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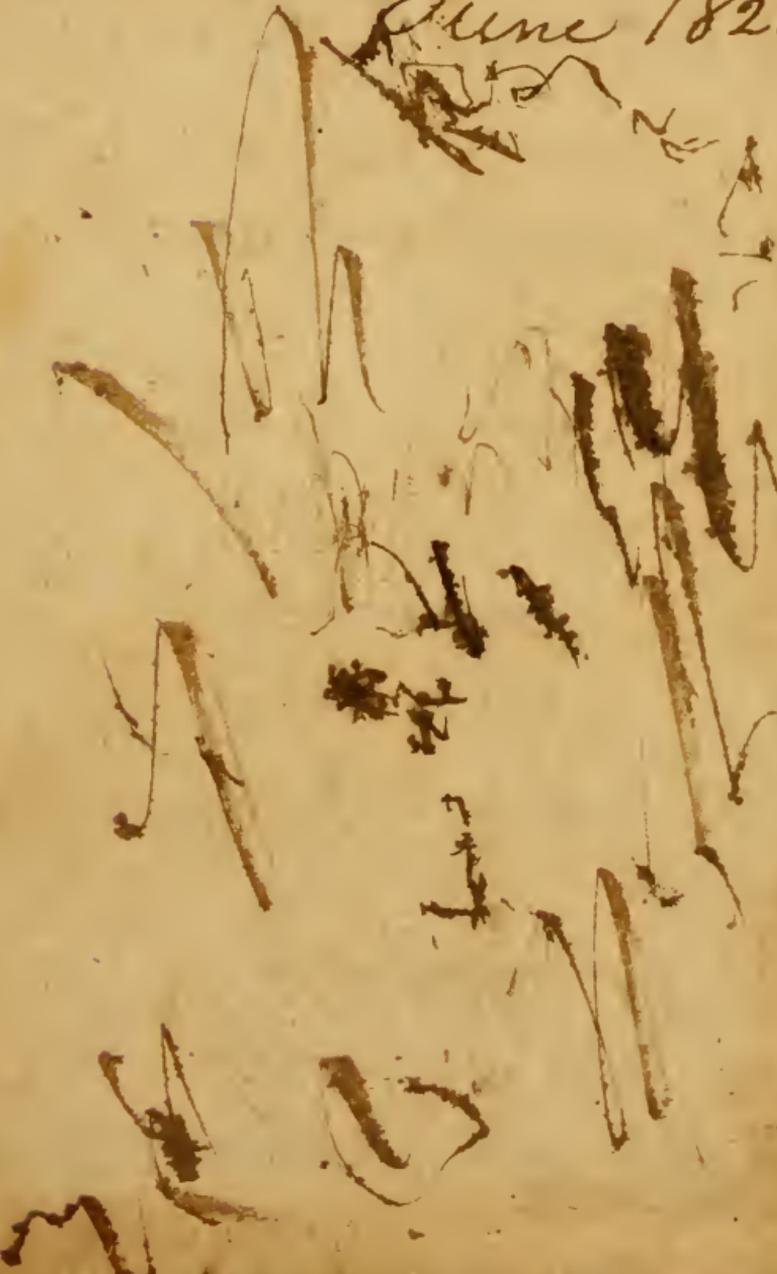
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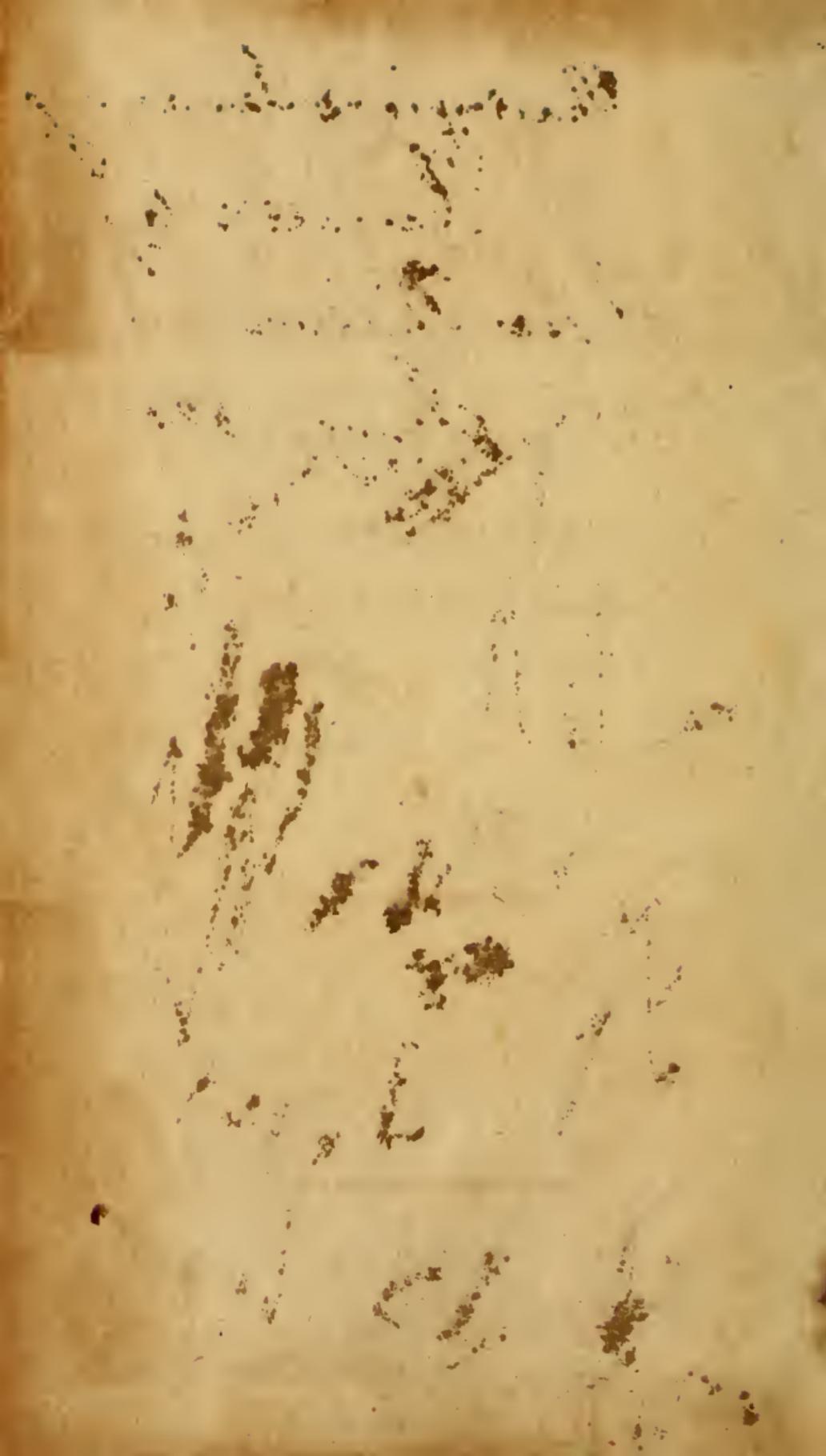
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Essay
E S S A Y S,

Abstract
MORAL AND LITERARY.

BY

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VICESIMUS KNOX, M. A.

A NEW EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

✓ V O L II.

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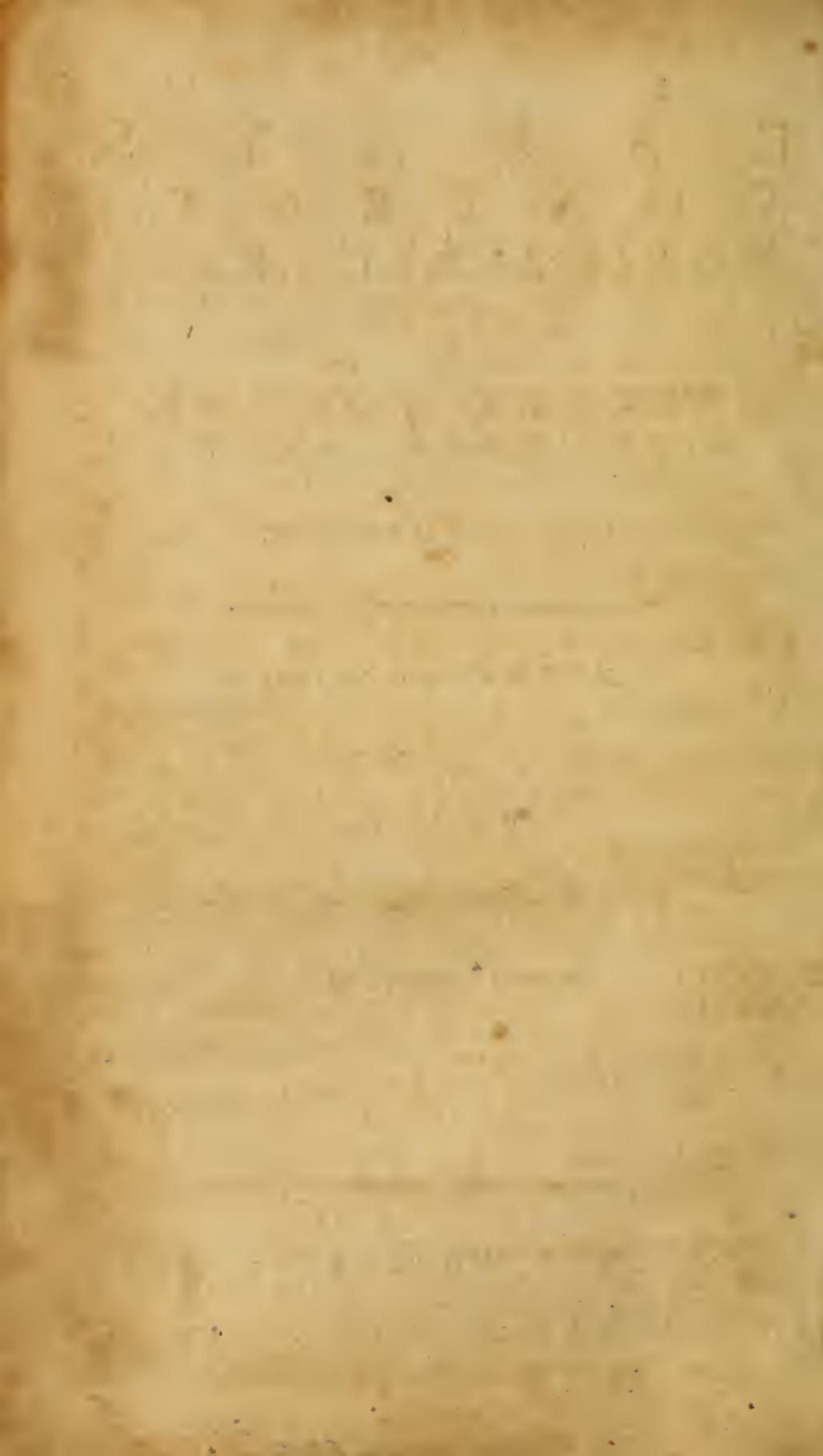
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E S S A Y S,
MOARL AND LITERARY.

No. LXXXII.

ON THE MEANS OF READING WITH THE
MOST ADVANTAGE.

IT is certain, that there are many students who impare their health in a continual course of reading and literary labour, without any adequate returns of pleasure or improvement. They read, indeed, because they consider it as a duty, or because they are endeavouring to accomplish themselves for the practice of a profession; but they are ready to confess, that the whole tenour of their studies is one continued toil, and that the pleasure they derive from them is by no means a recompence for exhausted spirits and habitual melancholy.

With a view to relieve students of this description, who are usually virtuous and amiable, I will endeavour to suggest a few hints, which may possibly contribute to render their reading more agreeable and advantageous. But I wish to premise, that in what I now say, and in whatever I have said, in the style of direction and advice, I mean only to offer, not to obtrude; to submit, and not to dictate.

In order to receive the proper advantage from reading, it must be rendered a pleasing employment. Human nature is so constituted, that no practice will be con-

tinued long and regularly, which is not attended with some degree of pleasure. We enter upon a study which is irksome and disgustful with reluctance, we attend to it superficially, and we relinquish it without reflecting upon it in a degree sufficient for the purpose of improvement. Instead of thinking of it uniformly and steadily, we drive it from our minds as the cause of uneasiness. But the heart and affections, the imagination and the memory, co-operate with the understanding, in deriving all possible advantage from the study which we love.

The first and most important object is, therefore, to form a strong attachment to those parts of science, or to those books, which our judgment impels us to study. There are various methods conducive to this end; but, perhaps, none are more effectual, than that of conversing with men of sense and genius on the books and the subject on which we purpose to read. There is a warmth and spirit in conversation, which renders subjects, which might otherwise appear cold and lifeless, interesting and animated. When the company is departed, and the conversation at an end, we are naturally inclined to see what has been said in books on the subjects discussed; and the light let in by the preceding conversation is an excellent introduction to our enquiries.

As soon as we have acquired, by actual reading, a competent knowledge of a book or particular subject, it will contribute greatly to animate us in proceeding still further, if we talk of it either with our equals in attainments, or with the learned and experienced. We advance an opinion, our self-love renders us solicitous to maintain it, we seek the aid of a book as an auxiliary, we therefore read it with eager attention; and I believe it will be difficult to avoid loving that which we attend to frequently and with eagerness.

Indeed, if we can once fix our attention very closely to a good book, nothing more will be necessary to make us love it: As in nature, when two bodies approach each other very nearly, the attraction of cohesion fastens them together; so when the mind attaches itself closely to any subject whatever, it becomes,

as it were, united to it, and gravitates towards it with a spontaneous velocity. There is, indeed, no study so dry, but by fixing our attention upon it, we may at last find it capable of affording great delight. Metaphysics and mathematics, even in their abstrusest parts, are known to give the attentive student a very exalted satisfaction. Those parts then of human learning, which in their nature are more entertaining, cannot fail of being beloved in a high degree, when the mind is closely and constantly applied to them.

In order to acquire the power and habit of fixing the attention, it will at first be necessary to summon a very considerable degree of resolution. In beginning the study of a new language, or any book or science, which presents ideas totally strange, the mind cannot but feel some degree of reluctance or disgust. But persevere; and, in a very short time, the disgust will vanish, and you will be rewarded with entertainment. Till this takes place, make it an inviolable rule, however disagreeable, to read a certain quantity, or for a certain time, and you will infallibly find, that what you began as a task, you will continue as an amusement.

There are many students who spend their days in extracting passages from authors, and fairly transcribing them in their common-place book; a mode of study truly wretched, which seldom repays the student either with profit or pleasure, which wastes his time, and wears out his eyes and his constitution. I most seriously advise all those unhappy students, who have been led to think, that the exercise of the hand can impress ideas on the brain; who interrupt their attention by copying; who torture themselves in abridging, and who think, by filling their pocket-books, that they shall enrich their understandings, to stop while they have eyes to see, or fingers to write. They have totally mistaken the road to learning; and, if they proceed in the way too long a time, they may suffer such injuries in it as shall disable them from returning, or seeking a better. After many years spent in this wretched labour, it is no wonder that they close their books, and make the old complaint of vanity and vexation. Nothing really serves us in reading, but what the mind

makes its own by reflection and memory. That which is transcribed is not in the least more appropriated than when it stood in the printed page. It is an error, if any suppose, that by the act of marking the words on paper with a pen, the ideas are more clearly marked on the brain than by attentive reading.

The best method of extracting and epitomizing, is to express the author's ideas, after shutting his book, in our own words. In this exercise, the memory is exerted, and the style improved. We make what we write our own; we think, we are active, and we do not condemn ourselves to an employment merely manual and mechanical. But, after all, whatever a few may say, write, or think, it is certain, that the greatest scholars were content with reading, without making either extracts or epitomes. They were satisfied with what remained in their minds after a diligent perusal, and when they wrote, they wrote their own. Reading is, indeed, most justly called the food of the mind. Like food, it must be digested and assimilated; it must shew its nutritive power by promoting growth and strength, and by enabling the mind to bring forth sound and vigorous productions. It must be converted *in succum et sanguinem*, into juice and blood, and not make its appearance again in the form in which it was originally imbibed. It is indeed true, and the instance may be brought in opposition to my doctrine, that Demosthenes transcribed Thucydides eight times with his own hand; but it should be remembered, that Demosthenes flourished before printing was discovered, and that he was induced to transcribe Thucydides, not only for the sake of improvement, but also for the sake of multiplying copies of a favourite author.

A due degree of variety will contribute greatly to render reading agreeable. For though it is true, that no more than one or two books should be read at once, yet, when they are finished, it will be proper, if any weariness is felt, to take up an author who writes in a different style, or on a different subject; to change from poetry to prose, and from prose to poetry; to intermix the moderns with the ancients; alternately to lay down the book and to take up the pen; and some-

times to lay them both down, and enter with alacrity into agreeable company and public diversions. The mind, after a little cessation, returns to books with all the voracious eagerness of a literary hunger. The intermissions must not be long, or frequent enough to form a habit of idleness or dissipation.

He who would read with pleasure (and I repeat that all who read with real profit must read with pleasure) will attend to the times of the day, and the seasons of the year. The morning has been universally approved as the best time for study; the afternoon may be most advantageously spent in improving conversation. Those faculties, which before dinner are capable of engaging in the acutest and sublimest disquisitions, are found, by general experience, to be comparatively dull and stupid after it. "I know not how it is," said a celebrated writer, "but all my philosophy, in which I was so warmly engaged in the morning, appears like nonsense as soon as I have dined."

Very hot weather is particularly unfavourable to reading. The months of July, August, and September, are by no means the seasons in which the fruits of the mind arrive at maturity. A rigid philosopher will perhaps maintain, that the mental faculties are not to be affected by the vicissitudes of cold and heat; but who will listen to philosophy, who is already convinced by actual experience? It is indeed remarkable, that these months are selected for vacation in the houses of legislature, in the courts of law, and in the seats of learning. In cold and inclement weather, when we are driven to the fire side for comfort, we find that delight in our books, which, in the vernal and autumnal season, we sought in the sunshine, and in the sweets of rural scenery. We no longer roam, we collect our scattered ideas, and find, in the exercise of our faculties, that delight, which is the consequence and reward of exerting, in a proper method, the natural energies of the divine particle which breathes within us.

But at all hours, and in all seasons, if we can restrain the licentious roivings of the fancy, sooth the passions of the heart, and command our attention, so

as to concentre it on the subject we examine, we shall be sure to find our attention amply rewarded. Attend closely, and close attention to almost any worthy object will always produce solid satisfaction. Particularly in reading, it may be depended upon as an approved truth, that the degree of profit, as well as pleasure, will ever be proportioned to the degree of attention.



No. LXXXIII.

ON THE PROPRIETY OF ADORNING LIFE,
AND SERVING SOCIETY, BY LAUDABLE
EXERTION.

IN an age of opulence and luxury, when the native powers of the mind are weakened by vice, and habits of indolence are superinduced by universal indulgence, the moralist can seldom expect to see examples of that unwearied perseverance, of that generous exertion, which has sometimes appeared in the world, and has been called heroic virtue. Indeed, it must be allowed, that in the early periods of society there is greater occasion, as well as greater scope, for this exalted species of public spirit, than when all its real wants are supplied, and all its securities established.

Under these disadvantages there is, indeed, little opportunity for that uncommon heroism, which leads an individual to desert his sphere, and to act in contradiction to the maxims of personal interest and safety, with a view to reform the manners, or to promote the honour and advantage of the community. Patriotism, as it was understood and practised by a Brutus, a Curtius, a Scævola, or a Socrates, appears in modern times so eccentric a virtue, and so abhorrent from the dictates of common sense, that he who should imitate it would draw upon himself the ridicule of mankind, and would be esteemed a madman. Moral and political knight-errantry would now appear in scarcely a less ludicrous light than the extravagancies of chivalry.

But to do good in an effectual and extensive manner within the limits of professional influence, and by per-

forming the business of a station, whatever it may be, not only with regular fidelity, but with warm and active diligence, is in the power, as it is the duty, of every individual who possesses the use of his faculties. It is surely an unsatisfactory idea, to live and die without pursuing any other purpose than the low one of personal gratification. A thousand pleasures and advantages we have received from the disinterested efforts of those who have gone before us, and it is incumbent on every generation to do something for the benefit of contemporaries and of those who are to follow.

To be born, as Horace says, merely to consume the fruits of the earth; to live, as Juvenal observes of some of his countrymen, with no other purpose than to gratify the palate, though they may in reality be the sole ends of many, are yet too inglorious and disgraceful to be avowed by the basest of mankind.

There is little doubt, but that many, whose lives have glided away in an useless tenor, would have been glad of opportunities, if they could have discovered them, for laudable exertion. It is certainly true, that to qualify for political, military, literary, and patriotic efforts, peculiar preparations, accomplishments, occasions, and fortuitous contingencies are necessary. Civil wisdom without civil employment, valour without an enemy, learning without opportunities for its display, the love of our country without power, must terminate in abortive wishes, in designs unsupported by execution. They who form great schemes, and perform great exploits, must necessarily be few. But the exertions which benevolence points out, are extended to a great compass, are infinitely varied in kind and degree, and consequently adapted, in some mode or other, to the ability of every individual.

To the distinguished honour of our times and of our country, it must be asserted, that there is no species of distress which is not relieved; no laudable institution which is not encouraged with an emulative ardour of liberality. No sooner is a proper object of beneficence presented to the public view, than subscriptions are raised by all ranks, who crowd with impatience to the contribution. Not only the infirmities of age and sick-

ness are soothed by the best concerted establishments, and the loss sustained by the calamities of a conflagration repaired; but our enemies, when reduced to a state of captivity, are furnished with every comfort which their condition can admit, and all the malignity of party-hatred melts into kindness under the operation of charity. From the accumulated efforts of a community of philanthropists, such as our nation may be called, a sum of good is produced, far greater than any recorded of the heroes of antiquity, from Bacchus down to Cæsar.

It has been said, that the ages of extraordinary bounty are passed. No colleges are founded in the present times, it is true; yet not because there is no public spirit remaining, but because there is already a sufficient number raised by the pious hands of our forefathers, to answer all the purposes of academical improvement. When a want is supplied, it is not parsimony, but prudence, which withholds additional munificence. The infirmaries diffused over every part of the kingdom, are most honourable testimonies of that virtue which is to cover a multitude of sins. And there is one instance of beneficence uncommon both in its degree and circumstances, which, though done without a view to human praise, must not lose even the subordinate reward of human virtue. He who lately devoted, during his life, a noble fortune to the relief of the blind, will be placed higher in the esteem of posterity, than the numerous train of posthumous benefactors, who gave what they could no longer retain, and sometimes from motives represented by the censorious as little laudable. While angels record the name of Hetherington in the book of life, let men inscribe it in the rolls of fame.

The motive of praise, though by no means the best, is a generous and powerful motive of commendable conduct. He would do an injury to mankind who should stifle the love of fame. It has burnt with strong and steady heat in the bosoms of the most ingenuous. It has inspired enthusiasm in the cause of all that is good and great. Where patience must have failed, and perseverance been wearied, it has urged through

troubles deemed intolerable, and stimulated through difficulties dreaded as insurmountable. Pain, penury, danger, and death, have been incurred with alacrity in the service of mankind, with the expectation of no other recompence than an honourable distinction. And let not the frigidity of philosophical rigour damp this noble ardour, which raises delightful sensations in the heart that harbours it, and gives rise to all that is sublime in life and in the arts. When we are so far refined and subdued as to act merely from the slow suggestions of the reasoning faculty, we shall indeed seldom be involved in error; but we shall as seldom atchieve any glorious enterprise, or snatch a virtue beyond the reach of prudence.

The spirit of adventure in literary undertakings, as well as in politics, commerce, and war, must not be discouraged. If it produces that which is worth little notice, neglect is easy. There is a great probability, however, that it will often exhibit something conducive to pleasure and improvement. But when every new attempt is checked by severity, or neglected without examination, learning stagnates, and the mind is depressed, till its productions so far degenerate as to justify disregard. Taste and literature are never long stationary. When they cease to advance, they become retrograde.

Every liberal attempt to give a liberal entertainment is entitled to a kind excuse, though its execution should not have a claim to praise. For the sake of encouraging subsequent endeavours, lenity should be displayed where there is no appearance of incorrigible stupidity, of assuming ignorance, and of empty self-conceit. Severity chills the opening powers, as the frost nips the bud that would else have been a blossom. It is blameable moroseness to censure those who sincerely mean to please, and fail only from causes not in their own disposal.

The praise, however, of well meaning has usually been allowed with a facility of concession, which leads to suspect that it was thought of little value. It has also been received with apparent mortification. This

surely is the result of a perverted judgment ; for intention is in the power of every man, though no man can command ability.



No. LXXXIV.

ON PHILOSOPHICAL CRITICISM, AND ON
THE LITTLE ASSISTANCE IT GIVES
TO GENIUS.

ARISTOTLE was the first of those writers who endeavoured to render taste subject to philosophy. His poetics are almost the only parts of his works which continue to be esteemed with a degree of implicit veneration. Mutilated and imperfect as they have come down to us, they yet contain many sentences pregnant with matter, and which lead the mind into the most curious theory. Yet it is certain, that they never yet formed a single poet, nor assisted him in any other respect than in the mechanical contrivance of a plan ; a defect in which is easily forgiven, when it is supplied by the native charms of real genius. Of this our Shakespeare is a proof, who, with all his ignorance of critical refinement, wrote in such a manner, as not only to be preferred by those who idolise him through prejudice, but by the most impartial readers, to Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

Though the old scholastic metaphysics were scarcely ever more exploded than in the present times, yet there is a taste for metaphysical criticism particularly prevalent among our thoughtful neighbours in North Britain. The author of the Elements of Criticism has penetrated deeply to discern the cause of those emotions, which literary compositions are found to produce. He has displayed great taste, great elegance, great reading, and a subtilty of enquiry, which must have resulted from unwearied labour, and from a singular share of natural sagacity. But I believe no reader ever found himself better able to compose, after having perused his volumes, than before he saw them. Nor

is it said, that their author, with all his theoretical knowledge of poetry, is himself a poet or an orator. This is not advanced to detract from his merit; for it is true of Aristotle, and of all those writers who, with a genius for logic and metaphysics, have entered on the provinces of taste and criticism. Dr. Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric* is a book of uncommon merit; it is read with great pleasure and improvement; yet it will be readily owned, that it tends little to form the orator. The author of the *Origin and Progress of Language* has displayed, as Harris says, "many judicious and curious remarks on style, composition, language, particularly the English; observations of the last consequence to those who wish either to write or judge with accuracy and elegance." This is certainly true; and yet many have written, and will write, with accuracy and elegance, without even hearing of this excellent treatise.

Most of the books which the world has agreed to admire, were composed previously to the appearance of systematical and abstruse theories of criticism, or by authors who, it is well known, paid them no attention. Homer, who is still the best heathen author in the world, had neither archetype nor instructor. Had his mind been called off from the book of nature, to such speculations as the Stagyrite afterwards fabricated from his noble inventions, there is great reason to believe, that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* had long ago gone whither all the coldly corrected productions are daily hastening. Theocritus would probably have written with much less ease and simplicity, had he read all that critical ingenuity has advanced on pastoral poetry. The *Oration*s of Demosthenes, however elaborate, were not formed on the models of professed rhetoricians. No Bossu had written when Virgil produced his magnificent work. No treatises on the sublime and beautiful had appeared, when Milton poured his majestic song. Nature, glowing nature, suggested the exquisitely fine ideas as they flowed, and left laborious criticism to weary herself in forming rules and systems from the unstudied efforts of her happier temerity.

It must not, however, be immediately concluded, that these books, which display great ingenuity, are useless, and the result of ill-employed time and talents. They constitute a most elegant species of philosophy. They lead to a knowledge of the human heart, and the operation of the passions. They require genius of a peculiar kind, the subtle and penetrating, and they please readers who are possessed of a corresponding taste. The point which we wish to evince is, that the lover of poetry, of oratory, of all the objects of classical taste, who means to exercise himself in the composition of them, will find himself mistaken in his plan of study, if he reads such writers as a preparatory discipline. Original authors must at first engross his attention; and from these, if he is possessed of abilities, he will insensibly catch a portion of fire, with which he will invigorate his own compositions; and in consequence of which he will be read with pleasure, though he should not have studied one metaphysical critic from Aristotle to the latest modern.

To learn in what this noble distinction of genius consists, has been the subject of enquiry. Little success has hitherto attended it; for the mind, as it has been often said, like the eye, though it calls up all nature to its view, cannot procure a sight of itself. With great probability, it has been supposed, that genius is an extraordinary power of attention; a capacity in the mind of attaching itself closely and strongly, at a glance, to every object that solicits its regard; of taking in the whole of it in all its distant relations, dependencies, modifications, origin, and consequences. But if we allow an extraordinary power of attention to be genius, which perhaps cannot be allowed, the question recurs; by what means this attention is caused and secured? Thus far the name is only changed, and the subject is still involved in difficulty.

It is too obviously true to be controverted, that there is an essential difference in the organization of different men; not merely in the external form; but in the interior structure of the invisible springs, which regulate

all the animal tendencies and motions. It is highly probable, that a delicate system of nerves, or a firmer contexture of them, is better able to observe the external world with unerring accuracy, than a more callous or a more relaxed assemblage of these instruments of sensation. This favourable predisposition of the organs, followed by peculiar opportunities for collecting ideas, and by inducements to impart them to the world, may perhaps constitute what we call literary genius.

There is indeed little doubt, but that some kind of genius, or, in other words, some peculiar ability to receive a certain train of ideas necessary to the practice of some art, or to the pursuit of some profession, is possessed by every individual not in a state of idiotism. Nature, a kind parent to all her children, has usually endowed them all with a power of exerting themselves with skill and advantage in some way or other. The misfortune has been, that the indications of nature are not always sufficiently manifest to the conductors of education. The destination is often necessarily fixed, before the faculties are arrived at sufficient strength to point out their propensity.

Universal genius is indeed sparingly, perhaps never, bestowed. For the preservation of impartiality, where nature has allowed an excellence in any remarkable degree, she has often permitted a defect to counterbalance it. Yet in the literary annals of almost every nation, we find many distinguished by intellectual endowments above the ordinary condition of humanity. It is a noble privilege to excel men in the very perfection in which they surpass the irrational animals, and is doubtless permitted by Providence for the happiness of mankind. Let it be considered, as an instance of the advantage which mankind derives from singular genius, what a train of light has been diffused far and wide on thousands and tens of thousands, for the space of near twenty hundred years, from the illumined understanding of the individual Cicero. Or, to take an example from our own polished age and country, let a conjecture be formed of the number of those who have been led to every thing good and great by an Addison.

The world, however, has seldom been grateful to its benefactors. It has neglected, banished, poisoned, and crucified them. But there was an inward satisfaction in conscious rectitude, a generous spirit in heroic virtue, which bore them through every thing with comfort, and their merit increased and triumphed in adversity.

They who have been possessed of subordinate degrees of genius, have in later times been induced to affect a singularity of sentiment and practice, in order to draw upon themselves the eyes of mankind. In pursuit of this end, they have adopted vices which their hearts and understanding must have condemned. Excentricity has been the object of their wishes. Ruin and disgrace have been the useful consequences, and the admiration of others has at last been extinguished in compassion. Poor man! it has often been exclaimed, he was indeed clever, but he wanted conduct, and he unfortunately died in a jail.

If moral could be combined with mental excellence; if the native vigour of genius could submit to be guided and restrained by the decisions of well conducted art; then might be supplied, what none will venture to expect, the two grand desiderata in morals and literature, a perfect man and a perfect work.



No. LXXXV.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD CHARACTER,
CONSIDERED ONLY WITH
RESPECT TO INTEREST.

AS the minds of men are infinitely various, and as they are therefore influenced in the choice of a conduct by different inducements, the moralist must omit no motive, however subordinate in its nature, while it appears likely to lead some among mankind to a laudable, or even a blameless behaviour. A regard to ease, to interest, and to success, in the usual pursuits of wealth and ambition, may induce many to pursue an honest and honourable conduct, who would not have been influenced by purer motives; but after they have once

perceived the intrinsic excellence and beauty of such a conduct, they will probably persevere in it for its own sake, and upon higher considerations.

To those who are to make their own way either to wealth or honours, a good character is usually no less necessary than address and abilities. Though human nature is degenerate, and corrupts itself still more by its own inventions; yet it usually retains an esteem for excellence. But even if we are arrived at such an extreme degree of depravity as to have lost our native reverence for virtue; yet a regard to our own interest and safety, which we seldom lose, will lead us to apply, in all important transactions, to men whose integrity is unimpeached. When we choose an assistant, a partner, a servant, our first enquiry is concerning his character. When we have occasion for a counsellor or attorney, a physician or apothecary, whatever we may be ourselves, we always chuse to trust our property and persons to men of character. When we fix on the tradesmen who are to supply us with necessaries, we are not determined by the sign of the lamb, or the wolf, or the fox; nor by a shop fitted up in the most elegant taste, but by the fairest reputation. Look into a daily newspaper, and you will see how important the characters of the employed appear to the employers, from the highest to the lowest rank. After the advertisement has enumerated the qualities required in the person wanted, there constantly follows, that none need apply who cannot bring an undeniable character. Offer yourself as a candidate for a seat in parliament, be promoted to honour and emolument, or in any respect attract the attention of mankind upon yourself, and if you are vulnerable in your character, you will be deeply wounded. This is a general testimony in favour of honesty, which no writings and no practices can refuse.

Young men, therefore, whose characters are yet unfixed, and who, consequently, may render them just such as they wish, ought to pay great attention to the first steps which they take on entrance into life. They are usually careless and inattentive to this object. They pursue their own plans with ardour, and neglect the opinions which others entertain of them. By some

thoughtless action or expression, they suffer a mark to be impressed upon them, which scarcely any subsequent merit can entirely erase. Every man will find some persons, who, if they are not enemies, view him with an envious or a jealous eye; and who will gladly receive any tale to which truth has given the slightest foundation.

Indeed all men are so much inclined to flatter their own pride, by detracting from the reputation of others, that supposing we are able to maintain an immaculate conduct, it would still be difficult to preserve an immaculate character. But yet it is wisdom not to furnish this detracting spirit with real subjects for the exercise of its activity. While calumny is supported only by imagination, or by malice, we may sometimes remove, by contradicting it; but wherever folly or vice have supplied facts, we can seldom do more than aggravate the evil, by giving it an apparent attention. The malignity of some among the various dispositions of which mankind are composed, is often highly gratified at the view of injured sensibility.

In this turbulent and confused scene, where our words and actions are often misunderstood, and often misrepresented, it is indeed difficult for innocence and integrity to avoid reproach, abuse, contempt and hatred. These not only hurt our interest and impede our advancement in life, but sorely afflict the feelings of a tender and delicate mind. It is then the part of wisdom first to do every thing in our power to preserve an irreproachable character, and then to let our happiness depend chiefly on the approbation of our own consciences, and on the advancement of our interest in a world where liars shall not be believed, and where slanderers shall receive countenance from none but him who, in Greek, is called, by way of eminence, *Djabolus*, or the Calumniator.

No. LXXXVI.

ON THE OSTENTATIOUS AFFECTATION OF
THE CHARACTER OF A LEARNED
LADY, WITHOUT SUFFICIENT
LEARNING, AND WITHOUT
JUDGMENT.

THE most attractive beauty of the person results from the graces of the mind. Delicacy, sweetness, sense, and sensibility, shining in the eyes, will compensate an irregularity of features, and will sooner excite love in a feeling heart, than the best formed face and the finest complexional hue without expression.

Nature must indeed have laid the foundation of these amiable qualities in the disposition; but they are by no methods so effectually called forth and improved, as by the cultivation of a literary taste. In an intercourse with the world, we see and feel the disagreeable passions; such as have an effect in distorting the countenance, and in giving to the eyes an envious, a proud, a disdainful, or an artful aspect; than which nothing is more repugnant to the idea of allurement. Eyes that unfortunately have acquired any of these appearances, whatever beauties they may be surrounded with, possess a repellent power, and operate like the basilisk. But however wicked the world is, books are for the most part still virtuous. Human nature appears in them in its most pleasing colours. They inspire generous and tender sentiments. She who is judiciously conversant with them, will find her countenance improving as her mind is informed, and her look ennobled as her heart is elevated. This must be a powerful motive for application among the ladies; and they may rest assured, that personal and mental beauty, though when separate, their dominion is not absolute, are truly irresistible when combined.

An application to books, however, is often found not to produce any attractive effects; nor is it to be wondered at, when it is conducted in an injudicious and

desultory manner. The advice of friends is at first necessary to point out the kind of books, and the times, the modes, and the degrees of study. Superficial and ill-directed reading tends to inspire the most odious of all vanity, and to occasion a behaviour truly ridiculous.

Semphronia has studied all the Magazines for these ten years past, and has now and then obtained the honour of contributing a little piece to some of her admired miscellanies. This distinction, as she thinks it, has greatly elevated her in her own opinion. She deems it sufficient to emancipate her from the usual decorums of eternal forms. She talks with an overbearing confidence, which, if she were not excused because she is a professed wit, would be intolerable rudeness. Her attention to the muses has excluded the graces from any share of her notice. If you call upon her in the morning, you find her with slipshod shoes, no apron, matted hair, a dirty face, a cap awry, and fingers begrimed with ink. If you ask her in what she is exercising her genius, she informs you she is writing a Pindaric ode on spring, and is looking in Bysshe's Art of Poetry for a rhyme to trees. It must be sent immediately, she says, or it will not be inserted this month. She hopes, therefore, that she may be excused in declining company. Her visitor has reason to rejoice at the dismissal; for the sight of her, as Swift less delicately says of Cælia, will operate as an emetic, and the smell as a poison.

Corina happened to fall upon some of the works of our modern sceptics. She could not understand them perfectly; but she discovered enough to be assured that scepticism was supposed to be a mark of superior sense, of a freedom from those narrow prejudices which enthrall the vulgar mind. She cannot therefore talk on common affairs; but when she gets into company with enlightened people, she expatiates on the happiness of possessing a philosophical turn, and pities the poor narrow souls, who go to church and perform all their duties, as they call them, with mechanical regularity, just like their great grandmothers. Voltaire, Rousseau, Bolingbroke, and Hume, are her oracles. She is dreaded by her own sex, and indeed voluntarily gives up their society. But,

the men she thinks more entertaining, more conversible, and less shackled with prejudices. She imagines herself particularly attended to by them; and indeed there are some humourists who listen to her conversation, in order to lay up store for ridicule. All who are judges, condemn and dislike her for entering into studies which have a natural tendency to darken the understanding and to corrupt the heart, and which are peculiarly odious in those who were formed to increase the comforts of life, and not to cut them off by diffusing the gloomy notions of the sceptic.

It was the misfortune of Fulvia to live next door to a circulating library. In every moment of listlessness the maid was dispatched for a handful of novels, no matter by whom they were written, or what they were in themselves, provided they were sentimental. By an uninterrupted course of such reading, she had acquired a taste for anecdotes, private history, and all that relates to the effects of love, which she was led to think, formed the great business of human life. Her heart had been a thousand times melted, and pierced, and smitten, and wounded, and was at last so mollified, that she felt the tenderest sentiments for every man with little distinction. She could not pass a few moments in a private interview with a male acquaintance, without being conscious of tender sentiments for him. She often doubted whether she ought, upon the whole, to rejoice or lament that she was endowed with such extreme sensibility. But to be sure, so it was, her poor heart was so full of love, that every one who approached might have a share unasked. Her voice was faint and tremulous; her refinements were elegant to a degree inconceivable. She was hardly fit for this low orb. She was, always miserable, except when pouring out her sentiments in letters to some beloved Eudoxus. She was, in short, too tender, too susceptible, too pure, too elevated to live in this world; and so every body said, till, in an evil hour, she ran away with a corporal quartered in the town, and has never been heard of since.

Lesbia, when very young, wrote a few rhymes, which, as her age was considered, were much applauded by her friends. Flushed with praise, she considered herself as

a second Sappho, and has been ever since devoted to the muse. Her reading was chiefly confined to the poet's corner in newspapers, and her productions have rivalled her models. She composes ænigmas, acrostics, rebusses, and songs, for those little red pocket-books which are annually published for the Ladies, and she has had the honour of gaining the reward for expounding the Prize Riddle. Within the circle of her acquaintance she is much admired. If a wedding happens among any of them, she pays for her bride-cake with an epithalamium; and she keeps in her drawers, like haberdashers wares in a shop, odes, elegies, and epigrams, adapted to every occasion.

Of all subjects, politics seem the least adapted to the female character. Women are entirely excluded from legislative influence; and, it is well known, that public affairs are seldom treated with temper, either in writing or conversation. But the female politician is by no means uncommon. Cornelia derives all her learning, of which she thinks she possesses an ample share, from the miscellaneous volumes of a Say and a Woodfall. She has herself sometimes ventured to communicate a paragraph or two, and has been delighted even to rapture, with the thought, that a plan or conjecture of hers has been wafted throughout the empire by so rapid a conveyance. On common subjects she is mild and reasonable; but while the gentlemen are talking politics, she submits with great reluctance to the rule of decorum, which requires that she should pay attention to the ladies. Her colour comes and goes for a long time, till at last she can bear it no longer, and bursts out with a blaze of eloquence, scarcely rivalled in the most famous schools of oratory, those of Athens or of Billingsgate. A treaty of marriage was on foot some time ago; but after all the preliminaries were settled, and a day for the ratification of the articles fixed, a rupture ensued on the adjustment of the balance of power, and hostilities have not yet ceased, nor is a coalition of the parties likely to take place.

In these few instances, and in those many which observation of the world will supply, there seems to have been an original fund of parts and a love of books,

which, properly directed, would have led to great improvements. But vague industry and unguided emulation, stimulated to persist in a wrong path by the partial praises of friends and relations, have participated even the amiably disposed into unsupported vanity, and caused them to distinguish themselves without acquiring honour.

To be affected in any way is, at all times, in all places, and in all degrees, to be disagreeable. But affectation of learning, in a woman of very little merit, draws upon itself the contempt and hatred of both sexes. They who excel most in either sex, are found by experience to be most candid and modest; to assume least, and to join in conversation with others, without displaying the sense of their superiority. Indeed it often happens, that there is an amiable humility in true genius and learning, which compels the possessor of them to think diffidently of his own character, amid the united praises of all around. Let her then, who possesses the bright jewel of learning, take care to set it in a plain manner, and its lustre will become more conspicuous.

In the embellishment of the person, a sufficient degree of care is usually taken that nothing unbecoming shall have a place in it. A regard is commonly paid to age, rank, and every circumstance which can point out the line of propriety. But in adorning the mind, it is usual to attend to little else but the dictates of inclination. Yet there is certainly a kind of sexual difference in the minds of the sexes, which admits and requires a different species of intellectual accomplishment. Oeconomy is said, indeed, to be the peculiar province of women; yet, surely, as rational beings, their reason may properly receive the highest possible cultivation. Nor should their attainments occasion contempt or neglect, unless they are sullied by obtruding arrogance, by a masculine boldness, a critical severity, and an ill-timed and injudicious ostentation.

No. LXXXVII.

ON THE FOLLY AND WICKEDNESS OF NEGLECTING A FAMILY AND CHILDREN, FOR THE PLEASURES OF DISSIPATION.

THOUGH it may be true, as it has been asserted, that one age is not better than another, yet it is obvious to remark that the modes, if not the degrees of vice, have varied at different periods; and that, of modes equally criminal in themselves, some are particularly destructive. Whatever have been the manners of preceding times, in our own country, I believe it will be readily allowed, that the middle ranks were never universally infected with the love of a dissipating life, till the present age. Domestic industry and œconomy, or the qualities distinguished by the homely titles of thriftiness and good housewifery, were always, till the present century, deemed honourable. They are now, however, discarded in disgrace; and in their place have succeeded a passionate love of show without substance, a never-ceasing attention to dress, and an insatiable hunger and thirst after diversions public and private.

Whoever considers the natural effect of excessive indulgence, in relaxing and weakening the tone of the mind, will immediately perceive how pernicious it must be to human nature in general, and to each particular society. There can remain neither inclination, nor ability for exertion, when the strings which should give elasticity are loose or broken; and without exertion what is man? Behold what he is in the womanish court of an oriental tyrant. Sunk in sloth, and prostrate in meanness, poor human nature, in such a situation, scarcely equals, in spirit or ingenuity, the monkey and baboon.

But I mean not to enlarge on dissipation in general, but to consider its effects in the limited circle of private

families; from which, however, it gradually extends its influence, like the undulations of a pebble thrown into a pool, over the whole community throughout all its departments.

Let us suppose a married couple in the middle ranks of life (and I select my instances from the middle ranks because they are the most numerous and important.) Let us suppose them just setting out, as it is called, in the world. The first object is to form and extend connexions. The ostensible motive is the advancement of the family interest; the real and most powerful motive, the love of various company, in a continual succession. Dinners and suppers, dancing and card-playing, leave little time, and no inclination, for the sober business of the trade or profession. A neglected trade or profession cannot succeed; and the poor young people, after having spent the little and hard-earned patrimony which, it may be, their affectionate parents bestowed on them, live the rest of their lives in some poor lodging in penury or servitude, or die of disappointment.

But if, by uncommonly good fortune, they avoid bankruptcy or ruin, yet their love of dissipation never fails to poison that happiness which it pretends to sweeten. It prevents them from performing the most indispensable duties, and living the life of rational creatures. All heads of families are presidents of little societies, which they are bound to regulate by precept and example. But how shall they be qualified to do this, who are seldom at home, and who, when they are there, are constantly engaged in vanity? Their own corruption descends, with additional malignity of influence, to the lowest menial, who has sought protection beneath their roof.

But let us consider them in the relation of parents. Nothing can be more inconsistent with the life of a lady, who delights in the fashionable amusements, than the care of her new-born child. Her dress would be disconcerted, and her shape spoiled, were she to attempt to feed it herself with the food which nature has made convenient for it. She could not be absent from home. She must be liable to interruption at all hours. Her health also must fail under so constant a fatigue, added

to the necessary toils of the ball and card table. Her physician, for she takes care to keep the doctor on her side, declares, that from the delicate imbecility of her constitution, it would be highly improper for her to submit to the exhausted task of suckling an infant. The little one, therefore, whose heavenly smiles would repay every maternal care, is sent to the cottage, or the garret, of some hireling nurse. There, amidst poverty, hunger and nastiness, it drags a precarious existence, with no attention, but the cold charity of a mercenary woman, who has often, at the same time, a child of her own to engross her maternal endearments. The mother, in the mean time, is engaged in the gay circle of an assembly, losing that money at cards, or spending it in dress and pleasures, which ought to pay her husband's creditors. Ah! little thinks she how her poor infant, which ought to be fostered in her bosom, is bewailing, in the excessive language of tears, the neglect, and the harsh treatment it undergoes, in the dreary haunts of want and misery. Many a severe menace, and many a hard blow, does the sweet babe receive from the passionate and ignorant nurse, at which a mother's heart would bleed, if it were not lost to sensibility. Poor innocents, unhappy orphans deserted in your helpless state, by those who have brought you into a wretched world; may he who took the children up in his arms, put his hands on them, and blessed them, have pity on your woes—on those injuries which ye sorely suffer, but cannot have deserved.

Life, however, is not easily extinguished; and notwithstanding all the pains and inconveniences which the child undergoes from want of food, from want of cleanliness, from want of those tender attentions which a mother only can pay, it does indeed survive; but what remains of its lot is even more miserable than that which has already passed. As it has always been absent from home, it is a stranger there. Its parents feel but little natural affection for it; for natural affection fixes itself in the heart most deeply at that period when the infant is hanging at the breast, and smiling, as it were, with gratitude, in the face of her who supplies it with delicious nourishment from her own vital current. It

takes still firmer possession of the heart when the child begins to prattle, and to play those little tricks which none but a callous mind can behold without delight. But, alas! the little boy or girl are still considered as obstacles to pleasure at home. They pay a short and formal visit there, and are again dismissed to a nurse, locked up with servants in the garret, or transferred to their grandmother. The last is a most enviable lot, in comparison with the former; in which they not only experience harsh words and hard blows, but learn vulgar ideas, vulgar language and habits of every kind, which must one day be unlearned.

As soon as they can walk firmly, and talk plainly, they are removed to one of those convenient schools or academies, as they are called, where children, at a very early age, are received as into nurseries. In the subsequent course of their education they are constantly kept from home; or if they are indulged in a visit of a few days, they see nothing but what tends to mislead them. They receive no fatherly advice, and whatever learning they may acquire at their schools, they usually enter on the stage to act their part in the drama of life, without judgment, and without principles to regulate their conduct. There is usually added to their misfortune of being neglected and misled, that of being deprived all share of their parents' possessions; who, in the gay circles of pleasure, not only spend their own, but involve themselves and their estates in debt, and in every species of distressing and disgraceful embarrassment. There is no part of the family and affairs of the dissipated which has not a tendency to ruin. They are themselves in a constant state of mortification and disappointment. Their object in pursuing a perpetual round of amusements, is to obtain perpetual pleasure; an object which human nature could never yet accomplish. They, of all others, are least likely to obtain it who make pleasure a business, and, in prosecution of it, neglect their most important and their daily duties. Indeed, there is nothing more misapprehended than the nature of pleasure. Men are deluded by a name, and, catching at a phantom, lose reality. The truest plea-

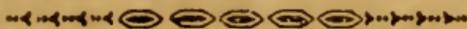
sure results from calm and moderate emotions. Noise, tumult, violence, disorder, take off the fine spirit from that which is otherwise formed to please, and leave little behind but dregs or disagreeable ingredients. Balls, assemblies, feasts, public diversions, cards, dress, various company, should be pursued only as what they are, temporary amusements. Ask those who are whirled in the vortex of fashion, whether they are happy, notwithstanding they are engaged, without ceasing, in what the world calls pleasure; they are as ready to complain of langour and of misery as any other part of mankind. Pride and vanity compel them to move with others of their rank or fortune; but their countenances and words abundantly testify that they have, at least, their share of human uneasiness. They feel, indeed, the satisfaction of being distinguished from the poor, because their fortunes enable them to pay for the distinction; but that happiness is but slenderly supported, which is founded only on the gratification of a weak and womanish vanity.

With respect to that particular part of the evil resulting from dissipation, the neglect and consequent misery of families, it is, certainly very extensive, and important. Single men, and single women, however led astray by the false lights of their own vain imagination, suffer by themselves, or at least draw but a few in their train. But the whole rising generation must be endangered, when dissipation is become universal among parents and heads of families.

Selfish arguments may succeed when others fail; and I therefore wish I could convince the generality of a certain truth, that there is really more pleasure to be found at the family fire-side, and in the regular performance of domestic duties, than in the never-ceasing pursuit after fashionable amusements. What is the delight of seeing an Italian or French dancer stand upon one leg, compared to that of beholding one's own smiling babes in the raptures of a game at play? What is the delight of glittering at a ball, a play, a masquerade, compared to that of a home, in which are found plenty, tranquillity, and love, uninterrupted by

the extravagance, the folly, the pride, the restlessness of that ignorant, empty, weak and fickle, yet arbitrary tyrant, Fashion.

Not that the moralist is severe. He prohibits no moderate and reasonable enjoyments. He is too well acquainted with human nature, and with life, so to moralize. He maintains only, that though dissipating pleasures may be allowed as a temporary relief, they are fatal to happiness and virtue, when they are suffered to engage the whole attention, or to become the chief employment.



No. LXXXVIII.

ON FORMING CONNECTIONS.

ONE can never sufficiently admire the liberal spirit of the great philosopher and orator of Rome, who, in his fine treatise on friendship, has exploded the idea, that the prospect of advantage is the foundation of this virtuous union, and asserted, that it owes its origin to a conviction in the parties of the mutual excellence of their morals and disposition.

This generous opinion appears still greater and more amiable when it is compared with the precepts and the practices of latter ages, and particularly of the present. It is now one of the first admonitions given to a young man, who is entering on the career of life, that he must at all events, make connections. And instead of intorning him, that he is to be directed in his choice of them by the appearance of moral and mental excellence, according to the sublime ideas of the noble Roman, his sagacious monitors suggest to him, that he is to be solely guided by the prospect of his interest and advancement in the road of ambition. Let a poor man of approved character, learning, and genius, and a rich man of fashion, with no pretensions to either, be introduced to a sensible and prudent young man of the world; and, while the rich man is viewed with submission, complaisance, and treaded with almost idolatrous attention, the

poor man stands by unnoticed, and probably despised. On the slight acquaintance of a first introduction, the youth who is deeply versed in worldly wisdom, will not fail to call at the rich man's house and leave a card with most respectful compliments; he would not come into the neighbourhood without paying that respect on any account whatever; he is not half so scrupulous about going to church, and paying his court to his Maker; but at the very time while he is bowing at the threshold of the rich man, the philosopher shall pass by, and because he possesses only a competency without superfluity, and without influence, he shall not be honoured with the common civility of a salutation. For it is a maxim with these men, that as it is an honour to know and be known to persons of fortune and title, so it is a disgrace to acknowledge an acquaintance with those who have nothing to recommend them but honour, spirit, learning and virtue.

The formation of connections is considered as so important, that it becomes in effect the principal object in education. The boy, whose parents are professed people of the world, would not on any account, fail to place him at a school to which the sons of the nobility are often sent, though they are ready to confess, that little learning and great profligacy are the usual acquisitions in it. If the boy is grown intimate with the son of a Duke, a Lord, or a Baronet, his parents are better pleased with him, than if he had learned by heart all Horace, Virgil, and Homer. There is no submission so mean, and no attentions so servile, but he is ready to pay them with alacrity, in accomplishing the important object of forming connections. The mind is rendered, by these means, low and abject; and though the boy may afterwards rise to the honour of being a nobleman's chaplain, or his travelling companion, yet he will retain through life, the sentiments and spirit of his Lordship's footman or valet de chambre.

A man unacquainted with the world, might suppose that the readiest road to preferment in several of the professions, is to acquire the knowledge and accomplishments which are necessary to a skilful practice of them. But this is really not the case. The surest and most

compendious method pointed out by the wise men of this world, is to form connections. Accordingly we see persons in the professions, who aim at distinction and advancement, by no means confining themselves to their libraries; but studying the graces of dress and address, and the arts of simulation and dissimulation. We see them frequently in public places, giving and receiving invitations to dinners and suppers and evidently spending so much time in dissipation, as to leave scarcely an hour in a day for reading and study.

We will suppose a young man entering on the profession of a physician. The time before he is of age is perhaps, devoted to hearing fashionable lectures, and to reading a few superficial books; such as tend to acquaint him with the common and obvious modes of practice. But he no sooner steps into the world than both books and lectures are laid aside. Several years, indeed, must elapse before he takes his Doctor's degree. But this time is not spent in study only, by him who knows how to play his cards, as it is called, and to secure success in life. No; he has learned a wiser lesson, and is well assured, that the most familiar acquaintance with Galen and Hypocrates, will not advance him half so well as connections. Connections are, therefore, the first and the last study of the day. If he has been fortunate enough to procure an introduction to a few titled persons, and to prescribe, with success, in the case of some Dutchess dowager's pricked finger, his fortune is made; he cannot fail of being recommended to more connections in the same fashionable line. He himself will become the fashion, and people of fashion will wish to be ill, or pretend to be ill, that they may have the credit of calling Doctor such an one "our physician." Connections will now be made, and money accumulated with such rapidity, that the Doctor will become a greater man than his employers, and venture to dictate to Lords and Dukes in politics as well as in a purge. It is a well known fact, and I mention it only as one instance, that some of the aspiring faculty had united the late Lord Chat ham among their closest connections.

In the subordinate branches also of the healing art, and indeed in most of the walks of life, much more dependence is placed on connections than on merit; much more attention paid to acquiring connections, than in acquiring merit; and to deserve connections is by no means thought the securest method of obtaining them. Deceit, external show, and pompous pretences, are deemed infallable nostrums for making connections; but, alas! can any lucrative advantage, resulting from connections, repay a rational creature for sacrificing truth and liberty? These connections are dignified by the name of friendships. Shade of Cicero, what indignation must thou feel at such presumption!

In divinity too, I am sorry to observe, that many more have risen to ecclesiastical emolument and dignity by studying throughout their lives, to make connections, than by superior piety or theological attainments. It is lamentable to behold those whose minds ought to possess peculiar elevation, bowing and cringing with abject servility, to the vilest peer of the realm, who happens to have influence at court, or to be the patron of a living. The Lord shall be a professed scoffer at all religion, and an avowed enemy to christianity in particular, and yet shall have a tribe of clergymen at his levee, who cannot help admiring his wit and understanding. Preferment, indeed, seems to be the only object among many of those who are set apart to teach the world that the riches of divine grace are the truest riches, and crowns of glory in a better world, the most enviable mitres. Horace has said, that to have pleased the great is not the lowest praise, many of the modern instructors of mankind seem to consider it as the highest; and, in proportion as they are servile to their patron, they are insolent to their curate.

It is a maxim with many, founded, as they pretend, on real observation, that mitres, stalls, and pluralities, are not attainable by any such qualities as are acquired in the study. You must form connections. In order to form connections, you must recommend yourself to various company by the graces; you must possess versatility of mind; you must frequent assemblies, gaming-

tables, watering places; your conscience must be as easy as your manners; you must take care not to spend too much time in reading Greek, or any thing else but the Court Calender; and you can hardly fail of valuable connections and valuable preferments, as thousands can testify.

But though numbers may give them confidence, surely those whose whole employment consists in meanly hunting for preferment under the garb of sanctity and religion, are most contemptible characters. Indeed, their dispositions are usually as narrow, selfish, and slavish, as their pursuits are sordid, and unbecoming the dignity of a sacred profession. Arise, Cicero, for my ideas return with pleasure to thee; arise, behold a pompous preacher, in a large peruke, and solemn canonicals, cringing to a debauchee and bishop-making Lord, and pretending all the while that he is cultivating friendship in all its purity.

But would you forbid a young man the formation of connections, by which so many have availed themselves, and risen to real and deserved grandeur? By no means; I would only teach him to preserve a just reverence for himself, and to despise all riches and all honours which must be purchased at the expence of truth, virtue and a manly spirit. I would, like others, advise every young man (and it is chiefly to the young that I presume to suggest admonitions,) to form connections, or rather friendships; but to be guided in his choice of them by personal merit and approved character. I do not say, for it would be unnatural and unwise, that he should neglect interest, or despise advancement, when it can be procured consistently with the spirit and integrity of an honest and delicate mind. If preferment comes unlooked for, and unsought by servile compliance, it is an honour as well as an advantage, and is doubly welcome. But if I must sacrifice my reason and my conscience, my honour and my freedom, in forming connections and pursuing preferment, I relinquish the chace, and eagerly retire to competency, contentment, and liberty.

No. LXXXIX.

AN ADDRESS TO A YOUNG SCHOLAR, ON
THE COURSE OF A LIBERAL EDUCATION AT SCHOOL.

YOUR parents have watched over your helpless infancy, and conducted you, with many a pang, to an age in which your mind is capable of manly improvement. Their solicitude still continues, and no trouble nor expence is spared in giving you all the instructions and accomplishments which may enable you to act your part in life, as a man of polished sense and confirmed virtue. You have, then, already contracted a great debt of gratitude to them. You can pay it by no other method but by using the advantages which their goodness has afforded you.

If your own endeavours are deficient, it is in vain that you have tutors, books, and all the external apparatus of literary pursuits. You must love learning, if you intend to possess it. In order to love it, you must feel its delights; in order to feel its delights, you must apply to it, however irksome at first, closely and constantly for a considerable time. If you have resolution enough to do this, you cannot but love learning; for the mind always loves that to which it has been long, steadily, and voluntarily attached. Habits are formed, which render what was at first disagreeable, not only pleasant, but necessary.

Pleasant, indeed, are all the paths which lead to polite and elegant literature. Yours, then, is surely a lot particularly happy. Your education is of such a sort, that its principal scope is to prepare you to receive a refined pleasure during your life. Elegance, or delicacy of taste, is one of the first objects of a classical discipline; and it is this fine quality which opens a new world to the scholar's view. Elegance of taste has a connection with many virtues, and all of them virtues of the most amiable kind. It tends to render you, at once, good

and agreeable. You must therefore be an enemy to your own enjoyments, if you enter on the discipline which leads to the attainment of a classical and liberal education with reluctance. Value duly the opportunities you enjoy, and which are denied to thousands of your fellow-creatures.

Without exemplary diligence you will make but a contemptible proficiency. You may, indeed, pass through the forms of schools and universities, but you will bring nothing from them away of real value. The proper sort and degree of diligence you cannot possess, but by the efforts of your own resolution. Your instructor may, indeed, confine you within the walls of a school a certain number of hours. He may place books before you, and compel you to fix your eyes upon them; but no authority can chain down your mind. Your thoughts will escape from every external restraint, and, amidst the most serious lectures, may be ranging in the wild pursuit of trifles or vice. Rules, restraints, commands, and punishments, may indeed, assist in strengthening your resolution; but, without your own voluntary choice, your diligence will not often conduce to your pleasure or advantage. Obvious as is this truth, yet it seems to be a secret to those parents who expect to find their sons improvement in proportion to the number of tutors and external assistances, which their opulence has enabled them to provide. These assistances, indeed, are sometimes afforded, chiefly with a view to enable the young heir to a title or estate, to indulge in idleness and nominal pleasures. The lesson is construed to him, and the exercise written by the private tutor, while the hapless youth is engaged in some ruinous pleasure, which, at the same time, prevents him from learning any thing desirable, and leads to the formation of destructive habits, which can seldom be removed.

But the principal obstacle to improvement at your school, especially if you are too plentifully supplied with money, is a perverse ambition of being distinguished as a boy of merit in mischievous pranks, in neglecting the tasks and lessons, and for every vice and irregularity which the puerile age can admit. You will have sense enough, I hope, to discover, beneath the mask of

gaiety and good-nature, that malignant spirit of detraction, which endeavours to render the boy who applies to books, and to all the duties and proper business of the school, ridiculous. You will see, by the light of your reason, that the ridicule is misapplied. You will discover, that the boys who have recourse to ridicule, are, for the most part, stupid, unfeeling, ignorant, and vicious. Their noisy folly, their bold confidence their contempt of learning, and their defiance of authority are, for the most part, the genuine effects of hardened insensibility. Let not their insults and ill-treatment dispirit you. If you yield to them with a tame and abject submission, they will not fail to triumph over you with additional insolence. Display a fortitude in your pursuits, equal in degree to the obstinacy in which they persist in theirs. Your fortitude will soon overcome theirs; which is, indeed, seldom any thing more than the audacity of a bully. Indeed, you cannot go through a school with ease to yourself, and success, without a considerable share of courage. I do not mean that sort of courage which leads to battles and contentions, but which enables you to have a will of your own, and to pursue what is right, amidst all the persecutions of surrounding enviers, dunces, and detractors. Ridicule is the weapon made use of at school, as well as in the world, when the fortresses of virtue are to be assailed. You will effectually repel the attack by a dauntless spirit and unyielding perseverance. Though numbers are against you, yet, with truth and rectitude on your side, you may be *ipse agmen*, though alone, yet equal to an army.

