the most contemptuous revilings, which have been directed *against* authors, have proceeded *from* authors.

Were I to speak from my own experience, I should say, that I have more frequently and more uniformly heard the profession contumeliously mentioned by those who were, at the very time, exercising it, than by those who were far removed from its concerns. It is evident, indeed, that the world has drawn its opinion from the declarations of authors themselves. Satirists, novelists, dramatists, essay-writers, and epigram-mongers are the sources whence flows all that scurrile abuse which it has long been the fashion to vent upon the subalterns of literature.

It often happens that what should be partial censure becomes indiscriminate; and such has been the case in the present instance. Bad authors, by what fatality I know not, have, in all ages, been a proscribed race of beings; the fair game of unfeeling blockheads and illiberal wits. Vulgar and gross abuse has been heaped upon them with an unsparing hand; a few great names have led the way, and insolence and ignorance have joined in the pursuit. It seems to have passed into an established maxim, that, to write badly, is a crime

of such magnitude as admits of no atonement: it so thoroughly strips the delinquent of all social rights, it casts him forth from the hospitable circle of his fellow-creatures with such marks of infamy and disgrace upon him, that humanity itself forbears to appear in his behalf whom all have doomed to relentless persecution. Nothing that is vented against him; no reproach, however bitter; no lampoon, however malignant; no satire, however false, and therefore the more poignant; no ridicule, however intolerable; no contempt, however blasting: in short, not the most savage ferocity which can come into action under the veil of literary rancour, is thought to be misapplied when directed against him who has written without excellence.

Common malefactors, for the most infamous crimes, find compassion in some breast, when caught in the toils of justice, and doomed to pay the forfeit of their delinquency: but the bad author none. *His* miseries are sport: *his* sorrows are festivity to the literary bloodhounds engaged in the pursuit. The man who commits adultery, who ravages domestic

peace, who blights the fair hopes of an innocent, unsuspecting family, who roots out, from the breast of an injured husband, the love and happiness that dwelt there; he, even he, finds an end to persecution, and his name ceases, at last, to be a watch-word for ridicule or infamy. The murderer is treated with decency and feeling; and brutality itself disdains, wantonly, to probe the sores of a corrupted heart. But, let an author publish a work that is deficient in excellence, who is there that does not think he has a right to lay the feelings of that author at his feet, with all the insulting mockery of derision? Is he not marked out for acrimonious ridicule, or lordly contempt? Is not even his moral character often implicated by some ungenerous sarcasm, or by some facetious parallel? Is he not derided as a dunce or despised as an ideot? Is not his name mercilessly sported with?—And whence all this? What offence has been committed? What violation of public or private welfare has been attempted?

Let it be remembered that I speak, here, of works which are deficient in some supposed

requisites of taste, judgement, or information; for those of an indecorous or an immoral tendency I resign to the utmost scope of infamy, punishment, and degradation. The authors of such books are to be considered in the light of common offenders against the well-being of society.

But, (let me again ask) what injury has been, or can be, committed by the publication of a work, not just so good as it might be, that it should be thought a fit plea for overstepping every boundary of feeling and humanity, every limit of justice and liberality? Why, too, I demand, is this unrelenting severity, in the case of failure, shewn only to authors? A painter, an architect, or a musician, may produce a work which proves to be incorrect and unworthy of public attention: but, in these cases, every thing is done when this incorrectness is stated; and the unsuccessful candidate is peaceably left to bring forth other productions of greater excellence, by a more matured application of his talents. No one presumes, no one thinks, of holding him up to ridicule and infamy, or of fixing such a

stigma upon his name that it carries with it a sort of judicial condemnation upon every thing to which it may afterwards be prefixed.

Again: this malignant warfare, this disgraceful hostility, is carried on by those who are themselves, authors, and often of acknowledged inferiority to those whom they thus calumniate. This is unseemly, and betrays a corrupt nature. But I call upon those who exercise this enmity, to remember the great retributive maxim of our religion: "do unto others as you would they should do unto you," and to consider what would be their feelings if thus treated.

No man spends hours, and days, and weeks upon an object without being more or less interested in its ultimate success. No man, perhaps, has sufficient apathy to bring a work to its completion, without indulging pleasing hopes of its merits, and imparting those hopes to friends and relatives. The ambition of delighting or instructing our fellow-creatures is certainly not the least honourable when successful, nor the least harmless when unsuccessful. The mere mortification of neglect and

disappointment carries with it pain enough, without the infliction of other punishment.

But let us pause for a moment, and consider under what complicated pain a delicate and apprehensive mind must labour, which not only sees its fancied laurels wither, withered by the torpid touch of cold oblivion, but beholds itself attacked with causeless rancour? What must he endure who sees every art employed to render him an object of ridicule and contempt; the public called upon to feast at a banquet where his heart and mind are served up for the repast? With what diminished pleasure he meets those friends, the sharers of his anticipated renown; with what faded glory he stands before his relatives, thus decried and thus hunted: with what a fallen self-estimation he perhaps ever after views himself. It may be, that he affects to meet his persecutors with scorn and indifference; and this, indeed, would be wisdom's part; but from himself he cannot conceal the galling and unwelcome truth that his name has been committed to derision and obloquy, and that with his name his feelings have been wrecked.

Think how contracted is the circle of human happiness, and how innocently he attempts to pluck some of its tempting treasure who gives a book to the world that is neither immoral nor vicious, and then tell me, ye who are foremost in the ungenerous pursuit, what adequate motive you have for such baseness? Has he injured you or aught belonging to you? Has he injured any one? Has he committed any crime? Has he done any thing that can give one moment's inquietude to any human being but himself? No. Why then delight so much in the production of human misery that you can, unprovoked, fix a sting in the bosom of an unoffending individual, whose only crime is that his talents are beneath perfection? Level not the same engines against harmless inferiority as you would use to crush the aspiring wickedness of vice and infamy. Prove that the want of ability, that the mere publication of an indifferent book, is a crime, and one that entitles its perpetrator to malignant aspersion and unfeeling scorn, and then I consent that, as a crime, it meet its due punishment: but, until that be done, I must

ever consider the wanton abuse of such writers among those actions which a wise and feeling mind should blush to remember.

It was an observation of Pliny the elder, that *no book was so bad, but something might be learned from it*; and, if this be true, which I am not inclined to doubt, it furnishes another argument why the humbler purveyors of literature should find greater kindness in their more successful brethren than they usually do. But I am wandering from the immediate object of my paper; though I do not regret it, for to lift my voice against oppression or cruelty of any description will always be to me an occasion of triumph and satisfaction.

I have already observed, that what should be partial censure often becomes indiscriminate; and it is thus that the popular ridicule and obloquy which have been attached to *bad*, or more judiciously speaking, to *unsuccessful authors*, have been transferred, with heedless impropriety, to the whole of them. The manifest iniquity of this proceeding needs no exposition: it would be unjust even were the contempt legitimate in its original applica-

tion: but when, in its first excitation, it rests upon cruelty and falsehood, how greatly is its criminality increased in every subsequent remove.

I cannot sufficiently lament that self degradation which literary men so frequently exhibit. It seems to be the peculiar stigma of this profession, that its members should concur to their own disgrace. Men, in other walks of life, have energy enough to vindicate their pursuits whatever they may be: or, if they have not, it might be expected from the votaries of literature, the acknowledged effect of which is to enlarge the mind, and implant feelings of liberality and conscious dignity. By what fatality it is that the result is otherwise I am unable to conjecture. Every literary man can recal some instance in which his associates have meanly assented to insinuations, uttered by some loquacious witling, which had an obvious tendency to place them in a ludicrous and consequently a contemptible light. To be asked if he *lodges in a garret*, or resides in *Grub-street*; whether he is a *bookseller's hack*, or *lives upon tick*, are

questions that an author is expected to endure with calm forbearance: nay, if he would be quite entertaining, he must echo back the laugh, and bow to the lash, as bears who are taught to dance on heated plates of iron move in the direction of the leader's whip. But he may gain a still greater reputation for wit and pleasantry if he will conduct the attack and shew his company how to despise him.

I have nothing to say to those who imagine that they exhibit proofs of sagacity and humour when they attempt to degrade literature by defaming those who pursue it. A war with folly ends in humiliation if it end in victory. But I deplore the servility of those who voluntarily submit to such undeserved obloquy, and who, not satisfied with humbly tolerating the effusions of abusive ignorance, are, themselves, foremost to depreciate a calling which they exercise. This is an aggravation. If they have adopted what they are ashamed of, let them abandon it: let them sink back to their original insignificance, and glide through life unknown and unvalued; or let them, otherwise, be honest and manly

enough to shew that they respect a situation which gives them bread. It is a mark of baseness to revile the source from which flows all that we can call our own.

I am fully aware of an objection that will be made, and I am prepared to meet it. It will be said, that men of independent circumstances, men of lettered ease, a *Gibbon*, a *Hume*, a *Lyttleton*, a *Bolingbroke*, a *Pope*, are exempt from these sarcasms; that they are levelled only at the drudges of literature; at those who write for bread, and who are often compelled, from their necessities, to sacrifice their principles to their wants. But this only heightens the evil; this only declares that the tongue which slanders is venal as well as malignant; that it is courteous and humble before the throne of wealth; and that it as meanly flatters the haughty sons of pride and consequence, as it basely persecutes the suffering children of poverty and misery.

This is, however, the common system of weak and vulgar minds. But it does not diminish the grievance I complain of; it rather doubles its torture by adding insult to oppres-

sion. I admit, that among those who follow literature as a means of subsistence, they who suffer the probability of want to warp their principles, to corrupt their minds, and to seduce them to the post of venal writers, deserve the strongest censures of indignant virtue: but, that petty minds should therefore indulge themselves in disgraceful calumnies against men struggling with poverty in the labours of intellect, is a species of tyranny that calls for the loudest reprobation. How many piercing insults, how many degrading circumstances, how many humbling situations, must have been endured by a *Johnson*, a *Goldsmith*, a *Collins*, a *Thomson*, a *Dryden*, an *Otway*, and many others, before the irresistible and commanding influence of their genius awed into silence the hooting owls that beset their path. Let us learn wisdom from experience; and when we are tempted to wound the feelings of an author, who is at present toiling in obscurity, let us reflect, that we are perhaps casting a momentary gloom over the mind, or giving a pang to the heart, of a future Johnson or a future Collins. And even should

it not be so; should the objects of our gibes and scorn be the irrevocable children of insipidity and dullness, yet even they are respectable, for they are, at least, endeavouring to employ the faculties of that quality of man, which, in its lowest state of healthfulness, has dignity enough to merit attention from the philosopher.

It has been justly observed by Hume, that "such a superiority do the pursuits of literature possess above every other occupation, that even he who attains but a mediocrity in them merits the pre-eminence above those that excel the most in the common and vulgar professions." And, indeed, why should an humble labourer in literature, though he produce nothing but ephemeral works, novels that are read and forgotten, or poetry that is never read at all, why should he be more hardly treated than an humble tradesman who does his best in the vocation which he has chosen? Nay, why should not the writer of a halfpenny ballad meet the same negative protection as a pastry cook or a ginger-bread maker? Is not the former, who produces a song, however

despicable in composition, so it be pure in sentiment, more usefully employed than the latter in preparing deleterious compounds to destroy the tone and health of our stomachs?

In some ensuing paper I shall pursue this subject further, and endeavour to shew the superiority of intellectual pursuits, whether of the highest or lowest order, when exercised in the cause of virtue, and designed to amuse or instruct our fellow creatures, above mere manual occupation, above the man of bows and "thank you, Sir, there's your change," above clerks and waiting maids, above indolent affluence and prating insignificance.

The Contemplatist.

No. IV.

SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 1810.

O mihi præteritos referat si Jupiter annos.
VIRGIL.

TO THE CONTEMPLATIST.

SIR,

IN attempting to address you, I feel all the aukwardness and diffidence of conscious inability; yet, the strong desire I have to give vent to the emotions that now oppress me, urges me to forego my native timidity, and to hope from your generosity, at least, the small consolation which can result from the declaration of virtue and the sorrows of repentance. My confidence is somewhat increased indeed, by the recollection of an assertion in your last Contemplatist, where you say, that " to

lift your voice against oppression or cruelty of any description, will always be to you an occasion of triumph and satisfaction." If truth dictated those words, Sir, let me avow, with a bitter consciousness of wretchedness, that, in what I have now to relate, you will find but too much room for the indulgence of so just and honourable a joy.

I am the only daughter of opulent and respectable parents; I was their pride and delight; the wealth they possessed seemed to give them happiness, only as it was employed to further mine; and, in the smile that brightened my countenance, they read the only reward they asked for unbounded love and affection. Whatever could adorn my mind, or add to the graces of my person, was procured with lavish liberality; and I may, without unseemly vanity, affirm, that my progress kept pace with their exertions. As I grew up, mental and bodily accomplishments grew with me; and while I excited the envy of my own sex, I saw, with delight, the admiration of the other. Those quick springing feelings

of nature, which take possession of the bosom at that period of life, when first the dawning passion of love finds aliment in the mind, mounted, with abounding vigour, in my heart, and I was, from principle, little solicitous to disguise their existence. Virtue, in my opinion, was founded upon self-estimation; I loved it, not as a barren duty, but as a sweet companion, that cheered my path of life, and shed lustre wherever she trod. Her dictates were obeyed from the strong conviction I felt, that my own happiness, my own worth and dignity were essentially interwoven with their preservation. I stood in awe of myself, not of the world; and I laboured to secure the peace of conscious rectitude, without resting it upon the basis of opinion. It was thus that I accounted virtue, and I felt secure in my own power.

My father was anxious to see me married in a manner suitable to my birth and fortune. Hapless words! How many human victims have bled at pride's gorgeous shrine! How many sorrowing hearts have approached the

altar, sickening at their own fortitude, obedient to the false notions of parental authority, and withering in their bloom, because torn from that happy spot where they might have flourished in peace and loveliness. Strange! that in the most momentous action of our lives, and in which *we alone* are to be made happy or miserable, the power to will should be denied us: that cold, unfeeling age should step into the chair of youth, and decide for a youthful heart, a heart full of warmth, and love, and sensibility, from the narrow calculations of avarice, or the empty phantasies of pride. Is not this a tyranny most hateful? Is it not a usurpation against which the voice of nature exclaims, and reason frowns upon as monstrous?

Yes, Sir, it was my father's resolution that I should marry according to my birth and fortune; but, while he was waiting to match me like a scanty shred, to suit me at all dimensions, to fit me at each point, my own heart turned purveyor, and singled out an adored object, whose name, whose memory, even yet, fills me with anguish and contrition. Oh

Henry, were it possible that at this moment you could behold me, that you could see my pallid cheeks, my wasted form, my dull and languid eyes—those eyes, which, you have so often sworn, kindled higher raptures in your bosom than beatitude can give; could you see them now drop tears, even at the recollection of your name, as fast as summer clouds distil their showers, one pang would smite you in your gay career, and drown your mirth in momentary sorrow and dismay. But I reproach you not: 'twas yours to forge the snares that circumvented me, and, having gained your prize, to throw it, like a froward child, away.

HENRY DE LA COUR I first saw at church: holy and sacred was the spot, and my thoughts were like them. I gazed and loved. It was at that moment I felt, for the first time, all those tumultuous sensations which crowd to the heart, when the raging fire that wanders through our veins, directs all its rays to one centre. Did my eyes at that instant speak, intelligibly, the strong emotions of my soul?

Yes, they must, for I fixed their ardent gaze with such devouring warmth upon him, that he blushed. Heavens! can I ever lose the recollection of that moment? I see, even now, the mantling hue that overspread his youthful cheek, giving new lustre to his fine dark eyes, shaded, as they then were, by auburn locks, that hung, graceful, o'er his manly forehead. He leaned forward to conceal the quick alarm which nature had taken, and bent his look upon the bible. I was immoveable; I was lost; I knew not that it was myself which caused the emotion I admired; for still I gazed, unconscious of what was passing round me till the full-toned organ awoke me to recollection and myself. I arose and joined the congregation in the psalm:—was I deceived, or did I hear a more than human voice, that seemed to soar above the rest? I paused—my ear directed my eyes—'twas the stranger, whose tones, so sweetly musical, stole, like a gentle slumber, o'er my soul, and left me again insensible to all but the soft conflict in my own breast. The service past, I lost this object of newly-created desire, in the

moving crowd; but I saw him, as he rose from his seat, cast a look towards me, which seemed to answer back the thoughts that filled my mind.

I returned home, pensive and dejected. My languid appearance excited the tender inquiries of my parents. To elude a distressing explanation, or a disingenuous prevarication, I sought my own chamber, and indulged a melancholy luxury of thought, not far removed from perfect bliss.

The week passed in a painful alternation of strong passions; and, as Sunday approached, I hailed it as a day that was to liberate my heart from insupportable bondage. The wished for morn at length arrived. Never before did religion appear to me half so lovely, or half so amiable. The hours appeared intolerably long from breakfast till the bell tolled; and when, at last, I set out for church, my steps seemed tardy, and the distance increased. In imagination I had passed the porch 'ere I had scarcely quitted the threshold of my own door; and

when I entered the aisle, my eyes wandered, with fearful eagerness, to the spot where, the last Sunday, I had looked myself away. He was not there. I sought the image of my thoughts through every part, but saw him not. The service commenced; I was disturbed, and could scarcely pay a decent attention to the duties of the place. I was lost in conjecture. Should I ever behold him again? Was he, perhaps, a stranger passing through the town, and only there by accident? or, could modest diffidence be so predominant in his nature that he dreaded a repetition of those blushes I had already caused? These, and a thousand other thoughts, passed rapidly through my mind, while my eyes were wandering from place to place, in the fond hope of yet meeting their adored object; but the hope was vain, and I quitted the church dejected and oppressed.

The evening of that day was calm and fine, and I strayed into the fields, that I might soothe the agitation of my bosom, by the contemplation of the placid scenes of nature. I had

a favourite walk, arched over with imbowering trees, where the silent lapse of years had carved a seat for meditation, out of the decayed trunk of a time-smitten oak. Here I had often sat in past moments, wrapped in delightful thought, while yet my bosom was a stranger to the tormenting fire that now possessed it; when my mind was as a peaceful lake that reflected, on its calm surface, the perfect image of surrounding objects; not, as now ruffled by storms and vexed with agitation.

I sat down, and hoped to find the peace I was wont to meet with there. Vain and senseless expectation! To me the trees no longer blossomed, and the landscape was no longer sweet; my eyes wandered, undelighted, over those charms of nature on which they erst had dwelt with a child's fondness. It was then that I fully *felt* what before I had only *believed*, that—

> "The *mind* is it's own place,
> And in itself can make a heaven
> Of hell, a hell of heaven!"

While I remained buried in these musings, my attention was suddenly excited by a rustling noise that was near me. I turned round, and saw a man forcing his way through the opposite hedge. Somewhat alarmed, I hastily quitted my seat to return home. The person having disengaged himself, and seeing my precipitate retreat, approached towards me, apologizing for the interruption he had been guilty of. I turned to acknowledge his politeness.—*It was the stranger!* I was pleased, alarmed, confused, and our situation was mutual. Never before did I behold the pure eloquence of nature speak so intelligibly. It was her unmasked workings that rose into our cheeks, our eyes, that seemed to free the bounds of time, and bade us view each other as something mutually dear. Though we had never spoken, though we had seen each other but once, and that in a public church, yet we seemed to know that we must not part; the blush had settled on the stranger's heart, and written there, in flaming characters, sentiments of love; the eager gazings of my en-

raptured sight had drawn such matter in, that now I stood like one bereft of sense.

I cannot, neither were it necessary, recal how we gradually subsided into discourse, wandering those paths once sacred to my own solitary step, while the pale moon arose upon our yet unfinished discourse. Oh! those were sweeter hours, and left a sweeter recollection on the mind than ever before gladdened a human heart! Each word he uttered fell like the softest notes of music on my soul, diffusing peace and rapture: I listened, and my ears drank his speech even as the thirsty earth imbibes the blessed rains of heaven; I trembled lest he should cease, and when he did, every thing seemed blank in nature. My heart, which never yet had throbbed with love for any human being, now laid itself before his altar, and owned no other power. Henry! that heart was pure, and might have dignified your choice.

It was in this first conversation that I learned his name was *Henry de la Cour:* that

his father was a half-pay officer of small fortune; and that he himself was not independent, but destined to acquire subsistence in some honourable profession. To me all this was nothing; I thought only of Henry.

At length we parted. I returned home, and found that some alarm had been excited by my unusual stay. My presence, however, dissipated every fear, and my parents, believing that I had been tempted by the fineness of an autumnal evening, made no inquiries: happily for me, or the first fruits of my newly awakened passion must, perhaps, have been a falsehood; for how could I have told my father what he would have been unable to comprehend?

I will not, Sir, extend my narrative by a minute detail of all the interviews which we afterwards had. Suffice it to say, that when, at length, I deemed it necessary to disclose the connexion to my father, and explained the birth and expectations of my Henry, he sternly chid me, and forbad me seeing him

again; for, "I must marry suitably to my birth and fortune."

If ever pity flowed for any human being, it might then have flowed for me. What! forsake my Henry! forget, utterly annihilate, all those endearing visions of future joy that had so long floated before my fancy, and decked my future path of life! Play a subtle woman's part, and put affection off and on even as my garment, and obedient to a father's bidding! And wherefore? Could stern authority have imposed a harsher mandate, had froward nature kindled, in my breast, love for some worthless, some undeserving object? Harsh even then it might be, but could not be unjust; now, honour, reason, and humanity loudly proclaimed against it. What is that mad infatuation which would tyrannise thus over the feelings of the human heart? Feelings which even they who own them, hope not to control.

I would not arm the pert and wanton fury of licentious passion against the sober counsel

of a father's right; but I would for ever condemn, and, were it in my power, annihilate that unjust supremacy which would decide for the heart of youth in a step which concerns their happiness alone, and which, when taken from obedience and not from inclination, too often consigns the meek sufferer to helpless anguish and unavailing sorrow. Humanity shudders to recollect how many victims have bled at the altar of parental authority, and wasted life in pining hopelessness of grief.

I needed not to think upon the subject. My secret resolution was formed, even at the very moment when I heard my father's stern commands. To renounce my Henry was, I felt, impossible; to wed him, with a parent's blessing, was equally so: driven, then, to the extremes of endurance, I resolved to resign the balance into the hands of nature, and to follow her dictates. I anticipated indeed their character, but I forbore to quit the station which society has assigned our sex. I appeared to follow, with reluctance, while my heart and wishes took the lead.

I communicated to Henry what had passed. He was much moved, but he strove to hide it. He bowed to a fate which he deemed irrevocable, and he talked of parting. Parting! Oh! what an icy current seems to freeze through a lover's shuddering frame, whose unwilling ears catch that melancholy sound. I answered by my tears. They spoke forcibly; and, since our hearts, so closely linked, could bear no thoughts of parting, it was but to bind them closer by the marriage vow, and then, should a father's rigid bosom deny a sanction, to court our fortune through the spacious world. The thought, quick as lightning, informed both our minds: Henry urged, and with affected coyness I gave the willing assent which was to seal my future bliss; every thing was pre-arranged, and I was to leave my father's dwelling with my future husband.

That father is now dead. It were an unholy office for me to arraign his memory. I too shall find that oblivious peace which the grave alone can give. Yet, when I look back, and call to mind what agonies I have endured,

what sorrows I have suffered, what tears I have shed, and how meekly I have borne the insulting taunts, the unfeeling scorn, and the gibing contumely of an unfriendly world; when I think that my days have been spent in want, and my nights devoted to solitary anguish; that my frame has wasted beneath the torturing conflict of my mind; that every hope, which so gaily danced before my eyes in my morn of life, has been blasted, withered, by the unfruitful grasp of poverty; and that my unjoyous after-course has been unblessed by a single ray of comfort; when I think of this, and think too that all has flowed from the unnatural tyranny and inflexible severity of a father, tell me who will dare to raise the voice of accusation against me, though I should disturb the ashes of that father by my execrations and my curses?

Here I stop: in my next letter you shall know the conclusion of the sufferings of

JULIA.

London, H——y-Street,
June 27, 1810.

The Contemplatist.

No. V.

SATURDAY, JULY 7, 1810.

Perfidus, sed quamvis perfidus, carus tamen.

TO THE CONTEMPLATIST.

SIR,

IN the execution of my promise, I now continue my narrative.

Every thing was arranged for my departure from my father's dwelling. Night was the time chosen, as being the least liable to unwelcome intrusion. Henry was to have a post-chaise in waiting, which would conduct us to a place of safety; and, on the following morning, we were to be married. I will not deny that my mind dwelt with rapture upon

this scheme rising in proportion to its romantic character. It suited my ardent and enthusiastic feelings. There was in it, in my estimation, something so singular, and therefore so pleasing, that the innocence of virtue was scarcely startled at the contemplation of it. I felt no emotion but that of joy as I prepared the little parcel that was to accompany me; and I took with me nothing that was not absolutely requisite, for my heart seemed to tell me that a parent's forgiveness would not be withheld.

These were the gaieties of expectation, in which the present was forgotten and the future decorated in all the fair colours of my wishes. Yet, when the moment arrived, my resolution failed; my heart sunk within me, and my eyes filled with tears. Twelve o'clock was the hour fixed. Henry was to be in waiting at the outer gate. Eleven had struck, and I was sitting in my room, with my small bundle before me, dreading, yet wishing, the hour to come. During this silent, this solemn interval, the mind had time to revert upon itself, and to conjure up a thousand painful

images. Thought became oppressive, and yet I had no means to escape from it. I surveyed my chamber and its dear, familiar contents, with eyes that swam in tears; and a momentary pang smote me which seemed to predict that I was to be for ever exiled from it. I took pen, ink, and paper, and wrote a few lines to my mother, which I resolved to leave upon my table, to assuage the first paroxysm of grief that would be felt when my flight was discovered. I had just folded it up when the village clock tolled twelve.

Gracious God! Had it been the fatal knell that was to have conducted me to a scaffold, I should hardly have felt a more appalling dread come over me! I sat for a few moments lost in conflicting sensations: but I had approached the verge and could not shrink from the leap.

I gently opened my door. I had to pass the chamber where my father and mother slept. Heaven knows with what a bursting heart I did so. Oh! it was a horrid moment. How like a guilty thief I thought myself, who robbed the innocent of all their little

wealth while they slept the sleep of peace. *I* was all *their* wealth, and yet I could inhumanly snatch it from them. I pictured to myself the distraction they would feel when they should awake and find their ruin. But even then, the sophistry of self-gratification came across my mind, and assisted to hush the terrors of my heart, by whispering to it that I should soon return and repair the evil I was about to commit.

I gained the gate, and threw myself, breathless and weeping, into the arms of Henry. He kissed away my tears, and led me, trembling, to where the carriage was waiting.

It was a clear, moonlight night, which, added to the solemn silence of the hour, awoke a thousand emotions in my breast. Henry spoke only in a whisper; and even this seemed to throw so much of guilt into our conduct, that I half recoiled from the step I had taken. But I had no time to think. We were seated in the carriage, and it drove off at a rapid pace.

We travelled all night, and, in the morning, alighted at an inn, about thirty miles from

my father's house. It was with a rapture which words cannot express, that I saw the first grey of the morn glimmering in the east. I felt relieved; and I anticipated the coming day as the period which was to give a holy sanction to my rashness, by uniting me to Henry. Heavens! How shall I proceed?

As we sat at breakfast, I spoke of marriage. Henry smiled. I thought it was a smile of love and joy, and my heart was gay. When our repast was over, Henry drew near to me, and taking my hand in his, addressed me:—

"Julia, there is a native sanctity in virtue which no human forms can increase. The heart that is filled with honour and liberal sentiments, needs no other monitor to keep its thoughts in awe than the proud consciousness that vice degrades and sullies the breast that owns it. Vulgar minds, indeed, a prey to every rude and lawless passion, submit, without a murmur, to their tempestuous sovereignty; and, in the wild career, lose all recollection of themselves and of the society of which they form a part. To such, and such only, can wholesome restrictions be needful.

Ah! those looks tell me you understand me: need I proceed?"

A horrid thought glanced across my mind. I was breathless. I felt too much. Weep I could not; but, in a voice scarcely articulate, I bade him proceed.

"Feel not incensed my Julia," he continued. "When I would throw off the shackles with which corrupt custom has fettered the rest of mankind, I do but pay the most exalted homage to your virtue, in believing that no ties can make it more lasting, or that, because you have the power to err, your heart would let you."

The full conviction of his intentions now flashed upon me. Merciful heavens! At that moment I could have annihilated him. Love was wholly extinguished, and rage alone possessed me. What! Sink into his mistress? Henry a vile deceiver? A crawling reptile, who could lay snares with subtle villainy, and avouch his infamy with words? I looked at him: it was a look of scorn and defiance.

"Wretch," I exclaimed after a painful struggle for utterance: but then, suddenly

recollecting from what height of happiness I had fallen, my eyes filled with tears, and I added, in a softened tone, "Oh! for pity's sake, let me not think you so vile and abject. Tell me that it was but jest: tell me that you are honorable. Let me not bewilder myself in horrid thoughts that paint you to my mind more hideous than words can represent."