By laying in a store of useful knowledge, adorning your mind with elegant literature, improving and establishing your conduct by virtuous principles, you cannot fail of being a comfort to those friends who have supported you, of being happy within yourself, and of being well received by mankind. Honour and success in life will probably attend you. Under all circumstances you will have an internal resource of consolation and entertainment, of which no sublunary vicissitude can deprive you. Time shews how much wiser your choice than that of your idle companions, who would

gladly have drawn you into their association, or rather their conspiracy, as it has been called, against good manners, and all that is honourable and useful. While you appear in society as a respectable and valuable member of it, they have sacrificed, at the shrine of vanity, pride, extravagance, and false pleasure, their health and their sense, their fortunes and their characters.



No. XC.

THE WANT OF PIETY ARISES FROM THE
WANT OF SENSIBILITY.

IT appears to me, that the mind of man, when it is free from natural defects and acquired corruption, feels no less a tendency to the indulgence of devotion, than to love, or to any other of the more refined and elevated affections. But debauchery and excess contribute greatly to destroy all the susceptible delicacy with which nature usually furnishes the heart; and in the general extinction of our better qualities, it is no wonder that so pure a sentiment as that of piety, should be one of the first to expire.

It is certain that the understanding may be improved in a knowledge of the world, and in the arts of succeeding in it, while the heart, or whatever constitutes the seat of the moral and sentimental feelings, is gradually receding from its original perfection. Indeed, experience seems to evince, that it is hardly possible to arrive at the character of a complete man of the world, without losing many of the most valuable sentiments of uncorrupted nature. A complete man of the world is an artificial being; he has discarded many of the native and laudable tendencies of his mind, and adopted a new system of objects and propensities of his own creation. These are commonly gross, coarse, sordid, selfish, and sensual. All, or either of these attributes, tend directly to blunt the sense of every thing liberal, enlarged, disinterested; of every thing which partici-

pates more of an intellectual than of a sensual nature. When the heart is tied down to the earth by lust and avarice, it is not extraordinary, that the eye should be seldom lifted up to heaven. To the man who spends his Sunday in the counting-house, in travelling (because the day is fit for little else) in a post-coach and four, in the tavern, or in the brothel, those who go to church appear as fools, and the business they go upon as nonsense. He is callous to the feelings of devotion; but he is tremblingly alive to all that gratifies his senses or his interest.

It has been remarked of those writers who have attacked christianity, and represented all religions merely as diversified modes of superstition, that they were indeed, for the most part, men of a metaphysical and a disputatious turn of mind, but usually little distinguished for benignity and generosity. There was, amidst all the pretensions to local sagacity, a cloudiness of ideas, and a coldness of heart, which rendered them very unfit judges on a question in which the heart is chiefly interested; in which the language of nature is more expressive and convincing, than all the dreary subtleties of the dismal metaphysicians. Even the reasoning faculty, on which we so greatly value ourselves, may be perverted by refinement; and there is an abstruse, but vain and foolish philosophy, which philosophises us out of the noblest parts of our noble nature. One of those parts of us is our instinctive sense of religion, of which not one of those brutes which the philosophers most admire, and to whose rank they wish to reduce us, is found, in the slightest degree, to participate.

Such philosophers may be called, in a double sense, the enemies of mankind. They not only endeavour to entice man from his duty, but to rob him of a most exalted and natural pleasure. Such, surely, is the pleasure of devotion. For when the soul rises above this little orb, and pours its adoration at the throne of celestial majesty, the holy fervour which it feels is itself a rapturous delight. Neither is this a declamatory representation, but a truth felt and acknowledged by all the sons of men; except those who have been defective in sensibility, or who hoped to gratify the pride or the

malignity of their hearts, by singular and pernicious speculation.

Indeed, all disputations, controversial, and metaphysical writings, on the subject of religion, are unfavourable to genuine piety. We do not find, that the most renowned polemics in the church militant, were at all more attentive than others to the common offices of religion, or that they were actuated by any peculiar degree of devotion. The truth is, their religion centered in their heads; whereas its natural region is the heart. The heart! confined, alas! in colleges or libraries, unacquainted with all the tender charities of husband, father, brother, friend; some of them have almost forgotten that they possess a heart. It has long ceased to beat with the pulsations of love and sympathy, and has been engrossed by pride on conquering an adversary in the syllogistic combat, or by impotent anger on a defeat. With such habits, and so defective a system of feelings, can we expect that a Doctor of the Sorbonne, or the disputing professor of divinity, should ever feel the flame that glowed in the bosoms of Mrs. Rowe, Mrs. Talbot, or Mr. Nelson?

An inexperienced and unobservant man might expect to find extraordinary devotion and piety in the chapels and colleges of our English Universities. Many of our academics are summoned to prayers, not less often than four times every day throughout the year. But do they attend voluntarily, or in obedience to a statute? Is there any particular piety or decency in the performance of public worship? Quite the reverse; for in no place of worship are the prayers read in a more careless or perfunctory manner; in none are more indecencies practised and connived at than in the chapels of our English Universities. The reason is, that those who attend in them consist, for the most part, either of jolly fellows, who drown all thoughts in wine and its concomitants, or of dry logicians and metaphysicians who, in the towering heights of their wisdom, are superior to the weaknesses of a devotee. I have seen in many a country church, where the congregation consisted only of honest husbandmen and their families, more decency and more devotion, than in any chapel in

the venerable seats of learning and of religion. A very amiable and ingenious writer has ventured to suggest, that even the clergy at large, from the habit of talking and disputing with familiarity on subjects of religion, are less apt to indulge the ardour of devotion, than the common tribe of mankind, engaged in the varied and busy scene of many-coloured life.

It is however certain, that a devotional taste and habit are very desirable in themselves, exclusive of their effects in meliorating the morals and disposition, and promoting present and future felicity. They add dignity, pleasure, and security, to any age; but to old age they are the most becoming grace, the most substantial support, and the sweetest comfort. In order to preserve them, it will be necessary to preserve our sensibility; and nothing will contribute so much to this purpose as a life of temperance, innocence, and simplicity



No. XCI.

ON THE PLEASURES OF A GARDEN.

NOT he alone is to be esteemed a benefactor to mankind who makes an useful discovery; but he also, who can point out and recommend an innocent pleasure. Of this kind are the pleasures arising from the observation of nature: and they are highly agreeable to every taste uncorrupted by vicious indulgence.

There will always be many in a rich and civilized country, who, as they are born to the enjoyment of competent estates, engage not in business civil or professional. But the restless mind must either find or make an object. Pleasure, therefore becomes, to the unemployed, a serious pursuit. Whatever is its essence, and whatever the declaimer may urge against it, pleasure will be sought by all who possess the liberty of election. It becomes then incumbent on the moralist, not only to urge the performance of duty, but to exhibit objects that please without enervating the mind, and gratify desire without corrupting the principles.

Rural scenes of almost every kind, are delightful to the mind of man. The verdant plain, the flowery mead, the meandering stream, the playful lamb, the warbling of birds, are all capable of exciting emotions gently agreeable. But the misfortune is, that the greater part are hurried on in the career of life with too great rapidity, to be able to give attention to that which solicits no passion. The darkest habitation in the dirtiest street of the metropolis, where money can be earned, has greater charms, with many, than the groves of Hagley.

Yet the patron of refined pleasure, the elegant Epicurus, fixed the seat of his enjoyment in a garden. He thought a tranquil spot, furnished with the united sweets of art and nature, the best adapted to delicate repose. And even the severer philosophers of antiquity were wont to discourse in the shade of a spreading tree, in some cultivated plantation.

It is obvious, on intuition, that nature often intended solely to please the eye in her vegetable productions. She decorates the flowret, that springs beneath our feet in all the perfection of external beauty. She has clothed the garden with a constant succession of various hues. Even the leaves of the tree undergo a pleasing vicissitude. The fresh verdure they exhibit in the spring, the various shades they assume in summer, the yellow and russet tinge of autumn, and the nakedness of winter, afford a constant pleasure to a picturesque imagination. From the snow drop to the moss-rose, the flower-garden displays an infinite variety of shape and colour. The taste of the florist has been ridiculed as trifling; yet surely without reason. Did nature bring forth the tulip and the lilly, the rose and the honeysuckle, to be neglected by the haughty pretender to superior reason? To omit a single social duty for the cultivation of a polyanthus, were ridiculous as well as criminal; but to pass by the beauties lavished before us, without observing them, is no less ingratitude than stupidity. A bad heart finds little amusement but in a communication with the active world, where scope is given for the indulgence of malignant passions; but an amiable dis-

position is commonly known by a taste for the beauties of the animal and the vegetable creation.

The northern countries of Europe are by no means well adapted to the true enjoyment of rural scenery. Our vernal seasons, which the poets celebrate in all the luxuriance of description, are commonly rendered cold and uncomfortable, by the long continuance of an eastern wind. Our poets borrowed their ideas of a spring from the poets of Italy, who collected theirs from nature. A genial day in April, is among us the subject of general congratulation. And while the lilac blossoms, and the laburnum drops its golden clusters, the shivering possessor of them is constrained to seek warmth at the side of his chimney. Yet, from the temperature of our climate we derive a beauty unknown in the gardens of a warmer country. Few objects are more pleasing than the smooth lawn; but the soft verdure, which constitutes its beauty, is not to be found in more southern climates. It is certainly true, that the rarity of our truly vernal weather, like that of other delights, increases the pleasure of it; and it is probable, for this reason that an Englishman, notwithstanding his complaints against his atmosphere, enjoys the pleasures of a garden in their full perfection. A fine day, says Temple, is a kind of sensual pleasure; but surely it would cease to be such, if every day were fine.

A practical attention to a garden, is by some esteemed a degrading employment. It is true, indeed, that, pastoral and agricultural manners, if we may believe the dignified descriptions of Virgil, are greatly degenerated. The employments of shepherds and husbandmen are now become mean and sordid. The work of the garden is usually left to a peasant. Nor is it unreasonable to assign the labour, which wearies without amusement, to those who are sufficiently amused by the prospect of their wages. But the operations of grafting, of inoculating, of transplanting, are curious experiments in natural philosophy; and, that they are pleasing as well as curious, those can testify, who remember what they have felt on seeing their attempts succeed.

Among the employments suitable to old age, Cicero has enumerated the care of a garden. It requires no great exertion of mind or body; and its satisfactions are of that kind which pleases without agitation. Its beneficial influence on health, is an additional reason for an attention to it in an age when infirmities abound.

In almost every description of the seats of the blessed, ideas of a garden seem to have predominated. The word Paradise itself is synonymous with garden. The fields of Elysium, that sweet region of poesy, are adorned with all that imagination can conceive to be delightful. Some of the most pleasing passages of Milton, are those in which he represents the happy Pair engaged in cultivating their blissful abode. Poets have always been delighted with the beauties of a garden. Lucan is represented by Juvenal as reposing in his garden. Virgil's Georgiacs prove him to have been captivated with rural scenes; though, to the surprise of his readers, he has not assigned a book to the subject of a garden. Our Shenstone has made it his study; but with all his taste and fondness for it, he was not happy in it. The captivating scenes which he created at the Leasfows, afforded him, it is said, little pleasure in the absence of spectators. The truth is, he made the embellishment of his grounds, which should have been the amusement of his life, the business of it; and involved himself in such troubles, by the expenses it occasioned, as necessarily excluded tranquil enjoyment.

It is the lot of few to possess territories extensive and well adapted like his to constitute an ornamented farm. Still fewer are capable of supporting the expences of preserving it in good condition. But let not the rich suppose they have appropriated the pleasures of a garden. The possessor of an acre, or a smaller portion, may receive a real pleasure from observing the progress of vegetation, even in a culinary plant. A very limited tract, properly attended to, will furnish ample employment for an individual. Nor let it be thought a mean care; for the same hand that raised the cedar, formed the hyssop on the wall. Even the orchard, cultivated solely for advantage, exhibits beauties unequalled in the shrubbery; nor can the green house produce an ap-

pearance to exceed the blossom of the apple and the almond.

Amusement reigns, says Dr. Young, man's great demand. Happy were it, if the amusement of managing a garden were more generally relished. It would surely be more conducive to health, and the preservation of our faculties to extreme old age, were that time, which is now devoted to the dice and to the card-table, spent in the open air, and in active employment.



No. XCII.

ON THE GRAVE AND GAY SPECIES OF PHILOSOPHY.

THE world has ever been viewed, by men of different dispositions, in a light totally different. The thoughtful and melancholy have represented it as a vale of misery; the gay and the volatile, as a theatre abounding with delightful entertainments, if the spectators are but in good humour. The whole difference, indeed, it has been said, arises from the various state of the minds of men, and not from any inconsistent diversity in the constitution of things. It would therefore seem probable, that the greater part would embrace the more agreeable side, from motives of self-interest and gratification. But the truth is, there are as many followers of Herclitus as of Democritus.

That there is an essential difference in the original form of minds, there is no doubt; and to this cause is to be attributed, that some are gloomy, others cheerful. But habit is often no less concerned than nature. For it is remarkable that, among moral writers, those who have enjoyed wealth and the company of the great, and who consequently partook of various pleasures, have commonly chosen the comfortable kind of philosophy; while they who were oppressed by want, and excluded from enjoyment, have no less naturally represented life, such as they found it, as a state of misery, interrupted only by short-lived and unsubstantial gratifications.

The English nation is characteristically grave; and of course the graver kind of philosophy has been much cultivated in England. There are few books that please more generally than the *Night Thoughts* of Young. Hevrey's *Meditations* are more frequently read than many works of humour, and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* has given as much pleasure among the English vulgar as the *Quixote* of Cervantes.

But our increase of wealth, and our imitation of French and Asiatic manners, have greatly altered our natural disposition. We begin to relish none but the gayer kind of philosophy. Horace would at present be more read than Juvenal, and Lucian than Seneca.

Every admirer of dignified diction and of solid sense must be delighted with the *Rambler*; and yet it has been said, that the *World*, and other less solid performances, are now more universally read and approved, at least in the politer circles. It must indeed be confessed, that besides some affectations which justly give offence, those excellent papers induce a melancholy by no means compatible with an active or pleasurable life. They inspire virtuous sentiments, but they depress those spirits which are necessary to put them in practice. I venerate the old age of their justly celebrated author; I admire his great exertions; and when I assert, that the gloomy grandeur of some among his moral writings communicates a sympathetic melancholy to the reader's mind, I by no means detract from his literary honours.

The philosophy of Epicurus is in some degree adopted by the greater part, most of whom embrace his tenets without having heard of his name. The truth is, human nature is naturally inclined to pursue pleasure, and to avoid all that has the appearance of wretchedness and woe. Even they who devote themselves to melancholy find a gloomy pleasure in it; a pleasure scarcely recognized by the gay and luxurious, but yet real and satisfactory.

The severe philosophy, though less agreeable to the gayer ranks, is the more favourable to virtue. Seneca and Antonius are severe moralists. They exhibit life in its less pleasing aspects, and exact duties not to be

performed without painful efforts. But they call forth the latent powers of the mind, and by requiring an exertion beyond the natural strength, really compelled to effect all that it is able. Indolence prevents men in general from effecting all that they are able. The pleasurable system dissuades them from the attempt. And if there were not some austere instructors, and some faithful followers of them, there would not be active virtue enough in a community to preserve its existence.

In the early periods of society, the grave philosophy is most cultivated. For then virtuous exertions are most necessary, and luxurious indulgences precluded. Success and increase in wealth and glory, are the usual consequence. Luxury succeeds in a course as certain in all its stages as any physical progress. A taste for a light, cheerful, fanciful philosophy, soon explodes the sudden precepts of rigid moralists. Manners are relaxed, and naturally bring on a declension of empire. At least all regard for liberty is lost; and the mind, enervated with pleasure, gladly sinks in the repose of despotism.

It is evident that in our own country, the severe philosophy loses ground. This among many others, is a symptom of corruption, and the harbinger of decay. An imitation of French manners has greatly accelerated this revolution in our sentiments. And, after all, it is a forced and unnatural change; for an Englishman, whether from the influence of climate, or some cause inherent in his constitution, is by nature grave, and disposed to admit manly thoughts, and to practise manly actions.

The influence of books, on the national manners in a community, almost every member of which devotes some part of his time to reading, must be important. And among other methods which might be used to excite the spirit of patriotism and political virtue, it might be proper to restore a taste for solid and severe morality, and to explode those light, superficial, sentimental, and affected productions, which, while they please the sickly mind, encrease its imbecility.

No. XCIII.

ON MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS.

IT was the early wish of Pope, that, when he died not a stone might tell where he lay. It is a wish that will commonly be granted with reluctance. The affection of those we leave behind us, is at a loss for methods to display its wonted solicitude, and seeks consolation under sorrow in doing honour to all that remains. It is natural that filial piety, parental tenderness, and conjugal love, should mark, with some fond memorial, the clay-cold spot, where the form, still fostered in the bosom, moulders away. And did affection go no farther, who could censure? But, in recording the virtues of the departed, either zeal or vanity often leads to an excess perfectly ludicrous.

A marble monument, with an inscription palpably false and ridiculously pompous, is far more offensive to true taste, than the wooden memorial of the rustic, sculptured with painted bones, and decked out with death's head in all the colours of the rainbow. There is an elegance and a classical simplicity in the turf-clad heap of mould which covers the poor man's grave, though it has nothing to defend it from the insults of the proud, but a bramble. The primrose that grows upon it is a better ornament, than the gilded lies on the oppressor's tombstone.

The prostitution of praise is injurious to virtue. That imaginary life after death, which consists in a remembrance of our worth cherished in the breasts of others, though it is despised by the severe reasoner, has commonly been an additional motive for exertion to the noblest spirits that have dignified human nature. But when we see the studied panegyric engraved on the marble that incloses the remains of the worthless, we despise the eulogium that mankind are mean enough to bestow on every one that will pay the price. Thus one

powerful motive is lost, which might operate on the generous in stimulating them to a worthy conduct.

On the tombstones of the truly great, it is certainly right that an inscription should be written consistent with their dignity. In order to be so, it must not be prolix. When their names and age make all the sepulchral history of distinguished personages, it seems to be implied that the rest is sufficiently known; but when the marble ambitiously enlarges on their excellence, it argues that the world wants the information. It is better that the passenger, when he sees an eminent name, should recollect, while he strikes his pensive bosom, the virtues of its owner, than that his remarks should be anticipated by an obtruding narrative.

The style of epitaphs usually adopted has been too diffuse. The noble-ancients, those patterns of unaffected magnificence, consulted real dignity in the brevity of their epitaphs. As an historical monument, at an age when printing was unknown, they sometimes engraved the exploits of a warrior on the marble; but in general they recorded little more than the name of the departed. The Grecian muse sometimes poured the sweet melody of verse at the shrine of a poet or hero; but she never condescended to mean flattery, nor displayed the bloated ostentation of a modern panegyric.

There are many excellent epitaphs in the English language, both in verse and prose. In the diffuse kind, that on the infamous Chartres is a fine model. Westminster Abbey exhibits many inscriptions written with manly, forcible, and energetic elegance. The great fault has been, a redundance of epithets in the superlative degree.

We have also many fine poetical epitaphs. Those of Dryden and Pope are the most deservedly celebrated; though those of Pope have been severely criticised. In general, the metrical are inferior to the prosaic. Some of the best are crowded with antithesis, a fault which renders them inferior to the Grecian; and some of the worst, many of which are found in the most public cœmeteries, stand forth a disgrace to national taste.

The love of rhyme descends to the lowest ranks. The parish-clerk is commonly called upon for a stave or two of verses, by every rustic that can raise a post and rail to the memory of his relation; and there are few church-yards in the kingdom, where that favourite stanza "Afflictions sore long time I bore," does not occur more than once.

But our epitaphs are most commonly written in Latin; probably because it is intelligible to foreigners, and is capable of more elegance and elevation. Our country has produced many writers remarkable for beautiful latinity: accordingly we find inscriptions in every part of the kingdom abounding with classical expressions. The misfortune has been, that many of them have encroached on the province of biography; and real dignity has been lost in the affectation of it, in a tedious and circumstantial detail of descents, pedigrees, and relationship. The reader is tired, before he has obtained a clear idea of the character and family described. His eyes have failed, even if his attention persevered. The epitaph on the pious Nelson, for instance consists of about eighty lines.

The punning and epigrammatic epitaph was much in fashion a century or two ago. That on fair Rosamond at Godstow might surely have been replete with tender sentiment, but it is merely a wretched distich of puns and monkish rhymes. This species is at present quite exploded, and little need be said to prove its great impropriety. False wit is always misplaced, but the true seems to be excluded from the epitaph. Who can beat merriment or buffoonery on a tombstone? The tender and elegiac, or the manly and severe style, seems to be best adapted to the monumental inscription. But neither the pathetic nor sublime is compatible with the ludicrous.

The authors of our epitaphs are seldom known. One of the best that I can recollect was the classical Bourne. The few he has left us are master pieces. That in Westminster Abbey, on Dickinson the architect, is truly sublime.

In our islands there has certainly been no dearth of genius for monumental inscriptions; though there is

one circumstance which might induce a foreigner to think the contrary. The famous Duchess of Marlborough is said to have offered, without success, five hundred pounds for an epitaph adequate to the dignity of her Duke. Her grace, whose taste was not very just, would probably have expected a history long enough to cover with inscription the unwieldy pile of stones called Blenheim-house. I cannot help thinking, that a tedious epitaph, minutely relating his achievements, would rather lessen than exalt him in the eyes of mankind. Would not Alexander the Great have appeared rather beneath the dignity of that name, if it had been written on his tomb, that the son of Philip was reputed to have been, in his day, the wisest general, the boldest hero, the most accomplished man, with a hundred other attributes? Would he have excited much admiration, if he had been handed down to us, merely in an epitaph abounding with those inflated superlatives, which Gothic ideas of grandeur have now introduced? It might have been a complimentary epitaph on an Alderman, who died of repletion; and would have borne an analogy to him in the circumstance of an unnatural tumour.



No. XCIV.

CURSORY THOUGHTS ON BIOGRAPHY.

AMONG the many arguments advanced to recommend the study of history, it has been said, that it teaches wisdom without the danger of experience, and, by pointing out the paths of those who have gone before us, facilitates the journey of life. History has been called philosophy teaching by examples. But, after all, it must be allowed, that civil history is less capable of regulating moral than political conduct. The descriptions of battles, the accounts of debates, the characters of kings and heroes, contain very little that can regulate the actions of the private and the more numerous ranks in the community.

But an exact and authentic account of individuals, who have greatly excelled in any of the departments of active or contemplative life, seems to be a mode of instruction best suited to an animal, like man, prone to imitation. When a single character is distinctly delineated, we can pursue the outline, with an ease equal to that with which the painter copies from the original picture placed before his eyes. We have the express authority of the pattern we have chosen to direct us in every emergency, and can tread, with implicit confidence, in the footsteps of the most distinguished men, without the suspense of deliberate selection. It is the remark of Aristotle, that the story of an individual, as it is a single object, is comprehended more fully, and therefore attended to with greater pleasure, than a history in which many personages are introduced.

For these reasons, biography appears to be more instructive than civil history, though it has commonly been written with a less degree of attention. Herodotus is all sweetness. Thucydides exhibits the solid and austere beauties. Xenophon, the attic bee, presents us with a style flowing with honey. Livy displays a most masterly composition, and paints in glowing colours all that he relates. Sallust rivals his Grecian master; Guicciardin and Vertot have exhibited in their writings some of the genuine graces of the historic muse. But among biographers, scarcely any can justly claim a rank with the first writers of the golden age.

As a diligent collector of facts, as a warm friend to virtue, as an entertaining narrator, I venerate the name of Plutarch. His writings bear evident marks of extensive reading; and communicate much and multifarious knowledge. Theodore Gaza has said, that if all books were lost, and he might recover one, it should be Plutarch. He is indeed an invaluable treasure of ancient learning; for he selected passages from books now totally lost, and inserted them very liberally in his works. Add to this, that he is an admirable moralist. But his judgment seems not to have been always strong enough to manage the unwieldy mass of learning he had assembled. He indulged the weakest superstition.

He is ever relating stories, which Horace calls ANTIQUES, or the tales of old women. Merely for an auttentaticous display of erudition, he digresses beyond all reasonable limits. His idea of drawing parallels was excellent; and he has sometimes drawn them admirably, though, as the critics say, not without a partiality to his own countrymen. They have convicted him of this unphilosophical attachment in the comparison between Tully and Demosthenes, Cato and Aristides, Sylla and Lyiander, Marcellus and Pelopidas.

They who are willing to allow him every other merit, give up his style as harsh and inelegant. Though certainly and useful, he cannot be esteemed a fine writer; and whatever merit he possesses, his instance does not refute the assertion, that biographical has never yet equalled civil history.

The long and diffuse accounts of Plutarch have been compared to colossal statues; the concise histories of Cornelius Nepos, to medallions. Cornelius Nepos has a claim from the age he flourished in, from his language, and from his fidelity, to the rank of a classic; but by no means to the first rank. It is suspected by many, that as Trogus was epitomized by Justin, so Nepos was abbreviated by a writer, who flourished under Theodosius in the decline of polite literature. The life of Atticus, if we may pronounce from internal evidence, continues undaltered, and reflects great honour on its writer, as a fine picture of a beautiful original.

Diogenes Laertius chose a subject well adapted to display ingenuity. The lives of the wisest men whom the world ever produced if well written, would have been a most valuable acquisition to ancient learning. But, with a fine subject, he was a poor writer.

It is to be wished, that Tacitus had more frequently exercised his talents in biography. His life of Agricola is, perhaps, the best biographical work that was ever composed. It is written in that beautiful energetic style, which characterises this spirited historian; and it is more pleasing than his other works, because it exhibits not a deformed portrait. Mallet's Life of Bacon is a good imitation of it.

Suetonius probably drew his pictures from the life, and they are loathsome to behold. They are, however, useful to the philosopher, as they enabled him to form a more complete idea of human nature in all the gradations of degeneracy and perfection. They are also well written. Concise, nervous, simple, they please by their perspicuity, and their freedom from ambitious ornament. To the honour of their author it must be said, that he appears to have advanced nothing through flattery or resentment, nor to have suppressed any thing through fear, but to have paid an undaunted regard to veracity. Erasmus observes that he wrote as freely as the emperors whom he described to have lived.

It is matter of surprise and regret, that we have not more biographers. Thousands and tens of thousands, eminent in every accomplishment, whose examples might have instructed the world, are become as though they had never been. In our own country, it is true that there are many biographical compilations, but they are for the most part incomplete. Wood's *Athenæ*, though a book that does honour to the most celebrated university, has no merit as an elegant composition. But I must not omit the tribute of praise to the writer of the life of Cicero; who has given us a most accurate account of one of the greatest men that ever lived, in a style truly classical and manly. The public is also indebted to the author of the *Rambler* for many biographical attempts. His portraits would be more universally and permanently pleasing, if he had not too often indulged his spleen, and converted a harshness of feature into absolute caricature. I never could admire either the writings or the life of the chief object of his panegyric, the unfortunate *Savage*.

Worth is often unknown, or known imperfectly, till after death: till that period, when it is too late to learn particular circumstances with accuracy. Hence it has happened that many of our second rate authors and actors in every department of life, though richly deserving a place in the annals of fame, are recorded only in those volumes, where to be born and die, as Pope says, makes all the history.

To preserve their own actions from oblivion and misrepresentation, some writers have been their own biographers. The task requires great delicacy. The very attempt indeed implies a considerable degree of self-value; but it has been justified by the examples of Thuanus and Hume.

There has appeared in our times and country a biographical work on an extensive plan. The first edition of the *Biographia Britannica* was well designed, yet unequally, and, upon the whole, indifferently executed. Many distinguished lives are totally omitted; many insignificant lives are tediously described. Though there is sometimes much labour and sagacity exerted, yet there are few masterly remarks. Most of the articles were furnished by writers of no great repute; and there was every reason for the new edition now undertaken. If I might presume to suggest an improvement, I would advise that elegantly engraved heads should be prefixed to every life, whenever they can be procured; and that the materials should not be collected from books only, but from the traditionary reports, and the manuscript letters remaining in the families of descendants. The names of the living persons who communicate the hints should be added, both to secure and to confirm their authenticity.

I believe none of these improvements are made in the second edition of the *Biographia*. I attribute the omission to the want of pecuniary assistance. It is greatly to be lamented, that any kind of assistance should be wanting in a work in which the national honour is highly interested.

No. XCV.

ON HOSPITALITY, AND THE CIVILITIES OF
COMMON LIFE.

IN the days of Horace, our countrymen were reputed to be savage in their behaviour to strangers. Though in the present age the charge would be unjust, yet it must be owned, that there is a reserve in the manner of an unadulterated Englishmen, which seems to confirm the opinion, that he inherits a portion of that unsocial spirit which disgraced his ancestors. But whatever may be his natural propensity, it is certain, that, in the liberal intercourse and comprehensive education which prevail in the present times, there is scarcely any country in the world where a more cordial hospitality is displayed, than in England.

The days of Elizabeth have been extolled as the days of genuine hospitality. The doors were thrown open, and, at the sound of the dinner-bell, all the neighbouring country crowded to the smoking-table. These were times indeed, says the railer against modern refinement. Yet it has been justly doubted, whether this indiscriminate hospitality was laudable. There was something generous and magnificent in the idea, and it gave the nobles of the land the influence of kings over their neighbourhood. Yet if its motive and its moral effect are considered, it will appear justly to be exploded. It proceeded from the love of power and from ostentation, and it produced gluttony, drunkenness, and all their consequent vices.

Considered in a charitable light, as affording food to the hungry, it will be found a less useful mode than the modern institutions. It did not select its objects: it considered not the degrees of indigence or of desert. The consequence was, that it increased indigence, and lessened desert; for experience has proved, that unnecessary alms, however amiable the motive of them, do a real injury where they mean a benefit. They pro-

mote idleness, by teaching poverty to rely on other aid than the efforts of an honest industry.

The great number of houses established for the reception of travellers in every part of the kingdom, and the expeditious modes of travelling, which render delay unnecessary, have contributed to restrain that general hospitality which opened the door to all who came. Such hospitality is no longer wanted; but there never was a time when judicious civility, of all kinds, was more liberally shewn to strangers than the present. And whatever the old Romans or the modern Gauls may assert of British ferocity of manners, no Italian or Frenchman of character ever came to our separated shore, without having felt delight at his hearty reception, and regret on his departure.

It seems probable that hospitality keeps pace with civilization. As the minds of a people are enlarged by improvements in knowledge, and communication with their neighbours, the selfish and morose affections gradually lose ground. In several parts of Europe, where social improvements have not yet reached the traveller is either considered as lawful prey, or else totally disregarded. On the other hand, we find the natives of the Society Isles, separated as they are from all the rest of the world, and by no means far removed from the savage state, remarkably hospitable. Though fear might in some degree cause their civility to Europeans, yet it was not the sole motive of it; for we find their good offices, after all apprehensions were removed, evidently proceeding from the tenderest and most generous affection. On the first appearance of the English on their coasts, they naturally considered them as enemies, and boldly opposed their invasion. Many of them exhibited acts of heroism, in defence of their country, scarcely excelled in the annals of antiquity. But no sooner was the branch of peace held out, than they received their wonderful visitors with open arms; with a humanity that reflects disgrace on the maritime villages of Europe, where a shipwrecked fellow creature, and fellow-countryman, has been destroyed for the sake of plundering his vessel. In other islands discovered

by our circumnavigators, we find, that no kindness could mitigate the ferocity of the rude child of nature. The hospitality of barbarians, like all virtues that proceed not from principle, but from humour and accidental causes, is of little value. A clearer light than the light of nature is necessary to give a steady operation to the feelings of humanity.

The idea which christianity has suggested of the relation in which all men stand to each other, is wonderfully adapted to promote universal hospitality. When we consider all men as brothers, we shall naturally receive the stranger within our gates with cordial kindness, as a relation whom we have never yet seen before, and to whom we wish to display some signal of our love. It is indeed true, that many who are justly esteemed worthy persons, do not reduce this generous idea to practice; and the reason seems to be, that they suffer the attachments of domestic life, and the connections of consanguinity, to engross the whole of their affections. Add to this, that the actual exercise of beneficence requires something which is less in our power than benevolence.

However justly the complaints of the misery of life, yet great occasions for the display of beneficence and liberality do not often occur. But there is an hourly necessity for the little kind offices of mutual civility. At the same time that they give pleasure to others, they add to our own happiness and improvement. Habitual acts of kindness have a powerful effect in softening the heart. An intercourse with polished and humane company, tends to improve the disposition, because it requires a conformity of manners. And it is certain, that a sense of decorum, and of a proper external behaviour, will restrain those whose natural temper would otherwise break out in acrimonious and petulant conversation. Even the affectation of philanthropy will in time contribute to realise it. The pleasure resulting from an act of kindness naturally excites a wish to repeat it; and indeed the general esteem which the character of benevolence procures, is sufficient to induce those to wish for it, who act only from the motives of interest.

As we are placed in a world where natural evil abounds, we ought to render it supportable to each other as far as human endeavours can avail. All that can add a sweet ingredient to the bitter cup must be infused. Amid the multitude of thorns, every flower that will grow must be cultivated with care. But neither pomp nor power are of themselves able to alleviate the load of life. The heart requires to be soothed by sympathy. A thousand little attentions from all around us are necessary to render our days agreeable. The appearance of neglect in any of those with whom we are connected, chills our bosom with chagrin, or kindles the fire of resentment. - Nothing therefore seems so likely to ensure happiness, as our mutual endeavours to promote it. Our single endeavours, originating and terminating in ourselves, are usually unsuccessful. Providence has taken care to secure that intercourse which is necessary to the existence of society, by rendering it the greatest sweetener of human life.

By reciprocal attentions, we are enabled to become beneficent without expence. A smile, an affable address, a look of approbation, are often capable of giving a greater pleasure than pecuniary benefits can bestow. The mere participation of the studies and amusements of others, at the same time that it gratifies ourselves, is often an act of real humanity; because others would not enjoy them without companions. A friendly visit in a solitary hour, is often a greater act of kindness than a valuable present.

It is really matter of surprize, that those who are distinguished by rank and opulence, should ever be unpopular in their neighbourhood. They must know the value of popularity, and surely nothing is more easily obtained by a superior. Their notice confers honour; and the aspiring heart of man is always delighted with distinction. A gracious look from them diffuses happiness on the lower ranks. But it usually happens, that an overgrown rich man is not the favourite of a neighbouring country; and it is unfortunate, that pride or inadvertence often prevent men from acting the godlike part of making others happy, even when they might do it without inconvenience to themselves.

No. XCVI.

ON THE MERIT OF ILLUSTRIOUS BIRTH.

THERE is scarcely any truth of which the world has been more frequently reminded by the moralists, than the unreasonableness of that veneration which is paid to birth. They have been told, that virtue alone is true nobility; but though they have acknowledged the assertion to be founded in reason, they have continued with uniform perseverance, in the same error. The luminous glory of an illustrious ancestor, seems to have diffused a brilliancy over a long line of descendants, too opaque of themselves to emit any original irradiations.

Gratitude, which first raises a benefactor to a distinguished rank in civil honours, is willing to continue its kindness to his immediate offspring. The distinction is rendered hereditary. This predilection for an ancestor soon leads to the accumulation of honours and possessions in his successors; and the incense originally offered because it was deserved, is at last offered at the shrine of opulence, independently of merit.

Subordination is, indeed, essential to society. The order of nobles, as hereditary Guardians of the laws, is found an useful political establishment; and none seem so well adapted to supply it, as they who have been raised to eminence by their ancestors, and who possess a territorial patrimony in the land which they are to protect. All that is contended for is, that the recommendation of birth may not set aside or depreciate real merit, the praise of learning, and the intrinsic value of virtuous exertions.

It is a remarkable circumstance in the history of mankind, that some of the best books have been written, and some of the greatest achievements performed, by those whose origin was truly plebeian. The politest and the genteelst books, whether the sentiment or the

style to be considered, have been produced by slaves, or the descendants of slaves. Horace, Phædrus, and Terence wrote in a style which must have been the standard of a court, to an intercourse with which they were, however, by no means entitled by their extraction. The founders of the most distinguished families emerged from the middle and lower classes, by the superior vigour of their natural abilities, or by extraordinary efforts assisted by fortune. And unless the adventitious circumstances of wealth and civil honours, can effect a change in the constituent principles of the mind and body, there is certainly no real superiority to be derived in a boasted pedigree of Tudors and Plantagenets.

And yet there have appeared flatterers who have indirectly suggested, that the minds of the nobility seem to be cast in a finer mould and to have an elegance inherent in their original constitution. According to this hypothesis, we must go on to suppose, that the mind of a commoner, exalted to the higher order of senators, catches this elegance by the contagion of invisible effluvia. On his creation he undergoes a kind of new birth, and puts off the exuviæ which encumbered and degraded him in the lower regions. Thus are all the occult perfections of noble blood to be infused by the mandate of a monarch. But no, said Maximilian to a man who asked to be ennobled by him, though I can give you riches and a title, I cannot make you noble.

In truth, there is many a nobleman according to the genuine idea of nobility, even at the loom, at the plough, and in the shop; and many more in the middle ranks of mixed society. This genuine idea contains in it generosity, courage, spirit, and benevolence, the qualities of a warm and open heart, totally unconnected with the accidental advantages of riches and honour; and many an English sailor has possessed more of the real hero than a lord of the admiralty.

If indeed there is any real difference in the quality of their blood, the advantage is probably on the side of the inferior classes. Their indigence and their manual employments require temperance and exercise, the best

purifiers of the animal juices. But the indolence which wealth excuses, and the pleasures which fashionable life admits without restraint, have a natural tendency to vitiate the body as well as the mind. And among the many privileges inherited by him who boasts nobility in his veins, he commonly receives the seeds of the most painful and the impurest diseases. He displays, indeed, a coronet on his coat of arms, and he has a long pedigree to peruse with secret satisfaction; but he has often a gout or a scrophula, which makes him wish to exchange every drop derived from his Norman ancestors, for the pure tide that warms a peasant's bosom.

The spirit of freedom, moral, mental and political, which prevails in England, precludes that unreasonable attachment to birth, which in the countries of despotism, tends to elevate the noble to a rank superior to humanity. In our neighbour's land, the region of external elegance united with real meanness, the implicit veneration paid to birth adds to the weight of legal oppression. A Frenchman of the plebeian order, attends to a Count or a Marquis with all the silent submission of idolatry; on the contrary, there is no doubt but that an English Gondolier would box with the best lord in the land, if he were affronted by him, without the least regard for his star and ribbon. It would indeed be an additional pleasure to the natural delight of conquest, to have bruised a puny Lord. Even the more refined and polished do not idolize illustrious birth. In truth, wealth appears to be the object of more universal veneration. Noble blood and noble titles, without an estate to support them, meet with great compassion indeed, but with little respect; nor is the man who has raised himself to eminence, and who behaves well in it, neglected and despised, because he derives no lustre from his forefathers. In a commercial country, where gain is the general object, they who have been most successful in its pursuit will be revered by many, whatever was their origin. In France where honour is pursued from the monarch to the cleanser of a jakes, the distinction of birth, even with extreme poverty, is enviable.

The brother of a Marquis would rather starve on a beggarly pension, than pollute himself with a trade by which he might acquire the revenues of a German kingdom. In our land of good sense, this folly is losing ground; and the younger brothers of noble houses, often think it no disgrace to rival the heir in a princely fortune acquired by honourable merchandise.

As the world becomes more enlightened, the exorbitant value which has been placed on things not really valuable will decrease. Of all the effects of man's capricious admiration, there are few less rational than the preference of illustrious descent to personal merit, or diseased and degenerate nobility to health, to courage, to learning, and to virtue. Of all the objects of pursuit which are not in our own power, the want of distinguished birth, may most easily be dispensed with, by those who possess a solid judgment of that which makes, and keeps us happy. There may be some reason to repine at the want of wealth and fame; but he who has derived from his parent health, vigour, and all the powers of perception, need not lament that he is unnoticed at the herald's office.

It has been observed, that virtue appears more amiable, when accompanied with beauty; it may be added, that it is more useful when recommended to the notice of mankind by the distinction of an honourable ancestry. It is then greatly to be wished, that the nobly born would endeavour to deserve the respect which the world pays them with alacrity, by employing their influence to benevolent purposes; to those purposes which can at all times be accomplished, even when the patriotic exertions of the field and cabinet are precluded.

No. XCVII.

RELIGIOUS AND MORAL PRINCIPLES NOT
ONLY CONSISTENT WITH, BUT PRO-
MOTIVE OF, TRUE POLITENESS
AND THE ART OF PLEASING.

A PHILOSOPHER who, in the austerity of his virtue should condemn the art of pleasing as unworthy cultivation, would deserve little attention from mankind, and might be dismissed to his solitary tub, like his brother Diogenes. It is, indeed, the dictate of humanity, that we should endeavour to render ourselves agreeable to those in whose company we are destined to travel in the journey of life. It is our interest, it is the source of perpetual satisfaction; it is one of our most important duties as men, and particularly required in the professor of christianity.

I have therefore lamented, that they who have taken the most pains to recommend an attention to the art of pleasing, have urged it only on the mean motives of self-interest. In order to attain the power of pleasing they have recommended flattery and deceit; and though they have required in their pupils the appearance of many good qualities, they have not insisted on any one virtue.

It is my wish to exalt this amiable talent of pleasing to the rank of a virtue founded on principle, and on the best dispositions of human nature. I would separate it from those varnished qualities, which, like whited sepulchres, are but a disguise for internal deformity. A student of the art of pleasing, as it is taught in the school of fashion, is all softness and plausibility, all benevolence and generosity, all attention and assiduity, all gracefulness and gentility. Such is the external appearance; but compare it with his private life, with those actions which pass unseen, and you will find them by no means correspondent. You will usually find a hard heart, meanness, selfishness, avarice, and a total

want of those virtues from which alone true benevolence, sincere friendship, and gentleness of disposition, can originate. You will, indeed, find even the appearances of benevolence and friendship proportioned to the supposed riches and rank of the person whose favour is cultivated.

It is a favourite maxim with those who teach the art of pleasing, that if you desire to please you can scarcely fail to please. But what motive, according to their doctrine, is to excite this desire? A wish to render all with whom you converse subservient to your interested purposes of avarice or ambition. It is a mean and despicable motive, when made the sole and constant principle of conversation and behaviour. If this life is the whole of our existence, if riches and civil honours are the chief good, if truth, honour, and generosity, are but names to adorn a declamation, then indeed, they who practise the art of pleasing, according to the vulgar idea of it, are, after all, the truly and the only wise. But let us not deem so meanly of the world and its creator; and if our favourable opinion of things is an error, it is not only pardonable, but glorious; and a generous man will say, like the noble ancient, he had rather err with a Socratès and a Plato, than be right with a Machiaval.

But, indeed, the virtues and the graces are much more nearly allied than they who are strangers to the virtues are willing to acknowledge. There is something extremely beautiful in all the moral virtues clearly understood and properly reduced to practice. Religion is also declared to be full of pleasantness, in that volume in which its nature is described with the greatest authenticity. It must indeed be allowed, that he who is actuated in his desire of pleasing by morality and religion, may very properly add all the embellishments of external gracefulness; and he may rest assured, that the sincerity of his principles, and the goodness of his character will ensure a degree of success in his attempts to please, which a false pretender, with all his duplicity can never attain.

If true politeness consists in yielding something of our own pretensions to the self-love of others, in re-

pressing our pride and arrogance, and in a gentleness of sentiment and conduct, surely nothing can be more conducive to it than a religion which every where recommends brotherly love, meekness, and humility. I know not how paradoxical my opinion might appear to the fashionable clubs at St. James', or to the professed men of the world, or to the proficient in what I call the *insincere* art of pleasing; but I cannot help thinking, that a true christian, one who thinks and acts, as far as the infirmity of his nature will permit consistently with his principles, possesses qualities more capable of pleasing, than any of those which are said so eminently to have distinguished a Malborough and a Bolingbroke. The pious and amiable Mr. Nelson seems to me to have deserved the epithet of all-accomplished, much better than he to whom it has been so often applied; and, if we may judge by his writings, and the accounts given of his life, as on the one hand there never was a better christian, so on the other there never appeared a politer gentleman. It is evident that he derived his art of pleasing, not from a study of the world, or practising the tricks of little worldlings, but from the lovely qualities recommended in the gospel, and from an imitation of the humble Jesus. They who study the art of pleasing will probably have recourse, as usual, to the many volumes written on the subject in the French language, or to the posthumous letters of a frenchified Englishman; and perhaps they would smile if an instructor were to refer them, for the best rules that have ever been given, to the sermon on the Mount.

It is however certain, that the art of pleasing which is founded on sincere principles, derived from religion and morality, is as far superior to that base art which consists only in simulation and dissimulation, as the fine brilliancy of the real diamond excels the lustre of French paste; or, as the roseate hue on the cheek of Hebe, the painted visage of a haggard courtesan. The insincere art of pleasing resembles the inferior species of timber in a building, which, in order to please the eye, requires the assistance of paint; the art which is founded on sincerity, is more like that which displays

far greater beauty in the variety and richness of its own native veins and colour. A short time, or a slight touch, destroys the superficial beauty of one; while the other acquires new graces from the hand of time.

The rules and doctrines of morality and religion tend to correct all the malignant qualities of the heart; such as envy, malice, pride, and resentment. In doing this, they cut off the very source of disagreeable behaviour. Morality and religion inculcate whatever is just, mild, moderate, candid, and benevolent. In doing this they effectually promote a system of manners, which, without any sinister design in the person who possesses them, cannot fail of being agreeable. If to these substantial powers of pleasing are added the last polish of a graceful deportment, the habits acquired in good company, an acquaintance with men and manners, a taste for polite arts and polite books, no other requisites will be wanting to perfect the art. A man will be under no necessity of hurting his conscience and his character in cultivating, I know not what, of a deceitful and affected behaviour. He may be at once pleasing and respectable; and grow in favour with men, without offending his God.

It is one circumstance greatly in favour of that art of pleasing which I recommend, that, even if it should not always succeed in pleasing those with whom we converse, it will be sure to please our own hearts; it will be sure to satisfy our conscience with a sense of rectitude at the time we are acting under its direction, and to furnish us with a tranquil delight, unalloyed by the remembrance of treachery and meanness, on a retrospective review of our lives and conversations.

No. XCVIII.

ON THE GUILT OF INCURRING DEBTS WITHOUT EITHER A PROSPECT OR INTENTION OF PAYMENT.

AMONG the various devices which young men have invented to involve themselves in difficulties and in ruin, none is more frequent than that of incurring debt without any real necessity. No sooner is the aspiring youth emancipated from his school, or his guardian and superintendants, than he becomes, in his own idea, a man, and not only so, but a man of consequence, whom it behoves to dress and make a figure. To accomplish the purpose of making a figure, some expensive vices are to be affected or practised. But as the stipends of young men, just entering into life, are usually inconsiderable, it is necessary to borrow on the most disadvantageous terms, or to purchase the various requisites of a pleasurable life on credit. The debt soon accumulated from small beginnings to a great sum. The young adventurer continues while his credit is good, in the same wild career; but adieu to real pleasure, to improvement, to honest industry, and to a quiet mind. His peace is wounded. A perpetual load seems to weigh him down; and though his feelings may, by length of time and habit, become too callous to be affected by the misery of his situation, yet he is lost to all sincere enjoyment; and if he does not fall a victim of despair, survives only to gain a precarious existence at the gaming table, to deceive the unwary and to elude the researches of persecuting creditors. Even if he is enabled, by the death of his parents or rich relations, to pay the debts which his youthful folly has contracted: yet he has suffered long and much, and lost the beginning of life, the season of rational delight and solid improvement, in distress and fears; in fabricating excuses and pretences, and in flying from the eager pursuits of dans and bailiffs.

But this folly, however pregnant with misery, is entitled to pity, and may, in some degree, admit of those usual palliations, youthful ardour, and want of experience. Thousands, and tens of thousands have ruined their fortunes and their happiness by hastily running into debt before they knew the value of money, or the consequence of their embarrassments. We pity their misfortune, but in the first part of their progress we do not usually accuse them of absolute dishonesty.

But the habit of incurring debt, though in the earlier periods of life, it may originate in thoughtlessness, commonly leads to a crime most atrocious in itself, and injurious to society. He who prayed against poverty, lest he should be poor and steal, understood human nature. Difficulties and distresses have a natural tendency to lessen the restraints of conscience. The fortres of honour, when stormed by that sort of poverty which is occasioned by profligacy, and not defended with sound principles (such as men of the world do not often possess) has for the most part yielded at discretion. He then who began with incurring debt merely because he was strongly stimulated by passion or fancy, and was not able to pay for their gratification, proceeds, when the habit is confirmed, and the first scruples are dismissed, to contract debt wherever unsuspecting confidence will afford him an opportunity.

If he possesses titles, distinction, or any kind of eminence, he will not find it difficult to gain credit. Young tradesmen, desirous of making connections, are ready to run any risque; and hope, if it is long before they receive their money, they shall not be without the great man's patronage or recommendation. But here, also, they are often deceived: for the great man considers all his creditors as his enemies, and never thinks of them but to contrive methods to avoid and deceive them. If he happens to receive any money, he takes care to expend it among strangers, who have no other demand upon him but for the commodity which he pays for at the time of purchase. The world is wide; and when one set of credulous tradesmen are wearied with expectation and disappointment; the great man migrates to another part of the town or country;

and condescends to honour some ambitious but unfortunate mortal, with the honour of dealing with him. Thus the great man goes on during the greater part of his life, and when the creditors are importunate, and the horrors of a goal impend, he collects his property and withdraws from the kingdom, or living in disguise, enjoys his luxuries, and laughs at his deluded tradesmen. Indeed, as most ill qualities go together, his pride is so great that he scarcely vouchsafes to bestow upon them a moment's consideration.

But while the builder, the draper, the taylor, the butcher, the baker, and the chandler, remain unpaid, the jocky and the horse-dealer, the mistress and the brother gamester, receive ready money with ostentatious profusion. Sharpers and prostitutes, with all the qualities of thievery, riot in those riches which ought to be paid to honest men, who with their families, are reduced to a state of starving, by feeding, cloathing, and accommodating, in every respect, some hardened profligate, and extravagant debauchee. Who but must feel indignation when he sees a man in high life, as it is called, eating a joint of meat of some poor tradesman, whose children are at the same moment begging of their parent a morsel of bread? Who sees, without lifting up his hands, my Lord, or Sir John, sitting joyous at the head of a plentiful table, supplied, *gratis*, with every article, by the father of those children?

Indeed, the pride and vanity of some persons, who value themselves on their birth, or their fashionable mode of life, induces them to look upon themselves as a superior order of beings, and to presume that they have a right to be still supported by their tradesmen in profusion and elegance, even after they are reduced in their circumstances either by misfortune or misconduct. If an honest man makes his demand, he is impertinent; his insolence is not to be borne; he is dismissed; but not till he evidently shews that he will no longer supply the commodities in which he deals. On his dismissal, some exception is taken to his account; a dispute ensues, and that dispute furnishes the fine gentleman or the fine lady with a pretence for not paying the bill. In the mean time card parties,

visiting and all the fashionable pleasures proceed as usual—for who would be so vulgar as to attend to the impertinence of the scum of the earth, or suffer one fashionable pleasure to be set aside by the clamorous importunity of a mean mechanic; though his meanness arises from his having spent his substance in supplying the person who despises him with the instruments of luxury, or the necessaries of life?

The profligacy, the vanity, the unceasing pursuit of pleasure, and the passion for external appearance, which characterises the present age, are necessarily productive of expence, expences occasion distress, and distresses, where principles are deficient, dishonesty. No wonder then, that in no age have sharpers, swindlers, and insolvent contractors of debt, so much abounded. There is hardly any mode of public life, especially in the metropolis, in which you can be engaged, without having your property exposed to the depredation of villains, who have made cheating a profession, and reduced the art of robbery to a system.

Many of the persons who live on the substance of others, by borrowing, purchasing, or employing without intending, or without being able to pay, make a splendid figure, and pass for gentlemen, and men of honour. But however they may felicitate themselves, on their success, and in the gratification of their pride and vanity, I shall not hesitate to pronounce them more criminal and detestable than highwaymen and house-breakers, because, to the crime of actual theft, they add a most ungenerous breach of confidence.



No. XCIX.

CURSORY REMARKS ON THE LIFE, STYLE,
GENIUS, AND WRITINGS, OF PETRARCH.

ONE of the first and brightest luminaries which appeared in the literary horizon, after a long and dismal night, was the illustrious Francesco Petrarch. He was born at Arezzo, as he informs us himself,

though Vossius denies it. He became archdeacon of Parma, and canon of the cathedral church of Padua, and might have arrived at the highest preferments which the popes can bestow, if he had not disdained some dishonest and humiliating compliances.

To form an adequate idea of the merit of the writers who arrived at excellence in the dawn of literature, it is necessary to consider, with attention, those peculiar circumstances which rendered even a mediocrity of learning a difficult attainment. Books were scarce, judicious instructors still more uncommon, and the powerful instigation of cotemporary models in a great measure deficient. Petrarch's claim to entire originality is not however universally allowed. He certainly imitated Cino de Pistoja; and Bayle says he stole many of his sentiments from him. Dante, indeed, preceded Petrarch, but I do not find that he made Dante his model. * With real difficulties and impediments, and with few circumstances to excite a spirit of enterprise, sufficiently ardent and persevering to surmount the very formidable obstacles, it is really wonderful that an individual could ascend, by his own efforts, the eminent heights of superior excellence.

Such, however, was the native force of Petrarch's genius, that in the middle of an unlightened age, he became celebrated throughout the civilized nations of Europe, as an orator, philosopher and poet.

His poetical fame is, indeed, the most distinguished. Formed with the finest sensibility of soul, he had the peculiar felicity of being born in a country whose language is the language of love. The ardour, the constancy and the romantic nature of his passion, rendered him universally popular, in an amorous and romantic age. In our own country he became the pattern of one of our earliest poets, Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey. And amidst all the disadvantages of a Northern and Gothic language, the English poet has celebrated his lovely Geraldine, in strains which are said, by some, to display more of the genuine tenderness of nature, than those in which the great Italian sung his Laura.

"In the sonnets of Surrey, says Mr. Warton, we are surpris'd to find nothing of the metaphysician taste which marks the Italian poets, his supposed masters, especially

Pretrarch. Surrey's sentiments are for the most part natural and unaffected, arising from his own feelings, and dictated by the present circumstances. His poetry is alike unembarrassed by learned allusions or elaborate conceits. If our author copies Petrarch, it is Petrarch's better manner, when he descends from his Platonic abstractions, his refinements of passion, his exaggerated compliments, and his play upon opposite sentiments, into a tract of tenderness, simplicity, and nature. Petrarch would have been a better poet had he been a worse scholar. Yet, upon the whole, I should as soon think of preferring Surrey to Petrarch, as of preferring a Gothic country church to a Grecian temple."

It is certainly true, that several of the poets who have devoted themselves to the description of the tender passion, have shewn that they really did not always feel it in its greatest strength and purity while they wrote. The love which nature inspires does not dictate antithesis, point, conceit and witticism. But Ovid, the poet of love, abounds with these even in his most impassioned verse. Cowley's mistress is by no means replete with the language of passion. I know not that even the gentle Waller expresses the sentiments which a tender and ardent love feels and utters. Hammond has written like one who was but little smitten with the tender passion. Petrarch also, has often addressed his verses to the understanding, when they should have been directed to the feelings; has endeavoured to please the imagination with an opposition of images, when all his skill should have been exerted in causing the nerves to vibrate at the touch of sympathy. The mind of the reader is disappointed, when, instead of the simple expressions of nature, he finds the subtilty of art; nor does he allow ingenuity on the subject of love to be a compensation for pathos.

It has been said his diction is obscure. The want of perspicuity arises chiefly from his having adopted a great many terms in the provincial language, which, since his time, has ceased to be colloquial in Italy, though it has been preserved by the poets in imitation of their master. The admission of antiquated expressions, is allowed by the best judges to be an

exquisite mode of adding a dignity to composition. It has been prescribed by the best critics, and practised by the best writers. And, with respect to the obscurity it may occasion, the fault is in the reader. Poetry has a language of its own. For the sake of elevation it is constrained to seek a diction remote from conversation or familiar prose. He who reads and criticises poetry, ought to be acquainted with its peculiar and idomatic language. Homer, Virgil, Milton, wrote in a diction which will not be understood by him who has been solely conversant in the prosaic writings of their several languages. This, indeed, may be justly said, that the dignity of the epopœa may require this method of contracting a venerable air, much more than the humbler strains of the plaintive inamorato. If any part of Petrarch's obscurity arises from the confusion of his ideas, or his perplexed method of expressing them, no veneration for his name must protect him from censure. Indeed several very able critics have complained, that they could not understand without an interpreter.

Enough of his meaning and of his beauties has been understood by his own countrymen, to give him the title of the Father of the Tuscan poetry. The classical excellence of his language has contributed to give a name to the century in which he lived, for the Italians call it *the good age of their language*, and attribute the happy effect in a great measure to Petrarch. Sweet, indeed, are the greater part of his sonnets, sweet their language, and sweet their sentiments. Though criticism may point out quaintnesses and unnatural conceits, may censure one part as metaphysical, and another as affected, yet the sensible reader will not judge by parts, but by the whole effect of an entire piece; and if his feelings have been often finely touched, and his imagination delighted, he will give himself up to the magic of the poet, and joining in the general applause, leave the cold critic to whisper his detraction disregarded.

The love-verses of many writers cannot be recommended without danger. But the sort of love which Petrarch felt, supposing the object a proper one, refines and ennobles humanity. It is a species of passion which

was never felt in the slightest degree by the modern debauchee. It partakes something of the nature of real devotion, and while it elevates human nature in idea, it contributes something to its real exaltation. Chastity was the virtue of the age in which romantic love prevailed, and one virtue is allied to all. The age was virtuous, in comparison with those times in which love is degraded to its lowest species, and even the philosophers endeavour to reduce man to the humiliating condition of a mere animal.

But Petrarch is not to be considered only as an Italian poet. He wrote Latin poetry with great reputation; and indeed during his life, seems to have acquired more honour from that, than from his vernacular productions. It was for his *Africa* that he was crowned with laurel in the capital of Rome. This work was a kind of heroic poem in honour of Scipio Africanus, whose name, says he, I know not how, was dear to me from the earliest age.

His *Africa* is acknowledged to be an imperfect work. It had not the last hand of its great author. But it abounds with historical matter, and with the fictions of poetry. The hand of a master is visible. The poetical fire sometimes burns with genuine heat and light. Yet, upon the whole, it is a work more conspicuous for genius than judgment, and wants that polish which a better age would certainly have bestowed. Had Petrarch written nothing but Latin poetry, he would have possessed but a subordinate place in the temple of fame.

The prose works of Petrarch are voluminous. He, indeed, is honoured with the name of the Restorer of the Latin language. Great was his merit in recalling a language which had almost sunk into oblivion; yet, I think it had been fortunate enough for the reputation of Petrarch, if he had written all his works in his native language, which he possesses in perfection, and which had arrived, under the management of him and his contemporary, at the standard of classic elegance. Though he writes with spirit, and abounds with striking and solid sentiments, and displays no inconsiderable share of learning, yet he cannot be called a good Latin writer.

His style is harsh and uncouth; his sentences are rugged and unpolished. There is a singularity of manner which sets him at a remote distance from the classics, and proves that he inspected their works rather for their matter than their mode of treating it. There is, however, a native force and vivacity, which would have constituted distinguished excellence, if the writer had condescended to have become an imitator of the ancients. An affectation of originality has often spoiled an ingenious work, by rendering it quaint and disgustful. The greatest beauty of his prosaic writings, and a very valuable excellence it must be esteemed, is the great and serious regard which he pays to piety and morality, and that spirit of philosophy, which, though of a melancholy kind, is just and solid.

A reader is doubly pleased when he can turn from the works of a distinguished writer, to his life, with equal complacency. In the life of Petrarch we find a noble and sublime spirit, which induced him to prefer his muse, his love, and his independence, to the favour of a papal despot. It is, indeed, the glorious privilege of genius to seek and find its happiness from its own resources. Emboldened by the consciousness of its own strength, and feeling an indignation at many of the changes and chances of this world, it is apt to spurn at worthless grandeur, and to despise those whom the multitude adores.

Human nature must always have an object suspended in its view. The lovely Laura was the object of Petrarch. The passion was romantic; the idea of her excellent imagination; but it had a happy influence on the poet's mind. It called forth the latent fire of his genius, it exercised his fine fancy; and though the poet pours his plaintive verse in strains which effect our sympathy, yet we are by no means to consider him as unhappy. For it is a truth collected from long observation on human nature, that the pleasure of the chase consists in the pursuit, not in the attainment; and that it is often better to expect than to enjoy.

No. C.

ON THE FOLLY AND WICKEDNESS OF WAR.

THE calamities attendant on a state of war, seem to have prevented the mind of man from viewing it in the light of an absurdity, and an object of ridicule as well as pity. But if he could suppose a superior Being capable of beholding us miserable mortals without compassion, there is, I think, very little doubt but the variety of military manœuvres and formalities, the pride, pomp, and circumstance of war and all the ingenious contrivances for the glorious purposes of mutual destruction, which seems to constitute the business of many whole kingdoms, would furnish him with an entertainment like that which is received from the exhibition of a farce or a puppet-show. But, notwithstanding the ridiculousness of all these solemnities, we, alas, are doomed to feel that they are no farce, but the concomitant circumstances of a most woeful tragedy.

The causes of war are for the most part such as must disgrace an animal pretending to rationality. Two poor mortals, elevated with the distinction of a golden bauble on their heads, called a crown, take offence at each other, without any reason, or with the very bad one of wishing for an opportunity of aggrandizing themselves by making reciprocal depredations. The creatures of the court, and the leading men of the nation, who are usually under the influence of the court, resolve (for it is their interest) to support their royal master, and are never at a loss to invent some colourable pretence for engaging the nation in the horrors of war. Taxes the most burthenfome are levied, soldiers are collected, so as to leave a paucity of husbandmen, reviews and encampments succeed, and at last fifteen or twenty thousand men meet on a plain, and coolly shed each other's blood, without the smallest animosity, or the shadow of a provocation. The kings

in the mean time, and the grandees who have employed these poor innocent victims to shoot bullets at each others heads, remain quietly at home, and amuse themselves, in the intervals of balls, hunting schemes, and pleasures of every species, with reading at the fire-side, and over a cup of chocolate, the dispatches, from the army, and the news in the Extraordinary Gazette. Old Horace very truly observes, that whatever mad frolicks enter into the heads of kings, it is the common people, that is the honest artizan, and the induttrious tribes in the middle ranks, *unoffended* and *unoffending*, who chiefly suffer in the evil consequence. If the king of Prussia were not at the head of some of the best troops in the universe, he would be judged more worthy of being tried, cast and condemned at the Old Bailey, than any shedder of blood who ever died by a halter. But he is a king; but he is a hero,—those names fascinate us, and we enrol them the butcher of mankind among their benefactors.