Henry, unmoved by my emotions, unmoved by the tears that now flowed fast down my cheeks, replied, with insulting coolness,—"Pshaw! this is but affectation: 'tis wearing the mask longer than even prudish coquetry demands. Come, my Julia! discard the restraints of vulgar minds: come to my arms, lovely as thou art ———"

He attempted to embrace me; but, with the force and dignity of insulted virtue, I threw him from me: he staggered to the other end of the room, and the severity of my looks awed him, for a moment, into silence.

I was, myself, a prey to the most agonizing sensations that ever rent the human heart.—To find, in the only object my soul had singled out for its stay and comfort through life, base-

ness, cruelty, and vice; to behold all my fondest hopes thus wrecked in an instant; to reflect that I had left my father's hospitable and kindly roof, and must now return to it fallen and insulted: Oh! what anguish would have been spared me at that moment, what subsequent miseries should I not have escaped, had Heaven, in mercy to my affliction, relieved me from a life that had, already, become hateful to me. Yet, it all appeared like a dream. But my persecutor soon recalled me to reality.

"Julia," said he, "I will be candid, condemn me as you may. To marry you I never thought: my situation, my circumstances forbid it. Besides, would I condescend to *steal* away my *wife?*"

"Base, ungenerous man," I replied, "you would condescend to ruin a helpless girl, to ruin a virtuous father and mother: you would condescend to give me and my hopes to endless infamy, and to fill my heart with bitterness. Neither circumstance nor situation would have intervened to obstruct the completion of that design. Oh! shallow artifice! Henry, hear me.—I loved you once, for I

thought you worthy of my love: I thought you virtuous. You are not what you seemed, and the love that dwelt so sweetly on the illusion is now converted into hatred: fly me; leave me; begone, or I'll alarm those within hearing and denounce your baseness."

The firm, undaunted manner with which I uttered these words had its due effect. He quitted the room, and, shortly after, the house. He looked with a smile of scorn upon me as he closed the door.

I was now alone, and I hesitated not a moment about what was to be done. I had money with me, and I resolved to return, immediately, to my parents, and hoped to atone for my error by what had been the purity of my conduct. I knew that the rumour of my flight would soon be spread over the place, and I therefore took care not to arrive till the evening had closed in.

As I entered the street that led to my abode how my heart sunk within me! I passed along, unnoticed, till I arrived at the garden-gate which adjoined my paternal mansion.—A melancholy silence seemed to prevail: no one was to be seen: the moon, just risen, cast

a silver radiance upon the foliage. I walked, musing, for a few moments; how changed, methought, already, from the time when I walked in peace on that very spot with my beloved parents. The idea was resolution, and I hoped, once more, to find, within that little space, my wonted happiness.

As I approached towards the house, I perceived a light in a small parlour where I had often sat, with my work, and watched the setting-sun as it shed a golden lustre over the landscape. I advanced slowly: the window-shutters were half closed, and I could just perceive my mother sitting, with a handkerchief up to her eyes. God! how my heart smote me at that instant! My father was pacing up and down the room in seeming agitation. While I thus stood gazing, with eyes that swam in tears, my favorite spaniel had discovered me, and was whining at my feet: his noise brought out one of the female servants, who, seeing me, exclaimed, with a shriek of joy, "Oh! my young lady!" In an instant afterwards I was sobbing on my mother's bosom. But my father——ah! rash

severity! tore me from her arms, proclaimed me infamous, and forbade me his house!

Oh man! of what materials is thy heart composed? Is it to ape a Roman name, that thus ye shut your feelings against approach, and seem to triumph in the ignorance of mercy? A daughter, locked within a mother's embrace, weeping, innocent, and yet repentant, who could turn her to the world's scorn, infamy, and want, that ever felt a father's transport in his child? When parents teach this cruel lesson, shall we wonder that indifferent minds learn it with too apt a perfection?

He forcibly dragged my mother from me, ordered the servants in, and closed the door. I stood motionless. The magnitude of my feelings absorbed the power of perceiving them. I looked towards my paternal roof, my home, my asylum, my birth-place, and found myself for ever exiled. I heard my mother's cries for her abandoned child. My mind pictured horrors. I tottered towards the door to call for mercy and forgiveness, and fell senseless at the threshold.

How long I lay thus I know not. When I came to myself I was cold and comfortless.—The dews of the night had fallen upon me, and my limbs trembled. My poor *Fido*, my faithful spaniel, was lying by my side, with his fore feet resting across my bosom as if to preserve there the vital warmth. I felt as I had been in a dream, Confused thoughts rushed across my mind. Henry—father—mother—an outcast. I started up and strove to enter. But no: all was fast; all was dark and silent within. I went round to the other side of the house where my mother slept: there was a light in her chamber; even this was comfort to me: but my sighs and wailings were audible; they reached a mother's ear; her window opened softly, and I saw, once more, the honored form which bore me. Involuntarily I fell upon my knees, held forth my hands in supplication, and stammered out the words "forgive me!" She took the ribbon from her head and threw it towards me, as a token of pardon, and exclaimed "God protect you, my Julia." More she would have said, more have done, but my father's

voice called her hence. Ten thousand times I kissed the precious pledge, and I have preserved it as a holy relic that shall comfort me in the hour of death.

Hope now forsook me. I left the garden, and wandered, I know not whither, till the morning dawned upon me. I then repaired to the house of a dear friend, who, I knew, would be a mediator between me and my offended father. When she heard my story she wept with tenderest pity, bade me be comforted, and spoke, with confidence, of my father's forgiveness when he should know that I was yet innocent. She left me with strong assurances of success; but returned, with anguish, to tell me, that neither prayers, nor tears, nor entreaties, could soften that inexorable heart.

Thus abandoned, I looked round to see whither I should turn my forlorn course. To stay in my native place was impossible:—I must fly somewhere. London was the spot where best we may be forgotten when we wish it, and thither I resolved to go. In the menial

employment of a servant I hoped to find a refuge from necessity. Yet, ere I quitted, for ever, scenes that were twined round my heart by the remembrance of the happiest hours there passed that ever gladdened a human being, I took a last farewel of them. I stole, at midnight, once more to my beloved home, walked over every place that was endeared to me, looked, with tearful eyes, upon the little room where was my library, and in which I had wept over fictitious woes less dreadful than my own; and, as I turned away, bade them adieu for ever.

I will not, Sir, detail to you the rest of my miserable life. In London, I found that the purest intentions were of no avail without friends. I offered myself wherever I thought I could get employment: but I was uniformly rejected, sometimes with contempt, sometimes with ridicule, and sometimes with insult.— The little money I had was soon expended, and I had now before my eyes the horrid prospect of a wretched death. From self-annihilation I shrunk back appalled. When

life is held upon contingencies, the props of virtue are shaken; while there is a prize to struggle for, the labour is assuaged; but when contumely imputes the vices that are yet unacted, it requires fortitude to stem the current of temptation. Poverty, in the minds of the million, is synonimous with crime. I was soon taught this bitter lesson. You will consider these, perhaps, but weak palliatives: let no one, however, dare to condemn me for falling till they have withstood the same weight.

A life of prostitution is a life of unmitigated wretchedness: but my career in infamy has been short. I write this on that bed from which I shall never rise again: the constant agony of an upbraiding conscience has preyed upon my vitals; and I hail, with joy, that moment which is to free me from misery.— I shall stand before my Judge, and my father shall stand there too; my crimes shall be read aloud, and every one shall fall like a thunderbolt upon his ear: my punishment shall be declared, and he too shall fall beneath the

frown of Almighty God: for, not a vice has stained my life that draws not its origin from his cruel severity.

Forgive me, Sir, that I have thus trespassed on your time: but there are those who may perhaps reap advantage from the narrative of the dying

JULIA.

London, H——y-Street,
July 3, 1810.

The Contemplatist.

No. VI.

SATURDAY, JULY 14, 1810.

Ardua res est, vetustis novitatem dare, novis auctoritatem, fastiditis gratiam, omnibus vero naturam et naturæ suæ omnia. PLINY.

OF things not to be compared we often attempt the comparison, by forcing them into fanciful analogies; and, when the diversities are too repugnant to coalesce, we strive to establish an absolute superiority where only a relative one can be maintained. In the pride of critical sagacity, we call that discovery which is only error, and imagine those things which it would puzzle the sober

deductions of the judgment to establish. We are pleased, however, with the fertility of our fancy, and call upon the world to bow to it as to the dictates of unerring wisdom.

It is in this manner that some writers have amused themselves with comparing the styles of ADDISON, JOHNSON, and GOLDSMITH: but with what propriety may be anticipated by every one who has perused those authors with critical discrimination. A more advantageous topic of discussion would be to consider the diction of each of these celebrated writers abstractedly, by which we might hope to learn the secrets of its excellence: and though the examination of the style of Addison has been performed by Johnson himself, I shall not therefore be deterred from telling what I think of it, unbiassed by the authority of his name. There are few things, indeed, which may be more safely disputed than the praises and censures of that critic, who delighted to set himself in opposition to the opinions of man-

kind, and sometimes confounded truth with novelty.

Style is not, perhaps, so much the offspring of taste and judgment, as the production of genius. Every man, whose mind is comprehensive, and whose faculties of perception are original and acute, creates, for himself, a peculiar style or mode of expression. As we find, in common life, that the conversation of men differs, according to the degrees of their intellectual powers, so may their written language: and, if this be true, the diction of equally celebrated writers should be considered abstractedly, rather than compared.

It is, perhaps, one of the leading characteristics of genius to be able to form its own language. No imitator is destined to immortality. If we recal the works of our truly great authors, we shall find that they all have a manner distinct from each other.

He who thinks forcibly, will seek correspondent expressions; but, he who wanders

only upon the surface of thought, will be content with common language. A giant cannot move in the trammels of a dwarf: a lofty imagination will seldom stoop beneath its height.

That peculiarity of diction which belongs to an original writer, is the result of labour facilitated by habit. He was first conscious of his mode of thought, and he then endeavoured to make his language suitable. What *he* does *always*, every writer does sometimes, when he rises above, or sinks below, the general tenor of his subject, and exalts or depresses his language accordingly.

Instead, therefore, of comparing the styles of three writers so discriminated from each other as *Addison*, *Johnson*, and *Goldsmith*, it would be more beneficial to critical knowledge to ascertain the respective qualities of each. Let me attempt it: and if I fail to convince my readers, my aim will not be wholly lost if I contribute to their amusement.

When *Addison* wrote, the prose language of this country had not received stability. Dryden, indeed, had written very elegantly in prose; yet, not without such occasional imbecility as would scarcely be found now in a newspaper essay. The prose of Hooker and Temple is often feeble, and that of Shaftsbury turgid. Sprat, whom Johnson praises with such profusion in his life of Cowley, was, notwithstanding, weak and prolix.

Addison, therefore, had not to ascend very high to outstrip his predecessors; and he seems indeed to have been contented with a slender pre-eminence. The term *elegant* has usually been applied to *Addison*, as expressive of his style; but a style merely elegant, without vigour, without a decided character, and without warmth, must be, generally, very insipid.

In the structure of his sentences, *Addison* is often negligent, as may be seen in the cri-

tical analysis which Blair has given of some of his papers. We are told, indeed, by some of his biographers, that he wrote slowly, and corrected with great assiduity and anxiety; if he did, he probably refined the rough stamp of his first composition away, and left a weakly, debilitated mass of artificial formation.

In reading the essays of *Addison*, I am seldom arrested by any sudden elevations, by any harmonious collocation of sentences, or by any happy application of words. He writes in one even tenor, and must, therefore, sometimes fail in preserving a necessary conformity between his style and his subject.

He is not scrupulous in his adoption of words. Such as were most readily obtained, he used; and, it may safely be asserted, that no one paragraph of Addison's could be selected in which the language shall be unsusceptible of improvement. As far indeed

as verbal accuracy is to be considered, he must be regarded as inferior to many living writers far beneath him in every other quality of mind. Examples, in support of this assertion, I could produce, if to produce them were thought necessary.

No doubt, to this opinion will be opposed the encomiastic one of Johnson, in his life of *Addison*. Why he deviated so widely from a model which he thought so excellent, can be accounted for only upon the principle which I laid down in the beginning of this paper, that style is the offspring of genius. A man of weaker powers, with an equal admiration of *Addison's* style, would certainly have imitated it: but Johnson was to create, not to adopt, a style. When Boswell mentioned to him the great difference which there was between his mode of composition, and that of *Addison's*, which he had so lavishly commended, he replied, " Sir, Addison had *his* style, and I have *mine*." Whether, however, his commendation has a just foundation, may admit of a doubt.

The great excellence of *Addison*, as an essayist, is the propriety of his thoughts upon serious and elevated topics, and his wit and humour upon meaner ones. When he is gay and humorous we have no reason to complain of his diction: it is then, and then only perhaps, that it possesses all that due conformity to the subject, which is the perfection of writing. It seems to flow naturally from him; and when we consider how nearly allied some of his lighter lucubrations are to the common tenor of common conversation, we are surprised to learn that he was so inferior in colloquial excellence. This inferiority must have arisen from the slow combination of his thoughts. In words he could scarcely be deficient; but he could not readily bring, to immediate application, the stores he possessed; and, as conversation is a state of quick and instantaneous interchange of ideas, the moment that is lost to reply, is lost for ever.

The transition from the style of *Addison*

to that of *Johnson*, is like passing from the coldly elegant scenes of Racine to the fiery eloquence of Shakspeare. *Johnson* impressed upon his language, what, in my opinion, every writer of original genius must do, the qualities of his own mind. As he thought with dignity, he wrote so. As he felt confidence in his own powers, his language was bold, energetic, and decisive. As his knowledge was desultory, his periods were sententious.

For the purposes of moral inculcation, the style of *Johnson* is excellent. He enforces his precepts in language which commands attention; he compresses his sentiments into short and weighty sentences that assume the force of maxims. The expressions he adopts are those which best convey his meaning, and, at the same time, stamp it on the mind of the reader.

As *Addison* could not ascend, so *Johnson* could not descend. He never trifles, or, if he

attempt it, he moves in fetters. I will not deny, that had he attended, or had he been capable of attending, to the following maxim of a French writer, (which is illustrated with more force than delicacy,) he would have been more generally pleasing:—

"*Quelque ton sublime qu'on prenne, si on ne mele pàs quelque repos a ses ecarts, on est perdu. L'uniformité de sublime degoute. On ne doit pas couvrir son cu de diamans comme sa tete. Sans varieté jamais de beauté.*"

Johnson could not attain the easy, natural diction of common narrative, the spritely interchange of colloquial vivacity, or the adaptation of language to an assumed character. Whatever he wrote bore the impress of his own mind. In *Rasselas*, Imlac and the waiting maid, the robber and the philosopher, all speak a kindred language. In reading the prose of *Johnson* the same effect is produced as by the poetry of Pope. The ear is some-

times wearied with its monotony: *abundat dulcibus vitiis.*

But to provide mere amusement is an inferior effort of the mind. *Johnson* aspired higher, and attained to what he aspired. He left the subordinate offices of literature to subordinate claimants, and advanced himself to the important dignity of a teacher of moral wisdom.

If it be allowed that where we would instruct, we must first excite attention, then, it cannot be denied that the style of *Johnson* is admirably fitted to effect its purpose. No one can read him with a vagrant mind. As, in society, we find that persons of a grave aspect, deliberate utterance, and forceful expression, obtain, and, as it were, command respect and attention even from the thoughtless and the dissipated, so the language of *Johnson* chains the mind down to its subject, and forbids it to trifle with its pages.

Such is the ordinary character of *Johnson's* style: but it sometimes ascends higher and awakens in the mind passions of a higher cast. Though pathos was not his peculiar province, yet he is often highly pathetic: nor would it be impossible to select instances of sublimity from his writings.

Let me add, that as an essayist, I prefer *Johnson* to *Addison*.

I am now to speak of *Goldsmith*: a writer who may boldly take his place by the side of those already mentioned, nor fear diminution by comparison. *Goldsmith* certainly formed himself in the school of *Addison*: but he had all the excellencies without the defects of his master. In wit and humour he was nothing inferior, and in the power of occasional elevation he was much superior.

Goldsmith is another instance of a man excelling in the charms of a plain and natural

diction on paper, yet absolutely unable to carry on rational conversation. It was usual for *Goldsmith* to say of himself that he always argued best, and always gained the victory, when he argued alone. No man, in fact, wrote more wisdom and talked more folly than poor *Oliver*.

Goldsmith, I think, excels all writers in our country in the power of giving appropriate language to fictitious characters. He embraced a wider sphere of literary exertion than Addison, and has, consequently, afforded greater proofs of the extent of his capacity. In his essays we find many narratives, the dramatic part of which is excellently supported. The character of *Beau Tibbs* is finished with matchless accuracy.

In the structure of his sentences he has greater harmony and greater variety than *Addison*. In his language he is more scru-

pulous. He does not offend so often by colloquial phrases or obsolete combinations. His prose is not so feeble, nor so coldly regular. In felicity of expression, when intended to convey a plain and simple idea, or a natural emotion of common minds, he is perhaps unequalled.

A very conspicuous merit of *Goldsmith's* prose is the lucid arrangement of his sentences. Every word, and every period, appear to be just where they ought to be. We have no evidence that he composed slowly, or that he laboured much to correct what he had once written: and such perspicuity of arrangement is, therefore, the more remarkable in a man whose ideas in conversation were so perplexed and confused.

Harmony, simplicity, clearness, and propriety in relation to the matter, are the predominant qualities of *Goldsmith's* general style;

but, as he was also capable of elevation, I may add to the above, occasional dignity and energy of language. As a model to be studied, I should prefer it to *Addison's*, for it is more pure.

In delivering these opinions I am not ignorant that I oppose the general voice. The cant of criticism has long been in favour of the *elegant Addison*, whom, in the consideration of language, I estimate below both *Johnson* and *Goldsmith.* With *Johnson* indeed, it is as ridiculous to compare him as it would be to compare Shakspeare and Milton: but with *Goldsmith*, the attempt is defensible, for there is some analogy between them. The lapse of half a century, however, during which the English language had been gradually refining, afforded to the latter opportunities of excellence which were denied to his predecessor. To a Shakspeare or a Milton only is it given to anticipate the progress of time in the construction of their language.

Inferior minds must wait upon that progress, and receive from it, their character and complexion.

The Contemplatist.

No. VII.

SATURDAY, JULY 21, 1810.

Criticism, as it was first instituted by Aristotle, was meant a standard of judging well. DRYDEN.

THERE are few subjects of miscellaneous literature which are perused with more avidity than didactic and illustrative criticism; whether it be that we are pleased to see an author passing through an ordeal from which he can hardly be expected to issue untouched, or that we are honestly anxious to rectify our own ideas, and to enlarge the boundaries of our own acquirements. The true motive is, perhaps, a compound of both. We are not unwilling to pursue an inquiry which may lead to the detection of error and

to the diminution of another's fame, and we hope, also, to have our own minds convinced by the force of the arguments employed, or to have its stores enlarged by the communication of superior knowledge. But the object of my present paper is rather to gratify the passion than to trace its cause, as I mean to offer to my readers some observations upon the language and sentiments of Milton's *Samson Agonistes*, a poem more frequently praised than read, by those who find it easier to repeat the decisions of others than to form their own. It may, indeed, seem a fruitless labour to criticise what has already passed under the discriminating observation of Johnson: but, when we recollect the force of the political and literary prejudices of that writer, it may, perhaps, be a task of merit and utility. My intention, however, is neither to controvert nor to defend the strictures of Johnson: I intend to offer those opinions which suggested themselves to me upon the perusal of this dramatic poem.

That it is confessedly written upon the model of the Greek drama is well known; and

that it should, therefore, have few of those qualities which belong to the theatrical productions of this country is natural. It is one of the ends of writing to please, and pleasure must be adapted to the state of the recipient. What gave delight to an ancient Greek or Roman, need not, necessarily, give the same delight to a people removed, in time, centuries from their era; and we find that in some cases it does not. It is the bigotry of erudition only which can hope to assimilate discordant principles in attempting to excite pleasure by means which are approved, not from their congruity, but from their antiquity. All taste is founded upon feeling. There is a strong moral and intellectual, as well as a physical sensibility, and this intellectual sensibility is the basis upon which alone can be reared the matured offspring of education, habit, and judgment, which we denominate *taste.* There is a wide difference between the perception of beauty and harmony and between the feeling of it. Lord Kaimes was capable of demonstrating, with philosophical precision, the very form and character of a

noble or sublime thought: but I doubt whether he ever *felt* a sublime or noble thought with that instantaneous sympathy which is the unequivocal evidence of a delicate and refined taste.

It seldom, perhaps never, happens, that an author is read with the same approbation by a foreign student, because a very great portion of the merit on which his reputation is built must necessarily consist of felicities of language and illustrations of manners, which cannot be felt unless understood, and cannot be understood unless known. This is true in a general sense, and it is particularly true with regard to the drama, which is still more an exhibition of national modes and customs, even when founded upon events that are *not* national; for, I suppose an ancient Roman, could he be called into temporary existence, would seek, in vain, for Roman forms of expression or Roman ideas, in *Julius Cæsar*, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, or in *Coriolanus*.— Addison has said, that a Roman ploughman probably spoke the Latin language with greater purity than the finest modern Latin

scholar that ever existed; and, in the same manner, it may be said that a Roman centurion was more truly a Roman, in his daily and most familiar thoughts, than even the pen of a Shakspeare could make a *Cæsar*, an *Antony*, or a *Brutus*.

It may indeed be considered as impossible to transfuse the national character of any country into the page which is written centuries after that country has lost its name among nations: and hence, the difficulty of awakening kindred sentiments in the mind of a reader, when he is occupied with manners and customs foreign from his own knowledge of experience.

If these opinions be founded in truth, it will then follow, that *Samson Agonistes* being written in imitation of a foreign model, and being founded upon an event not national, has two powerful difficulties to struggle against in its effect upon the mind.

But, to dismiss this consideration, I shall now proceed to offer a few observations upon its execution and upon the sentiments which it contains.

The proemial monologue is written with

considerable pathos, a quality not often to be found in the muse of Milton; and, when Samson deplores his own blindness, our feelings of pity are, at once, transferred to the author. The evils attendant upon that privation are enumerated with force and truth; not forgetting, (what is, perhaps, the greatest and most afflictive of them all),

> "being in light, expos'd
> To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong
> Within doors, or without, still as a fool,
> In power of others, never in my own."

To a rational being, imagination itself cannot surely conceive a keener or more perpetual misery than the consciousness of constant dependence on the mercy and forbearance of man; a state, surrounded with terrors which exist without diminution, and almost without that hope which alleviates those terrors in the breast of any other individual.

The complaint uttered in the following remonstrance is natural. When we suffer, we willingly ask why some better arrangement did not secure us from the necessity of suffering.

Since light so necessary is to life,
And almost life itself, if it be true,
That light is in the soul,
She all in every part; why was the sight
To such a tender ball as the eye confin'd,
So obvious and so easy to be quenched?
And not as feeling, through all parts diffus'd,
That she might look, at will, thro' every pore?

The incumbrance of a chorus is very sensibly felt in this poem. It is at once unnatural and superfluous. The mind is dissatisfied with so violent a deviation from the ordinary means of human intercourse, and it is offended at the employment of what might be omitted with advantage. Milton, however, was doubtless satisfied with what he considered as a happy adaptation of the Grecian muse to the English language. The pride of learning was propitiated at the expense of good taste and good sense. The ancient chorus can never be employed to advantage in the modern drama. Caractacus and Elfrida are proofs of this.

I have always thought that there is an irreverent use made of the name and power

of the deity in the following lines. Samson deplores the circumstance of having given an opportunity to the Philistines of magnifying and extolling their idol *Dagon* as the power by whose means he is now captive and blind among them: but, he adds,

This only hope relieves me, that the strife
With me hath end; all the contest is now
'Twixt God and Dagon: Dagon hath presum'd,
Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,
His deity comparing and preferring
Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,
Will not connive or linger, thus provok'd,
But will arise, and his great name assert:
Dagon must stoop, and shall, ere long, receive
Such a discomfit, as shall quite despoil him
Of all these boasted trophies won on me,
And with confusion blank his worshippers.

Surely no degree of enthusiasm for the genius of Milton can consider this with pleasure. The idea of a personal contest between a true and a false god reminds us of the absurdities of pagan mythology.

There seems, indeed, to be, in Milton, more perhaps than in any other writer, an obscu-

rity and confusion in his own conceptions of the omnipotence of the deity. Forgetting that the idea of *omnipotence* annihilates the *necessity* of *means*, for the accomplishment of an end, he constantly represents to us the supreme power as producing consequences not by its immediate act and will, and strives to excite our wonder, that by an apparently inadequate medium it is enabled to perform certain actions. But, it is consonant to our ideas of divine omnipotence, to suppose that what it wills it can perform merely by its own resolution and act: and, therefore, it is inconsistent in Milton to make the chorus exclaim,

Oh madness, to think use of strongest wines
And strongest drinks our chief support of health;
When God, with these forbidd'n made choice to rear
His mighty champion, strong above compare,
Whose drink was only from the liquid brook.

This is puerile; for the deity, by his own act, *could* have given, to the pliant sinews of infancy, corporeal strength even beyond that of Samson. To that power which finds every thing possible, only human weakness can imagine limits.

The most spirited and energetic part of this poem is the colloquy between *Samson* and *Dalilah*: and this, he doubtless wrote with feeling acrimony from the recollection of his own conjugal infelicity. Dr. Johnson says, that in all his writings he expresses a more than Turkish contempt for women. This, however, is not true, for surely he exalts the female character in Paradise Lost. It does not, indeed, appear, from the accounts of his biographers, that he had much reason to entertain an exalted notion of the sex: and when he attributes to them fickleness, wantonness, and deceit, does he wander far from truth?

Can it be doubted, by any one who knows the domestic history of Milton, that he wrote the following from conviction of its verity?

Out, out, hyena! these are thy wonted arts,
And arts of every woman false like thee,
To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray,
Then, as repentant, to submit, beseech,
And reconcilement move with feign'd remorse,
Confess, and promise wonders in her change,
Not truly penitent, but chief to try
Her husband, how far urged his patience bears,

His virtue or weakness which way to assail:
Then, with more cautious and instructed skill
Again transgresses and again submits:
That wisest and best men, full oft beguil'd
With goodness principl'd not to reject
The penitent, but ever to forgive,
Are drawn to wear out miserable days
Intangl'd with a poisonous bosom snake,
If not by quick destruction soon cut off
As I by thee, to ages an example.

The bitterness of this reproof can be heightened only by the recollection of its truth.

The same personal feelings which prompted the above, probably dictated the following, in which that allusion is made to individual merit which Milton might proudly claim:

It is not virtue, wisdom, valour, wit,
Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit,
That woman's love can win or long inherit.

This is dignified; but what solemnity of countenance can withstand the conclusion?

But what it is, hard is to say,
Harder to hit,
(Which way soever men refer it)
Much like thy riddle, Samson, in one day
Or sev'n, though one should musing sit.

That the muse of Milton has cowered her lofty wing when soaring where human inquiry is not permitted to pierce, is confessed; and it is palliated by the boldness of the attempt; but, that he who wrote the first three books of Paradise Lost should write the above is an anomaly not easily accounted for. Yet this is not all; for in this same speech of the chorus are to be found lines, surpassing perhaps those already quoted in absurdity of construction. I will transcribe the whole, because the poet still indulges in his invective against women and the infelicity of the conjugal state:—

Is it for that such outward ornament
Was lavished on their sex, that inward gifts
Were left for haste unfinish'd, judgment scant,
Capacity not rais'd to apprehend
Or value what is best
In choice, but oftest to affect the wrong?
Or was too much of self-love mix'd,
Of constancy no root enfix'd,
That either they love nothing or not long?

Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best
Seeming at first all heavenly under virgin veil,
Soft, modest, meek, demure,

Once join'd, the contrary she proves, a thorn
Intestine, far within defensive arms
A cleaving mischief, in his way to virtue
Adverse and turbulent, or by her charms
Draws him away enslav'd
With dotage, and his sense deprav'd
To folly and shameful deeds which ruin ends.
What pilot so expert, but needs must wreck
Embark'd with such a steersmate at the helm?

Favour'd of Heav'n who finds
One virtuous, rarely found
That in domestic good combines:
Happy that house! his way to peace is smooth;
But virtue which breaks thro' all opposition,
And all temptation can remove,
Most shines, and most is acceptable above.

Therefore God's universal law
Gave to the man despotic pow'r
Over his female in due awe,
Nor from that right to part an hour,
Smile she or lour.
So shall he least confusion draw
On his whole life, not sway'd
By female usurpation or dismay'd.

In this passage also there is, I believe, enough to offend both the critic and the mo-

ralist, for neither wisdom nor humanity can sanction the doctrine of tyranny as laid down by the poet. It partakes of more than "Turkish contempt," and approaches nearer to the vulgar brutality of those beings who identify the oppression of the unresisting with the vigorous controul of the rebellious. If Milton practised what he taught, who shall wonder that his wives deserted him?

The dignity of the tragic style will not admit of that minor species of wit which is sometimes included in punning: yet Milton could not always resist the temptation when he wishes to express contempt. Thus Samson says to *Harapha*,

Therefore, without feign'd shifts, let be assign'd
Some narrow place inclos'd, where *sight* may give
thee,
Or rather *flight*, no great advantage on me.

And again, the chorus observes,

Fathers are wont to *lay up* for their sons,
Thou for thy son art bent to *lay out*.

Nor is the expression, *giantship*, applied to

Harapha, consistent with the solemnity expected in a dramatic poem.