When one considers the dreadful circumstances that attend even victories, one cannot help being a little shocked at the exultation which they occasion. I have often thought it would be a laughable scene, if there were not a little too much of the melancholy in it, when a circle of eager politicians have met; to congratulate each other on a piece of good news just arrived. Every eye sparkles with delight; every voice is raised in announcing the happy event. And what is the cause of all this joy? and for what are our windows illuminated, bonfires kindled, bells rung, and feasts celebrated? We have had a successful engagement? We have left a thousand of the enemy dead on the field of battle, and only nine hundred of our countrymen. Charming news! it was a glorious battle! But before you give a loose to your raptures, pause awhile; and consider, that to every one of these nineteen hundred, life was no less sweet than it is to you; that to the far greater part of them there probably were wives, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, sisters, brothers, and friends, all of whom are at this moment bewailing that event which occasions your foolish and brutal triumph.

The whole time of war ought to be a time of general mourning, a mourning in the heart, a mourning much more sincere than on the death of one of those princes, whose accursed ambition is often the sole cause of war. Indeed, that a whole people should tamely submit to the evils of war, because it is the will of a few vain, selfish, ignorant, though exalted, individuals, is an unaccountable phenomenon. But they are led away by false glory, by their passions, by their vices. They reflect not; and, indeed, if they did reflect, and oppose, what would avail the opposition of unarmed miryads to the mandate of a government supported by a standing army? Many of the European nations are entirely military; war is their trade; and when they have no employment at home, or near it, they blush not to let themselves out to shed any blood, in any cause of the best pay-master. Ye beasts of the forest, no longer allow that man is your superior, while there is found on the face of the earth such degeneracy!

Morality and religion forbid war in its motives, conduct and consequences; but to rulers and potentates morality and religion usually appear as the inventions of politicians to facilitate subordination. The principal objects of crowned heads, and their minions, are the extension of empire, the augmentation of a revenue, or the annihilation of their subjects liberty. Their restraints in the pursuit of these objects are not those of morality and religion; but solely reasons of state, and political caution. Plausible words are used, but they are only used to hide the deformity of the real principles. Wherever a war is deemed desirable in an interested view, a specious pretext never yet remained unsound. Morality is as little considered in the beginning, as in the prosecution of war. The most solemn treaties and engagements are violated by the governing part of the nation, with no more scruple than oaths and bonds are broken by a cheat and a villain in the walks of private life. Does the difference of rank and situation make any difference in the atrocity of crimes? If any, it renders a thousand times more criminal than that of a thief, the villainy of them, who, by violating every sacred obligation between nation and nation,

give rise to miseries and mischiefs most dreadful in their nature; and to which no human power can say, thus far shall ye proceed and no farther. Are not the natural and moral evils of life sufficient, but they must be rendered more acute, more numerous, and more embittered by artificial means? My heart bleeds over those complicated scenes of woe, for which no epithet can be found sufficiently descriptive. Language fails in labouring to express the horrors of war amid private families, who are so unfortunate as to be situated on the seat of it.

But war has always been permitted by Providence. It is, indeed, true; but it has been only permitted as the scourge of mankind. Let a spirit and activity be exerted in regulating the morals of a nation, equal to that with which war, and all its apparatus, are attended to, and mankind will no longer be scourged, neither will it be necessary to evacuate an empire of its members, for none will be superfluous. Let us, according to the advice of a pious Divine of the present age, think less of our fleets and armies, and more of our faith and practice. While we are warriors, with all our pretensions to civilization, we are savages.



No. CI.

ON THE EFFECTS OF INTEMPERATE STUDY
ON THE HEALTH, AND ON THE DUTY
OF PAYING REGARD TO THE
PRESERVATION OF HEALTH.

THERE is in general but little danger lest good qualities and habits should be carried to excess. The moralist may, for the most part, recommend every laudable and useful practice, without prescribing any boundaries to proficiency. The probability is, that men will stop on this side, and not that they will go beyond the line of duty. But yet it is certain that there are some ingenious spirits, who actuated by a generous emulation, advance in the pursuit of a favourite ex-

cellence with so immoderate an ardour, and assiduity of application, as at once frustrates their purpose and injures their abilities.

As I have then, on many occasions, recommended a close attention to study, I think myself obliged, by motives of humanity, to suggest a few cautions which may prevent the evils of an intemperate application. I should, indeed, greatly lament, that any thing I have advanced in recommending to youth the cultivation of the mind, should lead them to neglect or injure that body on which the vigour of the mind greatly depends, and which, if it is disordered, often renders all other means of happiness and improvement ineffectual.

I am, indeed, the more inclined to enter on this subject, as I have seen very melancholy instances of nervous diseases entirely occasioned by intemperance in study, and its necessary concomitant, want of air and exercise. It is one circumstance peculiarly unhappy in these most unhappy of all diseases, that they seldom admit of cure, and therefore great and early vigilance should be exerted in their prevention.

A great student ought to be particularly attentive in the regulation of his diet. We learn from the writings of physicians, that the labour of the brain draws off those spirits which are necessary to promote digestion. The least and the lightest food under which we can possibly be easy, according to the advice of the celebrated Cheney, is particularly proper for the student. Such a diet will not only render the spirits cheerful, and invigorate all the faculties of the mind, but enable us to enjoy health with but a small share of exercise.

Exercise, however, is to be taken on every opportunity. But a solitary walk or ride, merely for the sake of exercise, and with no other object to stimulate our progress, as it is of all amusements the dullest, so it is found rather hurtful than advantageous. The mind still meditates in solitude, and the body at the same time labours; so that both are exhausted at once, and the student returns to his closet fatigued, dejected, and disappointed. Some little amusement must therefore be contrived, or some business engaged in, which may

operate as a loadstone in attracting us, without being sensible of our own efforts, from our libraries, up the mountain and along the forest, where health, with all her thousand joys, delights to fix her abode. A few cheerful companions in our walks will render them abundantly more healthful; for according to the ancient adage, they will serve instead of a carriage, or, in other words, prevent the sensation of fatigue.

Dejection of spirits is a certain consequence of intemperate study; but dejection of spirits, long continued, cannot consist with health. After a morning spent in a closer application than common, it will often be right to devote the rest of the day to good company, and innocent pleasures. Music is one of those pleasures, and the most delightful soother of the wearied mind. The heart dances at the sound of the lyre; fresh spirits animate the veins; the cloud of dejections are dissipated, and the soul shines out once more like the sun after a mist, in the blue expanse of æther.

Nocturnal studies, too long and too closely continued, seldom fail to injure the eyes, and together with them, the whole nervous system. They who are impelled by necessity to work by night and by day, must indeed submit with patience to their destiny; but that he who is master of his time, should chain himself down to a more exhausting toil than the labour of the galley-slave, is a species of folly approaching to insanity. And, indeed, I know of nothing more likely to produce madness than intemperate study, with want of exercise, want of air, and want of sleep. It will, after all, be but a poor comfort, to have gone through a whole library, and to have lost our eyes and our senses in the course of the laborious progress.

Every man of sense will make use of all the known methods of securing his health, were it merely on selfish motives, and for the sake of preserving his faculties and prolonging his life. But, omitting all selfish regards, I cannot help thinking, that an attention to the preservation of health is an important duty. I do not recollect that it has often been recommended as a duty. But since our health is greatly in our own power; since we all enter into the world to engage in

many active and necessary employments, and since the want of health will render us incapable of them, I cannot help thinking, that the care of our health may be numbered among the duties of indispensable obligation. A sound constitution of body is a blessing of heaven; and not to bestow the utmost vigilance in preserving a pearl of so inestimable a price, is a contempt of the gift, and an insult on the giver, and an impious ingratitude.

It is commonly said, that he who wants the advice of physicians in the regulation of his usual diet, after the age of thirty, wants also understanding; a defect which no physician can supply. It is indeed certain, that, at the age of thirty, a sufficient degree of experience of what may be agreeable or disagreeable to the constitution may have been collected. But, alas! few of us are willing to do all that we are able; few of us are so attentive, in the first portion of life, to the animal œconomy, as to remark with accuracy the causes of those slight indispositions which are occasioned by accidental excess in the gay and thoughtless hours of convivial enjoyment. We submit to them, however they may undermine the constitution, from friendly and benevolent motives. We are apt to think, that it would be too selfish to refuse to partake of the enjoyments of others merely to preserve our own health. The midnight assembly and the luxurious banquet are less sought for their own sakes, than from good nature and a social disposition. But, perhaps, if we considered that we are not taking care of ourselves merely on our own account, but for others, for our parents and our children, for our friends and for the public, we should not deem a scrupulous regard to health, though it may lead us to avoid the feast and the revel, either ungenerous or unsocial. It would appear in the light of a very serious duty, derived from an obedience to the will of heaven, and from the regard we owe to our neighbour; and we should be obliged to confess, that the nominal pleasures of excess ought always to give place to real duty.

A scrupulous regard to health is, indeed, a duty incumbent on all; but, perhaps, more particularly

to be attended by the learned and ingenious, as they are of all the most subject to indisposition. A delicate frame is very often associated with a strong intellect; and a life of study, though a life of labour, is not adapted, like that of the manual labourer, to give elasticity to the nerves, or vigour to the animal functions. But excessive eating, added to excessive study, must wear the machine much more than the substance of which it is constituted can long endure. If it is not soon broken in pieces, its wheels will be clogged, its springs broken, and the whole rendered useless and burthenfome. It is recorded of Mr. Pope, that he was an immoderate eater, that he kept a silver saucepan to dress dainties for himself in the intervals of his meals, and that he died of a saucepan of lampreys.

Whatever part of the system of human affairs we examine, one truth appears to prevade the whole complicated mass which is; that there can be neither wisdom nor happiness, nor even enjoyment of the subordinate kinds, independently of moderation. In the most refined and elevated part of our conduct and pursuits, the same truth is not less visible, than in the lower occupations of common life. Sweet are the pleasures of contemplation, delightful the exercise of the mind in reading and reflection; but no pleasure, however pure, must be invariably pursued, till we are removed into the world of spirits, and are enabled to enjoy intellectual pleasures unalloyed and uninterrupted.



No. CII.

ON THE PRESENT STATE OF CONVERSATION.

THERE is, perhaps, no method of improving the mind more efficacious, and certainly none more agreeable, than a mutual interchange of sentiments in an elegant and animated conversation with the serious, the judicious, the learned, and the communicative. Light and heat are elicited by the collision of minds. Truths which appeared dull in the solitude of the study;

are no sooner agitated in conversation, than they affect the mind with the liveliest impressions. And it is one circumstance which, in a peculiar manner, recommends the mode of improvement by mutual discourse, that the social affections are no less powerfully exerted and exercised than the powers of reason. By the display of both, the heart and the understanding are at once improved.

Such would be the description of him who should derive his ideas on the subject from a chosen few, or from his books. But let him consider conversation as it really appears in the living world, independently of theoretical and speculative refinement, and I fear, that, instead of finding it always attended with improvement, it will often appear to him a fertile source of corruption and degeneracy.

A young man who has just left his school, full of the ideas which the poets, philosophers, and historians of antiquity supply, will probably bid adieu to them all at the same time that he takes leave of his master; unless, indeed, his own choice should lead him to cultivate an acquaintance with them in private. Suppose him to pass from the school to an university. There, if he has spirit, he will of course seek the company, and imitate the manners, of those who possess a like spirit, and who are also celebrated as men of fashion. The conversation will therefore turn upon the subject of horses, dogs, drinking, dressing, debauchery, cajoling the old gentleman at home out of his money, to be spent in these laudable purposes, or running in debt with credulous and unfortunate tradesmen. Such will be the sublime contemplations, and the philosophical topics of discourse in the famed academic groves on the banks of the Cam and the Isis, and in the schools of science and theology. Even doctors, professors, tutors and lecturers, industriously avoid all topics connected with the species of learning and science which they profess, and most agreeably condescend to expatiate, in the common and combination room, on dogs, horses, and all the refined amusements of Granta and Rhedycina. Not but that there are a few who take a pleasure in conversing on letters; but they are solitary mortals, and

themselves are stigmatized, in the east language of the place, with the name of *Quizzes*, and their conversation with that of an insufferable *Bore*.

If our ingenuous youth should be transplanted from the nursery of a school into the army, he will find the conversation, in almost every respect, similar to that of the university. There will, indeed, be this difference, that as letters are not the particular business of a military life, they will sometimes be the topic of conversation among military men; whereas, in the university, they are entirely laid aside, lest they should subject the academic to the imputation of pedantry; an imputation deemed infinitely more disgraceful, than that of genteel ignorance and fashionable debauchery.

Should he be introduced into the society of nobles and legislators, he will still find dogs and horses, with all their concomitant sports and amusements, the favourite topic of discourse. Literature would be voted dulness; morality, preaching; philosophy, nonsense; and religion, hypocrisy. His Plato and his Tully will avail him little at the cockpit, at a horse-race, at a gaming-table, in the stud, and the dog-kennel. Such places are the usual resorts of the spirited and fashionable part of very great men; of those, whom the young, allured by the brilliancy of their career, would be most likely to follow.

Let him proceed in his enquiry after this refined and elegant conversation, and frequent, according to the usual intercourse of neighbourhood, the houses of the rich, the respectable, and fashionable, in private life. They shall be persons of sense and virtue, and yet nothing shall pass in their conversation from which any of the boasted advantages of it shall be perceived. For what, indeed, are the methods of passing time, among persons of the best repute and genteelest condition, while they think it indispensably necessary to move in the vortex of fashion? Nothing grave, nothing abstruse, nothing speculative; no moral maxim or critical remark, would be admitted in a polite circle of polite visitors. There is evidently an uneasiness, a silence, an awkwardness, a vacuity, till cards are introduced. It is not a harsh delineation of modern manners to assert,

that in general, and even among those who certainly have a right to esteem, there appears to be no taste for any thing that deserves the name of refined and ingenious conversation. The time of a visit is for the most part spent in repeating the doubtful news of the day; in mere chat without consequence or connection; in eating, drinking, and crowning the whole with whist and quadrille. All this may be very innocent and pleasant as a relaxation; and the only point I maintain is, that the species of conversation from which improvement is to be derived, is not often found in the present system of visiting and conversing.

I know not whether our youth, were he to seek the society of men in the professions, would be certain of finding that sort of converse, from which, philosophers inform us, so much moral and intellectual improvement is received. It is, I think, remarked by some one who went into the company of the clergy at one of their feasts, in hopes of finding among them, that elegance and philosophical spirit of converse which he had in vain sought among others, that nothing was talked of with any apparent animation, but the flavour of the venison, the fine relish of the hams, the richness of the pye-crust, and the excellence of the claret. These, indeed, caused the most cordial congratulations; and these, interrupted only by the conjectures on the next vacancies in livings, stalls, and mitres, constituted the whole of the discourse in a symposium consisting of the instructors of mankind. If such be the case, we are not to wonder that the sublimer sort of conversation is rarely to be found in the common ranks, who are often too deficient in education to be able to interchange their sentiments with any considerable advantage to the mind or the morals.

It is said, that a celebrated wit had sought the company of Addison with uncommon solicitude, and with a hope of being delighted with that fine humour which is so conspicuous in his writings; but that Addison did not talk, though he paid it off in drinking, which he did so intemperately, that nature was obliged to throw off her load; upon which circumstance the visitor, on his departure, remarked, that no good thing had come

out of his mouth that night but the wine. Let it, however, be remembered by those who bring such instances in their own justification, that the cause of Addison's taciturnity was, a natural diffidence in the company of strangers, to dismis which he took his glass more freely than he might otherwise have done; and that, among a chosen few, his conversation was at once improving and delightful.

In some circles it is possible to be a very excellent companion without uttering a single sentiment, or a single word more than is necessary to repeat the toast. In these, indeed, the wit of a Swift, the humour of a Quin, and the fine philosophical spirit of an Addison, would not be deemed half so agreeable as the good-natured ease of him who counts no hours, but silently sits and inhales and exhales, through a tube of clay, the smoke of tobacco. If such persons are philosophers, one might guess from their taciturnity, that they are the disciples of Pythagoras.

In the lower ranks of mankind we must not expect refinement. Liberal and ingenious ideas must have been collected by reading, before conversation can be advanced to the perfection of which it is capable. We readily therefore pardon those defects which could not easily have been supplied. We are not surpris'd at ribaldry, noise, and nonsense, in the society of the vulgar, and of those who seek relief from bodily labour, in coarse mirth, and unselected society. But that persons who have improved their reason, and who have leisure for all the refinements of intellectual pleasure, should neglect the means of so much advantage and satisfaction as might be derived from conversation properly conducted, is an additional instance of our folly, in disregarding the most obvious means of improving our happiness and our condition.

I know it may be said, that, as relaxation is often the principle object of our mutual intercourse, to render conversation a study, and the effect of care and meditation, is to defeat its purpose. But let it be remembered, that the improvements in conversation which I recommend, contribute no less to increase the pleasure than the advantage of it. I recommend no stiffness,

no improper solemnity, or disagreeable formality; but ease, elegance, politeness united with sense, taste, learning, and with a communicative disposition. Cards are not disapproved in general; nothing, however light, while it is innocent, is totally prohibited; and all that I contend for is, that, where circumstances admit, and in a proper alternation, literature, the fine arts, natural and moral philosophy, history, and whatever exercises the better powers of the understanding, should contribute to fill up the many hours which we usually spend in company. These things would often preclude insipidity, scandal, gaming, and intemperance. Such would be their valuable effects considered only negatively. But they would do more, they would exalt and refine the human mind, and would prove what man so often boasts without exhibiting sufficient proofs of it, that he is an animal, not only social, but rational.



No. CIII.

ON GOODNESS OF HEART.

WHOEVER has made accurate observations on men and manners, will easily perceive that the praise of goodness of heart is usually accompanied with an oblique insinuation of intellectual imbecility. I believe him to be a well-meaning man, says the malignant panegyrist, and if there is any fault in him, it will be found rather in his head than in his heart. Nothing could be better contrived by a crafty and envious world, to render this amiable quality contemptible, than to represent it as the effect, or as the companion of folly.

It is, indeed true, that innocence and integrity are usually accompanied with simplicity; not, however, with that sort of simplicity which is sometimes synonymous with folly; but with an amiable openness of manners, which had rather lose its objects, than obtain them by deceit; which leads the tongue boldly to speak, what the heart honestly conceives. If we weigh the satisfactions of an open and upright conduct, of a clear

conscience, and that of liberty which we enjoy by thinking, speaking and acting, without mean and servile restraints, it will, I believe, be found, that this simplicity is true wisdom, and that the cunning of the worldly wise is real and egregious imprudence.

Goodness of heart, whether it be a natural or acquired goodness, is, indeed, in every respect, the highest wisdom. It is the only quality which can rescue human nature from the disgrace and misery of its wretched weaknesses, and its powerful tendencies to evil. It raises the poor worm, that otherwise crawls on a dung-hill, and stings and bites his wretched companions, to an exalted place in the scale of being, and causes him to assimilate with the divine nature.

I shall exhibit to my youthful readers, whose hearts are yet susceptible of whatever bias they chose to give them, two characters; in one of which appeared goodness of heart, and in the other, worldly wisdom or cunning, or the art of pleasing for the sake of profit. If any one should hesitate in chusing whether of the two shall be his model, he need not hesitate at beginning a reformation of himself, for he may depend upon it, that his own heart stands greatly in need of amendment.

Serpens (for such let us suppose to be his name) has persuaded himself that he sees farther into things than the rest of his species. He considers religion as priestcraft, morality as the invention of politicians, and taste and literature as the amusement of fools. His philosophy, and his pursuits in general, are all circumscribed within limits extremely narrow. Pleasure and interest are his chief good, his only objects of serious pursuit; and in the attainment of these he is not scrupulously delicate. There is, indeed, no virtue or good quality, the appearance of which he does not assume; because, while mankind are weak enough to judge and esteem men according to moral and religious prejudices, a plausible appearance is essentially necessary to success in life. External decency is his highest aim. Sincerity or sound principles would but retard his purposes. Compassion he never felt, and is equally a stranger to love and friendship, though he is always professing them to

persons of fortune and distinction; whom he idolizes with religious adoration; and this is the only sentiment which he feels bordering upon religion.

By a life spent in abject fervility, in courting a capricious world, in deceiving the credulous, in contriving schemes of advantage or pleasure, and in hardening his conscience, he has at last, in his fiftieth year obtained some promotion, and accumulated a handsome sum of money. But he cannot enjoy it now he is possessed of it. The same greedy selfishness which taught him to debase his soul in pursuing interest and private gratification, still operates on his conduct, and renders him a complete miser. Though he has long enjoyed a competency, he never had spirit enough to marry. He was afraid of the expence. He hates his relations, because he thinks they expect his fortune at his decease. He has made no real friends, though he has deceived thousands by professing friendship for the easier accomplishment of his dirty designs. All the neighbours detest him; and he envies every one of them who appears to be happier than himself, which indeed they all do; for his heart is torn with malignity, with fears, anxieties, and covetousness. He bears, however, the character of a shrewd and sensible man, one who knows the world, and learned, at an early age, to make it his bubble. His advice is considered as an oracle in all pecuniary business, and no attorney would be half so much consulted, if he did not render himself almost inaccessible by the moroseness of his temper. As in his youth, he was all submission and gentleness, and perfectly skilled in the celebrated art of pleasing; so now when the mask is no longer necessary, his natural disposition breaks out in all its horrid deformity. But the misery which he occasions to all around him, falls upon himself, by the just retribution of Providence. The heart, which has been the receptacle of every vice and every meanness, is always the seat of uneasy sensation. The stupid insensibility with respect to the finer feelings, which usually characterises that sort of shrewd men, who are celebrated in the world as men who *know things so well*, may, indeed, guard

them from pungent affliction, but it is itself a curse most devoutly to be deprecated.

Simplicius was the son of parents remarkable for the piety and regularity of their lives. He received a liberal education in its most comprehensive form, and found every moral instruction which he derived from books, and from his preceptor, confirmed by example at home. All his delicate sensibilities were gradually nursed to a state of perfection by the innocence and temperance of his life; by the piety and virtue of his family, in which such respect was paid to him while a boy, that not a word that could convey a loose or improper idea, was ever uttered in his presence. He married early, and obeyed the dictates of his heart in selecting a most amiable woman of beauty, sense, and temper, but of little or no fortune. The shrewd and wise men of the world laughed and pitied. Simplicius, however, had never any reason to repent. His children are his chief delight; but he loves his friends with sincere and unalterable affection; and there is no species of distress which he does not pity and relieve to the best of his power. The amiableness of his manners, and the regularity of his conduct, gave him the advantage of character, the want of which can seldom be supplied by any worldly policy. With this powerful recommendation he has made his way to eminence, and enjoys his success with the truest relish. It is, indeed, unembittered by any reflection on sinister modes of securing it. He always proceeds in the straight road of common sense and common honesty. He knew of no obliquities; for, indeed, he found the art of life very plain and easy, and by no means such as requires the precepts of a Machiavel. His heart and his understanding are both excellent; and co-operating with each other, have conducted him to happiness through the flowery paths of innocence. His heart has been a perpetual spring of agreeable sensations to himself, and to all who were so fortunate as to be allied to him by kindred, by affinity, by acquaintance, or in the course of his negotiations. A good conscience will cause the evening of life to close in the sweetest serenity, as the day has been distinguished by unclouded sunshine.

Whatever the short-sighted votaries of avarice and ambition may assert, there is no doubt but that real goodness of heart is the noblest ornament of human nature, and the least fallible source of permanent satisfaction. I have often therefore lamented, that in the course of what is called a liberal education, very little attention has been paid at our best schools to the culture of the heart. While good seeds have been sown in the understanding, the heart has been suffered to be overrun with weeds and briars. In truth, learning and abilities, without goodness of heart, constitute that kind of wisdom which is foolishness in the sight of reason and of God. Without goodness of heart, man, however accomplished, is so far from being but a little lower than the angels, that he is scarcely above the accursed spirits, and by no means equal to many of the brutes, who often exhibit most amiable instances of a good heart in the virtues of gratitude, sincere affection, and fidelity.



No. CIV.

ON THE CHARACTERS OF THEOPHRASTUS.

IF portraits of the ancient Athenians, painted from the life by the artists of the times, had descended to the present age, they would have attracted universal notice, and have been justly considered as invaluable. The productions, however, of the pencil, are not proof against the corrosions of time; but though we have no original pictures of the persons of the ancient Athenians, we have admirable sketches of their minds delineated by Theophrastus. I do not mean descriptions of heroes, philosophers, or poets. They are to be found in the writings of the historian. Theophrastus has taken his models from private and common life; from persons too obscure to adorn the page of history but who constitute subjects well adapted to the purpose of him who studies the anatomy of human nature. It is, indeed, extremely curious and amusing to discover strokes of

character of the citizens of Athens, who lived above two thousand years ago, exactly similar to the manners of the present day as they appear in London, and in other parts of civilized Europe.

Theophrastus entered on the undertaking of delineating the characters of his countrymen at the age of ninety-nine; an age at which he had treasured up a multitude of ideas from converse and observation. His design was to stigmatize follies, foibles, and little vices rather than atrocious crimes. He meant as he informs us himself in his preface, that posterity should learn from the patterns which he should leave them, to judge of characters with accurate discrimination, and to select such persons for friendship and acquaintance as might communicate excellence equal to their own, by exciting a spirit of generous emulation.

I will transcribe a single extract for the amusement of my reader, desiring him to keep in his mind the idea that the writer of the character, and the person characterised, lived above three hundred years before the Christian era. It will also be proper, in order to receive all the pleasure which the perusal of Theophrastus is capable of affording, that the reader should consider, whether many features of the character have not fallen under his own observation.

The following passage is taken from his section on the art of pleasing; and shews, that this boasted art, as it is now taught, is no modern discovery; but is, at all times, the genuine offspring of meanness and self-interest.

“The art of pleasing,” says he, “is a kind of behaviour in the company of another, which tends, indeed, to give pleasure, but not for the best of purposes. The person who studies it, is such an one as, after having saluted a man a great way off, and called him the best man in the world, and admired him sufficiently, takes him by both his hands, and will not let him go; but accompanying him a little way, asks when he shall have the pleasure of seeing him again; nor does he take leave after all without a thousand compliments and praises. When he is called in as an arbitrator, he is not only desirous of pleasing the party on whose

side he appears, but the adversary also, that he may seem to be the common friend of both. He tells a foreign gentleman, that he really speaks the language with a better accent than the natives. When he is invited to dinner, he insists upon the gentleman's letting the little children come in, and the moment he sees them, he declares they are more like their father, than one fig is like another; and taking them by the hand, he kisses them, and makes them sit next to him, and plays with them himself, saying, here is a little triuket for one, and here a little hatchet for the other; and he lets them fall asleep on his lap, seeming to be highly delighted, though he sits on thorns all the while. He flaves his face very often; he keeps his teeth accurately clean; lays aside his clothes, even while they are good, because the fashion is changed, and takes care to be perfumed with the best perfume. In all public places he is seen talking or sitting with the principal persons, &c." It is not consistent with my design to fill my paper with citations, or it would be easy to produce many ancient pieces from this moral painter, which deserve to be highly esteemed on account of the age and curiosity. The paintings, it must be owned, are rather in the Flemish style, and many of them partake of the caricatura.

But though I commend the pieces as curiosities, I would by no means be understood to praise them as perfect, or as standards for imitation. Whether they have undergone mutilation or transpositions, or whether the author in extreme old age, had not spirits to review what he wrote, it is not easy to determine: but it is certain that there is often a total want of connection, and that many strokes are admitted not at all applicable to the character to which they are applied. Indeed it appears probable, that the characters were real ones, and the remarks personal. So that though the author began with the general foible or folly, yet, pursuing the model from which he drew in all its parts, he was led by an accurate delineation of the whole, to some particularities not at all connected with the predominant features, of the general character.

With respect to the style of this little book, I cannot discover any beauties so peculiarly striking, as could

induce Aristotle to change this author's name from Tyrtamus to that of Theophrastus. There were, however, it is probable, in his other works, some very distinguished excellencies of diction, since they procured him, from one of the best critics whom the world ever saw, a name, which signified, that he expressed himself like a god. Diogenes Laertius informs us that he wrote no fewer than two hundred and twenty books; but scarcely any of them have escaped the hand of envious time. The characters are greatly mutilated, and many of them lost. It is, indeed, supposed, that, as in this treatise he has represented faults only, he wrote another, in which he presented to the view the most amiable picture of virtuous and agreeable characters. Very high commendations are paid to his Treatise on plants; but it is but little read, since the great improvements which have been made by the moderns in the science of botany. Upon the whole of his character, Casaubon appears to have remarked, with justice, that he was worthy of that age which produced the glorious triumvirate, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

Many commentaries have been written to facilitate the reading of the characters; but I cannot help thinking, that this is one of the few ancient books, in the illustration of which, learning is less necessary than a knowledge of the world.



No. CV.

ON SEVERAL PASSAGES IN THE ENCHIRIDION
OR MANUAL OF EPICETETUS.

THERE is scarcely any of the philosophical sect which has not adopted some absurdity amidst a great variety of wise and valuable doctrine. Like all inventors and selectors of their own systems: they have been hurried to excess, and have disgraced the rational parts of their philosophy by far-fetched refinements, or by foolish tenets, which could originate only in the madness of enthusiasm. The stoical system, beautiful and noble as it is in a general view, abounds with

blemishes which have rendered it almost contemptible. It may, indeed, be said, in vindication of them, that they have a tendency to raise and strengthen human nature; while the errors of many other systems tend only to indulge its passions, and to increase its infirmity.

I shall present my reader with a few extracts from the admirable *Enchiridion*; divesting them of the absurd doctrines, and retaining only what is really practicable and interesting to mankind at large, independently of any philosophical system. The passages are well known to the learned, to whose notice it would be superfluous to address them. They are more particularly intended for the use of the young, and of those who, from their engagements in active or commercial life, have not time for the study of *Epietetus*. Readers of this description will, I hope, find them not only very curious, but useful specimens of heathen wisdom. I shall transcribe the few passages which the limits of my paper will admit from the translation of a lady, who has long done honour to her sex, and to English literature.

“Require not things to happen as you wish; but wish them to happen as they do happen, and you will go on well.

“Remember that you must behave in life as at an entertainment. Is any thing brought round to you? Put out your hand and take your share with moderation. Does it pass by you? Do not stop it. Is it not yet come, Do not stretch forth your desire towards it, but wait till it reaches you. Thus do with regard to children, to a wife, to public posts, to riches; and you will be some time or other a worthy partner of the feasts of the gods.

“Remember that you are an actor in a drama, of such kind as the author pleases to make it. If short, of a short one; if long, of a long one. If it be his pleasure you should act a poor man, a cripple, a governor, or a private person, see that you act it naturally. For this is your business, to act well the character assigned you. To chuse it, is another's.

“If you have an earnest desire of attaining to philosophy, prepare yourself from the very first to be

laughed at, to be sneered by the multitude, to hear them say, "he is returned to us a philosopher all at once," and, "whence this supercilious look?" Now, for your part, do not have a supercilious look indeed; but still keep steadily to those things which appear best to you, as one appointed by God to this station. For remember, if you adhere to the same point, those very persons who at first ridiculed, will afterwards admire you; but if you are conquered by them, you will incur a double ridicule.

"When a neighbour's boy has had a slight accident, broken a cup, for instance, we are presently ready to say, "These are things that will happen." Be assured then, that when your own cup likewise is broken, you ought to be affected just as when another's cup is broken. Transfer this in like manner to other things. Is the child or wife of another dead? There is no one who would not say, "This is an accident to which human nature is liable." But if any one's own child happens to die, it is presently, "Alas, how wretched am I?" But it should be remembered, how we are affected in hearing the same thing concerning others.

"If a person had delivered up your body to any one whom we had met in the way, you would certainly be angry. And do you feel no shame in delivering up your own mind to be disconcerted and confounded by any one who happens to give you ill language.

"Duties are universally measured by relations. Is any one a father? In this are implied, as due, taking care of him, submitting to him in all things, patiently receiving his reproaches, his correction. But he is a bad father. Is your natural tie then to a good father? No: but to a father. Is a brother unjust: Well: preserve your own situation towards him; consider not what he does, but what you are to do. In this manner you will find, from the idea of a neighbour, a citizen, a general, the corresponding duties, if you accustom yourselves to contemplate the several relations.

"It is incumbent on every one to offer libations and sacrifices conformably to the customs of his country, with purity, and not in a slovenly manner, nor negligently, nor beyond his ability.

“ Immediately prescribe some character and form of behaviour to yourself, which you may preserve, both alone and in company.

“ We must not discourse on any of the common subjects, of gladiators, or horse races, or athletic champions, or feasts, the vulgar topics of conversation; but principally not of men, so as either to blame, or praise, or make comparisons. If you are able, by your own conversation, bring over that of your company to proper subjects; but, if you happen to be taken among persons of ideas totally different from yours, be silent.

“ Let not your laughter be much, nor on many occasions, nor profuse. Avoid swearing, if possible, altogether; if not, as far as you are able.

“ Avoid public and vulgar entertainments; but, if ever an occasion calls you to them, keep your attention upon the stretch, that you may not imperceptibly slide into vulgar manners. For be assured, that if a person be ever so sound himself, yet if his companion be infected, he who converses with him will be infected likewise.

“ Before marriage preserve yourself pure; but do not, therefore, be troublesome, and full of reproofs, to those who are licentious, nor frequently boast that you yourself are not.

“ If any person tells you, that such a person speaks ill of you, do not make excuses about what is said of you, but answer, “He does not know my other faults, else he would not have mentioned only these.

“ In parties of conversation, avoid a frequent and excessive mention of your own actions and dangers; for, however agreeable it may be to yourself to mention the risques you have run, it is not equally agreeable to others to hear your adventures. Avoid likewise an endeavour to excite laughter; for this is a slippery point, which may throw you into vulgar manners; and besides, may be apt to lessen you in the esteem of your acquaintance. Approaches to indecent discourse are likewise dangerous. Whenever, therefore, any thing of this sort happens, if there be a proper opportunity, rebuke him who makes advances that way; or, at least, by silence and

blushing and a forbidden look, show yourself displeas'd by such talk.

“If you are struck by the appearance of any promised pleasure, guard yourself against being hurried away by it; but let the affair wait your leisure, and procure yourself some delay. Then bring to your mind both points of time; that in which you shall enjoy the pleasure, and that in which you will repent and reproach yourself, after you have enjoyed it: and set before you, in opposition to these, how you will rejoice and applaud yourself if you abstain. And even, though it should appear to you a seasonable gratification, take heed, that its enticing, and agreeable, and attractive force, may not subdue you; but set in opposition to this, how much better it is, to be conscious of having gained so great a victory.

“When you do any thing from a clear judgment that it ought to be done, never shun the being seen to do it, even though the world should make a wrong supposition about it; for, if you do not act right, shun the action itself; but, if you do, why are you afraid of those who censure you wrongly?

“If you have assumed any character above your strength, you have both made an ill figure in that, and quitted one which you might have supported.

“Women from fourteen years old, are flattered with the title of mistresses by the men. Therefore, perceiving that they are regarded only as qualified to give the men pleasure, they begin to adorn themselves; and in that to place all their hopes. It is worth while, therefore, to fix our attention on making them sensible, that they are esteemed for nothing else but the appearance of a decent, and modest, and discreet behaviour.

“It is a mark of a want of genius. to spend much time in things relating to the body; as to be long in our exercises, in eating and drinking. These should be done incidentally and slightly; and our whole attention be engaged in the care of the understanding.

“Never call yourself a philosopher, nor talk a great deal among the unlearned about theorems; but act conformibly to them. Thus, at entertainments, do not talk how persons ought to eat, but eat as you ought.

There is great danger in immediately throwing out what you have not digested. And if any one tells you, that you know nothing, and you are not nettled at it, then you may be sure that you have begun your business.

“ Sheep do not produce the grais, to shew how much they have eaten ; but, inwardly digesting their food, they outwardly produce wool and milk. Thus, therefore, do you likewise, not shew theorems to the unlearned, but the actions produced by them, after they have been digested.

“ The condition and characteristic of a vulgar person are, that he never expects either benefit or hurt from himself ; but from externals. The condition and characteristic of a philosopher are, that he expects all hurt and benefit from himself.

“ Whatever rules you have deliberately proposed to yourself for the conduct of life, abide by them as so many laws, and as if you would be guilty of impiety in transgressing any of them ; and do not regard what any one says of you, for this, after all, is no concern of yours. How long will you defer to think yourself worthy of the noblest improvements, and in no instance, to transgress the distinctions of reason ? You are no longer a boy, but a grown man. If, therefore, you will be negligent and slothful, and always add procrastination to procrastination, purpose to purpose, and six day after day, in which you will attend to yourself, you will insensibly continue without proficiency ; and living and dying, persevere in being one of the vulgar. This instant then, think yourself worthy of living as a man grown up, and a proficient. Let whatever appears to be the best, be to you an inviolable law. And if any instance of pain or pleasure, or glory or disgrace, be set before you, remember that now is the combat, now the olympiad comes on, nor can it be put off ; and that, by once being worsted and giving way, proficiency is lost ; or by the contrary, preserved. Thus Socrates became perfect, improving himself by every thing, attending to nothing but reason. And, though you are not yet a Socrates, you ought, however, to live as one desirous of becoming a Socrates.

“ Upon all occasions we ought to have this saying

of Socrates at hand, "O Crito, if it thus pleases the gods, thus let it be! Anytus and Melitus may kill me indeed, but hurt me they cannot."

The conferences of Epictetus, from which, indeed, the manual is in great measure collected, quaint as they appear, abound with pithy remarks; such as suggest much more to the mind of a reflecting reader than meets the ear. The gold, however, as it happens in the richest mines, is surrounded with much dross. The uncouth manner in which the conferences appear in a translation, however excellent, has deterred many from perusing them, who would have found their perseverance amply rewarded. I cannot, therefore, help wishing, for the sake of liberal and studious young men, that all the valuable matter were extracted, and presented to their view, with accuracy; but, at the same time, with all the ornaments of an elegant and flowing diction. I should, indeed, think it an excellent mode of improving the minds and morals of those who are in the course of their education, if some one passage, like those cited above, were selected as a text or subject on which the preceptor might expatiate. For, next to the scriptures themselves, the writings of the stoics contribute most to raise and rescue human nature from the humiliation and wretchedness into which it is prone to fall, by natural degeneracy, inherent weakness, and acquired corruption. They operate on the mind like those medicines on the body which are called bracers, or corroboratives; and surely that philosophy ought to be encouraged by every moralist and statesman, which adds nerves to virtue, and gives stability to empire.



No. CVI.

ON SWEETNESS AND DELICACY OF STYLE.

AS there is in some flowers an exquisite scent, and in some fruits a delicious flavour, to express which, no language has a name, so there is in style a sweetness

and a delicacy which eludes description, and can only be perceived by the sensibility of taste.

But though it may be difficult to analyse this agreeable quality, or to teach a writer how to infuse into his works, yet it is by no means equally arduous to point out a few authors in whom both the observations of others, and our own feelings have discovered it. This, indeed, is the only method of communicating it; and though it is not to be taught by didactic and formal precepts. It may be acquired by the contagious influence of a captivating example.

Sweetness is chiefly to be found in Lyric poetry; but is by no means confined to it. Though Vossius is of opinion, that sweetness is peculiar to it, as gravity to the epic, simplicity to the pastoral, softness to the elegiac, jocularity to the comic, pathos to the tragic, bitterness to the satyric, and pungency to the epigrammatic. I rather think, that they all admit on some occasions, something of this quality. Homer, who will furnish models of every style, often mixes among his ruder beauties, a delicate sweetness of diction, which besides its own inherent power of pleasing, embellishes all the rougher parts by the power of contrast.

Theocritus is all sweetness; and if a reader with a good ear, should not understand the sweet bard of Syracuse, he might still be delighted with the delicious honey of the doric dialect.

Many of the little, but elegant compositions in the anthologiæ, owe all their excellence to the selection of words, which convey enchanting music to the ear. They seem indeed to trickle like liquid honey from the honey-comb, and this without any affectation in the writers; for such are the peculiar beauties of the Greek language, that it is difficult to write on subjects connected with pleasure, love and beauty, without using such expressions as, besides their real meaning, excite an idea of sweetness similar to the objects represented.

Sweetness is the peculiar excellence of the joyous bard of Teos. The bacchanalian songs of modern times partake very little of those delicate charms which distinguish a style truly anacreontic. It does not indeed

appear, that the modern bacchanals have thought it possible that their joys should admit of delicacy. The songs, therefore, which have been written to enliven and stimulate their mirth, have usually been of a coarser kind, and such as necessarily excluded sweetness of composition. They seem to have considered a Bacchus as he is rudely represented on a sign-post, and not as he is described by the poets and sculptors of antiquity, a most graceful and elegant figure. Anacreon, after all, like the Greek epigrammatists, must be acknowledged to owe much of his sweetness to a language, which cannot be otherwise than sweet on certain subjects, without unnatural violence.

The Latin language, though susceptible of peculiar delicacy, is certainly less capable of sweetness than the dialect of Athens, Ionia, and Doris. But still there are many authors in it, who have derived much of the power of pleasing the human race, during near twenty centuries, from the singular sweetness of their style.

Catullus, I believe, deserves to be mentioned among the first of those who have emulated the Greeks in their distinguished excellence. Few books would have been better calculated to give boys a true taste for sweet composition, if the decency of the poet's sentiments had been equal to the delicacy of his style.

Horace was a very Proteus in the circumstance of a versatile and variegated diction. His odes abound with stanzas, and his other works with heroic verses, which evidently prove, that if he had chosen to vie with Virgil in strength and dignity, he would have approached his rival. But he was a man of pleasure, and his favourite style is that in which he celebrates love and wine. In this there is a remarkable sweetness; and I know not whether the *curiosa felicitas*, or that charm of his writings, which resulted from study and happiness united, may not be said to consist in sweetness and delicacy. Such is the delightful sweetness of the ninth ode of the fourth book, and the fourth of the third, that all readers have been charmed with them; and Julius Scaliger, a very warm critic, has asserted, that he had rather be the author of them than of all Pindar's odes, or than to be elevated to the rank of a monarch.

It is, I think, certain, that many of the odes of Horace, and many of the works of other poets of equal fame, have delighted mankind from one generation to another, far less by their sentiments than by those congenial beauties, a sweetness of language, a delicate choice of words, and a well modulated collocation.

The modest bard of Mantua indisputably owes his influence over the human mind, to his talent in attuning, in a most judicious union, softness, sweetness, and the nicest delicacy, with the most majestic grandeur.

Among the prose writers of Greece and Rome, every reader of taste will immediately observe, that Herodotus and Xenophon, Cæsar and Cicero, claim the first place in the excellence of a sweet style. The two Plinies and Paterculus, have a considerable share of it. Thucydides, Sallust, and Tacitus, are too fond of austerity to admit any great portion of sweetness.

Many of the modern Latin poets have distinguished themselves by the sweetness of their verse. Some of them have, however, carried it to excess, and have written in the worst manner of Grotius, Joannes Secundus, and Bonifonius. Sweetness ought to be distinguished from lasciviousness; the one affects us with the sensations durably agreeable; the other quickly cloy and palls the appetite.

The eminent French writers, who certainly possess taste, have displayed a remarkable sweetness of style. The Italians can scarcely compose without displaying it. He who has formed a taste for this quality, will find it fully gratified in the writings of Fontaine, Metastasio, and, indeed, in all the celebrated authors of France and Italy. Those nations, in modern times, have been more defective in strength and nerve, than in any of the softer qualities, the purpose of which is to please.

Though the French are disposed to deny the English the praise of taste, I cannot help thinking, that we have writers who can rival them in their pretensions to every excellence which can adorn composition. Our Addison, like some of the most celebrated ancients, possesses that sweetness, that delicacy, and that grace, which is formed to please the human mind. under all

the revolutions of time, of fashion, and of capricious taste. It is not only the excellent matter which produces the effect of gently composing our passions while we are reading Addison; but it is also that sweet style, which cannot be read and tasted without communicating to the mind something of its own equability. Sir William Temple was, indeed, the model of Addison, and he is remarkable for the sweetness of his style, especially if he is compared with the writers of his own time.

All our eminent poets have judiciously mingled sweetness with strength, and grace with dignity. Waller has usually obtained the praise of sweetness; but he has been greatly exceeded by his successors in this and every other species of poetry. If that sort of genius which constitutes a Homer, a Shakespeare, a Milton, has not been common among us; yet the subordinate species which is displayed in elegant mediocrity, and in what we call pretty and pleasing opuscula, has been no where more abundant.

It appears to me, that the later writers of prose have rather affected the masculine and nervous, than the sweet and graceful. The late Mr. Harris is, indeed, an exception; for he collected the purest honey from the flowers of Attica. The author of Fitzosborne's letters has exhibited both grace and sweetness; and I wish they were not sometimes injured by verbosity. Johnson, Hawkesworth, Robertson, are chiefly admired for strength and force. Hume has now and then displayed something of Addisonian sweetness in a few of his moral essays. It is to be wished he had displayed also something of the Addisonian goodness of heart. The Warburtonian school, as Hume called it, though it has produced ingenious and nervous writers, cannot boast either of sweetness or gracefulness. It has delighted much in violent controversy and arbitrary dictation, both of which usually bid defiance to the Graces, and prefer bitterness and acrimony to sweetness.

Though it may not be easy to define the whole of that, whatever it is, which constitutes sweetness of style, yet it is by no means difficult to discover one or two circumstances which are highly conducive to it. It is,

indeed, obvious to observe, that the frequent use of liquid letters, and of labials combined with syllables, consisting of vowels with few consonants, contributes greatly to sweeten the diction. But so nice a point is real excellence, that the smallest excess or affectation of any particular beauty will totally destroy all its agreeable effect. It must result from nature, cultivated, indeed, but not too closely confined and directed, by art. Alliteration is conducive to sweetness, and is a figure frequently used by the best writers, ancient and modern. Used with caution it cannot fail to please; but the cause of the pleasure should be latent. When this figure obtrudes itself too often, and in excess, as it does in several modern writers, it loses all its grace, and the reader resents and loaths the paltry artifice of a writer who depends on so poor a claim to applause. This, indeed, and all other ornaments, are to be used, as it has been observed, like salt at a meal, which agreeably seasons every dish when mixed in moderation, but which would spoil the whole, if it were rendered the predominant ingredient in the repast.



No. CVII.

HINTS TO THOSE WHO ARE DESIGNED FOR THE PROFESSION OF PHYSIC.

IT was always a part of my design, in these papers, to suggest a few hints of advice to young persons, who are just entering on any of the liberal professions; not, indeed, with a presumptuous intention to direct them in a technical or scientific practice, but merely to give them some general ideas; which may render their views more liberal, and their minds more generous, or arm them with some useful precautions. I remember too well the impertinence of the sophist who read a lecture to Hannibal on the art of war, to think of instructing any persons in the peculiar or mechanical art and science, which they have made the study of their lives. But there are certain universal truths which men, attached to a particular pursuit, sometimes over-

look. There is also a certain enlargement of mind, which is lost in the narrow habits and confined views of those who take an active part in a lucrative profession. He who surveys life in an extensive prospect, may see a variety of magnificent objects which escape the eye, which is constantly fixed on a few single circumstances, and confined within a narrow circle. It is the business of the moralist to inspect every part of human life, to endeavour to correct its errors, and promote all the excellence and happiness of which it is capable.

It has been justly remarked, that they who enter on the profession of medicine, in any of its branches, have commonly depended for success, rather on the cultivation of the graces, than the sciences. And it is certain, that many persons whose solid attainments were very moderate, have run away with the greatest share of wealth and popularity, with few other recommendations, than a fine person, a showy dress, a singular equipage, and an undaunted effrontery.

But since internal satisfaction, a consciousness of having done all that it was possible to prepare for a profession, and of having pretended to no more than we are able to perform, is a surer source of happiness than the applause, and even the guineas of the ignorant multitude; I advise every pupil, who values substantial happiness more than the phantom of it, to devote the first period of his life to a very serious pursuit of every part of knowledge which contributes to give him, not only a practical, but theoretical skill in his profession; not only the contracted ideas of a mercenary practitioner, but the comprehensive sentiments of a student in philosophy.

The foundation should be laid in an education truly liberal. It is really lamentable to observe the extreme ignorance of those among medical practitioners, who are applied to in the first instance, and who constitute the most numerous class. They are taken from a writing school, or perhaps a grammar school at the age of fourteen and bound apprentices. They have usually acquired a good hand writing; but their knowledge of the classics is seldom worth mentioning; and, upon the whole, their education may be said to be about equal

to that of a pauper in a parish charity school. Their business is to stand behind the counter and compound medicines by the prescriptions of the doctor. These are usually in Latin, written very badly, and full of affected abbreviations. They are, indeed, often so ænigmatical, that nothing less than the sagacity of an Oedipus can resolve their difficulties. The poor lad, if he has time, will toil at his dictionary, where, however, he often toils in vain; but if he has not time, which is usually the case, he takes the most expeditious method of doing business. He is ashamed to confess his ignorance, and therefore puts up any medicine which his conjecture suggests; the phial is wrapt up, dispatched with all expedition, and the patient is poisoned.

After having spent seven years in a shop pounding drugs and spreading plasters; and after having acquired a little paltry portion of mechanical knowledge by constant habit, he is dismissed as complete; and goes into the country, a bold professor of chirurgery and pharmacy. With a smart dress, an unblushing countenance, and a voluble tongue, he is sure of success, and bids defiance to all the learning in the world. In his own opinion, he is another Hippocrates or Heberden; and, indeed, he is an object of real wonder to the country people; for he collects a few hard words from his dictionary, which he utters with great gravity among gossips and farmers, who consider him as a very learned man, as well as prodigiously clever in his profession. Those who could bear witness against his skill, are all secured and silenced, in the church-yard.

I assert that a knowledge of Greek as well as Latin is really necessary to the apothecary, if he would perform his business with that accuracy which is certainly required in so important an employment. A boy, destined to this employment, should by no means leave his school till the age of sixteen or seventeen. The knowledge of the learned languages, acquired before that time, is merely elementary; it is only of use as it leads to farther improvement in the languages. It cannot qualify for any profession, much less for the apothecaries, the names of whose instruments, medi-

cines, and operations, are, for the most part, either wholly Greek, or of Greek extraction.

But, indeed, if he wishes to raise his profession above the level of an empiric, or a farrier, he should acquire a liberal education for his own sake, independently of its use in a mercenary view; for the sake of polishing his mind, and elevating his sentiments. With a liberal education and an extensive practice, he is in fact a physician, though called an apothecary; and though he should neither have purchased a diploma, nor have earned a regular degree, by spending his time, money, and health, in an English university, he is a gentleman: and the peculiar utility of his employments, when judiciously and humanely conducted, entitle him to the company and conversation of all who deserve that distinction.

There never was an age in which they who intend to support the dignified character of graduated physicians, had better opportunities for improvement in physiology. Lectures, as well as books in anatomy, chemistry, and every part of science and natural philosophy, never more abounded. Let the student devote himself to these with long and serious application, and depend more upon them, than on the caprice of fashion, or any singularity in his chariot and livery. A popular physician in a great capital, and indeed, any where, is a very important member of society, considered merely in a political view. The lives, limbs, health, and spirits of a very great part of the subjects of a kingdom, depend upon his skill and honesty. A man who undertakes this office, and recommends himself by address and artifice, without qualifying himself with every preparatory knowledge, and who abuses the confidence of those who fly to him as to a guardian angel, in the deepest distress, has very little claim to the title of an honest man; and deserves to be stigmatized and punished with the worst of villains and the vilest of sharpers.

It has been observed and regretted, that some individuals in this liberal profession have exhibited such an attention to interest, as is incompatible with the common feelings of humanity. Such persons are their own enemies; for no gratifications of sordid avarice can equal the delicious sensations of him, who delights in

exercising his skill, in diffusing joy through the haunts of misery, and in relieving the sick, the maimed, the halt, and the blind.

There is, indeed, something godlike in the medical profession, when it is humanely and disinterestedly exercised. Every one, it is true, ought to pay that regard to interest, which prudence and a love of his own family demand; but he who also delights in relieving, from the satisfactions of sympathy and a sense of duty, may be said to resemble the great model of every perfection, Jesus Christ, who went about doing good, and healing all manner of sickness and diseases among the people.



No. CVIII.

THE COMPLAINTS AGAINST MODERN LITERATURE PROBABLY ILL-FOUNDED.

TO complain of the present, and to praise the past, has so long been the favourite topic of disappointment, or of ignorance, that every stricture on the degeneracy of the times, is looked upon as the effusion of ill-nature, or the result of superficial observation: but the absurdity of declamatory invective, ought not to preclude the cool remarks of truth, reason, and experience.

The practice of vice, or virtue, has indeed varied at different periods, rather in the mode than in the degree; but the state of literature has suffered more violent revolutions; it has sometimes shone with the brightest lustre, and at others has been totally overshadowed with the darkness of barbarism.

To review the state of learning from the earliest periods, and to investigate the causes of its fluctuation, is a task that requires much labour, sagacity and erudition. More superficial enquiries will, however, suffice to examine the justice of the charge of literary degeneracy in the present age, and, if it be well founded, to discover the causes of it.

It has been observed by an ingenious writer, that as every age has been marked by some peculiarity, from

which it has derived its characteristic appellation; so the present, were it to be distinguished by a name from its most prevalent humour, might be called, *the age of authors*. Of late years, almost every man has felt an ambition of appearing in print, from the voluminous lexicographer, down to the scribbler, in a pamphlet or a newspaper. It is indeed, natural to suppose, that of a great number of competitors, some would reach the prize; and that the universal combination of intellects would effect some stupendous work, which should exceed all the productions of our predecessors, and demand the admiration of the latest posterity. It has however, been observed, that the learning of the present age is not deep, though diffusive; and that its productions are not excellent, though numerous.

The multiplicity of compositions is an argument of their hasty production; and hastiness is, at least, a presumptive proof of their want of merit. In this point, the literary and the natural world resemble each other. The productions of nature, whether vegetable or animal, as they are either of a slow or speedy growth, are known to be durable or transitory, solid or unsubstantial. The oak and the elephant are long before they attain perfection, but are still longer before they decay; while the butterfly and the flowret perish as they arise, almost within a diurnal revolution of the sun. The works of virgil cost him much time and labour; but they have existed near two thousand years universally admired, while the compositions of that poet, who boasted he could write two or three hundred verses while he stood on one leg, were lost in a space almost as short as that in which they were produced.

But the hasty formation of literary works in modern times, is not a greater obstacle to their excellence, than the mercenary motives of their authors. The office of instructing mankind in morality, and of informing them in science, was once reserved for those alone who were particularly adapted to the task by the impulses of genius, by peculiar opportunities, and by singular application. In these times, however, the profession of an author is become a lucrative employment, and is practised rather by those who feel the inconvenience of

nunger, than by those who are stimulated with the hope of immortality. But it is a known truth, that avarice contracts the mind, and renders it incapable of elevated sentiments and generous enterprizes. It ceases therefore to be matter of wonder, that works are destitute of spirit, when they proceed not from the noble ardour inspired by the love of fame, but from the frigid incitements of the love of money.

The depraved taste of readers is another cause of the degeneracy of writers. They who write for the public, must gratify the taste of the public. In vain are their compositions formed on the models of the best writers, and regulated by the precepts of the most judicious critics, if they conform not to the popular caprice, and the mistaken judgment of the vulgar. In an age when the taste for reading is universal, many works, contemptible both in design and execution, will be received by some readers, with distinguished applause. The want of the merits of just reasoning and pure language, is with the greater part, the half-learned and the ignorant, no objection. In truth, unconnected thoughts, and superficial declamation, are congenial to minds unaccustomed to accurate thinking, and insensible of the charms of finished excellence. Hence writers, of acknowledged abilities and learning, have been known, when they aimed at popularity, to relinquish real excellence, and adopt a false taste, in opposition to their own judgment.

After all, it may not perhaps, be absurd, to attribute many of the complaints against the present state of letters, to ignorance, envy and caprice. In every department of literature, in the gay regions of fancy, and in the depths of philosophy and science, many authors there are of this age and nation, who have acquired an illustrious reputation by deserving it : and if they want that originality of thought and solidity of learning, which mark some of the productions of our first writers, yet have they a force, elegance, and correctness of style, unknown to their predecessors.

No. CIX.

ON THE CAUSES AND FOLLY OF DISSENTIONS
IN A COUNTRY NEIGHBOURHOOD.

IT seems extraordinary, that with all our pretensions to the social affections and to christianity, there are few country towns or villages, in which the families, which are reckoned genteel by the right of fortune, and of self estimation, live upon terms of cordial and sincere friendship. One might, I believe, venture to go farther, and to assert, that there are few where a general enmity and dislike does not lurk, under the formality of ceremonious visits, and civil salutation.

The foundation of all the uneasiness is a foolish pride, which, though it was not made for so weak a creature as man, yet adheres so closely to him, that he can seldom divest himself of it, without such an effort as few minds are able to make. Philosophy is vainly applied; for few are prouder than philosophers. Religion only can effectually eradicate a vice so deeply rooted: that amiable religion, which teaches us to love our neighbours as ourselves; and which has informed us of a truth which experience abundantly confirms, that from pride only cometh contention.

The most trifling distinction or appearance of superiority, is sure to excite all the heart burnings of secret envy and jealousy. Instead of rejoicing at any fortunate event which contributes to the happiness of a neighbour, the greater part secretly repine at it, and endeavour to lessen the satisfaction it might afford, by disseminating some mortifying surmise or insinuation. Indeed, the fortunate person sometimes deserves some humiliation; for as his neighbours are endeavouring to lower him to their own level, he, on the other hand, ostentatiously displays his superiority, and labours to depress them below their due rank, that his own elevation may be more conspicuous. It would be entertaining to

behold the little contrivances which the petty gentry invent for the purpose of eclipsing each other, if there were not always something of a malignity which disgusts and hurts the mind of a humane man. The rivalry is by no means of an amicable sort; and though the parties are wonderfully civil when they meet, they often hate each other with the greatest inveteracy. Nothing would, indeed, give them greater pleasure, than to hear of each others losses or ruin, though they would not fail to visit on the occasion, and to sympathise in the politest and most approved fashion.

Scandal, indeed, who has long reigned with arbitrary sway in country towns, is usually the cause of all that latent hatred which poisons the happiness of families, whose birth or fortune has placed them in the same neighbourhood; and who, enjoying plenty, might also enjoy peace, if they could prevail upon themselves to turn a deaf ear to the tale-bearer. But such is the perverseness or malignity of many, that though they have themselves but just suffered from the false reports of slanderers, they listen, with delight, to the next whisper, that flies like the arrow in the dark, and wounds a neighbour's reputation. If any favourable report begins to prevail, it is with difficulty admitted; it is doubted, contradicted, or extenuated. But there is no lie so improbably false, so little like the truth, but it will be joyfully received and believed without examination, so long as it tends to lower an object of envy in the esteem of a neighbourhood, to injure the interest of a rival in vanity, or to wound the heart of him whom we hate, only because we feel the weight of his real superiority.

It is to be wished, that people would consider from how contemptible a source most of those calamities originate, which induce neighbours to entertain a bad opinion of each other, and in consequence, to live in a state of constant, though secret enmity. They usually come from domestic servants, who, in revenge for a just reprimand, or from the wickedness of an ungrateful heart, delight in disseminating the most cruel tales without the smallest foundation in reality. Or, supposing something similar to the calumny did happen

in a neighbour's house, it is so disguised, altered, and exaggerated, by the time it has gone from the top of the town to the bottom, that what was, in truth, no more than a trifle scarcely worth attention, becomes a charge of a most atrocious and injurious kind, when it has been tolled from tongue to tongue. The vilest menial shall utter a lie, in the meanest shop of the most paltry town; and, in the space of half an hour, it shall be republished with additions and embellishments, as a known fact, by the Lady of the Manor.

The petty officers and distinctions of church-wardens, surveyors, mayors, lords of the manor, commissioners of turnpike roads, and similar rural dignities, do indeed often fill their possessors, and their ladies, with so high a sense of their own importance, and at the same time excite so much envy in the little minds which aspire at such little honours, that, in proportion as the great person advances in the path of glory, he is often obliged to relinquish the comforts of good neighbourhood. It is not, indeed, to be wondered at, if those who have had little or no education, and whose views have been confined to horses, dogs, and the affairs of a vestry and a court-leet, should value themselves too much on petty distinction; and should suppose the title of Esquire, Lord of the Manor, or Justice of Peace, such honours as may justify them in treating others with contumely. Neither is it wonderful, that they who have never wandered beyond the limits of their native parish, should survey such distinctions with an envious eye. All men ought, indeed, to aspire at distinction, as it may lead them to aspire at usefulness and virtue, but it is certainly desirable, for the sake of tranquility, that envy and malice should not be mixed with laudable emulation.

But there are other causes besides the love of scandal and the gratification of vanity, which powerfully operate in interrupting the harmony of a good neighbourhood. Avarice is the occasion of many and indeterminable disagreements. In what part of the country can we fix our residence, where some of the clergy are not objects of dislike, because a regard to their wives and children, whose bread depends upon their lives, induces

them to insist on those duties which the laws have allowed them. The clergyman in the most desert parts of the country, is usually a man of learning, and of a polite mind, who might diffuse a taste for elegant and improving conversation; but he is excluded from the society of his parishioners, because he makes a just claim upon their property. The most shocking calumnies are propagated against him and his family; every thing is done which can mortify and distress him, and he is frequently involved for life by the farmers, and a pettifogger at their head, in vexatious and expensive litigation. He who preaches peace, and who might soften, by the influence of polished manners, the remains of brutality among his savage and narrow-minded neighbours, is hunted by them till he is forced to take refuge in the lonely retreat of his parsonage.

The various meetings which are necessary to conduct parish, and other public business in the country, are often productive of violent animosities. An opposition formed at a vestry, or a turnpike meeting, is sometimes carried on with more acrimony than in the House of Commons. It would not be so lamentable, if the consequences of the dispute terminated at the time and place in which it arose; but it usually happens, that if the gentlemen have disagreed in the vestry, the ladies, at the next tea drinking, put on sullen looks, and commence a secret attack on each others persons, dress, character and conduct. Hostilities, which owe their rise to a difference in opinion concerning the mending of a road, or the repairing of a steeple, are carried on under the cover of external civility, and continue from generation to generation.

It would be a very valuable point gained, if we could prevail on the many thousands, who, with all the external means of happiness, lead uncomfortable lives from the dissensions of their neighbourhood, to consider duly the importance of a friendly intercourse with those in whose vicinity they have been placed by Providence. They may be confidently assured, that no pleasure arising from scandal, from petty distinctions, from trifling matters of interest, or from influence over parish or country meetings, can be compared to the

satisfaction of living in love, and in a constant interchange of those good offices which alleviate adversity, and give to prosperity its sweetest enjoyments. The qualities indispensably necessary to the accomplishment of this desirable purpose, are benevolence and humility.



No. CX.

THE IMPRUDENCE OF AN EARLY ATTACHMENT TO ACTING PLAYS.

IN A LETTER.

AS I was sauntering a few days ago, on one of the public walks, I could not help particularly remarking a young man, whose dress shewed marks of a shabby gentility, and whose countenance wore the aspect of a settled melancholy.

The appearance of wretchedness, in whatever situation, is always sufficient to awaken curiosity. I felt myself irresistibly impelled to enquire into the history of a person who seemed to be completely miserable. After having walked a considerable time, I perceived him to throw himself, in a disconsolate attitude, on one of the seats of the walk. I did not neglect the opportunity; but seating myself by his side, prevailed on him, after some introductory conversation, to give me his history, which he did in the following words:

“ Yes, Sir,” said he, “ though my present appearance may seem to invalidate my assertion, I assure you I was the son of one of the most opulent traders in the metropolis. I might at this time have been enjoying all the happiness that affluence can bestow; but now, alas! I have no where to lay my head, no refuge to which I can fly for comfort. I am abandoned to the wide world without a friend; and one consideration aggravates all my misery—I have deserved my sufferings, and cannot justly complain.”

Here he paused to conceal a tear that was just bursting from his eyes. After he had a little recovered

himself, his countenance gradually grew more serene, and he proceeded with less emotion.

“ When I was at the age of eleven, my father placed me at a celebrated grammar-school—there I spent the happiest days of my life. Nature, as I was told, had given me parts; I made a rapid progress in classical learning; all was encouragement, all was hope, and all was happiness. But, in the midst of my improvement, my father resolved, in opposition to the advice of my master, to remove me from school, and to settle me in his own counting-house. My master urged, that though I might perhaps succeed in a learned profession, yet the vivacity of my disposition would be an obstacle to my prosperity in a mercantile employment. My father, sensible of the lucrative advantages of an established trade, was deaf to these remonstrances; and on a fatal day I entered into engagements to plod at the desk and the counter for seven years.

“ But nature is not to be constrained by indentures. Instead of casting up sums, and measuring ells, I employed my time in the perusal of Shakspeare, in composing epilogues and farces, and in discussing the merits of every new dramatic production. Instead of spending my evenings in posting accounts, and examining my ledger, I was always attending the performances of a Foote or a Garrick. At length, by constantly frequenting the play-houses, and mixing with contemptible sciolists, who called themselves theatrical critics, I became so enamoured of the stage, as to look upon dramatic entertainments as constituting the most important business, as well as the most agreeable enjoyment of human life. The shop continually resounded with my rants, in imitation of some favourite actor; and I went so far as to treat with the purchasers of a yard of Irish, with a theatrical tone, and a dramatic action.

“ I had so great an opinion of my own talents, that, like the immortal Shakspeare, I was ambitious of shining both as an actor and a writer. Accordingly I finished a comedy with great care and pains, and presented it to one of the managers, who returned

“ it upon my hands, with evident marks of contention.
 “ By no means dejected, I was resolved to try my
 “ ceſs as an actor. But having, with great diffi-
 “ obtained permission to ſpeak before the man-
 “ and a circle of their friends, who ſeemed to enjoy
 “ diſtreſs, I was again rejected.

“ Though I could not ſucceed at the theatres, I was
 “ reſolved to exert my abilities at ſpouting and diſ-
 “ puting clubs. And here, indeed, I eaſily made a
 “ conſpicuous figure; as I had the advantage of a
 “ claſſical education, and moſt of my competitors had
 “ no education at all. The moſt important topics of
 “ religion, learning, and politics, I diſcuſſed with
 “ more volubility than the graveſt prelate, the pro-
 “ foundeſt academic, or the craftieſt ſtateſman. But I
 “ triumphed, as it were, without an enemy, and the
 “ facility of the conqueſt diminished the pleaſure of it.
 “ I ſoon became weary of dry argumentation, and
 “ eagerly panted to wear the buſkin, and to mouth the
 “ ſonorous periods of ſome tragic bard.

“ It happened that I had formed a connection
 “ with a young member of the club, whoſe genius was
 “ was entirely ſimilar to my own. and who had been en-
 “ gaged with a ſtrolling company of players. He had
 “ often ſolicited me to go with him on an acting tour
 “ into the north of England; and I had as often re-
 “ fuſed from a principle of pride. But at length an ar-
 “ dent deſire of exhibiting on the ſtage, overcame every
 “ regard to duty, and every compunction of conſcience.
 “ In a fatal hour (I bluſh to mention it) I embezzled
 “ a ſum of money with which I was entrusted in the
 “ courſe of buſineſs, packed up my clothes, and ac-
 “ companied a ſet of vagabonds, who, like myſelf,
 “ had abandoned every reputable occupation, and de-
 “ voted themſelves to infamy and indigence. for the
 “ ſake of gaining the plaudits of a few ruſtics aſſembled
 “ in a barn.

“ And now commences the æra of all my miſery.
 “ The money I had fraudulently taken, was ſoon
 “ ſquandered away in a ſociety of thoughtleſs mortals,
 “ who regarded not to-morrow, if they could feaſt
 “ to-day. We were, indeed, received with applauſe;

“ but the audience was commonly so scanty, that the
“ expences of representation often exceeded the re-
“ ceipts. In every town we were looked upon with
“ suspicion, and treated as vagrants. We were some-
“ times reduced to such extremities, by the expences
“ of travelling, and the loss of acting to empty barns,
“ that we have wanted even food to support nature.
“ Above charity, we could not be relieved, and desti-
“ tute of credit, we could not be trusted. At length
“ I saw my folly, and after various resolves, sent a
“ friend to enquire whether my father was disposed to
“ receive me, should I return and confess my fault.
“ How, alas! was I struck, when I was told in an-
“ swer that my father died a few days ago of a broken
“ heart; and that his death was so sudden, that he
“ had not time to alter his will, in which, in the first
“ rage after the discovery of my elopement, he had cut
“ me off with a shilling.

“ It is impossible to give you an adequate idea of
“ my grief on this occasion, and I shall only inform
“ you, that it would have proved fatal, had it not
“ been soon removed by emotions of a different kind.
“ During my indisposition, one of the actresses of our
“ company, whose beauty is only exceeded by the
“ goodness of her heart, watched me with all the
“ anxiety of a parent, and soothed me under the hor-
“ rors of despair, with the softest blandishments of
“ tenderness. I soon felt a flame kindling in my
“ breast, which was answered with a sympathetic
“ passion. In short, I was no sooner restored to health
“ and vigour, than I married the lovely Emily: we
“ have now been united near a year, and yesterday she
“ was safely delivered of twins. That she is well,
“ thank Heaven; but, alas, the reflection, that I am
“ destitute of all the means that can give her ease, or
“ provide for her offspring, sharpens all the darts of
“ ill-fortune, and embitters every woe.”

Here he stopped, and I was obliged to leave him, after having given him an invitation to my house, where I hope to be able to alleviate his misfortunes, without hurting his sensibility. But I cannot help expressing my wish, that all who, deluded by a heated

imagination feel themselves inclined to quit the comforts of a parent and a home, in pursuit of a profession which is prohibited by law, and which constantly entails on its followers misery and disgrace, may avoid his wretchedness, by avoiding his conduct.



No. CXI.

ON THE PLEASURE OF REFLECTION.

THAT the enjoyments of the understanding exceed the pleasures of sense, is a truth, confessed by all who are capable of exerting the faculties of thinking in their full vigour. But by these pleasures are generally understood sublime contemplations on subjects of science and abstruse disquisition; contemplations which can only be the result of uncommon powers and extraordinary efforts.

But there are intellectual pleasures of another kind; to the enjoyment of which, neither great abilities nor learning are required. These are no other than the pleasures of reflection, which are open to the illiterate mechanic, as well as to the sage philosopher, and constitute some of the sweetest satisfactions of human life.

There are few who have not felt pleasing sensations arising from a retrospective view of the first period of their lives. To recollect the puerile amusements, the petty anxieties, and the eager pursuits of childhood, is a task in which all delight. It is common to observe, that on no subject do men dwell with such pleasure, as the boyish tricks and wanton pranks which they practised at school. The hoary head looks back with a smile of complacency, mixed with regret, on the season when health glowed on the cheek, when lively spirits warmed the heart, and when toil strung the nerves with vigour.

Cicero has remarked, that events the most disagreeable, during their immediate influence, give an exquisite satisfaction when their consequences have ceased; and Aeneas solaces his companions, under the hardships

they endured with the consideration, that the remembrance of their sufferings would, one day, give them satisfaction. That these sentiments are just, is well known to those who have enjoyed the conversation of the soldier. Battles, skirmishes, and sieges, at which perhaps he trembled during the action, furnishes him with topics of conversation, and sources of pleasure, for the remainder of his life.

Reflection is the properest employment, and the sweetest satisfaction, in a rational old age. Destitute of strength and vigour, necessary for bodily exertions, and furnished with observations by experience, the old man finds his greatest pleasure to consist in wandering in imagination over past scenes of delight, in recounting the adventures of his youth, the vicissitudes of human life, and the public events to which he is proud of having been an eye witness. Of so exalted a nature are these enjoyments, that theologians have not hesitated to assert that to recollect a well spent life, is to anticipate the bliss of a future existence.

The professors of philosophy, who will be acknowledged to have understood the nature of true and substantial pleasure better than the busy, the gay, and the dissipated, have ever shewn a predilection for privacy and solitude. No other cause have they assigned for their conduct in forsaking society, than that the noise and hurry of the world is incompatible with the exertion of calm reason and dispassionate reflection. The apophthegm of that ancient who said, "he was never less alone than when by himself," is not to be considered merely as an epigrammatic turn. In vain was it to pursue philosophy in the Suburra; she was only to be courted, with success, in the sequestered shade of rural retirement.

Were the powers of reflection cultivated by habit, mankind would at all times be able to derive a pleasure from their own breasts, as rational as it is exalted. To the attainment of this happiness, a strict adherence to the rules of virtue is necessary; for let it be remembered, that none can feel the pleasures of reflection, who do not enjoy the peace of innocence.

No. CXII.

HINTS TO THOSE WHO ARE DESIGNED FOR
THE PROFESSION OF THE LAW.

THERE is no order in the community more contemptible than that of those practitioners in the law, who, without one liberal principle of justice or equity possess a skill in little else but quibbles, and in those points by which villainy is taught to proceed with impunity, cunning enabled to elude the spirit by misrepresenting the letter, and truth perplexed, obscured, and lost, in the mazes of chicanery. It is indeed surprising, that many, who call themselves men of honour, and who profess to have had a liberal education, should allow themselves, in the practice of their profession, to assert palpable falsehood to confound the clearest evidence; and defend, with all the appearance of sincere conviction, what they know to be indefensible. It is not an admissible apology to assert, that their profession requires such an abasement; for a similar justification might be offered by the sharper or the highwayman. There are, undoubtedly, certain laws of honour and truth established in the heart of every honest man, of which no regard for lucre, and no jesuitical pretence of professional necessity can justify the infringement.

There seems, indeed, to be a very unfortunate error in many among the students of the law who value abilities and technical knowledge at a high rate, but entertain no great esteem for goodness of heart, and integrity of conduct. While the world allows them abilities and knowledge, they depend with security on success, though they should be notoriously mercenary in public, and debauched in private life. Indeed, they have had living examples to prove, that however bad the morals of the man, if the impudence and eloquence of the lawyer are approved, he may have what briefs he pleases, and even be advanced to the dignity of a

Lord Chancellor. An infamous character, blasted with imputations of the most atrocious kind in the walks of private and domestic life, may be introduced, by his known effrontery, and his supposed abilities, to that dignified seat, where law is to be corrected by equity, and where the conscience of the Judge is the chief controul.

Whatever be the abilities of a man, yet if he be notoriously irregular and intemperate, in the violation of those laws which are prior to all human laws, he ought not to be promoted to any office of trust and honour, particularly in the law. If the governing part of a nation were sincere in a profession of a belief in the national religion, men who are remarkable for breaking the laws of that religion, would be at least neglected, if not disgraced. The advancement of bad men to the highest offices in the law, is a disgrace to the government, and an injury to the people, whom it greatly corrupts; not only by the example, but by leading them to suppose, that the governors of the nation, whom they naturally suppose wiser than themselves, consider religion and morality merely as engines of state.

Though, therefore, the student may see men of infamous characters advanced and encouraged, let him not be deluded. If he is wise, he will still pay his greatest attention to the cultivation of a pure and honest heart: this will furnish him with more satisfaction than was ever derived to a bad man from the insignia and emoluments of office, and the fees bestowed by popular favour. Whatever practice or preferment can be acquired consistently with this, accept with gratitude. But if the public, or the rulers of the nation, still prefer the bold pretender, whose appearance and abilities arise from that audacity which accompanies a bad and an unfeeling heart, despise all that they can bestow, and remember that this life is short, and that there is another; that this world is the place of probation, and the next of reward. Remember that a pure heart, a clear conscience, an independent spirit, and a soul that spurns the lucre which is to be gained by unmanly servility, are infinitely superior (considered only as they tend to promote happiness) to the possession of the

seals, with their usual appendages, a peerage and a pension.

With respect to the modes of preparation for this profession, I see, with regret, that an illiberal method prevails, which consists in confining the future advocate like a clerk in a merchant's counting-house, to the desk of some practising lawyer, and teaching him the ordinary business almost mechanically. There he sits, and copies a great number of dry formalities, such as, if he attended to them, could not enlarge his mind; such indeed, as, without a remarkable dulness of disposition, he cannot attend to. After labouring for several years in a manual employment, as sedentary, and scarcely more liberal than that of the weaver or the watchmaker, he comes forth a formidable barrister; formidable, indeed, in some respects, as he has probably acquired a good deal of that low and dirty practice, and that narrow and confined mode of thinking, which a liberal mind would despise too much to be able to acquire. He is, as it were, a spider, and can spin cobwebs in the dark and foul recesses of the heart, to catch those diminutive objects, which a more generous animal would not deign to ensnare.

The true method of arriving at an eligible species of eminence in the study of the law is, to enlarge the capacity of the mind by a most comprehensive and classical education; and then to furnish it with some portion of every species of human knowledge. A general and enlarged philosophy, moral, natural, and theological, ought to form the firm basis of the future superstructure. On this should be added history, ancient and modern; general jurisprudence, and a particular acquaintance with the spirit of laws in all the civilized nations of antiquity. Long and accurate observation of men and manners ought to be added; and the virtues of exemplary benevolence and humanity should complete the fabric. Such should be the preparation:—what it is, we have already seen. But sometimes even the toil of the writing-desk, as well as every other serious preparation is omitted, and the student called to the bar, puts a large wig over his powdered hair and pig tail, and

starts up a pleader; ready to undertake any cause either of property, or of life.

Whoever has read the works of Cicero, will remember how great a share of learning he requires in his orator, who was, indeed, a pleader, or advocate; but not such a pleader, or such an advocate, as many of those who have disgraced the modern courts of judicature. The great statesmen of Rome supported the character of lawyers with a peculiar dignity, unknown to modern institutions. Adorned with philosophy, as well as law, they descended to the courts to defend their clients; not with the hope of a paltry fee, but induced by the pure motives of friendship and humanity; by a desire of doing good, and a regard for justice. Men, it is true must live by their professions; and, therefore, the disinterestedness of the ancients, who had other resources, cannot be universally imitated. But, surely, in an age that pretends to peculiar illumination and philanthropy, and in a people who have long professed a most humane religion, it is wonderful to find men who assume so important a profession, ready to defend any side for pay; and debasing their characters by an affectation of extreme libertinism, of infidelity, and of every kind of profligacy, which tends to harden the heart, and to deaden the feelings of humanity, no less than to stifle the sentiments of true honour.



No. CXIII.

ON SOME INCONVENIENCIES WHICH UNAVOIDABLY ATTEND LIVING WRITERS.

THE composition of a book has often been compared to the furnishing of a feast, in which, whatever art may have been exerted, and variety produced, it seldom happens that every palate is equally pleased. Sometimes the dishes are not dressed and seasoned as they ought to be; and sometimes the organs of sensation in the guests are languid and indisposed.

No work, however excellent, ever yet appeared, which was not blamed, as well as praised, by many; but we hesitate not to pronounce that good, which retains, during a considerable time, a majority of suffrages in its favour. Longinus, very reasonably, makes the favourable opinion of various nations, for many ages, an infallible criterion of an author's singular excellence. And it is certain, that to call in question the merits of those books which have long survived their authors, contributes more to disgrace the critic, than to diminish the author's reputation.

But it is not so with living writers. They labour under peculiar disadvantages; not only from the difficulty of arriving at distinction after so many illustrious predecessors, but from the prejudices and the envy of their equals and contemporaries. Men have always felt an inclination to exalt departed genius, not only from a sincere admiration of it, but also with a secret desire to degrade living merit, by introducing an invidious comparison. No one aspires at the distinctions of fortune, or civil honours, without exciting jealousy and envy. It would be therefore unreasonable to suppose, that literary ambition should be exempted from the attendants of all ambition. It aims at peculiar distinction, and must therefore excite peculiar opposition.

There never yet was a moral writer, however sincere, whose life and external manners corresponded in every respect, with the dignity of his writings; and who did not, in some degree, disappoint those who were led, by the admiration of his works, to approach his person and to seek his company and conversation in the scenes of familiar life. Too high an expectation is usually formed of him; and we do not consider, that in his book we survey only the picture of his mind; a picture, which is usually falsified and deformed by the crazy covering in which it is involved. When he sat down to write, his soul was probably in its proper state, all spiritual and all contemplative. No sooner has he laid aside his pen, and departed from his library, than he is necessarily engaged in the common pursuits of mankind; and displays, like them, many frailties, and many of those faults which he has very sincerely con-

demned in his moral dissertations. But when a spectator, unacquainted with life, manners, and the inconstancy of the human heart, beholds this difference between the writer's book and his behaviour, he, too precipitately and severely, indulges his censure, and learns to despise him whom, at a distance, he admired. Thus are enemies and calumniators multiplied, without any other failings on the part of the injured person, than the common imbecilities attendant on the most improved state of human nature. Foibles and errors, which would scarcely be noticed in others, are not only remarked in him, but remembered and related in company as matter of entertainment. Even his sincerity is doubted, and the writer is lowered by the imperfections of the man; though the imperfections are only the characteristics of humanity. If he has written against avarice or ambition, and happens, by honest industry or good fortune, to gain money or promotion, he is immediately represented as an hypocrite; notwithstanding he may have a family dependent upon him for support, or may have worn himself out in the service of the public, without seeking or gaining any other emolument than what may afford him an humble and quiet retreat in his old age.

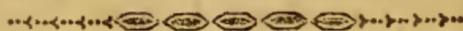
It is not easy to write, without sometimes appearing to assume an air of superiority. Moral precepts would often be ineffectual, if they were not enforced in a style, which, though by no means dogmatical, is yet, in a due degree, authoritative. The neighbours, and the familiar acquaintance of the moralist, who are accustomed to estimate importance by property, and to judge of the weight of a man's opinions by the weight of his purse, are offended to find him, who has not a vote in a county meeting, nor an acre of arable or pasture on the face of the earth, daring to express himself with as much freedom, as if he were animated with the consciousness of keeping a pack of fox hounds, or had considerable influence at the election of a knight of the shire. Nevertheless, if what he writes be true, truth being great, he who is armed with it will certainly prevail. Resistance or contradiction will be ineffectual. Nothing, therefore, remains but ridicule and detraction

to sap the fortress, which is proof against assault. The writer, therefore, is represented by the neighbouring gentlemen as an oddity, a melancholy recluse, and, perhaps, a little cracked; both he and his family are pitied by the humane ladies, for being perpetually confined to musty books, and total strangers to all true pleasure. Between the sippings of the tea, and the dealing of the cards, much criticism is displayed, in which, it is not easy to determine which is the more conspicuous, ignorance or ill-nature. It is not uncommon for ladies, who can hardly write their names, or indite a love letter, without Entrick's spelling dictionary, to decide on the merit of a celebrated poem, or any other new publication, with all the authority of an Aristotle, or the foolish virulence of a Zoilus. And who, indeed, can controvert a remark, however injudicious or malignant, when it proceeds from lips which add a grace and sweetness to all they utter? A veteran virgin may surely be allowed to console herself, in the intervals of scandal, with the severity of literary criticism. It must indeed be owned, that many lies and false censures on characters, are published to the world at the tea and the card-table; but theirs is this comfort, that whenever it is known whence they originate, they are suffered, by all candid and sensible persons, to drop, still-born, from their prolific parents. Yet, sometimes, they struggle into life, and are able to murder many a reputation before their own final extinction.

Every thing excellent is to be paid for at a certain price of inconvenience or difficulty. The calumnies of envy, ignorance, and impertinence, must be sustained by him who endeavours, by worthy means, to procure the esteem of the worthy. He must weigh the praises against the censures, and enjoy the predominant applause, while he neglects the severe remarks of impertinence or ill temper, as trifles lighter than the air. No truth has been more repeatedly uttered, than that nothing in this sublunary state is, in every respect, what we wish it. We must then learn to submit to necessity, and turn our attention from our evils, to our advantages. After all our complaints, Providence is usually found kind and impartial; and, if we possess but

humility and patience we shall discover under our most disagreeable situation, some copious source of placid enjoyment. The ill usage of the world will recoil from the heart, which is shielded with faith and innocence, as the billows are reverberated from the rock.

Whatever difficulties or injuries a writer may sustain, he may console himself, if he has always taken the part of truth and virtue, that he has employed the talents which God gave him, at least in an inoffensive and rational manner; and that it is probable, that many, in the great mass of mankind, may possess a kindred spirit, and at some favourable moment may receive pleasure and advantage from his lucubrations, even when he is united with the dust from which he was taken, and become equally insensible to censure or applause.



No. CXIV.

ON THE OBLIGATIONS WHICH LEARNING OWES TO THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

MANY among those who have made the greatest pretensions to learning, have professed themselves enemies to revelation. It is not, indeed, difficult to account for their rejection of a religion which is all humility, and by no means calculated to please such as consider the applause of men as the most valuable object, and who pride themselves on the infallibility of their own intellects. To the bold, the conceited, and the half-learned pretender to philosophy, who is weak enough to think his reason commensurate to every object which falls under its notice, that system, which requires the exercise of faith more than of reason, appears, as the scriptures themselves observe, foolishness. Pride, and a very silly kind of pride, such, indeed, as arises from narrow views of things, and an ignorance of human nature, is the foundation of infidelity.

It is, however, no less ungrateful, than foolish and wicked, in the sons of learning, to devote their abilities to the extermination of the national religion. For it is really true, that all the ancient learning which now remains, was preserved by some peculiar circumstances attending the propagation of Christianity; and, I believe, it will be thought very probable, that if the ancient languages, and the books written in them, had been entirely lost, the civilized nations of Europe would have still continued in a state of darkness and barbarism. Real superstition would then, indeed, have reigned triumphant; and the philosopher, as he calls himself, who is now writing down Christianity, would have been trembling at witches and goblins, spells and enchantments. He makes use of that very light, which has directed his steps in the paths of learning, to discover the most probable means of extinguishing the source of all illumination.

I was led into this train of reflections by the perusal of a charge of a late very learned archdeacon of London, in which he evinces, that our Saviour spoke most truly in more senses than one, when he said of himself, "I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD."

When any species of literary industry is considered as a duty founded on religion, care will be taken to preserve those parts of literature, which, from the indolence and infirmity of the human mind, might have been lost amidst revolutions, persecutions, distress, and the fury of conquest. In every difficulty, the Christians fled for comforts to their scriptures, and watched over them with peculiar vigilance. The Septuagint preserved, in the worst times, a knowledge of Greek; and the Latin translations, which were multiplied with avidity, rescued the Latin language from a total oblivion. Josephus was studied, and therefore preserved by the Christians more carefully than by the Jews; and the necessity of Greek for the understanding of the New-Testament, caused that language not only to be saved from the ravages of time, but also to be studied with devout attention.

The Fathers of the church wrote in Greek during three centuries; and at a time when the Latin language

was gradually decaying, the Latin fathers contributed something to its restoration; and wrote, as well as their coeval writers among the Pagans, not indeed with Augustan excellence, but still well enough to preserve a skill in the construction and vocabulary of the language.

A considerable knowledge of history, and something of chronology and philosophy, was necessary in studying and defending the scriptures, even in the earliest ages; and many Christians appeared well skilled in these parts of learning, at a time when they were generally neglected. Religion and conscience operated as a stimulus, when all other motives were insufficient to retard the mind in its swift progress down the declivity.

With a view, and solely with a view, to enable ecclesiastics to read and understand the scriptures, even in the most dismal night of ignorance, there were some places of instruction in cathedrals, and monasteries, in which the embers of literature, if we may venture to use that expression, were preserved from total extinction; in which a spark lay latent, which was one day to lighten the universe.

The little learning of those unfortunate ages, though it did not enable the persons who possessed it to taste and understand the beauties of the ancient poets and philosophers, yet gave them some idea of the value of books in general, and enabled them to transcribe with tolerable accuracy, even what they did not accurately understand. Thus were those inestimable treasures of all elegance and pleasing knowledge, the old Greek and Latin authors, handed down to ages more blessed; to those who were able to unlock them, and pour out their riches for the general utility. Nor are we indebted to Christians for the classics only; but also for the Roman law, and the codes of Justinian and Theodosius. Books, which were destroyed by ignorance and angry kings and conquerers, found a safe asylum in religious houses; and even Monkery, which has been justly reprobated as one of the follies of human nature, became, under the direction of Providence, the instrument of many of those blessings which now contribute greatly to the happiness and dignity of an enlightened empire.

The revival of learning, as it is termed, or its emancipation from churches and monasteries, and general diffusion over the world, is greatly owing to the efforts of ecclesiasties. There arose, in that auspicious morning, a constellation of polite and profound Christian scholars, whose effulgence has scarcely been outshone by any succeeding luminaries in the literary horizon.

The best scholars of modern times, not only in theology, but in every part of human learning, have been Christian divines. They were led by their pursuit of religious knowledge, into the collateral paths of philosophy, philology, and all elegant and useful literature.

It is to the piety of Christians that we owe the venerable foundations of schools and colleges; those institutions, which, though they have often been perverted, have still kept the light burning like the vestal fire, and handed the torch from one generation to another, like the runners in the torch-race. It was the love of Christ which taught those towers to rise on the banks of the Cam and the Isis, and planted seminaries of learning in every considerable town throughout the kingdom.

“To the gospel, then,” says the learned divine who suggested this subject, “and to those who embraced it, are due our grateful acknowledgments for the learning that is at present in the world. The infidels, educated in Christian countries, owe what learning they have to Christianity, and act the part of those brutes, which, when they have sucked the dam, turn about and strike her.”



No. CXV.

CURSORY REMARKS ON THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF DR. JORTIN.

THE mind feels a secret complacency in contemplating characters eminent for virtue, learning, and religion; and there are few who are not delighted,

as well as instructed, by the praises bestowed on departed merit. Notwithstanding the depravity of human nature, virtue still appears amiable to the vicious, and knowledge to the ignorant. Experience, indeed, seems to confirm the opinion of Plato, that goodness, exclusive of its collateral advantages, is possessed of charms irresistably captivating.

A review of the life of the late Dr. Jortin cannot but suggest the most pleasing reflections. As a poet, a divine, a philosopher, and a man, he served the cause of religion, learning, and morality. There are, indeed, many writers whose reputation is more diffused among the vulgar and illiterate, but few will be found whose names stand higher than Dr. Jortin's in the esteem of the judicious. His Latin poetry is classically elegant. His discourses and dissertations sensible, ingenious, and argumentative. His remarks on ecclesiastical history interesting and impartial. His sermons replete with sound sense and rational morality, expressed in a style simple, pure, and perspicuous.

Simplicity of style is a grace, which though it may not captivate at first sight, is sure in the end to give permanent satisfaction. It does not excite admiration, but it raises esteem. It does not warm to rapture, but it soothes to complacency. Uskiful writers seldom aim at this excellence. They imagine that what is natural and common cannot be beautiful. Every thing in their compositions must be strained, every thing affected: but Dr. Jortin had studied the ancients, and perhaps formed himself on the model of Xenophon. He wrote on subjects of morality, and morality is founded on reason, and reason is always cool and dispassionate. A florid declamation, embellished with rhetorical figures, and animated with pathetic description, may indeed amuse the fancy, and raise a transient emotion in the heart; but rational discourse alone can convince the understanding, and reform the judgment.

The first efforts of genius, have commonly been in poetry. Unrestrained by the frigidity of argument, and the confinement of rules, the young mind gladly indulges the flights of imagination. Cicero, as well as many other ancient philosophers, orators and historians,

is known to have sacrificed to the Muses in his earlier productions. Dr. Jortin adds to the number of those who confirm the observation. In his *Lusus Poetici*, one of the first of his works, are united classical language, tender sentiment, and harmonious verse. Among the modern Latin poets, there are few who do not yield to Dr. Jortin. His sapphics, on the story of Bacchus and Ariadne, are easy, elegant, and poetical. The little ode, in which the calm life of the philosopher is compared to the gentle stream gliding through a silent grove, is highly pleasing to the mind, and is perfectly elegant in the composition. The Lyrics are indeed all excellent. The poem on the Immortality of the Soul is ingenious, poetical, and an exact imitation of the style of Lucretius. In short, the whole collection is such as would scarcely have disgraced a Roman in the age of an Augustus.

Time, if it does not cool the fire of imagination, certainly strengthens the powers of the judgment. As our author advanced in life, he cultivated his reason rather than his fancy, and desisted from his efforts in poetry, to exert his abilities in the disquisitions of criticism. His observations on one of the fathers of English poetry, need but to be more generally known, in order to be more generally approved.

Classical productions are rather amusing than instructive. His works of this kind are all juvenile, and naturally flowed from a classical education. These, however, were but preparatory to his higher designs, and soon gave way to the more important enquiries which were peculiar to his profession. His discourses on the Christian Religion, one of the first fruits of his theological pursuits, abound with that sound sense and solid argument, which entitle their author to a rank very near the celebrated Grotius.

His dissertations are equally remarkable for taste, learning, originality, and ingenuity.

His remarks on Ecclesiastical history are full of manly sense, ingenious structures, and profound erudition. The work is highly beneficial to mankind, as it represents that superstition which disgraced human nature, in its proper light, and gives a right sense of the advantages derived

from religious reformation. He every where expresses himself with peculiar vehemence against the infatuation of bigotry and fanaticism. Convinced that true happiness is founded on the right use of the reasoning powers, he makes it the scope of all his religious works, to lead mankind from the errors of imagination, to embrace the dictates of dispassionate reason.

Posthumous publications, it has been remarked, are usually inferior in merit to those which are published in an author's life-time. And, indeed, the opinion seems plausible; as it may be presumed, that an author's reason for not publishing his works, is a consciousness of their inferiority. The Sermons of Dr. Jorton are, however, an exception. Good sense and sound morality appear in them, not indeed dressed out in the meretricious ornaments of a florid style, but in all the manly force, and simple graces of natural eloquence. The same caprice, which raises to reputation those trifling discourses which have nothing to recommend them but a prettiness of fancy, and a flowery language, will again consign them to oblivion: but the sermons of Dr. Jorton will always be read with pleasure and edification.

The transition from an author's writings to his life, is frequently disadvantageous to his character. Dr. Jorton, however, when no longer considered as an author, but as a man, is so far from being lessened in our opinion, that he excites still greater esteem and applause. A simplicity of manners, an inoffensive behaviour, an universal benevolence, candour, modesty, and good sense were his characteristics. Though his genius, and love of letters, led him to choose the still vale of sequestered life, yet was his merit conspicuous enough to attract the notice of a certain primate who did honour to episcopacy. Unknown by personal acquaintance, and unrecommended by the solicitation of friends, or the interposition of power, he was presented, by Archbishop Herring, to a valuable benefice in London, as a reward for his exertions as a scholar and a divine. Some time after he became chaplain to a late bishop of London, who gave him the vicarage of Kensington, and appointed him archdeacon of his

diocese. This was all the preferment he had, nor had he this till he was advanced in life. He did not, however, repine. Thus he speaks of himself. "Not to his erudition—but to his constant love and pursuit of it—he owes a situation and a station better than he expected, and as good as he ought to desire."



No. CXVI.

ON THE UNION OF EXTRAVAGANCE IN TRIFLES AND VICE, WITH PARSIMONY IN ALL THE TRULY HONOURABLE, USEFUL, AND NECESSARY EXPENCES.

NO appearance in the moral world is more remarkable, than that combination which is often observed in the same character, of avarice with profusion, of meanness with liberality. Vanity, selfishness, and a want of serious principles, are striking circumstances in the manners of the present age; and as vanity leads to expensive ostentation, so selfishness, and a want of principle, have a natural tendency to produce covetousness and rapacity. Very few restraints are allowed to operate on the modes of acquiring or of saving money except the fear of detection. There is scarcely any meanness or baseness to which many persons, who make the greatest shew in dress, furniture, and equipage, are not ready to submit under the certainty of concealment.

The time has been, when a great family, residing in a great house of a village, was considered as a blessing to all the neighbouring country. The poor were employed in adorning and improving the grounds all about it. The table in the parlour was always open for the reception of the gentlemen who resided within ten miles of the house; and the kitchen afforded warmth and plenty to the poor and industrious tenant or labourer. The rich man resided in the house of his fathers, and spent his money among those who earned it

from him by the sweat of their brows. But, according to the modern system of fashionable manners, such a kind of life would be deemed intolerably dull, as well as antiquated and vulgar. The family, therefore, spend as little time as possible at the noble seat of their ancestors, but hasten to the sea-side or the watering-places, where they hire a little hut, or cabin, and lavish their money on strangers, without any returns of gratitude, or of rational satisfaction. The farmer, who lives in their native village, returning weary from his plough, shakes his head as he passes the cold kitchen, and turns with pity and contempt from the smokeless roof. The servants are pinched, and even envy the comparative plenty and independence of the next cottages. The whole country rings with reports of the meanness and poor living at the great house. In the mean time, the lord and lady, the baronet or esquire, with their respective families, are figuring, as it is called, in all the profusion of emulous extravagance, at Bath, or Brighthelmstone. While they grudge the bread and cheese which are consumed in their own house, or refuse to contribute to a brief, or any charitable institution among their poor neighbours at home, they subscribe most liberally, to an infamous master of the ceremonies, and to every fashionable amusement; they give feasts to strangers whom they shall never see any more, and whose principal recommendation is, that they appear, from their external splendor, not to want any assistance. Their vanity is gratified in seeing the great and the rich at their table; and what signifies it, they think, if the wretches at home, whom nobody knows, starve and rot on the dunghills whence they originated. They grudge the poor even small beer in their own houses: but drench every rich guest who visits them at their lodgings with champagne and burgundy. How shall we account for such inconsistency but by supposing that these personages possess large estates and little souls, immense vanity and diminutive understandings; and that the badness is only exceeded by the meanness of their hearts?

It is easy to observe persons of this description, who will not hesitate to expend many hundreds in dress

alone, but who, when a book is praised in their presence, will spare no trouble in finding somebody of whom they may borrow it, alledging in excuse, that books are so dear, it is impossible to buy every thing that comes out. The price of the book shall be three shillings, and it shall contain amusement for three weeks, and yet they will not buy it because it would be extravagant; though they will not scruple to expend three guineas, any night in the week, for three hours pastime in a party at the public places of diversion. The milliners, the hair dressers, the perfumers bills, shall amount to many hundreds a year; but five pounds expended at the bookseller's would be downright prodigality. Guineas, flow without restraint, in subscriptions to balls, concerts, assemblies; to dancing-masters, music-masters, and to players: but when the parish lecture's book is brought, or the Marine Society, or the Magdalen, or the Infirmary, or the contribution for the Release of Prisoners for small debts, or the sufferers in Barbadoes, or the prisoners of war, are recommended as fit objects to receive their superfluities, they immediately look grave, complain their taxes rise, and rents fall; and assert, with an unfeeling heart, that these are not times to admit of any expences which are not absolutely necessary.

The education of their children ought certainly to constitute one of the first cares of the rich; and no reasonable expence should be withheld in the accomplishment of it. But there are few great families in which this is not one of the smallest articles of annual expenditure. From the butler, and lady's maid, from the gentleman and footman, down even to the groom and the scullion, the wages are, probably, one, two, three, or four-score pounds a year, with board and perquisites, according to the dignity of the respectable personages; but if the superintendant of education is allowed only the wages of the body coach-man, though he is obliged to feed and lodge young master, and furnish him with many necessaries as well as learning, he is reckoned a fortunate man, and is doubly happy, if his bill is not canvassed and curtailed. I know a family, in which the butler annually receives just four times the sum which

many persons of fortune pay, at schools of repute, for the board and education of the heir apparent.

Indeed, in all necessary and laudable expences, a degree of frugality is displayed which approaches to extreme meanness and parsimony. The poor tradesmen who supply the ordinary articles of domestic consumption, are not only denied their price, but, after every abatement, are obliged to wait an unreasonable time for their money. So far from possessing an inclination to be generous, it grieves such persons to be just. But though they who furnish commodities, without which life cannot be supported, are ill-used and defrauded, whoever can supply any circumstance of dress, equipage, luxury, by which selfishness and vanity may be gratified, are profusely and immediately rewarded. Men of letters, or ingenuity in the professions, are kept at a distance; but the door is always open to players, and to signiors and signioras. Chaplains and tutors are out of fashion; but their place is abundantly supplied by fiddlers, pipers, caperers, and scaramouches. A dancing, or music-master, who can enable the young ladies to display a fine finger or a fine foot, is immediately considered as the best friend of the family, made a companion, invited to the table, paid extravagantly, and complimented with thanks and presents; neither is it wonderful, if the young ladies fall in love with these fine gentlemen, and marry them; since they appear, both in their own and their parents eyes, to possess the summit of all human excellence. As to the person who may be employed to form their minds, he is usually engaged from the recommendation of cheapness, and is for the most part, made the object of ridicule, because he has not the air of Noverre and Gallini.

A fortune, considered in its true light, is a sacred trust, and intended to promote, not only the happiness of its possessor, but of all with whom he is connected, and who deserve his beneficence. The time has been, when the poor were thought to have a claim upon that superfluity, which is now lavished on the mean ministers to luxury, vice, and vain ostentation. We read in the tablets in our churches, and in the records of all charitable foundations, that people of the highest fashion

were of opinion to be good was essential to the character of true gentility. But now, if we were to ask the representative of a rich family, where he had bestowed the superfluities of the last year, he might answer, that he had deposited some share of it in the pocket of an Italian, who had the extraordinary merit of being able to stand longer on one leg than the rest of the two-legged and unfeathered race. He might answer, that he had lost it at the gaming table; spent it in the tavern and brothel; sported it away at New-market; lavished it on dogs, horses, jockies; and left the poor and deserving to the care of Providence.

That Providence, whose blessings he abuses and perverts, seldom fails to punish his ingratitude. For as all his external circumstances have more in them of show than of solidity, so also have all his boasted enjoyments, and all that happiness, which he thinks to derive from riches, independently of their proper application,



No. CXVII.

ON A TASTE FOR THE CULTIVATION OF
FLOWERS, AND BEAUTIFUL
SHRUBS AND TREES.

BEAUTY of every kind, is formed to captivate, and there is this peculiar advantage in contemplating the beauties of vegetable nature, that we may permit our hearts to be ensnared by them without apprehensions of a dangerous or a dishonorable servitude. A taste for the beauties of vegetation is the mark of a pure and innocent mind, and, at the same time, one of the best preservatives of purity and innocence. It diverts the attention from the turbulent scenes of folly, and superinduces a placid tranquility, highly favourable to the gentler virtues, and to the permanency of our most refined enjoyments.

I have often been surprised to find those, who possessed a very acute susceptibility of artificial or literary grace, and were powerfully affected by the beauties of a poem, a piece of sculpture, or a painting, not at all

more sensible of the charms of a tree, or a flowret, than a common and inelegant spectator. They have dwelt with rapture on a fine description of the Vale of Tempe, they have entered into all the delight which a Shakspeare or a Milton meant to communicate in their enchanting pictures of flowery and sylvan scenes, and yet can walk through a wood, or tread on a bank of violets and primroses, without appearing to be affected with any peculiar pleasure. This is certainly the effect of a superficial judgment; for there is no truth of which philosophers have been longer convinced, than that the realities of nature infinitely exceed the most perfect productions of imitating art.

The beauty of colour, though justly esteemed subordinate to that of shape, is yet found to delight the eye more immediately, and more universally. When colour and shape are united in perfection, he who can view them with insensibility, must resign all pretensions to delicacy of perception. Such an union has been usually effected by nature in the formation of a flower.

There is scarcely a single object in all the vegetable world, in which so many agreeable qualities are combined, as in the queen of flowers, the rose. Nature certainly meant to regale the senses of her favourite with an object, which presents to him at once freshness, fragrancv, colour and shape. The very soul seems to be refreshed on the bare recollection of the pleasure which the senses receive in contemplating, in a fine vernal morning, the charms of the pink, the violet, the honey suckle, the hyacinth, the narcissus, the jonquil, the rocket, the tulip, and a thousand others, in every variety of figure, scent and hue; for nature is no less remarkable for the accuracy and beauty of her works, than for variety and profusion. Defects are always discovered in the works of art when they are examined with a microscope; but a close examination of a leaf of a flower, is like taking off a veil from the face of beauty. The finest needle ever polished, and pointed by the most ingenious artist, appears, when it is viewed by the solar microscope, quite obtuse; while the sting of a bee, however magnified, still retains all

its original acuteness of termination. The serrated border of the petal of a flower, and the fringe on the wing of a fly, display an accuracy of delineation which no pencil ever yet could rival. The taste of the florist has not, indeed, been much admired, or generally aspired at; while that of the connoisseur in painting, is considered as a mark of elegance of character, and an honourable distinction. Yet, surely, it is an inconsistency to be transported with the workmanship of a poor mortal, and feel no raptures in surveying those highly finished pictures, in which it is easy to trace the finger of the Deity.

The poets have given us most luxurious descriptions of gardens and of rural scenery; and though they are thought by some to have exceeded reality, they have, indeed, scarcely equalled it. Enter a modern shrubbery, formed of a selection of the most agreeable flowering shrubs, and consider, whether there is any thing in the garden of Alcinous, in the fields of Elysium, in Milton's Paradise, to be compared with the intermixture of the lilac, the syringa, the laburnum, the double blossomed cherry, peach, and almond; the rubinia, the jessamine, the moss-rose, the magnolia, and a great number of others less common, but not of greater, though perhaps of equal beauty. As we walk under clusters of flowers, white as snow, tinged with gold, purple as the grape, blue as the expanse of heaven, and blushing like the cheek of youth, we are led to imagine ourselves in fairy land, or in another and a better world; where every delicate sense is delighted, and all around breathes fragrance, and expands beauty; where the heat seems to participate in the joy of laughing nature. Groves and gardens have, indeed, been always supposed to soothe the mind into a placid temper, peculiarly favourable to the indulgence of contemplation.

The excellent taste which now prevails in gardening, usually combines the shrubbery and the grove. The tall trees of the forest, constitute the back ground in the living landscape, and shrubs, beneath and before them, form the underwood, in a delightful resemblance to the natural coppice, and the unculti-

vated forest. The plane tree is one of the first beauties among those which are now most frequently planted in our gardens. Its large leaf, and permanent verdure, render it peculiarly fitted to afford a shade. I always consider it as a classical tree, for the ancient writers often mention it; and some of the finest philosophical dialogues of antiquity passed under the cool retreat of its broad and vivid foliage. Socrates sought no other theatre than the turf that grew under the plane tree, on the banks of the Ilissus. The weeping-willow, that droops over the babbling stream, constitutes one of those fine beauties which partake of the melancholy and romantic. Such, indeed, are the charms of its luxuriant branches, that, when properly situated, it is of itself an enchanting picture. Beautiful as are all the features of the modern garden, I should not hesitate to allot the first place in an estimate of horticultural graces to the weeping-willow. The weeping-birch is at all times pleasing, and a most delightful object in winter. Observe yonder tall stem rising from the interstices of a craggy rock, covered with a rind white and glossy like silver, and drooping with ten thousand fine twigs, so attenuated as to appear almost capillary. View it when sprinkled with hoar frost, or with snow, and if you have a soul capable of being charmed with natural beauty, you will be sensibly affected at the sight with a sweet complacency. An old oak is not often found in our gardens, because of its tardy vegetation; but whenever it appears in them, it produces all the effect of graceful majesty, and one may contemplate it for hours with still new delight. The delicate acacia, the conical poplar of Lombardy, the flowery chestnut, the soft lime, the elegant mountain ash, the aspiring fir, the glossy laurel, these all form so various and delightful pictures that while I am permitted to expatiate over the lawn, and penetrate the mazes of the wood and garden, I shall not repine that it is not my lot to saunter in the picture galleries of a palace.

The taste for plantation prevails greatly in this country, and it ought to be encouraged, as it is a never-failing source of pleasure to the planter, and of improvement to the community. But it is to be hoped, that

while we plant the tree for ornament, we shall not forget to drop the acorn, and raise that heart of oak, which bears an analogy to the bravery of the people; and has ever been to this land, *et præsidium et decus*, both a bulwark and a beauty.



No. CXVIII.

ON THE CHARACTER OF ADDISON AS A
POET

THE lustre of a great name not only sets off real beauties to the greatest advantage, but adds a grace to deformity, and converts a defect to an excellence. The enthusiastical admirers of a favourite author, like ardent lovers, view those objects with rapture, which cause in others indifference or disgust. Without considering the inequalities of the same genius, and the diversities of subjects, they are led to conclude, from the excellence of one part of an author's works, that all are excellent; and that whatever bears his signature, is genuine wit, and just taste.

I know not whether even Mr. Addison, who is so deservedly esteemed the honour of our nation, was not indebted for a small part of his reputation to the blind bigotry of prejudice. On any other supposition, I know not how he could have been admired as a very eminent poet. The dispassionate temperature which constituted a solid judgment, and qualified him for the cool disquisitions of criticism and morality, rendered him incapable of that animated spirit which is the soul of poetry. But the reader is unwilling to believe, that so accurate a critic, and so correct a writer, is himself faulty; and, therefore, when he passes from his prose to his poetry, and observes a manifest inferiority and deficiency of merit in the latter, he rather inclines to distrust his own judgment than the abilities of the author. Reader after reader has toiled through the same dull rhimes, perhaps blind to their faults, or, if sensible of their defects, yet inclined to join in their praise, in opposition

to conviction, from a dread of the imputation of a depraved taste. Had not a veneration for his name prevented critics from speaking their real sentiments, though Addison would, as a moral essayist, most justly have been called the Socrates, Plato, or Xenophon of his age; yet he would never have been esteemed the first of poets.

It would be injustice, while we inspect these volumes, to pass over in silence, the elegant poem which is prefixed to the works of Addison, on the death of their author. The melancholy flow of the verse is well adapted to express the tenderness of the sentiments. The beauty of the imagery, and the energy of the expression, entitle this little piece to a very respectable rank among the elegiac compositions of the English writers. It was for a long time little regarded; but the attention lately paid to it, and the commendations bestowed on it, are proofs that literary merit, however unnoticed for a time, through accident, prejudice, or party, is sure to receive the applause it deserves from impartial posterity.

At the end of the verses of Addison to Mr. Dryden, we are told, that the author was but twenty-two years of age when he wrote them. Whether the age was affixed to extenuate the imperfections, or to enhance the merits of the poem, certain it is, that both these intentions are frustrated by its extreme insignificance and futility. The production is unworthy the age of twenty-two. Mr. Pope is known to have written his pastorals, which infinitely exceed the versification of Addison, at sixteen. And Milton acquired an elegance in Latin verse at an earlier period. The thoughts in this piece are not striking, the style is contemptible, and the negligence in the rhyme alone would, in the present refinement of taste, consign the work to oblivion.

That all his pieces are upon a level with this, cannot be asserted. That some of them abound with grand conceptions, and have many good lines, must be confessed. But allowing Addison all the merit in his poetry, which candour, or even partiality in his favour can allow; he never can be justly esteemed one of the first poets of the nation. I never heard that Socrates

increased his fame by his poetical version of *Æsop's Fables*, and the best prose-writer in the best age of Rome wrote the line, "*O fortunatam, natam, me consule, Romanam.*" The truth is, nature usually bestows her gifts with a prudent liberality even to her favourites. One might on this occasion apply Martial's, "*Hoc Ciceronis habes.*" This character of a bad poet you have in common with the great Cicero.

To oppose opinions universally received, is to incur the imputation of vanity, ignorance, and want of taste. But as every individual has a right to private judgment, and may offer his sentiments to others, while he does it with modesty, professes a possibility of mistake, and keeps his mind open to conviction, I have ventured to advance an opinion against the poetical merit of Addison; regardless how it may alarm those who submit their judgments to the directions of others, and who pay an implicit obedience to authority.



No. CXIX.

THE FOLLY OF BRINGING UP CHILDREN
TO A LEARNED PROFESSION, WITH-
OUT THE PROBABILITY OF PRO-
VIDING THEM WITH A
COMPETENCY.

THAT admiration is the effect of ignorance, is a truth universally confessed; and nothing so forcibly excites the wonder of the the illiterate Plebeian, as the character of profound erudition.

Dazzled by the splendor of literary honours, many an honest parent has prevented his son from acquiring a fortune behind the counter, to see him starve in a pulpit.

These reflections were occasioned by meeting an old friend at a coffee-house one evening last week. His looks were meager, his dress shabby, and he sufficiently apologized for the rustiness of his coat, by the following narrative:

“ My father,” said he, after some preliminary conversation, “ was a shoemaker of tolerable business in London; a very honest man, and very much given to reading godly books, whenever he could steal a moment from the lap-stone and the last. As I was the only child, he took great delight in me, and used frequently to say, that he hoped in time to see me Archbishop of Canterbury, and no such great matters neither; for as to my parentage, I was as good as many a one that had worn a mitre; and he would make me as good a *scholar* too, or it should go hard with him.

“ My destination to the church was thus unalterably fixed before I was five years old; and in consequence of it, I was put to a grammar school in the city, whence, after a thousand perils of the cane, and perils of the rod, I went to the University on an exhibition of fifteen pounds a year, which my father obtained from one of the city companies, with no small difficulty. So scanty an allowance would by no means defray the enormous expences of university education; and my father, whose pride would not let me appear meaner than my companions, very readily agreed to pay me forty pounds out of the yearly profits of his trade, and to debar himself many innocent gratifications, in order to accomplish in me the grand object of all his ambition.

“ In consequence of my father’s desire, that I should complete the full term of academical education, I did not go into orders till I was of seven years standing, and had taken the degree of Master of Arts. I was therefore incapable of receiving any pecuniary emoluments from my studies, till I was six and twenty. Then, however, I was resolved to make a bold push, and to free my father from the burthen of supporting me with half the profits of his labours. The old man was eager that I should attempt to get some kind of preferment; not, as he would generously say, that he wanted to withdraw his assistance, but that he thought it was high time to begin to look up at the Bishoprick.

“ I hastened to London as the most ample field for
“ the display of my abilities, and the acquisition of
“ money and fame. Soon after my arrival, I heard of
“ a vacant Lectureship; and though I was an entire
“ stranger to every one of the parishioners, I resolved
“ to trust my cause to honest endeavours, and a sedu-
“ lous canvass. I shall not trouble you with an enu-
“ meration of the several indignities I suffered (for I
“ had not lost my university pride) from being under
“ the necessity to address, with the most abject suppli-
“ cation, chandlers, barbers, and green grocers. Suf-
“ fice it to acquaint you, that myself, and another
“ young clergyman of regular education, appeared, on
“ the day of election, to have but seventeen votes be-
“ tween us; and that a methodistical enthusiast, who
“ had once been a carpenter, bore away the prize with
“ a majority of a hundred and twenty.

“ Though disappointed, I was not dejected; and I
“ applied to a certain Rector for his Curacy, the
“ duty of which, consisted of prayers twice a day, a
“ sermon on Sundays, and innumerable burials, christen-
“ ings, and weddings. I thought myself happy, how-
“ ever, in being offered forty guineas a year, with-
“ out surplus, or surplice fees; but how I was chagrined,
“ on being told by the Rector, on the very first Sunday
“ I went to officiate, that I need not trouble myself, as
“ another gentleman had undertaken the whole duty
“ at forty pounds!

“ I waited now a considerable time in expectation of
“ something to fall; but heard of nothing in which
“ there was the least probability of success, unsupported
“ as I was by friends, and unknown to fame. At last,
“ I was informed by an acquaintance, that a certain
“ Clergyman in the city was about to resign his
“ Lectureship, and that he would probably resign in my
“ favour, if I were early enough in my application.
“ I made all the haste I possibly could to reach this
“ gentleman before his resignation; and found very
“ little difficulty in persuading him to intercede in my
“ favour. In short, his endeavours, joined to my own,
“ secured the Lectureship, and I was unanimously cho-
“ sen. The electors, however expressed a desire, that

“ I would quit my place of residence, which was
“ a long way off, and live in the parish. To this re-
“ quest I consented; and immediately fixed myself in
“ a decent family, where I lodged and boarded for
“ fifty pounds a year: and as I was not so ambitious
“ as my father, I congratulated myself on the happy
“ event, and sat down contented and satisfied. But,
“ alas! how was I confounded, when my collectors
“ brought the annual contribution, to find it amount
“ to no more than an exact sum of twenty one pounds
“ two shillings and three-pence three farthings! I was
“ under the immediate necessity of discharging my
“ lodging, resigning my preferment, and quietly de-
“ camping with the loss of no inconsiderable sum.

“ I’hus, Sir,” said he, “ have I now for these
“ twenty years been tossed about in the world, without
“ any fixed residence, and without any certain prospect
“ of my bread. I must not however complain, as I
“ am well assured there are many in the metropolis
“ in situations very similar to mine. Yet sometimes,
“ I own, I cannot help being foolish enough to ima-
“ gine, that I might, perhaps, have been happier,
“ and I am sure I could have been richer, had I been
“ brought up to my paternal awl and last. My poor
“ father died about two years ago, and I have reason
“ to think, his disappointment and sorrow for my ill-
“ success hastened his dissolution.

“ I now support myself tolerably well in the capacity
“ of, what the world ludicrously calls, a Hackney
“ Parson. And though I do not get quite so much
“ as a journeyman shoemaker, I make shift to keep
“ soul and body together; and I thank God for that.
“ If, Sir, you could recommend me, here is my ad-
“ dress, up four pair of stairs.”——

He was proceeding, but he had too powerfully ex-
cited my sympathy; and after consoling him to the best
of my power, I took my leave of him, not without
severe reflections on those parents who, to indulge a
childish vanity, bring up their offspring to misery and
want.

No. CXX.

ON DECENCY, AS THE ONLY MOTIVE OF OUR
APPARENT VIRTUES, AND PARTICULAR-
LY OF OUR RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOUR.

WHATSOEVER may be the vices of this age, it cannot be said to be particularly distinguished by hypocrisy. Selfishness reigns triumphant; and men, for the most part, pursue whatever they think conducive to their own pleasure or interest, without regarding appearances, or the opinions of others, except, indeed, when their interest or their pleasure are immediately concerned.

Even they who fill offices of confidence and honour in the community, are, in this age fond of divesting themselves of that external dignity with which the wisdom of our ancestors judged it right to surround them. They descend with a peculiar kind of pride from their natural or political eminence, and will not even display the appearance of those virtues and abilities which are absolutely necessary in their offices and stations. They ostentatiously exhibit a carelessness and profligacy in their conversation and behaviour, which, if they really possess, ought to displace them from their rank, and strip them of their blushing honours.

In those who fill public offices, or who are fixed in the more important professions, a regard to external decency is itself a virtue. But in truth, if the present disordered state of things would permit, none ought to fill those offices and professions, whose regard to decency does not arise from a regard to virtue.

There are, indeed, many who are esteemed good sort of persons, but whose goodness is unprincipled, and appears to arise solely from a regard to external decorum, or, what is called, the saving of appearances. And this motive, poor and contemptible as it is, in comparison with rational principles arising from con-

viction, is very often the only avowed motive for the regular performance of all external duties; but more particularly of those which concern religion. The following imaginary transaction will, perhaps, suggest an idea of that poor and political decency which it is thought a very extraordinary effort of virtue to maintain. Let us then invent a scene of fiction by way of exemplification.

“We must have a Fast Day soon,” says the statesman, for the Americans have had one already.” “It is unnecessary,” replies the Privy Counsellor in the jockey dress, aiming at a wretched pun, “it is all a farce.” “Between friends,” subjoins the Statesman, “I am not fonder of such formalities than you are; but you know it is decent, and we must conform, externally at least, to the prejudices of the mob.” “It is decent, my Lord,” re-echoes the bench of Bishops.

“There is a Sermon preached to day before the House of Lords,” says a member. “True,” says another, “but I vote it a Bore; and besides, I am engaged to see a fine bitch pointer that I think of buying;” “well,” resumes the other, “but let us make a party of two or three to church, because it is decent.” “We beg, my Lords,” softly whispers an episcopal voice, “you would not put yourselves to the smallest inconvenience, for half a dozen of us have determined, though we have a thousand engagements, to postpone them an hour or two for the sake of decency. Decency, my Lord, must supersede every consideration.” “Will you go to church, my Lord Duke?” says one, lowly bowing to his patron. “No; I think it decent, but you will be there on that account; and as I am engaged to-day at billiards, I must beg to be excused:—but I hope there will be enough there to make a decent appearance.”

Among the gay senators of the British empire it has been observed, that very few, of late, have displayed in this instance even that subordinate virtue of which we speak, a regard to external decency. Westminster Abbey, indeed, is not a place to be frequented for

pleasure by those who chiefly shine in the stand at a horse-race. One or two officers however do attend a sermon officially, and a few others for the sake of decency; but the knowing ones consider the whole business, to express their own ideas in their own language, as a cursed lounge. This business, therefore, and many others of a most solemn, sacred, and venerable nature, being considered merely as incumbrances by the jolly part, which is the greater part; they are utterly neglected, or attended by a few only whose interest compels them to have a regard to decency.

Our religion teaches us to separate one day out of seven for religious purposes. But many of the wise men who were born to be our English Solons and Lycurgi, or, in other words, who happened to be descended from peers, and therefore sit as hereditary legislators, consider the institution merely as a foolish superstition; and therefore spend the Sabbath, like the charming people abroad, at cards, and in dissipation, and very much lament those gross prejudices of the common people, which render it decent and prudent not to open the theatres, and enliven the horrid dulness of the Seventh day, by public diversions. Even mighty good sort of people, as they are usually called, hesitate not to confess, that a regard to external decency is one of the chief motives of their regular conduct in observing the Sabbath, and other virtuous practices of our forefathers.

It would not be difficult to trace this motive of decency in many of the apparent virtues, which display themselves with no little ostentation, in every department of human life. But it is really better to pay that deference to virtue which arises from assuming the appearances, than by impudent and avowed contempt of it, to injure others by the example. To have merely a regard to decency in common life, and in a wicked and unprincipled age, becomes in some degree, virtuous. We will not, therefore, expose this unsound virtue to severe censure, except when it appears in religion, where, whatever appearances are insincere, constitute hypocrisy, of a most detestable kind; hypocrisy, founded on self-interest. It is the man of *decent* character (and with this view alone he is decent) who

rises to preferment, and then laughs in his lawn sleeves at the humble Christian in tattered crape, who is too sincere to be political, too sound in the inner man to want or admit the varnish of the whited sepulchre.

Pope has said that Secker was decent, and that Rundle had a heart. Whether the censure or the praise was just, is not mine to determine. All I shall remark on the passage is, that though decency may smooth the way to courts, and insinuate itself into the highest seats of preferment, it is a heart only which is capable of deriving from the success, a pure and solid satisfaction. Though decency without sincerity may be approved by narrow politicians, and even gain the applause of the multitude by deceiving them, yet let not the hypocrite triumph, but remember, that there is one before whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden.



No. CXXI.

ON THE ANIMOSITIES OCCASIONED IN THE COUNTRY BY THE GAME LAWS.

IN a late paper on the disagreements of a country neighbourhood, I purposely omitted one of the most fruitful causes of them, intending to consider it in a paper by itself, consistently with its extensive and important operation. I believe it will be allowed by all who have made remarks, that the individuals of this nation are more seriously and inveterately divided by disputes about the Game, than by controversies, which make much more noise in the world on the subjects of politics or religion. What remains among us of savageness and brutality is chiefly preserved by the mean and selfish greediness of those who possess a thousand peculiar advantages, and who yet meanly contend for an exclusive right to destroy the Game; that unfructuary property; which the Creator intended to be possessed by the first occupant, like the air, light, and water.

Some restraints however of that kind, which tend to prevent the poor labourer from wasting his valuable time, might, perhaps, be neither unjust, nor, in any respect attended with inconvenience. But the Game Laws, as they now subsist in England, are a disgrace to the noble fabric of our free constitution. They are illiberal in their nature; they originated in slavery, and they lead to tyranny. It is remarked by Burn, and the great commentator on our legal system, that, in one statute only for the preservation of the Game, there are not less than six blunders in grammar, besides other mistakes; so that one is led to conclude, that this part of our boasted code was drawn up by a committee of boorish country esquires, and stupid fox-hunters. Indeed, the whole body of the Game Laws is replete with perplexity, absurdity, and contradiction. What can be more ridiculous, than that the legislature, of a mighty empire should require one hundred a year as a qualification to shoot a poor partridge, and only forty shillings to vote for a Senator? "There is another offence," says Blackstone, "so constituted by a variety of acts of parliament, which are so numerous and so confused, and the crime itself of so questionable a nature, that I shall not detain the reader with many observations thereupon. And yet it is an offence which the sportsmen of England seem to think of the highest importance; and a matter, perhaps the only one, of general and national concern: associations having been formed all over the kingdom to prevent its destructive progress; I mean the offence of destroying such beasts and fowls as are ranked under the denomination of Game." Upon the whole it may be truly said, that the Englishman, who has a regard for the honour of his country, and sense enough to see the mean and arbitrary spirit of the Game Laws, and the nonsense of the Letter, must hide his face in confusion when he considers how much time and attention have been spent upon them by the British Legislature.

Rural diversions certainly constitute a very pleasing and proper amusement for all ranks above the lowest. Every man who has a just claim to the title of gen-

tleman, or, indeed, who is capable of spending his time in amusement, without injuring the public or his own family, ought to be suffered to partake of them. If he gives up his hours, his labour, and his thoughts, to the pursuit, he has earned a right to the object, since the object is of a nature that cannot be appropriated while alive and at liberty. A fellow-creature is agreeably amused and benefited, and no man robbed, since the bird that flies in the air no more belongs to the tenant of the mansion-house, than the sun-beam which equally shines on the cottage and palace. Poor is the opulence, and little the grandeur, which shews a disposition which would undoubtedly engross, if it were possible, the light and the air.

With respect to the matter of a trespass, it is certain, that a Lord of the Manor is no less liable to be prosecuted for it on his own manor, than any other person, whether qualified or unqualified. It shews therefore, the ignorance as well as the arbitrary disposition of these petty princes, when they claim the privilege of prowling for prey, without controul on their neighbour's land, and of excluding all others from their own. In short, it is extremely doubtful what privileges the lord of the manor possesses; and whether he has a better right to hunt and shoot without a particular grant from the king, than the meanest subject whom he bullies and browbeats. The contemptible laws which have been made on this business, certainly want illustration and amendment. Indeed they ought to be torn out of the statute book, and the memory of them, like that of feudal ignorance and slavery, execrated.