While noticing the errors of this production, I will advert to one or two more. In the following lines the simile is mean and vulgar :—

> But he, tho' blind of sight,
> Despis'd and thought extinguish'd quite,
> With inward eyes illuminated
> His fiery virtue rous'd
> From under ashes into sudden flame;
> And as an evening dragon came
> Assailant on the perched roosts,
> And rests in order rang'd
> Of tame villatic fowl.

Surely a nobler comparison might have been found, if sought for, than an irruption into a hen roost, to illustrate the horrible destruction of a multitude by the sudden falling in of the building which contained them.

The ludicrous flow of the following couplet needs no comment:

> Some dismal accident it needs must be,
> What shall we do, stay here or run and see?

These are minute faults, yet they should not be beneath the notice of him who seeks to improve by illustrative criticism. To ascend as high as Milton can scarcely be hoped by any one; not to sink so low is within the power of all who have mental qualities worthy of exertion. Let this defend the apparent unimportance of my strictures.

Before I conclude this paper, I will point out a passage which is, perhaps, imitated from Massinger, an author doubtless familiar to Milton, and worthy of being familiar to him. The chorus exclaims,

> Of good or bad so great, of bad the former,
> For evil news rides post, while good news baits.

In the *Picture*, by Massinger, is a passage very similar to the above:

> Ill news, madam,
> Is swallow wing'd, but what's good walks upon
> crutches.

The Contemplatist.

No. VIII.

SATURDAY, JULY 28, 1810.

Nemo adeo ferus est, ut non mitiscere possit,
Si modo culturæ patientem commodet aurem.

HORACE.

TO plead the cause of humanity is a task pleasing to the heart of a good man; and it is one, also, from the execution of which more honour is derived than from inquiries, however ingenious, which tend only to amuse the mind, or to gratify the curiosity. Speculative benevolence is sometimes produc-

tive of more extensive benefit than actual, because the latter may be only local and temporary, while the former may continue to operate unobstructed by time or place. The writer who consecrates his talents to the cause of virtue, is a never-ceasing benefactor to mankind. There is scarcely a moment when he may not solace himself with the idea that he is producing some good: the page which he has devoted to the inculcation of morality, may be working its effect, when the author is resigned to languor or to mirth, or when he is pining in sickness and in sorrow: and he may console himself with the hope, that when even death shall have consigned him to the dreary abode of the sepulchre, his fellow creatures will be still benefited by the labours of his life.

Inspirited by this conviction, I have formed the resolution of dedicating this paper, and some ensuing ones, to the consideration of a topic which has been brought before the pub-

lic mind by a nobleman, whose name will long be remembered, and long revered, by all whose natures are not unsusceptible of the feelings of pity and humanity. The topic to which I allude, is *Cruelty to Animals*; nor will I be deterred from my purpose by any consciousness of my own insignificance, or the small influence which I may be expected to have over the conduct of my fellow subjects. Public opinion must be gradually overcome. The conversion that is progressive is likely to be permanent; and, though it may not be the lot of every man to lead a nation's voice, yet, there is, perhaps, no man who is totally incapable of exerting, somewhere, a salutary influence. We allow that the meanest individual has power to communicate the seeds of vice and immorality, and why then may not the same individual become the vehicle of virtue and humanity? To wait for splendid opportunities of doing good, is to let life slip away in the intention of benevolence; but to seize, with sincerity, every occa-

sion of doing it, is to approve ourselves worthy in the sight of God. And let no man be withheld from exerting himself to his utmost, whatever may be his station in society; in that station let him act, and he will not act in vain. For myself, if I shall hereafter have reason to believe that what I am about to write has carried conviction to one heart only, I shall not think my labour fruitlessly employed.

The first emotion with which the mind is filled, as it contemplates the relation of brutes to man, is that of kindness. They are weak, we are powerful: they are obedient, we are imperative: they serve, we command. They are humble and patient; they endure the ills which we inflict upon them without a murmur, and are still as ready to obey as if they had been cherished with abounding love and mercy. With us they contend not for supremacy. Their actions are devoid of all that can justly provoke us to resentment; and though, for

the purposes of domestic and public economy, needful asperities may be requisite to fit them for our use, yet, they do not justify the wanton abuse of a privilege which we possess by inheritance, but for which we shall surely be responsible hereafter. He who is truly merciful, will always avoid the infliction of unnecessary pain; and even that which is necessary, he will perform with emotions of sorrow and regret. That heart must be lamentably hardened which is insensible to the wailings of distress, which bleeds not at the groans, of the dumb creation. It is scarcely to be believed, that in civilized man that ferocity is to be found which can behold, unmoved, the agonies of animals subjected to needless torture; nay, more, (and I blush while I write it) that there should exist individuals who can malignantly inflict pain and anguish upon unoffending creatures, and exult in the sobs and convulsions of expiring nature.

Shame and reproof have lost all power over

such minds; all feeling is annihilated in their hearts, and it is vain to hope for their reformation by the gentler impulses of awakened compassion and remorse. No, the strong arm of the law must be raised to awe them. But, shall we be told, that to curb such horrible excesses, to abridge the empire of groans and misery, to give humanity a wider play, and to gratify the virtuous feelings of our nature, is to infringe upon the indefeasible rights of man, and to enforce arbitrary and vexatious regulations? In what book, in what record, in what moral code shall we find it written, that man HAS A RIGHT TO TORTURE? In what bloody pandect shall we find this right acknowledged? In what constitution are we told that it is morally or politically right to abuse the creatures of God's hand? What modern Draco will dare to promulge an ordinance so monstrous, so iniquitous, so impious? No, the law of nature is here our guide, whose voice condemns, loudly condemns, the horrid practice.

There is no bosom so obdurate, but it will confess this truth, if it be properly presented. Nature is always the same, and when she can be approached through the thick envelopements which passion, habit, and society have thrown around her, we shall find her uniform in her decisions. Even they who commit the very enormities of which I now complain, would not deliberately inculcate them to their offspring, nor defend the perpetration of them upon the abstract principles of propriety and right. Men will dare to do what they will not dare to justify. It is so in all other vices, and it is so in this. The practice of it is continued without reflection, and without remorse: but place it before their eyes in all its hideous truth, and they would shudder at the monstrous apparition. Like the guilty Thane, they will be "afraid to *think* of what they have done; *look* on it they dare not."

Here then is that solemn voice which

speaks in every bosom, and which no man ever despised with impunity. To this let him appeal, who is tempted to doubt the propriety of regulations, whose object it is to restrain those by the fear of punishment who can be restrained by no other motive. Let him ask himself if animals have corporeal feeling like his own? Let him ask whether pain be a desirable sensation, or whether we have a right to inflict it unnecessarily? The answers to these questions will be the noblest sanction of those measures which Lord Erskine is enforcing in behalf of injured animals. They too, who stigmatise the proceeding as the offspring of a morbid delicacy, of a too refined humanity, shew only their own weakness or their own cruelty. The cause of humanity is the cause of nature and of God; and is it possible to defend such a cause too zealously? Believe it not, ye who are willing to embrace any counsel which flatters your own doings. Hearken not to the delusion which would persuade you that it is weak-

ness, and not virtue, that bids you be merciful. Throw away the stubborn prejudices which obscure your reason and harden your hearts, and learn compassion even for the meanest creature that has life and feeling. You will never want the mercy which you shew, nor will you be without a sweet consolation when you reflect upon your deeds.

The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from Heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blessed:
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mighty.

We do pray for mercy,
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. SHAKSPEARE.

There is a fashion in most things, and I wish I could succeed in bringing humanity into fashion. Man will do much from custom which he will not do from reason; and it is

therefore of importance that he should acquire the habit of doing right. A vice that is generally discountenanced will always be acted with caution and timidity; but that which has ceased to be regarded with abhorrence by the mass of mankind, will be perpetrated with few emotions of shame. It is thus with cruelty to animals, which, unless flagrantly infamous, seldom meets with that reprobation which it were to be wished always followed it. If, therefore, any means can be devised, by which the minds of the multitude may be awakened to a due sense of the enormity of this practice, the basis will be laid of its gradual extinction; and to effect this salutary reformation must be the labour of many individuals directed to the same purpose. The subject being thus brought before them, under various aspects, on various occasions, and with various degrees of ability, the great stream of public opinion will be slowly turning from its present channel, till at length it will be happily directed into one where its

course may produce every effect which a wise and good man can wish for.

They who condemn the project of legal interference, seem not to have any very exact notions upon the subject. Eager to display their own sagacity, by detecting the weakness of a legislative measure, they confound liberty with licentiousness, and pretend to have many fears lest every man should be abridged of an unlimited right to exercise cruelty. But this ferocious freedom may be safely resisted. It will always be easy to distinguish between needful severity and wanton barbarity; and, besides, the very consciousness that there *is* a law to punish cruelty will operate as a powerful check upon those individuals who, now, set at defiance every feeling of humanity. No man can walk through the streets of this metropolis without having hourly occasion to wish that he could call in the aid of power to befriend the harmless victims of human brutes. Without such an auxiliary, interference only sub-

jects the intruder to such consequences as every man is not disposed to encounter.

I would willingly, however, divest the lovers of English liberty of all fears for the constitution, of which they are so vociferously proud, by convincing them that such laws as I am sure it is the intention of Lord Erskine to suggest, will never rob my countrymen of one legitimate right. It is the business of law, negatively to enforce the practice of virtue by the prohibition of vice, and whatever comes under this denomination, whatever is an offence against the moral system of society, may, and ought to be, the object of legal punishment. A misdemeanor may be more or less criminal, but if it be a misdemeanor, there can be no doubt that some correction of it should be provided. The multiplication of crimes is one of the consequences of civilization; but, it is another consequence, that as those crimes become dangerous or inconvenient to society, the wisdom of the legislature

provides remedies. Let no man believe that political liberty can exist with moral depravity. Where good and bad are left in undistinguished confusion, there exists a radical source of corruption which, by infecting the principles of conduct, prepares the way for a universal degeneracy of manners that, like a canker, will fester round the core of social life, and spread infection through its inmost fibres. But, to oppose a barrier to such degeneracy, is the office of well-digested laws; and a nation is then most truly great when it is most virtuous. If there be any one who is prepared to prove, that the exercise of wanton cruelty towards animals is not a crime, it will be then proper to consider how we shall resist an attempt to shackle it with penal laws; but, while the general voice of mankind, while universal nature denounces it as a crime, in the abstract, why should it be wished to shelter it from that visitation of punishment which we judge to be so necessary in all other cases?

But there are some who think it a needless refinement of humanity, and who condemn it as a measure which may enervate the national character. What! is our courage in the field, or on the seas, to perish, if we are not allowed to feed it by a cowardly infliction of pain upon a helpless, a harmless, an unresisting animal? Is the heroic ardour of the warrior to be derived from so dastardly a source? Shall our armies be beaten, and our navies taken, when it is no longer permitted to our populace to strike out the eyes, to dissever the tendons, to crush the bones, or mercilessly to scourge the unfortunate brute that chance places within their power? Must we, without the continuance of such practices, lose, immediately, that venerable and honoured name which our ancestors have transmitted to us as a precious deposit, and which we have yet virtue enough to love and cherish. I hope not: I hope our national character is founded upon something better than this savage freedom which is now so loudly

insisted on. I hope we may still continue to be a great, a brave, and a generous people, even though there should pass a law to punish causeless, or vindictive cruelty to animals.

Surely it is no evidence, either of manhood or of honour, to oppress the unresisting, or to punish the unoffending. Whoever looks upon the animal creation with a mind properly disposed, will be immediately struck with the conviction, that man, though he is the lord, was never meant to be the tyrant of it. The sense of benefits received is, in most cases, sufficient to ensure kindness towards those who confer them. But here it is otherwise. We are unmindful of all that we obtain, and we recompense fidelity, usefulness, and cheerful obedience with stripes and blows. I am willing to believe, however, that iniquity so flagrant, requires only to be known and felt to be detested; and I shall resume, therefore, this subject in some ensuing papers, not with-

out the hope, that by repeated efforts I may be able to aid, in some degree, the success of a cause so truly noble, generous, and humane.

The Contemplatist.

No. IX.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 4, 1810.

——— Quæque ipse miserrima vidi,
Et quorum pars magna fui. ———
Quanquam animus meminisse horret, luctuque refugit:
Incipiam. —— VIRGIL.

THE recollection of the sufferings of JULIA, whose narrative has been given in the fourth and fifth numbers of my lucubrations, was yet fresh in my memory, when I received the following communication through the hands of my publishers:

TO THE CONTEMPLATIST.

SIR,

I KNOW no person to whom I can so properly address myself, on the present occasion, as to yourself; for you have acquired a sort of right to be acquainted with the last moments of one whose agonies of mind you

have contributed to soothe. JULIA, whose melancholy story will, I hope, prove a lesson to the cruelty of parental tyranny, and operate as a check upon the ardour of youthful love; JULIA, whose heart was pure, and whose principles were right, even in the midst of vice and misery, is now no more. She breathed her last in my arms.

I, Sir, am that "dear friend" she mentions, who, when she first transgressed, strove, but in vain, to stand between her and her father's curses. I fruitlessly endeavoured to persuade her to remain in her native place, and to try what repeated solicitations might do, operating upon decaying parental anger. But her pride was too great: she felt that she was essentially innocent, and that the rigid severity of her father was beyond the measure of her offence. When she left me, to go to London, I endeavoured to fortify her resolutions of virtue by my counsel; and, for some some after her residence in the metropolis, she continued to correspond with me. To this I diligently urged her, because her letters were a source of comfort both to myself and to her unhappy mother,

to whom I always shewed them, and whose venerable eyes never yet perused them but with a flood of tears. These letters were, for a period, written with all the appearance of a composed and tranquil mind: but, latterly, they became less frequent, and less coherent; they seemed to be produced by some uncommon perturbation of feeling; and, in my answers, I sought to soothe this apparent state of anxiety. But she took no notice of my endeavours, and the last letter I ever received from her was the following:—

"Maria! Weep for me: pray for me. Merci-
"ful God! What am I now? Tell my father, tell
"my unrighteous sire, his unhallowed curses fasten
"on me! What a gulph yawns before me! Dear,
"dear friend, these lines are blotted with hot and
"scalding tears, that fall quick from my galled eyes.
"My hand trembles.—Maria! you loved me.—Oh
"my mother! meek, unoffending parent, where is
"now your once adored Julia? Julia, whose smile
"welcomed you in the morning, and whose parting
"kiss at night, imprinted on your honoured lips,
"was the blessing that soothed you into repose.—
"Maria! I conjure you mention not my name
"to her: for I am lost to her, to you, to myself,
"to the world, to God!"

You will easily conceive, Sir, that I read this letter with feelings of no common poignancy; and the first thought that occurred to my mind was, that my unhappy friend, driven to the last extremes of poverty, had wrought up her mind to the horrid purpose of self-destruction. Full of this belief, I was wretched. I could not, in mercy, shew the letter to her mother. I beguiled her with various accounts; and, meanwhile, wrote several letters to Julia, but received no answer; the last two, indeed, were returned to me under cover from the general post-office—for Julia was not to be found! My suspicions were now confirmed; and I wept over her memory as of one in another state of being. Her mother I suffered to remain in a state of dubious anxiety, not having resolution to communicate the whole to her. Sometimes, indeed, I had hopes that she might be living; for, with trembling solicitude I examined the public papers, but met with nothing that confirmed the apprehended circumstances of her death.

Some months passed away in this state of

uncertainty, during which time her father paid the debt of nature. I was the witness of his last moments, and I witnessed them with horror. He was a proud and stubborn man: a man who would persist in error rather than acknowledge himself to have been wrong. In the first fury of his rage he had forbidden his daughter her home; nor would he, from that moment, suffer any person to mention her name to him. But his inward feelings were visible by their outward effects. He was no longer gay and cheerful: he lost his relish for discourse and company; his days were spent in moody silence, and his nights in sleepless sorrow; he rarely walked out, for he felt that every finger was pointed at him, as a cruel and unjust father, while the dejected and woe-worn countenance of his wife hourly reproached him as the barbarous murderer of her earthly joys; he grew sullen and reserved; he looked no one in the face; and he was a slow but deserved victim to the corroding canker of an accusing conscience. His health declined, and he found himself at length unable to quit his chamber. There I

often visited him ; and though my presence revived the recollection of his daughter, yet he delighted to see me. But he never spoke of her. How deeply, however, the sense of his rigid conduct, and of her innocence, affected him, the following instance will prove:

One day, as he was turning over some loose papers that were contained in a small writing desk, a sudden tremulous start of his whole body, accompanied with an expression of uncommon agony in his countenance, alarmed me. I hastened to him and inquired if he was unwell? He looked at me, but made no answer, and I saw that his eyes were full of tears. He dropped the lid of the desk, but suddenly lifted it up again: his agitation increased: his tears flowed; drops of perspiration started from his brows, and he sobbed aloud. When he saw me about to speak, he hastily quitted the room.

There was something so strange, so unaccountable in all this, that I ventured to trespass upon the limits of confidence, and to look into his desk. Alas! I beheld there the cause of his distress. There was an interest-

ing sketch of Julia, drawn in crayons, by herself, and under which her father had written with a pencil, *My dear child.* The unexpected sight of this had overcome him; for she there appeared, as in truth she was, lovely and innocent. I could not myself, behold it without emotion.

It was but a few days after this that he finished his earthly career. In the morning of the last day he had received the sacrament; but this solemn rite did not seem to communicate, to him, that holy calm which it usually does to the dying moments of the good man. There was something awfully shocking in his look. His eyes had a fixed and terrific glare: his nostrils were expanded; his teeth gnashed; his breathing was short and loud: his fleshless hands grasped, convulsively, the bedclothes: his grey hairs, matted with perspiration, were erect: on his hollow cheeks stood big drops of sweat: and, sometimes he would dash his hands forward, as if to drive away something horrible that strove to approach him. In this state I sat and watched him, while nature, growing to a close, struggled

but feebly with her adversary; till, at length, he sunk back upon his pillow and expired, exclaiming, "Julia! forgive me."

May every parent who reads this passage, and who beholds here no fictitious woes, no imaginary colouring, learn to moderate that power which nature and society have placed in their hands: and, ere they doom a guiltless child to want, to misery, and to vice, ere they interdict the most powerful and the most natural feelings of the human heart, ere they attempt to establish *their* authority upon the ruins of the temporal felicity of their offspring, let them reflect, that there is an awful monitor lodged in the breast of man, which, aroused, plants scorpion stings round every future step of life; renders what is past, hateful; what is to come, horrible; and which makes its victim sick of existence, though afraid to die: a state, surely so dreadful, as to be beyond the power of imagination to exaggerate.

After the death of this unhappy father, the mother of Julia became a sorrowing and a melancholy inmate of my abode. When the poignancy of her grief had subsided, there

remained only a mild and tender solemnity of manner, which interested the feelings of all who knew her. Many an hour have we passed in fruitless conjectures respecting the fate of Julia; and when we had exhausted hope, and admitted the suggestions of probability, our tears have mingled together in commiseration of her hapless lot. Reports, various and contradictory were, from time to time, brought to us; but they only served to excite expectations which were fruitless, or to deepen despair.

Some months had elapsed in this state of alternate hope and disappointment, when accident threw in my way the two letters which she had addressed to you. They were indeed but a dubious beacon: yet they were sufficient to excite my resolution. I had no doubt that it was my unhappy friend: but how was I to trace her? Though I almost despaired of overcoming this difficulty, still I was resolved to attempt it. I did not communicate the circumstance to her mother; but, upon the plea of urgent business, I immediately set off for London.

My first step was to proceed to the place where I had formerly addressed to her while she corresponded with me. I thought it might, perhaps, form the commencement of a clue that would eventually crown my wishes with success. I was not disappointed. I was directed to several places where she had successively resided, though under a different name. At length I traced her to the very street in which she lived, and the initial and final letters of which agreed with those which she had put at the bottom of her letters to you.

It was a dirty, narrow place, and situated in the most wretched part of this metropolis. I was almost afraid to encounter so much vice and filth as presented themselves. I persevered, however, and found the very house. My feelings were now at their highest. I feared, yet wished to ask for her. With a trembling hand I raised the knocker. A squalid little girl, the picture of dirt and misery conjoined, opened the door. She seemed startled at my appearance. I made my inquiries. She pointed, silently and significantly, to a back parlour. I entered; but

there was scarcely light enough to see my way along. A ragged blanket was hung up before the window to exclude, at once, the light and wind. The smell which issued from this abode of wretchedness almost overpowered me.

I looked fearfully round the room, but could see nothing. The child, however, conducted me across it, into a low, dark closet, where I could just perceive, on the floor, a human figure extended, covered with a coarse rug. There was a woman sitting down, who was at that moment chafing the temples of the person with vinegar. When I entered, she arose. I asked for *Jane Thompson*: . The woman pointed to the ground! Merciful Heavens! Here then I was to behold the once beauteous, the once happy Julia!

This closet was so dark that I could not discern the features of any person in it. I begged that a candle might be brought, and, in the interim I stood lost in a world of conflicting sensations. I could hear nothing but a low breathing from the being that lay before me. I half hoped that I might be in total error: but no: the moment the light appear-

ed, I saw but too well the melancholy ruins of that noble edifice I once loved and honoured. Yes: 'twas Julia! but oh! how unlike to what I saw her last!

She was slowly recovering from a fainting fit: one of those lapses which nature often undergoes when exhausted by disease and misery. I watched her gradual return to life, but did not speak to her. I was occupied in examining that form and countenance once so familiar to me. Had it not been for certain decisive features, which could not deceive me, I should in vain have sought to recognise her. Wrapped in coarse and squalid apparel, on the bare ground, with only a tattered rug across her; her head supported upon her arm, her only pillow; the flesh wasted from her cheeks, her temples, her eyes; her countenance meagre and wretched; her hair in disorder; who could have found in such a disfigurement of natural character, the bosom friend of our youth?

I asked the woman, in a whisper, how long she had lived there? She answered, nearly

six months, that she had pined herself to death, for that she eat little, and wept incessantly; and that she had been now six weeks in this state, without the hope of living from day to day. I found that this poor woman had attended her with solicitude and kindness, and I took care that she was rewarded for it.

Julia now unclosed her eyes, but the light of the candle seemed to affect them, and it was removed: she caught a glimpse of my face, however, as it passed me, and, uttering a loud shriek, relapsed into her former state.

This was what I feared: but the first shock over, I hoped it would prove the only hurtful consequence of my presence. She remained for some time in this fit, but at length recovered. I signified, by a motion, that I wished the woman to leave us together for a while. When she was gone, I bent over Julia, and softly pronounced her name. She started from the ground, threw her arms convulsively round my neck, hid her face in my bosom, and burst into tears. For some moments she could only utter, with sobs, *Maria, Maria,*

and at each mention of my name, press me closer to her.

This was a trying moment, and one to which my power of language will not enable me to do justice. It was a long, long time, before any thing but mutual tears, sighs and embraces, passed between us.

When, at length, Julia had somewhat recovered from her uncommon agitation, her first question was, in a voice feeble and scarcely articulate, by what strange accident I had discovered her abode. I told her the manner, and she seemed at first to doubt my veracity; but, when I explained minutely the way in which I had proceeded, she silently acquiesced and sunk into meditation.

I did not yet venture to mention any thing respecting her mother, the death of her father, or her own situation: but my first care was to remove her from her present wretched habitation. She unwillingly consented to this, observing, with a mournful emphasis, "it matters not under what roof I breathe my last." I overcame, however, her scruples, and

before evening I had her conveyed, with much difficulty, in a coach, to a lodging at Pentonville. I could perceive, from the manner in which she took leave of the woman of the house, that she had received much kindness at her hands; and I liberally rewarded her before I departed.

As soon as she was comfortably placed in bed, I sent for a physician who immediately attended and seemed, at first, to cherish some hopes of the possibility of her recovery. Heavens! what a cheering sound was that to me! The idea of restoring my poor Julia once more to her mother, to society, and to virtue, was one that filled me with gladness.

I now wrote to her mother, and, with all the preparatory caution that was possible, I unfolded to her the circumstances which had happened. I entreated her to set off immediately for London, that she might have the consolation, in the worst event, of blessing her dying child.

On the following day Julia seemed much more composed, and towards the evening, as

we sat in calm and interesting discourse, she voluntarily related to me the circumstances of her short but eventful career in London. It was a simple, but melancholy narrative.

But I have already extended this letter beyond my intention, and I find that I must defer, to a future communication, the conclusion of Julia's sad but instructive story.

I remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

MARIA S——Y.

London, August 2d, 1810.

The Contemplatist.

No. X.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 11, 1810.

Dignum sapiente bonoque est.—HORACE.

I HAVE lately been much pleased with the perusal of a tragedy called *Sir Walter Raleigh*, written by George Sewell, and acted in 1719, in which year it also passed through two editions.

As it is no unpleasing task to record the merits of the dead, and to recommend that to notice, which accident, or envy, or negligence, has suffered to remain in obscurity, I am inclined to hope my readers will not regret to find, in my present paper, a critical analysis

of this play, with such extracts from it as may be necessary to support my commendation, and likely to amuse in perusal.

The preface is written with considerable vigor and elegance; but the dedication, which is inscribed to the popular statesman of that time, James Craggs, the friend of Pope, and of the wits of Queen Anne's reign, has all the meanness of such addresses. He says that the "best judges of tragedy," are "great and noble spirits," because they find, in the language and sentiments of tragedy, a similitude to their own: and, of course, a principal Secretary of State, cannot be less than "a great and noble spirit." When I read such flattery, my pity is divided between the giver and receiver, with this difference, however, that I pity the latter as a sufferer, while I both pity and scorn the other as an offender.

It is not, however, to praise the preface, or to censure the dedication, that I sit down to write this paper: but, to offer some remarks upon the language and the sentiments of *Sir Walter Raleigh*, which are, I think, sufficiently vigorous, elegant and poetical, to entitle

them to higher celebrity than they now possess.

I intend to confine myself to these, because it is they alone which are entitled to commendation. The plot is meagre; the characters are not well drawn, nor well discriminated; the incidents are too rapidly hurried upon each other, and no room is left for the allowed operation of human passions in their production. For this reason it resembles more a narrative than a dramatic action. These faults, however, may be attributed to that youth and inexperience, which the author has pleaded in his preface: while the energy of his language, and the correctness of his imagery would have remained, to dignify the more elaborate efforts of maturer years.

Sewell seems to have taken Otway for his model, in the construction of his language. I can discern, at least, more of his manner, and forceful mode of expression in the sentences of this play, than of any other dramatic writer. They have none of the cold regularity and torpid accuracy of Rowe.

The *Dramatis Personæ* are :—

Sir Walter Raleigh,
Howard,
Young Raleigh,
Salisbury,
Gundamor,
Lord Cobham,
Sir Julius Cæsar,
Carew,
Wade, Lieutenant of the Tower.
Lady Raleigh,
Olympia, Salisbury's daughter,
Florella.

Howard, *Carew*, and *Sir Julius Cæsar*, are the friends of Raleigh. *Salisbury*, and *Gundamor*, (the Spanish ambassador) are his enemies, and by their machinations he is made, finally, to perish. *Young Raleigh* is beloved by *Olympia*, and a trifling diversity of incident is produced by her influence over her father, and her use of that influence to save the life of Sir Walter, for the sake of his son.

The play opens with a dialogue between Sir Julius Cæsar and Carew, of which the following part is entitled to commendation.

Sir J. Cæsar. Sure, as e'n now we pass'd the council door
I saw Lord Gundamor; and if these eyes
Discern'd aright, his visage seem'd to bear
A mixture of uncertain cheerfulness
Like hope corrected by some cautious fear.
I like it not—for tho' we cannot read
The wiles of statesmen in their public looks;
Yet, when alone, the soul works undisguis'd
And prints its meaning on the outward form.

Carew. That face ne'er boded good to British hearts;
For, trust me, as I hold my country dear,
As I revere her monarch's sacred head;
Yea, as I wish prosperity may crown
That faith our fathers witness'd in the flames:
So much I fear that busy statesman's art,
Is working up some cursed scene of woe
To stain those dearest names with foul disgrace,
And fix a mark of hatred on their friends.

Sir Julius. Curse on the droll, and his intriguing mirth,
His studied jokes, and insolence of wit;
By this he winds the women in his toils,
Fashions the flatter'd sex to all his views,
Rouses the curious devil in their souls,
That knows no rest, but tortures without end,

Till it has wrung each purpose of the state
From the fond husband-fool, who must betray
His king, his God—to set his wife at ease.
I *tell thee, friend, dissimulation dwells,*
As at her home, in every smile he wears;
That face has laugh'd us into deeper shame,
Than we can suffer from his monarch's frown,
Tho' heighten'd with the pride of new Armadas,
All Europe's princes, and his Indian gold.

In this speech there is much felicity of expression, vigour of language, and great smoothness of versification. I have put in italics what I think most worthy of being noted.

In the character of *Howard,* I can trace some resemblance to the rough, manly virtue of *Pierre. Howard* is a sea captain, who had accompanied Raleigh in his expedition to Guiana, and he is devoted to his interest. He joins the preceding interlocutors, and the discourse turning upon the trial of Raleigh, he exclaims, speaking of the lawyers employed,

I heard the deep mouth'd pack, they scented blood
From the first starting, and pursued their view
With the law music of long-winded calumny.
Well I remember, one among the tribe,

A reading cut-throat, skill'd in parallels
And dark comparisons of wondrous likeness,
Who in a speech of unchew'd eloquence,
Muster'd up all the crimes since Noah's days,
To put in balance with this fancied plot,
And made e'en Cataline a saint to Raleigh.
The sycophant so much o'erplay'd his part,
I could have hugg'd him, kiss'd the unskilful lies
Hot from his venal tongue.