There is a practice particularly mean and oppressive, which very much prevails in this selfish age, among the engrossers of that part of the creation which God and nature have constituted free as the seas and the winds. They do not consider the pursuit of Game in the liberal light of a gentleman-like diversion, but view the hare and the partridge as provender for the table at once genteel and cheap. They therefore seldom give themselves the trouble to join in the chace, or carry the gun over the furrows; but select some idle peasant, who, by poaching, has acquired a skill in the arts of

destroying Game; clothe him in green plush, and send him to provide pheasants, and bid defiance to his superiors, whenever the master has company to dine with him, and wishes to save an article in the butcher's account. This green-coated hero, who is usually one of the greatest scoundrels in the parish, sallies forth under the protection of the lord or lady of the manor; and if he meets a curate, or an apothecary, or a reputable tradesman, or even a neighbouring lord of the manor, boldly insults them, threatens to shoot their dogs, or seize their fowling-pieces; and justifies all his insolence by alledging, that what he does or says is all by his master's order. Appeal to that master, and, probably, the insults are aggravated; or, if he pretends to uncommon affability, he will allow that the fellow is apt to be a little foul-mouthed; but, upon the whole, is a very faithful servant. The low wretch himself might, indeed, be punished both for his trespass and his ill usage; but though he insulted his prosecutors in the field, he is ready, like all upstart and petty potentates, to bend on his knees for mercy, and usually disarms the generous by pleading a wife and six children. I know not which ought to predominate, compassion for the poor deluded peasant, or contempt for his employer. It is surely enough that the rich man claims an exclusive right to the commoners of nature himself; and he ought by no means to be suffered to commission the lowest plebeian to do that which he prohibits in gentlemen of the professions; of fortunes as independent, if not so great, as his own, and of minds often much greater.

It is in the power of these hirelings, who seldom possess much principle, to involve all the country in animosity. The landed gentry usually possess a share of pride fully proportionate to their estate and mansion-house. The hireling of one trespasses on the dominions of another. Reprisals are made. Each defends his representatives. One thinks himself as good (for that is the phrase) as the other. No concessions can possibly be made. Hatred, of the bitterest and most rancorous kind, mutually takes possession of these lords in miniature; and many a hunting would end, if vassals could

be procured, like that of Chevy Chace, in a bloody battle.

If compassion did not intervene, one might be much entertained with so ludicrous an object, as that of creatures, who pretend to reason, benevolence, christianity, and education, rendering their existence mutually painful, by fierce quarrels, secret but venomous hatred, expensive and vexatious litigations, occasioned by objects of a nature truly trifling in themselves, and which, allowing them every possible praise, can be called no more than innocent diversions. Are we not still children with all our beard and gravity about us, if we always play till we quarrel? Our conduct, in this respect, is almost too absurd to admit of serious expostulation. It may furnish scenes for mirth at a puppet-show, or a farce at Bartholomew Fair.

However, I think it necessary, before I conclude this subject, to declare, for the sake of avoiding the malignant misrepresentations of gossips and scandal-dealers by profession, that there are no allusions in this paper either personal or local; and that I have not been pleading for a privilege in which I am interested, not being inclined to hunt, nor able to shoot.

I will beg leave to add one passage on the subject from Blackstone, for the information of those among sportsmen, who are too tenacious of their exclusive rights, and who are able to read it.

“ Another violent alteration of the English constitution, consisted in the depopulation of whole counties for the purposes of the King’s royal diversion; and subjecting both them, and all the ancient forests of the kingdom to the unreasonable severity of Forest Laws, imported from the continent; whereby the slaughter of a beast was made almost as penal as the death of a man. In the Saxon times, though no man was allowed to kill or chase the King’s deer, yet he might start any game, pursue and kill it, upon his own estate. But the rigor of these new constitutions vested the sole property of all the Game in England in the King alone; and no man was allowed to disturb any fowl of the air, or any beast of the field, of such kinds as were specially

“ reserved for the royal amusement of the Sovereign,
 “ without express licence from the King, by the grant
 “ of a chase or free warren: and whose franchises were
 “ granted as much with a view to preserve the breed
 “ of animals, as to indulge the subject. From a similar
 “ principle to which, though the Forest Laws are now
 “ mitigated, and by degrees grown entirely obsolete;
 “ yet from this root has grown a bastard slip, known
 “ by the name of the Game Law, now arrived to,
 “ and wantoning in, its highest vigour: both founded
 “ upon the same unreasonable notions of permanent pro-
 “ perty in wild creatures; and both productive of the
 “ same tyranny to the commons; but with this dif-
 “ ference; that the Forest Laws established only one
 “ mighty hunter throughout the land, *the Game Laws*
 “ *have raised a little Nimrod in every manor.* And in
 “ one respect the ancient law was much less unreason-
 “ able than the modern; for the King’s grantee of a
 “ chase or free warren might kill game in every part of
 “ his franchise; but now, though a freeholder of less
 “ than one hundred a year is forbidden to kill a par-
 “ tridge on his own estate, yet nobody else (not even
 “ the lord of the manor, unless he hath a grant of free
 “ warren) can do it without committing a trespass, and
 “ subjecting himself to an action.”



No. CXXII.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF GOVERNING
THE TEMPER.

NOTWITHSTANDING the many complaints of the
 calamities of human life, it is certain that more con-
 stant uneasiness arises from ill temper than from ill
 fortune. In vain has Providence bestowed every ex-
 ternal blessing, if care has not been taken by our-
 selves to smooth the asperities of the temper. A bad
 temper embitters every sweet, and converts a paradise
 into a place of torment.

The government of the temper then, on which the
 happiness of the human race so greatly depends, can

never be too frequently, or too forcibly recommended. But as it was found by some of the ancients one of the most efficacious methods of deterring young persons from any disagreeable or vicious conduct, to point out a living character in which it appeared in all its deformity, I shall exhibit a picture, in which I hope a bad temper will appear, as it really is, a most unamiable object.

It is by no means uncommon to observe those, who have been flattered for superficial qualities at a very early age, and engaged in so constant a series of dissipating pleasure, as to leave no time for the culture of the mind, becoming, in the middle and advanced periods of life, melancholy instances of the miserable effects resulting from an ungoverned temper. A certain lady, whom I shall distinguish by the name of Hispulla, was celebrated from her infancy for her fine complexion. She had, indeed, no very amiable expression in her eyes, but the vermilion of her cheeks did not fail to attract admiration, and she was convinced by her glass, and by the asseverations of the young men, that she was another and a fairer Helen. She had every opportunity of improving her mind; but as we naturally bestow our first care on the quality which we most value, she could never give her attention either to books or oral instruction, and, at the age of fifteen or sixteen, could scarcely write her name legibly, or read a sentence without hesitation. Her personal charms were, however, powerful enough to captivate the heart of a thoughtless heir, very little older than herself. Her vanity, rather than her love, was gratified by the alliance; and when she found the assiduities of promiscuous suitors at an end, she found herself gradually sinking in the dead calm of insipidity. When love was no more, other passions sprung up with all the luxuriance of rank weeds, in a soil where no salutary herb had been planted in the vernal season. Pride, that fruitful plant, which bears every kind of odious quality in abundance, took root in her heart and flourished, like the nettle or the hemlock, on the banks of the stagnant pool.

Her husband was the first to feel its baneful effects. Though the match was greatly to her advantage, she persuaded herself that she might have done better; and

that her good fortune was by no means adequate to the prize which her beauty and merit might have justly claimed. With this conviction, and without any habits or abilities which might lead her to seek amusement in books, she found no diversion so congenial to her heart, as the tormenting a good natured, young, and agreeable husband, who, by marrying, had excluded her from the probability of a title. As a small compensation for the injury received, she assumed an absolute dominion over him, his fortune, and his family. He durst not differ in opinion from her; for on the slightest opposition, her eyes dart fire, her cheeks glow with indignation, and her tongue utters every bitter word which rage and malice can dictate. The comfort of every meal is poisoned by a quarrel; and an angry vociferation is re-echoed from the parlour to the kitchen, from the cellar to the garret, by night and by day, except in the awful and ominous pause of a sullen silence.

The poor husband, who with every amiable disposition, possessed also the virtue of patience, bore the evil as long as human nature could bear it; but as years advanced, and her fury increased, he sought a refuge at the tavern, and in the composing juice of the grape. Excess and vexation soon laid him in the only secure asylum from the stings and arrows of an outrageous temper, the silent tomb.

The children, after suffering every species of persecution which an angry, though foolishly fond mother, could inflict, no sooner arrived at maturity, than they began to look for happiness in an escape from home, where neither peace nor ease could find a place. The daughters married meanly, unworthily, and wretchedly, contented to take refuge from the rage of a furious mother in the arms of footmen and hair-dressers. The sons ran away, and became vagrant and wretched debauchees; till, in mere despair, one of them entered as a soldier in the East India service, and the other put an end to his own existence.

The mother, after shedding a few natural tears, and wiping them soon, began to feel her pride and passion amply gratified in an absolute dominion over an estate,

a mansion-house, and a tribe of servants, whose dependent situation made them bear her fury with little resistance. But she enjoyed her reign but a short time; for as her mind was incapable of resting on itself for support, she sought relief from the bottle of cordial; and, heated one day with a large draught, and a violent passion with one of the maids, she burst a blood-vessel, and expired in a scolding fit, her tongue still quivering after her heart had ceased its pulsation.

I believe the originals of such a picture as this, are much less common in the present age, than they were in the last century. Ladies were then secluded from the world till marriage, and as they were very superficially educated in every thing but potting and preserving, it is no wonder if they became termigants or viragos. They had no right idea of themselves or the world around, and yielded, without opposition, to those violent emotions, which arise, perhaps, in every mind when it is totally uncultivated.

Culture of the understanding, is, indeed, one of the best methods of subduing the heart to softness, and redeeming it from that savage state in which it too often comes from the hands of nature. The more our reason is strengthened, the better she is enabled to keep her seat on the throne, and to govern those passions which were appointed to be her subjects; but which too often rebel, and succeed in their unnatural revolt. But, besides the effect of mental culture, in calling forth and increasing the powers of the reasoning faculty, it seems to possess an influence in humanizing the feelings, and meliorating the native disposition. Music, painting, and poetry, teach the mind to select the agreeable parts of those objects which surround us, and by habituating it to a pure and permanent delight, gradually superinduce an habitual good humour. It is of infinite importance to happiness to accustom the mind, from infancy, to turn from deformed and painful scenes, and to contemplate whatever can be found of moral and natural beauty. The spirits, under this benign management, contract a milkiness, and learn to flow all cheerily in their smooth and yielding channels; while on the contrary, if the young mind is teased, fretted, and neglected, the passages of the spirits become

rugged, abrupt, exasperated, and the whole nervous system seems to acquire an excessive irritability. The ill treatment of children has not only made them wretched at the time, but wretched for life; tearing the fine contextures of their nerves, and roughening, by example, and by some secret and internal influence, the very constitution of their tempers.

So much of the happiness of private life, and the virtues of mothers and daughters, in particular, depends on the government of the temper, that the temper ought to be a principal object of regard in a well-conducted education. The suffering of children to tyrannize, without controul, over servants and inferiors is, I am convinced, the ruin of many an amiable disposition. The virtues of humanity, benevolence, humility, cannot be too early enforced; at the same time care should be taken, that an infant of two or three years old should never be beat or spoken to harshly for any offence which it can possibly commit. In short, let every method be used which reason, religion, prudence, and experience can suggest, to accomplish the purpose of sweetening the temper, and banishing the furies from society. May the endeavours be successful; and may we only read, that there have, indeed, been such animals as shrews and viragos, but that the breed is extinct in England, like the breed of wolves!

I have been much pleased with the lovely picture of Serena, in Mr. Hayley's instructive poem, the Triumphs of Temper; and I cannot conclude, without earnestly entreating the Ladies to view it as a looking-glass, by which they may learn to dress their minds in a manner which can never be out of fashion; but which will enable them to secure, as well as extend, their conquests; and to charm, even when the lilies and roses are all withered. If the poem should effect its very laudable purpose, the Virtues, the Muses, and the Graces, should unite to form a wreath for the poet's brow, and hail him as the restorer of a golden age. While every mother, wife, and daughter, aspires at the virtues of a Serena, let Alecto, Megæra, and Tisiphone, be confined in chains to the infernal regions, and forbidden ever more to arise and assume the shape of a British lady!

No. CXXIII.

ON THE MORAL EFFECTS OF A GOOD
TRAGEDY.

IT is with regret I observe, that a taste for the noblest part of theatrical amusements, the representation of tragedy, is rather on the decline. It strongly marks the frivolity of an age, when the buskin is excluded for the sock, and the public attention too much engaged by dances, singers, and harlequins, to admit the serious, yet lively pleasures, of the Tragic Muse.

There seems to me to be no method more effectual for softening the ferocity, and improving the minds, of the lower classes of a great capital, than the frequent exhibition of tragical pieces, in which the distress is carried to the highest extreme, and the moral at once self-evident, affecting, and instructive. The multitudes of those who cannot read, or, if they could, have neither time nor abilities for deriving much advantage from reading, are powerfully impressed, through the medium of the eyes and ears, with these important truths, which, while they illuminate the understanding correct and mollify the heart. Benevolence, justice, heroism, and the wisdom of moderating the passions, are plainly pointed out, and forcibly recommended to those savage sons of uncultivated nature, who have few opportunities, and would have no inclination for instruction, if it did not present itself under the form of a delightful amusement. The human heart in general, whether it beats in the bosom of him who has been improved by education, or of the neglected child of poverty, is taught to exercise some of its most amiable propensities by the indulgence of commiseration in scenes of fancied woe. Were the Theatre under certain regulations, a man might go to it as he goes to church, to learn his duty and it might justly be honoured with the appellation which it has often assumed, and be called the school of Virtue.

There are certainly a thousand tragedies of more classical merit, but few better calculated to save the numerous and important classes of the plebeian order

from wallowing in vice, theft, intemperance, and wretchedness of every kind, than the tragedy of George Barnwell. Common and illiterate minds cannot follow the high flights of sublime poetry, nor understand the beauties of blank verse; but the language of Lillo in this humble tale, is level to the lowest degree of intellect. It must, indeed give pleasure to every friend of unassuming merit, to find the due tribute of applause paid to the modest Lillo by one of the best of all modern judges, the Critic and Philosopher of Salisbury. He, whose taste was formed on the purest models, and corrected by the strictest rules, has not hesitated to place the Fatal Curiosity in the very first rank of dramatic compositions. And George Barnwell, however it may be affectingly despised by the silly votaries of fashion, who abominate it as low, deserves no less to be esteemed for its moral excellence, than the other for its classical. It has, perhaps, saved as many from an ignominious end, as the Beggar's Opera has hastened to it. That any moralist, or man of observation, can entertain a doubt concerning the effect on the upper gallery of a play, in which thieves and harlots are represented as amiable and innocent characters, and all the rest of society as rogues, evinces, in this instance, an ignorance of human nature. The representation of the Leggar's Opera is not only an outrage on civilized society, but an extreme act of cruelty to those wretched boys and girls who have been allured to the paths of destruction, by viewing them thus strewed with artificial flowers. Take away the disgrace, the shame, and the first fine sensibilities of timid vice, and you remove a restraint, the force of whose operation neither precepts nor laws can ever supply. Suppose a country lad, with all his native modesty about him, allured to the Theatre by the Beggar's Opera. In a few hours he undergoes a perfect metamorphosis. He thinks himself illuminated, and despises the honest old folks at home, who have hitherto confined him, as he supposes, in childish ignorance. His perverted ambition takes an unfortunate turn; and if he arrives not at the honour of dying like a Macheath, he will at least endeavour to

deserve it. Such, I am well assured, is often a true case; but even the miserable creatures who are far gone in the paths which lead through villainy to ruin, may be called back by the melancholy tale of poor George Barnwell. There are many other Tragedies in the English language which convey admirable morals to the lower classes, and have undoubtedly rescued many a wretch who was deaf to a parent's voice and a preacher's admonition, from the dominion of an evil spirit.

But, indeed, there is no class of people, however refined and polished, which may not receive such benefits from a well written Tragedy, as scarcely any other mode of instruction can afford. He who has entered into all the feelings of a Shakspeare, an Otway, a Rowe, an Addison, may be said to have assimilated with their souls, and snatched a sacred spark, which cannot fail to kindle something in himself resembling the ethereal fire of true genius. His nature will be improved, and a species of wisdom and elevation of spirit, which was in vain sought for in academic groves, may at last be imbibed in the Theatres. Philosophy may catch a warmth of the drama, which is capable of advancing it to nobler heights than she would otherwise have attained. Socrates, whose benevolence and wisdom appeared to have something of divinity, was the voluntary assistant of Euripides in the composition of his tragedies; and undoubtedly was of opinion, that he taught philosophy to instruct the herd of mankind in the most effectual manner, when he introduced her to their notice in the buskin.

Instructing, entertaining, animating, and ennobling, as is the spirit of the tragic muse, is it not wonderful that many could slight its efficacy, or view its fine productions on the stage with perfect insensibility! Yet, he who surveys the seats in the theatre, where opulence and fashion take their place, will find many a painted and powdered figure of both sexes, which appear to view a Lear, a Shore, a Hamlet, and a Harlequin, with the same heavy eye; nor shew one emotion, except it be of laughter, while nature is most powerfully attracting the sacred fountain of tears, wherever it has

not been closed by affectation, by a natural or an acquired stupidity. It seems, indeed, to be a part of the contemptible vanity which characterizes the age, to laugh at public spectacles when others are serious, and to be serious when others laugh. "Who, indeed," says the fine bred lady, "would be sincerely affected by any thing said or done by the low creatures on the stage?"

Some spectators, on the other hand, lose all the effect of the piece by attending to the identical men and women who act, rather than to the characters which they represent. They also admire Mr. or Mrs. such an one's coat, gown, cap, shoe, leg, or hand, but forget the hero and the heroine, the poet, and the poem.

The taste for ridicule, which greatly prevails in a mean, selfish, debauched, and trifling age, contributes to prevent the genuine effect of Tragedy. Great laughs are seldom susceptible of deep or serious impressions. While the dead lie scattered on the stage, and every thing is presented to the view which ought to excite pity and terror, the joker dissipates the sweet sorrow of sympathy by the introduction of a ludicrous idea. Ridicule, indeed, seems to become a weapon in the hands of the wicked, destructive of taste, feeling, morality, and religion.

The addition of a ludicrous epilogue, a farce, pantomime entertainment, and of dances between the acts, has often been lamented as destructive of the effects of the finest tragedy. It is true, that they who live to please must please in order to live, and therefore the players and their managers are not culpable. They must not only provide manly amusements for men, but childish diversions for children and school boys. These entertainments have, indeed, often that ingenuity and drollery in them, which may, at a proper season, relax the most rigid philosophy. I censure not the things themselves, but the time of their introduction. After the soul has been deeply impressed with serious and virtuous sentiments, it is surely lamentable that every mark should be effaced by harlequins and buffoons. It must be remembered, that I am speaking only of the moral effects of the drama,

and I believe every one will agree, that these would be more successfully produced, if the entertainment, as it is called by way of eminence, preceded the Tragedy. The spectator would then retire to his pillow with his fancy full of fine poetic images, and his heart glowing with every elevated idea of moral rectitude. But now, his feelings are so trifled with and tantalized, that at last he grows callous to the tenderest pathos, and attends the theatre merely as a critic in acting, instead of an interested partaker in the scenes which pass in review.

In times, when manly minds are necessary to save a sinking empire, and retard the decline of a degenerating people, every mode of improving the hearts of the community at large, in the serious and severer virtues, ought to be applied with avidity. The Theatre opens a fine school for the accomplishment of this end; and it would certainly contribute greatly to accelerate the general improvement, if there were less singing, dancing, and buffoonery, and more Tragedy. But some great man, by which epithet I mean, in this place, a titled and fashionable man, must set the example of admiring it, or else all the muses themselves might rack their inventions in composing the melancholy tale, with no other effect, than that of diffusing sleep or smiles throughout Pit, Box, and Gallery.



No. CXXIV.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICS, AS A SUBJECT OF CONVERSATION, ON THE STATE OF LITERATURE.

IT is a mark of the social and public spirit of this nation, that there is scarcely a member of it who does not bestow a very considerable portion of his time and thoughts in studying its political welfare, its interest, and its honour. Though this general taste for politics, from the highest to the lowest orders of the people, has afforded subjects for comic ridicule, yet

I cannot help considering it both as a proof of uncommon liberality, and as one of the firmest supports of civil liberty. It kindles and keeps alive an ardent love of freedom. It has hitherto preserved that glorious gift of God from the rude hand of tyranny, and tends, perhaps, more than any other cause, to communicate the noble fire of true patriotism to the bosoms of posterity. While we watch vigilantly over every political measure, and communicate an alarm through the empire, with a speed almost equal to a shock of electricity, there will be no danger lest a king should establish despotism, even though he were to invade the rights of his people at the head of his standing army.

But as zeal without knowledge is subversive of the purpose which it means to promote; it becomes a true friend to his country to endeavour to unite with the love of liberty, the love of knowledge. It unfortunately happens, that political subjects are of so warm and animating a nature, that they not only appear to interest in a very high degree, but to engross the attention. The newspapers form the whole library of the politician, the coffee-house is his school, and he prefers the Gazette, and an acrimonious pamphlet, for or against the ministry, to all that was ever written by a Homer, or discovered by a Newton.

To be a competent judge, either of political measures or events, it is necessary to possess an enlightened understanding, and the liberal spirit of philosophy; it is necessary to have read history, and to have formed right ideas of the nature of man and of civil society. But I know not how it happens, the most ignorant and passionate are apt to be the most decisive in delivering their sentiments on the very complicated subjects of political controversy. A man, whose education never extended beyond writing and the four rules, will determine at once, and with the most authoritative air, such questions as would perplex the wisest statesman adorned with all human learning, and assisted by the experience and advice of the most cultivated persons in the nation. Even gentlemen according to the common acceptation of that title, or those who have fortunes, and have received the common instruction

of the times, are seldom able to judge with propriety in politics, though they are usually inclined to dictate with passion. Is it possible that from having learnt only the first elements of Latin and French, and the arts of dancing, fencing, and fiddling, in perfection, a man should be qualified, I do not say to sit as a Senator, but to expatiate with sufficient judgment and intelligence, on the propriety and nature of any public transaction, or system of government? But he is worth an estate of a thousand a year, and therefore, though all his other merit, in kind, and degree, may be like that of a master of the ceremonies, or that of a skilful groom and whipper in, he thinks he has a right to give law to the neighbourhood in political conversation. His ideas are confined to narrow limits; and as his patriotism is for the most part spite, so his support of a ministry is, in some respects, self interest. It must be so; for a man, whose mind is not enlarged and cultivated, cannot entertain such a liberal system of opinions as those of real patriotism.

But even, among persons, whose minds are sufficiently improved to distinguish and pursue the good of man, and of society, independently, either of passion or of private advantage, the rage for politics often proceeds too far, and absorbs all other objects. In vain does the hand of art, present the picture or repeat the melody of music; for the eye is blind, the ear is deaf to all but the news and the newspaper. Poetry, philology, elegant and polite letters, in all their ramifications, display their alluring charms in vain to him, whose head and heart still vibrate with the harsh and discordant sounds of a political dispute at a tavern. Those books, whose tendency is only to promote elegant pleasures or advance science, which flatter no party, and gratify no malignant passion, are suffered to fall into oblivion; while a pamphlet, which espouses the cause of any political men or measures, however inconsiderable its literary merit, is extolled as one of the first productions of modern literature. But meager is the food furnished to the mind of man by the declamation of a party bigot. From a taste for trash, and a disrelish of the wholesome food of the mind, and from

the consequent neglect of solid learning, mere politicians are prevented from receiving valuable improvement; and the community, together with literature, is at last deeply injured. For when learning is little respected, it will naturally decline; and that the mental darkness consequent on its decline, leads to the establishment of despotism, every one who has surveyed the pictures of mankind, as pourtrayed by the pencil of history, will immediately acknowledge. What did Athens and Rome retain of their ancient dignity when their learning and their arts were no more? That the light of learning should ever again be extinguished, may appear a visionary idea to an Englishman; but so it did to a Roman, in the days of Cicero. Notwithstanding the multiplication of books by the art of printing, both they, and all value for them, may vanish, together with the power of understanding them, if the fury of politics should occasion a contempt for letters and for education, and should convert the leaders of a people into Goths, and Vandals.

He who would add an elegance to politics, and distinguish his conversation on the subject from the vociferation of porters in an alehouse, should inspect the finished pieces of antiquity, and learn to view public acts and councils in the light in which they appeared to those whom the world has long considered as some of the best and politest teachers of political wisdom. If he possessè not taste enough to relish the works of poetical imagination, let him confine himself to such authors as Thucydides and Xenophon, Polybius and Plutarch, Livy and Sallust. Politics will assume new grace by communicating with history and philosophy; and political conversation, instead of a vague, passionate, and declamatory effusion of undigested ideas, will become a most liberal exercise of the faculties, and form a mental banquet, at which the best and wisest of mankind might indulge their finer appetites with insatiable avidity. What can constitute a more rational object of contemplation than the noble fabric of society, civilized by arts, letters, and religion? What can better employ our sagacity, than to devise modes for its improvement and preservation?

Not only the understanding, the taste, the temper of a people, but the spirit also, will be greatly improved by learning politics of the Greeks and Romans. No man of feeling ever yet read Livy without learning to detest slavery, and to glow with a love and emulation of public virtue. The Greek and Roman spirit cannot be too much encouraged by those who have a just idea of the dignity of a true Englishman, and desire to maintain it. And let it be remembered, that the Athenians, in their most glorious periods, were as much attached to politics and news as Britons ever were; but that they preserved, amidst the warmest contests, a refined taste and delicate passion for the politest learning, and the profoundest philosophy.



No. CXXV.

ON BUFFOONERY IN CONVERSATION.

IT is sweet, says the agreeable poet of Venusium, to lay aside our wisdom, and to indulge on a proper occasion a species of temporary folly. He, indeed, must be outrageously severe, who would prohibit any pleasing mode of passing our leisure hours, while it is consistent with innocence, and the nature of a being eminently distinguished by the fine faculties of reason, fancy, memory, and reflection. Charming is the social hour when solidity of judgment is enlivened by brilliancy of wit, and the lively sallies of imagination by a sweet interchange of pensive gravity. Ease, freedom, and the unstudied effusion of the sentiments which naturally arise in cultivated minds, form a very delightful recreation; and dismiss the mind to its serious employments with new alacrity. Those among the ancients who were most celebrated for their wisdom, were remarkable for a cheerful and equible gaiety, and often diverted themselves, in their intervals of severer meditation, with jests and drollery. Who more cheerful than the gentle Socrates? Who more delighted with a joke than the dignified Cicero? But, at the same

time, few were equally capable of maintaining a legitimate conversation in all its gravity and elegance. The conversations of Socrates, preserved by his eloquent disciples, breathe a wisdom approaching to divine; and Cicero's book, *de Oratore*, is one of the noblest monuments of polished urbanity, as are many of his philosophical pieces of speculative wisdom.

But there prevails, at present, a taste for low and noisy mirth, which totally precludes all delicacy of sentiment, all exercise of reason and invention, and almost degrades us to the level of those ludicrous animals whom nature has rendered so wonderfully expert in the art of mimicry. Many persons who imagine themselves remarkably endowed with humour, and the power of delighting whatever company they deign to bless with their presence, are apt to give their tongues a licence to wander without the reins of judgment, to affect uncommon expressions, attitudes, grimaces, and modes of address and behaviour; and to imagine, that oddity is humour, eccentricity wit, downright nonsense prodigiously droll, and rudeness infinitely entertaining. If the company are as foolish as the pretended wit; or, indeed, if they are very polite and good natured, they seldom refuse the easy tribute of a laugh, either real or affected; and the joker, animated by his fancied encouragement, proceeds in his extravagant sallies, till his assumed folly approaches very nearly to real idiotism. In the mean time, as he draws the attention of the company on himself, and engrosses all the time and talk, he not only lowers himself, but prevents others from rising; relaxes the tone of his own mind, and, of all around, to a state of imbecility, and at once prevents the opportunity and the power of uttering a single idea worth remembrance. Noise and laughter are but meager food for the mind; and however pleased people may appear, they commonly retire from the company in which these have formed the only entertainment, with an unsatisfied and uneasy vacuity, with disgust and disagreeable reflection.

It very often happens that these facetious gentlemen rely upon more expeditious methods of becoming prodigiously entertaining than any thing which requires

utterance. They enter a room, and sit down gravely, with their wigs one side, or with the back part of it over their forehead. They take great delight in the practical joke; and if they can pick your pocket of your handkerchief, smut your face, draw your chair from under you, or make you a fool, as they call it, they consider themselves as other Yoricks, and as fellows of infinite humour, endowed with peculiar talents for setting the table on a roar. It might, indeed, be said with truth, that they literally make fools of themselves, and appear ambitious of supplying that order which was once very common, but is now either a little out of fashion, or introduced in disguise; I mean the order of professed and hireling fools for the amusement of the nobility. It has indeed been jocularly said, that many of the nobility in the present age, execute the office in their own persons to save expence.

Now, though there were nothing criminal in buffoonery, yet as it tends, when too long continued, to weaken the faculties of the mind, to exclude all attention to any thing serious, and to divest conversation of its power of affording improvement as well as pleasure, it is certainly to be wished that it were, in some measure, restrained. I say restrained only; for I do not know any just reason why any method of innocently amusing the mind, during a short interval of inaction, should be utterly forbidden. Man is an animal that delights in variety; mirth and mimicry, jest and jollity, *quips and cranks and wanton wiles, and Laughter holding both his sides*, are certainly no less allowable as the means of relaxation, than cards, backgammon, billiards, and the bottle. He is wise who requires moderation in all these indulgences; but he who inveighs against any of them in the gross, and without exception, has taken a false estimate of human nature, and is not to be considered as a moralist, but as a declaimer. If any one rule will admit of universal application, it is that which directs us to observe the golden mean.

I could never admire the wisdom of certain self-elected legislators of graceful behaviour, who seem to forbid us to laugh, with much greater strictness than they would have prohibited the violation of the decalogue,

To be remarkable for laughing, is not only ungraceful, but a sign of folly. But God has distinguished man by the power of risibility, and there is no reason why he should not exercise it on proper occasions; and, perhaps, there would be no occasion more proper, than when a disciplined fop shews by his behaviour, that he prefers the varnish of external grace to honour and to honesty.

Wit, it has been said, does not naturally excite laughter. But this observation, though true in part, is not universally true; for wit, united with humour, possesses such a command of the risible muscles, that he must be a stoic, or a very ill natured man, who is able to resist the impulse. I should, indeed, have no favourable opinion of that man's heart or disposition, who could be present at a truly comic scene without laying aside his severity, and shaking his sides with as much glee as the ingenious child of nature. And if it is a weakness not to be able to refrain from laughter at a ludicrous object, it is a weakness of all others the most pardonable; and it is surely better to be weak than malignant. But, in truth, the weakness consists only in laughing immoderately or frequently without an adequate object.

In every convivial meeting of elegant and polished company, the Muses and the Graces should be of the party. The first honours and attention should be paid to them; but let not Comus and Jocus be forbidden to follow in their train, and under their command. The entertainment will be thus heightened and varied, and good sense and decorum derive new lustre from good-humour. We would indeed, restrain that excessive and rude mirth which originates in levity and folly, and becomes what is called buffoonery; but far be it from us to banish that sprightliness which naturally results from the gaiety of innocence. Joy, while we are blessed with health and ease, and what the stoics called *EUROIA*. or the well flowing of the stream of life, is gratitude and obedience.

No. CXXVI.

ON THE STYLE OF XENOPHON AND PLATO.

WRITERS, who have displayed any of that uniform peculiarity in their style which renders it easily imitable, however popular they may become at their first appearance by gratifying the passion for novelty, are by no means the most perfect writers; but are to be classed with those artists of the pencil, whom the painters distinguish by the appellation of Mannerists. Simplicity of diction, as it is one of the most engaging beauties, is also one of the most difficult to imitate. It exhibits no prominence of feature, but displays one whole, properly embellished with a thousand little graces, no one of which obtrudes itself in such a manner as to destroy the appearance of a perfect symmetry. In this species of excellence Xenophon is confessedly a model. He has been called the Attic Muse and the Attic Bee. It has been said, that the Muses would express themselves in his language, that his style is sweeter than honey, that the Graces themselves appear to have assisted in its formation; but though all this power is justly due, yet it would be difficult to point out any one beauty which recurs so often in the same form, as to characterise his composition.

But the numerous writers who have imitated the Rambler, or the Adventurer, are discovered in their affectation, before the reader has perused a single page. The very peculiar manner of those excellent performances, has been easily imitated by inferior writers, and more easily caricatured. Addison is simple and natural, and, consequently, has not often been mimicked with equal success. Indeed, the nearer we approach to the manner of Addison, the more agreeable is our style; but, I believe, none ever admired the style of the Rambler, but in the hands of its original author. The satyrical writer of Lexiphanes easily rendered it

ridiculous; and though in some of Aikins' profaic pieces, there is a very serious and good imitation of it, yet we are rather disposed to smile than admire. Affectation always borders on burlesque; but a manner, which derives its graces from nature, cannot be rendered ridiculous. The style of Xenophon, like the philosopher whom he records, is proof against the sportive and malignant buffoonery or an Aristophanes.

It is however certain, that every beauty cannot be combined under one form. If the style of Xenophon displays grace, ease, and sweetness; it is deficient in magnificence, in weight, in authority, and in dignity. But it should be remembered, that the Venus of *Medici* is not to be censured, because it wants the nerves and muscles of the *Farnesian Hercules*. It appears to me, however, that though some of the most popular writers of England yield to Xenophon in the softer graces, they greatly excel him in masculine beauty. The authors of the *Rambler*, of the *Adventurer*, and of some of their imitators, will be found to possess a superiority in this respect, on a fair comparison. Indeed, if there were more singularities and deviations from simplicity than are to be found in those volumes, their excellent sense and fine morality ought to exalt their authors to a degree of honour, far superior to any which can be derived from a skill in composition.

According to the opinions of the best judges, ancient and modern, the greatest master of the beauties of style whom the world ever saw, was the divine Plato. The ancients hesitated not to assert, in the zeal of their admiration, that if Jupiter were to speak in the language of Greece, he would infallibly express himself in the diction of Plato. He possessed the art of combining severity with grace, and sweetness with grandeur; and to him we owe a similar combination, in the great orator and philosopher of Rome, who formed his style on the model of Plato; and has given us a resemblance scarcely less exact than that of the bust to its mould, or of the waxen seal to the sculptured gem.

The introductions to the dialogues of Cicero are always peculiarly beautiful; so also are those of Plato.

It is agreeable to call to mind the sweet spot which Plato represents as the scene where the dialogues passed, in language no less delightful than the scene itself.

The river Ilissus glided over the pebbles in a clear stream, but so shallow that you might have walked through it without any great inconvenience. At a small distance rose a tall plane tree, spreading its broad foliage to a considerable distance, and flourishing in all the mature luxuriance of summer beauty. At the root of the tree issued a spring, dedicated to Achelous and the Nymphs, and remarkable for its cool and limpid water. The softest herbage grew round its little banks, the verdure of which was rendered perpetual by the refreshing moisture of the spring, as it flowed down a gentle declivity. A sweet and cooling breeze generally breathed along the shade, and great numbers of Cicadæ, taking shelter from the sun, resorted to the coverts, and made an agreeable kind of natural music with their little notes, which seldom ceased. Plato adds several other agreeable heightenings of the scene, in which moral and philosophical beauty was to emulate the beauties of nature. The language of Plato adds charms to the whole, as variegated colours illuminate and embellish the plain sketches of the chalk or pencilled outline.

It is no wonder that philosophy, recommended by such graces as these, was found to render her votaries enamoured. Virtue and public spirit can scarcely ever want their admirers and followers, when they are decorated in a manner which sets off their own loveliness to the greatest advantage. It is to be lamented, for the sake of virtue, that Lord Shaftesbury was a sceptic. His style was a fine imitation of Plato, and displays such beauties, as might conceal the ugliness of a deformed system. Mr. Harris has also exhibited the Platonic graces in high perfection; and I cannot help considering it as a mark of defective taste that he is not more popular. His style appears to be one of the most elegant, classical, and judiciously ornamented among all the English writers of the present century. They who have raised their taste so as to perceive his beauties, will consider the style of many writers, whom they once admired, as comparatively barbarous. He who never

tasted the pine apple, the peach, and the nectarine, may probably suppose that he enjoys the most exquisite flavour of the fruit-garden while he is feasting on a pippin; as he, who never partook of the pippin, may devour a crab, and admire it as a delicacy.

A critic of antiquity, Dionysius the Halicarnassian, has discovered many and great faults in the style of Plato. He seems to think the epithets too poetical, the metaphors too bold, the matter too allegorical. Pompey the Great disputed the point with him; and there is a curious letter extant on the subject, from the critic to the statesman. It is, indeed, obvious to remark, that, though Plato would not admit Homer into his republic, he has admitted many of his beauties into his style; and has often written with an enthusiastic warmth, which they, who have not partaken of the efflatus to which he somewhere pretended, cannot entirely approve. A cold critic, like Dionysius, would naturally be disgusted with it; but we cannot listen to his censures of a noble genius, who snatched graces beyond the reach of art; whom Pompey approved, and whom Tully almost idolized. When specimens of perfect composition were to be pointed out, the choice has fallen on the Georgics of Virgil and the Menexenus of Plato.

Both Xenophon and Plato display, what is more valuable than all verbal elegance, a fine system of morality, which long shone forth in the world as a light unequalled, till the sun of revelation arose. If Xenophon's memoirs were divested of a few superfluities and a few absurdities, I should not fear to assert, that they approach very nearly to the Gospel, in the exhibition of instructive lessons, and a sublime, yet encouraging example, of all human excellence; for, with respect to the calumnies advanced against Socrates, they undoubtedly originated from the father of lies. And those writers are to be esteemed the enemies to human virtue and happiness, who employ their ingenuity in detracting from illustrious and established reputation.

No. CXXVII.

ON THE ADVANTAGES DERIVABLE FROM
NATIONAL ADVERSITY.

IT is very certain that national prosperity, as it is comprehended in the idea of numerous fleets and armies, of extensive empire, large revenues, advantageous commerce, and a profusion of money in specie, is a kind of good by no means necessarily connected with moral good, or with the substantial happiness of individuals. It makes a splendid figure in imagination's eye; but to reason it appears, in a very questionable shape, and experience is able to evince, that it has always diffused profligacy and misery through the walks of private life; and, by introducing luxury, licentiousness, indolence, and corruption, has at once destroyed all that can render human nature dignified and happy, and precipitated the decline and the downfall of empires themselves, while triumphing in fancied glory.

It has been observed that the Bodies Politic and Natural bear to each other a remarkable analogy. A human form pampered, bloated, and plethoric, will often have the appearance of strength, as well as magnitude; though no state of it can be less adapted to facilitate the animal movements, or in greater danger of a hasty dissolution. The body politic also loses in muscular force, as much as it acquires of unwieldy size, till, by the gradual decrease of vigour, and augmentation of weight, it totters on its baseless supports, and, at last, lies level in the dust with Babylon and ancient Rome. Luxury, the inevitable consequence of what is falsely called national prosperity, becomes the grave of empires, and of all that could adorn them; or render their longer duration a rational object of desire.

There is, undoubtedly, a certain degree of magnitude, at which, when a State is arrived, it must, of necessity, undergo the alternative; of being purged of its peccant humours, or falling into a nerveless languor

and consequent decline. Perhaps our own country has already arrived at that degree, and is now, under the operation of Divine Providence, suffering the amputation of its morbid excrescences for the salvation of its health and existence. It may lose some of its revenues; but it will save and meliorate its morals and its liberty. Ministers may be shaken from their seats, pensioners and placemen may be reduced to despair, funds may be annihilated, and estates brought down to their natural value; but freedom, but virtue, but industry, but the British constitution, but human nature, shall survive the wreck, and emerge like silver and gold when tried by the fire, with new value and additional lustre. After a state of political adversity, something may take place in the society, similar to the expected renovation of all things, after the general conflagration of the universe.

Distress and difficulty are known to operate in private life, as the spurs of diligence. Powers, which would for ever have lain dormant in the halcyon days of ease and plenty, have been called forth by adversity, and have advanced their possessor to the most enviable heights of virtue, happiness, and glory. Man is naturally indolent, and, when undisturbed, will bask and sleep in the sunshine till the sleep of death; but, when roused by the blast and the thunder, he rises, strains every sinew, and marches on to enterprise. Success will almost infallibly attend great exertions, uniformly and resolutely continued; so that what begun in misery ends in triumph, as the sun which rose in a mist descends with serenity, and paints the whole horizon with gold and purple.

Public industry may be excited in the same manner, and in the same degree, by public misfortunes. The nation is impoverished, or, in other words, its superfluities are retrenched. It is an event devoutly to be wished. Luxury, with ten thousand evils in her train, is obliged to withdraw, and the humble virtues, whom she had driven, by her insolence, into exile, cheerfully advance from their concealment. Industry and frugality take the lead; but to what a degree of vigour must every muscle of the body politic be braced, when every

member is, in some measure, actuated by industry and frugality. No man ever yet exerted himself to the utmost of his strength; nor is it on record, that any state was ever yet so exhausted, but that, while it enjoyed liberty. it might draw new resources from its own vitals. Though the tree is lopped, yet, so long as the root remains unhurt, it will throw out a greater luxuriancy of branches, produce fruit of better flavour, and derive fresh vigour from the axe. If one has accidentally disturbed an ant hill, or broken the fabric of the hive, though the little animal appeared before to have exerted their utmost efforts, yet it is amazing, with what additional diligence they apply themselves to repair the depredation. Not a moment is allowed for despondency. The earth and the air glow with motion, and the misfortune seems immediately to add to their spirits, and ultimately both to their store and security.

The beautiful description which Virgil has given us of the busy scene in which the Tyrians are engaged in building Carthage, represents, in a most lively manner, the alacrity with which human creatures are found to exert themselves, when instigated by the stimulus of necessity. An emulation of labour seizes every bosom. No murmuring, no complainings in the street, but every one feels himself happy, in proportion as he renders himself useful. Mens abilities rise with the occasion; and political evil, like other evil, under the conduct of a merciful deity, has produced extensive good, by calling forth some of the noblest exertions, and most perfect characters which have adorned the records of human nature.

There is one beneficial effect of national adversity, of greater importance than any which I have enumerated. It subdues the haughty soul elevated with riches, and inebriated with excess, and turns the attention to the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the only Ruler of princes, who, from His throne, beholds all nations, and bids the sceptre to depart from the wicked to the righteous. It teaches us to rely less upon our German auxiliaries, our musquets, our mortars, our cannon, our copper-bottomed men of war, our generals, and our admirals, than on the Lord of Hosts.

When he fights for us we shall conquer. Without him, we shall in vain put our trust in a Burgoine, a Keppel, or a Cornwallis ; but the ball of empire shall continue to roll on westward as it has ever yet done, till it stops in America, a world unknown to the ancients, and which may save the tears of some future Alexander.

If Providence shall have decreed the downfall of British supremacy, happy should I be to have suggested one idea which may stimulate the exertions of my countrymen, once more to raise the noble column on the basis of liberty and virtue ; or which may console them on its ruins, and teach them, while they sit by the waters of bitterness, and hang their harps on the willow, to think of Him who can make rivers of comfort to flow in the dreary desert.



No. CXXVIII.

ON SOME OF THE FAISE PRETENSIONS AND IMPOSITIONS OF THE ARTFUL AND AVARICIOUS.

NOTWITHSTANDING the pretensions of religion, philosophy, and education, the greater part of mankind appears to be restrained in their actual conduct by few efficient principles, but those which are dictated by a regard to interest. To the love of gain, and the weakness or want of principles, it must be imputed, that every occupation and department of life, abounds with imposture. A mask is easily put on. Appearances are, indeed, far more easily assumed than realities ; and they are often more successful and more plausible ; for the edifice of him, who employs all his time and attention in gilding, painting, and carving the front, will much sooner attract the notice and applause of the passenger, than that of him, who has been solicitous only about the strength of the beam, and the massy firmness of the foundation.

So powerful are the instigations of avarice, and so easy is it to deceive the young, the simple, the innocent

and unsuspecting, that the intercourse among mankind would have been one uniform commerce of deceit, if it had not fortunately happened, that the same want of principle, and superfluity of selfishness, which led the deceivers to impose upon mankind, induced them also to betray the arts of each other. Rival cheats, in the fury of jealous competition, have discovered the secrets of the juggling art, and opened the eyes of the deluded observers.

But, as there is always a rising generation unacquainted with the snares of the deceitful, nets and traps are still laid wherever there is a probability of prey. It becomes those then, who have seen many of the arts of life, to let others profit by their experience, and prevent the generous game from falling into the hands of the mercenary poacher.

It may be prescribed as a rule which will not often fail in the application, that where extraordinary pretensions are made, either in the manual arts, the trades, or the professions, there is just ground for caution and suspicion. Solid merit and real excellence of every kind, usually confide in their own power of recommending themselves, while ignorance, and superficial skill, naturally endeavour to ensnare by cunning, what they cannot earn by desert. There is a delicacy and spirit attendant on real worth and ingenuity, which had rather be without success, than attain it by artifice and arrogant pretention.

The prudent and experienced are generally on their guard against those numerous adventurers, who rely for success on advertisements in the public papers. If there is any difference between the mercer, haberdasher, or wine merchant, who advertises his goods, and him who does not, it is, that the advertiser sells, at a dearer price, a worse commodity. His shop is a kind of trap, the bait is pretended cheapness; and many a young bird is caught with the chaff of a bargain. A wise man will take care not to lay out his money when things are to be sold at prime cost, and under prime cost, and twenty *per cent.* cheaper than the rest of the trade. Beware of those generous spirits, who sell their property, or their industry *pro publico bono*; beware, as you value

your health and your life, of those who will cure you of all diseases with a five shilling pill box, beware of being poisoned by the vintner, who promises you neat and imported; which words being interpreted, signify a liquor in which not a drop of grape juice, or foreign spirits is to be found. Beware of your purse and your credulity, when you are offered to be taught more of the languages and sciences by a new method, in six months, six weeks, or six hours, than those who preside over schools can teach in six or sixteen years. Beware of a thousand artful tricks which are displayed in the newspapers, and which the deceitful heart of man contrives, as the spider weaves his web, to catch those who are unsuspecting because they are innocent. The true meaning of all pompous pretences, and inviting advertisements is, that their authors being distressed, and, probably destitute both of character, friends, and merit, find an easy mode of supplying the defect, by digging pitfalls for the unwary, with whom the world must always abound, at the expence of a few shillings for every snare. Such indeed, is the credulity of mankind, that many a quack and pretender has possessed an estate in the corner of a newspaper, equal to large freeholds of dirty acres.

There are few departments in which more instances of deception occur, than in the lower walks of literature. It happens that they who are to be mechanically instrumental in disseminating science and philosophy, and all the productions of human wit, constitute a very numerous body, consisting of many members in extreme indigence, from the author, by trade, down to the bookbinder and the devil. Employment must be provided for them all, or both they and their families must want bread. The press must, therefore, be constantly in motion; but what is to supply it; A very few presses would be sufficient to prepare for the public view all productions really new and necessary. Compilations are formed under a thousand shapes and disguises; and men of straw, adorned with Doctors Degrees, and the dignity of Fellows of the Royal Society, are created by the fiat of the adventurous publisher, and stand forth as the renowned authors, in all the dignity of a title page.

From these powerful men in buckram, issue grand and Imperial Bibles, new systems of Geography, Histories of England, and Collections of Voyages, with a permission to read the first number, and return it if not approved, and a promissory note, generously engaging that all numbers, exceeding a certain amount, shall be given gratis. But if any deceit can be excused, perhaps it is such an one as this, which feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, and communicates much entertaining and useful knowledge among the poor. I wish as good an apology could be made for those who are impelled, by avarice rather than want to deceive the public; to bring out, with all the pomp of announcing advertisements, new editions of books, in which nothing has been reprinted but the title, to injure the character and sale of a work whenever the ingenious author prints it on his own account; and to practise all those mean and base arts which are comprehended in the significant, but cant, appellations of puffery and tricks in trade. Many a mean mind will perhaps take umbrage at these remarks; but I have long ago resolved to bear with patience in the cause of Truth, all the malice of her enemies.

There are those who call such arts as these, innocent frauds; but it is well remarked by a very sound moralist, that no frauds are innocent; because they destroy the confidence of society, on which our happiness and convenience in every part of our intercourse with each other, greatly depend. I will venture to add, that he who will cheat without remorse in one thing, will cheat in another, whenever he can do it with equal secrecy and impunity. Though tricks in trade, or the deceitful mysteries of a profession, may enable a man to raise a capital house of business, to be in a great way, or to become a good man, as the phrases are in the city, yet they can never be compatible with common honesty, nor render him more truly respectable, than the humbler adventurer who actually invades your sob, or rifles your pocket.

No. CXXIX.

ON THE PREVAILING TASTE IN POETRY.

SWEET poesy! thou loveliest object of intellectual pursuit.—But I am running into a rhapsody, when I intended only a dissertation. It is, indeed, difficult not to be transported beyond the limits of cool criticism in contemplating the beauties which the magic hand of the poet raises around, with all the creative power of a real enchantment. From the cares of gain, the toils of ambition, the noise, the hurry, the vexation of a disordered world, we rise on the wings of poesy to ethereal regions, where all is sublime and tranquil; or are wafted to visionary scenes, in which are displayed all the delicious sweets of a paradise and an elysium. Away, ye sordid objects; ye pollutions and incumbrances of the pure spirit! Man is not tied down to you. Providence, in compassion to wretched mortals, has given them a power of forsaking this low orb, and soaring awhile, all mind, all spirit, all ecstasy, in the car of the swan, on the wings of the eagle.

Reason alone, with all her pretensions, is seldom sufficient to soothe our cares, and compose our passions; but melody and fancy united with her, are capable of pouring balm into the wounded heart. In all nations, and in all ranks of the people, some species of poetry has been cultivated; and a taste for it was undoubtedly implanted in our nature, that the sore evils of reality might often be alleviated by the sweets of fiction. When Pandora's box was opened on mankind, and misery diffused on every side, fancy, as well as hope, kindly lingered for our consolation.

While we are tracing the love of song from the favoured isles of the Southern Ocean, to the regions of Iceland, we are naturally tempted to dwell, with particular attention, on the poetical taste of our own country, and our own times.

I think it is not difficult to perceive, that the admirers of English poetry are divided into two parties. The objects of their love are, perhaps, of equal beauty, though they greatly differ in their air, their dress, the turn of their features, and their complexion. On one side are the lovers and imitators of Spenser and Milton; and on the other, Dryden, Boileau, and Pope.

Now it happens, unfortunately, that those who are in love with one of these forms are, sometimes, so blind to the charms of the other, as to dispute their existence. The author of the essay on Pope, who is in himself a very agreeable poet, and of what I call the old school of English poetry, seems to deny the justice of Mr. Pope's claim to the title of a true poet, and to appropriate to him the subordinate character of a satirical versifier. On the other hand, the authors of the Traveller, and of the lives of the English poets, hesitate not to strip the laurels from the brow of the Lyric Gray.

Goldsmith, in his life of Parnell, has invidiously compared the Night Piece on Death to Gray's Elegy; and in a manner, which betrays a little jealousy of a living poet's fame, given the preference to Parnell. There is also a little censure thrown on the elegy, in a collection which Goldsmith published under the title of the Beauties of English Poetry. I remember to have heard Goldsmith converse, when I was very young, on several subjects of literature, and make some oblique and severe reflections on the fashionable poetry. I became a convert to his opinion, because I revered his authority. I took up the odes of Gray with unfavourable prepossessions, and in writing my remarks on them, joined in the censure. I have since read them with great delight, and on comparing their style, and even their obscurity, with many of the finest pieces of Lyric composition in all antiquity, I find a very great resemblance. I am not ashamed to retract my former opinion, and to pay the tribute of applause to those elegant friends, Gray and Mason. At the same time, while it is easy to discern that they differ greatly from the school of Dryden and Pope, it is no derogation from their merit

to assert, that they are the genuine disciples of Spenser and Milton. Such, also, are the very elegant and learned brothers, one of whom presides, with so much honour, over the school at Winchester, and the other has written an elegant and elaborate history of that English poetry in which himself excels.

Goldsmith's Traveller is certainly a beautiful poem, and so are Dr. Johnson's imitations of Juvenal; but they, and a thousand others of the same species, are of a different stamp from the English antique. They are excellent productions in one kind, but not less so are those of Gray and Mason in another. Let both schools flourish and receive their due applause, nor let those who have only acquired a taste for one, treat the other with contempt. Spenser and Milton drew not from a Gothic model, but from the polished Italians, who, though they had lost some of the purity and simplicity of ancient Rome, yet retained much of her elegance. I cannot help thinking that his poetical ideas are confined, who has not observed with delight, the sweet lines, the sweet language, the sweet fancy of Spenser; and who has not been also charmed with the smaller pieces of Milton. All tastes, however various, allow Shakspeare's claim to poetry; but it cannot be denied, that some of his best descriptions, and especially those delicious morsels which occur in the form of songs or sonnets, partake much more of the ancient than of the modern school, either English or French; for we may call it English, if we attribute its origin to Pope, and French, it to Boileau.

There seems to be an unreasonable prejudice entertained against blank verse, by those who wish to dictate on the subjects of criticism. It is sufficient, in the idea of many, to condemn a poem, that it is written in blank verse. Though one may prefer rhyme upon the whole; yet, as blank verse is susceptible of great variety of music, and of every ornament of diction, it is surely absurd to involve it in any general censure. It may, however be attributed to this idle prepossession that Mr. Mason's English Garden seems to be neglected. There is, indeed, a general prejudice against all works which appear to come from that school, and the very

severe criticism of the late biographical preface to the works of Gray, will, perhaps, contribute to explode a most delightful style of pure poetry; of poetry, conversant solely in the regions of fancy, and clothed in a luminous and musical diction appropriated to itself, and most remote from all that is prosaic. Very high commendations are due to Mr. Anstey, to the author of a poetical epistle to Sir William Chambers, to Mr. Haley, and to several others who are well known to fame for their successful labours in the school of Pope; but, at least, an equal share of praise ought to be paid to the scholars of Milton and Spencer;—such as Mr. Mason and the two poetical brothers. With respect to Gray, he has received his tribute of applause from a discerning public, and has certainly deserved it. The heart and the imagination have given it him; and they who can see no beauty in his verse, may probably succeed in writing a lampoon; but would probably fall far short of the poet whom they censure, in lyric and elegiac poetry.

None can entertain a higher veneration for our late Prefatory Biographer of the poets, than myself, and I was therefore greatly concerned to see him exposed to censure, by an uncandid, not to say injudicious, piece of criticism on the poems of Gray. He indeed, allows the merit of the elegy, but examines and censures the odes with every appearance of wanton malignity. Who but must lament that the solid critic and moralist should have been so much under the influence of envy and jealousy, as to treat the fame of his cotemporary, the illustrious Gray, with singular harshness, in a work which contains very candid accounts of a Sprat and a Yalden, a Duke and a Broome, and of others, with whom, if Gray is compared, he will appear, as Shakspeare says, like Hyperion to a Satyr.

The late collection of poets has restored to temporary life, many a sickly and dying poet, who was hastening to his proper place, the tomb of oblivion. Why was any more paper wasted on Dorset, Halifax, Stepney, Walch, and Blackmore? How can a work pretend to the comprehensive title of the Body of English Poetry, in which the works of Spenser and Shakspeare are omitted, to

make room for such writers as King or Ambrose Philips? The writer of the preface is, indeed, sufficiently willing to throw the blame from himself on the compilers, whom he was not permitted, or did not endeavour to controul. A selection, formed under the direction of true taste, would have answered the two great ends of the publication which it has now frustrated; it would have amply paid the booksellers, and reflected honour on English literature. Then should we have seen, in the place of Roscommon and Rochester, Pomfret and Fenton, the works of Goldsmith, of Glover, of Mason, of Aikin, of Carter, of Beattie, of the Wartons, of Anstey, and of many others, who would shine among the Hughes's, Pitts, and Savages, like the moon among the diminished constellations.

Upon the many and excellent living writers of poetry we may observe, that though the distressful times of war and political animosity are unfavourable to the gentle arts of verse; yet the active and polished genius of this nation seems capable of surmounting all obstacles in letters, as its manly spirit has ultimately borne all before it in the unhappy contests of war.

No. CXXX.

ON THE PECULIAR DANGER OF FALLING INTO INDOLENCE IN A LITERARY AND RETIRED LIFE.

IT is certain that, as our ancestors were reduced to found colleges by religious motives, so they chiefly intended them to answer the purposes of religion. Those pious benefactors to mankind did not mean to establish seminaries to prepare men for the world, but to teach them to despise it. But more enlightend periods than those in which these worthies lived, have discovered, that man best obeys his Maker when he takes an active part in the duties of society.

A long residence in a college is, perhaps, scarcely less unfavourable to devotion than to social activity. For devotion depends chiefly on lively affections, exercised and agitated by the vicissitudes of hope and fear

in the various transactions and events of human intercourse. He, who is almost placed beyond the reach of fortune in the shelter of a cloyster, may, indeed, be led by the statutes of the institution to attend his chapel, and doze over his cushion, but he will not feel, in any peculiar manner, the impulse of devotional fervour. The man who is engaged in the busy and honourable duties of active life, flies from the world to the altar for comfort and refreshment; but the cloistered recluse, pants, while he is kneeling in all the formalities of religion, for the pleasures and employments of that world from which he is secluded. During several centuries, a great part of mankind was confined in monasteries, solely for the advancement of religion and learning; yet never was the earth more benighted than in those periods, by bigotry and ignorance. Nor will any one assert, that in subsequent times, and in modern universities, the improvements in knowledge and religion have been, in any degree, proportioned to the numbers of those who have been separated from the world to facilitate their cultivation. The truth seems to be, that when the common incentives to industry are removed, and all the natural wants supplied without the necessity of exertion, man degenerates, as the pure waters of the river stagnate and become putrid in the pool. At last, the boasting possessor of reason contents himself with dreaming "the blank of life along," with no other proofs of existence than the wants of the animal nature. Take away love, ambition, the changes and chances of this mortal life, and man will be contented to eat, drink, sleep, and die,

Nor in colleges alone, though they may be considered as the temples of indolence, but in common life, also, the human mind becomes torpid, as the necessity of exertion is diminished. He who, confiding in the possession of a fortune for his happiness, avoids the avocation of a profession, and what he calls the fatiguing parts of study, will soon lose those powers of mental activity which he has not resolution to employ. If he does not gradually degenerate to a level with the irrational creation, he will not long be distant from the vegetable. When the habits are irretrievably confirmed, it might

perhaps be happy, if his nature would permit him to become at last impassive and quietcent; but as spontaneous fermentation takes place in masses of putrefaction, so, in the mind which has ceased to be exercised by its own efforts, emotions and habits will voluntarily arise both offensive and dangerous. Pride and envy, conceit and obstinacy, selfishness and sensuality, are among the ugly daughters of indolence.

It may appear paradoxical, but it is certainly an opinion authorized by experience, that an active life is the most friendly to contemplation. The fire of the mind, like culinary fire, has burned with a clear and constant flame, when opened and ventilated by perpetual motion, as it has been smothered and extinguished in smoke, when suffered to remain long without disturbance. The best, and many of the most voluminous writers, acted still more than they wrote. What could be more unlike the life of the cloister than the lives of Xenophon, Julius Cesar, Erasmus, and a thousand others, whose days were so engaged in negotiation, in senates, in battles, in travelling, that it is not easy to conceive how they could find time even to write so great a quantity as they certainly composed? But such are the effects of assiduity, of an uninterrupted accumulation of efforts, that he who has been excited to restless activity by the spurs of honour, interest, and a generosity of nature, as frequently accomplished more by himself, than a thousand of his fellow creatures employed in the same sphere, and furnished by nature, with equal abilities for improvement. A hackney writer of catchpenny compilations, the printer of a newspaper, the maker of a magazine, though engaged in a multiplicity of daily and various avocations, will perform, in a few months, a portion of literary labour which shall infinitely exceed that of whole colleges of those who slumber, or waste their activity on hounds and horses on the borders of the muddy Cam, and the slowly winding Charwell.

But it avails little to point out the disorders of literary indolence, without endeavouring to suggest a remedy. It appears then to me, that those whom Providence has blessed with leisure, and the opportunity

of spending it in the pursuits of learning, and the liberal pleasures of retirement, too often languish in their pursuits, from neglecting to render them the subjects of debate and conversation. It is the warmth of discussion in free and social meetings which invigorates solitary study, and sends the scholar back to his books with fresh alacrity. The hope of making a figure in a subsequent meeting, the fear of a shameful exposure, and of appearing inferior to those who are, in a natural and civil view, our equals, will stimulate all our powers, and engage all our attention, while we sit in those very libraries, where we once nodded and slumbered over the page even of a Homer. Meetings should be established in all literary societies for the communication of remarks, and the rehearsal of compositions. But the strictest rules should be prescribed and observed for the preservation of decorum; or else a majority of Masters of Arts would vote away the books, the pens and the ink, and all the moral, philosophical, and tasteful discourses, in order to introduce pipes and tobacco, Joe Miller, and the punch bowl.

It is right, also, that contemplative men, however far removed from the necessity of employment by the liberality of fortune, should communicate with mankind, not only in pleasures and amusements, but in real duties and active virtues, either conjugal, paternal, professional, official, or charitable. Something should be engaged in, with such obligations to performance, that an inclination to neglect should be over-ruled by legal compulsion, or the fear of certain loss and shame. The best method of avoiding the wretched state of not knowing what to do, is, to involve one's self in such circumstances as shall force one to do something. The natural indolence of the human heart is found to escape every restraint but the iron arm of necessity. Such is our present condition, that we must be often chained down to our real happiness and our best enjoyments.

With respect to the prevention of indolence in an academical life, it would certainly be a happy circumstance, if none were allowed to reside in an university above seven years, who were not actually engaged in the

composition of a learned work, or in superintending the education of youth as Tutors, Professors, and heads of Colleges. A Senior Fellow, without these employments, is one of the unhappiest and least useful members of the community.



No. CXXXI.

ON THE MANNERS OF A METROPOLIS.

WHATEVER may be the political advantages of a very populous capital, and I believe they are of a very disputable nature, the moral and physical evils of it are evidently numerous, and destructive of the human race. This observation is, indeed, true of all cities in which too great a proportion of the people is assembled; but I shall confine my present observations to the capital of the British empire.

The junction of Westminster with London, or of the Court with the City, is very justly supposed to have a pernicious influence on both; on those who are engaged in the employments of commerce, and on those who are invited from their paternal mansions by the court and the senate-house. The Courtier communicates to the Citizen a love of pleasure, of dissipation, of vanity; and the Citizen to the Courtier, an idolatrous veneration for opulence. The Courtier introduces the vicissitudes of taste and fashion; the Citizen imitates them, and furnishes, in profusion, the means of their display and gratification. Thus are luxury, and all its consequent vices and miseries, advanced to as high a degree as they can reach, by the union of ingenuity to invent modes of indulgence, with wealth to supply the materials.

Lovers of pleasure in excess, are always lovers of themselves in the same degree; and their love, with all the characteristical blindness of the passion, commonly injures its object. We shall therefore find selfishness prevailing in the metropolis, and producing all its natural effects of avarice, private gratifications, meanness, servility, and inhospitality. True patriotism and

public spirit, though the very want of them will often cause the greatest pretensions to them, will seldom be found in the more numerous classes who inhabit the capital. Where money and pleasure are the sole objects of ardent pursuit, public virtue, and indeed all virtue, will be exposed to sale, whenever a purchaser can be found to pay the price. "Money, O ye Citizens!" says Horace, in a style of satyrical irony, "is first to be sought; and it is time enough to think of virtue, when you have secured a fortune."

The inhabitants of a great city will often be inhospitable and unneighbourly. Their attention is fixed on advancing and gratifying themselves, and they consider their neighbours as rivals, or at least as not worth cultivating, since they can always buy amusement at the numerous places of public resort and diversion. But in the country, mutual good offices take place, from a mutual desire and necessity of a friendly intercourse. The Londoner hardly knows the name of his next door neighbour; and, in accidents and distress, would as soon think of sending to Rome, as to him, for comfort and assistance. But in any emergency in a village, every hand is ready to afford relief. Hospitality to strangers still lingers in the distant country, but has long been banished from that region of avarice and selfish profusion, an overgrown city. Pay a visit in Sussex, in Devonshire, in Cornwall, in Wales, in the North, and compare your reception among strangers with that which you meet with in London and Westminster. Luxury, avarice, and vice, have, indeed, a natural tendency to annihilate every generous principle, and to harden the heart against all connections which do not promise to terminate in sensual pleasure, or in lucrative advantage.

The secrecy with which crimes can be committed in a crowd, is a powerful temptation. The Londoner may be involved in debauchery, and engaged in fraud, without being suspected at home, or in his neighbourhood. In the country, the fear of shame, and a principle of pride, often operate, when virtue, honour, and conscience would cease to restrain; for no one can there be guilty of an action remarkably dishonest or immoral without detection. A gentleman who should devote himself

to the arts of the swindler, or the practices of the profligate debauchee, in a village or country town, would soon be compelled, by the hisses of infamy, to desert the place, or to live there in solitude. But in a city, even men adorned with the robes of magistracy may proceed, with little notice, in the most scandalous conduct.

Weakness of body and weakness of understanding are often found to characterize the inhabitant of the capital. Luxury, want of air, want of sleep, excess in food, and in sensual indulgence, have a natural tendency to debilitate. And if there were not continual supplies from the north, I know not whether the city would not exhibit the human race in a most lamentable condition of imbecility, folly, distortion, and deformity. Compare the limbs of the volunteer soldiers in the metropolis with those of the rustic militia, or regulars; Compare the conduct and understanding of him who was born within the sound of Bow-bell, with those of the hardy native of Yorkshire or Scotland.

The extremes of irreligion and enthusiasm mark the manners of the capital. These, indeed, are the natural consequences of some among the many bad dispositions already enumerated. Sunday is considered by the thrifty trader as a holliday, on which he may indulge without imprudence. It is therefore distinguished by many from the rest of the week, solely by excess, and by vicious indulgences. The parish churches are neglected; nor is there a great concourse to any place of worship, except where some enthusiast or hypocrite has opened a receptacle for those who labour under the symptoms of idiotism or insanity. The symptoms are often confirmed under this injudicious course, till they arrive at a degree of madness, real and most melancholy.

I have pointed out some peculiar evils in the manners of the metropolis with two intentions. One is to prevent, in some degree, the prevailing practice of emigrating from the country, from the seats of health and comparative innocence, to that sink of sin; and that grave of the human race, a city too crowded with people, and overrun with every abomination. The other is, to suggest a hint which may alleviate that part of the evil which admits a remedy. The love of money, of

distinction, of pleasure, will probably frustrate the former purpose; but the latter, in a day of national distress, or under other circumstances favourable to virtue, may possibly be accomplished.

To promote a reformation of manners, additional authority and efficiency must be given to the clergy and magistrates of London. Both of them are at this time looked upon by the vulgar, both high and low, with sovereign contempt. The churches are left to curates, or poor incumbents, who, in a place where riches are idolized, hold a rank scarcely equal to the keeper of an ale-house or an oil-shop. The justices of Middlesex have long been the standing objects of hatred and derision. Are the London clergy, who labour strenuously in their vocation, and on whom so much of the state of morals and christianity depends. particularly countenanced by the ministry of the bishops? It is parliamentary interest which procures mitres, and stalls, and livings; and though a city curate, or incumbent, should convert millions from the error of their ways, he would still be suffered to elbow his way along Cheapside in his thread-bare coat and tattered gown; pointed out and laughed at by every apprentice. The common people will not discriminate. They will despise religion and morals when they see the teachers of them poor, mean, and neglected.

Is it not a disgrace to the Defenders of the Faith, &c. that a London clergyman, who has promoted every charity, and probably reformed great numbers, during thirty or forty years, shall be suffered to live and die with nothing but a curacy and a beggarly lectureship? and that, in the mean time, he who is related to a Lord, or connected with Members of Parliament, though he never preached, and can hardly read, should be loaded with dignities and pluralities? He who would reform the capital, I repeat, must render the clergy respectable in the eyes of the vulgar, and the magistrates formidable.

No. CXXXII.

ON PHILELPHUS AND THEODORE GAZA,
POLITE SCHOLARS OF THE FIF-
TEENTH CENTURY.

THOUGH the admirer of elegant letters will find his sweetest, most solid and most constant pleasures of the learned kind, in the writings of the Augustan age; yet he will often feel his curiosity powerfully excited and amply rewarded by those among the revivers of learning who are distinguished by the politeness of their literary accomplishments. I was lately amusing myself in this pleasant walk of classical literature, when I accidentally met with the epistles of Philelphus. Though they are not without a few expressions which mark the barbarism of his times, they possess a considerable share of elegance, and partake much of the graces which shine so agreeably in the epistles of Pliny and Cicero.

Philelphus was born at Tollentino, in Italy, in the year 1398; a very early period for so uncommon an instance of proficiency. He died at Florence in 1480, after having filled a long life with the most laborious application. Let it be remembered, that printing was unknown at that time, and that not only the books which were composed, but which were also read, were often painfully transcribed by the student.

Philelphus was no inconsiderable poet, but was crowned with laurel, according to the fashion of the times, by Alphonso king of Naples. He wrote five different works in verse, and, according to his own account in one of his letters, they consisted of ten books of satires, five books of miscellaneous poems, the Sfortiad in eight books, ten books of epigrams, and three books of Greek poems. The number of verses in the whole, as calculated by himself, amounted to thirty-three thousand eight hundred. He has omitted, in this computation, his Nicholaus, a poem in two books, and in sapphic verse, which he composed in

honour of Pope Nicholas the Fifth, by whom he was greatly esteemed, and who had invited him, by a large present, to undertake the translation of Homer into Latin. He was scarcely less voluminous in prose, but less original as his prosaic works consist chiefly of translations from Lyllias, Aristotle, Xenophon, Hippocrates, and Plutarch. Though he has also written two books of Convivia, three entitled Commentationes Florentinæ, five on Moral Discipline, and the Life and Exploits of Francis Sfortia, in compliment to whom the Sfortiad, which has been mentioned already, was composed. There are also Orationes, of which Erasmus speaks rather unfavourably in his Ciceronianus.

But the only work of Philelphus which I have had an opportunity of inspecting, is the Epistles, of which this prolific author, in the course of a long life, has written no fewer than thirty seven books. These abound with eloquence, and with such literary anecdotes and particulars, as cannot but afford amusement to the curious scholar. Though Morhoff rather slightes them, yet Erasmus, a much better judge, acknowleges that they resemble Cicero.

I present the reader with an extract from one of them, selected for no other reason than that I happen to be reading it at the time I am writing, and that it characterizes the spirit of the author, and the great attachment which he bore to books. Cardinal Bessario, the patriarch of Constantinople, had applied to him, desiring him to sell his copy of Homer's Iliad; to which request Philelphus thus replies, "That copy
 " of Homer's Iliad which the very learned Theodore
 " Gaza has written out for me, I value so much, that
 " I would not part with it to any man, for all the vast
 " and wonderful treasures of Cræsus. I am really
 " surpris'd that you should think that I, who always
 " had the character of generosity, should be so much
 " chang'd as to be capable of avarice. I have learned
 " to give away many things, but to sell nothing, particularly books; than which I esteem nothing of
 " greater value. But this book of Homer is so dear
 " to my heart, and affords me so much pleasure, that
 " life itself can furnish nothing more delightful. There-

“fore pardon me in this one thing. If I can gratify you in any thing else, you may command me, and shall not be disappointed.” My paper will not admit a number of citations, and I will therefore content myself with referring the lover of elegant latinity and literary anecdotes to the original collection.

It is a circumstance which adds to our surprise in contemplating this example of literary industry, that Philellus was very much engaged in wars and in embassies; so true is it, that the greatest exertions of mind are compatible with the most active life. His writings are not free from faults, from that inaccuracy which proceeds from haste; but he is still a stupendous instance of diligence and excellence. Who but must lament, that after having done so much to enlighten a dark age, and enjoyed the friendship of princes and pontiffs, he should die in his eighty second year so poor, that his bed, and the utensils of his kitchen, were obliged to be sold to pay the expences of his funeral! But few men of real genius love money; and of the liberality of philellus, the fragment which I have inserted is an ample testimony.

I hope it will not be tedious or disagreeable to the reader, if I mention a few circumstances relative to the friend and contemporary of Philellus, Theodore Gaza, of whom he speaks in his epistle, as having transcribed for him a very fine copy of Homer's Iliad.

Theodore Gaza was born at Thessalonica, but received a part of his education in Italy. He was an elegant writer both in the Greek and Latin languages; but he displayed his abilities chiefly in translation; a most useful labour when the learned languages were imperfectly understood. He translated parts of Aristotle, Theophrastus, and Hippocrates, into Latin; and the treatise of Cicero on Old Age into Greek. He wrote also a treatise on Grammar in four books, which has been greatly celebrated. Greek learning, and indeed all ancient learning, is greatly indebted to this distinguished reviver of it, Theodore Gaza.

But he also was unfortunate, and adds to the number of those whom Providence has exhibited to prove,

that the rewards of virtuous and useful labour do not consist in riches, honours, or any thing else which the rulers of this world are able to bestow. Poor Gaza had dedicated his Translation and Commentaries on Aristotle's Book on Animals to Pope Sixtus the Fourth, in hopes of procuring from his patronage a little provision for his old age. The pope gave him only a purse with a few pieces in it, and accompanied his gift with a manner, which induced Gaza to conclude, that it was the last favour he should receive. Gaza received it in silence; and as he walked home, all melancholy and indignant, along the banks of the Tiber, he threw the purse into the stream; and soon after died of vexation and disappointment.

I have introduced these examples with a view to animate the student to industry; and at the same time, to teach him to seek his reward in his own heart, in the approbation of heaven, in the private satisfactions of study; and not to depend too much on princes, pontiffs, or popular favour.



No. CXXXIII.

ON THE INEFFICACY OF THAT STYLE OF
SPEAKING AND WRITING WHICH MAY
BE CALLED THE FROTHY.

ON the decline of ancient learning and Augustan taste, there arose a number of sophists and declaimers, who, in pursuit of an excellence in style superior to the natural graces of a better age, deviated into a most contemptible affectation. quaint, awkward, and frivolous, as were their embellishments, they paid their principal attention to them, and totally neglected solidity and substance. This style of writing characterizes the decline of a genuine and manly eloquence. It is, indeed, like the hectic efflorescence on the countenance of an invalid far advanced in a consumption.

In several departments of modern literature, and even in our own country, a style of writing has ap-

peared which very much resembles the sophistical and declamatory. But I know not that it has been so conspicuous in any of our publications, as in the popular addresses from the pulpit. Several of the favourite preachers in the capital, who seldom fail to fill every church in which they harangue, and to raise the largest contributions to charity schools, have presented the public with their sermons, in order to make the experiment, whether that oratory which delights the lower orders in the pulpit, would be equally well received in the closet. It was an unhappy experiment for the reputation of the orators; for there hardly ever appeared more remarkable specimens of florid, frothy, and meretricious eloquence. Sounding brass, and tinkling cymbals, are descriptions of it truly emblematical. If there is any sweetness, it is a sweetness which cloy, and makes you sick; if there is any brightness, it is a brightness which dazzles and gives you pain; if there is any gold, it is not like the bullion, but like the leaf, expanded to a superficies almost impalpable, under the operation of the goldbeater. Indeed, this species of style is very well described by the common epithet of the frothy; but as a means of supplying aliment, or as a constant diet, what is a syllabub to a surloin.

Indeed, almost all the popular preachers in London, have found it easier to themselves, and more agreeable to an illiterate and unthinking audience, to address the ears, the fancy, and the passions, than the faculties of reason and judgment. If their discourses were found to produce any better effect on their hearers, than that of furnishing an amusement for a leisure half-hour, it would be wrong to censure them, merely because they are offensive to a delicate and refined taste. But the truth is, that they excite only transient emotions, which, though they may last long enough to draw from the hearer a shilling for the churchwardens plate at the church door, will seldom go home with him, or produce an uniform influence on his personal and social conduct. He goes to hear a fine preacher as he goes to a play, to be entertained when he has nothing else to do he pays for his entertainment at the door, and gives himself

no farther concern on such subjects, but to look out for a similar one when his shop, or ware house, or counting-house are shut up, through the necessity of complying with the laws and customs of the country.

It may be said, that though a taste, formed by the pure models of Greece and Rome, may reprobate the frothy style, yet, since it is found to entertain the vulgar of a great capital, sometimes usefully, and always innocently, it ought not to be exploded. But perhaps we are not able to grant, that it does entertain them either usefully or innocently. It certainly gives them wrong ideas of religion, and teaches them to neglect and despise the dispassionate suggestions of reason. But it is one of the principal objections to this popular or frothy preaching, that it allures men from their own parish churches, and induces them to desert the pulpit of a modest and regularly educated clergyman, for some noisy and bold, some ignorant and hypocritical pretender. It leads them from the light of the sun to those meteors and vapours, whose dancing and uncertain gleam often conducts them into quagmires. There are few parishes in the metropolis which do not contain some thousands of inhabitants; but you will often find in their respective churches not more than one hundred, and sometimes scarcely half that number. Whither are they gone? Many, indeed, are carousing in the delectable retreats of the rural Hoxton; but many are also gone to the new built chapels, or the crowded churches, where some silver-tongued orator is preaching himself, with all the pathos of a white handkerchief, the splendour of a diamond ring, the smartness of a well dressed head, and the deceitful grimaces of an impostor. Religion, however, must lose much of her venerable air, when, instead of the decent clothing of a chaste and honourable matron, she is represented in the taudry and flimsy garment, the painted cheeks, the glass ear-rings, the false brilliants of the false courtesan.

I think I may confidently affirm, that the frothy style would not be tolerated at the bar or in the senate. It would be thought too trifling for the important subjects of property and politics. It would be an

object of ridicule. And shall that oratory which is hooted from the forum, not only take refuge, but lift up her head in triumph in the pulpit? It is not surprizing that men of sense pass by wagging their heads when they find an orator haranguing in church with all the affected language and sentiment of a fashionable auctioneer. The eloquence which has distinguished many of the most favourite preachers and writers of pulpit harangues, is not that of St. Paul, of Demosthenes, of Cicero; but of those great masters of florid description, Messieurs Langford and Christie.

I believe it will appear consistent with reason, that a peculiar degree of gravity, and solidity, far exceeding that of the senate or bar, is required to produce the due effect of pulpit oratory. Practical divinity is the gravest species of moral philosophy, deriving additional dignity and force from the authenticity of revelation. The appearance of truth and simplicity, is its most becoming ornament. To apply to it the little arts of rhetoric, and the petty graces of affectation, would be like painting, in tawdry and variegated colours, those Corinthian columns of St. Paul's cathedral, which derive all their beauties from their simple and symmetrical grandeur. When we go to church we hope to hear salutary truth, and to receive improvement of mind and morals. When we wish to be only amused, we shall repair to the play and the puppet-show.

I will take the liberty to hint to young and fashionable divines, who are generally smitten with the false graces of style and delivery, that their congregation would be much more edified, if instead of moral essays, in what they call *fine language*, they would preach sermons properly so called, to the plain style of truth and scripture. Let them also take care, as they will answer it to Him in whose name they ascend the pulpit, not to preach themselves, But the Gospel; not to be so solicitous in the display of a white hand, as of a pure heart; of a diamond ring, as of a shining example.

No. CXXXIV.

ON THE GENIUS OF ERASMUS.

BATAVIA and Bætia are by no means remarkable for the productions of genius; but Bætia may blast her Pindar, and Batavia her Erasmus.

I mean not to consider the theological opinions of Erasmus, but his learning and his genius; and of these I may venture to affirm, that if Erasmus had lived in an Augustan age, they would have advanced him to a rank among the best of the classics. But the theology and theologians of his times were at open war with the graces of taste and elegance; and considering the authority which they possessed, and the scarcity of any other writings than those which proceeded from the cloister, it may be pronounced almost impossible to have lived and written in that age, without contracting a tinge of the prevailing barbarism.

The style of Erasmus is not therefore perfectly pure and classical, but it is his own, and it has a native charm which renders it agreeable. I would not advise a young man to view it as a model; nor, indeed, to be much conversant in the works of Erasmus, or any modern writer of Latin, till his taste be formed, and a judgment regulated, by Terence, Virgil, Cæsar, and Cicero.

But he, whose mind is mature, and whose comprehensive powers are capable of grasping all pre-eminent authors, whether ancient or modern, will receive pleasure and improvement in a great degree from the writings of Erasmus. They have usually been studied only by divines, and for theological information. But I warmly recommend them to the lover of philology, or of classical learning, as furnishing a dish for such a palate both plentiful and highly seasoned. Erasmus was born to cultivate the *Literæ Humaniores*, or the politer parts of learning; and I have often lamented, that he should have been diverted from those flowery paths into the rough road of controversial divinity.

The colloquies, or dialogues of Erasmus, are often used to initiate boys, at an early age, in the study of the Latin Language. They are uncommonly lively, entertaining and instructive; and as there is not much danger of corrupting the style of a very young boy, there are, perhaps, few books better adapted to the purpose. Indeed we must not do Erasmus the injustice to assert, that he is devoid of elegance in style, for though, wherever he expresses theological ideas, he is almost under the necessity of using words unknown to the writers of a better age; yet, on other occasions, he really abounds with phrases of the purest and sweetest Latinity. Neither are his dialogues to be considered as fit only for boys, since they abound in wit, humour, good sense, and in allusions which strongly mark the fertility of the mind from which they originate. In a comparative estimate of genius, according to its kinds and degrees, I should not hesitate to place Erasmus in the same class with Lucian. There is, indeed, a seasoning of salt in all his writings, in which the necessity of being grave did not forbid him to be facetious. The *Ciceronianus* is an admirable specimen of judgment and pleasantry.

His Praise of Folly is a most humorous satire, and reflects no less honour on the inventive powers, than on the good sense of its author; as it was written, if I mistake not, in the space of one week, for the amusement of himself and Sir Thomas More, at whose house he was upon a visit. It made its author many enemies; but his genius rose like the arm of a giant against a host of pigmies, and defeated them all after a short conflict. His forgiveness of the vain and angry Dorpius who first attacked him, evinces his magnanimity and goodness of heart. Spite and envy may secretly undermine, but can never make an open and successful attack on the fortresses of true genius.

But the epistles of Erasmus will, perhaps, be found to furnish the student in philology with more amusement than any other of his works. They are, indeed, a valuable treasure of curious information. Their clear and lively language, their poignant wit, and good-natured humour, render it difficult to lay them aside

when once we are engaged in the serious perusal of them. They are very numerous, but they are by no means all which Erasmus wrote. He complains, indeed, of being obliged to write so many, that there was not a possibility of taking copies of them all. A great share of knowledge of the world, and of human nature, as well as of letters and literary characters, may be collected from them by the attentive reader.

But, indeed, to whatever part of his voluminous works we turn our attention, we can scarcely avoid the sentiments of pleasure and surprise. He has written more than many students were ever able to read. He has written so excellently, that all the learned, except a few envious cotemporaries, from his own times to ours, have uniformly considered him as a prodigy. And let it never be forgotten, that, under Providence, he owed his education and subsequent improvements entirely to himself. He was used ill and neglected in his youth. He abounded neither in books nor in instructors; but he possessed a genius and a love of letters, before which all obstacles usually give way, like the Alps to an Hannibal.

It adds greatly to our wonder, in contemplating his large and crowded tomes, when we recollect that he spent his life in a most unsettled state, and in constantly travelling from city to city, and from kingdom to kingdom. But his mind was employed in study wherever he went, and he composed many parts of his works as he rode on his horse. He was also attacked by many enemies; and though he was placable, yet as he was also irascible, much of that time and attention, which would otherwise have been devoted to calm contemplation, was necessarily lost in controversy.

He was certainly the greatest man of his time. Popes, kings, archbishops, bishops, and cardinals, hide their diminished heads in his presence. One is, indeed, almost tempted to laugh when one surveys a groupe of stupid personages, with crowns and mitres, riches and titles, sitting on their thrones and in their cathedral, yet bowing with an homage at once abject and involuntary, to the personal merit of poor Erasmus. He, indeed, was permitted by Providence to pass through his pilgrim-

age in this world without ecclesiastical riches or dignity; he was designed as an instance to prove, that great merit is its own reward, and that temporal distinctions are allowed, like trifles beneath the notice of heaven, to fall indiscriminately on the deserving, and the undeserving, the learned and the ignorant. Erasmus had no mitre; but he had the internal satisfactions of genius; he had glory, he had liberty.

Though I am sensible he wants no addition to his fame, and could not receive any from my applause, yet I have ventured to pay him this humble tribute, as the oblation of gratitude for the great and repeated pleasure which his works once afforded me in the retirement of a college.



No. CXXXV.

ON THE EDUCATION OF A PRINCE.

AN opinion has often prevailed, that the education of a prince ought to be totally different from that of other gentlemen, and that any remarkable share of learning would disgrace him. I shall not hesitate to affirm, that they were the enemies of princes who advanced such an opinion; for nothing can contribute more effectually to the general abolition of the monarchical form of government, than to render the character and person of the monarch contemptible. In an age and country enlightened like our own, if a king were the only gentleman unadorned with a liberal education, his kingly office would serve only to augment the contempt, and rouse the indignation of his people. Though he should sit on his throne, surrounded by his cringing courtiers, and his standing army; and though he should number among the provinces of his empire, the regions of the east and the west; yet, in the eyes of every sensible and independent spectator, his personal littleness would be rendered still less, by a comparison with his hereditary and official magnificence. The defects of the person would be attributed to the form of his government; and men of the greatest mode-

deration, if they were exempt from royal influence would heave an involuntary sigh for a republic or a revolution.

Every friend therefore to a reigning family, every lover of political tranquility, and of regular subordination, will wish to augment the personal accomplishments of that youth who is destined, at some future period to wield a sceptre. He will recollect, that the mind of a prince comes from the hand of nature, in a state no less rude than the mind of a peasant; and that, if it is not formed by early culture, it will soon become much ruder, more refractory, and more vicious under the many unfavourable circumstances of an exalted station. It will be readily allowed, that a peculiar polish, enlargement and liberality, is required in him who is to look with a comprehensive eye through all the ranks of society, and estimate the true interests of nations, and of mankind at large. Both the heart and the understanding of such an one, should be expanded to the utmost degree of possible dilation.

But no method of culture is found so much to fertilize the human mind, as that kind of discipline which is called the classical. A prince, therefore, though he should certainly be educated in private, ought to be trained according to the modes which the experience of ages has established as the most successful in a public seminary. No whimsical systems of pragmatical and conceited tutors should be admitted. The boy should be taught his grammar like other boys; for though there is indeed a royal game of goose, I never have yet heard of a royal method of learning Latin and Greek; and if there be such an one, the success of it still remains among the arcana of state.

An heir to a crown should certainly learn the ancient as well as the modern languages; and he will not be able to learn them effectually, without learning them radically. Away then with the indolence and indulgence which grandeur foolishly claims as a happy privilege! Let the boy, if you wish him to maintain the dignity of a man and a king, be early inured to mental labour. Let his memory be exercised in learning the rules of Lilly's grammar. Let him be confined

to his books and papers all the morning, and part of the evening, from the age of five to nineteen. The maids of honour will cry out shame; the sycophantic herd of young noblemen, who croud, with all the fervility of their own footmen, around a throne, will repine that they cannot have an opportunity of introducing themselves to the familiarity of the future King; but regard neither the foolish exclamations of vanity, nor the mean murmurs of self-interest. Proceed with him regularly, from the fables of Phædrus to the philosophy of Cicero, from the Cyropædia of Xenophon to the histories and politics of Herodotus, Thucydides, Livy, Sallust, and Polybius. Let his ear be familiarized to the fine language and sentiments of Cicero and Demosthenus, and his heart ennobled by the examples of the brightest characters of Greece and Rome.

Why should his superintendants be so cruel as not to cultivate in him a taste for the beauties of poetry, or leave him unacquainted with Homer and Virgil? An elegant taste, an humanized disposition, an enlightened understanding, will adorn him more than the jewels in his crown, or the robes of his coronation. It will give him an internal source of happiness and will teach him rather to seek his pleasures in a humane and generous conduct, than in the display of pomp, or the indulgence of luxury. A prince, with a mind uncultivated, must necessarily take his chief delight in mischief, in vice, or in unprincely occupations; but he, whose understanding is illuminated, and heart purified by a right discipline, will deserve a title which has been often unjustly claimed—that of Heaven's Vicegerent.

When, by the close application of ten or twelve years, a firm and broad basis is laid of ancient learning, let the stripling, be introduced to the avenues of all the parts of human knowledge. Let the years which elapse till he is of the age of three or four and twenty, be employed in acquiring proper ideas of all the objects, whether natural or civil, which surround him, under the tuition of a governor who possesses, not only official and titular, but personal authority, under one who is not frightened by the laughter of fashion, of

dissipation, or of false philosophy; from filling his pupil's mind with moral virtues, and a sincere, not a political, veneration for christianity.

All this is a general preparation for the particular pursuits which become a King, and these are law and politics. But I mean not the narrow system of a mercenary practitioner and a cunning statesman, but the general principles of justice and equity; the wise maxims of government as it is instituted for the diffusion of happiness and virtue among the individuals of a nation, and not for the extension of empire, or the accumulation of destructive opulence. What a situation is a Throne for the indulgence of the feelings of a christian, and of a compassionate friend to wretched human nature! I would not, indeed, refer a prince for maxims of equity and government to Puffendorf and Grotius, the dull and unfeeling deliberators of questions on which a good heart and understanding can intuitively decide; but to his own heart and eyes, to his own enlightened reason, to the page of scripture, and to the volumes of authenticated history.

Princes have been almost uniformly confined in their views to the narrow systems of worldly politicians, and of interested courtiers. False grandeur has fascinated themselves and their subjects. National prosperity has been estimated by fleets and armies, commerce and revenues. The morals, the health, the religion of the individuals, are considerations which do not claim the attention of a cabinet, but are discarded as subjects of declamation in the church or in the schools. "What is it to me," cries aloud the wisdom of this world, "while his lordship knows how to superintend the navy, whether he believes in God or the devil, and whether he has kept such laws as I neither understand nor value, the laws of relative and christian duty?" A nation thus advances in the devious paths of a false wisdom, till an incensed Providence, wearied with repeated provocation, visits it at last with a curse. Look from the Ganges to the Thames, and acknowledge the evident visitation of a chastizing Providence.

Imagination triumphs in the prospect of a golden age, when princes, and all who are concerned in the executive

parts of government, shall be early formed to virtue, to learning, to humanity, to religion. How happy, it has been said, would it be, if Philosophers, who are justly so called, were Kings; or Kings Philosophers!



No. CXXXVI.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON THE ART OF PRINTING.

THAT the desire of knowledge for its own sake is an adventitious passion unknown to nature, and to be classed among the refinements of civilization, is an opinion unsupported by experience, and derogatory from the native dignity of a rational creature. Fancy and sentiment, the powers of the intellect, and the feelings of the heart are, perhaps, by nature equally strong and susceptible in the rude Indian, and in the polished member of an established community. Perhaps these similar powers would be equally fit for exertion, and these propensities equally importunate for gratification, if the savage were not constantly engaged in providing for that necessary sustenance, which, without his own interposition, is commonly secured to the philosopher.

The pupil of nature, under all his disadvantages, feels the impulse of a species of literary curiosity, and seeks its satisfaction. He possesses the faculty of memory; he must therefore, without the co-operation of his will, remember many of the impressions received by the senses: he has a power of reflection, which will teach him to reason and draw inferences, without designing it, from the objects of his experience and observation. He feels within himself an imagination, capable of recalling past ideas of pleasure and pain, and apt to be delighted by beauty, novelty, and grandeur. Every natural exertion of natural faculties is attended with satisfaction. He feels it from the unpremeditated exertions of the mental powers; he tacitly acknowledges it to be congenial to his mind, and

of course endeavours to repeat, to extend, and to prolong it: but the objects which fall under the notice of his own senses, and his personal experience, are insufficient in number and importance to satisfy his capacity. He is led to enquire what passed among his forefathers, and in his turn is requested by his progeny to communicate his own remarks, superadded to the information of his ancestors.

Such, probably, is the origin of tradition; a mode of communicating knowledge, once universal, and still, perhaps, subsisting in the newly discovered islands of the Pacific Ocean, on the banks of the Senegal, and at the foot of the Andes. Beneath the shade of his plantain, the patriarch Indian still recites the divine origin of his tribe or family, the warlike actions of his ancestor, and of his own personal prowess. The attentive audience carry away the tale, and supply the defects of memory by the aid of imagination. The story spreads, time gives it a sanction, and at last it is found to constitute the most authentic history, however obscure, and fabulous, of the origin of a nation, after it has emerged from barbarism, and is become the seat of arts and learning.

In the earliest and rudest state of literature, if we may give that appellation to the efforts of the intellectual faculties where letters are unknown, is often produced the most animated, and perhaps most perfect, though least artificial, poetry. Historic truth is, indeed, little regarded, as it is addressed to reason rather than to fancy; but poetic composition appears with marks of genius approaching to inspiration. From his memory or his invention, or from both, the savage is heard to pour forth the song of war, and to warble the notes of love, warm with the sentiments of a feeling heart, and compensating the want of regularity and grace, by the strength and vivacity of natural expression.

If we believe the representations of some writers, poems equal in length to the most celebrated Epopeas of Greece and Rome, have been handed down, without the aid of letters, from the remotest antiquity to the present day; and in our own country and times, traditionary tales, poetic and prosaic, are known

to abound in that lowest class among us, who are yet unacquainted with the elements of learning. The tenant of the cottage, stupid and incurious as he may appear to the polite observer, has his fund of entertaining knowledge, and knows how to enliven the winter evening, with tales of fairies, giants, and enchantments, which he believed on the word of his progenitors, and which his hearers receive with equal pleasure and credulity, intending to transmit them to the rising generation.

The early appearance, and the universality of traditional learning, seems to establish the opinion, that the love of knowledge is among the first and importunate desires inherent to the human heart. We see it believing absurdity, and admiring nonsense; we see it bearing one of the strongest characteristics of natural inclinations, a proneness to neglect reason in pursuit of gratification.

This ardent love of knowledge which gave rise to tradition, soon invented improvements which superseded its general necessity. Tradition was soon found to be attended with great inconveniencies, and to be defective in its most perfect state. A thousand important circumstances must necessarily elude the most retentive memory, and besides the evils resulting from weakness of that faculty, and from the general inclination to exaggerate and embellish the simplicity of truth, the want of written standards to appeal to, afforded constant opportunities for imposition. Uprightness of intention, and strength of memory, were not always united in those who undertook the recital of events. Accuracy and justness of representation were rare, and the civil history of every people, without a single exception, is, in its first periods, dark and incoherent, such indeed as might be expected from oral authority.

The inventor of means to supply the defects of memory, and to preclude the opportunity of deceit, it is obvious to conclude, would be considered as a great benefactor to mankind, and elevated by the exuberant gratitude of a rude age, above the rank of humanity. To Theuth, the inventor of letters among the Egyptians, and to the same personage, under the name

of Hermes among the Greeks, divine honours were paid; an apotheosis surely more justifiable on principles of reason, than that of Bacchus the cultivator of the vine, or of Hercules, the cleanser of a stable.

To communicate the discovery, the inventors of literary symbols found it necessary to mark them on some substance susceptible of impression or penetration. What that substance was, is a subject of curious, but unimportant enquiry. The original mode of inscribing these newly discovered characters, however conducted, was probably very imperfect; but as it happens in all discoveries of momentous consequence, the idea, of it once started, was pursued with that general ardour and attention, which never fails to produce a great improvement. The stone the palm-leaf, the biblos or bark of the linden tree, the leaden tablet, the papyrus manufactured into the charta, the parchment, and the pugillares, respectively served, as progressive advancement suggested, or as convenience required, to receive the written lucubrations of the ancient poet, philosopher, legislator, and historian.

That many of the noblest efforts of ancient genius, though committed to writing on substances so frail as the papyrus, and so subject to erasure as the waxen tablet, should have reached the present age, is an event only to be accounted for by supposing, their conspicuous beauties occasioned uncommon vigilance and solicitude in their preservation.

At a very late period, a substance formed of macerated linen, was found superior in beauty, convenience, and duration, and better adapted to the purposes of literature, than all the prior devices of mechanical ingenuity. It derived its name from the flag that grew on the banks of the Nile, which, though it in some degree resembled, it greatly excelled. Porous, yet of firm contexture, it admitted the inscription of characters with a facility, equalled only by the retention with which it preserved them. By the ease with which it is procured and inscribed, it rescued the ancient authors from the possibility of oblivion, and may strictly be said

to have formed that monument more durable than brass, which a celebrated poet prophesied to himself with a confidence, justified at length by the accomplishment of his prediction.



No. CXXXVII.

ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH LED TO
THE DISCOVERY OF THE ART OF
PRINTING, WITH MISCELLA-
NEOUS REMARKS ON IT.

THE business of transcribing the remains of Grecian and Roman literature, became an useful, an innocent, and a pleasing employ to many of those who, in the dark ages, would else have pined in the listless langour of monastic retirement. Exempt from the avocations of civil life, incapable of literary exertion from the want of books and opportunities of improvement, they devote the frequent intervals of religious duty, to the transcription of authors whom they often little understood. The servile office of a mere copyist was not disdained by those who knew not to invent; and the writers in the scriptorium were inspired with an emulation to excel, in the beauty and variety of their illuminations, the fidelity of their copy, and the multitude of their performances.

But when every letter of every copy was to be formed by the immediate operation of the hand, the most persevering assiduity could effect but little. They appear not to have been written with the rapidity of a modern transcriber, but with a formal stiffness, or a correct elegance, equally inconsistent with expedition. They were therefore rare, and consequently much valued, and whenever sold, were sold at a great price. Few indeed, but crowned and mitred heads, or incorporated communities, were able to procure a number sufficient to merit the appellation of a Library; and even the boasted libraries of princes and prelates, were such, as are now easily excelled by every private collection. To be poor, with whatever ability or inclination, was,

at one time, an insurmountable obstacle to literary improvement: and, perhaps, we indulge an unreasonable acrimony in our general censure of Monkish sloth and ignorance, not considering that an involuntary fault ceases to be blameable; that ignorance is inevitable where the means of information are scarce; and that sloth is not to be avoided, where the requisites of proper employment are not attainable without great expence, or earnest solicitation.

It was, perhaps, less with a view to obviate these inconveniencies, than from the interested motives of deriving greater gain by exacting the usual price for copies multiplied with more ease and expedition, that a new mode was at length practised, derived from the invention of the Art of Printing, a discovery which, of all those recorded in civil history, is of the most important and extensive consequence.

That the first productions of the press were intended to pass for manuscripts, we are led to conclude from the resemblance of the type to the written characters, from the omission of illuminations which were to be supplied by the pen to facilitate the deception, and from the inventor's concealment of his process, so far as to incur suspicion of witchcraft or magic, by which alone the first observers could account for the extraordinary multiplication of the transcripts of copies.

But the deceit was soon detected. The perfect resemblance in the shape of the letters, in the place and number of the words on every page, the singular correctness, and above all the numerous copies of the same author, inevitably led to a discovery of the truth. To conceal it, indeed, was no longer desired, when experience had suggested the great lucrative advantages, and the practicability of multiplying books without end by the process newly invented. It soon appeared, though it was not obvious at first, that the new mode would be more agreeable to the reader, as well as easier to the copyist, and that printed books would universally supercede the use of manuscripts, from a choice founded on judicious preference. The art was soon professed as a trade, and the business of copying, which had once afforded only amusement or gain to the curious and the idle, became the constant employment and support

of a numerous tribe of artificans, and constituted a very considerable source of mercantile advantage.

Of an art, which, though it had yet acquired but small degrees of perfection, appeared of most extensive utility in religion, in politics, in literature, and even in commerce, no labour has been spared to investigate the history; but unfortunately, the enquiries into the origin of arts, infligated by the zeal of minute curiosity to push their researches too far, often discover them so rude, obvious, and inartificial at their commencement, as to reflect very little honour on those whom they ostentatiously exhibit as the earliest inventors. Such has been the result of the investigators of those who, dissatisfied with the common received opinions on the date of the invention of Printing, pretend to have discovered traces of it many years before the first production of Faustus, in 1457: and it is true, that the *Speculum Salutis*, and a few other books are extant, which are, on good reasons, judged to have been stamped, not printed *secundum artem*, long before the erection of a press at Mentz: but the mode in which they were executed, like the Chinese, bears but little resemblance to the art of Printing, properly so called: it appears not, by any historical memoir, to have suggested the first hint of it, and is too imperfect to deserve notice as even the infant state of this momentous invention.

National pride, like the pride of individuals, is often founded on slight or dubious pretensions. Thus have Germany and Holland contended with all the warmth of party, for the imaginary honour of giving birth to the Inventor of Printing, who, after all, was probably led to the discovery, not by the enlarged views of public utility, but by fortunate circumstances concurring with the desire of private and pecuniary advantage: but though the history of Printing, like all other histories is in some degree obscure and doubtful at its earliest period, though Strasburg has boasted Mentel, and Harlaem Coster, as the inventor, yet is there great reason to conclude, that the few arguments advanced in their favour are supported only by forgery and falsehood; and we may safely assert, with the majority of

writers, and with the general voice of Europe, that the time of the invention was about the year 1440; the place Mentz, and the persons Gutenberg, Faustus, and Schæffer, in conjunction.

He who wishes to trace the art in its gradual progress, from the wooden and immoveable letter to the moveable and metal type, and to the completion of the whole contrivance, will receive satisfactory information from the annals of the elaborate Mattaire. In the mean time the essayist will avoid the repetition of facts already too well known and established to admit additional illustration, and will think himself more properly employed in making reflections on the literary, the moral, the political, and the religious effects which have resulted from the invention.

It is, indeed, generally true, that the history of a mechanical art affords but insipid entertainment to a mind which is tinctured with the liberality of philosophy, and the elegance of classical literature. It often exhibits natural excellence united with such meanness of sentiment, and vulgarity of manners, as unavoidably mingles disgust with admiration; but to the truth of this general remark, the annals of typography are a singular exception. Many are recorded to have laboured at the press, whose literary attainments would have done honour to the chair of a professor. By their annotations, they illustrate the sense and spirit of those authors, the letter of whose writings they embellished by the most beautiful and accurate impressions.

The names of the Aldi, of Robert and Henry Stephens, of Turnebus, and of many more who united mechanical ingenuity with profound erudition, will ever be remembered with respect and gratitude by the votary of ancient learning. Happily for letters, at a time when the valuable works of antiquity were contained in manuscripts sometimes illegibly written, and often mutilated or corrupted, a number of men arose whose knowledge and sagacity enabled them to ascertain and exhibit, by the newly discovered art, the genuine reading. Such men were greater benefactors to mankind, than many who have been more celebrated; nor is it an ill grounded glory which Italy derives from

her Manutii, Germany from her Froben, France from her Stephani, the Netherlands from their Plantin, and England from her Caxton.

Every student looks back with regret on those times when an Erasmus corrected what an Aldus printed; when, like the painter of antiquity, a printer exposed his production to the passenger, and solicited censure; and when the legislature of a great nation provided by a statute, with a penalty, for the correctness of publications.

To prefer, with implicit attachment, all the earlier productions of the art to the more recent, were to be actuated with the narrow spirit of a typographical virtuoso; yet the truth is, what indeed was to be expected from the superior learning of those who were formerly concerned in the process, they surpass the more splendid editions of latter times, in the one great excellence of correctness. It is true, indeed, that the fungous production of the modern writer, appears with a splendour of paper, and brilliancy of type, unknown in the fifteenth century; and, if the work is written in the vernacular language, and on a familiar subject, is perhaps sufficiently correct. It is true, likewise, that considering the expedition of the artisan, the degree of correctness with which the common papers of intelligence appear, is really wonderful, and affords a striking instance how much industry can effect, when stimulated to exertion by the hope of that abundant gain, which our more than Athenian love of political information constantly supplies. Of such dispatch, a Plantin would, perhaps, have denied the possibility. Books of learning, however, especially when written in the dead languages, are indeed more slowly brought forth, but hardly with equal perfection. The mistaken avarice, and the gross ignorance of the modern editor, often frustrates all the past labour of printers, correctors, and commentators, who have toiled with aching eyes in the revival of proof sheets, and in the collation of manuscripts.

By one of those laudable artifices which prevent private avarice from withholding public benefits, the art was stolen from Harlaem, and brought to Oxford

by Frederic Corfelles. But while we are considering the introduction of printing into England, not to commemorate the names of Bouchier, Turnour, and Caxton, who were most instrumental to it, would be an omission equally negligent and ungrateful. Nor should the tribute of praise be any longer withheld by neglect from earl Tiptoft and earl Rivers, who, at this period, were restorers and patrons of learning in our own country, and who contributed to its advancement in imitation of their contemporary, Pius the second, in Italy, both by their munificence and example.



No. CXXXVIII.

ON THE MORAL, POLITICAL, AND RELIGIOUS EFFECTS OF PRINTING, WITH CONCLUDING REMARKS.

THE literary advantages derived from the invention of printing are so obvious, that to point them out with all the formality of disquisition is unnecessary.

But the moralist, no less than the man of letters, finds himself interested in the consequences resulting from the mechanical mode of multiplying the copies of books. To this cause, he attributes that change in the manners and sentiments which has taken place within the interval of a century or two, and which cannot escape even superficial observation. Philosophy once preserved among a chosen few, with the selfishness of an Alexander, who reprimanded Aristotle for divulging the secrets of science, has now diffused its influence on the mean as well as the great, the gay and the fair as well as the severe and studious, the merchant and the manufacturer as well as the contemplative professor. Pamphlets and manuals, on every subject of human enquiry, are circulated by the assiduous trader at a small price, among the lowest ranks of the community, the greatest part of whom have been furnished with the ability of reading by an eleemosynary education. A

tinctive of letters, which was once rare, and formed a shining character, has pervaded the mass of the people, and in a free country like our own, where it is not checked in its operation by political restraints, has produced remarkable effects on the general system of morality. Much good has resulted from it: happy, if it had not been mixed with that characteristic alloy of human happiness, much evil. Learning thus communicated to the vulgar, has taught the savage ferocity of gross ignorance to yield to gentleness and humanity; but it has also superinduced a general indolence, refinement, and false delicacy. It has been the means of exhibiting to the best advantage, the image of virtue in her natural beauty; but it has also held up to view the meretricious charms of vice in the false ornaments superadded by a corrupt imagination. It has been a steady light to lighten men in the path of truth; but it has also been an *ignis fatuus* leading them into the mazes of error, and plunging them at last into the depths of misery. If it has often tempted us to boast of living in an enlightened age, it has no less frequently induced us to regret the old times of ignorant, but innocent simplicity. If we sometimes look back with a mixture of scorn and pity on the unlettered ages that preceded us; we also sometimes confess ourselves ready to renounce the pride of superior knowledge for the solid happiness of that national probity, which, though it may not have receded, has not kept pace with our progress in scientific improvement. Here, however, the old maxim will be suggested to every one, that a good argument against the use of a thing, cannot be drawn from its abuse. It will at the same time be remembered, that the present times are ever seen through the fallacious mediums of prejudice and passion; and that the censures of the satirist may not arise from real degeneracy, but that common propensity which has, in all ages, given rise to invectives against the prevailing manners. If it is true that improvement in knowledge is a natural and laudable object of human desires, the more general that improvement, the happier and more perfect is human nature, and the more estimable that art from which it is principally derived.

But however equivocal the effects of the universal dissemination of literature on the morals of those who cannot judge and select with the same ease with which they can procure books, there is no doubt of their being beneficial among others, whose judgment is directed by liberal culture, and whose sentiments are undepraved by fashionable dissipation. Before the introduction of printing, the student, who, revolted at the idea of languishing in the sloth of Monkery, had scarcely any scope for his industry and talents, but in the puerile perplexities of a scholastic philosophy, as little adapted to call forth the virtues of the heart, as to promote valuable knowledge: but since that important æra in the annals of learning, every individual, even the poorest of the Muses' train, has been enabled to obtain, without difficulty, the works of those great masters in practical and speculative ethics, the Greek and Roman Philosophers. He is taught by the same instructors who formed a Xenophon and a Scipio, and can hold converse, in the retirements of his chamber, with the celebrated sages of antiquity, with nearly the same advantages as if he actually sat with Socrates beneath the shade of the plane tree, walked with Plato in the Lyceum, or accompanied Cicero to his Tusculan villa.

Whatever tends to diffuse new light on the understanding of a whole people, or to effect a change in the general system of manners, soon produces a similar revolution in their political character. Airy fabrics, which, when seen through the mists of ignorance, were supposed to be realities, vanished at the light of learning, as the enchantment is dissolved by the operation of the Talisman. The sun of science arose, the prospect cleared around, and they who had shuddered at the ideal phantoms of the night, ventured to walk forth and examine every object that solicited attention. The prejudices on the subject of civil government, formed by ignorance and fostered by the policy of power, when once the art of printing had multiplied books, and roused the spirit of enquiry, soon gave way to the dictates of instructed reason. The natural rights of mankind became well understood, the law of nations

was attended to, implicit obedience was neither exacted on the one part, with the same rigour as before, nor paid on the other with equal civility. What remained of the feudal institutions could not long subsist, when more liberal ideas of the nearer equality of mankind were imbibed from books, and when a great degree of dignity and power was attainable, not only by birth and riches, but by mere literary eminence. The distinction of Vassal and Lord soon ceased to be the only one in the community, when men were led by the ease with which books were procured, to aspire after the fine arts, philosophy, and erudition. Such studies infused a noble generosity of spirit, which scorned to pay an abject homage to ignorant opulence. Ignorant opulence, indeed, could not maintain, or even exact by force, that truly valuable respect which is naturally due and cheerfully paid, to personal dignity. Men, by reading, were led to reflect, and by reflection discovered, that they had been under an error when they looked up to their governors as to a superior Order of Beings; but at the same time they learned the happiness of living under a well-regulated constitution, the duty of obedience in return for protection, and the political necessity of subordination. History, and treatises of politics, suggested just notions of civil society, and a sense of expediency produced at length that voluntary acquiescence which was once exacted by pretensions to divine right, or by the immediate interposition of authority. The lust of dominion which disgraced the iron reign of the sullen and unlettered tyrant, was succeeded, in the enlightened father of his people, by a spirit of benevolence and philosophical moderation. That power which was once placed on the sandy foundation of popular prejudice and fear, when those fears and prejudices were dissipated by free disquisition, acquired an establishment on the basis of reason. Nor let it be deemed idle speculation to attribute these salutary consequences to the invention of printing, since to him, who attentively considers all its remote, as well as proximate effects, it will appear fully adequate to their production. When all ranks of people on a sudden were enabled to exert with vigour the faculty of think-

ing, which had only laid dormant for want of opportunity, the effect of the moral and political world must be as striking, as that which takes place in the physical at the return of day after night, and spring after winter.

Thus has Faustus and Mentz, by an art invented and exercised with views of private emolument, ultimately contributed more to the empires, and caused more important events in their history, than all the efforts of the renowned conquerors and lawgivers of antiquity. That the same art which has produced these salutary consequences, has also been the means of encouraging licentiousness; of animating sedition, and kindling the flame of civil war, is to be attributed to that lamentable condition of human affairs which is observed to counterbalance every good, with a proportion of concomitant evil.

To the Art of Printing, however, it is acknowledged, we owe the reformation. It has been justly remarked, that if the books of Luther had been multiplied only by the slow process of the hand-writing, they must have been few, and would have been easily suppressed by the combination of wealth and power: but, poured forth in abundance from the press, they spread over the land with the rapidity of an inundation, which acquires additional force from the efforts used to obstruct its progress. He who undertook to prevent the dispersion of the books once issued from the press, attempted a task no less arduous than the destruction of the Hydra. Resistance was vain, and religion was reformed: and we who are chiefly interested in this happy revolution must remember, amidst the praises bestowed on Luther, that his endeavours had been ineffectual, unassisted by the invention of Faustus.

How greatly the cause of religion has been promoted by the art, must appear when it is considered, that it has placed those sacred books in the hand of every individual, which, besides that they were once locked up in a dead language, could not be procured without great difficulty. The numerous comments on them of every kind, which tend to promote piety, and to form the christian philosopher, would probably never have

been composed, and certainly would not have extended their beneficial influence, if typography had still been unknown. By that art, the light, which is to illuminate a dark world, has been placed in a situation more advantageous to the emission of its rays: but if it has been the means of illustrating the doctrines, and enforcing the practice of religion, it has also, particularly in the present age, struck at the root of piety and moral virtue, by propagating opinions favourable to the sceptic and the voluptuary. It has enabled modern authors wantonly to gratify their avarice, their vanity, and their misanthropy, in disseminating novel systems subversive of the dignity and happiness of human nature: but though the perversion of the art is lamentably remarkable in those volumes which issue, with offensive profusion, from the vain, the wicked, and the hungry, yet this good results from the evil, that as truth is great and will prevail, she must derive fresh lustre, by displaying the superiority of her strength in the conflict with sophistry.

Thus the Art of Printing, in whatever light it is viewed, has deserved respect and attention. From the ingenuity of the contrivance, it has ever excited mechanical curiosity; from its intimate connection with learning, it has justly claimed historical notice; and from its extensive influence on morality, politics, and religion, it is now become a subject of very important speculation.

But however we may felicitate mankind on the invention, there are, perhaps, those who wish, that, together with its compatriot art of manufacturing gunpowder, it had not yet been brought to light. Of its effects on literature, they assert, that it has increased the number of books, till they distract, rather than improve the mind; and of its malignant influence on morals, they complain, that it has often introduced a false refinement, incompatible with the simplicity of primitive piety and genuine virtue. With respect to its literary ill consequences, it may be said, that though it produces to the world an infinite number of worthless publications, yet true wit and fine composition will still retain their value, and it will be an easy task for critical dis-

cernment to select these from the surrounding mass of absurdity; and though, with respect to its moral effect, a regard to truth extorts the confession, that it has diffused immorality and irreligion, divulged with cruel impertinence the secret of private life, and spread the tale of scandal through an empire; yet these are evils which will either shrink away unobserved in the triumphs of time and truth over falsehood, or which may, at any time, be suppressed by legislative interposition.

The *Liberty of the Press* is a subject not to be touched upon, but with a trembling caution. Every student must abhor the thought of erecting the tribunal of a star-chamber in the republic of letters; every lover of his country must reject with disdain the proposal of silencing the voice of truth by the menace of authority: but, at the same time, every true friend to learning and mankind, who, free from the enthusiasm of party, understands their real interest, would rejoice to see the day when the advantages of the Liberty of the Press should be unalloyed with those evils of its licentiousness; which, without some expedient of controul, will prevail, as long as they are, on one hand, indigent and avaricious publishers, and on the other, fractious and unprincipled readers.

But innovations in particular intimately connected with civil liberty, will ever be guarded against in a free country, with all the vigilance of jealous circumspection. Men will often patiently support the present evil, the nature and extent of which is ascertained by experience, rather than incur the hazard of a future detriment, which may possibly outweigh the beneficial ends proposed. If then the unrestrained use of the Press is as it has been commonly termed, the palladium of liberty, may it never be taken from us by fraud or force; and perhaps the evils resulting from the abuse of this privilege are of that kind, which, when permitted to take their course, ultimately remedy themselves: for it is certain, that there may be a period, and perhaps our own times approach to it, when the petulant licentiousness of public prints and pamphlets becomes too contemptible to gain attention, and

therefore fails of producing a malignant effect. Avarice will cease to publish, when men are too wise to purchase; faction and vanity will be silent, when they no longer find an audience: but penal and coercive measures are known to give weight to the nonsense of sedition and impiety, by alarming that attention which it could not otherwise excite, and to occasion the evils intended to be obviated; as the means used to extinguish a flame sometimes increase its violence.

But referring the discussion of this complicated subject to legislative wisdom, we may venture to express an honest wish without danger of presumption; and surely all the good and enlightened part of mankind will sympathise in the desire. That the time may not be distant, when the qualities of the heart shall be cultivated with the same general ardour as the powers of the understanding; when the affectations of singularity, and the love of money, shall no longer multiply treatises tending to teach the people a false philosophy, an erroneous belief, or a factious conduct; when the Art of Printing shall no more be perverted to embellish vice and justify folly, but operating in the accomplishment of its proper purposes, at once promote the interest, which cannot indeed without natural violence be separate, of sound learning and unaffected virtue.



No. CXXXIX.

CURSORY THOUGHTS ON SATIRE AND SATYRISIS.

THE good reception which that species of poetry, called Satire, has commonly met with in the world, is perhaps owing to some dispositions in the human nature not the most amiable. It derives not its power of pleasing, like other poetry, from its effects on the imagination. It raises no enchanting prospects; it is not necessarily employed in fiction. A spirit of indignation is its essential principle, and by causing a similar spirit in the reader, it gently gratifies the irascible passions.

It must be owned, that it has seldom answered its ostensible end of reforming the age. Yet allowing it to be of little use in reformation, it is often composed with such evident marks of genius as render it interesting to men of taste. And though spleen may have given rise to its first production, and the love of censure ensured its success, yet the beauties of the composition will cause it to be read, even by those who disapprove personal invective, long after the resentment that occasioned it has subsided.

Horace, the politest writer whom the world ever produced, adopted satirical writing, and succeeded in it, though there is every reason to believe that his natural disposition was not severe. The truth is, he was a man of the world, as well as a man of reflection, and wrote his remarks on men and things in careless verse; not without censuring them indeed, but without indulging the asperity of sarcasm. He probed every wound with so gentle a hand, that a patient smiled under the operation. The gay friend of Mæcenas had lived in courts, and knew too much of the world to think he could reform the gay and voluptuous part of it by abrupt severity.

Not so the stern Juvenal. With all the warmth of a zealot in the cause of virtue, he pours his majestic verse, and, amid the most spirited invective and the finest morality, emits many a luminous irradiation of poetry beautifully descriptive.

His predecessor Persius had afforded him a noble model. He improved on it in nothing but perspicuity. Persius is all fire, spirit, animation. The frequency of his interrogations rouses the attention of the reader, and it is not easy to read and understand him without catching the glow with which he evidently wrote. If his obscurity arose from fear, it does not indeed depreciate his merit as a writer; but it has caused him to be less read and admired than he deserves. The last lines of his second satire are alone sufficient to entitle him to immortality.

The English seem to have copied the manner of Juvenal rather than of Horace. Our national spirit is indeed of the manly and rougher kind, and feels some-

thing congenial with itself in the vehemence of the fallen Juvenal.

The Roman is remarkably harmonious. But Donne, his imitator, seems to have thought roughness of verse, as well as of sentiment, a real grace. It is scarcely possible, that a writer, who did not studiously avoid a smooth versification, could have written so many lines without stumbling on a good one. Pope has revived his fame by attuning his harsh numbers; a work whose very excellence makes us regret that a genius so fertile as was the bard's of Twickenham, should have wasted its vigour in paraphrases and translations.

This versatile poet has imbibed the very spirit of Horace. Nor can the mere English reader obtain, by the translation of Creech or of Francis, so clear and adequate an idea of the true Horatian manner, as from the liberal imitations of Pope.

Dryden seems to have preferred the model of his favourite Juvenal. His nervous line was well adapted to satirical composition. He says, himself, "he could write severely, with more ease than he could write gently." His *Abraham* and *Achitophel*, and his *Mac Flecknoe*, are master pieces, and models in the serious and vehement kind of satire.

Boileau seems to have blended with judgment the manner of Horace and Juvenal. Yet whatever degree of elegance he possesses, the natural monotony of French verse, tires an ear accustomed to the various harmony of our English poets. The French language never appears so mean as in the heroic couplet. He who reads the *Henriade*, and at the same time thinks of Milton, Dryden, Garth, or Pope, must close the volume with all the loathing of disgust. He who reads Boileau, will find his improving imitator Pope rise in his opinion. Pope rouses the attention by all the changes of musical modulation; Boileau soothes it to dull repose by the lullaby of similar pauses uniformly repeated.

A poet of our own, little attended to at present, once enjoyed a very high degree of fame as a satirical writer. Oldham has been called the English Juvenal. His satire on the Jesuits has indeed much of the spirit of Juvenal. It displays wit, force, pungency, and a

very copious invention; but it is no less distinguished by a vulgarity, which must prevent Oldham from keeping his place among the classics of our country. He has lashed the Jesuits with deserved and unrelenting rigour; but though severe punishment is often necessary, yet to see it inflicted with the wanton cruelty of an assassin, is not agreeable. There are some works of poetry, as well as of painting, which, though well performed as pieces of art, lose the praise their excellence demands, by the shocking nature of their representations.

A later satyrist, Doctor Young, is still read with pleasure. But he has the fault of Seneca, of Ovid, of Cowley; a profuse and unseasonable application of wit. His satires have been justly called a string of epigrams. A lover of originality, he did not regard models. Had he endeavoured to imitate Juvenal or Persius, he would have avoided this fault. Those great masters were too much engrossed by the importance of their subjects, to fall into the puerility of witticism. There is also something in Young's versification which a good ear does not approve.

But even Young, popular as he was, has been eclipsed by a poet who has shone with the effulgence and the stability of a meteor. Churchill possessed merit; a merit which was magnified when seen through the medium of party, beyond that degree which it was able to support. When reason at last viewed what passion had exaggerated, she was disgusted with the disappointment, and turned away with neglect. Thus the celebrated Churchill, with whose applause the town re-echoed, is sinking to an oblivion which he hardly deserves; for though he wrote many careless lines and many dull passages, yet the greater part of his productions displayed a genuine vein of satirical genius.

Within a few years Satire has re-assumed her original rude form of scurrilous and petulant abuse. An improved versification has given a gloss to illiberal, calumnious, and anonymous invectives. An undaunted effrontery, recommended by elegant verse, has supplied the want of every classical and noble ornament. That it has been well received, is no proof of its solid excellence as composition, since, to the greater part of

readers, the abuse which it lavishly pours on public and private characters, is a sufficient recommendation.

It differs from classical satire in this, as well as other circumstances. Horace, Persius, Juvenal, though sometimes disgraced by obscenity, yet abound with fine moral sentiments. They not only put vice to shame, but countenanced virtue, and pointed out the way to attain to it. But the satirists of our times seem to have little else in view, than to gratify private pique, or party prejudice. It is indeed scarcely to be expected, that in a degenerate age, many will be found to possess dignity of character and solidity of judgment, in a degree sufficient to enable them to stand forth disinterested and efficient censors of prevailing folly and fashionable vice.



No. CXL.

ON LOGIC AND METAPHYSICS.

TO false and careless reasoning most of the misfortunes of life are to be attributed. Logic then, as an art, is perhaps so far useful in the conduct of life, as it superinduces a habit of accurate reasoning.

But what says experience? Is the man who has digested Burgerſidius found to be wiser in his actions than others? The best disputant that ever conquered in the schools, when he has descended to the walks of common life, has been found no less prone to deviate into the paths of error, to be involved in the clouds of passion, and misled by the false lights of imagination, than the busy multitude who never heard the categories. They who possess common sense in a competent degree, will discover, with no other aid, the fallacy of wrong reasoning. They who are deficient in it, will not find a substitute in the use of a syllogism.

The great numbers who supply civil and commercial offices, in which there is a constant necessity for the exertion of reason, and who conduct the most important affairs without the aid of scholastic logic, are proofs that vigorous nature wants not this slender assistance. To

imagine that a well-formed mind cannot reason well without logic, is no less absurd, than to suppose that the solid oak wants the support of the ivy that creeps round it.

The best school for the improvement of reason, after a competent education, is the living world. We find even the illiterate, who have spent their lives in constant action, possessing a very extensive knowledge of things, and a most accurate method of judging of them; a knowledge and a method to which the cultivated but inexperienced reasoner can seldom attain. It is common to see the learned academic, whose labours are at last rewarded by a rural benefice, unable, notwithstanding his acquired strength of reason, to cope with the rude rustic in a bargain for dues which the laws have allotted him.

It seems, then, that the gradual decay of scholastic logic, and the contempt in which syllogistic skill is held, is not unreasonable. It contributes little to the benefit of society. It is rather injurious to it, by drawing off that attention which might be usefully bestowed. What then shall we say? Must an art, which our forefathers have studied from age to age, and to which many of us have devoted our first years at the universities, be exploded? A veneration is due to long established opinions. The powers of judging, which stimulate the present age to innovation, were possessed by the past in equal perfection. Some reason they had for their institutions. The same reason may perhaps remain to prevent the total abolition of them; for truth and reason are unchangeable. Our ancestors established logical studies in the universities, because in their days there were few other books to be obtained. and no other learning was prized. Their descendants must continue to bestow on them a moderate attention, because every part of knowledge contributes to accomplish the professed scholar. But they need give no more than a moderate attention, because the improvements of philosophy, and the great multiplication of books in every part of human learning, enable the student to spend his time and sagacity more usefully and more agreeably.

He who possesses the genius and taste, together with the philosophical spirit of the attic Harris, will do right

to cultivate them by studying the unread works of ancient logicians. Our English Aristotle, whose productions are at once the quintessence of elegance, and prodigies of analytical ingenuity, has pointed out flowers in those paths of learning where thorns only were seen before. The Stagyrice was literally idolized; and had it been the fate of Harris to have lived a few centuries ago, he also would have been honoured with a subordinate deification. If any thing can restore a taste for these languishing studies, it is the grace which his style and his accuracy have given them.