The latter part of this speech will remind every one of the expression of Pierre.

I could have hugg'd the greasy rogues,
They pleased me. *Venice Preserved.*

To the above, *Carew* replies,

He was the same,
Who, starting from the question in debate,
And, when corrected by a calm rebuke
Catch'd all the scandal malice could suggest,
Search'd to the heart, and cramm'd plain *Atheist*
Down his brave opponent's throat.

Sir Julius Cæsar. Vain insolence!
But 'tis the curse and fashion of the times;
When prejudice and strong aversions work,
All whose opinions we dislike are Atheists.
Now 'tis a term of art, a bugbear word,
The villain's engine, and the vulgar's terror.

The man who thinks and judges for himself,
Unsway'd by aged follies, reverend error,
Grown holy by traditionary dullness
Of school-authority, he is an Atheist.
The man who hating idle noise, preserves
A pure religion seated in his soul,
He is a silent, dumb, dissembling Atheist?

Howard. I had forgot it—yes, the base-tongu'd gownman
Did call him Atheist.—So men judge at home,
Who never trac'd a providence at sea,
And saw his wonders in the mighty deep.
The Atheist sailor were a monstrous thing,
More wonderful than all old ocean breeds.
But I will witness for my Raleigh's faith;
Yes; I have seen him when the tempest rag'd,
When, from the precipice of mountain waves,
All hearts have trembled at the gulph below,
He with a steady, supplicating look,
Display'd his trust in that tremendous Pow'r
Who curbs the billows, and cuts short the wings
Of the rude whirlwind in its midway course,
And bids the madness of the waves to cease.
O! fellow soldier! were that folly thine,
Tho' thou wert dearer than the love of honor
To my old bosom, I would pluck thee hence
Tho' my heart crack'd.——

It must be allowed that these sentiments are natural in the character that utters them, and are besides just and poetical. Nor will any of my readers, I believe, dissent from the opinion of honest Howard, in the following:

O! how I hate this tribe of kissing courtiers!
There is some flavour in a woman's breath,
And nature bids us meet it with a gust,
But these new kissers, with their Spanish air,
Make perjury conclude where lust begins.

The character of *Lady Raleigh* is purely feminine. She is soft, tender, and deploring. Her description of her son is happily executed.

These eyes shall ne'er behold
A form so delicate: all other youths
Seem'd cold and lifeless images to him.
A soul so rich in virtue, it chastis'd
Vice without speech, and utter'd, thro' his eyes,
Silent persuasion: in the field of war
Cautious as age, and daring as despair,
Yet humble as the conquer'd when victorious.

The following remonstrance has truth and nature to recommend it.

Vain empty words,
Of honour, glory, and immortal fame.
Can these recal the spirit from its place,

Or re-inspire the breathless clay with life?
What, tho' your fame, with all its thousand trumpets,
Sound o'er the sepulchre, will that awake
The sleeping dead, and give me back my son?
No, no.—

The first scene of the second act introduces *Sir Walter Raleigh* to our notice, and he utters the following monologue, which is at least, removed from the common imagery of common poets.

Not yet the shadows of retreating night
Disperse, nor dawns the day spring from on high;
And yet, I thank thee, heaven, I bless thy pow'r,
That has unseal'd my eyes and wak'd my soul
To life, to action, and to think on thee.
There is no instant in the tide of time,
But man may seize, and fill the vacant space
With useful searches of improving thought.
The light attracts him with ten thousand views,
Offering her objects to the sense unsought,
That ask, and court, and press him to be known.
Then, soon as night succeeds, the darken'd air
Warns him to sweet retreat, and silent musings,
That trace the past ideas through the brain,
Now mix, and now divide the various heap,
Then form, anew, the separated kinds

Trying all ways to feed the greedy soul.
Thus even here I'm happy, thus disjoin'd
From pomps and thrones, from camps, and noisy
war,
The boasted scenes and glory of my youth.
Well—they are past: this prison now is all,
And this I will enjoy—there's something here
I never tasted in the courts of kings.

The philosophic dignity and content which this passage breathes, accord well with the character of the speaker.

The following is at once poetical and true.

O Reputation! dearer far than life,
Thou precious balsam, lovely, sweet of smell,
Whose cordial drops once spilt by some rash hand,
Not all thy owner's care, nor the repenting toil
Of the rude spiller, ever can collect
To its first purity and native sweetness.

Better converse whole ages with the dead,
Pore on a broken marble, to retrieve
A single letter of a brave man's name
Who died at Marathon or Agincourt,
Than spend one moment with deceit and vice.

I know not whether the subsequent lines may not aspire to something of the manner of Shakspeare.

Were I a subtle sprite that sucks the air,
And lives on dew drops of the misty morn,
That whispers love to maidens in their dreams,
That stands at statesmen's elbows in their closets,
And dictates blood and treason to their hearts,
Then I might tell of plots, intrigues, and death,
Of falling kingdoms, and of worlds on fire.

I will now select several passages, which I consider as felicitous in thought or expression, or both. A lover exclaims of his mistress:

O! I could bless her at the dawn of light,
And with the morning fragrance mix her name,
Invoke her in the thirsty, noon-day heat,
And cheer the sober evening with her praise.

Vice in a flattering mirror views mankind,
Judging of others from its own similitude.
The good are few, and known to fewer still.

Think not I hold that vain philosophy
Of proud indifference, that pretends to look
On pain and pleasure with an equal eye.
To *be*, is better far than *not to be.*
Else, nature cheated us in our formation.
And when we *are*, the sweet delusion wears
Such various charms and prospects of delight,
That what we could not *will*, we make our *choice*,
Desirous to prolong the life she gave.

Madmen and fools may hurry o'er the scene,
The wise man walks an easy, sober pace,
And though he sees one precipice for all,
Declines the fatal brink, oft looking back
On what he leaves, and thinking where he falls.

When Sir Walter is informed of his approaching dissolution, he exclaims,

O death! I have sought thee in the listed field,
Midst shouting squadrons and embattl'd hosts,
Pursu'd thee in the noon-day sweat of war,
And listen'd for thee on the midnight watch.
In frozen regions, and in sun-burnt climes,
In winds, in tempests, and in troubled seas,
In every element I sought—but thou
Hast shunn'd the searcher in each dangerous path,
Spar'd him in seas, in battle, and in storms,
To seize the weary wanderer at his rest,
And sink him in the coward arms of peace.

To his friends who flatter him with hopes and assurances of posthumous glory, he replies,

Go, cast a curious look on Helen's tomb;
Do roses flourish there, or myrtles bloom?
The mighty Alexander's grave survey,
See, is there ought uncommon in his clay?
Shines the earth brighter round it to declare,
The glorious robber of the world lies there?
What, Egypt, do thy pyramids comprise?

What greatness in the high rais'd folly lies?
The line of Ninus this poor comfort brings,
We sell their dust and traffic for their kings.

These are the natural consolations of one who is trying to reconcile himself to what he cannot escape.

In his parting discourse with his son, Sir Walter gives him the following advice:

Follow not fortune, nor aspire to court;
If call'd to honour, hold thy country's good
First in thy view, that comforts all disgrace.
For know, a mighty statesman is so plac'd,
One good or guilty thought may damn or save him,
And turn the fate of millions in an hour.
For me, regardless of thy father's fate,
Pursue his pattern in all acts but one.
Contract no friendship with an o'ergrown greatness;
Falling it crushes thee: and standing long,
Grows insolently weary of support,
And spurns the props that held it up before.

The last speech of Sir Walter, before he goes off to execution, deserves to be transcribed.

Farewel my friend,
The glass is almost run, the scene is short,
Presenting but one object to my view.
O eloquent! O just! O mighty death!

Who shall recount the wonders of thy hand?
Whom none could counsel, thou hast well advis'd,
And whisper'd wisdom to the deafest ear:
Whom all have trembled at, thy might has dar'd;
Whom all have flatter'd, thou alone hast scorn'd,
And swept, poor deify'd mortality,
With common ashes to an humble grave.
Long have I pluck'd thy terrors from my heart,
Call'd thee companion in my active life,
My solitary days, and studious hours;
Made thee familiar to my couch as sleep.
Come then my guest—the guilty soul depends
'Twixt doubt and fear—but thou and I are friends.

I think the most fastidious reader will be willing to allow, that there is, in the above, enough to deserve praise, and little to merit censure.

Let me also observe, that I have met in this play with an expression, which I have always admired in Gray, as peculiarly happy. Sir Walter says,

May my fame die among the rotten names,
Of *summer friends*, court spies, &c.

And Gray, in his *Ode to Adversity*, has the following lines:

Light they disperse; and with them go
The *summer friend*, the flattering foe.

I do not mean to infer that Gray ever read the tragedy of Sir Walter Raleigh, nor, consequently, that he is a plagiary; but, as the expression is highly figurative, the coincidence is remarkable.

It was my intention, when I sat down to comment upon this drama, to have noticed some turgid and affected phraseology, which the author occasionally employs: but I believe it would not answer any beneficial purpose, for the writer is not eminent enough to mislead. I hope, however, that the passages which I have cited, will justify the assertion, that as the production of a young writer, they indicate a soil from which excellent fruit might have been expected, had he lived to produce other works. He was a man much esteemed when living, but suffered to die so poor that his funeral rites were performed with little more splendor than a pauper's. He died at Hampstead, in the church-yard of which place he was buried, without even the memorial of a stone.

The Contemplatist.

No. XI.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 18, 1810.

Volvitur letho :
Purpureus veluti cum flos succisus aratro
Languescit moriens, lassove papavera collo
Demisere caput, pluvia cum fortè gravantur.

VIRGIL.

To THE CONTEMPLATIST.

SIR,

I HASTEN to conclude my account of Julia; and though my mind shrinks from the narration, I should be ashamed to suffer my feelings to intercept that benefit which I am willing to hope may result from the disclosure of her calamities.

You will learn, Sir, with astonishment, that *Henry de la Cour* was the one who finally triumphed over her virtue. This circumstance, however, accounts for the manner in which she apostrophises him in her first letter to you; and it affords also a useful lesson to mankind. It may shew, that to admit the encounter of vice under any shape, weakens, imperceptibly, the props of virtue, and, in the same proportion, strengthens the ascendancy of the foe; that error, once familiarised to the mind, loses, by a contemplation of its character, half its odious qualities, and, that its attacks, once permitted, no one can say where they will terminate.

Julia, on her first arrival in London, was actuated by honest and virtuous sentiments; but, in her impetuosity to throw herself upon the world, she knew not to what a froward and illiberal friend she was resorting. Reading mankind in the volume of her own bosom, she had perused them only in fiction; and

the first bitter lesson she was taught was, that beasts, the most ferocious, have more natural tenderness for their kind than man. Unaided, unbefriended, unpatronised, she roamed a forlorn being through the streets of this vast metropolis, rejected, despised, or insulted, wherever she applied for the means of honest industry.

One morning, as she was retiring from the house of a wealthy citizen, whose wife had enlivened the conversation of his breakfast-table by every species of taunting insolence towards Julia, (who had applied there for a situation) which ignorance and brutality could devise, she met, on the threshold of the door, Henry de la Cour. She started at the sight of him, as if her foot had fallen on an adder. Henry looked at her, but did not speak: he was upon terms of intimacy with the family, and had called to pay a morning visit, when this most unexpected and most distressing interview took place. Julia, how-

ever, quickly summoned to her aid all the lofty feelings of insulted and conscious virtue. She did not deign to open her lips, as she passed him, but retired with all the innate dignity of innocence, which, though obscured, was not humbled by misfortune. Henry attempted neither to speak to her nor to stop her; but, as she hastily proceeded along, he followed at a distance.

Almost overpowered by this adventure, she reached her lowly dwelling in a state of mind more easily imagined than described. She knew not that Henry had followed her, and she retired to her solitary chamber, there to pass the day in tears and fasting. Her tears she wished not to repress; and her hunger she had no means of alleviating. The incident of the morning had awakened a train of thought in her mind which led to madness. The recollection of her home, of her parents, of Henry, and of her present forlorn condition, overpowered her with grief and despair. She

wished she had not seen him, and yet the sight of one whose image love had consecrated in her heart, excited that painful joy, that pleasing sorrow, that melancholy bliss, which springs from the memory of past happiness when contrasted with present wretchedness. As she sat and recalled all those scenes of unclouded gaiety and contentment which had been truly hers, till the fatal moment that first placed Henry in her view, those endearing hours of social intercourse, those moments of solitude or of innocent employment, by which her time was occupied, her anguish became insupportable, and in an agony of grief which she could not suppress she threw herself upon her wretched pallet, there to weep and sigh, undisturbed and hopeless.

She passed the day in this manner, but was aroused, in the dusk of the evening, from her mournful solitude, by a loud knock at her chamber-door. On opening it, there was a ticket-porter, with a letter in his hand. It

was for her: no answer was required. In the obscure gloom of her chamber she could just distinguish that the superscription was in the hand-writing of Henry. She threw it from her with indignant disdain, without attempting to break open the seal. She was lost in conjecture; but, at last, a grateful thought came across her mind, which awakened the tenderest emotions of love. It might be—she hoped at least it might be—that Henry—sensible of the wrong he had done her, was willing, perhaps implored, to offer that honourable compensation which alone could heal the wounds he had inflicted. She snatched the letter up: she procured a light: she read it: and, as it is now lying before me, I will copy it here:—

"My Dear Julia,

"May the voice of a penitent be heard? Will the declaration of sincere contrition soften your most just anger, and awaken sentiments of compassion towards

one, who has never ceased to lament the error by which he offended and lost you?

"Julia! I am not what my conduct must have taught you to think me. The moment of delusion is past, and my reason condemns all that my folly committed. One fault, one only fault may surely be forgiven. Did a lover ever yet plead for mercy, and found it not, when he had abjured the cause of his mistress' displeasure? and is my Julia less kind than the rest of her sex? Can she so soon forget what we once were? Can she forget that night I bore her from her father's house; that morning which was to have seen us joined in wedlock? Can she forget all this, and remember only my transgression?

"Since that hour when I left you, with all a villain's feelings in my bosom, since that hour I have known no peace, no earthly comfort. I felt the awful solemnity of your rebuke, and dared not appear again in your

presence: but I hovered round the spot, and saw you depart for your home. I stood, like one bewildered, and suffered you to escape, having no power to intercept your progress. I dreaded the indignant lightning of your eyes. I became a prey to remorse, nor cherished the hope of ever beholding you again.

"But the accident of this morning has given me a new being. I followed you to your abode, and shuddered as I saw you enter it. In imagination I beheld all that you have suffered for me. Your father's anger, your desertion, your present forlorn condition· Can I restore you to happiness. Oh let me: let me, I implore you. I sue most humbly for your pardon. I will atone for my error. Admit me, I beseech you, to an interview. I have much to say, much to offer, which I will not commit to a letter. I will make you honourable satisfaction. If you yet love me, if you would still approach the altar with me, with what rapture should I give you that

proof of my affection. Once more, let me see you. I will not ask to visit you at your home: there may be many reasons why you might decline such a proposal. But meet me. Dare I propose the place and time? I will: I must. To-morrow, at eleven, in St. James's-Park: I will be in the seat opposite the palace. Do not deny me this: give me an opportunity of proving myself worthy of your pardon and your love.

"Adieu: do not disappoint me: once more, adieu!

"Your's, most affectionately,

"HENRY DE LA COUR."

It may easily be conceived with what emotions Julia perused this letter. Anxious to believe it true, she thought it so, and in the anticipation of happier days, now about to

commence, her heart admitted the stranger guest—felicity. A thousand pleasing images crowded to her mind. The hope of propitiating her father's anger, of enjoying her mother's counsel and society, of presenting to them both, her Henry in her husband, filled her bosom with placid feelings: and Julia, poor Julia, retired to her pillow with a happy heart.

She met him. An interview rivetted all her former sentiments, which the perusal of his letter had already awakened. She was again lost in the enthusiasm of passion, and she now regarded Henry as a protecting angel, destined to snatch her from the depths of misery and anguish, and to place her on the topmost pinnacle of earthly happiness. He veiled his designs beneath the most studied artifices of language and of manner; and when he affected to be most explicit, he was, in fact, most ambiguous.

I will not, Sir, relate minutely all the steps he took to accomplish his unworthy purpose. Julia was already humbled in self estimation, and nothing so surely leads to moral depravity as the extinction of that dignified principle which teaches us to reverence ourselves. Her love was, if possible, more impetuous than before, while her motives to virtue were probably less. Goaded on by conflicting passions, want, and a jail before her eyes, Julia became the victim of circumstances. She fell before the machinations of that being, whose title to the name of MAN would have been established, by raising her to an honourable station in society. Tell me, Sir what language is sufficient to convey a just detestation of the wretch who betrays innocence by adding to its dangers, and who triumphs in the success of an enterprise which might fix additional impiety on a fiend?

How Julia felt, and how she thought, when she had fallen, may be known from her letter

to me, which I have already transcribed.—That letter was written in the first lucid interval after the riotous excesses of guilty pleasure.

Not a drop of blood flows through the veins of Henry which is not rank with villainy. Let him read this page, and if he have one human feeling, let him tremble! Let the name of JULIA smite him like a thunderbolt; and when, in the bitter hour of mortal dissolution, he calls for mercy on his GOD, may her shrieks for vengeance deafen the judgment-seat of Heaven, till mild compassion shall be turned to righteous condemnation, and the penalty of all his crimes fall heavy on him!

Pardon me, Sir, if I seem intemperate in my language. Had you seen, as I did, the sufferings of the mild and once happy Julia, you would be moved to equal warmth of expression. This mean, this abject assassin of

his victim's peace of mind, soon satiated, soon sickening at his own success, craving, like a hungry vulture, for fresh offals, to offer up at the shrine of vice and infamy, abandoned to solitary anguish the deluded partner of his guilt, left her to contend alone with disgrace, with want, and with wretchedness. But the constitution of Julia sunk under the acuteness of her feelings, and she retired to that abode of misery where I found her, there to die unknown and unlamented.

Such was the narrative she communicated to me, and at its conclusion she wept a flood of tears. I sat, unable to offer her consolation, for I was, myself, a prey to various sensations.

A few days after this her mother arrived. I had previously prepared her for the interview, and she talked as if she could support it. But when she heard the carriage stop at the door, and knew that her beloved parent was

in it, her weak frame could not bear up against the struggle, and she was insensible before her mother reached the room. I saw that venerable mother fall on her knees by her bed, and, with her daughter's lifeless hand clasped in her's, the tears rolling down her cheeks, breathe out a fervent prayer to Heaven that she once more beheld her lost child: her kisses, her sighs, her embraces, recalled the fainting Julia to life and recollection. She beheld her dear parent, whose every look spoke forgiveness: she raised herself in the bed, cast herself in her arms, and faintly stammered out *Mother—Mother.* It was all she could.

Let me not dwell any longer on this painful yet happy scene: but hasten to a conclusion of my melancholy narrative.

The health of Julia seemed now gradually to re-establish itself, and we had the most sanguine hopes of her perfect recovery. But,

alas! they were fallacious. The hectic flush of convalescence glowed upon her cheek, while death slowly preyed upon her vitals. She herself, indeed, never cherished the thought, I may say the wish, of getting well. The silent corrosions of sorrow had penetrated too far: the stamina of life was gone; and she breathed now only by the aid of medicines and cordials. I was happy, however, to see a great alteration in her state of mind: she seemed more composed: her fortitude changed from the energy of despair to the pious resignation of the Christian. She discoursed with calmness upon her hope of pardon in another world: and she rejoiced that she had been able to receive her mother's forgiveness in this. Of her father she spoke not at all; and heard of his death without much emotion. She declined gradually; she grew daily and hourly weaker; and, at last, sunk into eternity as she reposed her head upon my bosom.

Thus died Julia: and her story may serve to warn the thoughtless and reprove the vicious: virtue may see its danger, and learn to shun the snares with which it is too often surrounded. May it also impress this truth on every mind,—that a life of errror must be a life of wretchedness!

I remain, Sir,

Your humble servant,

MARIA S——Y.

London, August 15, 1810.

The Contemplatist.

No. XII.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 25, 1810.

Who by repentance is not satisfied,
Is nor of heaven nor earth:
By penitence the Eternal's wrath's appeased.

SHAKSPEARE.

I WAS deeply moved by the narrative contained in my last two numbers; and while I pitied the misfortunes of Julia, I but feebly condemned her errors. Yet, let it not be supposed that I would confound the distinctions of morality. All virtue and all vice are relative. They who have resisted no temptation, have little cause to boast of their purity: and they who have yielded to strong impelling circumstances, may justly hope for leniency in the judgments of their fellow creatures.

There are some crimes, however, which, not ending in themselves, seem to call for louder reprehension in proportion to the extent of the evil which they produce. Among

these are seduction, and its consequence, the contamination of female honour. At the present moment, when women seem to glory in the publicity of their infamy, a consideration of these topics may not be wholly useless, and it will form no improper sequel to my last two papers.

Seduction is twofold: that of the married, and that of the single woman: and I know not that it is easy to decide which is the most criminal.

The seduction of a married woman, indeed, seems to be attended by evils of a more complex nature. A greater number of persons may be, eventually, involved in its consequences: and the circumstances under which the seducer must effect his plans are of a complexion more decidedly infamous and flagitious.

When *Hermione* defends herself from the charges of *Leontes*, she exclaims, with dignity and truth,

> "For life, I prize it,
> As I weigh grief, which I would spare: *for honor,*
> *'Tis a derivative from me to mine,*
> And only that I stand for."

The married woman, when she stains her

conjugal faith, entails shame and disgrace upon innocent beings: upon beings committed by nature to her protection, and whom the strongest ties of affection bind her to protect and love.

It has been sometimes weakly urged, that the irregular conduct of a husband palliates the transgressions of a wife. But to this it may be replied, that vice is always wrong, and that to urge the plea of example in extenuation of a crime, is to open the door to universal immorality: for, where is the crime that has not had, and still has, its perpetrators? and who has passed through life so innoxiously as not to wish sometimes to enforce the law of retaliation? To bear injuries meekly, however, is one of the constant admonitions of the gospel; and HE who was on earth all perfection, has set us an illustrious example of patient suffering. We intuitively admire, indeed, acts of great forbearance: and this intuitive admiration is the simple language of nature. When Philip of Macedon inquired of Demochares, the Athenian ambassador, what he could do to please the people of Athens, he replied, "Hang your-

self." Had Philip sacrificed the brutal cynic on the spot, we should scarcely have blamed him: but, when he mildly dismissed the snarling Athenian, and bade him ask his countrymen who was the most praiseworthy, the giver of such language or the patient receiver of it, we immediately admire the greatness of his mind.

There does not exist an opinion more erroneous, or more fatal to morality, than that which supposes the commission of a crime by another a palliation of it by ourselves. The woman who may chance to be wedded to a dissolute, unfeeling husband, should strive to encounter her misfortune with that patience which springs from the conviction that this life is, to all, a state of greater or less suffering: that the virtue which flourishes amid sorrow, and oppression, and contumely, is an object of veneration and respect, while the vice which is generated merely in the rank soil of resentment is justly abhorred and execrated: and let her also recollect that by the exemplary piety and morality of her own conduct, she may, ultimately, reclaim that of her husband. If these considerations have

no weight, she should, at least, remember that there is a future state of retribution where she may justly expect reward for patient and unmerited sufferings here.

But she who is driven to illicit gratifications, by no paroxysm of rage, by no sullen purpose of revenge, by no false notions of morality, what can she plead in extenuation? Nothing I fear that will appease the injured, or accommodate itself to the notions of society. Let her, then, pause a moment, and deliberate upon the step she is about to take. Has her husband been affectionate, faithful, and upright in his conduct towards her? If he have, would not common gratitude suggest a better requital? Has he fixed all his happiness upon her, built his fondest hopes of worldly comfort upon her presence and upon her conduct? Does he acknowledge no other motive to action than to provide for her delight, ask no other monitor than her counsel, seek no other reward than her praises? Oh! pause, and reflect what an eternal ravage you are about to commit in the fair region of domestic happiness, and how ill the pleasures of corrupt embraces will repay you for the paradise you

quit. Look upon the man you would plunge into remediless anguish! Recall his tender protestations, his love, his virtues, and forsake them if you can. Or have you children? Think of them: think what they have a right to demand at your hands, and tremble while you but meditate upon the thought of sending them forth into the world with the foul blot of infamy upon their innocent heads! Think that for the indulgence of criminal and dishonest passions you debase your own issue; become worse than the fiercest beast of prey by injuring your offspring, and that you compel your children to blush at the mention of their mother's name. Oh! reverence yourself, and sink not into the grave dishonoured, unrespected, unwept, untended by the heart, eye, and hand of filial love.

I never could see the justice of that law which makes all the penalty, in cases of adultery, to fall upon the man: not that I would have him escape, but that I would make his guilty partner in pleasure his partner in punishment. Women are rational beings, and as such ought to be made responsible for their own chastity; for, in violating it, they

know what they do, and they do it wilfully. Common equity demands, therefore, that they should be amenable to penal laws. It may be remarked, also, that almost every nation of antiquity adjudged punishment to both the man and woman in cases of adultery. Under Constantius and Constans they were either burnt, or sewed in sacks and thrown into the sea. Under Leo and Marcian the penalty was different; and under Theodosius, women convicted of this crime were punished in a singular manner, the narration of which, however, I do not think it necessary to produce.

Nor have modern nations neglected methods of punishing a crime so fraught with mischief to civil society; and at this day, if a woman in Turkey commit adultery, she is tied in a sack and thrown into the sea, and her lover is beheaded.

I scarcely wish to propose penalties so sanguinary: but I am most solemnly of opinion, that justice and morality alike demand that the adultress should not escape unpunished.

But, if we condemn the tempted, what shall we say of the tempter? What shall we say of

the man who not only violates female honour, but violates that honour which belongs to another? Who adds treachery to guilt, and descends to the basest iniquity by wearing the smiles of friendship on his face, and carrying the malice of villainy in his heart? In almost every case, the seducer of a married woman must be upon terms of intimacy, and more than common intimacy, with the husband, or he cannot carry on his machinations. Is it possible then to conceive any situation more wicked, more self-debasing, more abhorred, than this? He crosses the threshold of his friend's door, he is received with hospitality and candour, he is trusted with freedom and confidence; and yet, beneath the very eyes of that friend, he is secretly plotting to destroy him and to bring his name to public disgrace, and his happiness to private ruin. But to effect all this how must he proceed? He must lie, dissemble, lurk about for opportunities like a thief, start from detection like a guilty wretch, and accomplish his purpose with all the fearful villainy of a felon.

It will be thought, perhaps, that I have thus decided the question, which I regarded

as ambiguous in the commencement of this paper; and, indeed, I believe it will be found, upon the most accurate reflection, that the evils attendant upon the seduction of a married woman are greater in themselves and more complicated in their consequences, than those which result from the criminal triumph over unwedded honour and virtue. Yet, let it not be supposed that I regard, with indifference, an action which has, in every age, been marked with infamy. The seduction of virgin innocence is a subject upon which more can be said that arrests the passions than upon the other: and hence poetry and eloquence have not spared their powers to paint the cruelty of the action. We appeal to the judgment and the reason in the latter; but in the former we arouse the feelings.

Few topics, indeed, are more susceptible of pathetic declamation than this. We bring before the mind the modest, timid virgin, shrinking, even in idea, from the contemplation of vice: we behold her, in the calm peace of innocence, the charm of society, the delight of her friends, the proud honour of her parents and kindred: we see her heart filled

with precepts of morality and religion, and her manners and discourse refined by the cares of education: and we anticipate what lovely fruit this early cultivation, this pregnant soil in all that is virtuous, might have produced. The transition from this scene of peace and quiet, to the gloomy turbulence and moral degradation of vice, is powerful: and there is no heart so callous that is not moved at such a picture skilfully drawn. We contrast past splendour with present abasement: and, like the traveller who sighs over the ruins of Babylon or Rome, we deplore the fallen relics of innocence and virtue. But, to the ravager of this fabric let me address myself.

What are your hopes, what are your incitements? Your hopes are infamous, your incitements are bestial. You have none of the common palliatives of wickedness to plead. You are not tempted, for you are the tempter: no necessity impels you, for your natural and artificial desires may be gratified at a cheaper rate than the perdition of an innocent girl's happiness and reputation. Your proceedings, therefore, are the cool, malignant ones of a bad and corrupted heart: you resemble the

ferocious hordes of conquering barbarians, who first pillage and then massacre: but your massacre is incomparably more tremendous, for it is of the soul, not of the body: your victim is still left a creature of wretchedness in this life, and ultimately, perhaps, without hope in the next.

Surely more than common cruelty must possess the bosom of a seducer. Love, in its utmost fervour, confidence, that knows no suspicion, are felt towards you by the hapless object of your arts: this love you feign to return, this confidence you deceive with promises. That your love is feigned, admits of no dispute, for true love honors its object: but what is debased by moral turpitude can never be regarded with veneration. That you delude by artifices is equally indisputable; for where is the inexperienced girl, that would yield to solicitation with the assured conviction that it was to gratify only momentary passion, and that she was finally to be deserted? No: marriage, that honourable compost which is laid over the wounds of diseased reputation, is the glittering bait; and her credulous ears are filled with the jargon of

anticipating joys, which, in a few days, or hours perhaps, shall be sanctified by religious ceremonies. Her fears are thus destroyed: she commits her temporal welfare to the being who smiles only to betray, and who leads her, with designed iniquity, from a path to which she can never, never return.