For metaphysics what can be said? If every book that has been written on them, and thousands have been written, were annihilated, not a single individual in the great community of all mankind would in any one respect have just reason to lament the loss. Mathematical and arithmetical studies are speculative, it is true; but they do not terminate in speculation. They afford a great pleasure, abstractedly considered, by the full evidence with which they display their truths; but they tend to obvious utility as well as to delight. They builder, the navigator almost every mechanic art, is assisted by geometry, and all men, without exception, benefited by arithmetic. But metaphysics tend only to benight the understanding in a cloud of its own making, to lose it in a labyrinth of its own contrivance.

Metaphysics were once encouraged and cultivated, because they served the purposes of superstition. They involved theological subjects in a perplexity which the simple could never unravel. They gave an air of mystery and depth, which caught the admiration of the vulgar. They are now employed, in a similar manner, in the service of infidelity. They have induced the half-learned and the conceited, those who think they understand them, and those who wish to be thought by others to understand them, to adopt, without being apprehensive of danger, opinions fatal to their own happiness and to the existence of society.

Even when cultivated by the honest and truly ingenious, they exhibit an instance of blameable pride. They aim at a science to which man can never attain. It is truly laughable, to observe a creature with hardly knowledge enough of the things around him to guide him with safety, perplexing himself with ontological enquiries into the nature of angels, and the essence of the devil.

The ontologists and pneumatologists, the nominales and reales, the doctores seraphici, and all the tribe of microscopic philosophers, are, in the present age of discernment totally neglected. Even Malebranche and Locke, the most rational of the metaphysicians, are daily losing ground. As a task they are attended to in public seminaries, where some obsolete plan of study requires metaphysical exercises; but the multitude of more agreeable works seldom leave time or inclination, to the student who is at liberty to choose his books, for the controversy concerning innate ideas. A few, however, in the present times, have been so unfortunate, as to waste their labour in defending materialism, in expatiating on liberty and necessity, in diffusing scepticism, and in proving that man is no more than an animal. This sentence and doctrine will probably induce them to prove, in their own persons, that he is an *irritable animal*.

Such miserable effects of metaphysical research have induced an amiable writer, whose heart and abilities vie with each other for excellence, to vindicate the nature and immutability of truth, to expose the futility of metaphysics, to confound the devices of their patrons, and to establish the natural rights of common sense. This formidable champion has given the last fatal blow to languishing sophistry; a blow which, that she may never recover, every man must wish, who knows the baneful influence of a Hume's dark inventions, and who desires to counteract it.

To put an end to speculative error, it might, perhaps in some degree, be effectual to lay less stress upon metaphysics in academical education. Those who preside over our seminaries are no less liberal than enlightened, and will surely, on some future day, if any part of the present system of instruction is trifling or pernicious,

renounce it with alacrity. But a proper deference to their respectable opinions renders it reasonable to suppose, that an attention to this abstruse, though otherwise useless science, may tend to give the young mind a habit of thinking with depth and precision. As a severe discipline, it may be advantageous. Many a manœuvre is taught the soldier in his course of preparation for war, which will seldom be useful in the field of battle.

All those however who have little opportunity of being actively serviceable to others, have an unquestionable right to seek amusement in abstruse speculation, or in any other pastime which is innocent. They may puzzle themselves for diversion even in metaphysics. But if, in the course of their inquiries, they should fall upon a wonderful discovery, which, when divulged, would disturb the happy ignorance of mankind, let them for once be selfish, enjoy it in private, and withhold it from the community.



No. CXLI.

ON LATIN VERSE AS AN EXERCISE AT SCHOOL.

NO part of classical education has been more generally censured and more firmly adhered to, than that of exercising boys in the composition of Latin poetry. The wise remark, that a poet is born, and not formed by discipline, has been urged against it. It has also been alleged, that the time bestowed on it would be more advantageously spent in the study of things, and in acquiring a right method of expressing our sentiments in humble prose. It is absurd enough, says the objector, to exact a certain portion of English verse from the scholar; but to perplex him with Latin verse, at a time when he might be learning a thousand useful things what is it but extreme imprudence, countenanced indeed by general practice, but nevertheless both culpable and truly ridiculous?

They allow, however, that the custom is general, and of long duration. Surely then that degree of

respect is due to the general opinion of mankind, and to the wisdom of our predecessors, which leads us to presume, that there must have been some benefit perceived by experience from an institution thus ancient and universal. And it is natural to consider, whether a few arguments may not be found in favour of a mode silently and uniformly pursued amid the loud clamour every where raised against it.

The defenders of practices unjustly censured, often do an injury to their cause, by admitting none of the objections to be reasonable. We will then allow, that to learn to make Latin verse is to lose time, when the scholar is destined to spend his life in commercial or in mechanical employments. But, at the same time, we must insist on its utility to the man of independent fortune, to the divine, the lawyer, the physician, and perhaps to the accomplished military commander.

To all these an acquaintance with the classics will add an elegance, such as tends to complete their characters as gentlemen, as well as scholars. It is the finishing polish of education, and operates on the mind, like dancing on the person, by superadding a graceful habit. But there is no method so well calculated to infuse an intimate knowledge of an author, as to imitate and endeavour to rival his excellencies. To write Virgilian verse with true elegance, it is necessary to commit to memory every phrase; to catch the very spirit of Virgil; to mark the varied pauses of his verses, the length of his periods, the peculiar grace of his expressions; and to give the whole composition a majestic dignity. All these requisites to poetical composition in Latin, can only be acquired by a frequent and attentive perusal of the noble Mantuan.

The first-fruits of genius produced by the finest writers that adorn our annals, were compositions in Latin verse. Milton, at a boyish age, wrote it with great elegance. Cowley excelled in it early. Addison was much celebrated for his juvenile essays in it. Prior began with writing Latin epigrams. All the great men who have been educated at public schools, where it is invariably an exercise, were, during several years,

obliged to compose it as a daily task; and though many of them were never distinguished in poetry, yet they derived considerable advantages from the attempt, as will probably appear from the following reflections.

Difficulty is naturally painful; but to overcome it causes a very sensible pleasure, and facilitates future conquests by adding courage. To write Latin verse, is certainly an arduous task to a young boy; but the authority of his master, and a spirit of emulation, urge him to attempt with alacrity what his own indolence would have led him to neglect. Long practice gives facility. He finds he has overcome what he once thought insurmountable. When any new undertaking offers itself in future, with a difficult and forbidding aspect, he is not affrighted; for he recollects, that he has already performed that which appeared to him impracticable. The exertion necessary to accomplish what is not easy, has a natural tendency to give the mind fresh vigour.

A subject taken from a classic, a moral sentiment, or an ingenious remark, is given to a boy to employ his leisure during the intervals of school. He is taught, that there must be an unity in his design; that he must invent a thought, on which he is to display, if he can, good sense and Augustan wit, expressed in the most elegant versification. This tends to give a knowledge of things, at the same time that it renders it necessary to call to his assistance all his classical phraseology. He must revolve many ideas in his mind before this thought occurs. In this process he exercises the powers of judgment, of discrimination, of taste. He recollects all his reading, he reviews all he has seen and heard, he searches his books for similar topics, and at once improves what he has obtained, and makes new acquisitions.

He who has been conversant in great schools will have seen copies of verses written as the exercises of an evening in which were displayed wit, humour, fine language, ingenious turns, harmonious verse, and very shrewd observations on men and things. Such were the *Lusus Westmonasterienses*; such were many in the *Muse Etonenses*, and such are thousands that

have never yet been offered to the public view. It is a known truth, that many of the boys who were engaged in these useful sports of a fertile genius, afterwards became distinguished members of the literary or the political republic; and they owed much of that good reception which they met with in the world, to the fame and merit of classical scholarship, acquired at their school.

Every liberal scholar desires to extend his views, and to be enabled to derive literary pleasure from all that is capable of affording it. If he has formed no taste for modern Latin poetry, he will be a stranger to many most pleasing productions. But he cannot have a just relish for them, unless he has a knowledge of prosody, and of their various metres; and of these he can seldom have a perfect knowledge, such a knowledge as will enable him to judge of their finer graces, without having composed Latin poetry as an exercise.

It is certain that none of the modern Latinists have equalled Virgil and Horace, and that the classical student can no where find entertainment so unmixed as in their original writings. But the daintiest fare that an Apicius ever invented, ceased to please when constantly repeated. Nor can he be said to have an undistinguishing taste, or a coarse appetite, who seeks variety in the writing of the Virgilian *Vida*, and in the sweet strains of our own Vincent Bourne. There is often a happy union of the beauties that distinguish Ovid, Tibullus, and Martial, in the *Carmina Quadragesimalia*. Rapin, Vanier, Buchanan, and Browne, seem to have written Latin verse with an ease, which would almost lead to a supposition that Latin was their vernacular Language. In miscellaneous publications of our own and other nations the man of taste will find a multitude of poemata, which he may read with pleasure, and without danger of corrupting the purity of his style.

Merely as the means of enjoying a sweet and innocent pleasure in greater perfection, of filling up a leisure hour with an elegant amusement, the composition of Latin verse may be justly recommended to the affluent and the generous youth, who enjoys, and knows how to value, a liberal education. Others, it must be owned, will be much better employed in learning their pence-table.

No. CXLII.

ON THE INSENSIBILITY OF THE MEN TO
THE CHARMS OF A FEMALE MIND
CULTIVATED WITH POLITE AND
SOLID LITERATURE.

IN A LETTER.

SIR,

I AM the only daughter of a clergyman, who, on the death of my mother, which happened when I was about three years old, concentrated his affections in me, and thought he could not display his love more effectually than by giving me a good education. His house was situated in a solitary village, and he had but little parochial duty, so that there was scarcely any thing to divert his attention from this object. He had ever been devoted to letters, and considering learning, next to virtue, as the noblest distinction of human nature.

As soon as I could read, I was initiated in Lilly's Grammar, and, before I was eight years old, could repeat every rule in it with the greatest accuracy. I was taught indeed all kinds of needle-work; but two hours in every day were invariably set apart for my improvement in Latin. I soon perfected myself in the elementary parts, and had read Phædrus and Cornelius Nepos with a strict attention to the grammatical construction of every word and phrase which they contained. From these I was advanced to Virgil and Horace. Under the direction of so good a classic as my father, I soon acquired a taste for their beauties, and not only read them through with great delight, but committed their more beautiful passages to memory.

My father was so well pleased with my proficiency, and with the task of instructing the object of his tenderest love, that he resolved to carry my improvements higher, and to open to my view the spacious fields of Grecian literature. The Greek Grammar I mastered with great ease, and I found a sweetness in the language which amply repaid me for the little difficulties I sometimes encountered. From the Greek Testament

I proceeded to the *Cyropædia* of Xenophon, the *Oration*s of Demosthenes, the dialogues of Plato, and the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer. That I received great improvement from this course, cannot be denied; but the pleasure of it alone was to me a sufficient reward. I was enabled to drink at the fountain head, while others were obliged to content themselves with the distant and polluted stream. I found that no translations whatever, however accurately they might exhibit the sense of originals, could express the beauties of the language. I was possessed with a power of inspecting those volumes, in admiration of which the world has long agreed, but from which my sex has been for the most part unreasonably excluded. It was a noble privilege, and I value myself upon it; but I hope and believe I did not despise those who had not partaken of it solely for want of opportunities.

The French and Italian languages became easy after my acquaintance with the Latin, and my father was of opinion that they are indispensably necessary to the modern scholar. In French I had read Rollin, Boileau, Fontenelle, Voiture, Bouhours, Bruyere, Rosseau, Voltaire, and Marmontel; in Italian, Petrarch, Tasso, Ariosto, Guicciardin, and the *Cortegiano* of Castiglione. All these gave me a degree of pleasure which I am sure none would be without, who are capable of obtaining it.

After having laid a foundation in the languages, which I believe is seldom done with success but in an early age, my father allowed me to feast without controul on the productions of my own country. The learning I had acquired enabled me to read them critically, and to understand all their allusions. The best writers abound so much in quotations, that I cannot help thinking that they who are unacquainted with the ancient languages, must often be mortified at their inability to unlock the concealed treasure.

All the classical poets, from Shakspeare to Pope, were my study and delight. History, which my father always recommended as peculiarly suited to adorn the female mind, was a favourite pursuit. I digested Hume and Robertson, and took a pleasure in every biographical

anecdote I could collect. After reading a life, or the history of any particular event, I was always desired by my father to give my sentiments upon it in writing; an exercise which I found to be attended with great advantage.

I never penetrated deeply into the sciences; yet I could not rest satisfied without a superficial knowledge of astronomy, of the solar system, of experimental philosophy, and of geography mathematical, physical, and political. This little was necessary for rational conversation, and I had neither time nor taste for scientific refinements. Poetry was my delight, and I sometimes wrote it, as the partiality of my poor father led him to assert, in a pleasing manner.

I do not make it a merit of my own, because it was entirely owing to my father's direction, that with all my attention to books, I did not neglect the ornamental accomplishments. My father excelled in music, and he taught me to play on the harpsichord. He engaged a good master to instruct me in dancing, and he always cautioned me against that neglect of dress and of accurate cleanliness, which, he said, had sometimes involved literary ladies in deserved disgrace. He likewise inculcated the necessity of avoiding a pedantic manner of conversation, and strictly charged me never to be overbearing, or to shew in the company of others the least appearance of conscious superiority. I believe I may venture to say, that I complied with his directions, and that I talked with perfect ease among the superficial, and neither expressed nor felt contempt, except when vanity and affectation were combined with ignorance.

Yet, notwithstanding my improvements and my earnest endeavours to prevent them from becoming invidious, I find myself received in the world with less cordiality than I had reason to expect. My own sex stand too much in awe of me to bear me any affection. When I come into their company, an universal silence would prevail, if it were not interrupted by myself. Though I cannot say that I am treated rudely, yet I can easily perceive that the civilities I receive are constrained; and I have every reason to

believe, that no small pains are taken to traduce my character, and to ridicule my taste in dress, and all the circumstances of external behaviour. It is kindly hinted that a little awkwardness and impropriety may be excused in a learned lady, and that dress and decorum are beneath the notice of a poetess.

I have no reason to think that my person is particularly disagreeable; yet, I know not how it is, I am avoided by gentlemen who are ambitious of the company of other ladies. They have dropt, in the hearing of some of my friends, that though they think me extremely clever, yet they cannot reconcile the ideas of female attractions and the knowledge of the Greek. They do not mean to detract from my praise; but they must own, that I am not the woman after their hearts. They entertain a notion, that a lady of improved understanding will not submit to the less dignified cares of managing a household. She knows how to make verses, says the witling, but give me the woman who can make a pudding.

I must confess, I never thought it the most valuable recommendation of a wife to be capable of becoming a conversible companion to her husband; nor did I ever conceive that the qualifications of a cook-maid, a laundress, or a house-keeper, were the most desirable accomplishments in a partner for life. A woman of improved understanding and real sense is more likely to submit to her condition, whatever it may be, than the uneducated or the half-learned; and such an one will always be willing to superintend œconomy, when it becomes her duty; and to take an active part in household management; when the happiness of him she loves, and of herself, depends upon her personal interference.

The education of children in the earlier periods, particularly of daughters, naturally belongs to the mother. Her inclination to improve them, seconded by her ability to take the proper methods, must be attended with the most valuable effects. The world is acquainted with the happy consequences of a Cornelia's parental care. But it seems probable, that little nourishment of mind can be imbibed from a mother, whose

ideas hardly ever wandered beyond the limits either of a kitchen or a dressing-room. Neither is there sufficient reason to conclude, that the whose intellectual acquisitions enable her to entertain her husband, and to form the minds of her children, must be incapable or unwilling to superintend the table, and give a personal attention to domestic œconomy.

That learning belongs not to the female character, and that the female mind is not capable of a degree of improvement equal to that of the other sex, are narrow and unphilosophical prejudices. The present times exhibit most honourable instances of female learning and genius. The superior advantages of boys education are, perhaps, the sole reason of their subsequent superiority. Learning is equally attainable, and, I think equally valuable, for the satisfaction arising from it, to a woman as a man. For my own part, I would not lose the little I possess, to avoid all other disagreeable consequences of which I have just now complained.



No. CXLIII.

ON PARENTAL INDULGENCE.

THE love of progeny seems to operate as strongly in the brute creation as in the human species, during the helpless age of immaturity. The guidance of instinct, indeed, as it is more decisively determinate, seems to bring up an offspring with less deviation from the purposes of nature, than the superior faculty of reason. The greater acuteness of reason leads to hesitation, and involves in error, while it is distracted by the variety of objects it assembles for its choice. The bird never injures its young by repletion. The young indeed, of few animals, when left to the care of the parent; without the interference of man, is found to perish. But it is well known how large a proportion of children die under the age of two years, in our metropolis. The cause is in general the neglect of nature for the aids of art, proceeding from a degree of fondness which stimulates the parent to take all the

care upon herself, and to leave little to the invisible process of natural energies.

If the child survive by the vigour of its constitution to a puerile age, even then the fondness of the parent, most amiable in its origin, but most injurious to the object it most wishes to benefit, is found to destroy the very purposes of living, by endeavouring to render life pleasurable to excess and without vicissitude. If his absence can be so far borne as to permit him to enter at a school, an earnest desire is expressed that he may be indulged in all those luxuries of the table which pollute the pure stream of infant blood, and, by overloading the organs of intellect, preclude the possibility of solid improvement. He, whose attention should be engrossed by his book, and who should learn to look on every pleasure of the senses as a subordinate pleasure, is taught by the overweening attachment of a parent, to have little other care than to pamper the grossest among the animal appetites.

Regularity of diet, and modest decency in all the circumstances of scholastic life, are often represented as the result of sparing œconomy; and the young pupil no sooner returns, in the days of vacation, to his paternal roof, than he is crammed with delicacies, to compensate the penance he has undergone at the place of his education.

We can derive but little improvement from the teacher we contemn. Yet how can the boy avoid contempt for the master, whom he is taught to consider as totally regardless of any thing but his own sordid interest, and capable of depriving the child committed to his care of his proper sustenance? But they who are sensible in other respects, are rendered, by their fondness, weak enough to believe any calumny which a froward child utters for the sake of changing his place of education, or of remaining at home.

The propensity to indulgence is so strong, that at the maturest age, and with the most improved reason, it is difficult to restrain it within the limits of moderation. To encourage, instead of checking this natural tendency, is, in effect, to nurse those vices of the future youth, and to cause those excesses of early

manhood, which in the end hasten the grey hairs of the inconsiderate parent with sorrow to the grave. Few would be profligate in the extreme, if they were not untaught all the virtue they learn under their tutors, by the example and inadvertence of their own family. When immorality is obliquely recommended by a father's practice, the infection is irresistible. A tutor's admonitions are soon supposed to proceed merely from official care, when they contradict the conduct of him whom a child naturally loves above all others.

The general custom of allowing a considerable weekly stipend, and of giving pecuniary presents to the schoolboy, often frustrates the intentions of education. It is not likely that he should give his thoughts to literary improvement, who is obliged to study how he shall spend the bounty of his aunts and cousins; and whose pocket always enables him to find recreation without seeking it in books. It would be happy if things could be so contrived, that, for want of employment he should be driven to those volumes where employment of the sweetest kind may be always found, attended with the most valuable advantages. A profusion of money at a childish age is not uncommonly the cause of subsequent extravagance, and tends to introduce one of the most pernicious and least curable vices, a propensity to gaming. But reasoning can avail little against the partiality of some fond relation who cannot suffer present pleasure to be neglected by her favourite for the sake of an advantage distant and uncertain.

It is usually supposed that maternal affection is stronger than paternal. There is no doubt but that it often interposes in a justing the plan of education. Its kind solicitude is too amiable to be censured with asperity. Yet we must assert, that it is not possible that a mother, though sensible and accomplished, should be so well qualified to direct the care of a boy's education in all its parts, as a father of equal abilities. All the important departments in civil life are filled by men. The pulpit, the bar, the senate-house, are appropriated to men. Men, from the facility with which they travel, and their superior hardiness, see

more of the world than women, who, with the same opportunities, might indeed make the same observations; but who, in the present state of things, cannot judge of those qualifications, attainments, manners, and characters, which recommend to notice in all the professions of life, and tend to insure success. Hence it is that are they observed to set the highest value on ornamental accomplishments, of the grace of which their fine taste is peculiarly sensible; and to under rate the more solid attainments, with the utility and beauty of which their situation often keeps them unacquainted. Many a fond and sensible mother has controverted the necessity of learning Latin, as a *dead* language, in which there can be no use, while the living languages of France and Italy are more easily attainable, and infinitely more fashionable. Such a judgment is not to be wondered at; nor does it proceed from natural weakness, but from an unavoidable **unacquaintance** with the charms of the classics, and the **utility** of Latin in the practice of every liberal art, in the **conversation** of the enlightened, and in the study of the most admired modern books, which abound in Latin quotations, in allusions to the classics, and in words which cannot be fully understood without understanding the language from which they are derived.

Add to this, that the extreme tenderness of maternal affection will not permit that strict discipline to be exercised on a beloved son, which, though it has nothing in it of harsh severity, resembles not the soft and indulgent treatment of the domestic nursery. Scarcely any thing of value is brought to perfection without some care analogous to this scholastic discipline. The tree will not produce its fruits in sufficient abundance, or with a proper flavour, unless it is chastised in its luxuriance by the hand of art. It is requisite that the stubborn soil should be broken by cultivation. The most serviceable animals are either useless or hurtful, till reduced to obedience by coercion. Man, above all, possessed as he is of stronger powers and accurate perceptions, of ill qualities no less than good, in a superior degree, requires all the aids of art to correct his enormities, and teach him to act a rational and con-

sistent part in the theatre of the world. Although the infliction of salutary discipline may give pain even to those who know it to be salutary, yet they must not, for the sake of sparing their own feelings, act in contradiction to their judgment, and do an irreparable injury to those whom they most tenderly love. Excessive lenity and indulgence is ultimately excessive rigour.

With the excellent effects of Spartan discipline, every one is acquainted. Of the lamentable consequences of modern relaxation, daily experience furnishes examples. The puerile age is patient and tractable. Reformation must begin there. Temperance, diligence, modesty, and humility, cannot be too early inculcated. These will lead through the temple of virtue to the temple of honour and happiness. In this progress, strict discipline will sometimes be necessary; but let not the pretence of proper correction give an opportunity for the gratification of vindictive cruelty. Inhumanity, even in a Busby, admits not of palliation.



No. CXLIV.

ON THE POEMS ATTRIBUTED TO ROWLEY.

THERE are many truths which we firmly believe, though we are unable to refute every argument which the extreme subtilty of refined learning may advance to invalidate them. When I read the researches of those learned antiquaries who have endeavoured to prove, that the poems attributed to Rowley were really written by him, I observe many ingenious remarks in confirmation of their opinion, which it would be tedious, if not difficult, to controvert. But I no sooner turn to the poems, than the labours of the antiquaries appear only a waste of time and ingenuity, and I am involuntarily forced to join in placing that laurel, which he seems so well to have deserved, on the brow of Chatterton.

The poems bear so many marks of superior genius, that they have deservedly excited the general attention of

polite scholars, and are considered as the most remarkable productions of modern poetry. We have many instances of poetical eminence at an early age; but neither Cowley, Milton, nor Pope, ever produced any thing, while they were boys, which can justly be compared to the poems of Chatterton. The learned antiquaries do not indeed dispute their excellence. They extol it in the highest terms of applause. They raise their favourite Rowley to a rivalry with Homer; but they make the very merit of the works an argument against the real author. Is it possible, say they, that a boy could produce compositions so beautiful and so masterly? That a common boy should produce them is not possible; But that they should be produced by a boy of extraordinary genius, such a genius as was that of Homer and Shakspeare; such a genius as appears not above once in many centuries; though a prodigy, is such an one as by no means exceeds the bounds of rational credibility.

That Chatterton was such a genius, his manners and his life in some degree evince. He had all the tremulous sensibility of genius, all its excentricities, all its pride, and all its spirit. Even his death, unfortunate and wicked as it was, displayed a magnitude of soul, which urged him to spurn a world, where even his exalted genius could not vindicate him from contempt, indigence and contumely.

Against the opinion of his superiority of genius, the miscellanies which he published in a periodical pamphlet are triumphantly produced. But what proof is there that all which are attributed to him were really his own? They are collected after his death; collected, I suppose, by conjecture, and published in a separate volume with all the typographical errata of the hasty pamphlets from which they are reprinted. But in many of the pieces which were confessedly written by him, there are marks of genius, not indeed equal to those of the counterfeit Rowley, but such as prove, that the boy who wrote them could write better. In composing the ancient poems all his attention had been exerted. It was the first, and seems to have been the greatest, object of his life, to raise himself to future eminence by the

instrumentality of a fictitious poet of a former age. Nights, if not days, were devoted to the work; for we have it on record, that he used to sit awake in his chamber during the silence of midnight. But the little compositions which he wrote for the magazines, were either written in a careless mood, when he relaxed his mind from his grand work, or in a moment of distress, when an extemporary essay or copy of verses was necessary to procure him a halfpenny roll and a draught of small beer. When he found that the editors were more desirous of quantity than quality, and amidst the numerous volunteers in their service, seemed backward to engage with one who wanted a stipend, he foresaw that even the little which nature wanted could not be supplied—He saw, and resigned his indignant spirit.

Unfortunate boy! short and evil were thy days, but thy fame shall be immortal. Hadst thou been known to the munificent patrons of genius—But wast thou not known to one? If fame report thy treatment truly, it was not kind of thee, Horatio; it was not like thyself, for thou art gentle in thy nature. Wast thou not considered as the oracle of taste, the investigator of all that is curious in arts and literature?—It was then, at last, thy only pride and pleasure to bring to light a catalogue of *royal and noble* authors.—What hadst thou to do with reptiles? with a poor, friendless, and obscure charity-boy? Besides, exclaims Horatio, it was a forgery,—a horrid, a vile forgery—Impostors are not to be encouraged—But let us ask thee, didst not thou put a false name to thy own romance,—to thy own poor production, for such it is when compared with the sublime-excellence of Chatterton? If, indeed, thy neglect of the poor boy arose from mistake or inadvertency, and I think it might, the generous Public freely forgives thee; but if from pride and insolence, the present and all future times will probably resent an omission, which hastened one of the greatest geniuses which England ever knew, at the age of a boy, to that bourne from which no traveller returns.

Unfortunate boy! poorly wast thou accommodated during thy short sojourning among us;—rudely wast thou treated,—forely did thy feeling soul suffer from the scorn of the unworthy; and there are, at last, those

who wish to rob thee of thy only meed, thy posthumous glory. Severe too are the censures of thy morals. In the gloomy moments of despondency, I fear thou hast uttered impious and blasphemous thoughts, which none can defend, and which neither thy youth, nor thy fiery spirit, nor thy situation can extenuate. But let thy more rigid censors reflect, that thou wast literally and strictly but a boy. Let many of thy bitterest enemies reflect what were their own religious principles and whether they had any, at the age of fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen. Surely it is a severe and an unjust surmise, that thou wouldst probably have ended thy life as a victim of the laws, if thou hadst not finished it as thou didst; since the very act by which thou durst put an end to thy painful existence, proves, that thou thoughtest it better to die, than to support life by theft or violence. The speculative errors of a boy who wrote from the sudden suggestions of passion or despondency, who is not convicted of any immoral or dishonest act in consequence of his speculations, ought to be excused and consigned to oblivion. But there seems to be a general and inveterate dislike to the boy, exclusively of the poet; a dislike which many will be ready to impute, and, indeed, not without the appearance of reason, to that insolence and envy of the little great, which cannot bear, to acknowledge so transcendent and commanding a superiority in the humble child of penury and obscurity.

Malice, if there was any, may surely now be at rest; for "Cold he lies in the grave below" But where were ye, O ye friends to genius, when stung with disappointment, distressed for food and raiment, with every frightful form of human misery painted on his fine imagination, poor Chatterton sunk in despair? Alas! ye knew him not then, and now it is too late,—

For now he is dead;

Gone to his death-bed,

All under the willow tree.

So sang the sweet youth, in as tender an elegy as ever flowed from a feeling heart.

In return for the pleasure I have received from thy poems, I pay thee, poor boy, the trifling tribute of

my praise. Thyself thou hast enblazoned; thine own monument thou hast erected. But they whom thou hast delighted, feel a pleasure in vindicating thine honours from the rude attacks of detraction. Thy sentiments, thy verse, thy rhythm all are modern, all are thine. By the help of glossaries and dictionaries, and the perusal of many old English writers, thou hast been able to translate the language of the present time into that of former centuries. Thou hast built an artificial ruin. The stones are mossy and old the whole fabric appears really antique to the distant and careless spectator; even the connoisseur, who pores with spectacles on the single stones, and inspects the mossy concretions with an antiquarian eye, boldly authenticates its antiquity; but they who examine without prejudice, and by the criterion of common sense, clearly discover the cement and the workmanship of a modern mason.

But though I cannot entertain a doubt but that the poems were written by Chatterton, yet I mean not to dictate to others, nor will I engage in controversy. I have expressed my feelings as those of a reader, who, though he respects the study of antiquities, dislikes the blind prejudices of the mere antiquary. I leave the weapons of controversy to be wielded by those powerful champions in the cause of Chatterton, a Tyrwhit and a Warton. I give a single vote for Chatterton; but I can make no interest in his favour.



No. CXLV.

ON THE MORAL TENDENCY OF THE WRITINGS OF STERNE.

IT is the privilege of genius, like the sun, to gild every object on which it emits its lustre, if the influence of its light and heat be directed on deformity itself, something of an agreeable tinge is communicated; and that which naturally excites horror and aversion, begins at last to please. Genius, like the fabulous power of Midas, seems to convert all it touches into gold, and with the wonderful property of the philosophers stone, to transmute the basest to the purest

metal. Hence it has happend, that doctrines which common sense and common prudence have repudiated are no sooner recommended by writers of genius, than they are received without debate, and admired as the ultimate discoveries of improved philosophy. Let the same opinions be advanced by a dull writer, and even the vain and the vicious, whom they tend to encourage, will refute and disavow them from principles of pride and of shame.

That Sterne possessed a fine particle of real genius, if our reason were disposed to deny it, our sensations on perusing him, will fully evince. It is, I think, an infallible proof of real genius, when a writer possesses the power of shaking the nerves, or of affecting the mind in the most lively manner in a few words, and with the most perfect simplicity of language. Such a power conspicuously marks both a Shakspeare and a Sterne; though Sterne is far below Shakspeare in the scale of genius.

I am ready to allow to Sterne another and a most exalted merit besides, and above the praise of genius. There never was a Heathen philosopher of any age or nation, who has recommended in so affecting a manner, the benignant doctrines of a general philanthropy. He has corrected the acrimony of the heart, smoothed the asperities of natural tempers, and taught the milk of human kindness to flow all-cheerily (it is his own expression) in gentle and uninterrupted channels.

To have affected so amiable a purpose is a great praise, is a distinguished honour. I lament that the praise is lessened and the honour sullied by many faults and many follies, which render the writings of Sterne justly and greatly reprehensible.

If we consider them as compositions, and are guided in our judgment by the dictates of sound criticism, and by those standards of excellence, the rectitude of which has been decided by the testimony of the politest ages, it will be necessary to pronounce on them a severe sentence. The great critic of antiquity required, as the necessary constituents of a legitimate composition, a beginning, a middle, and an end. I believe it will be difficult to find them in the chaotic confusion of *Tristram Shandy*. But, disregarding the tribunal of Aristotle,

to which the modern pretenders to genius do not consider themselves as amenable, it will still be true even by the decisions of reason and common sense, that his writings abound with faults.

Obscurity has always been deemed one of the greatest errors of which a writer can be guilty; and there have been few readers, except those who thought that the acknowledgment would derogate from their reputation for wisdom, who have not complained that *Tristram Shandy* is in many places disgustfully obscure.

The admirers of *Sterne* extol his wit. But I believe it will be found that his wit is of the lowest kind, and the easiest of invention; for is it not for the most part allusive obscenity? a species of wit to be found in its fullest perfection in the vulgarest and vilest haunts of vice. It is indeed, easy to attract the notice and the admiration of the youthful and the wanton, by exhibiting loose images under a transparent veil. It is true indeed there is usually a veil, and the decent are therefore tempted to read; but the veil like the affected modesty of a courtesan, serves only as an artifice to facilitate corruption.

The praise of humour has been lavished on him with peculiar bounty. If quaintness is humour, the praise is all his own, and let *Cervantes* and *Fielding* bow their heads to *Sterne*. They who admire *Uncle Toby*, *Doctor Slop*, and *Corporal Trim*, as natural characters, or as exhibiting true humour in their manners and conversations, are little acquainted with nature, and have no just taste of genuine humour. It is evident enough that the author meant to be humorous and witty, and many of his readers in the abundance of their good nature, have taken the will for the deed.

But till obscurity, till obscenity, till quaintness, till impudence, till oddity and mere wantonness, wildness, and extravagance are perfections in writing, *Tristram Shandy* cannot justly claim the rank, to which it has been raised by folly and fashion, by caprice and libertinism, and ignorance. I knew that this censure will be considered as blasphemy by the idolaters of *Sterne*; but I hope it will not sour that milk of human kindness which they may have imbibed from his writings; and

to an excessive degree of which wany soft and effeminate persons affectedly pretend. Let their philanthropy repress awhile their resentment, and I will venture to predict, that time will insensibly strip the writer of those honours which never belonged to him.

But will you allow his sermons no merit? I allow some of them the merit of the pathetic; but the laborious attempts to be witty and humorous have spoiled the greater part of them. The appearance of sincerity is one of the best beauties of a sermon. But Sterne seems as if he were laughing at his audience, as if he had ascended the pulpit in a frolic, and preached in mockery. Had he however, written nothing but his sermons, he would not have been censured as the destroyer of the morals and the happiness of private life.

There are, indeed, exquisite touches of the pathetic interspersed throughout all his works. His pathetic stories are greatly admired. The pathetic was the chief excellence of his writings; his admirers will be displeased if one were to add, that it is the only one which admits of unalloyed applause. It is certainly this which chiefly adorns the *Sentimental Journey*, a work which, whatever are its merits, has had a pernicious influence on the virtue, and consequently on the happiness of public and private society.

That softness, that affected and excessive sympathy at first sight, that sentimental affection, which is but *lust in disguise*, and which is so strongly inspired by the *Sentimental Journey*, and by *Tristram Shandy*, have been the ruin of thousands of our countrymen and countrywomen, who fancied, that while they were breaking the laws of God and man, they were actuated by the fine feelings of *sentimental affection*. How much are divorces multiplied since Sterne appeared!

Sterne himself, with all his pretensions, is said to have displayed, in private life, a bad and a hard heart; and I shall not hesitate to pronounce him, though many admire, him as the first of philosophers, the grand promoter of adultery, and every species of illicit commerce.

No. CXLVI.

ON THE WEIGHT AND EFFICACY WHICH
MORALITY MAY DERIVE FROM THE
INFLUENCE AND EXAMPLE OF
THOSE WHO ARE CALLED
THE GREAT.

IT is true, indeed, that the world abounds with moral instruction, and that there is scarcely any good thing so easily obtained as good advice; but it is no less true, that moral instruction and good advice are found to possess a very small degree of influence in the busy walks of active life. In the church, we hear the scriptures read and sermons preached; in the library, we study and admire the morality of the philosophers; but how few, in the actual pursuits of ambition, of interest, of pleasure, and even in the common occupations and intercourse of ordinary life, suffer their conduct to be regulated by the precepts of Solomon, of a Socrates, or of Him who was greater than either!

No sentence is triter, than that all example is more powerful than precept; but when the example is set by the rich and the great, its influence on the herd of mankind becomes irresistible. What can books effect? what avail the gentle admonitions of the retired moralist, against the examples of lords, dukes, and East-India Nabobs? Can the still small voice of conscience be heard by those who live in the noise and tumult of pleasurable pursuits? or can the mild doctrines of the humble Jesus be attended to, amid the agitations of the gaming-table, and the debaucheries of a brothel? A vicious nobleman, or profligate man of fashion, contributes more to extirpate morality, and diminish the little portion of happiness which is allowed to mankind, than all the malignant writings of the sceptics, from Mandeville and Bolingbroke, down to the feeble and cowardly, yet conceited writer, who insinuates his corrupt and infidel opinions under the fair semblance of an elegant history. I cannot help observing, when I

think of that last and recent attempt, that it resembles that of the evil spirit, who, when he beguiled the mother of mankind, and ruined all her progeny, used the soft words of an affected eloquence. The serpent was however cursed; but the wily historian is invited to a court, rewarded with places of honour and advantage, and eagerly enrolled in the legislative body of a mighty and a christian nation.

It is certainly true, that when a government bestows peculiar honour on men who have written against the religion of the country, and who have impiously fought against the King of kings, it must lose the respect and attachment of all good men. The religion of a country is unquestionably worthy of more solicitude in its preservation than the political constitution, however excellent and admirable. Kings, with all their minions and prerogatives, lawgivers and laws, are trifles compared to that system of religion, on which depends the temporal and eternal welfare of every individual throughout the empire. What avails it, that under a successful administration the French are beaten, and the Americans scourged for the sin of rebellion, if the same administration ruins our best, our sweetest hopes; those which rely on the protection of a kind Providence, and those which cheer us in this vail of misery, by the bright gleams of a sun which shall rise to set no more?

But supposing the narrow-minded ministers of a government so involved in gaming, sensuality, and temporal concerns, as to view all religion as imposture, and all modes of faith as political contrivances; yet surely they act inconsistently with the dictates of their own mean and low species of wisdom, when they exterminate, by their example, that religion which they allow to be politically useful. What ideas can the multitude entertain of the truth or advantages of a religion, when they see those who openly deride, and profess to disbelieve it, possessing the greatest power of the state, appointing bishops, and archbishops, and signing, while they sit at the table with a strumpet, presentations to the cure of half the souls in the three kingdoms? Who, unless he is corrupted by these instances, but

must feel an honest indignation, if a man were raised to the chancellorship of England, in whose disposal are so many ecclesiastical preferments, who was a bully in his profession, and in private life a whoremaster? Who can wonder that a thousand little imitators of him should think it a mark of spirit, wisdom and abilities, to follow his steps in the paths of vice, and, if possible, to exceed his enormities? What must the common people think when profligate men are advanced to the head of a profession? They cannot but believe, that those who are reputed to be so much wiser than themselves, and who are evidently greater, in a worldly sense of the epithet, must have chosen that system of opinions, and that plan of conduct which are most likely to be just and rational, safe and pleasant. "If my Lord, or his Grace," says the mechanic, "of whose wisdom listening senates stand in awe, is a debauchee and an infidel, I must conclude, that my parish preacher, an obscure and homely man, is an hypocrite, religion a farce, morality a useless restraint on the liberty of nature. Welcome then, universal libertinism! and let us hasten to the house of the harlot; let us drink the sweet cup of intoxication; let us scorn the creeping manners of vulgar industry, and, like men of spirit, seek our fortune with a pistol on the highway."

We will suppose the case of a great officer of state, but of an abandoned character, residing at a great house in a populous street of the metropolis. His conspicuous station draws the eyes of all his neighbours on every part of his private as well as his public conduct. His neighbours, we will proceed to suppose, are honest men, bred, in what he calls the prejudices, but which they really believe the virtues, of their forefathers. They are faithful husbands they are constant churchmen. They are temperate and æconomical. They are industrious in their occupations, and just in the payment of their debts. But the great man produces on them a total metamorphosis. He lives in a state of fashionable separation from his wife, whom he treated cruelly and wickedly. He keeps a mistress. His house is a constant scene of intemperate festivity. His Sundays are, in a peculiar manner, devoted to jollity,

gaming and debauchery. He would as soon think of going to heaven as to the church; and as to paying debts, it is quite unfashionable, and he has genteeler methods of expending his money than on the low tradesmen who supply him with nothing else but necessaries. Who, that has any pretensions to fashion, could bear to neglect a horse-race and the gaming-table, merely to satisfy the greasy inhabitants of Clare-market? Such is sometimes the example of the great neighbour.

Now I ask, whether the restraints of a common education or of common principles, whether the maxims of books or the admonitions of preachers, can counterbalance the weight of such an example, rendered brilliant by riches and grandeur, and still farther recommended by the patronage of a king, and the authority of office? Vice and misery are communicated from him, first to his neighbourhood, and then to the public at large, like infections and fatal diseases from the foul contagion of a putrid carcase.

But if a king, a court, a ministry, a parliament, were to honour and reward those only, or chiefly, whose characters were unimpeached, and to brand with infamy, or at least to neglect, the abandoned libertine and the audacious blasphemer, however celebrated for eloquence and abilities, then would the empire be fixed on a basis of adamant; then would faction and rebellion be no more; and the rulers of this world would deserve to be honoured with a title to which they have usually but little claim, that of the Representatives of the Beneficent and Almighty Lord of all Creation.

No. CXLVII.

ON THE PROFLIGACY AND CONSEQUENT
MISERY OF THE LOWER CLASSES,
AND ON THE MEANS OF
PREVENTION

A Contemplative and benevolent man can scarcely look down for a moment on the lower walks of life without feeling his compassion powerfully excited. On whatever side he turns, he beholds human nature sadly degraded, and sinking into the most deplorable wretchedness, in proportion as it recedes from its natural and its attainable perfection. Ye philosophers, who exert your ingenuity to explode, as unnecessary, the little virtue and religion that remain among us, leave your closets, awhile, and survey mankind as they are found in the purlieus of a great metropolis, in the haunts of Old Drury, of St Giles's, of Duke's Place, of Hockley in the Hole, of the brothel, of the prison-house, and then say whether your hearts do not smite you on the recollection, that you have exercised those talents which God Almighty gave you for benignant purposes, in breaking down the fences of morality! Let him who coolly controverts the distinction between moral good and evil, and who, instigated by vice and vanity, boldly fights against the religion of Jesus, and the comfortable doctrines of grace and redemption, repair to the cells of the convict, to the condemned hole, and spend the midnight hour with the murderer who is doomed to fall a victim on the morrow to the justice of his country. Ah! little think the conceited sophists who sit calmly at their desks, and teach men to laugh at all that is serious or sacred, to what an abyss of misery the actual practice of their speculative opinions will reduce the poor lost child of fallen Adam! If they thought on this, and possessed hearts capable of feeling, they would shudder at the tendency of their writings, and henceforth employ their abilities in restoring human nature to happiness and dignity.

The evils arising from the poverty of the lower ranks are trifling, when compared with those occasioned by their depravity. There is, indeed, no real and substantial happiness of which poverty, when accompanied with health and innocence, is not capable; but wallowing in vice, involved in the perplexities of fraud, haunted by the fears of detection, and distressed and tormented with the diseases of intemperance, it becomes such a state of wretchedness and wickedness as can only be exceeded in the regions of infernal torture. And can the rulers of this world possess a plenitude of power without attempting to exert it in its fullest force in the prevention, or at least the mitigation, of extreme misery among the lowest, the most numerous, and perhaps the most useful members of the community? I have no esteem for that species of politics which pretends to pursue a national good independently of the happiness of individuals; and I cannot help thinking, a system of government which derives any part of its wealth from the wretchedness of the greater part of its subjects, not only defective but diabolical. To encourage intoxication for the sake of encreasing a revenue, though it may be natural in a confederacy of sharpers, is an idea so mean, so base, so cruel, that the statesman who entertains it, however loaded with civil honours, and renowned for his wisdom, deserves to be stigmatised with immortal infamy. That the vices and the miseries of the lower classes chiefly arise from the multiplication of houses of public entertainment, is a truth which none have ever controverted. And perhaps no effectual and permanent remedy can be applied, without the interposition of the legislature, in lessening the number of public houses, and in exacting a strict scrutiny into the characters of those to whom licences are allowed.

But in the present constitution of affairs, it is greatly to be feared, that the desire of raising a large revenue will usually supersede all moral considerations. What indeed is the moralist to the financier? The greatness of empire, like that of private life, is for the most part estimated by riches, exclusively of private virtue and of intellectual excellence. If then we vainly appeal

to the legislature, we must seek, in other resources, for the alleviation of a disease which perhaps the legislature alone can radically cure.

Now it is certain, that much of the profligacy of the plebeian order arises from extreme ignorance. All men pursue with ardour the profession of some good, real or imaginary. What is it which must constitute this good, and appear superior to all other objects, in the mind of a wretch born in a cellar or a garret of Kent-street, or Broad St. Giles's, almost starved with cold and hunger during his infancy, beaten, reviled, abused, neglected while a boy, and conducted to manhood amidst the most shocking examples of cruelty and fraud, of drunkenness and debauchery? Is it probable that, for the most part, he should have an idea of any other good but the possession of money, and the indulgence of the grossest sensuality? Can he have any principles or habits of virtue to restrain him from secret fraud and open violence? His understanding is no less rude and uncultivated than that of the savage, and becomes at last incapable of admitting any instruction but in the low tricks of a thief, and the artifices of a prostitute. The world exists not to him, but as it appears amidst the vilest, the most degenerate, and the most ignorant of the human race. He pursues a *summum bonum*, or a chief good, which appears to him to consist in seizing the property of the incautious, and in using his gains as the instrument of indulgence in brutal excess. Poor unfortunate brother! for a brother we must acknowledge thee, deformed as thou art with rags, and loathsome to the eye of delicacy.—Hapless boy! if thou hadst known purer pleasures and better objects, thou wouldest probably have sought them with the same eagerness which has brought thee to the gibbet. The dignified statesman, the venerable bishop, the authoritative judge who tries and who condemns thee to die, might probably have done as thou hast, and suffered as thou sufferest, had he been born as thou wast born, the child of misery, the out-cast of society; friendless, homeless, unbeloved, unregarded, unknown, and unknowing of the means and motives of an honest industry. Thou fallest a victim to the laws indeed, and

perhaps a just victim; but I will pity thee, my heart shall bleed for thee, and ventures to predict that the sweet mercy of Heaven will mitigate the severity of human justice.

He who can enjoy the pleasures of affluence without considering the misery of the lower classes, and endeavouring, according to his influence and abilities, to alleviate the burthen, probably possesses a disposition which no riches can render happy. Charity is characteristic of this country, and is, indeed, the natural effect of British generosity. Our clergy are constantly recommending it in the metropolis; and the many palaces of the poor which lift up their roofs around it, are eminent and honourable testimonies, that their preaching is not in vain when they recommend munificence. There are, however, few charitable establishments that so immediately tend to snatch the lowest classes from wretchedness and ruin as that of the Marine Society; and if my praise could contribute to effect it, the fame of its institutors should be immortal. But their own benevolent hearts, and that God, in whose gracious purposes they cooperate, are able to bestow on them a reward infinitely superior to all human glory.

They who inform the understandings of the poor, in such a manner and degree as to amend their morals, contribute more to their happiness than the most munificent among their pecuniary benefactors. In a great and commercial nation honest industry will seldom be destitute of employment and reward. And here I cannot help remarking the singular utility and importance of the clergy. The church-doors are open to all; and valuable instruction in every duty of human life is afforded gratuitously. Our Saviour, who knew and felt for the wretchedness of the lower classes, seems to have designed the gospel, in a peculiar manner, for the poor; and the poor of this country have the gospel preached to them, if they are willing to listen to it, in every part of the kingdom. But it is a melancholy truth, that the poor in general, but especially those of the metropolis, neglect to avail themselves of this singular and unspeakable advantage. Those among

them who give any attention to religion, are often led to a state approaching to lunacy, by illiterate and fanatical pretenders to heavenly illumination.

I venture to affirm then, that more weight and authority should be given to the regular clergy, whether dissenters, or on the establishment. I mean not to erect a spiritual tyranny, for I abhor all tyranny; but I wish that some mode should be devised for rendering the regular clergy more respectable than they now are in the eyes of the vulgar. And I should imagine the most effectual method of accomplishing this purpose is, to reward those who are eminently distinguished for piety and for their parochial labours, with those preferments and with those honours, which, in the eye of reason and of God, are justly their due. In the present state of things, the worthy curate who spends all his days in preaching, praying, and in visiting the sick, shall earn less, and be less respected than a smith and a carpenter; and at his death leave his widow and his children to the cold protection of charity. But a young rake who happens to be cousin to a lord, a bishop, or to be connected with those who have influence at an election, shall get himself *black'd over or japanned*, as he vulgarly phrases it, at an ordination and thenceforward preferred to pluralities, and shine, as a sensible author observes, in all public places but his own pulpits.

But, after all that the clergy can do, even when abuses are removed, it is to be feared that the lower classes will be led by the examples of the higher. But oh! ye who call yourselves the great, condescend once in your lives to visit a goal, and to survey the mansions of woe and wickedness in the outskirts of the town! I apply not to your purses; you are liberal in subscribing to all kinds of charitable institutions. Ye do well. But give me leave to tell you, that the setting of a good example to the lower classes, considered merely as an act of charity, will do more good, and prevent more misery, than if ye cut down your last oak, or give all ye win at a gaming-table to found an hospital, or establish a dispensary.

No. CXLVIII.

ON SOME PASSAGES IN ARISTOTLE'S RHETORIC, WITH MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS ON HIS STYLE, GENIUS, AND WORKS.

ARISTOTLE established an intellectual empire, more glorious and universal than the conquests of his pupil. But he is a remarkable instance of the caprice of human judgment and the revolutions of taste. After having been idolized with a veneration almost blasphemous, he is now most undeservedly neglected. And yet his works, though unentertaining and obscure to the reader who peruses them with the same attention which he gives to a novel and a newspaper, abound with matter which cannot fail to enrich the mind and to delight a philosophical taste by its beautiful truth and accuracy. In his three books on the rhetorical art, are many passages which describe human nature in the most curious manner, and with the greatest fidelity of delineation. He characterises the manners of different ages no less scientifically, than a Hunter would describe an anatomical subject, or a Linæus a plant. The fine pictures of the manners of young and old men in the second book, are such as Horace has imitated, but not equalled; such as might have richly fertilized the imagination of a Shakspeare. The celebrated speech of Jaques is not equal to the accurate and complete descriptions of the manners of different ages in the life of man by the neglected Aristotle.

The close, yet comprehensive language of Aristotle, will scarcely admit of a literal translation. I shall not then attempt to deliver his sentiments in English, since I should not satisfy myself; but I will refer the young student to the admirable original, where, in the fourteenth, and a few subsequent chapters of the second book, he will be able to acquire a very accurate knowledge of human nature.

I have selected these passages as a specimen of Aristotle, with an intention to obviate the prepossessions of those who imagine that every part of his works is abstruse and difficult of comprehension. A good translation would be the best commentary that could be given of them: but he who was the best qualified to perform it in perfection is now no more. It is, indeed, much to be lamented, that the great philosopher of Salisbury did not condescend to enrich his country with the translation of the best among the works of his admired Stagirite. Mr. Harris's style is, indeed, for the most part the style of Plato; but we may conclude from the many passages from Aristotle, which he has most accurately translated in his notes, that he would have rendered whole treatises in English to the greatest advantage. He has, however, caused the want of a translation of Aristotle to be less felt, by supplying such originals himself, as certainly vie with his Grecian master.

I cannot help remarking, that though this is an age in which many ingenious authors delight in metaphysical researches, yet few attend to the writings of Aristotle. Indeed, many of the French philosophers, who have done all they can to obscure the light of nature, common sense and revelation, by the clouds of metaphysics, have not been sufficiently acquainted with Greek, or with ancient learning, to be able to improve themselves by the fine philosophy of the polished ages of Greece and Rome. Like spiders in a dark and dirty corner, they have drawn flimsy cobwebs from themselves, with which they cruelly endeavour to ensnare the giddy and unwary.

It is indeed my misfortune, if it be a misfortune, to have no great idea of the utility of metaphysical disquisition. And though Aristotle's logic and metaphysics principally contributed, in the middle ages, to render him the idol of the world, I cannot help considering them as the least useful parts of his various lucubrations. They are, indeed, valuable curiosities, and illustrious monuments of human ingenuity; but at the same time, when compared to his rhetorical, ethical, and political books, they are as the husk and the

shell to the pulp and the kernel. It was these, however, together with his erroneous physics, which induced the bigoted theologists to number Aristotle among the saints in the calendar, and to publish a history of his life and death; which concluded with asserting, that Aristotle was the forerunner of Christ in philosophy, as John the Baptist had been in Grace. Images of him and of the founder of Christianity, were beheld at one time with equal veneration. It is said, that some sects taught their disciples the categories instead of the catechism, and read in the church a section of the ethicks instead of a chapter in the gospel.

If the exclamation which he is related to have made at his death be true, he appears to have possessed very rational ideas on the subject of religion.

A christian might have said, as it is reported he said just before his dissolution, "In sin and shame was I born, in sorrow have I lived, in trouble I depart; O! thou Cause of causes, have mercy upon me!" I found this anecdote of Aristotle in the Centuries of Camerarius, but I am not certain of its authenticity.

The style of Aristotle has been censured as harsh and inelegant; but it must be remembered, that few works, of which so much remains, are supposed to have suffered more from the carelessness or presumption of transcribers, and the injuries of long duration, than the works of the great legislator of taste and philosophy. We may fairly attribute any chasms and roughnesses in the style to some rude hand, or to accident. It is not credible that so accurate a writer should have neglected those graces of style which the nature of his subject admitted. The style of his best works is truly pure and attic; and Quintillian, whose judgment ought to decide, expresses a doubt whether he should pronounce him more illustrious for his knowledge, his copiousness, his acumen, his variety, or the sweetness of his elocution.

No. CXLIX.

ON THE BEAUTY AND HAPPINESS OF
AN OPEN BEHAVIOUR AND AN
INGENUOUS DISPOSITION.

A GREAT part of mankind, if they cannot furnish themselves with the courage and generosity of the lion, think themselves equally happy, and much wiser, with the pitiful cunning of the fox. Every word they speak, however trivial the subject, is weighed before it is uttered. A disgustful silence is observed till somebody of authority has advanced an opinion, and then, with a civil leer, a doubtful and hesitating assent is given, such as may not preclude the opportunity of a subsequent retraction. If the conversation turn only on the common topics, of the weather, the news, the play, the opera, they are no less reserved in uttering their opinion, than if their lives and fortunes depended on the sentiment they should at last venture, with oracular dignity, to advance. Whatever may be their real idea on the subject, as truth is a trifle compared to the object of pleasing those with whom they converse, they generally contrive gently to agree with you; unless it should appear to them, on mature consideration, that their opinion (if contingencies to the number of at least ten thousand should take place) may, at the distance of half a century, involve them in some small danger of giving a little offence, or of incurring a trifling embarrassment. They wear a constant smile on their countenance, and are all goodness and benevolence, if you will believe their professions: but beware; for their hearts are as dark as the abysses which constitute the abodes of the evil spirit. A man of this character *niger est*, as Horace says, and thou, who justly claimest the title of an honest Englishman, be upon thy guard when thine ill fortune introduces thee into his company.

These crafty animals are even more reserved, cautious, timid, and serpentine, in action than in con-

versation. They lay the deepest schemes, and no conclave of cardinals, no combination of conspirators, no confederacy of thieves, ever deliberated with more impenetrable secrecy. Connections are sought with the most painful solicitude. No arts and no assiduities are neglected to obtain the favour of the great. Their hearts pant with the utmost anxiety to be introduced to a family of distinction and opulence, not only because, the connection gratifies their pride, but also because, in the wonderful complications and vicissitudes of human affairs, it may one day promote their interest. Alas! before that day arrives, their perpetual uneasiness has usually put a period to their ambition, by terminating their existence. But even if they gain their ends after a youth and a manhood consumed in constant care and servitude, yet the pleasure is not adequate to the pain, nor the advantage to the labour. Every one is ready to complain of the shortness of life; to spend, therefore, the greatest part of it in perpetual fear, caution, suspense, and solicitude, merely to accomplish an object of worldly ambition or avarice; what is it but the proverbial folly of him who loses a pound to save a penny? Give me, O ye powers! an ingenuous man would exclaim, give me health and liberty, with a competence, and I will compassionate the man of a timid and servile soul, who has at last crept on hands and knees, through thick and thin, into a stall, and seated his limbs, after they had been palsied with care, on the bench of judges or of bishops.

Indeed, the perpetual agitation of spirits, the tormenting fears, and the ardent hopes, which alternately disorder the bosom of the subtle and suspicious worldling, are more than a counterbalance to all the riches and titular honours which successful cunning can obtain. What avails croziers, coronets, fortunes, mansion-houses, parks, and equipages, when the poor possessor of them has worn out his sensibility, ruined his nerves, lost his eyes, and perhaps stained his honour, and wounded his conscience, in the toilsome drudgery of the most abject servitude, from his youth up even to the hoary age of feebleness and decrepitude? When a man has a numerous offspring, it may indeed, be generous to sacrifice

his own ease and happiness to their advancement. He may feel a virtuous pleasure in his conduct, which may soothe him under every circumstance of disagreeable toil or painful submission. But it is obvious to observe, that the most artful of men and the greatest slaves to interest and ambition, are frequently unmarried men; and that they were unmarried, because their caution and timidity would never permit them to take a step which could never be revoked. Themselves, however unamiable, have been the only objects of their love; and the rest of mankind have been made use of merely as the instruments of their mean purposes and selfish gratifications. But the rest of mankind need not envy them, for they inflict on themselves the punishments they deserve. They are always craving and never satisfied; they suffer a torment which is justly represented as infernal; that of being perpetually reaching after blessings which they can never grasp, of being prohibited to taste the fruit whose colour appears so charming to the eye, and whose flavour so delicious to the imagination.

How lovely and how happy, on the other hand, an open and ingenuous behaviour! An honest, unsuspecting heart, diffuses a serenity over life like that of a fine day, when no cloud conceals the blue æther, nor a blast ruffles the stillness of the air; but a crafty and designing bosom is all tumult and darkness, and may be said to resemble a misty and disordered atmosphere in the comfortless climate of the poor Highlander. The one raises a man almost to the rank of an angel of light; the other sinks him to a level with the powers of darkness.—The one constitutes a terrestrial heaven in the breast; the other deforms and debases it till it becomes another hell.

An open and ingenuous disposition is not only beautiful and most conducive to private happiness, but productive of many virtues essential to the welfare of society. What is society without confidence? But if the selfish and mean system, which is established and recommended among many whose advice and example have weight, should universally prevail, in whom, and in what shall we be able to confide? It is already shock

ing to a liberal mind to observe, what a multitude of papers, parchments, oaths, and solemn engagements are required, even in a trivial negociation. On the contrary, how comfortable and how honourable to human nature, if promises were bonds, and assertions affidavits! What pleasure, and what improvement would be derived from conversation, if every one would dare to speak his real sentiments, with modesty and decorum indeed, but without any unmanly fear of offending, or servile desire to please for the sake of interest! To please by honest means and from the pure motives of friendship and philanthropy is a duty; but they who study the art of pleasing merely for their own sakes, are, of all characters, those which ought least to please, and which appear, when the masque is removed, the most disgustful. Truth, and simplicity of manners, are not only essential to virtue and happiness, but, as objects of taste, truly beautiful. Good minds will always be pleased with them, and bad minds we need not wish to please.

Since cunning and deceit are thus odious in themselves, and incompatible with real happiness and dignity, I cannot help thinking that those instructors of the rising generation who have insisted on simulation and dissimulation, on the *pensieri stretti*, on the thousand tricks of worldly wisdom, are no less mistaken in their ideas, than mean, contracted, and illiberal. Listen not, ye generous young men, whose hearts are yet untainted, listen not to the delusive advice of men so deluded, or so base. Have courage enough to avow the sentiments of your souls, and let your countenance and your tongue be the heralds of your hearts. Please, consistently with truth and honour, or be contented not to please. Let justice and benevolence fill your bosom, and they will shine spontaneously like the real gem without the aid of a foil, and with the most durable and captivating brilliancy.

No. CL.

A REMEDY FOR DISCONTENT.

COMPLAINTS and murmurs are often loudest and most frequent among those who possess all the external means of temporal enjoyment. Something is still wanting, however high and opulent their condition, fully to complete their satisfaction. Suppose an indulgent Providence to accomplish every desire; are they now at last contented? Alas! no; their uneasiness seems for ever to increase, in proportion as their real necessities are diminished. It is in vain then to endeavour to make them happy by adding to their store, or aggrandizing their honours. Their appetite is no less insatiable than their taste fastidious.

But there yet may remain a remedy. Let those, who are miserable among riches and grandeur, leave, for a moment, their elevated rank, and descend from their palaces to the humble habitations of real and unaffected woe. If their hearts are not destitute of feeling, they will return from the sad scenes to their closets, and on their knees pour forth the ejaculations of gratitude to that universal Parent, who has given them abundance, and exempted them from the thousand ills, under the pressure of which the greater part of his children drag the load of life. Instead of spending their hours in brooding over their own imaginary evils, they will devote them to the alleviation of real misery among the destitute sons of indigence, in the neglected walks of vulgar life.

That one half of the world knows not how the other half lives, is a common and just observation. A fine lady, surrounded with every means of accommodation and luxury, complains in a moment of *ennui*, that surely no mortal is so wretched as herself. Her sufferings are too great for her acute sensibility. She expects pity from all her acquaintance, and pleases herself with the idea that she is an example of singular misfortune, and remarkable patience. Physicians at-

tend, and with affected solicitude feel the healthy pulse, which, however, they dare not pronounce healthy, lest they should give offence, by attempting to spoil the refined luxury of fancied woe. To be supposed always ill, and consequently to be always exciting the tender attention and enquiries of all around, is a state so charming in the ideas of the weak, luxurious, and indolent minds of some fashionable ladies, that many spend their lives in a perpetual state of imaginary convalescence. There is something so indelicate in being hale, hearty, and stout, like a rosy milk-maid, that a very fine and very high-bred lady, is almost ready to faint at the idea. From excessive indulgence, she becomes at last in reality what she at first only fancied herself, a perpetual invalid. By a just retribution, she is really punished with that wretchedness, of which she ungratefully and unreasonably complained in the midst of health, ease, and opulence.

One might ask all the sifterhood and fraternity of rich and healthy murmurers, Have you compared your situation and circumstances with that of those of your fellow-creatures who are condemned to labour in the gold mines of Peru? Have you compared your situation with that of those in your own country, who have hardly ever seen the sun, but lived confined in tin mines, lead mines, stone quarries, and coal pits? Before you call yourself wretched, take a survey of the jails, in which unfortunate and honest debtors are doomed to pine for life; walk through the wards of an hospital; think of the hardships of a common soldier or sailor; think of the galley-slave, the day-labourer; nay, the common servant in your own house; think of your poor neighbour at the next door; and if there were not danger of its being called unpolite and methodical, I would add, think of Him, who, for your sake, sweated, as it were, drops of blood on Calvary.

It is, indeed, a duty to consider the evils of those who are placed beneath us; for the chief purpose of christianity is, to alleviate the miseries of that part of mankind, whom, indeed, the world despises; but whom, He who made them pitied, like as a father pitieth his own children. These miseries are not fanci-

ful, their complaints are not exaggerated. The clergy, when they are called upon to visit the sick, or to baptize new born infants, are often spectators of such scenes, as would cure the discontented of every malady. The following representation is but too real, and may be paralleled in many of its circumstances, in almost every parish throughout the kingdom.