Man of guilt! when your intemperate passions burn hotly, and your eyes are cast around to meet some fit receptacle for them, turn away, I beseech you, from the fair region of innocence and peace! Enter not its holy precincts with premeditated ruin and devastation! Dash not the smile of virtue from the cheek of youth: fill not the heart of piety and truth with corruption and vice: pluck not the fair rose from the stem on which it grew, and having worn the bauble for a while leave it on the earth to perish. Think of a father's and a mother's agonies when they behold their poor child dishonoured, lost, debased: think of your victim, and what unimaginable evils may flow from thy accursed act. Remember, too, there is a state of retribution; a state, where no collusion will serve: no sophistry can palliate: a state, where thy crimes

will stand in naked truth against thee, and their punishment will be awarded with righteous judgment.

And, let not the voice of censure be raised against me, if I venture to call for mercy and compassion, for mildness and forbearance towards the guilty. I know not, indeed, by what arts of satisfaction those parents can lull their feelings who have never practised forgiveness; or how they acquit themselves of the after crimes of their children, when they shut the only door against their repentance which humanity and nature demand should be open. Surely they who have acted thus (and they are numerous) must turn pale and tremble as they exclaim, "FORGIVE US OUR SINS, AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO HAVE TRESPASSED AGAINST US," for they implore a heavy retribution of justice. Something may be pleaded in behalf of parental anger: but that anger which knows no mitigation, and which shuts the heart against the cries of mercy, is the enmity of a demon, not the weakness of humanity. To the proud father who can forgive no crime, and to the unnatural mother who prides herself upon untempted chastity, perhaps, and turns away from her fallen but

repentant daughter, I would address myself in the language of Shakspeare:

Alas! alas!
Why, all the souls that were, were forfeit once,
And HE that might the vantage best have took,
Found out the remedy; How would you be,
If he, which is the top of judgment, should
But judge you as you are? O! think on that;
And mercy then will breathe within your lips
Like man new made!

Nay, it well becomes a parent to seek after the child that has strayed: not merely to wait and permit her return, but to arrest her progress in error, and, with the least possible delay, strive to win her from the paths of vice. This is a duty which man owes to man; but how much more do parents owe it to their offspring.

As a subject not unconnected with this paper, let me interpose a shield between the confirmed prostitute and the world's censure. I wish not to be regarded as the advocate for a state, which, however necessary philosophers and politicians may deem it, the moralist cannot but condemn: but I would, if possible, awaken sentiments of pity and commiseration instead of contempt, insult, and scorn. There is injustice and cruelty in this. There is

injustice, because we know not how far they have offended, from what cause they have offended, or how sincerely they may, in their hearts, repent: and there is cruelty, because it is oppressing those who have no power to resist, nor any advocate to intercede; for who willingly appears as the champion of avowed infamy?

I cannot but think that the state of prostitution is rendered more desperate by the general cry of horror that is raised against it; as men grow furious from despair, and often plunge into the depths of iniquity, because access even to the confines of respectability and esteem are denied to them. Of those poor wretches who gain a scanty livelihood by the worst debasement, it is not unjust to believe that the greater part would have returned to virtuous society, had there existed means. But no: an unhappy female, having forfeited her honor, is immediately driven forth to a wide and pitiless world, without the possibility of expiating her crime by future amendment. There is surely in this more of ferocity, than civilised society warrants. By what superiority of purity we are entitled to scorn her who repents, it would be diffi-

cult to shew: and, as christians, let us never forget that the Father of all Mercies rejoices in one who turneth from his wickedness!

But their sorrows are enough, without our contumely. The greatest misery may be hid in smiles: and the prostitute, who purchases her bed and food and cloathing by her smiles, must not therefore be judged happy. Oh! if the sternest heart that looks in scorn upon them, could view what domestic wretchedness they suffer; could see them in their solitude, forlorn, pinched with cold, smitten with hunger, and pining with disease; they would forget their errors and pity their miseries. I do not wish to confound the distinctions of vice and virtue; but I would not aggravate what is already wretched, nor add poignancy to what is already acute. The negative virtue of forbearance is within the reach of every one; and where we do not choose to stretch forth a hand to assist, we may at least refrain from multiplying anguish.—Let us remember what they once were; let us imagine under what circumstances they may have fallen; and let us never forget, that the stability of our own virtue gives us no authority to condemn, without mercy, those who have yielded.

The Contemplatist.

No. XIII.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1810.

Ingenii egregia facinora, sicuti anima, immortalia sunt.
SALLUST.

Humanus animus decerptus ex mente divina, cum alio nullo, nisi cum ipso Deo, (si hoc fas est dictu) comparari potest.
CICERO.

IN my third number I offered some observations upon the superiority of intellectual pursuits, and promised to resume the subject. I shall now perform that promise, by considering the nature of that divine faculty, by which we are so wonderfully discriminated from every other part of the visible creation.

Poets, philosophers, and moralists have, in all ages, stood forward to advance the dignity of man over the brute creation; and, in doing this, they have assumed for his prerogative that which alone he exclusively possesses—MIND. They have not vaunted his personal endowments, for in them he shrinks from comparison. In his strength, he yields to the lion; in swiftness, he submits to the horse and the hound; and in dexterity, he is inferior to the beaver, whose instinctive operations place him far above the savage of nature. But, while he thus feels his own native inferiority even to the beasts of the field, he finds himself placed immeasurably above them by the resources of art; and by these resources he appropriates to himself the qualities of the whole animal creation.

Placed thus artificially high, it is natural to ask to what he owes his elevation. The answer is important:—to MIND. It is the energies of that living principle, directed by its guidance, and acting from its impulse,

which have raised him so conspicuously in the scale of being. The boundless sphere of its combinations open to him new fields of action, in which *he only* can appear. The highest efforts of brute instinct are much beneath the lowest operations of intellectual power. Man looks upon its sagacity only as the mimic resemblance of a loftier cause: he sees its termination, and its stationary nature.

Those animals which have been most celebrated for apparent ratiocination, (as the elephant for instance, whose actions certainly seem, more than those of any other animal, to result from will) have never passed the boundary which limits them: the elephant of to-day has not advanced a single step beyond the elephant of two thousand years ago. But, with man, it is otherwise. Nations that were heretofore sunk in barbarism, have risen to splendour: with him all is progressive: from his cradle upwards, (speaking individually and collectively) he is in a perpetual state of

improvement; and this capacity, which so eminently distinguishes him, is the sole result of his mind. Constantly impelled forwards, he unceasingly discovers something that was unknown: one desire creates another: the same impulse animates millions: the mass of being is thus put in motion: and it advances with one simultaneous tendency. The whole creation is his theatre, and on its boundless space he acts his part: he looks with forward and reverted eyes, corrects the past and anticipates the future.

If then the mind be that distinguishing attribute: if it form that proud character in our nature, what, I ask, can be more dignified in us than its operations? The mechanical arts are, some of them, carried on by a sort of instructive imitation: the man of grossest intellect is adequate to the performance of their nicest operations: they address themselves to the eyes, and are produced with precision only by successive repetitions: the mind is entirely unemployed: the whole

dexterity is placed at the fingers' ends.—This needs no proof: but if it did, we have only to inspect the work-room of any artisan to be convinced of its truth.

If there be any sceptic hardy enough to doubt the omnipotence and pre-eminence of mind, let him, for a moment, cast his eyes upon facts. Let him consider the deplorable degradation, the worse than brutal state of those poor creatures, who have been invested with the human form, only, as it were, to shew its nothingness when unaccompanied by that active and informing principle which gives it all its grace, and dignity, and usefulness. The savage of Aveyron, the wild boy of the woods, ideots, and numerous other instances might be adduced. What a melancholy and degrading spectacle! Look at that vacant, uninformed laugh; look at that beamless eye; look at that hurried and unmeaning walk; hear the shocking laugh; mark the whole evidence of fallen nature. Madness too, is another awfully striking truth both of

the omnipotence of intellect, and the frail foundations upon which we build our loftiest pretensions. Who can look upon the ruins of a noble mind, who can behold the solemn change wrought in the frame of him who is visited with mental deprivation, and not exclaim, with the poet,

> "Mind, mind alone, bear witness earth and heaven,
> The living fountain in itself contains
> Of beauteous and sublime."

The mind then is not only the distinguishing attribute between man and the beast, but it is, itself, the highest quality to be found in animated nature. When we consider, not only its pre-eminence, but its utility and importance, we are irresistibly led to confess its paramount claims to admiration. Nothing, then, but ignorance or the petulance of objection could prompt any one to degrade the operations of a quality so manifestly great in itself, and so dignified in its results. We instinctively admire all that is wonderful and striking: the lofty rocks, the majestic ocean,

the boiling whirlpool, the thundering cataract, affect us with emotions of awful delight: the soft and pleasing landscape, the placid scene of rural life, the silver-bosomed lake, the verdant foliage, the embowered walk, charm us no less with tranquil and peaceful sensations: to both we pay our homage—for both are admirable. Yet, he that would dare to advance the dignity of inanimate nature over the living lustre of intellectual, would be regarded as impious, or pitied, rather for obduracy of feeling, than perversion of mind.

It is not, therefore, asserting too much, to say, that intellect holds the highest place among the works of God. To it, every thing in the world is subordinate. Indeed, it may be affirmed, with few exceptions, that all which we admire is, more or less, the effect of its potency. It is a sort of deity: a creative faculty which possesses power adequate to the production of new combinations so striking as to appear almost equal to the immediate works

of God himself. Whoever looks abroad upon mankind with a curious and attentive eye, will intensely feel that all his most admired and most cherished treasures have sprung from his labours directed by the light of reason. In those parts of the universe where nature reigns in solitary pride, where her footsteps have not been effaced by those of her progeny, where her grandest features remain untamed, and reposing in undisturbed majesty, beauty, utility, variety, are banished; silence and unfruitfulness dwell there: desert barrenness inhabits the gloomy space. Not so where man has long multiplied, and where he has applied his energies; he lends his assisting hand to nature, and leads her forth to loveliness and use. He creates, as it were, new worlds around him: he reforms the wildness which he finds: he communicates a spark of that intellectual beam which animates his frame, and he alters the face of things. The powers of his mind are called into action, and nothing remains untouched.

By what fatality is it then, that this principle, so exalted in itself, so unbounded in its application, so beneficial in its results, should, under any modification, which does not tend to generate evil, be subjected to ridicule or contempt? Forced as we are to allow its supremacy, how is it that we deny respect to its acts? Nay, what is still more absurd, why only in one sphere of its activity is this manifest injustice committed? These are questions which I cannot answer, nor do I think it possible to answer them satisfactorily.

Surely the situation of that man who is employed in cultivating his mind, and giving birth to its suggestions, is at least as honourably employed, as he who writes for hire in an attorney's office, or cringes for sixpence behind a counter: that he may be, sometimes, more usefully employed than either, is irrefragable. It is impossible that he should not perform some good in the course of his exertions. If his mind be of the higher

order, it needs no eloquence, no argument, to prove this: and, in my opinion, it requires as little, even though his intellect should not rise above the standard of mediocrity. Truths, to be useful, must be adapted to the capacity of those for whom they are intended; and pleasure, to be acceptable, must equally be tempered to the recipient. Thousands, who are incapable of digesting the morality of Johnson, or the logical deductions of Locke, may be led aside from vice, and warmed to the pursuit of virtue, by incitements dressed in an humble garb: and a simple narrative, or a homely maxim, will often do more towards effecting this purpose, than the highest efforts of reasoning and metaphysical distinction.

Those tastes too, which are not refined enough to draw pleasure from the purer fountains of eloquence and poetry, may receive large draughts of a less costly beverage. Innocent delight forms half the business of the life of man; and they who cater for his

appetite, by giving wholesome, though not high-seasoned food, are not to be despised. A sixpenny tale, ending with a good moral, may furnish more real delight and advantage to a more numerous class of readers, than the most celebrated performances of the most celebrated wits.

All exertion of the intellect supposes a certain degree of knowledge, and knowledge, as it has been sententiously observed by Bacon, "is power." Every one, indeed, who attentively considers the advantages which are possessed by the man of cultivated mind over him who is uninformed, will be sensible of this truth. So uniformly, so necessarily do we acknowledge this power in the ordinary transactions of life, that he who has no mental superiority seldom possesses any other superiority; and the universal practice of civilized society so pertinently points out the value of mind, that every man is eager to transmit to his offspring more than he has himself.

I have often thought, however, (and the discussion may be introduced here not unaptly) that when Bacon delivered that aphorism to the world, he meant it to bear a more extensive import than it usually does. It has been exclusively applied to literary acquisition; but it would be doing greater justice to the comprehensive genius of its author to multiply its points of application.

Human knowledge is twofold, and may be distinguished into *natural* and *artificial*. By *natural*, is meant that gradual developement of the intellectual faculties which is produced by the operation of external objects upon the senses: and by *artificial*, is understood that pursuit of recondite facts, by which we either appropriate the acquisitions of others, or elicit original ideas of our own. The one qualifies a man for the world in its largest occupation: the other fits him only for partial society. When they are conjoined, which, however, seldom happens, they produce a perfect man: and it was this union, I ima-

gine, which Lord Bacon contemplated when he so emphatically pronounced "knowledge" to be "power."

It can hardly excite a question which of these branches of knowledge should obtain our preference. In general, every man endeavours so to unite them that they may furnish mutual support: but the points of repulsion are so numerous, and the prejudices of society so often interpose a resisting medium, that they seldom perfectly coalesce. It is, however, much more rare to meet with the purely *artificial* than the purely *natural* character.

The one, indeed, necessarily supposes an active, and the other a contemplative life: but a contemplative life is not the destination of man, while, for the other, all his faculties are manifestly designed. The greatest happiness in human existence is, when they succeed in grateful alternation: when the labors of the one are relieved by the soft pleasures

of the other: when solitary meditation purifies the heart, strengthens the understanding, and invigorates the purposes of virtue; and, when the business of society calls us away from the dominion of thought, lest we should become enamoured of seclusion, resign ourselves to solitude, and lose, in her shades and silence, the spring of action, and the love of man.

But, how rare is that combination of qualities which is necessary to form such a character. How often do we meet with the mere man of business, to whom privacy is confinement, and inactivity, wretchedness: whose days are observed to pass only by a stated recurrence of duties: and whose mind has never launched beyond that narrow circle of petty events which circumscribes the present. How often, too, do we meet with the man of mere study: who lives but in one element: who, removed from his library, finds himself a cypher in society: whose discourse must always flow in the same channel, never

branching out into collateral streams, or fertilizing, by its course, the various regions of intellect: who, like Antæus, is invulnerable amid authors and manuscripts, but lifted from thence, is easily crushed.

A solitary contemplatist (not myself) is often a useless incumbrance upon society. He walks forth from his chamber, and stares about him with an eye of vacancy: he seems in a new world: nothing assimilates with his self-created notions: he feels himself a stranger among men: he shrinks back into his individual state: wraps himself in the congratulations of his own heart: and wonders at the error, inconsistency, and depravity of his fellow-creatures.

To hope to unite the two characters in perfection can be the ambition of but few men: but the endeavour to approximate them should be the ambition of every man. It is not only in the great and commanding scenes of existence; it is not only in the per-

formance of solemn duties, and the support of important interests: it is not only on the spacious theatre of public life where the world may be regarded as spectators, that the neglect of this endeavour is sensibly felt. Even under the roof of domestic privacy, even in the modest retirement of worth and merit, in the intercourse of friendship, and in the endearments of affection, its fatal influence is felt.

The Contemplatist.

No. XIV.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1810.

Sine inflammatione animorum et sine quodam afflatu quasi furoris, poëtam magnum esse non posse.

CICERO.

THERE has not, perhaps, arisen, in modern times, a character more truly interesting than that of the late *Henry Kirke White.* Burns and Chatterton command admiration, but do not excite esteem. They were highly gifted, and endowed with powers that soared above the common track of intellect: we gaze upon them as something more than human: but, if we turn from the poet to the man, who does not sigh over that moral degradation by which their resplendent talents were accompanied? Not so with the amiable Kirke White: in him we admire the poet, and we love and reverence the man—if man he may be called, who was nipped in the very bloom of youth, and just at that moment when fame

was preparing for him that wreathe of renown after which he so ardently panted. Born with a mind of uncommon character; inspired with an unquenchable ardour for knowledge which nothing but death could overcome, and from which that death proceeded; gifted with a heart that nourished every liberal, every gentle virtue, who does not mourn for the untimely extinction of so bright a star in the hemisphere of genius?

Sorrow, however, would be equally fruitless to the living and the dead; but some amusement and some instruction may be derived from a closer inspection of his genius and writings than has hitherto been taken. This I propose to do in the present paper, and I shall pursue the inquiry in my future ones. The events of his life were few, and not very important; they need not, therefore, be detailed here. They shew the uncertainty of that reputation to which the literary candidate aspires. The talents of Henry procured him no powerful friend, no munificent patron: he was suffered to languish in an humble mediocrity of station.

It fills one, indeed, full of melancholy reflections to think how seldom the meed of merit is

conferred, while its possession can communicate one throb of pleasure to the mind that has deserved it. There is, in human nature, a littleness which is sure to betray itself, whenever man is called upon to judge the deserts of existing man: and I fear the tenderness which is sometimes shewn towards the memory of departed genius, but poorly atones for our neglect of it when living, if, as some have conjectured, we are unconscious, in a future state, of what passes in this. Yet, it has often given me delight to think that the unbodied spirit, roaming through the realms of space, and endued with capacities of pleasure, but unsusceptible of pain, may view, with unmixed felicity, those events in this world by which it could have been filled with felicity during its abode here: and in this manner the spirits of the great and good, of whatever age or clime, whether heroes, poets, patriots, statesmen, or philosophers, may find the reward of those virtues, qualities, and high endowments, which the tardy gratitude of their own age, or the malevolence of passion suffered to sink unprized into the tomb. It is thus, at least, that I am willing to console

myself when I remember how many have wept

> suis non respondere favorem
> Speratum meritis.
>
> HORACE.

For, if there be no balm laid up, hereafter, to heal the wounds which a degenerate and merciless world too often inflicts, if there be no port of peace whence we may securely view the billows that have tossed us, and the rocks on which we have split, where would be the consolations of virtue and the terrors of vice? But it is not so. Every sigh that sorrow breathes, every tear that misery sheds, every look of resignation that anguish wears, every patient suffering, every unmerited wrong, proclaims another state where those tears, those sighs, those sorrows, and that anguish, will be repaid, a hundred fold, with such bliss as imagination cannot conceive, nor the tongue of man utter. Since then this feeling, which nature prompts and which religion sanctifies, is engrafted upon every heart, why may we not suppose that one source of recompense for the evils of life will be to see them acknowledged by those who committed them, and to breathe the incense of all those profuse

honours which human love and admiration pay to the manes of genius? Thus may a Shakspeare and an Otway, thus may a Butler and a Burns, be even now receiving the oblations that are daily poured forth to their memories: and thus too may the calm and peaceful spirit of Henry draw pleasure from those tributes which have been paid to him, since untimely death snatched him from us. Surely this is not visionary. The higher powers of mind are not bestowed in vain; and when their possessors excite neither the esteem nor veneration of their contemporaries, may it not be believed that futurity will indemnify them for the neglect and contumely of the world? But, let me commence the object of my paper.

I remember to have read the poems of Henry when they were first published in 1803. I was then struck with the simple and unaffected preface to the book, but more so with the many beauties which the volume itself contained. When I read the concluding lines of *Clifton Grove*, the lines on *an early primrose*, and those *supposed to be spoken by a lover at the grave of his mistress*, I could not for a moment hesitate to consider him as far above any English poet we have yet read of, in pre-

cocity of genius. I hope I shall hereafter shew, that from these poems, written between the years of thirteen and seventeen, specimens of English poetry may be selected which will yield the palm only to the maturest efforts of other poets.

In this critical estimation, however, of Henry's poems, I shall follow the order of the pieces as they are arranged in Mr. Southey's edition of his "Remains;" and as death has removed him from the sphere of all competition or the possibility of future amendment, a more decided tone may be adopted than might otherwise be deemed allowable.

I do not estimate the letters of Henry very highly. Had they been shewn to me by a friend, without communicating the name of the writer, I should not have formed an advantageous idea of his powers. As it is, when I consider the inspired mind of Henry, I think them remarkably deficient in warmth and enthusiasm; even on his favourite topics, poetry and literature, he writes as tamely and as coldly as Locke himself could have done. They are creditable for his age, but they are not superior to what many well educated young men of his age could have written. Compared

to the epistolary effusions of Burns, (I mean those written about the same age as Henry) the uneducated, the unlettered ploughman, they sink very low. Burns was a poet even in his prose: the same glow of fancy, the same enthusiasm of feeling, the same warmth of expression, pervade his letters as his poetry. Whether the early religious habits of Henry communicated a sort of premature gravity of character, or whether he thought it necessary to assume the solemnity of a moralist and a teacher when writing to his brothers and his youthful friends, I know not; but the letters themselves are without any of that *vivida vis animi*, which we are apt to consider as almost inseparable from true inspiration.

The poems with which the first volume closes were written before the publication of *Clifton Grove*, and display some of the finest touches of a sublime and pathetic imagination. The first, *Childhood*, is conjectured by his editor to have been one of Henry's earliest productions, written when he was between fourteen and fifteen. There is one thing, however, which inclines me to think that it was of later origin. In the second part, where he so feelingly describes the occupations of a

summer's day as passed with his friend, he says,

"Then to another shore perhaps would rove,
With Plato talk in his Ilyssian grove;
Or wandering where the Thespian palace rose,
Weep once again o'er fair Jocasta's woes."

This reference to Grecian literature seems to indicate that it is a later production, for, in his *Life*, he is represented as studying the Greek language *after* his fifteenth year. There is another passage also in this poem which supports this supposition. After describing the country schoolmistress and her encouragement of his early proficiency, he exclaims,

"Oh, had the venerable matron thought
Of all the ills by talent often brought;
Could she have seen me when revolving years
Had brought me deeper in the vale of tears.
Then had she wept, and wish'd my wayward fate
Had been a lowlier, an unlettered state:
Wish'd that remote from worldly woes and strife,
Unknown, unheard, I might have passed thro' life.
Where, in the busy scene, by peace unblest,
Shall the poor wanderer find a place of rest?
A lonely mariner, on the stormy main,
Without a hope, the calms of peace to gain;
Long toss'd by tempests o'er the world's wide shore,
When shall his spirit rest, to toil no more?"

Either these are merely poetical complainings, or they were written at a later period. What woes could so severely oppress a boy of fourteen?

Yet the poem is by no means finished with the correctness of *Clifton Grove.* It has many weak and puerile lines, many expletives, and many false quantities, such as the following:

" This shrubby knoll was once my favourite seat,
Here *did* I love at evening to retreat."

* * * *

" Recal, with faithful vigour, to my mind,
Each face familiar, each relation kind;
And all the finer traits of them afford,
Whose general outline in my breast is stor'd."

* * * *

" Here first I enter'd, tho' with toil and pain,
The low *vestibule* of learning's fane:
Enter'd with pain, yet soon I found the way,
Tho' sometimes toilsome, many a sweet display."

To read the second line properly, we must make four syllables of *vestibule.*

" For banners, to a tall ash *we did bind*
Our handkerchiefs, flapping to the whistling wind."

* * * *

Sad was such tale, and *wonder much did we,*
Such hearts of stone there in the world could be.

* * * *

Yet grieve not I, that fate did not decree
Paternal acres to await on me.

* * * *

Grant, that if ever Providence should please
To give me an old age of peace and ease.
Grant, that in these sequester'd shades my days
May wear away in gradual decays:
And oh, ye spirits, who embodied play
Unseen upon the pinions of the day,
And genii of my native fields benign,
Who were—

The whole of this is bad. Apostrophe is, perhaps, the most difficult figure in poetry to manage with becoming dignity and effect.

This poem on childhood is divided into two parts; and were I to hazard a conjecture, it would be that they were written at different periods. Most of the above errors are to be found in the *first* part, and the allusion to Grecian literature, which, in my mind, so strongly speaks to the point, is in the second. Be that however as it may, I shall now proceed to select some of the more interesting passages from this poem.

The picture of the village school-mistress need not shrink from comparison with its rival in Goldsmith:

"In yonder cot, along whose mouldering walls
In many a fold the mantle woodbine falls,
The village matron kept her little school,
Gentle of heart, yet knowing how to rule;
Staid was the dame, and modest was her mien,
Her garb was coarse, yet whole, and nicely clean:
Her neatly bordered cap, as lily fair
Beneath her chin was pinned with decent care,
And pendant ruffles of the whitest lawn
Of ancient make, her elbows did adorn.
Faint with old age, and dim were grown her eyes,
A pair of spectacles their want supplies;
These does she guard secure in leather case,
From thoughtless wights, in some unweeted place."

The truth of the following lines every heart will acknowledge:

"Yes, Childhood, thee no rankling woes pursue,
No forms of future ill salute thy view,
No pangs repentant bid thee wake to weep,
But Halcyon peace protects thy downy sleep,
And sanguine hope, thro' every storm of life,
Shoots her bright beams and calms the internal strife.
Yet even round childhood's heart, a thoughtless shrine,
Affection's little thread will ever twine;
And though but frail may seem each tender tie,
The soul foregoes them but with many a sigh.

Thus, when the long-expected moment came,
When forced to leave the gentle-hearted dame,
Reluctant throbbings rose within my breast,
And a still tear my silent grief express'd."

These specimens, however, will not tend to impress the reader with a very exalted notion of Henry's genius; they are pretty, and commendable for his years, but they contain nothing of that enthusiasm of the muse which communicates a kindred spark to the bosom of the reader. I hasten, therefore, to the *Fragment of an Eccentric Drama*, in which may be discovered more of poetical inspiration than in any thing else which he has written. The very conception is grand and solemn, and the language is suited to the conception. It commences with a song called the *Dance of the Consumptives*, which has all that wild and irregular spirit that is to be found in the songs of Shakspeare's Fairies. After they have sung their fantastic strains they vanish, and the *Goddess of Consumption descends*, habited in a sky-blue robe, and attended by mournful music. She then speaks:

Come, Melancholy, sister mine!
Cold the dews, and chill the night:

Come from thy dreary shrine!
The wan moon climbs the heavenly height;
And underneath her sickly ray,
Troops of squalid spectres play,
And the dying mortals groan
Startles the night on her dusky throne.
Come, come, sister mine!
Gliding on the pale moonshine:
We'll ride at ease
On the tainted breeze,
And oh! our sport will be divine!

The Goddess of Melancholy then advances out of a deep glen in the rear, habited in black, and covered with a thick veil. She speaks:

Sister, from my dark abode,
Where rests the raven, sits the toad,
Hither I come, at thy command,
Sister, sister, join thy hand!
I will smooth the way for thee,
Thou shalt furnish food for me:
Come, let us speed our way,
Where the troops of spectres play;
To charnel houses, church-yards drear,
Where death sits with a horrible leer,
A lasting grin, on a throne of bones,
And skim along the blue tomb-stones.
Come, let us speed away,

Lay our snares and spread our tether;
I will smooth the way for thee,
Thou shall furnish food for me,
And the grass shall wave
O'er many a grave,
Where youth and beauty sleep together.

Perhaps, in the language of these solemn and mysterious beings, may be observed that wild and awful application of imagery which the fancy-created forms of Shakspeare have hitherto alone possessed. It is an humble task of the imagination "to body forth the forms of things unknown," compared to that more exalted one of giving to them thoughts and language as unearthly as themselves. A hundred poets might have conceived a *Caliban*, but Shakspeare alone could both conceive and identify him by such expressions and such ideas as only *Caliban* could have; and this lofty privilege of the poet, this "giving to airy nothing a local habitation and name," is, surely, to be found in the preceding extracts from Henry.

The same grand and original fancy pervades the remaining part of this fragment. *Melancholy* suddenly exclaims,—

Hist, sister, hist, who comes here?
Oh! I know her by that tear;
By that blue-eye's languid glare,
By her skin and by her hair:
She is mine,
And she is thine,
Now thy deadliest draught prepare.

CONSUMPTION.

In the dismal night air drest,
I will creep into her breast;
Flush her cheek, and bleach her skin,
And feed on the vital fire within.
Lover, do not trust her eyes,—
When they sparkle most, she dies!
Mother, do not trust her breath,—
Comfort she will breathe in death!
Father, do not strive to save her,—
She is mine, and I must have her!
The coffin must be her bridal bed,
The winding sheet must wrap her head:
The whispering winds must o'er her sigh,
For soon in the grave the maid must lie.
The worm it will riot
On heavenly diet,
When death has deflowered her eye.

[*They vanish.*

Were I asked to point out a finer passage in English poetry, I should scarcely know where

to look for it. The melancholy accuracy of the picture is itself a beauty; and nothing can be more truly poetical than the first two lines.

While *Consumption* speaks, *Angelina* enters, and delivers a soliloquy full of poetical beauty, in which she mourns a faithless lover, and rejoices in the consciousness that the grave will soon close over her sorrows. The initial lines are good.

Angelina continues to bewail her fate, and fancies how, when she is dead, village maidens shall talk around a winter's fire, of her sad fate,

> "And tell,
> How painful disappointment's canker'd fang
> Wither'd the rose upon my maiden cheek."

What a picture these lines convey to the mind! Is it inferior even to Shakspeare's description of *Melancholy?* And the expression

> "Like a worm i' the bud,
> Prey'd on her damask cheek,"

scarcely excites a more thrilling sensation in the bosom than these lines of Henry.

Let it be remembered, that the whole of this *Eccentric Drama* was written before his sixteenth year, and then reflect what must have been the powers of his mind.

The Contemplatist.

No. XV.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1810.

Sic honor et nomen divinis vatibus atque
Carminibus venit.

HORACE.

IN pursuing my observations upon the poems of Kirke White, I shall now turn to that collection which he published himself. They are not numerous, and, generally speaking, they are not excellent: I mean when compared with other pieces which he produced before and about the same period as these. The trite observation of an author's incompetency to be a correct

estimator of his own merits, may probably apply here; for, if we suppose Henry to have selected the poems which he published from those which were destined to be posthumous, I may then say, with little fear of contradiction, that he selected with the partiality of an author. I cannot discover in them so much of inspiration, of warmth of language, and of felicity of conception, as in those which have already passed under my notice.

The preface to this small wreathe of wild flowers is written with a modest simplicity, over which subsequent events have thrown an additional interest. When he states his motives for publication to be "the facilitation through its means of those studies which, from his earliest years, have been the principal objects of his ambition; and the increase of the capacity to pursue those inclinations which may one day place him in an honourable station in the scale of society," who does not regret that he was so long

tossed about, the victim of uncertainty, and destined to be alternately elevated and depressed, as hope and disappointment were presented to him by the hands of those who affected to be his patrons? The conclusion of this preface is the timid appeal of a feeling and delicate mind to the distributors of monthly and quarterly reputations. "Such are the poems, towards which I entreat the lenity of the public. The critic will doubtless find in them much to condemn: he may likewise possibly discover something to commend. Let him scan my faults with an indulgent eye; and in the work of that correction which I invite, let him remember he is holding the iron mace of criticism over the flimsy superstructure of a youth of seventeen; and, remembering that, may he forbear from crushing by too much rigour the painted butterfly, whose transient colours may otherwise be capable of affording a moment's innocent amusement."

In reading these poems, I think I can per-

ceive more marks of youth and inexperience than in the others. Sometimes, indeed, his genius takes a lofty flight; and, when it does rise, it ascends with all the majesty of inspiration. These flights, however, are not so frequent; and when he stoops, it is not with the same ease, propriety, and gracefulness. All the meretricious ornaments of style, which are likely to catch the mind of a young writer, may here be traced: elisions, forced inversions, expletives, and obscure diction. In the introductory ode to his "Lyre," we have these lines:—

——"thy music wild
Has serv'd to charm the weary hour,
And many a lonely night has '*guil'd*."

"and thou, and I, must shroud
Where dark oblivion '*thrones*."

In "Clifton Grove," the following lines are exceptionable, on account of some one or other of the above-mentioned errors:

"While happiness evades the busy crowd
In rural coverts *loves the maid to shroud*."

There is nothing which a young writer so readily believes as that inversion must be poetry.

The cacophony in the first of the following lines is very obvious:—

"And thou too, Inspiration, *whose wild flame*
Shoots with electric swiftness thro' my frame."

"The woods that wave, the grey owl's *silken* flight,
The mellow music of the listening night."

"How lovely from this hill's *superior height*
Spreads the wide view," &c.

"Now ceased the long, the monitory toll,
Returning silence *stagnates in the soul*."

It is impossible to affix a meaning to the words in the last line. In the following there is either tautology or incongruity:

"Or where the village ale-house crowns the vale,
The *creaking* sign-post *whistles* to the gale."

"When evening *slumber'd on the western sky*."

The last line has all the tumid inanity of modern poetry.

Henry seems also to have been unaccountably attached to the verb *to career.* In "Clifton Grove," he says,

> "O'er the woodland drear,
> Howling portentous, did the winds *career*."

Again, in the lines supposed to be spoken by a lover at the grave of his mistress:

> "O! then, as lone reclining
> I listen'd sadly to the dismal storm,
> Thou, on the lambent lightnings wild *careering*,
> Didst strike my moody eye."

And, in his Sonnet to the Æolian Harp, he exclaims,

> "So ravishingly soft upon the tide
> Of the enfuriate gust it did *career*."

To the mind of Henry, Milton perhaps was present in the use of this expression: in Paradise Lost, he has the lines,

"With eyes, the wheels
Of beryl, and careering fires between."
B. VI. l. 756.

There are, I know, who would consider as trifling, if not unnecessarily severe, this minute criticism: but to such I would answer, that the aggregate excellence of poetry is founded upon the individual excellence of expression: that thoughts, in themselves grand or sublime, moral or pathetic, derive all their power over the mind from the language in which they are clothed; and that there must be, therefore, an appropriate excellence in verbal criticism, as it establishes what is correct by displaying what is erroneous. Indiscriminate praise is severest censure: and, where no personal feelings intervene to occasion it, can proceed only from imbecility of mind. Were I to criticise the works of Henry Kirke White as the works of a boy, I might, perhaps, speak of them with the tame lenity of mere approbation: but when I judge them as the productions of an inspired mind, which had anteceded the progress of

time, I must then pronounce with a more decided tone. Besides, in adverting to the defects of diction, I advert only to that which is the result of practice and judgment, and not of intuition:

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance.

POPE.

Having thus pointed out some of those juvenile errors which are to be found in these poems, I shall now proceed to a further consideration of them.

When Henry wrote his poem of "Clifton Grove," he seems to have been fresh from the study of the English classics, for it abounds with imitations of their most popular passages. I will notice a few of them:—

"And beds of violets blooming mid the trees,
Load with *waste fragrance* the nocturnal breeze."

From Gray:

Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Elegy.

* * * * * *

"Tho' were his sight convey'd from zone to zone,
He would *not find one spot of ground his own.*"

This is a direct imitation of the following passage in Goldsmith:

> My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,
> And *find no spot of all the world my own.*

* * * * * *

"Yet as he looks around, he cries with glee,
These bounding prospects all were made for me;
For me, yon waving fields their burthen bear;
For me, yon labourer guides the shining share, &c."

From Pope, though differently applied:

For me kind nature wakes her genial power,
Suckles each herb, and spreads out every flower;
Annual for me the grape, the rose renew
The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
For me the mine a thousand treasures brings;
For me health gushes from a thousand springs;
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise,
My footstool, earth—my canopy, the skies.

Essay on Man, Ep. I. l. 133.

* * * * *

"Content can soothe, where'er by fortune plac'd,
Can rear a garden in the desart waste."

The idea probably from Milton:

The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

P. L. B. 1. l. 254.

* * * * *

"This sheds a fairy lustre on the floods,
And *breathes a mellower gloom upon the woods.*"

From Pope:

Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
And *breathes a browner horror on the woods.*

Eloisa.

Describing, in Clifton Grove, a despairing lover, who drowns himself in the Trent, Henry has the following beautiful lines:

Sad, on the solitude of night, the sound,
As in the stream he plung'd was heard around:
Then all was still—the wave was rough no more,
The river swept as sweetly as before;
The willows wav'd, the moonbeam shone serene,
And peace, returning, brooded o'er the scene.

There can be little doubt that the idea of this was suggested by the following grand passage from Thomson's Summer, l. 1046:

> "You heard the groans
> Of agonizing ships from shore to shore;
> Heard nightly plung'd amid the sullen waves
> The frequent corse, while on each other fix'd,
> In sad presage, the blank assistants seem'd
> Silent, to ask whom Fate would next demand."

I will freely confess, however, that if Henry had this passage from Thomson in his thoughts, he has produced one much finer.

I have already said, that Clifton Grove does not abound with many instances of true inspiration. Sometimes he breaks forth into grandeur, as in the following couplet:

> A hundred passing years with march sublime,
> Have swept beneath the silent wing of time.

But these instances are rare; and I shall dismiss this poem with extracting one pas-

sage from it as a specimen, and which is perhaps its best. It is also an example of uncommon felicity of versification in a boy not yet sixteen:

Dear native Grove! where'er my devious track,
To thee will memory lead the wanderer back.
Whether in Arno's polish'd vales I stray,
Or where "Oswego's Swamps" obstruct the day,
Or wander lone, where wildering and wide
The tumbling torrent laves St. Gothard's side;
Or, by old Tejo's classic margent muse,
Or stand entranc'd with Pyrenean views:
Still, still to thee, where'er my footsteps roam,
My heart shall point, and lead the wand'rer home.
When splendor offers, and when fame incites,
I'll pause, and think of all thy dear delights,
Reject the boon, and wearied with the change,
Renounce the wish which first induced to range;
Turn to these scenes, these well known scenes, once
more,
Trace once again old Trent's romantic shore,
And tir'd with worlds and all their busy ways,
Here waste the little remnant of my days;
But if the Fates should this last wish deny,
And doom me on some foreign shore to die:

Oh! should it please the world's supernal king,
That welt'ring waves my funeral dirge shall sing;
Or that my corse should on some desert strand
Lie, stretch'd beneath the Simoöms blasting hand;
Still, tho' unwept, I find a stranger's tomb,
My sprite shall wander thro' this favorite gloom,
Ride on the wind that sweeps the leafless grove,
Sigh on the woodblast of the dark alcove,
Sit a lorn spectre on yon well known grave,
And mix its moanings with the desert wave.

Of the miscellaneous poems which this volume contains, the first is *Gondoline*, a ballad, sufficiently singular in its conception and irregular in its metre. Some of the stanzas are wild and characteristical.

After this follows "Lines written on a Survey of the Heavens in the Morning before Day-break." These were probably produced, or at least suggested, after one of those nights of study to which Henry ultimately fell a victim. It is in blank verse, and contains some fine thoughts upon the intrinsic meanness of man, and the little-

ness of his hopes and labours for a being destined to eternal life.

The next piece in succession is "Lines supposed to be spoken by a Lover at the Grave of his Mistress." I have always admired this piece as being distinguished by great pathos, and language both poetical and musical. It contains, too, one of those delicate touches of true genius, which are not often found in the pages of modern writers:

"His cheek is pale;
The worm that prey'd upon thy youthful bloom
It canker'd green on his."

I pass over his "Study," in Hudibrastic verse, written with levity but without wit, that I may transcribe the beautiful lines "To an early Primrose:"

Mild offspring of a dark and sullen sire!
Whose modest form, so delicately fine,
Was nurs'd in whirling storms,
And cradled in the winds.

Thee, when young Spring first question'd winter's
sway,
And dar'd the sturdy blust'rer to the fight,
Thee on his back he threw,
To mark his victory.

In this low vale, the promise of the year
Serene, thou openest to the nipping gale,
Unnotic'd and alone,
Thy tender elegance.

So Virtue blooms, brought forth amid the storms
Of chill adversity, in some lone walk
Of life, she rears her head
Obscure, and unobserv'd;

While every bleaching breeze that on her blows
Chastens her spotless purity of breast,
And hardens her to bear,
Serene, the ills of life.

The first two stanzas of this poem contain a richness of diction, and of imagery, which are the true offspring of genius. The metre is probably in imitation of Collins' *Ode to Evening*, and Pope's *Ode to Solitude*: but

certainly superior to the latter, and hardly inferior to the former.

The Sonnets of Henry are written with as much excellence, perhaps, as that species of composition is susceptible of. I am one of those who cannot admire the constrained form of a sonnet: oft recurring rhimes force an author, necessarily, upon bad or foolish ones; and I have never read an English sonnet in which, at least, six of the lines were not superfluous.

The Contemplatist.

No. XVI.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1810.

Ex sententiis hominum nostra fama pendet.
CICERO.

IN this number I shall bring to a conclusion my strictures upon Henry Kirke White; and, as the remaining poems are either fragments or short occasional pieces, it would be a thriftless labour to myself and to my readers, to consider them minutely. I shall rather endeavour, to convey a general notion of their aggregate merit.

In reading these smaller pieces we are forcibly struck with that uniformity of genius which he perhaps possessed, and which the lapse of years would have removed. His mind, indeed, seemed to be confined by the sufferings of his body; and it rarely happens that he attempts any thing which does not

point to his own feelings and situation. A want of variety is thus produced, and a consequent want of interest in the reader. I know not, however, whether I shall be justified in the opinion of some for censuring this monotony of subject, when I reflect that these pieces have been given to the world, not by himself but by his editor.

The "Ode to Fuseli" is an unequal performance. It has some lines that would do honour to any pen, and it is disfigured also by the unmeaning emptiness of modern poetry. Of the last the following is an example:

> While far below the fitful oar
> *Flings* its faint *pauses* on the steepy shore.

This is absolute nonsense; to *fling pauses* is unintelligible. These two lines

> Who shall now sublimest spirit,
> Who shall now thy wand inherit?

are probably imitated from Gray:

> Oh! lyre divine, what daring spirit
> Wakes thee now: though he inherit, &c.
>
> *Prog. of Poe.*

The following I consider as the best lines in this piece:

Mighty magician! long thy wand has lain
Buried beneath the unfathomable deep;
And oh! for ever must its efforts sleep,
May none the mystic sceptre e'er regain?
Oh yes! 'tis his!—Thy other son,
He throws thy dark wrought tunic on.
Fusselin waves thy wand—again they rise,
Again thy wildering forms salute our ravish'd eyes.
Him didst thou cradle on the dizzy steep,
Where round his head the volley'd lightnings flung,
And the loud winds that round his pillow rung,
Wooed the stern infant to the arms of sleep,
Or, on the highest top of Teneriffe
Seated the fearless boy, and bade him look
Where far below the weather-beaten skiff
On the gulph bottom of the ocean strook.
Thou mark'dst him drink with ruthless ear
The death sob, and disdaining rest
Thou sawst how danger fired his breast,
And in his young hand couch'd the visionary spear.

The "Ode addressed to the Earl of Carlisle" seems to me to be in nothing superior to newspaper or magazine poetry. Such lines as these,

"But human vows, how frail they *be!*
Fame brought Carlisle *unto* his view."
"And not to know, one swallow makes no summer."

are puerile, and can claim no lenity on the score of youth. Candour, however, seems

to demand that no censure which is passed upon this posthumous poetry should be transferred to Henry. Were the loose papers of any literary man, the effusions of momentary inclination to write, which were afterwards thrown aside, unread perhaps, and uncorrected, to be given to the world by the officious friendship of an editor, we should perceive the vast difference there is between what an author writes and what he publishes. With this security for the fame of Henry, I shall animadvert the more freely upon those productions which it has been deemed prudent to commit to posterity.

The lines "written in the prospect of Death," are equal to Henry's happiest flights. They are tender, elegant, and melancholy. They have that plaintive morality which the contemplation of their subject rarely fails to produce in sensible minds. The following passage gave me pleasure in the perusal:

Fifty years hence and who will hear of Henry?
Oh! none—another busy brood of beings
Will shoot up in the interim, and none
Will hold him in remembrance. I shall sink
As sinks a stranger in the crowded streets

Of busy London. Some short bustle's caused,
A few enquirers, and the crowds close in
And all's forgotten. On my grassy grave
The man of future times will careless tread
And read my name upon the sculptur'd stone;
Nor will the sound, familiar to their ears
Recall my vanish'd memory. I did hope
For better things!—I hop'd I should not leave
The earth without a vestige!

These are thoughts which are familiar to every aspiring mind, while yet in the outset of its career; they are the thoughts that stimulate its activity, and propel its energies to erect an empire in the memory of its fellow man.

In the "Ode to Genius," I find an accumulation of unmeaning epithets which would lead me to refer its production to a very early period. The maturity of intellect which produced *Clifton Grove*, and the *Dance of the Consumptives*, could scarcely pen any thing so trivial as the following:

But ah! a few there be whom griefs devour,
And weeping woe, and disappointment keen,
Repining penury, and sorrow *sour*
And self-consuming spleen.
And these are genius' favourites: these
Know the *thought-thron'd* mind to please,

And from her fleshy seat to draw
  To realms where fancy's *golden orbits* roll.
* * * * * *
And *fat* stupidity shakes his *jolly sides*,
And while the cup of affluence he quaffs
With *bee-eyed* wisdom, &c.

I cannot but think our admiration of Henry's genius would have been more entire, had many of these posthumous pieces been committed to the flames.

No charm of science, no luxury of mental enjoyment, has power to abstract us long from the consciousness of corporeal suffering. Henry's frequent recurrence to the fatal disease that finally removed him from among the sons of men, proves that he thought often and painfully upon its progress: and who can read his pensive, melancholy strains upon the subject, and not breathe a sigh for the youthful martyr that bowed to its canker'd fang? At p. 96 of the second volume, there is a fragment upon *Consumption*, of which I could wish the last seven lines away, for they deteriorate what is good without them: and at p. 110, there is the following sonnet on the same subject:

Gently, most gently, on thy victim's head,
Consumption, lay thine hand! Let me decay,
Like the expiring lamp, unseen, away,
And softly go to slumber with the dead.
And if 'tis true what holy men have said,
That strains angelic oft foretel the day
Of death, to those good men who fall thy prey,
O! let the aërial music round my bed,
Dissolving sad in dying symphony,
Whisper the solemn warning in mine ear;
That I may bid my weeping friends good bye
Ere I depart upon my journey drear;
And smiling faintly on the painful past,
Compose my decent head and breathe my last.

This furnishes, at the same time, a favourable specimen of Henry's sonnet writing; a species of composition under which the genius of Milton himself sunk. The English language is essentially incapable of appearing either graceful or dignified in the shackles of a sonnet: and they who have laboured most to assert its fitness, by their practice, have only written themselves into obscurity.

The lines on the death of Nelson are not composed with that vigour and that reach of fancy and language which I should have expected from Henry's advancing years. The introduction of the word *ditty* in the second

line is ignoble and unsuitable. It would be appropriate in a pastoral elegy which bewails the fate of some Corydon or Delia, but it is quite unfit to convey an idea of a funereal dirge to the memory of a departed hero. In this piece also, I find a line so palpably borrowed from Milton, that I wonder his editor allowed it to pass without being marked as a quotation:

> "he must not, shall not sink
> *Without the meed of some melodious tear.*"

This is a direct plagiarism of the following beautiful line in Milton's *Lycidas:*

> "He must not float upon his watery bier
> Unwept, and welter to the parching wind
> *Without the meed of some melodious tear.*"

I pass over numerous small pieces that offer no room for remark. Many of them have a certain degree of appropriate merit; and others are wholly without any thing that renders them worthy of being printed: such is the fragment, No. iv. p. 139, which is eminently insipid. In the lines to *Solitude*, p. 131, the following stanza marks the constant ambition of his mind to leave a name behind him:

> The autumn leaf is sere and dead,
> It floats upon the water's bed;
> I would not be a leaf to die,
> Without recording sorrow's sigh!
> The woods and winds, with sullen wail,
> Tell all, the same unwearied tale;
> I've none to smile when I am free,
> And when I sigh, to sigh with me.

I have now come to "Time," a poem, which, though only a fragment, is yet of considerable length. His editor says, "this poem was begun either during the publication of Clifton Grove or shortly afterwards. Henry never laid aside the intention of completing it, and some of the detached parts were among his latest productions."

In this poem, therefore, inequalities of execution may be expected. It exhibits more power of mind, than *Clifton Grove*, but less vigour of fancy; its morality is enforced in language closely imitated from Young. It is such a sort of ethical rhapsody as might be discontinued and resumed through any period of time, and in any mood, without detriment to the subject. As there is no narrative, there can be little fear of confusion: paragraphs are distinct from each other, and require not to

be harmonized with preceding or subsequent ones. This kind of writing is well adapted for the excursions of a young mind: it leaves the thought free, by not distracting the attention; and if there be much power of reflection, it is not easy to say where such a poem would terminate: for who can limit the combinations of intellect?

The proemial lines of this fragment are constrained and inelegant. There is more difficulty than is commonly suspected in detailing, with simplicity and elegance, what are to be the chief topics of a poem: Milton himself failed in it.

Viewing this production as a posthumous one, I find in it many things which Henry's judgment and taste would have amended, in a revisal: such are the following:

"*Chaos's* sluggish sentry."

"Mild as the murmurs of the *moonlight* wave."

"I *feel* the freshening *breeze* of *stillness blow*."

This is as bad as the "horrid *stillness*" of Dryden "*invading* the ear."

"Of *endless glory* and *perennial bays*."

This is surely a futile iteration; but it is surpassed by the following line:

"Misty, gigantic, huge, obscure, remote."

In the lines beginning,

"Where are the heroes of the ages past?
Where the brave chieftains, &c.—p. 152.

he appears to have had Blair's *Grave* in his recollection, one passage of which seems here to be imitated.

"Where are the mighty thunderbolts of war?
The Roman Cæsars and the Grecian chiefs, &c.

His idea of death, as a state of oblivion till the last day, is a poetical, but not a philosophical one. Young thought differently: and as Henry was well versed in theological writings, it is the more remarkable that he has adopted such an opinion.

There are in this fragment, many passages which possess unequivocal merit. Without, however, specifying them individually, I shall transcribe one, which is at least equal to any other.

"God of the universe—almighty one—
Thou who dost walk upon the winged winds,
Or with the storm, thy rugged charioteer,

Swift and impetuous as the northern blast,
Ridest from pole to pole :—thou who dost hold
The forked lightnings in thine awful grasp,
And reignest in the earthquake, when thy wrath
Goes down towards erring man,—I would address
To thee my parting pœan; for of thee,
Great beyond comprehension, who thyself
Art time and space, sublime infinitude,
Of thee has been my song! With awe I kneel
Trembling before the footstool of thy state,
My God, my father!—I will sing to thee
A hymn of laud, a solem canticle,
Ere on the cypress wreath which overshades
The throne of death, I hang my mournful lyre
And give its wild string to the desert gale.
Rise, son of Salem, rise, and join the strain,
Sweep to accordant tones thy tuneful harp
And, leaving vain laments, arouse thy soul
To exultation. Sing hosanna, sing,
And hallelujah, for the lord is great
And full of mercy! He has thought of man:
Yea, compass'd round with countless worlds, has thought
Of we* poor worms that batten in the dews
Of morn, and perish ere the noonday sun.

It cannot be denied that there is vigour and comprehension in this extract; and, that it is at least such as only a very highly endowed mind could produce, at such an immaturity of age.

* This should be *us*.

The next and last poetical production in this volume is the "Christiad," of which I know not how to speak with tenderness to Henry's memory, and with just regard to truth. His editor says "there is great power in the execution of this fragment:" but I have sought in vain for it. I view it in no other light than as an unsuccessful attempt to put Milton's *Paradise Regain'd* into a Spenserian stanza: and how such a project is likely to succeed, the reader need not be informed by me. There is a temerity too in the attempt, which could have been justified only by success: for who can hope to rival Milton? Yet, in this fragment, we have Satan convoking an infernal assembly, haranguing them, and an endeavour to discriminate these evil agents by an appropriation of language and manner: but to me, the whole appears so unequal, and so ludicrous, that I regret it should have been permitted to disfigure these posthumous volumes. That my assertion, however, may not be unsupported by proof, I will adduce a few of those passages which excited this unfavourable opinion in my mind. Let my readers recollect the opening of the second book of

Paradise Lost, " High on a royal seat, &c. and then read the following with what gravity they can:

High on a solium of the solid wave,
Prankt with rude shapes by the fantastic frost
He stood in solemn silence:—now keen thoughts engrave
Dark figures on his front; and, tempest tost,
He fears to say that every hope is lost.
Meanwhile, the multitude, as death, are mute:
So, ere the tempest on Malacca's coast
Sweet quiet gently touching her soft lute,
Sings to the whispering waves the prelude to dispute.

Satan then informs them he has failed in his endeavours to tempt our Saviour, and afterwards breaks forth into the following puerile strain of invective:

What then! shall Satan's spirit crouch to fear!
Shall he who shook the pillars of God's reign
Drop from his unnerv'd arm the hostile spear?
Madness! the very thought would make me fain
To tear the spanglets from yon gaudy plain,
And hurl them at their maker! Fix'd as fate
I am his foe! Yea, though his pride should deign
To sooth mine ire with half his regal state,
Still would I burn with fix'd unalterable hate.

I forbear to specify what is bad in these extracts, for the whole appears to me to be nothing but absurdity. In the xxi stanza Satan is ridiculously made to say, " Jove himself

might quake at such a fall!"—But enough: I know of no benefit that protracted censure could produce. The two last stanzas are affecting, because there Henry mournfully relapses into himself again: but for the rest, I wish it never had never been printed.

I observe particularly in these posthumous productions of Henry, a licentious use of words unauthorised by any English classical writer: such as *hectic*, for the patient afflicted: *enchasten'd*, *encheers*, *solium*, *spanglets*, *immantled*, *jingly*, &c. Of these, the greater part is extracted from the "Christiad:" and had he lived, his increasing good taste and judgment would certainly have deterred him from such wanton infraction upon the stability of our language.

Of his prose compositions, with which the second volume concludes, I cannot say much, either in praise or censure. They are creditable for his years, but they betray an immaturity of judgment; and in nothing greater than in the exuberant praises of the two Bloomfields. But here he might plead the infatuation of graver heads, who, confounding what is excellent with what is singular, ad-

mired in a shoemaker and a tailor, such poetry as they would have read with scorn in the pages of a scholar. But Stephen Duck and Ann Yearsley have had their day: and why should not Robert and Nathaniel Bloomfield have theirs?

In the *Essay on Tragedy*, Henry makes a parade of learning without the possession of it. He talks familiarly of Du Bos and Fontenelle, although it is evident he knew no more of either than what he obtained from Hume's essay on the same subject.

His prose is stiff and inelegant; full of such phrases as *whereby*, and *whereas:* he seems not to have attained the art of modulating his periods. He succeeds best in narrative: the tale of *Charles Wanley* is pleasingly told. I should suspect the vision, p. 228, to have a personal allusion to something concerning himself in those parts which relate to the "pert cit," and the reply of "Melancholy."

I have thus concluded my remarks upon this extraordinary youth, and if they have given as much pleasure to those who may have read them, as they have to me in writing, my time has not been misemployed.

The Contemplatist.

No. XVII.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1810.

Voulez-vous prévenir les abus et faire d'heureux mariages? etouffez les prejugés, oubliez les institutions humaines, et consultez la nature.

ROUSSEAU.

SIR,

I AM a young man, and have been married about two years to a very fine woman, whom all my acquaintance commend for her beauty, and whom, even I, who am her husband, cannot help considering as handsome. Not indeed that I chose her for her face alone, though I am most conscious and most ready to confess, that the eye is one avenue to pleasure, which no wise man, who is sus-

ceptible of the impressions of beauty, will neglect. A good heart is a treasure: a discreet mind is another: a sound understanding is a third: but if all these treasures be enclosed within an ugly body, they are robbed of some of their value, and of much of their attraction. There is no virtue, no moral grace, which does not shine with more resplendent lustre, when reflected from that harmonious elegance of form and countenance, that blooming loveliness of modesty and youth, which poets dream of, and which real life sometimes presents in the female sex. In choosing my wife, therefore, I was not displeased to find this union of moral and physical beauty, which I have always considered as so conducive to conjugal felicity: and no man has found greater happiness from it than I have. Nay, I am still happy; only it is now occasionally overshadowed by some circumstances which I do not know how to remove. Perhaps, however, your superior wisdom and sagacity may instruct me in the way.

I am, by nature, an admirer of the female

sex. My feelings, indeed, with regard to them are so susceptible, that I may almost say, I never pass an evening, or a few hours, in the society and conversation of an interesting woman without enduring a transitory emotion of sorrow when absent. Whether this should be considered as my misfortune or my fault, I shall not now discuss: but the consequent attentions which these feelings lead me to proffer to the other sex, are sources of great offence to my wife, and occasion many unhappy hours between us, for I tenderly love her, but cannot yield my liberty even to my love. I often endeavour to convince her that she is unreasonable, but without success. However, as she reads your paper regularly, I have thought it a prudent stratagem to make my complaints to you, and likewise to endeavour, by a connected chain of argument, to impress her with different notions upon the subject. Perhaps, also, this discussion may be of use to others, who, like me, suffer from the tenderness of conjugal affection.

The feelings of preference towards the op-

posite sexes which nature has implanted in every bosom, are so intimately inwoven with almost every incident of life, form so distinguishing a portion of human felicity, and are, in their unbridled tendencies, so likely to produce error, that one great business of morality has ever been the sober and discreet direction of them. We all acknowledge their potency, either in our thoughts or actions; and the institutions of civil society have tended rather to acuminate than to blunt their poignancy. By the frequency of intercourse, and by the arts of polished life, they are divested of their grosser particles, given a wider and more liberal range, and elevated to the rank of social enjoyments.

These feelings, directed towards one object and influenced by motives of convenience, choice, or necessity, produce marriage; which, simply considered, is but a contract by which mutual advantages are to be gained, and the form instituted by the church, a formal ratification of that contract.

I do not believe that language has any terms adequate to express the vast difference of feel-

ing which arises in the heart, accordingly as it is filled with gratified or ungratified desire. The fervour of the latter, and the frigid complacency of the former, have no more affinity than heat and cold. We awake as from a dream, when we awake from the satiety of marriage: we look, but look in vain, for the enchanting prospect that before dazzled our sight: and we reflect with astonishment upon the amazing change. That this is so, the solemn voice of every breast would declare, were it suffered to speak out: but it is a truth so unwelcome, that we strive to hide it even from ourselves; and we strive to hide it from the world by a conduct which is the mixed offspring of humanity, honour, and esteem. Fiction and poetry indeed have sometimes given to wedlock the attributes of a single state: and weak minds have fancied that they saw or felt no change: but the former is known to be falsehood; and the latter, when they are to be found, should, in mercy, be left in the undisturbed possession of their notions.

What marriage is capable of giving, I believe to be this: a tender and affectionate

friendship for each other, ripened, by the lapse of years, into such a mutual necessity, that the separation, by death, becomes a painful and dreaded event. It is, however, possible to ascend higher than this, and very possible to fall lower. So much necessary deception is practised on both sides before marriage, that its after days are too often but accumulated discoveries of vices, errors, and imperfections, the very existence of which were not suspected; and these discoveries are probably the first inlets to that settled and habitual indifference (I mean with a reference to the preceding state) which we never fail to discover in conjugal life. Marriage, therefore, may be regarded as the knell of those elevated joys which love inspires: love and marriage never can be united.

While I write this, I anticipate the exclamation of surprise with which your readers will peruse it. But before they condemn, let them understand; and to understand, they must have passed through both states. They who can identify the ardent, glowing, generous, and lofty emotions of unwedded love, with the

tame, languid, satiated, and placid feelings of matrimonial union, may be envied for a happy obtuseness of mind, but can be admired neither for power of discrimination nor, I fear, firmness of truth. The very sense of mankind, indeed, seems to rise against the supposition: for what is more generally ridiculed and despised than connubial dotage? and it is ridiculed and despised because it must be unnatural or false. No: we expect the discreet sobriety of decent esteem: but we are disgusted with the shadow of what has no longer the vital spirit to animate it.

Intellectual cultivation has a necessary and decided tendency to produce a susceptible character; or, in other words, while it creates additional capacities for pleasure, it also refines our sense of it: and there is no pleasure so perpetual or, perhaps, so intense, as that which results from the intercourse of the sexes. I speak of any intercourse but sensual. Hence, in the ascending scale of human society, we find a corresponding elevation of this delight: and the more we remove from the merely animal creature, the more we shall find the intellec-

tual one deriving pleasure from a source in which the senses have little or no share. At this point of ascension, the free communication between the sexes forms a leading character of human felicity: and, as it is deprived of all grossness of expectation, it may be considered as one of the purest gratifications of which society is capable.

How is it then that it has been thought necessary to regard this pure and incorrupt intercourse between the sexes, as essentially hostile to, and incompatable with, the state of marriage?

Marriage has no power to root out the settled habitudes of nature: it has no power to quench the sympathy which links us to our kind, or to endow us with new senses. It leaves us as it found us, in full possession of all our natural and artificial desires: and, while these desires reign within our bosoms, can happiness be compatible with their annihilation?

The selfish maxim, that they who are united in wedlock, must have neither hands, eyes, nor ears, for any other human being, has

been, is, and ever will be, the fruitful source of conjugal misery. It converts the state of marriage into a solitary and unfruitful banishment: it renders it a gloomy disunion from our fellow creatures: it places a solemn interdict upon the emanations of social love and kindness, and makes its victims sullen, suspicious, and discontented. They find themselves, by their own act, held a captive in the most pernicious and hateful thraldom: they find that they have snapped asunder the link that held them to the world they moved in: they are no longer one of its members: they have drawn a magic circle round themselves, which they must not o'erleap: they sit down in pining misery within its narrow bounds, and waste their days in self-consuming anguish. All those fond delights which flow from unrestrained, yet pure, intercourse, are denied them: they have become a property: they are sold; converted into private possession: a purchased slave to the will and uses of another: their actions misinterpreted: their intentions misconceived: their very virtues made into vices: and the stainless purity of

an angel soiled with the rank spots of inveterate malice and slanderous imputation. Millions submit to this, and, submitting, are miserable. Some spurn at the ignoble and debasing bondage: rise superior to the petty trammels of corrupt minds: disdain every tribunal but their own conscience: and feel and act as become those who have reared the shrine of virtue in their hearts, and are not the blind worshippers of a false idol, erected by prejudice and adored by weakness.

The ceaseless love of variety, which no human being is without, and which, indeed, forms the basis of our moral and political advancement in society, this love of variety, for ever operating upon our feelings, propels us in search of new objects of delight. Nothing pleases in perpetuity, and why then human nature? Besides, in marriage, it too often happens, that the very conduct which endeared the parties to each other, prior to the nuptial ceremony, is forthwith laid aside; and when, in fact, additional reasons arise for every effort being made to retain, we carelessly throw away. But were it not so, the zest of

novelty must decay, and what has already sickened with repetition, comes with no relish to our senses. Satiety produces indifference; and indifference, tied down to its object, generates absolute loathing and disgust. The art of pleasure is understood by few: the art of leaving, that return may be more sweet and grateful. The same viands, the same books, the same sports, the same occupations, however exquisite they may be in themselves, yet displease by constant repetition. The happiness of life consists in contrast: when wearied with the bustle of active duties, we fly to solitude: when sick of inactivity, we rush into the vortex of society and dissipation. We are, in every thing, hunting after change; and why then should we be confined to one gloomy scene of domestic existence?

Temporary absense from what is dear to us enhances the value of the treasure. We return to it with new fondness, and contemplate it with new delight. The placid comforts of home are felt with increased charms when occasionally relieved by the turbulence of public life, or the variety of mixed society.

We may enchain the body, but who can forge fetters for the mind? We may remain, by compulsion, real or imaginary, by our fire-side, but our thoughts are wandering through other scenes, and our imaginations tasting fancied happiness. The sense of what we ought to be, compared with what we are, makes us irritable: we revolt from the stale joys that once delighted, and might still, if not forced upon us: we become sullen, and banish from our hearts every feeling that would lead us to extract happiness from the circle of domestic life.

This is the consequence of that narrow prejudice, which supposes that marriage is to fasten its victim down to one object; to render it insensible to ought else besides, and to make it criminal to draw pleasure from a pure and innocent intercourse between the sexes. Were there any power by which the hearts of mankind might be read: were there some talisman that could, by its magic influence, give to every woe of human life its true origin, I do believe, that an awful proportion of the miseries of existence would be found to flow

from the state of wedlock as it is now constituted. Jealousies, suspicions, reproaches, heart-burnings, taunts, sullenness, malice, revenge, is the black catalogue of vices that walk in its train: and these hateful passions are all conjured up by the interdiction of the natural emotions of the human heart, which, denied their legitimate objects, turn back upon themselves, stagnate into feculencies, and corrupt the very sources of worldly felicity. The mind rankles with the galling consciousness of the servitude it endures: nothing vigorous or healthful possesses it: all its feelings are embittered, and a pining anxiety preys upon its energies.

Some, indeed, as I have already observed, disdain a thraldom so odious and so contemptible, and boldly marking out the path of their own conduct, contemn the railings of rancour, or the insinuations of envy, and satisfied in the conscious integrity of their own hearts, do not appeal beyond it. They cannot accommodate the tenor of their lives to the circumscribed notions of the illiterate and the prejudiced: they are satisfied that their

intentions are pure, and that no evil, directly or indirectly, flows from their proceedings: in the confidence of this certainty they have all the meed that virtue asks, and they can endure all the insults that virtue suffers. To be ranked among these is the proudest character of man. They who have not learned to respect themselves, must never aspire to the dignity of virtue: but they who *have* acquired that greatest lesson of our moral nature, have fortified themselves with an armour of adamant: they fear to do wrong, because they fear themselves: their breast is the volume and register of their deeds where they turn to read them: it is not open to the inspection of the world, for the world can read only its own language: in the pursuit of honest pleasure they are not to be turned aside by the finger of scorn or the tongue of slander: they feel that they are right, and, feeling so, bid their actions avouch their principles.

But there is another circumstance attached to this debasing notion of the sole property of married persons: a circumstance which, alone, ought to operate against its continuance: I

mean the implied degeneracy of human nature.

I presume the strongest advocate for matrimonial possession will allow that the eyes and tongue are free, and that while personal dereliction is avoided, that is avoided which is most suspected. Surely there is no abridgment of conjugal rights and privileges, if words and looks wander from one point: there is no attack upon domestic peace, no violation of domestic claims, when that is given to others which was never meant, by God or man, to be appropriated to one. Yet, who can deny that the jealousy of connubial tyranny too often attempts to limit even these?

It would not be easy to imagine any principle more illiberal than this. It supposes so much inherent depravity in human nature, generally and individually: it establishes such a sensual object as the aim and end of sexual intercourse: and it destroys so captivating and so endearing a source of social happiness, that I am lost in wonder when I reflect upon the extent to which it is pursued.

I will conclude by observing, that while I assert the freedom of intercourse between the sexes, I reject all ideas but those of purity, virtue, and honour: that intercourse must be without a spot, or it is criminal; and I think well enough of human nature to believe that this is abundantly possible.

I remain, Sir, &c.

HYMENÆUS.

The Contemplatist.

No. XVIII.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1810.

Suspicions, amongst thoughts, are like bats amongst birds, they ever fly by twilight: they are to be repressed, or at least well guarded, for they cloud the mind. BACON.

OF the evils that afflict human life, more are imaginary than real. Every man knows, or may know, if he will carefully look into himself, that he has dreaded misfortune more frequently than he has felt it; and every

man also knows that he has suffered more from the anticipation of calamities that have afterwards happened, than from the calamities themselves. It is the nature of fear to exaggerate, and when we are obscurely conscious of something that is to come, our imagination will always outrun truth. It is the same with what we dread and with what we hope. To dwell within the sober probabilities of life in our expectations seems to be a task beyond the reach of man. We should not so often hear complaints of disappointment, if we did not so often indulge in unreasonable hopes; but no sooner are our hearts flattered with the gay prospects of futurity, than we resign ourselves to the delusions of fancy, and look for what we wish rather than for what we ought to expect. I will not deny, indeed, that this delusion is a fascinating error, and, in some cases, a useful one perhaps: but we should curb its power, for every man is actually happy in proportion as he subdues his imagination to his reason.

But, if it be necessary to repress the deceits of hope, which charm by their blandishments, and scatter roses, however transitory, in the path of life, how much more necessary is it to conquer that tendency, which we all possess, in a greater or less degree, to embitter our existence by the groundless apprehension of evils, and to acuminate those which happen by the inventions of a gloomy spirit? How much more necessary is it that we should overcome that sullen temper of mind by which we distort every purpose from its true end, and see, in every act of those by whom we are surrounded, intentions of malice, calumny, and revenge. I have known such, and I have deplored their weakness: I have pitied them as the unintentional assassins of their own happiness, as infatuated beings who mourned the loss of a treasure which they threw away as often as it approached them.

I cannot help suspecting that this perversity

of mind owes its origin to a mistaken notion of mankind, which springs from ignorance and is fostered by prejudice. He who understands the system of social life must know that it is upheld by mutual kindness; and he who transfers the delinquency of a few to the whole, betrays at once folly and wickedness. To distrust every one, to suspect fraud and baseness on all occasions, and to arm ourselves in our intercourse with our fellow creatures as if we were surrounded by our enemies, is a sort of prudence which no one can envy for its power of conferring happiness. I am not of that philosopher's opinion, who counsels us to treat even our friend as a man who may, one day, become our foe: a maxim subversive of all generous confidence, of all tender intercourse; for what is friendship but an endearing interchange of trust, a mutual compact of fidelity and honour?

Among these various modes of self-tormenting, there is none more frequently adopted or

more certainly destructive of felicity, than suspicion. To nourish that, is to nourish an inward foe that never sleeps; a ravenous monster to whom all food is grateful. It is a canker which penetrates the most secret recesses of our nature, and corrupts the most latent sources of action. It deteriorates the noblest virtues: it degrades those who cherish it, and it dishonours those who are unjustly its object. It is a characteristic of this passion too, that it is combined with sullenness, by which it is fostered without suffering any opportunity for its removal or decay. The mind of the suspicious man is closed against the rays of truth: it dwells in gloomy and voluntary darkness; it feeds upon black and frightful images, and repels the power that would turn it from its own abhorred repast. It is a willing slave to baseness, nor does it stop in its ignoble career, till it is awakened to truth and remorse by the shock of some necessary but unexpected evil.

SUSPICOSUS was married in early life to MARIA, and had found in marriage such happiness as marriage is likely to give. MARIA had been carefully educated, and she possessed much native good sense, joined to a warm and feeling heart. She was elegant in her person, refined in her manners, and frank in her disposition. She loved reading, and she had, what is a common consequence of reading, a slight enthusiasm of character. She was attentive, however, to the exercise of her domestic duties, and suffered nothing to impede the execution of what she considered as the peculiar functions of a wife. SUSPICOSUS was the object of her choice, and marriage, when it had subdued the fervour of love, left in her bosom a lasting and sincere affection.

SUSPICOSUS had an unfeigned regard for MARIA; but it was a regard that had its principal basis upon external qualities. He was not insensible to the virtues of her heart, though he had no high and generous feeling of them.

He was sometimes gratified by their consequences, but he knew not how to honour them for themselves. He was fully alive, however, to her personal attractions, and he listened, with rapture, to the applauses of his friends, as they commended the dignity of her deportment or the beauty of her countenance. He was happy in the possession of a handsome wife, without reflecting that the pleasure which springs merely from the possession of beauty is the pleasure of a child over a gilded toy.

The mind of SUSPICOSUS was not enlarged, and he therefore participated but little in those mental pleasures which formed so considerable a part of the delights of MARIA. He did not, however, forbid her to pursue them, though he never omitted any opportunity of ridiculing the warmth of her expressions when she spoke of any favourite author. He always treated her knowledge with sarcastic petulance; affected to disbelieve her progress

in French and Italian when she was learning those languages, and rudely suppressed her discourse when it rose above the level of ordinary conversation. MARIA patiently submitted to what she wisely considered as a small evil in the account of life: and she willingly strove to be the companion of her husband when her husband was present. In his absence, could she find a friend that would partake of her mental pleasures, she was happy. She often repeated, with warmth and feeling, the lines of Young:

Hast thou no friend to set thy mind abroach,
Good sense will stagnate. Thoughts, shut up, want air,
And spoil, like bales unopen'd to the sun.
Had thought been all, sweet speech had been denied;
Speech! thought's canal: speech! thought's criterion too.

It is often a natural progression from reading to composition. Perhaps no person who reads much has ever totally refrained from

the attempt to commit his thoughts to paper. In the absence of a friend, the power of composition relieves the mind from grief and partakes with it of joy: and MARIA was accustomed to employ this mode of expressing those feelings which are so common to sensible minds. But nothing could more deeply offend SUSPICOSUS than any sort of literary composition: he thought it an avenue to corruption: nay, in the bigotry and ignorance of his mind, he thought it a degradation. Whenever, therefore, MARIA indulged in this solitary solace, she was compelled to destroy or conceal whatever she wrote.

It happened that one morning she had translated, from Rousseau's *Heloise*, one of the most impassioned letters from *Julia* to *St. Preux*. It was done merely as an exercise with a view to ascertain her accuracy in the language she was then studying. She had caught all the vivid glow of the original: she was pleased with it: and, instead of de-

stroying it immediately, as was her usual custom, she kept it to read a second time.

By some accident this translation fell from her pocket, and was picked up by SUSPICOSUS. He knew his wife's hand-writing, and read the letter with trembling and astonishment. What could it mean? To whom could it be addressed? Was she false and infamous? Was she carrying on an intrigue even in the very house and under his own eyes? Yes, she was; for he held the evidence in his own hands. Still, however, he thought it impossible, for the tenderness of her affection, the purity of her principles, and the little cause he had given for such a deviation were strong against the presumption.

SUSPICOSUS wanted liberality of character; he was proud and reserved where he but thought an injury; and, instead of coming

forward in an open, manly way, to state the grievance which he felt, he smothered the real or fancied wrong within his bosom, and it was only in his dark and sullen look, in his cold and altered conduct, that his displeasure could be read. He kept the letter, but he never questioned MARIA respecting its import or its destination.

MARIA had missed the paper, but innocence knows no fears. She readily imagined that it might fall into the hands of SUSPICOSUS; but if it did, she also thought that he must know, from its nature and from the manner in which it was written, that it could be nothing but what it was.

When they met at dinner, SUSPICOSUS was silent and gloomy; and he retired to his own room immediately the meal was over. MARIA was alarmed and hurt at this conduct; but she endeavoured to suppress her rising fears by attributing it to some chagrin of mind

arising from causes in which she had no concern. Her blameless conduct removed all suspicion from herself.

At the tea-table SUSPICOSUS was still the same, and when MARIA attempted to introduce any topic of discourse, he either made no answer or replied with laconic sullenness. It was in vain that she urged him to disclose any cause of sorrow or vexation that oppressed him. It was in vain that she strove, by every kind and gentle blandishment, by every token of affection which she could employ, to induce him to reveal the secret uneasiness he felt. In the apprehension of greater evils she forgot topics of meaner import: the translated letter no longer occupied her thoughts: it was a trifle that could find no place in her recollection. But her silence on this subject only served to aggravate the suspicion of her husband: he thought that it proceeded from callous indifference; or else, that the paper he had was but a rough sketch, now of no

value, as the corrected copy had been despatched to its object.

Thus doubt increased doubt, and each doubt created fresh anxiety. His mind and feelings became warped: he saw every action of MARIA through a new medium: he heard every word she uttered with a new sense. If she was gay at his return home, she had just been quitted by her paramour; if pensive, he had come too soon, and disappointed her of an interview with him; if she smiled at his departure, it was from expectation; if she was sad, it was hypocrisy. If she went abroad it was to see him or to receive letters; if she staid at home, the servant had been bribed to bring them. Every thing she did or said was perverted, and this constant irritation of mind rendered him at length habitually peevish, cold, and sullen.

MARIA observed this fatal change in her husband, and sought, in vain, to discover the

cause of it. Her heart acquitted her of any crime towards him, and she felt that her love for him was still unabated. That love, however, was no longer amiable in his eyes, and its manifestation was repulsed with disgust. Her hours of solitude were now no longer devoted to the pleasing labours of instruction, but to the silent indulgence of sorrow: she sought her chamber to weep undisturbed; and she issued from it with a countenance falsely dressed in delusive smiles.

The delicate frame of MARIA sunk under the poignancy of this conflict. The roses withered from her cheek; the sparkling of her eye was quenched. A slow and wasting disease brought her to the bed of death; and, as she lay there, her husband first felt the iniquity of his conduct. He now thought her innocent and virtuous, when her innocence and virtue could no longer adorn the ranks of society, give pleasure to himself, or dignity to MARIA. He saw her pallid countenance,

her sunken cheek, her withered form; and he saw them with agony.

One morning, the last that ever dawned upon the mortal sight of MARIA, he approached her bed-side with trembling: he threw himself upon his knees, and, in a faltering voice, he questioned her about the letter. A thought now flashed across MARIA's mind; she raised herself from her pillow; she explained the whole: in the tears of her husband she read his contrition; she felt that she was again innocent in his eyes; and with the fervid glow of that consciousness upon her cheek she expired.

The Contemplatist.

No. XIX.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1810.

Sapientia est rerum divinarum et humanarum scientia, cognotioque quæ cujusque rei causa est.

CICERO.

I HAVE given insertion to the following letter, because the writer seems to be sincere in his opinions, and because those opinions, thus expressed, may call forth inquiries that may ultimately lead to truth, which is not always to be found on the side of custom.

TO THE CONTEMPLATIST.

SIR,

THE topic upon which I am about to trouble you with some remarks, is one that

has often occupied the attention of abler pens than mine; but, as I propose to tell what I think myself, and not what others have thought before me, perhaps the want of originality of subject may be no impediment to my success with you or your readers. To discuss the *utility* of what are called the learned languages, can never be a task of insignificance, if it be performed with temper, candor, and ability: for surely it is no mean question, to fix the limits and importance of a branch of education whose fate it has been to be magnified or depressed beyond the bounds of truth; and this discussion is the object of the present letter.

Things and not *words* ought to be the primary concern of a rational being: and the former are, I conceive, to be obtained as well in an English as in a Latin or a Greek dress. I will take history as an example; for this species of composition is principally conversant about those subjects which are essential to general and to useful knowledge. The man who reads Livy,

Tacitus, Sallust, Cæsar, Xenophon, Thucydides, in their original language, comes forward with a haughty mien, with a scornful look of self-importance, and boasts his *learning:* I grant, his learning is two-fold; he knows the facts; and he knows, also, the languages in which those facts are narrated:—the man, likewise, who has read these authors in approved translations, or who has digested their essence in comprehensive compilations, may also step boldly forward with the conscious independence of knowledge, and, with an unblenched countenance enter the lists with the more pompous linguist. I ask, in what does the boasted superiority of this latter consist? If in any thing it consists in this: where I read *citizen,* he reads *civis:* where I read *and,* he reads *et;* where I read *a man of refined taste,* he reads *homo emunctæ naris;* where I read *solid friendship consists in the same desires, the same aversions,* he reads *idem velle, idem nolle, firma amicitia est:* &c. &c. But, is this a knowledge upon which a man is to pride himself: is this

school-boy exercise of memory, this mechanical operation of the human faculties, to draw the line between genius and stupidity, between erudition and ignorance? Is not the real, the essential, the *useful* knowledge which we both possess equal? Is not my acquaintance with the general current of events, with the causes that produced them, with the consequences that resulted from them, as full, as complete, as beneficial as his? Am I not enabled to draw the same inferences? To make the same applications? To apply the same reasonings? Can I not estimate, with the same accuracy, the motives of the actors? Can I not acquire the same general and accumulated stock of information? In fact, that useful knowledge which consists in the concentration of events for the purpose of applying them by way of comparison, illustration, or argument when needful, is possessed, equally, by both of us: and willingly may be resigned to the pedant, the empty fame of possessing two or three words for the same idea, where I have only one.

Perhaps it may be said, my knowledge will not be so accurate, because translators may mistake the meaning of an author, or may wilfully pervert it. To the first objection I answer, I might probably be as mistaken as they, supposing I knew the original; owing to the obscurity and confusion in which many parts of the classics are involved: and, as to the second, allowing that a man may occasionally be so warped by prejudice or party as to purposely pervert the meaning of an author, yet, this is not always the case, and others may be found who have more impartiality; for, of almost all the classics there is more than one translation extant. What has been here said of history will apply equally to ethics, criticism, philosophy, dialectics, &c.—But with regard to poetry and eloquence, the case differs. Here the imagination, and not the judgment, is to be propitiated. We are to be amused, delighted, charmed, but seldom instructed. We are to rise from perusal, our ears amused with harmonious versification, our fancies bewildered

with beautiful imagery and apt similies, our minds loaded with metaphor, anaphora, metonymy, synecdoche, dactyls, spondees, iambics, pyrrhics, amphibrachs, and a world of abstract personifications, which are, indeed, infinitely amusing and often enrapture the soul "lapping it in Elysium," but which have no more real and necessary connection with substantial, useful knowledge, than an ear for music, an eye for painting, or a palate for *haut gout*. Even here, however, the *utile* may be extracted from translations, though certainly the *dulce* will evaporate. But these things are, at best, only agreeable recreations for idle fancies: and the man who never read Horace, but in the imitations of Pope (by far the liveliest transcript of his manner) or Virgil, but in the translation of Dryden, or Homer, but in the version of his English translators, will have little reason to complain of his loss, while, in addition, he has free access to the beauties of Shakspeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Akenside, and a host of native poets. And the same may be said of all works purely imaginative.

They who argue on the opposite side of the question, and maintain the *utility* of the learned languages, have seldom, in my opinion, formed a right conception of the case. They confound, perpetually, the *languages* with the *things* contained in those languages. They talk of the beautiful morality of Xenophon, of the profundity of Tacitus, and the elegant precision of Sallust; they never consider that this morality, that this profundity exist, as effectually, in our versions of them, as in the originals. Will any man venture to tell me that after reading the *Cyropœdia* of Xenophon in Lord Lansdown's translation, I have not as clear an idea of the virtues that constitute an amiable prince and a wise legislator, as he who learnedly mouths it in the Greek? Or, will it be asserted, that I shall not feel the same detestation of the vices of Cambyses, as related in Herodotus, because I read the account of them in English? What mummery is this!

They talk idly too about the revival of

learning, and think they have established a wonderful fact when they discover that to that revival we owe our present advancement in science. This is something like a man who should tell you it is dark at night, and light in the day time. The discovery of ancient manuscripts certainly engendered an ardour for learning, and an emulation which, at a remote period, produced the most important events: but the bastard erudition of the middle ages is more easily praised than read. Even so late as the close of the fifteenth century, the Medicean family, in their laudable efforts for the preservation of classical remains, only built, as it were, a cradle in which future literary heroes were to be nursed. Three of the greatest names of modern Italy, Dante, Boccacio, and Petrarca, were a century anterior to this; and at that time there were few manuscripts yet discovered, and those few difficult of attainment; *(See Vie de Petrarque par de Sade.)* Sallust, Livy, some of the works of Cicero, and a few of the poets: what assistance then, did those men derive from

the Latin classics? and Greek was altogether out of the question, for it was not till the subversion of the eastern empire in 1452 that the fugitive Greeks brought their language and literature to Italy. It appears, therefore, that to the exertions of native genius the knowledge of ancient languages is by no means an indispensible appanage. Shakspeare knew them not, and who regrets that he did not? Burns knew them not, and where is he that thinks for a moment, his genius would have exerted itself more vigorously if he had?

Knowledge may be considered under two different points of view; its acquisition and its application; these two are quite distinct, for there are some who store up mines of intellectual wealth, and have not the talent to bring it into circulation. Knowledge is nothing but an aggregation of *ideas* derived from experience, from books, or from reflection: we are acquiring the first from the day of our birth to the day of our death: the second only

a favoured few acquire, and the third a still more favoured few. I shall confine myself to the second. The consciousness which we have of any thing is an idea, and the question is not, *how* this consciousness is acquired, but whether it be actually acquired. If I know that Cyrus defeated Crœsus at the battle of Thymbria; if I know that Egyptian Thebes had a hundred gates and could send forth 10,000 armed men at each; if I know that Semiramis crossed the Indus, or that Sardanapalus was a weak and effeminate king, and the last of the Assyrian monarchy; that the grandeur of Nineveh perished with his falling fortunes; if I know all this, what does it matter whether I have learnt it in Greek or in English? The Grecian or the Latinist may tell me, you have lost the beauties of the original, you have lost all that indefinite grace which cannot be transfused into a foreign language; the harmony of periods, the charms of antithesis have totally escaped you; though he should tell me this, and probably what he tells me would be true, yet I would reply

that *my knowledge*, my useful, my substantial knowledge, was not one whit inferior to his: I am prepared to draw from it all the results which my reason can draw, and that is the knowledge of reflection.

I will illustrate this from example.—A linguist reads in Tacitus *obtrectatio et livor pronis auribus accipiuntur:* an unlettered man reads *envy and detraction are willingly received:* the former reads, in Seneca, *curæ leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent:* the latter, *light sorrows are clamorous, severe ones are dumb*; *&c. &c.* and I would ask whether the moral truth of the one or the other be not as perfectly possessed, relished, and understood by both? What is there so all-commanding in these languages, that our native idiom is to be degraded as fit only for transacting our daily duties? The affectation of scholars has produced this blind resignation of our sober faculties; scholars who, themselves destitute of native powers, seek to enhance the reputation of what they have acquired, and mag-

nify their own pursuits; like the tanner, the stone-mason, and the carpenter, in the fable, who were respectively for having the walls of their town made of leather, stone, and wood.

But there is another advantage which the advocates in support of the learned languages maintain; viz. that the knowledge of our own is wonderfully improved by them. They entrench themselves behind the wretched affectation of learning, and shew, with the absurd parade of a scholar, the use they have made of their own utensils. Greek! Greek! Latin! Latin! that's their acropolis, that's their bulwark; that's their defence; and that, they imagine, is to impose silence upon unlettered reasoners, to strike them with awe, to strike them with humility and submission. They complain, that they find a difficulty in understanding words derived from the Greek and Latin; that they confound their significations; that they never have clear ideas of them. All this may be so; and if it *be* so,

I am not bound to shew the reason *why* it is so, though there needs "no ghost come from the grave to tell us." But I will maintain, that a man of common sense may have as accurate an idea of a word derived from the learned languages, *as it is used in our own,* as he who knows its radix. I say as it is USED IN OUR OWN; for the stability of a language is, or ought to be, such as to preclude innovation; and, although I may know that a certain word bears a multiplicity of significations in its original, yet *I* am bound to use it, not according to those primitive significations, but according to its received and legitimate ones in my native tongue; and a man who knows *no* language but his own, may yet *acquire* his own, in the fullest and completest sense of the word, by the study of the best writers and the use of the best dictionaries.

The knowledge of languages is certainly an ornament to the edifice of *genius*: but when it exists solitary in a barren mind,

which produces not one indigenous plant, which merely bears, and that not in a very flourishing manner, whatever is transplanted into it, I then look upon it as a very humble sort of merit indeed. They can aspire no higher than to the poor applause of successful diligence; a diligence in which *every* man can become their competitor, and *many* may bear away the laurel. It requires just the same temper of feeling by which the woodman fells a tree, or the hedger excavates a ditch; they know that their strokes, constantly repeated, will at length produce the desired effect. The linguist also knows that a heavy and inflexible perseverance must ultimately bring him to an end, and imprint upon his mind the words of the language he is studying. But, when we compare this humble merit with the higher occupations of the mind, when we compare it with the flights of fancy, the daring combinations of genius, the sublime pictures of imagination, when we compare it with the successful investigation of moral truth, the discoveries of science by

which life is rendered happier and our ideas of the Creator expanded; when we compare it with almost any of the native energies of intellect, how poor it seems, how low it sinks; give it its due praise; assign it its just rank; but let us not sink into the common and disgusting error of making the learned languages every thing, and every thing else nothing; let us not place Greek and Latin as the boundary between all that is great and wonderful and lovely, and what is poor, unworthy, and disgraceful: let us estimate, truly, what we have, and we shall then find that *words* do not always give *knowledge*; let us not come forth with a magisterial air and a vain parade of learning, to frighten plain, well-meaning men out of their mother tongue, which, heaven help them! they may have been learning thirty or forty years, by telling them "you don't know Greek; you don't know Latin; therefore, you know nothing, not even English. Sir, it is impossible that you can understand the meaning of *synecdoche*, *syncopa*, *metaphrase*, *miso-*

gamist, *misogamy*, for you don't know Greek!" I smile when I think of such language, and pity those who use it.

I remain, Sir, &c.

Attalus.

The Contemplatist.

No. XX.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1810.

Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide.
DRYDEN.

THE following letter from a northern correspondent will, I hope, be acceptable to my readers: and, if it lead them to think with humility and trembling upon that gift of which we are all so proud, but which the Almighty Giver can, in a moment, snatch from us, the narrative will not be without its use.

TO THE CONTEMPLATIST.

SIR,

A BOOK was recently put into my hands, entitled *An Address to the lately formed Society of the Friends of the People: by John Wilde, Esq. Advocate,* &c. I had been previously much interested about the author of this work. His story is melancholy and singular, and perhaps will not be perused by your readers without emotion. I have been able to glean only a few scattered facts from partial inquiry, and these I will give you.

His father is a tradesman in Edinburgh, and I know nothing of what other family he may have, or what are his connexions in life. This son, at a very early age, betrayed marks of a powerful mind; and an education suitable to his dawning talents, was provided for him. The bar is, in Edinburgh, the principal avenue to fame and wealth for those who, like Wilde, have to acquire both; and he accordingly qualified himself for becoming an advocate, a professional character of great respectability in this town. I have never heard with what success he practised, or whether he was distinguished as an eloquent pleader: indeed, whether he ever practised or pleaded at all, for the name of advocate is often taken here as an honourable title, without any intention of engaging in its duties. But I have been told, that his lectures on civil law, in the university, were excellent; that his views were often grand and comprehensive; and that his language was always nervous, forceful, and elegant. I am not able to say at what period he began, nor at what period he concluded, his professional duties; but it was during their continuance that he published his "Address."

Wilde saw, equally with Burke, the decided tendency of the French Revolution: he was instructed by past wisdom; from the analogies of things he was enabled to predict what would probably happen, or at least to shew what such a concussion must generally produce. Of an epoch so long past, and of principles since so completely developed, it would now be idle to speak; but the work itself has great and various merit. It possesses eloquence, imagination, fire, pathos, reasoning, learning, and wisdom. It embraces a comprehensive sphere of inquiry, and conducts that inquiry with ability and strength. It has some passages eminently beautiful; some characters felicitously drawn; and some delineations vivid and impressive. The language occasionally rises to sublimity; is very often grand; and never otherwise than fluent and energetic. It shews, in every page, a mind well stored; and, what is infinitely better, it shews a mind sincere, bold, and independent. The reader, from the first paragraph, delivers himself, unresistingly, into the hands of his author: he never disputes his magic sway; he bends to it; and owns, with a pleasing

ecstacy of mind, the power that subdues him. As a mighty river, rolling in its course, sweeps before it every resisting obstacle, and bears, upon its bosom, the scattered ruins; so his eloquence, the charms of his narration, overwhelm the mind and confound, at once, the dawning objections that sometimes arise. I do not exaggerate; I have read the book with attention, with emotion; an emotion, perhaps, somewhat increased by the consciousness of what the author *now is.*

Oh! does not imagination lend her brightest rays to paint, upon the tablets of the mind, a man enjoying the love, the esteem, the admiration of his friends, the applauses of the world, the proud consciousness of an honest fame? Does not fancy depict him moving in a sphere where attention waits upon his steps, and distinction walks by his side; where his words are received with delight, and his maxims treasured up with zealous sedulity; in a sphere where he holds converse with philosophers, statesmen, and dignitaries; where he instructs the wise, polishes the refined, and sharpens the sagacious? Yes; the mind draws for herself a pleasing, a glorious, a noble picture! She sees him in his professional cha-

racter vindicating the rights of the oppressed, dashing the proud petty tyrant from his car of despotism, and trampling beneath his feet, with indignant mien, the base instruments of corruptive wealth.—The forum echoes with the thunders of his voice, calling upon the administrators of public justice to avenge injured worth, to castigate shameless and abandoned villainy. She beholds him, in all cases, the guardian of those whom fate has doomed to fall beneath the sceptre of vexatious pride; and never shrinking from the line of truth, of justice, and of public duty. Or, she reposes in a milder scene. She views him in the retired privacy of domestic felicity; planning schemes of public good; shedding round a narrower circle the rays of love, benevolence, and friendship; and illuminating the path of elegant retirement.

Alas! it is no such thing! The wreck of his reason has hurled him from the walks of men, and placed an awful mark upon him, by which the ignorant and the base-minded know his degradation. His eye no longer beams with intelligence; his breast no longer swells with high born sentiments; his tongue no longer pours forth the conceptions of a mind,

pregnant with grand and comprehensive ideas! He has lost every characteristic of a man but the form!

Oh! it is a humiliating sight, and reads an awful lesson to the heart. That he, whose mental energies were formed to delight, to captivate, to astonish; whose soul breathed with ardour in the commanding eloquence of words; whose bosom beat responsive to some of the noblest, and most glorious sentiments that ever animated the human form; that he should now claim but small distinction from brute, unconscious matter; that he should prowl about in bye paths and unfrequented roads, forlorn, despised, and neglected; that he should be scoffed at by the ignorant and the barbarous; stared at, with the foolish gaze of wonder, the insulting sneer of mockery, or the sigh and exclamation of pity! I have seen that eye, which once spoke the soul within, fixed, with rayless glare, with deadened imagination, upon unnoticed objects; I have seen it wandering about with vague, unconscious look, that spoke the ruins of a noble mind; I have marked the hurried step, the unbidden laugh, the squalid form; and I have mourned the perishable texture of that organisation on

which proud man builds all consequence; from which he draws impious importance; and deduces claims to pre-eminence more unstable than the waves, more fluctuating than the winds.

You will ask me, perhaps, what was the immediate cause of this mental derangement. I cannot answer this distinctly. I have heard many reasons assigned; the most general one is, that an intemperate course of study, in preparing his collegiate lectures at a time when he was compelled to employ an active and dangerous medicine, occasioned the melancholy catastrophe. The first symptoms were perceived one morning during his lecture: he broke off abruptly, and bade the pupils come and warm themselves, for it was a very cold morning. But, whatever, were the cause, the effect is equally deplorable; and it is more deplorable when we reflect on what a mind the awful ravage has been committed. Insanity is, in every instance, an afflicting spectacle; but how much more so, when we see its wild and gloomy reign in a once happy region, where every thing that was manly, liberal, and noble, took its growth; where science flourished, and wisdom imp'd

her wing for daring flights! where virtue spread her inspiring mantle, and invested every deed in fair proportioned colours. The eye looks with comparative unconcern upon the smoking ashes of a nameless hamlet; but the tear starts, and the heart beats when we behold a mighty empire swept from the face of things by the burning ploughshare of o'er-whelming ruin!

He is allowed, I believe, a pension from government, obtained after this solemn event had taken place; and, from a respect to his talents, his virtues, and his misfortune, he is still nominally retained as the professor of civil law in the university, and the acting one is constrained to pay him half the salary. A needless kindness! He wants but a small stipend to supply his few necessities. I have been told that he often locks himself up in his room, and will sit, for whole hours, composing pamphlets upon the French Revolution, which he destroys as fast as he writes them. That he has lucid intervals I am inclined to believe from the following fact.

Towards the conclusion of the dedication to his book, which is inscribed to W. Carlyle,

Esq, are the following words: "Indeed, both you and I, in the discording harmony of our natures, could still pass through the same enchantments, and be raised to the same ravishing delights, as in those days when Mrs. Siddons (for which our eternal gratitude is her due) sublimed our souls to that reach of felicity, of which the memory might, in after life, drive away (while itself remained) all possible human pain and sorrow."—Now it is remarkable, that whenever Mrs. Siddons plays in Edinburgh, Wilde never fails to attend the theatre; I have twice witnessed this myself; I observed him very closely; and whenever Mrs. Siddons appeared, he rivetted his eyes upon her, but seemingly without any consciousness of what she said, for, in her most pathetic parts, I have seen a vacant smile upon his countenance. Yet the moment she went off the stage, he paid no sort of attention to the other actors, but looked at the audience, or hung his head upon his bosom; and from this posture he would start the moment he heard the tones of Mrs. Siddons' voice. I own I am utterly unable to account for this mixture of consciousness and of insensibility; of reason and of insanity. There is evidently the

former, when he rouses from his reverie at her voice, when he fixes his eyes immoveably upon her, and turns them away from the other actors; and I think that there is as evidently the latter, when he does not seem to participate in any thing she utters; his countenance remains inflexible, only that sometimes, in the deepest parts, an unmeaning smile appears. To me this is inexplicable.

I am not certain whether your readers will peruse this account of so melancholy an event with the same emotions that I have written it. I am well aware they cannot feel the same sentiments for poor Wilde as myself, for they have neither seen him nor read his work; two circumstances very necessary, towards forming that sort of feeling which pervades my breast whenever I think of him, and particularly when I have met him in my walks. He is yet in the prime of life, handsomely formed, vigorous and athletic; through all his dirt and all his slovenliness this may be traced. He walks incessantly, and very quickly. Sometimes, indeed, I have seen him sauntering along as if in a meditating mood: but this is not common. I have, more than once, seen him in the dusk of the evening slowly pacing

along, his hat off, and his face turned up towards the heavens muttering to himself.—Ill-fated mortal! never have you crossed my path that my heart has not done homage to thy misfortune! Never have I thought on you in the lone moments of contemplation that I have not prayed for thy release!—

I am almost ashamed to mention, that the idle fears of a few women in this town have lately caused the incarceration of poor Wilde in a private mad-house. They complained that his appearance had terrified them as often as they met him in the public walks; and to quiet their frivolous alarms, this harmless maniac is now deprived of the only comfort of which perhaps he was conscious; for he walked incessantly, and usually with great rapidity.

It occurs to me, that as Wilde's book is now rather scarce, a few brief extracts, justifying the eulogiums which I have passed upon it in the commencement of this letter, might be acceptable to you, and your readers. Its various merits, indeed, can be but ill appreciated by such detached portions; yet they will serve to show, that the mind which produced them was of no common stamp; and that the goodliest fruit might have been anti-

cipated from its maturity, when such was the produce of its spring.

Every one remembers the impassioned description of the Queen of France by Burke: Wilde has selected the same topic, and shines with native light even by the side of his illustrious predecessor.

"In my present temper of mind," says he, "I cannot speak to you. My eyes are turned; my whole thoughts are centred on Paris. It was by a sudden impulse, connected with what is now doing there, that I again run to these papers. They might otherwise have been neglected long, long. It struck my mind that I might by their means think aloud upon the most injured and the noblest of women.

"Certainly she is so. It is a spectacle such as no history has recorded. Nothing like it was ever brought by the imagination of poets into any dramatic fable. The dignity is unparalleled. The misery is unparalleled. Her afflictions have been heavier than any ever known. Her constancy has been greater than any ever exerted. It has been a mild constancy too; a constancy as mild and serene as it has been undaunted. In former ages there have been high minded and heroic women; yet they have, in general, had too near a resemblance to the minds and to the heroism of men. It is not stern philosophy in the Queen of France. It is not imperious and haughty

boldness. Her firmness and courage are softened and graced by all the feminine affections and beauties. She is the tender mother, the affectionate wife, the heroic queen, and the lovely woman.

" And must this lady, *fairer than feigned of old or fabled since*, must she, with all her virtues and all her attractions, be given up so early a sacrifice to the cannibals of France! Ah! with what different sentiments did she, in the spring of her life, enter that once gay and happy land, happy even under all the evils (and many real evils there were) of the old subverted government! With what different sensations, after residing some years among a people who adored her, did she see herself become their Queen with still increased adoration! With what happy auspices did this reign begin! It was scarcely possible that France ever again should be engaged in a continental war. Besides the dowry of her beauty and her virtues, this Queen brought to her kingdom the fair portion of perpetual peace with that formidable and hostile power, betwixt which and France an animosity kindled centuries before, and frequently maintained with bitterness and rancour, had drained the best blood of both countries, and deformed the face of all Europe. This violence was now to expire for ever upon the lips of beauty, and this fortunate woman was to compose the tumults of the nations with her smile. Except our mad and wicked attempt against our colo-

nies of America, nothing could have disturbed the universal repose. In France itself the reign began with concessions. Acts of benignity every where marked the steps of the young sovereigns. A Queen had not been seen in France for a long, a very long period; and such a Queen, so lovely in her person, so popular in her manners! The French were satisfied, and happy beyond all former memory. They were acquiring besides, (gradually and in measure) new privileges, and obtaining fresh benefits, every day. Nothing was wanting but to give them that constitutional security by which his subjects might truly say that the benefits of their sovereign were become their property, and to be the birthright of their children. The King for this purpose, called together his States. They have degraded, imprisoned, dethroned him: they now threaten to murder him, his wife, and children, and to massacre all his family and friends, who have not by flight escaped from their fury. In the country of France there are now left neither laws, nor morals, nor manners. As to its inhabitants, 'their places know them no more.' It is a nation 'scattered and peeled:' every thing good, and generous, and honourable, and manly, having left, or having been driven from the soil; there now only remain, not to dwell in the land, but to desolate it, hordes of wandering savages, whose journies to and from their chief encampment at Paris, are marked with rapine and blood;

while the void which has been left by the flight of all the better sorts of citizens, is filled up by the influx (like the rushing into a common sewer) of all the filth and offscourings of Europe. Such has been the state (the dreadful state) of this ancient and renowned kingdom; of this country to which nature had been so lavish in her bounties, and where art had done so much as if nature had done nothing: such are the calamities which have afflicted it now for more than three years, ever since the fatal and execrable day, which some Englishmen have not been ashamed to place in the holy calendar of freedom!"

The nature of your paper, Sir, precludes the idea of copious extract; yet I will venture upon one more, which I scruple not to pronounce eloquent. It is his description of the capture of the *Bastile*, in a letter addressed to some persons who had met in Edinburgh, to celebrate the occasion with a dinner:

"Gentlemen," says he, "when I first heard that this fortress was demolished, I rejoiced as much as any of you can do. If eating and drinking are to be reckoned the appropriated and legitimate marks of applause, I should have met with you any where, and should have ate myself (had you demanded it) into a surfeit, or drunk till my eyes reeled in their sockets. Indeed I did consider it to be a great deliverance. Little did I think that this fortress was demolished, only to make a Bastile of all France. Little did I imagine that it was

demolished by savages, and not by heroes. But its captors did not leave their nature long in question. They have published their own annals, and recorded their own triumphs. Read them, Gentlemen; tell me if all the centuries of the Bastile can equal the months of their domination. When *Arné* mounted its walls, I had figured to myself the shades of patriots long departed, the *Bruti* and *Sidneys*, and all the spirits of the illustrious dead, hovering in air over the battlements, smiling upon the children of liberty in France; and my soul, in imagination, flew to join them. Alas! Gentlemen, it was no such heavenly vision! the demons of perdition rode in the air! The towers of the Bastile fell before the incantations of the enemy of man! The shades of the brave and free did not tune their heavenly harps to the immortal song of liberty! The spirits of the abyss discordantly howled the dirge of the human race!"

These two portions, which I have extracted, shew only the energetic style and the glowing imagination of their author. They who wish to know his erudition, his sagacity, and his philosophical opinions upon men and things, must inspect the book itself, and they will surely read it with some emotion, when they reflect, that the mind which conceived it, is now but a melancholy token of degradation.

I remain, &c.

MISERICORDUS.

Edinburgh, Oct. 16, 1810.

The Contemplatist.

No. XXI.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1810.

Nosce teipsum.
PITTACUS MITYLENÆI.

THE comprehensive command contained in the laconic motto to my present paper furnishes a topic of moral exhortation which has been duly enforced by most writers who have sought to improve the condition of mankind. To *know ourselves*, in the large and general acceptation of the phrase which its author meant it should bear, is to be wise in that most important knowledge which embraces the interests of two states of being, of this world and of the next. He indeed who has never learned to inspect his own heart, to disentangle the intricacies of his own thoughts, to separate the true from the apparent mo-

tives of his actions, and to commence, with seriousness, a reformation of conduct arising from this self examination, has yet to acquire the hardest lesson of our nature and one without which all other wisdom sinks into nothing. The virtues which we have, or which we acquire, the vices we renounce, the piety we nourish, and the benevolence which we exercise, must all equally spring from this source. A life of heedless security must be a life of guilt. Man, beset with his own passions and environed by the temptations of the world, would become the defenceless prey of every vice without that inward inquiry into his course to which conscience impels him, and which reason justifies. It is thus that he learns to know his danger, and knowing to avoid it: but, so weak are the resolutions of virtue and so powerful the attacks of its enemies, that we are secure only by constant vigilance: a vigilance which, however momentarily remitted, will surely serve to shew the potency of our foe.

But, as this inquiry too often leads us to the knowledge of weaknesses which are mor-

tifying to our pride, we hasten from the trial as quickly as we can, and transfer our inquisitions to the thoughts and actions of others, because there we are gratified by detection. No tenderness towards another withholds our hand when we are probing the sores of an ulcerated mind; then, we are righteous judges even in our cruelty; the evil is deeply rooted and must be plucked forth: to spare would be to injure: it is wholesome for our moral constitution that the disease should be exterminated. The caustic and the knife are applied: spare your victim: no, what is the pain of moments compared to the pains of eternity? Do you fear no recrimination? Do you fear no contumacious refusal to submit to the operation from one as foully blurred with imperfections, perhaps, as he whose wounds you would so deeply lacerate? No.

When a moralist sits down to inform mankind that universal wickedness prevails, and that virtue has taken her flight to Heaven, he never reckons himself among the depraved. He is a sentinel, placed upon an alarm-post, to give account of what passes within his obser-

vation. If that retributive justice were generally allowed which retorts the sentiments and accusations of a man, upon his own bosom and conduct, either we should wholly desist from promulgating our opinions, or we should deliver them with the cautious hesitation of a criminal who is giving evidence, and who weighs every word, and balances every expression, lest he utter any thing which may impeach his own credit or affect his own safety. Such a practice would strike at the root of all free discussion, and reduce the task of preceptive morality to a civil interchange of kind expressions. General opinions are to be applied generally, not individually. The modern patriot who denounces his age as corrupt and venial, who prates about reform and is eloquent upon abuses, does not expect to hear his fulminations reverberated against himself, or if they be, he learns to smile at the petty malice which is driven to so poor an expedient. The divine who thunders from the pulpit against the vices of society, who enumerates their catalogue and affixes, to each, its appropriate stigma, does not expect

to hear an accusing voice in his congregation pronouncing "Thus have you done yourself;" for though the practice of virtue may give efficacy to its doctrines to him who has the opportunity of observing their union, it does not follow that the purest precepts may not flow from a man whose passions are stronger than his piety, or that we should reject the cup of health because the hand that offers it is unclean. Even in our daily intercourse with each other, in our most familiar conversations, there is a tacit compact, felt and acknowledged by every one, that what we utter as general truths shall be received as such, nor malignly applied to any individual present. Without it were thus, it is very evident that society could not exist, for every assemblage of persons would lead to contention and perhaps to bloodshed. The French, indeed, have a maxim which prudently bids us not to mention a halter in the family of a man who has been hanged: (*Il ne faut pas parler de corde dans la maison d'un pendu:*) and this is certainly a discreet prohibition: but the case is of rare occurrence, and of itself suggests the remedy when it does occur.

The difficulty of self-knowledge however, (to return to the immediate object of my paper,) seems to be exactly in proportion to the facility with which we believe ourselves to obtain our knowledge of others. Even the stores of acquired information too often elude our sight when we wish to marshal them before us. To be abstracted from all outward and visible objects, and to pursue a steady course of inward examination, whether it be for the purposes of virtue, of utility, or of amusement, seems to be equally encompassed with difficulty. Some wandering thought will still break through the fine texture of our mental fabric, and recal our minds to the world and its concerns.

The knowledge, indeed, which is derived from books or from observation, is often so limited that we cannot readily summon or combine it for use. We turn the eye inwards and view, either solitary tracks of empty desolation, or a wilderness scattered over with useless shrubs and gaudy flowers, or trees of statelier growth, but obscured, neglected, and unpruned. It should be remembered, how-

ever, that to fill the mind with confused masses of knowledge, attending neither to order nor utility is to bind its faculties with a ponderous burden which depresses every emanation of thought that might aspire to the praise of originality.

These were the ideas which suggested themselves to me as I sat revolving various topics of discussion for my present paper, without being able to fix upon any one that pleased me; and I began to think my own mind in such a state of disorder, that I feared lest I should sink into an idle labyrinth of meditation, and waste those moments in fruitless speculation which should be given to action. After having bewildered myself with the ideas of others, however, I resolved to turn from books to men, and try what could be produced by the operations of my own mind upon itself.

Then, I began to consider the motives of action, the shades of character, and the varieties of conduct which distinguish the moral agents of the world. I endeavoured to unfold the springs of thought, to trace the involutions of passion, to disentangle the intri-

cacies of action, and to lay open to my deliberate inspection the breast of man. Difficulties vanish before an ardent mind, or rather they have no existence in it;—the rapid combinations of thought far outstrip our capacities for performance: and, it is not until we embody them, until we cease to be contemplative, and become active beings, that we feel, powerfully, the superiority of the mental over the corporeal faculties. I pictured to myself the benefit I should confer upon society, by detecting and simplifying that which has been hitherto known, though very imperfectly, only to the sage and the philosopher; by unfolding to the world, in perspicuous phraseology, the ordinary process of thought through all its gradations; teaching them to ascend from moral effects to causes; and to pursue, in all their ramifications, the sources of action. This would be enabling man to form for himself a kind of moral thermometer, shewing the degrees of human virtue; of friendship and of enmity, where the one sinks into indifference and the other rises to revenge; where benevolence is found to be

only a wandering ray of self-love, escaped from its centre, and charity an ostentatious display of superfluous wealth: where every passion may be traced through all its windings to its proper origin, and the degrees of every vice and virtue estimated with unerring impartiality.

This, I justly imagined, would be an acquisition to the interests of mankind, of no common importance; and, filled with the vast design, I looked forward, with a rapid intellectual glance, to the immortality it would confer upon me. I began, therefore, to contemplate the means I should employ and the objects I should select. But I did not long deliberate; it was immediately obvious, that no better subject than myself could be produced on which to commence my moral analysis; for it might easily be supposed that I could trace, with greater accuracy, the operations of my own mind than those of another. I sat down to the task, fully prepared to combat all the opposition which prejudice, self-interest, or passion, might create.

But I soon found that it is easier to resolve than to perform; that it is often the business of one man to detect abuses and to display inconsistencies, but that of another to correct and reconcile them; that he who can trace the outline may be incompetent to fill up the design; and that it is frequently all man can do, to tell what should be done, leaving the performance of it to other beings, or trusting, himself, to the influence of accident or caprice, which may direct him to it. I recoiled back astonished, when I beheld the difficulty of even assigning the real motive which induced me to commence a periodical paper; the passions were set in opposition to truth; and they prevented, by their uproar and rude collision, her modest, feeble voice from being heard. When I proceeded temperately and cautiously, I perceived that I was in danger of confounding distinctions and mistaking subtlety for argument; if I urged my labours with briskness and rapidity, then I had to fear the impositions of fallacy, and the probability of seizing, with indiscriminate avidity, the specious phantom of error, instead of the majestic form of truth.

I should, perhaps, have been like those Indian philosophers, who, rejecting the idea that the globe is self-supported, maintain that it is upheld by a large elephant, that the elephant stands upon a tortoise, and—there they stop.

There are, I believe, two causes which operate very powerfully against us in all our endeavours of this nature. With regard to ourselves, self-love; with regard to others, diffidence and prejudice.

The influence of self-love is too notorious to need argument or illustration. In most minds, I fear, the passions have the greatest sway; this, indeed, necessarily arises from the constitution of society, from the power of early habits, from our love of pleasure, and our love of ease. In our course through life, warfare with the malignity, the envy, or the depravity of our fellow creatures, is more or less our certain lot; the most exalted virtue will feel their stings, as the highest mountains are the seat of storms, clouds, and perennial winter; the humblest will not escape, as the shrubs of the valley are often scattered by the whirlwind while the oak stands un-

moved. This obligation to be vigilant, which is thus imposed upon us, produces, in some measure, an impediment to excesses; but the nature of our adversaries too often contaminates us. As the ancient Romans were accustomed to derive advantage alike from victory or defeat, and to adopt every superiority which accident threw in their way; so we too often employ against our adversaries the same arts and the same weapons with which they endeavour to overwhelm us; not remembering that the end will never sanctify the means, and that vice cannot pass through the mind without leaving, like the snail, some of its slime behind. Let no man say to himself, that he will adopt it only as a temporary expedient, and discard it when it ceases to be useful: he will find that its inroads are not easily to be effaced, and that its allurements are sometimes too powerful to be withstood by ordinary minds; for, as it disdains petty restraints, and overlooks common impediments to our gratification, its progress will always be viewed with momentary pleasure, and its dictates obeyed with heedless alacrity.

It is, therefore, a mortifying investigation to most men, to discover in their own minds the ascendancy of evil; to feel that they are walking in a path where the flowers of virtue are but thinly strewed; and that, while the undistinguishing world beholds them with pleasure, and praises their integrity, their worth, and their unblemished honour, they are only sacrificing to a false idol, whose superior art enables him to conceal his deformities.

"For neither man nor angel can discern
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
Invisible, except to God alone,
By his permissive will, thro' Heav'n and Earth:
And oft, tho' wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps
At wisdom's gate, and to simplicity
Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill
Where no ill seems."

Some, indeed, there are, who know no greater pleasure than in weeding out error, and who will pursue a self-investigation with steady perseverance, unshrinking and undismayed. But their rarity is only sufficient to make us feel and admire their superiority.

To descend from a point of acknowledged eminence is a painful humiliation; to mingle with the crowd, when we have been accustomed to direct it, is degrading; and, to forego praises and honours after we have revelled in their charms, is a stretch of human virtue hardly attainable. The whirlwind that has scattered forests and overthrown edifices, that has swept navies before it, and heaved to the Heavens the billows of the ocean, may subside into peace with gently-dying murmurs, upon the unruffled bosom of some lake; but the mind of man rarely knows such a termination of its storms. The passions succeed each other in an endless train: and he who foregoes, by compulsion, the bustle of an active life, will find envy and desire accompany to his retreat; if he throw it up voluntarily, too often will regret torment his hours of privacy. But, if we scrutinise our minds under these impressions, we shall then find ambition to be the impulse of a great mind; envy, a proper sense of injustice; and regret, the longings of virtue, which pants again to move in its sphere of activity.

But if self-love thus interpose its shield, when we would penetrate the recesses of our own mind, and detect the motives of our own conduct, we are equally repelled from success, by prejudice and difficulty, in attempting to discover those of others. The unwilling gratitude of mankind will seldom allow it to acknowledged merit when it is obvious, and its indolence, joined with the former, prevent it from seeking it when it is obscure. The littleness of vanity whispers that if we applaud, invidious comparison may follow; and the sense of injustice, which this tacit detraction creates, is pacified by reflecting that what we do not perform, others may, and that it will be time enough for us to commend, when the world has already given its sanction. I am willing to hope, indeed, that this reluctance to seek for, to bring forward, and to celebrate real merit, arises sometimes, from a timid apprehension of our own judgments, and a wish rather to glide with the stream, than to direct it to its proper channel: for ridicule and contempt always follow erroneous admiration, and sometimes even that which is founded in

truth: and where is the mind so hardened or so lost, that is not alive to the stings of derision and disdain?

But, while I thus propose a palliative for occasional instances, I fear that, in the majority of cases, the worst motives influence us; and such as cannot be obviated by sophistry, or vindicated by reason. They are the offspring of envy and malignity, which seek to bring all to one common level, and to destroy those distinctions of virtue which form the great moral barriers of life, and restrain the wanton inroads of vice and immorality, which alone brighten the paths of piety and rectitude, and darken with obloquy and shame those of turpitude and depravity.

Amid this rude collision of passion, however, who shall venture to say that he knows the motives of his own actions, or that he has discovered those which operate upon the rest of mankind?

FINIS.

Squire and Warwick, Printers,
Furnival's-Inn-Court, London.

U. C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES
C051447641