The minister of a country village was called upon to baptize an infant just born. The cottage was situated on a lonely common, and as it was in the midst of the winter, and the floods were out, it was absolutely necessary to wade through the lower room to a ladder, which served instead of stairs. The chamber (and it was the only one) was so low, that you could not stand upright in it; there was one window which admitted air as freely as light, for the rags which had been stuffed into the broken panes were now taken out to contribute to the covering of the infant. In a dark corner of the room stood a small bedstead without furniture, and on it lay the dead mother, who had just expired in labour for want of assistance. The father was sitting on a little stool by the fire-place, though there was no fire, and endeavouring to keep the infant warm in his bosom; five of the seven children, half naked, were asking their father for a piece of bread, while a fine boy, of about three years old, was standing by his mother at the bed side, and crying as he was wont to do, "Take me, take me, mammy." "Mammy is asleep," said one of his sisters, with two tears standing on her cheeks; "mammy is asleep, Johnny, go play with the baby on daddy's knee." The father took him up on his knee, and his grief, which had hitherto kept him dumb, and in a state of temporary insensibility, burst out in a torrent of tears, and relieved his heart, which seemed ready to break. "Don't cry, pray don't cry," said the eldest boy, "the nurse is coming up stairs with a two-penny loaf in her hand, and mammy will wake presently, and I will carry her the largest piece." Upon this, an old woman, crooked with age, and clothed in tatters, came hobbling on her little stick into the room, and after heaving a groan calmly sat down, dressed the child in its rags; then divided the loaf as far

as it would go, and informed the poor man that the churchwardens, to whom she had gone, would send some relief, as soon as they had dispatched a naughty baggage to her own parish, who had delivered herself of twins in the Esquire's hovel. Relief indeed was sent, and a little contribution afterwards raised by the interposition of the minister. If he had not seen the case, it would have passed on as a common affair, and a thing of course.

Ministers and medical practitioners are often witnesses to scenes even more wretched than this; where, to poverty, cold, nakedness, and death, are added, the langours of lingering and loathsome diseases, and the torments of excruciating pain. A feeling heart among the rich and the great, who are at the same time querulous without cause, would learn a lesson in many a garret of Broad St. Giles's or Shoreditch, more efficacious than all the lectures of the moral or divine philosopher.

I cannot help mentioning and applauding a mode of charity of late much encouraged in this metropolis, which is indeed distinguished above all others for the wisdom and variety of its eleemosynary institutions. Dispensaries are established for the poor, and patients visited at their own habitation by physicians of allowed skill and distinguished character. I will only take the liberty to express a wish, that some regulations may be made to prevent this noble design from being perverted, like many others, to purposes of private interest.



No. CLI.

ON THE UTILITY OF RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES, AND OF ADMITTING MUSIC AND EXTERNAL MAGNIFICENCE IN PLACES OF DEVOTION.

IF all men were enlightened by education and philosophy, and at all hours actuated by the principles of reason, it would be unnecessary to have recourse to external objects in producing devout and virtuous affec-

tions. But as there must always be a great majority, who, from the want of opportunities or capacities for improvement, are weak and ignorant; and as even among the wise and learned there are none who are constantly exempted from the common infirmities of human nature, it becomes expedient to devise modes of operating on the soul through the medium of the senses. It was for this reason, that in all great communities the officers and offices of religion have been surrounded with whatever is calculated to rouse the attention, to interest the heart, to strike the eye, and to elevate the imagination.

I cannot help thinking, therefore, that those well-meaning reformers, who wish to divest religion of external splendour, are unacquainted with the nature of man, or influenced by narrow motives. They mean, perhaps, to spiritualize every thing, and the purpose is laudable; but they know not, or they consider not, that ordinary spirits, such as are those of the vicious and vulgar, are most easy and effectually touched by the instrumentality of exterior and material objects. He who wishes to penetrate to the recesses of the vulgar soul, will succeed better by the co-operation of the eyes and the ears, than merely by addressing the rational faculty.

An idea may be formed of the potency of sounds and sights, unassisted by reason, if we contemplate their effect in war. The drum, the fife, the habiliments of a soldier, the flag, and all the pomp and parade of military transactions, contribute, perhaps, more than any sense of duty, or any native or acquired sentiments of bravery, to lead on the embattled phalanx even to the cannon's mouth. It is something operating in the mind in a similar manner, which most easily bows the stubborn knees of the hardened offender, and subdues to softness the steely heart on which no force of argument could of itself stamp an impression. There are few who cannot hear or see, but many who cannot understand. All can feel a powerful stroke on the fancy or passions, but few are affected by a syllogism.

Music therefore, poetry, painting, and architecture, may very reasonably be associated as auxiliaries of an empress, whose subjects are rebellious. And I cannot

help thinking, that they who repudiate all ornament, and all the modes of affecting the senses of the vulgar in the offices of religion as indecent, impious, or improper, do not recollect the temple of Solomon, but suffer their good sense to be overpowered in this instance by the zeal of a barbarous fanaticism.

The offices of religion where music and artificial embellishments are admitted, become so alluring, that those who would never think of their more serious duties, are often invited by them to the church, and gradually converted. Like the rake of antiquity, who mingled in the audience of a philosopher with a design to ridicule him, but who was made a convert before his departure, many of the loose and profligate votaries of vice, have been enticed by the music, and afterwards reformed by the sermon, which they intended to slight, and perhaps to deride.

The processions and pompous formalities of religion, however exploded in the warmth of reformation as papistical reliques, are certainly useful in the community, when they are not suffered to exceed the bounds of moderation. They were esteemed and observed in ancient Athens and ancient Rome, by those who loved and enjoyed liberty in its fullest extent. They were found to aggrandize the majesty of empire, to inspire a generous enthusiasm in the minds of the people, and to furnish them with an amusement, not only innocent and improving, but attended with a very high and satisfactory pleasure. None can detest popery more than myself; but yet it appears to me, that many of the splendid and august scenes which that persuasion admits, are highly useful, if considered only as furnishing a harmless entertainment to the lower orders of mankind. What charms can a London carman, chairman, Hackney-coachman, fishwoman, find in an English meeting or a church? but they would be delighted, and very powerfully affected with the grandeur and solemnity of a Romish procession. As we have no allurements adapted to their ignorant and rude minds, they spend the Sunday at an alehouse, even at the next door to the church without a wish to enter the consecrated place. All that passes there is above their comprehension. They are but little removed from the state of the

brutes, and they must remain so; for there is nothing, in the only places in which they have an opportunity of instruction, to strike their imaginations, and penetrate through the passage of the senses to the dormant soul.

It is true, indeed, that we admit music in the established church; but it is also true, that it is in general a kind of music which is little better than discord to the vulgar ear. For in the metropolis, where organs are chiefly to be found, the performers are too fond of shewing their powers of execution, to be willing to play those simple tunes which can alone affect the minds of the simple and uninformed.

There has been much conversation on the subject of adorning St. Paul's cathedral with the productions of the pencil. Many artists, it is said, have offered to contribute the efforts of their ingenuity. Some scruples have arisen to impede the design. In this age they cannot be puritanical. I really think that judicious paintings would produce a desirable effect on the morals of the lower classes. But if painting is not to be admitted, there surely can be no objection to sculpture. Westminster-Abbey is crowded with monuments; and I will venture to predict, that our posterity will see St. Paul's equally honoured. I hope the event will not take place so late as to exclude such artists as Bacon, or if painting is admitted, such as Reynolds, West, and Romney.



CLII.

ON THE PRESENT STATE OF PARLIAMEN- TARY ELOQUENCE.

IN taking a view of parliamentary eloquence, I mean to consider it as totally independent of party and politics, and solely as a subject of literary taste. It must be a peculiar narrowness of spirit, which bestows or refuses applause to the productions of genius, because they are found to favour either a court or an opposition. I would allow an equal share of praise to equal genius, whether it appeared in a leader of the minority, or in the first minister of state.

The speeches from the throne are little more than the formalities of office. It would be unreasonable to expect in them the fire, the pathos, the argument of genuine and animated oratory. They possess an air of dignity highly proper and characteristical. They breathe a spirit of sincerity and paternal tenderness, which at once marks the judgment of the composer, and endears the speaker to his people. There was one on the commencement of the war with America, which deserves to be selected as a very spirited and memorable harangue. It would have adorned the page of a Livy. "The resolutions of parliament," says his Majesty, "breathed a spirit of moderation and forbearance—" "I have acted with the same temper, anxious to prevent, if it had been possible, the effusion of the blood of my subjects, and the calamities which are inseparable from a state of war; still hoping, that my people in America would have discerned the traitorous views of their leaders, and have been convinced, that to be a subject to Great Britain, with all its consequences, is to be the freest member of any civil society in the known world.

"The rebellious war now levied, is become more general, and is manifestly carried on for the purpose of establishing an independent empire. I need not dwell on the fatal effects of the success of such a plan. The object is too important, the spirit of the British nation too high, the resources with which God hath blessed her too numerous, to give up so many colonies which she has planted with great industry, nursed with great tenderness, encouraged with many commercial advantages, and protected and defended at much expence of blood and treasure.—The constant employment of my thoughts, and the most earnest wishes of my heart, tend wholly to the safety and happiness, of all my people."——The spirit of a great King, and the tender solicitude which speaks the true father of his people, render this speech truly excellent, and, indeed, its excellence was evinced by its effect; for soon after it was disseminated over the nation, the American war, which was once universally odious, became a popular measure. Little did the composer of the above passage conceive, that in a few

years the *high spirit of the British nation* would be reduced to the humiliating necessity of supplicating for peace the *deluded* people of America.

In an assembly, like the higher house, consisting of men, in whose education no expence as been spared, who are, or who ought to be, animated by their own exalted situation and the examples of an illustrious ancestry, one might reasonably expect to find frequent examples of distinguished eloquence. But it really would be difficult to name a single peer who has attracted notice or admiration for the classical elegance of his matter or his language. The law lords, relying on their professional knowledge, do, indeed, frequently make long and bold speeches. Accustomed to brow-beat the evidence at the bar, and dictate on the bench, some of them have retained their insolence and effrontery when advanced to the woolfack. But noise, obstinacy, and imperious dictation, though even an upstart chancellor should use them, cannot please an attic or a Roman taste, nor obtain the praise of pure and legitimate oratory. Its rough and boisterous vehemence may, indeed, frighten a puiſne race of peers into an implicit acquiescence with the will of a minister, but it will not deserve the esteem of those, who, in the recesses of their libraries, appreciate its merit as a work of literature. A few dukes and lords in opposition have not been deficient in noise nor in violence, but their barbarous language, matter, and manner, must assign them a rank among the Goths, and not among the polished sons of Athens and Rome. Of all the speeches spoken in the house, how few have ever been collected and preserved in libraries, as models of classical elegance. Passion and personal animosity have, indeed, produced many invectives, which gratify the spleen of party, and are for the time extolled beyond all the productions of preceding ingenuity. But is there extant a single volume of speeches, by the most famous among the orators of the upper house, which can be produced as a classical book, or stand in competition with the orations of Cicero? I think it necessary to repeat, that my remarks have not the least reference to party. I am in search of an orator to whom the epithet of classical

may be justly applied. I regret that the fury of party and the meanness of servility, has for the most part excluded that true taste, true grace, and true spirit, which is necessary to form a classical orator, from the harangues of an assembly which may be deemed the most august in Europe.

The House of Commons has always been esteemed a very distinguished theatre of modern eloquence. And there, indeed, notwithstanding the same impediments which prevail among the peers, it is easy to produce many splendid examples. In the house of Commons, men have been stimulated by the most powerful motives, by the hopes of rising; in the House of Lords they have already risen. But though we join in the applause of common fame, yet let us ask, where are to be found the volumes of oratorical elegance? Have the speeches which have gained the praise of admiring kingdoms, been no where collected and recorded? Do we lock them up in our book-cases, and put them into the hands of our children as models for imitations, as lessons to form their young minds, and raise a succession of orators and patriots? No; the speeches are celebrated at first, and while they answer a temporary purpose. They are like vegetable of a night, or insects of a day. They have seldom that solidity of merit which can render the ore valuable when the stamp is effaced, and the occasion of it almost forgotten and quite disregarded; which can preserve the plate still saleable after the fashion is antiquated. Glorious was the eloquence of Mr. Pitt. Nations shook at the thunder of his voice. But where are the harangues? are they preserved as illustrious models for the instruction of posterity? Instead of being engraven on brass, they are almost sunk into an oblivion, like the soldiers whose bones once whitened the plains of Germany. Yet I mean not to detract from his glories. Language can scarcely supply terms to express the weight of his authority, the magnitude of his mind and his character, and the efficacy with which he thought, decided, spoke, and acted. But let it not escape the reader's attention, that we are enquiring for a rival to the masterly and transcendent excellence of a Cicero and a Demosthenes.

If such has of late appeared among us, the curiosity of this age would have preserved it; and if it be preserved, let the volume be openly produced, and the public will embrace it as an invaluable treasure.

There are, indeed, in the senate, several desperate declaimers, who, wishing to make themselves of consequence, and to retrieve their own affairs, which they have ruined at the gaming-table, exert all their effrontery and all their volubility in any cause, and on any side, which eventually may promote their interest, or gratify their ambition. The ignorant and discontented extol the bravado who thus draws courage from despair, as a prodigy of abilities, and the mirror of eloquence. But the good, the wise, and the judicious observer, pities and despises him as an unprincipled brawler, with as little taste in eloquence as honesty; and as the mere rival of the noisy spouters at the forum or the Robinhood.

The applause, indeed, bestowed on one orator, is scarcely adequate to his literary merit. Mr. Burke has produced to the world very honourable testimonies of his natural abilities, and his acquired taste. What orations are there published of modern Members, which can bear a comparison with those of Mr. Burke? With what dignity he addressed the people of Bristol; and how mean and little did they appear, contrasted with him whom they rejected! Like Socrates before the judges, he appeared more like their master than their suppliant. He concludes with a spirit worthy of him who wrote on the sublime and beautiful; worthy of a polished ancient in the best of ages. "And now, gentlemen," he concludes, "on this serious day, when I come, as it were, to make up my account with you; let me take to myself some degree of honest pride on the nature of the charges brought against me. I do not here stand accused of venality, or neglect of duty. It is not said that, in the long period of my service, I have, in a single instance, sacrificed the slightest of your interests to my ambition, or to my fortune. It is not alledged, that to gratify any anger or revenge of my own, or of my party, I have had a share in wronging or oppressing any one man in any

“ description. No; the charges against me are all
 “ of one kind, that I have pushed the general prin-
 “ ciples of general justice and benevolence too far;
 “ further than a cautious policy would warrant, and
 “ further than the opinions of many would go with
 “ me. In every accident which may happen through
 “ life, in pain, in sorrow, in depression, and distress,
 “ I will think of this accusation and be comforted.”

There are not, indeed, many of the members who favour the public with their harangues, so that we have not an opportunity of judging of all so well as of Mr. Burke's. We must, however, acknowledge our great obligations to the ingenious Mr. Woodfall, the editor of the Morning Chronicle, whose memory seems equal to the instances of which we read, but which do not often occur in our intercourse with society.



No. CLIII.

A LIFE OF LETTERS USUALLY A LIFE OF COMPARATIVE INNOCENCE.

IT is not the least among the happy effects of a studious life, that it withdraws the student from the turbulent scenes and pursuits, in which it is scarcely less difficult to preserve innocence than tranquillity. Successful study requires so much attention, and engrosses so much of the heart, that he who is deeply engaged in it, though he may, indeed be liable to temporary lapses, will seldom contract an inveterate habit of immorality. There is in all books of character a reverence for virtue, and a tendency to inspire a laudable emulation. He who is early, long, and successfully conversant with them, will find his bosom filled with the love of truth, and finely affected with a delicate sense of honour. By constantly exercising his reason, his passions are generally reduced to subjection, and his head and heart keep pace with each other in improvement. But when I assert that such are the consequences of literary pursuits, it is necessary to distinguish between the real and pretended student; for

there are many desultory readers and volatile men of parts, who affect eccentricity, whose lives, if one may so express it, are uniformly irregular, and who consequently exhibit remarkable instances of misery and misfortune.

Folly and imprudence will produce moral and natural evil, their genuine offspring, in all situations and modes of life. The knowledge of arts and sciences cannot prevent the vices and the woes which must arise from the want of knowing how to regulate our private and social conduct. But where prudence and virtue are not deficient, I believe few walks of life are pleasanter and safer than those which lead through the regions of literature.

Many among mankind are involved in perpetual tumult, so that if they felt an inclination to consider their duty, their nature, their truest happiness, they really would not be able to find an opportunity. But he, whom Providence has blessed with an enlightened mind, and the command of his own time, is enabled to form his heart, and direct his choice according to the dictates of the most improved intellects, and the examples of the most accomplished characters. He is, indeed, a creature far superior to the common herd of men, and being acquainted with pure and exalted pleasures, is not under the necessity of seeking delight in the grosser gratifications. He considers not property as the chief good; he is therefore free from temptations to violate his integrity. Disappointment in matters of interest will never render him uneasy or discontented, for his books have discovered to him a treasure more valuable, in his estimation, than the riches of Peru. Through all the vicissitudes of life he has a source of consolation in the retirement of his library, and in the principles and reflections of his own bosom. From his reading he will collect a just estimate of the world, and of all around him; and, as he will cherish no unreasonable expectations, he will be exempted from severe disappointment.

The conversation of many abounds with slander and detraction, not originally and entirely derived from a malignity of nature, but also from ignorance, from a

vacancy of intellect, and from an inability to expatiate on general and generous topics. But whatever be the motive of them, it is certain that few crimes are more injurious to private happiness, and opposite to the spirit of our amiable religion, than slander and detraction. The man of reading is under no temptation to calumniate his neighbour from the defect of ideas, or a want of taste for liberal and refined conversation. He interests himself in his neighbour's happiness; but does not pry into the affairs, nor sit in judgment on the domestic arrangements, of another's family. Most of the topics of scandal are too low and too little for him. He will not stoop from his elevation low enough to pick the dirty trifles from the ground. His thoughts are engaged in elegant and speculative subjects, far removed from all which tend to excite envy, jealousy, or malevolence.

The want of employment is one of the frequent causes of vice; but he who loves a book will never want employment. The pursuits of learning are boundless, and they present to the mind a delightful variety which cannot be exhausted. No life is long enough to see all the beautiful pictures which the arts and sciences, or which history, poetry, and eloquence are able to display. The man of letters possesses the power of calling upon a succession of scenes to his view infinitely numerous and diversified. He is therefore secured from that unhappy state which urges many to vice and dissipation, merely to fill a painful vacuity. Even though his pursuits should be trifling, and his discoveries unimportant, yet they are harmless to others, and useful to himself, as preservatives of his innocence. Let him not be ridiculed or condemned, even though he should spend his time in collecting and describing moths, mosses, shells, birds, weeds, or coins; for he who loves these things seldom sets his affections on self, or any of those objects which corrupt and divide human society. He who finds his pleasures in a museum or a library, will not often be seen in the tavern, in the brothel, or at the gaming-table. He is pleased if he possesses a non descript fossil, and envies not the wretched enjoyments of the intemperate, nor the ill-gotten wealth of the oppressor or extortioner.

But his pursuits have usually a title to much greater praise than that of being inoffensive. Suppose him in any of the liberal professions. If a clergyman for instance, he devotes his time and abilities to the preparation of dissuatives from vice, from folly, from misconduct, from infidelity, from all that contributes to aggravate the wretchedness of wretched human nature. Here the pleasures naturally resulting from literay occupation are improved by the sublime sensations of active benevolence, the comfortable consciousness of advancing the truest happiness of those among our poor fellow-creatures who have not enjoyed the advantages of education. In the performance of the godlike office of a true parish priest, there is a necessity of setting an example, and of preserving decorum of character; a necessity which conduces much to the security of innocence. It is often a great happiness to be placed in a rank where, to the restraints of conscience and morality, are added the fear of peculiar shame, loss, and disgrace, necessarily consequent on ill behaviour. Human nature wants every support to keep it from lapsing into depravity. Even interest, and a solicitude for reputation, when, in some thoughtless interval, the pillars of virtue begin to totter, may stop the fall. The possession of a valuable character which may be lost, and of a dignity which must be supported, are often very useful auxiliaries in defending the citadel against the temporary assaults of passion and temptation.

Since, then, the pursuits of letters is attended with many circumstances peculiarly favourable to innocence, and consequently to enjoyment of the purest and most permanent species, they who have been fixed in so desirable a life as a life of learning, ought to be grateful to Providence for their fortunate lot, and endeavour to make the best return in their power, by devoting their leisure, their abilities, and their acquirements, to the glory of God, and the benefit of mankind.

No. CLIV.

ON THE ADVANTAGE WHICH MAY BE DERIVED TO THE TENDER AND PATHETIC STYLE, FROM USING THE WORDS AND PHRASES OF SCRIPTURE.

IT is observable, that an audience often laughs or yawns in the most interesting scenes of a modern tragedy;—a lamentable proof of the poet's imbecility. The poet! he may, indeed, be a versifier and a declaimer, but he is no poet, who tells a tragic tale without eliciting a tear. Let us not prophane the sacred name of poet, by bestowing it on the feeble poetaster.

It is not enough that the language of a tragedy is flowery, the similes and metaphors brilliant, the verse melodious; there must be a charm added by the creative power of almighty genius, which no didactic rules can teach, which cannot be adequately described, but which is powerfully felt by the vibrations of the heart-strings, and which cause an irresistible overflowing of the *Δακρυων πηγαι*, the *sacri fontes lacrymarum*.

Rigid diction and pompous declamation are, indeed, found to be the least adapted of all modes of address to affect the finer sensibilities of nature. Plain words, without epithets, without metaphors, without similes, have oftener excited emotions of the tenderest sympathy, than the most laboured composition of Corneille. Ye who have learned how to touch the heart, go not to the schools of France, but become the disciples of Sophocles, Shakspeare, Sterne, and Chatterton. O simplicity! thou captivating simplicity! 'tis thine at once to effect what all the artifice of rhetoric, with all its tropes and figures, tediously and vainly labour to accomplish. 'Tis thine to dissolve the hardest heart, and to force even stubborn nerves to tremble. A few words of simple pathos will penetrate the soul to the quick, when a hundred lines of declamation shall assail it as freely and ineffectually, as a gentle gale the mountain of Plinlimmon.

A writer of taste and genius may avail himself greatly in pathetic compositions, by adopting the many words and phrases, remarkable for their beautiful simplicity, which are interspersed in that pleasing, as well as venerable book, the Holy Bible. I cannot, indeed, entirely agree with those zealous critics who pretend to discover in the scriptures all the graces of all the best classics. To please the ear and imagination, were very inferior objects in the benevolent mind of Him who caused all holy scripture to be written for our use. But, at the same time, it is certain that they abound in such beauties as never fail to please the most cultivated taste. Besides their astonishing sublimity, they have many a passage exquisitely tender and pathetic. Our admirable translation has preserved them in all their beauty, and an English writer may select from it a diction better suited to raise the sympathy of grief, than from the most celebrated models of human composition.

Sterne, who, though he is justly condemned for his libertinism, possessed an uncommon talent for the pathetic, has availed himself greatly of the scriptural language. In all its most affecting passages, he has imitated the turn, style, manner, and simplicity, of the sacred writers, and in many of them has transcribed whole sentences. He found no language of his own could equal the finely expressive diction of our common translation. There are a thousand instances of his imitating scripture interspersed in all the better parts of his works, and no reader of common observation can pass by them unnoticed. I will quote only one or two instances taken from the most admired pieces in the tender style. "Maria, though not tall, was nevertheless of the first order of fine forms. Affliction had touched her looks with something that was scarcely earthly, and so much was there about her of all that the heart wishes, or the eye looks for in woman, that could the traces be ever worn out of her brain, or those of Eliza out of mine, she should not only eat of my bread, and drink of my cup, but Maria should lie in my bosom, and be unto me as a daughter.

“ Adieu, poor luckless maid! imbibe the oil and wine which the compassion of a stranger as he sojourney on his way, now pours into thy wounds. The Being who has twice bruised thee can only bind them up for ever.” Again, in his description of the captive. “ As I darkened the little light he had, he lifted up a hopeless eye towards the door, then cast it down, shook his head, and went on with his work of affliction. I heard his chains upon his legs, as he turned his body to lay his little stick upon the bundle. He gave a deep sigh. I saw the iron enter into his soul.” It is easy, but it is not necessary, to adduce many more instances in which a writer, who eminently excelled in the power of moving the affections, felt himself unequal to the task of advancing the style of pathos to its highest perfection, and sought assistance of the bible.

It is easy to see that the writer of so many tender and simple passages had imitated the delightful book of Ruth. With what pleasure did a man of his feeling read. “ Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried.” Sterne stole the very spirit of this passage and indeed of all the fine strokes of tenderness, and many a one there is, in a book which is often laid aside as absurd and obsolete. The choice which Sterne has made of texts and of citations from the scriptures in his sermons, are proofs that he (who was one of the best judges) was particularly struck with the affecting tenderness and lovely simplicity of scriptural language.

The poet, therefore, who means to produce a tragedy, which shall be able to stand its ground even after the first nine nights, without the aid of puffing, and without filling the pit and boxes with orders, should sometimes go to the same fountain, and drink the waters of poetical inspiration of which Sterne drank so copiously. He will improve greatly by studying the language and histories of Joseph, Saul and Jonathan, of Ruth, of

Job, of the Psalms, of Isaiah, of Jeremiah, of many single passages every where interspersed, and of the parables in the new Testament. Judgment and taste are certainly necessary to select; but he may depend upon it, that a word or two well selected will gain him the truest applause, that which is conveyed in sighs and tears. Let him fully persuade himself, that the only method of operating powerfully on the feelings of nature, is to renounce art and affectation, and to adhere to truth and simplicity.

Something is necessary to be done to produce an alteration. The theatric state is in its decline. It cannot much longer be supported by fine dresses, painted scenes, music, dancing, and pantomime. We have hearts as well as ears and eyes; if they know not how to touch our passions at old Drury, let us away to the Opera-house, and see the Vestris.



No. CLV.

ON THE FIGURE PARRHESIA, OR ON EXPRESSING ONE'S SENTIMENTS FREELY.

THEY whose wisdom consists in cunning and caution, who consider preferment as the only or most valuable object of human pursuit, and who stand in awe of grandeur independently of personal merit and character, will often shake their heads as they read my essays (if they read them at all) and blame the writer's imprudence, in venturing to express himself on many dangerous subjects without reserve. It is madness, they exclaim, to cut himself off from all chance of ecclesiastical preferment, to exclude himself, and perhaps his children, from the sunshine of patronage; and (to use the words of a celebrated orator) "to create a long, dull, dreary, unvaried vista of despair and exclusion."

But, O, ye wise ones of the world (an honest and independent writer might say) significantly as ye whisper among each other, and hug yourselves on your

own profound sagacity, I value not your bastard wisdom: and though I pretend not to despise either honours or emoluments fairly and openly obtained, I think the means ye use in their pursuit base and mean, and that ye purchase all you possess at a price too dear. Ye resign your reason, your liberty, and, I fear, too often, your truth and honour. Ye are real slaves, and the robes of office and dignity in which ye pride yourselves, are but the liveries of a splendid servitude. From one instance of your spirit and wisdom let the public judge of all. Dare ye, if raised by a long course of mean servility to a seat in the British senate, to give a vote, or express a single sentiment according to your own judgment, and without first religiously consulting the god of your idolatry? Censure me no more for an honest freedom. Blush rather at your own meanness and cowardice. Pity me no more, as excluding myself by temerity from the favours of the great. I am happier in the liberty of ranging, in thought, through all the mazes of human life, and of uttering my undisguised sentiments on whatever I see and hear, than in gaining favour where favour is to be gained, merely by submitting to the meanness of concealing truth, and speaking according to the dictates of self-interest alone. Blame me no more till you point out the passage in the gospel, where boldness of rebuke is prohibited, and where a professed servant of Jesus Christ is taught to bow the knee to an unbelieving and debauched ruler of this world.

But you are actuated by envy, softly suggests the successful chaplain, the *quondam* tutor, and travelling companion of a graceless duke. You rail, says he, at what you cannot reach. But, my lord, give me leave to ask, whether you are not actuated by avarice and worldly ambition, vice in a christian pasture, no less culpable than envy. By what were you actuated when you gained the favour of the patron who raised you to your honours, merely by drinking and caballing for him at a contested election. Your patron professes himself a deist, and you know he keeps many concubines. By what were you actuated when you were always seeking his company, and dining at his table? Was it a desire

to convert him from the error of his ways? Did you even dare to hint your displeasure at them? Did they displease you?

And, with respect to envy as the motive of my freedom, your lordship will do well to consider, that he who envies, eagerly wishes to obtain the object. He who eagerly desires to obtain, usually pursues the most probable means of success. But your lordship shall judge by your own experience, whether what I have said is, in the smallest degree, like the methods which are found most successful. Does it tally with your own recipe for rising at court?

Indeed, my lord, you must excuse me. I cannot think as you do; your objects and mine are totally different, and must be differently pursued. Enjoy your mitre and your cushion; but let me also enjoy my liberty, or, if you chuse to call it so, my humour. I will boast a superiority in one respect; I have no master, save one.

But you say I am gratifying my vanity. If to seek an honest fame, be to seek the gratification of my vanity, I plead guilty to the charge. I dare avow a wish to possess the public esteem, but I pursue no mean or sinister method to procure it. I rely for their favour on my love of truth, and the sincerity of my zeal in their service. Their good opinion is a delightful and sufficient reward. Not that I ever affected to renounce or to despise preferment, but it comes unsought for, as well as unlooked for, if it comes at all.

To preserve the favour of the public, and the approbation of my own heart, I think it necessary to continue, while I write, the open declaration of my sentiments, such as they are, equally uninfluenced by mean hopes and cowardly apprehensions. Individuals may apply what was never meant to be applied, to themselves, and, in the warmth of an exasperated mind, may shew their resentment by neglect or censure. Hitherto I have known nothing of that kind of which I can complain. Arrows from the hand of a recluse, like myself, have usually fallen, like a weapon from the nerveless Priam. What avail the attacks of the moralist, without the assistance of wealth, fashion, and interest?

Let me then be permitted (such a writer might proceed to say in his defence) to employ myself in peace and innocence, and to amuse readers of congenial sentiments, by a free communication of feelings undisguised by art, and uttered boldly as they were excited warmly, by men and manners passing in review. Let the sympathetic tribe, who, in the exuberance of their compassion, express their anxiety lest I should hurt my interest, reserve their pity for objects of more merit. I am happy in the idea, that nothing which I have written can injure the interest of any one but the writer.

In times of peculiar exigency (he might add) there may be a moral as well as military heroism. He deserves to be degraded from his rank, who is not ready to incur every hazard in the cause which he has justly undertaken; and not only to forego honours and advantages in the defence of what he deems the truth, but, if circumstances should require it, to die in its confirmation. A timid and lukewarm prudence in a good cause is little better than desertion.



No. CLVI.

ON READING MERELY WITH A VIEW TO
AMUSEMENT.

THERE are many who spend much of their time in reading, but who read, as they play at cards, with no other intention but to pass the time without labouring under the intolerable burthen of a total inactivity. The more trifling the book, the better they suppose it suited to their purpose. Plays, pamphlets, memoirs, novels, and whatever entertains them without requiring any great degree of attention, constitute the whole of their library. Even these are read in a desultory manner, without the interference of taste, or the trouble of selection. Indeed this light food for the mind is so much wanted, that the circulating libraries lay in a stock of it every year; and an assortment of summer reading is in as great request at the booksellers in the watering places, as a variety of new spring patterns at the silk-mercens in Pall Mall. The

fine lady and gentleman, who have nothing to do but to pursue their amusement, and in whose delicate minds the dressing of the hair is a business of the first importance, commonly spend two or three hours every day under the hands of the friseur; but then the time is by no means wasted, for it is spent in summer reading; and as the volumes which contain summer reading are not large folios, and neither printed on the smallest type, nor on the most crowded page, one of them just serves to fill up the hours devoted to the artist of the comb. The genteel student rises from his chair when the operation is completed, takes off his flannel gown, sends back the half bound book to the library, and enters upon the momentous business, without any odious gravity or seriousness, which might perhaps have remained with him, had his morning studies required deep thought, or communicated to him a series of sober reflections. He can, indeed, on a rainy day, devour half a dozen volumes of summer reading, and be no more incommoded than when he swallows as many jellies and puffs at the fashionable confectioners.

It must be allowed that this kind of reading, trifling as it is, may often constitute an amusing and a very innocent pastime. But I will venture to say, that useful and improving reading might be found, that should be equally, and indeed more entertaining. The same time spent on books of character, which is lavished away on literary trash, would render many a mind, which is now vain and superficial, really elegant, prudent and well informed. The time spent under the operation of the hair-dresser is very properly spent in reading; but why should not the works of the English classics be used in preference to a vile translation from a foolish French novel? To a taste not vitiated, the works of Shakspeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Addison, and many of their successful followers, are much more pleasing than the inelegant and hasty productions of hireling writers, whose indigence compels them to be less solicitous about quality than quantity; who study not so much what is congruous to taste and truth, as what will catch the notice of the general reader,

and answer the venal purpose of their employer by a rapid sale. Have we not many true histories, elegant in their style, abounding with matter most improving to the heart and understanding, and calculated to interest and entertain in a very high degree, by gratifying curiosity? Unless we renounce our pretensions to reason, we must confess that such books are capable of furnishing more pleasure, exclusively of the improvement, than anonymous and unauthenticated anecdotes, memoirs, novels, voyages, travels, lives, and adventures.

There are those who have read more volumes than the profoundest scholars in the nation, who yet are unacquainted with the elements of science, with the most interesting facts of true history, with the maxims of philosophy, with the beauties of style, and with the extent and force of the language. They have read inattentively what indeed was scarcely worth attention; and they have immediately forgotten what was too futile to deserve remembrance. Had they possessed judgment sufficient to point out the proper books, and resolution to pursue the dictates of their judgment, they would have enriched their minds with inestimable treasures, and acquired the reputation and satisfaction of solid scholars. The same exertion of their eyes, the same consumption of their time, the same sedentary confinement, would have earned a prize of sufficient value to repay them amply for every effort of diligence. But now they have, perhaps, injured their eyes, ruined their health, neglected their affairs, vitiated their taste, and possibly corrupted their morals, or weakened their faith, with no return, but the amusement of the moment, or the retention of false facts, distorted figures of life and manners, or trifling anecdotes, the lumber of the head not the furniture.

Persons advanced in life, or labouring under sickness and infirmity, have an unquestionable right to amuse themselves with whatever can innocently alleviate their evils, and enable them to pass away the lagging hours in a sweet and transitory oblivion. Their reading, like their diet, may be light and more adapted to tickle a sickly palate, than to afford solid and substantial nourishment. But in youth, health, and vigour,

who would voluntarily confine himself to the weakness and inspidity of water-gruel?

It is, indeed, lamentable to observe young persons of lively parts, and with a love of reading, devoting those years and those abilities, which might render them valuable members of society, to such studies as tend only to dissipate their ideas, to vitiate their morals, to womanize their spirits, and to render them the dastardly and degenerate sons of those to whom it was once a glorious distinction to bear the name of Britons.



No. CLVII.

ON A METHOD OF STUDY, WRITTEN BY
RINGELBERGIUS.

THERE is a little treatise on the method of study, written by Ringelbergius, which, in the two last centuries, was a great favourite among scholars, and contributed much to animate their industry. The learned Erpenius acknowledges himself originally indebted to it for all his acquisitions. He met with it at the age of sixteen, and, in consequence of its suggestions, though he was then totally averse from a studious life, and had made no proficiency in learning, yet he afterwards became a distinguished scholar. The treatise had become scarce, and Erpenius generously printed a new edition, that others might partake of the benefit which he had himself enjoyed. He published it with the title of *Liber vere Aureus*, or the truly Golden Treatise.

In the epistle to the reader which Erpenius has prefixed, he speaks of the animating effect of the book in terms so warm, and with so much gratitude, that a student would be wanting to himself not to gratify his curiosity, by at least giving it a perusal. It is short, and contains many passages which tend to encourage the scholar in his pursuits, and to inspire them with an ardour and enthusiasm, like that excited in the soldier by the drum and trumpet, as he is marching on to battle. I believe there could not be found a better

exhortation to study for the use of boys, if the good passages were not disgraced by others so ridiculous, as almost bring the writer under the imputation of lunacy. His literary enthusiasm had certainly transported him, in several instances, beyond the limits of his own reason.

I will select a few hints from the little tract, which may not only serve as a curious specimen to the English reader, but may rouse him from his indolence. The whole is, indeed, more valuable for the spirit and fire which it conduces to raise, than for its precepts and directions. It is rather exhortatory than didactic.

“How mean,” says he, speaking of the scope at which students ought to aim, “how timid, how abject must be that spirit which can sit down contented with mediocrity! As for myself, all that is within me is on fire. I had rather,” he proceeds in his strong manner, “be torn in a thousand pieces, than relax my resolution of reaching the sublimest heights of virtue and knowledge. I am of opinion, that nothing is so arduous, nothing so admirable in human affairs, which may not be obtained by the industry of man. We are descended from heaven, thither let us go, whence we derived our origin. Let nothing satisfy us lower than the summit of all excellence. This summit then,” says he, “I point out as the proper scope of the student.

“But labour must be beloved, and the pleasures of luxury despised. Shall we submit to be extinguished for ever without honour, without remembrance, *ἀνθρώποις οὐδὲν ἐπιδημιούμενοι*, without having done any thing like men?” The whole of this chapter is written in a very uncommon style of literary enthusiasm, and I think it can hardly fail of inflaming a youthful imagination. If such ideas were early fixed in the bosom of an ingenious and ingenuous boy, what improvement in virtue, and in all useful qualities, might not be expected?

“That we must never despair,” is the title of his third chapter. “If in our ascent we should fall headlong a thousand times, we must begin to climb again every time more ardently, and fly to the summit with recruited vigour! Let no one be dejected if he

“ is not conscious of any great advancement at first.
 “ The merchant thinks himself happy if, after a ten
 “ years voyage, after a thousand dangers, he at last
 “ improves his fortune; and shall we, like poor-
 “ spirited creatures, give up all hope after the first
 “ onset? *Quodcumque imperavit animus obtinuit*. What-
 “ ever the mind has commanded itself to do, it has ob-
 “ tained its purpose.

“ Riches must have no charms compared to the
 “ charms of literature. Poverty is favourable to the
 “ success of all literary pursuits. I mean not to throw
 “ contempt on money in general, but on that exor-
 “ bitant wealth which allures the mind from study.
 “ But your parents,” says he, “ will rather chuse
 “ that you should be guilty of perjury or murder, than
 “ not know how to value money.

“ The student must be desirous of praise. It is a
 “ promising presage of success to be roused by praise
 “ when one shall have done well, and to be grieved and
 “ incited to higher aims, in finding himself blamed or
 “ outdone by another. He who aspires at the summit
 “ must be passionately fond of glory.

“ Thus have the first qualities, indispensably requi-
 “ site in a youth devoted to study, been mentioned. He
 “ must aim at the highest points, he must love labour,
 “ he must never despair, he must despise riches, he must
 “ be greedy of praise. It remains that we prescribe
 “ the methods. There are then, three gradations in
 “ the modes of study; hearing, teaching, writing. It
 “ is a good and easy method to hear, it is a better and
 “ easier to teach, and the best and easiest of all to
 “ write. Lectures are dull; because it is tedious to
 “ confine the liberty of thought to the voice of the
 “ reader. But when we teach or write, the very ex-
 “ ercise itself precludes the tedium.

Though the treatise of Ringelbergius is short, yet
 to make an useful abbreviation of it, would require
 more room than the limits I usually prescribe to
 my papers will allow. I mean only to give a little
 specimen of the manner in which this very extra-
 ordinary writer has composed his once celebrated
 treatise. There are certainly many things in it which
 can scarcely fail to stimulate an honest mind, sincerely

and seriously devoted to letters. A severe critic, or a lover of ridicule will find much of both in the matter and style to censure and deride. But still there is something so honest and so warm in this writer, that a good-natured mind cannot help being entertained even with his absurdities, and inclined to overlook them amidst the greater abundance of valuable advice. I believe the copies are not very scarce, and earnestly recommend, both to the young student and the lover of literary curiosities, to devote half an hour to the perusal of it, if it should fall into their hands.

Ringelbergius was a very ingenious man, not only in polite learning and in the sciences, but in the arts of mechanical writing, painting, and engraving. Indeed, these were his first pursuits and his employments, and he did not apply himself to learning Latin till his seventeenth year; but such was the force of his genius, that he then made a rapid proficiency. He was certainly a man of genius, and though not quite correct in his language, yet he wrote Latin with much more spirit and vivacity than most of the Dutch and German writers of his age. He acquired the Greek language and could almost repeat Homer from beginning to end. He was well versed in various sciences, and wrote ingeniously upon them; but his tracts are, I believe, more curious than useful. He would have been an excellent writer, and profound philosopher, had he lived in an age when the follies of judicial astrology were exploded, and hypothesis reduced to the test of experiment.



No. CLVIII.

ON THE FOLLY OF SACRIFICING COMFORT TO TASTE.

THERE are certain homely, but sweet comforts and conveniencies, the absence of which, no elegance can supply. Since, however, they have nothing of external splendour, they are often sacrificed to the gratification of vanity. We live too much in

the eyes and minds of others, and too little to our own hearts, too little to our own consciences, and too little to own satisfaction. We are more anxious to appear, than to be happy.

According to the present modes of living, and ideas of propriety, an ostentatious appearance must be at all events, and in all instances, supported. If we can preserve a glittering and glossy varnish, we disregard the interior materials and substance. Many shew a disposition in every part of their conduct, similar to that of the Frenchman, who had rather go without a shirt, than without ruffles; rather starve as a count, than enjoy affluence and independence as an honest merchant. Men idolize the great, and the distinctions of fashionable life, with an idolatry so reverential and complete, that they seem to mistake it for their duty towards God. For to use the words of the Catechism, do they not appear "to believe in them, to fear them "to love them with all their hearts, with all their "minds, with all their souls, and with all their "strength, to worship them, to give them thanks, to "put their whole trust in them, to call upon them, "to honour their names and their words, and to serve "them truly all the days of their lives?" As they worship false gods, their blessings are of the kind which corresponds with the nature of their duties. They are all shadowy and unsubstantial; dreams, bubbles, and meteors, which dance before their eyes, and lead them to perdition.

It is really unaccountable to behold families of a competent fortune, and respectable rank, who (while they deny themselves even the common pleasures of a plentiful table, while their kitchen is the cave of cold and famine, while their neighbours, relations, and friends pity and despise as they pass the comfortless and un-hospitable door) scruple not to be profusely expensive in dress, furniture, building, equipage, at public entertainments, in excursions to Bath, Turnbridge, or Brixthelmstone. To feed the fashionable extravagance, they rob themselves of indulgencies which they know to be more truly satisfactory; for which of them returneth from the midnight assembly, or from the sum-

mer excursions, without complaining of dulness, fatigue, ennui, and insipidity. They have shewn themselves, they have seen many fine persons, and many fine things, but have they felt the delicious pleasures of domestic peace, the tranquil delights of social intercourse at their own towns and villages, the solid satisfactions of a cool collected mind, the comforts arising from a disembarrassed state of finances, and the love and respect of a neighbourhood?

To run in debt, and be involved in danger of arrests and imprisonment, are, in this age, almost an object of fashionable ambition. To have an execution in the house, is to be in the same predicament with this baronet, and the other lord, or with his grace the duke. The poor imitator of splendid misery, little greatness, and titled infamy, risques his liberty and last shilling to become a man of taste and fashion. He boasts that he is a happy man, for he is a man of pleasure; he knows how to enjoy life; he professes the important science called the *Scavoir Vivre*. Give him the distinction which, in the littleness and blindness of his soul, he considers as the source of happiness and honour. Allow him his claim to taste, give him the title of a man of pleasure, and since he insists upon it, grant him his pretensions to *Scavoir Vivre*. But at the same time he cannot deny that he is hunted by his creditors, that he is obliged to hide himself, lest he should lose his liberty; that he is eating the bread and the meat, and wearing the clothes of those whose children are crying for a morsel, and shivering in rags. If he has brought himself to such a state as to feel no uneasiness, when he reflects on his embarrassment, and its consequence to others; he is a base, worthless, and degenerate wretch. But if he is uneasy, where is his happiness? where are his exalted enjoyments? how much happier had been this boaster of happiness, had he lived within the limits of reason, duty, and his fortune, in love and unity with his own regular family, at his own fire-side, beloved, trusted, respected in the neighbourhood, afraid of no creditor or persecution, nor of any thing else, but of doing wrong? He might not indeed have made a figure on the turf; he might not

have had the honour of leading the fashion; but he would probably have had health, wealth, fame, and peace. Many a man who is seldom seen, and never heard of, enjoys, in the silence and security of a private life, all which this sublunary state can afford to sweeten the cup, and to lighten the burthen.

In things of an inferior nature, and such as are not immediately connected with moral conduct, the same predilection for external appearance, and the same neglect of solid comfort, when placed in competition with the display of an affected taste, are found to prevail. Our houses are often rendered cold, small, and inconvenient, for the sake of preserving a regularity of external figure, or of copying the architecture of a warmer climate. Our carriages are made dangerous or incommodious, for the sake of attracting the passenger's eye, by something new or singular in their shape, strength or fabric. Our dress is fashioned in uneasy forms and with troublesome superfluities, or uncomfortable defects, just as the Proteus, Fashion, issues out the capricious edicts of a variable taste. We even eat and drink, see and hear, not according to our own appetites and senses, but as the prevalent taste happens to direct. In this refined age we are all persons of taste, from the hair-dresser and milliner to the duke and dachess. The question is not what is right, prudent, pleasing, comfortable, but what is the taste. Hence beggarly finery, and lordly beggary.

The sacrifice of comfort to taste is visible in our modern gardens. I rejoice in the explosion of the Dutch manner. I expatiate with raptured eye and imagination over the noble scenes created by a Kent and a Brown. But at the same time I lament that our cold climate often renders the sublime and magnificent taste in gardening incompatible with comfort. Winter, as the poet says, often lingers in the lap of May. How pleasing to step out of the house, and bask under a sunny wall covered with bloom, to watch the expansion of a rose-bud, and to see even the humble pea and bean shooting up with all the vigour of vernal fertility! But now the mansion house stands naked and forlorn. You descend from the flight of steps. You are saluted by

the rudest breath of Eurus and Boreas. No trees, no wall, no out houses, even the kitchen and offices subterraneous. Not a corner to seek the genial warmth of a meridian sun. Fine prospects, indeed, all around. But you cannot stay to look at them. You fly to your chimney corner, happy if the persecuting blast pursues you not to your last recess. We allow all that taste can claim. We admire and love her beauties; but they are dearly bought at the expence of comfort.

A little and enclosed garden adds greatly to the real enjoyment of a rural retreat. Though taste has thrown down the walls, and laid all open; I venture to predict that before the lapse of half a century, good sense and the love of comfort will rebuild them. The grounds beyond may still be laid out in the grandest and most beautiful style; but let the house stand in the midst of a little cultivated spot, where every vegetable beauty and delicacy may be displayed, and where the rigours of our inclement clime may be softened with elegant enclosures. The contrast between this, which I would call the domestic, and the other which might be named the outer garden, or the grove, would produce an effect by no means unpleasing. They who have no taste for flowers, and the thousand beauties of an enclosed garden, are but pretenders to any kind of taste in the graces of horticulture.

Indeed, such is the nature of man, we commonly advance improvement to the verge of impropriety. We now loath the idea of a straight line, and a regular row of trees. But let us not, in the pride of our hearts, flatter ourselves with the unerring rectitude of our taste. Many of the ancients who possessed the best taste, not only in poetry and eloquence, but in arts, in painting, sculpture, architecture, were great admirers of plantations perfectly regular, and laid out in quincunxes. However vanity and fashion may dictate and declaim, the world will not always believe that Homer, Virgil, Cyrus, Cicero, Bacon, and Temple, were totally mistaken in their ideas of horticultural beauty.

Cicero informs us, in a fine quotation from Xenophon's economics, that when Lyfander came to Cyrus, a prince equally distinguished for his glorious em-

pire and his genius, Cyrus shewed him a piece of ground *well enclosed and completely planted*. After the visitor had admired the tall and straight trees, and the rows regularly formed in a quincunx, and the ground clear of weeds, and well cultivated, and the sweetness of the odours which exhaled from the flowers, he could not help expressing his admiration not only of the diligence, but the skill of him by whom all this was measured and marked out; upon which Cyrus answered, "It was myself who measured every thing, the rows of trees are of my disposing, the plan is mine, and many of the trees were planted with my own hand." An illustrious pattern, which, I hope our English noblemen and gentlemen will not be afraid to follow. Why always employ a professed plan maker? Why sacrifice their own amusement and inclination to the will of another, and to the imperious edicts of capricious fashion?



No. CLIX.

ON THE EXAMPLE OF HENRY THE FIFTH,
AND THE OPINION THAT A PROFLIGATE
YOUTH IS LIKELY TO TERMINATE
IN A WISE MANHOOD.

THERE are those who consider early profligacy as a mark of that spirit, which seldom fails to produce in the subsequent periods of life, a wise and a virtuous character. The example of Henry the fifth is often cited in confirmation of their opinion. Shakspeare has indeed represented his errors and reformation in so amiable a light, that many are not displeas'd when they see a young man beginning his career in riot and debauchery. While there is an appearance of spirit, they regard not the vice.

The example of Henry the fifth has been applied particularly to heirs apparent of a crown. If the future king is found to be early initiated in the excesses of sensuality, it is a favourable presage, and we are

referred to the example of Falstaff's Hal. If he devote his time to drinking, and be actually involved in continual intoxication, it is all the better, for do we not recollect Hal's exploits at the Boar's Head in Eastcheap? Dame Quickly, Doll Tear-sheet, are illustrious instances to prove what company a prince should keep in order to become hereafter a great king. It is in the haunts of intemperance and vice, and in the company of sycophants and knaves, that he is, according to the vulgar phrase, to sow his wild oats, to spend the exuberance of his spirit, to subdue the ebullition of his blood, and to acquire a valuable species of moral experience.

It is true indeed that Henry the fifth is a remarkable instance of early profligacy and subsequent reformation. He is a remarkable, because he is a rare instance. For one who succeeds as he did, a thousand become either incurable debauchees, drunkards, and rogues, ruin their characters and fortunes, or die under the operation of so rough an experiment. We hear not of those who are obliged to go to the East Indies, to hide themselves on the Continent, to skulk in the garrets of blind alleys, to spend their days in jails, or are early carried to the church-yard, amidst the thanks and rejoicings of their friends for so happy a deliverance from shame and ruin. But if one wild youth becomes but a tolerably good man, we are struck with the metamorphosis, as we are with every thing uncommon. We exaggerate his goodness, by comparing it with his previous depravity. We cite the example, as a consolatory topic, wherever we behold a young man, as the scripture beautifully expresses it, walking in the ways of his own heart, and in the sight of his own eyes. We talk as if we almost congratulated a parent, when his son has spirit enough to violate, not only the rules of decency, but also the most sacred laws of morality and religion.

Such fatal ideas have broken the heart of many a virtuous and feeling father. They have brought his hairs, before they were grey, to the grave. I have been much pleased with a passage in the sermons of the late worthy Dr. Ogden, in which he recommends regularity and virtue to young men solely for the sake of their pa-

rents. "Stop young man," says he, "stop a little
 " to look towards thy poor parents. Think it not too
 " much to bestow a moment's reflection on those who
 " never forget thee. Recollect what they have done
 " for thee. Remember all—all indeed thou canst
 " not; alas! ill had been thy lot, had not their care
 " begun before thou couldst remember or know any
 " thing.

" Now, so proud, self-willed, inexorable, then
 " couldst thou only ask by wailing, and move them
 " with thy tears. And they were moved. Their
 " hearts were touched with thy distress; they relieved
 " and watched thy wants before thou knewest thine
 " own necessities, or their kindness. They clothed
 " thee, thou knewest not that thou wast naked: thou
 " askedst not for bread; but they fed thee. And
 " ever since—for the particulars are too many to be
 " recounted, and too many surely to be all utterly for-
 " gotten, it has been the very principal endeavour,
 " employment, and study of their lives, to do service
 " unto thee. If by all these endeavours they can ob-
 " tain the child's comfort, they arrive at the full ac-
 " complishment of their wishes. They have no higher
 " object of their ambition. Be thou but happy, and
 " they are so.

" And now tell me, is not something to be done, I
 " do not now say for thyself, but for them? If it be
 " too much to desire of thee to be good, and wise, and
 " virtuous, and happy for thy own sake; yet be happy
 " for theirs. Think that a sober, upright, and let
 " me add, religious life, besides the blessings it will
 " bring upon thy own head, will be a fountain of un-
 " feigned comfort to thy declining parents, and make
 " the heart of the aged sing for joy.

" What shall we say? which of these is happier?
 " the son that maketh a glad father? or the father
 " blessed with such a son?

" Fortunate young man! who hast an heart open
 " so early to virtuous delights, and canst find thy own
 " happiness in returning thy father's blessing upon his
 " own head!

“ And happy father! whose years have been pro-
 “ longed, not as it often happens, to see his comforts
 “ fall from him one after another, and to become at
 “ once old and destitute; but to taste a new pleasure,
 “ not to be found among the pleasures of youth, re-
 “ served for his age; to reap the harvest of all his
 “ cares and labours, in the duty, affection, and feli-
 “ city of his dear child. His very look bespeaks the
 “ inward satisfaction of his heart. The infirmities of
 “ his age sit light on him. He feels not the troubles
 “ of life; he smiles at the approach of death; sees
 “ himself still living and honoured in the memory and
 “ the person of his son, his other dearer self; and
 “ passes down to the receptacle of all the living, in the
 “ fulness of content and joy.

“ How unlike to this, is the condition of him, who
 “ has the affliction to be the father of a wicked off-
 “ spring! poor, unhappy man! No sorrow is like
 “ unto thy sorrow. Diseases and death are blessings,
 “ if compared with the anguish of thy heart, when
 “ thou seest thy dear children run heedlessly and head-
 “ long in the ways of sin, forgetful of their parents
 “ council, and their own happiness. Unfortunate old
 “ man! How often does he wish he had never been
 “ born, or had been cut off before he was a father:
 “ No reflection is able to afford him consolation. He
 “ grows old betimes; and the afflictions of age are
 “ double on his head. In vain are instruments of
 “ pleasure brought forth. His soul refuses comfort.
 “ Every blessing of his life is lost upon him. No success
 “ is able to give him joy. His triumphs are like that
 “ of David: while his friends, captains, soldiers, were
 “ rending the air with shouts of victory—he, poor con-
 “ queror, went up, as it is written, to the chamber over
 “ the gate and wept: and as he went, thus he said;
 “ O, my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom!
 “ would to God I had died for thee! O, Absalom, my
 “ son, my son!”

I have introduced this passage, with a hope that
 gay and thoughtless young men may be properly affected
 by it; and though they should have no regard for them-
 selves, that they should be led to have pity on their

poor parents, and to chuse the right way, that they may not cause affliction to him who has often dandled them in his arms, nor to her at whose breast they hung in the sweet and innocent period of their infancy. It is indeed a melancholy consideration that children, who have been the delight of their parents during the earlier ages, no sooner arrive at maturity, than they often prove a scourge and a curse. They hurry those out of the world, who brought them into it. They embitter the old age of those who devoted the health and strength of manhood to their welfare and support. Sad return! to plant the pillow of reclining age with thorns!—O have pity, have pity on your father—behold him with tottering step approaching you! With suppliant hands, and tears in his eyes, he begs you—to do what? to be good and happy. O spare him, wipe away his tears; make him happy, be so yourself—so when it shall be your turn to be a father, may you never feel the pang you have already inflicted!

There are parents, indeed, who seem to have little concern but for the pecuniary interest or worldly advancement of their children. While their children excel in dress, address, simulation, and dissimulation, they are allowed to be as debauched and immoral as they please. While they possess a poor, mean, and contemptible kind of wisdom, commonly called the knowledge of the world, their parents are perfectly easy; though they should be notoriously guilty of every base artifice, and plunged in the grossest and most unlawful species of sensuality. That poor man, Lord Chesterfield was one of those parents who are ready to sacrifice their children's honour, conscience, and salvation, for the sake of gaining a little of the little honours and riches of the world, where not even the highest honours of the most abundant riches are comparable to the possession of an honest heart. That wretched Lord seems to have entertained very little natural affection for his spurious offspring. His paternal attention was all avarice and ambition. He would probably have been delighted if his son had been at an early age a remarkable debauchee. He would have thought the spirit which vice displayed, a sure prog-

nostic of future eminence. Providence defeated his purpose, and permitted his letters to be exhibited as a loathsome monument of wickedness, vanity, and worldly wisdom. Such wisdom is, indeed, usually folly, even where its effects and consequences are confined to the present period of existence.

Every father then, and every mother who deserves that tender and venerable appellation, will strenuously endeavour, whatever have been their own errors and vices, to preserve those whom they have introduced into a troublesome world, from the foul contagion and pollution of vice. If they have any regard for their children, for their country, for themselves, they will use every probable means to rescue the rising generation from early profligacy. Selfish motives often prevail when all others are inefficacious. I repeat then, that, for their own sakes, they must guard their offspring from riot, intemperance, and prodigality. If they are misguided by the example of Henry the Fifth, or any other reformed rake, so as to encourage their children in evil, or even to be negligent of them, they will probably repent in the day of old age, and find poverty, shame, and anguish, superadded to the weight of years, and the unavoidable evils of natural decay.



No. CLX.

A GOOD HEART NECESSARY TO ENJOY THE BEAUTIES OF NATURE.

BY a just dispensation of Providence, it happens that they who are unreasonably selfish, seldom enjoy so much happiness as the generous and contented. Almost all the wicked deviate from the line of rectitude, that they may engross an extraordinary portion of some real or imaginary advantage. Their hearts are agitated in the pursuits of it with the most violent and painful emotions, and their eagerness, apprehensions, and solicitude, poison the enjoyment after they have obtained the possession. The nature of their pleasures is at best gross, sensual, violent, and transitory. They are

always dissatisfied, always envious, always malignant. Their souls are bent down to the earth; and, destitute of all elevated and heavenly ideas, *cælestium inanes*. They have not powers of perception for the sublime or refined satisfactions; and are no less insensible to the tranquil delights of innocence and simplicity, than the deaf and blind to the beauty of colours, and the melody of music.

To the wicked, and indeed to all who are warmly engaged in the vulgar pursuits of the world, the contemplation of rural scenes, and of the manners and natures of animals, is perfectly insipid. The odour of flowers, the purling of streams, the song and plumage of birds, the sportive innocence of the lamb, the fidelity of the dog, are incapable of attracting, for one moment, the notice of him whose conscience is uneasy, and passions are unsubdued. Invite him to a morning walk through a neighbouring wood, and he begs to be excused; for he loves his pillow, and can see no charms in trees. Endeavour to allure him, on a vernal evening, when, after a shower, every leaf breathes fragrance and freshness, to saunter with you in the garden; and he pleads an engagement at whist, or at the bottle. Bid him listen to the thrush, the blackbird, the nightingale, the woodlark, and he interrupts you by asking the price of stocks, and enquiring whether the West-India fleet is arrived. As you walk over the meadows enamelled with cowslips and daisies, he takes no other notice, but enquires who is the owner, how much the land lets for an acre, what hay sold for at the last market. He prefers the gloomiest day in November, on which pecuniary business is transacted, or a feast celebrated, or a public diversion afforded, to all the delights of the merry month of May. He who is constantly engaged in gratifying his lust, or in gaming, becomes in a short time so very wise, as to consider the study of the works of God in the creation, and the external beauty both of vegetable and animated nature, as little superior to a childish entertainment. How grave his aspect! No Solon ever looked so sapient as he does, when he is on the point of making a bet, or insidiously plotting an intrigue. One might conclude, from his air of importance, that man was born to shake the dice, to shuffle the cards, to drink

claret, and to destroy by debauchery, the innocence of individuals, and the peace of families. Ignorant and mistaken wretch! He knows not that purity and simplicity of heart would furnish him with delights, which, while they render his life tranquil and pleasurable, would enable him to resign his soul at death into the hands of his maker unpolluted. What stains and filth it usually contracts by an indiscriminate commerce with the world! how comparatively pure amidst the genuine pleasures of a rural philosophical life!

As a preservative of innocence, and as the means of a most agreeable pastime, the love of birds, flowers, plants, trees, gardens, animals, when it appears in boys, as indeed it usually does, should be encouraged, and in a subordinate degree cultivated. Farewell, innocence, when such things cease to be capable of affording pleasure! The heart gradually becomes hardened and corrupted, when its objects are changed to those of a worldly and a sensual nature.

Man may indeed be amused in the days of health and vigour with the common pursuits of ordinary life; but they have too much agitation in them for the feeble powers of old age. Amusements are then required which are gentle, yet healthy; capable of engaging the thoughts, yet requiring no painful or continued exertion. Happy he who has acquired and preserved to that age a taste for simple pleasures. A fine day, a beautiful garden, a flowery field, are to him enjoyments similar in species and degree to the bliss of Elysium. A farm yard, with all its inhabitants, constitutes a most delightful scene, and furnishes him with a thousand entertaining ideas. The man who can see without pleasure a hen gather her chickens under her wing, or the train of ducklings following their parent into a pond, is like him who has no music in his soul, and who, according to Shakspeare, is fit for treasons, murders, every thing that can disgrace and degrade humanity. *Vetabo iisdem sub trabibus, fragilemque mecum solvat phaselum.* I will forbid him, says Horace on another occasion, to be under the same roof with me, or to embark in the same vessel.

Let it operate as an additional motive in stimulating us to preserve our innocence, that with our innocence we preserve our sensibility to the charms of nature. It is indeed one of the rewards of innocence, that it is enabled to taste the purest pleasure which this world can bestow, without the usual consequences of pleasures, remorse and satiety. The man of a bad heart can find no delight but in bad designs and bad actions—nominal joys and real torments. His very amusements are of necessity connected with the injury of others, and with a thousand painful sensations which no language can express. But the mind of the honest, simple, and ingenuous, is always gay and enlivened, like some of the southern climates, with a serenity almost perpetual. Let a man who would form an adequate idea on the different states of the good and bad heart, with respect to happiness, compare the climate of Otaheite with that of Terra del Fuego, as described by our British circum-navigators.



No. CLXI.

ON THE PECULIAR BASENESS OF VICE IN
NOBILITY.

MANY, who have been raised to titles and estates by the virtue or good fortune of their ancestors, seem to consider themselves as privileged to infringe all the common restraints established by a regard to decency, by moral philosophy, by natural and by revealed religion. They have noble blood in their veins, therefore they presume that the world was made for them to take their pastime in it. Who, they exclaim (with a volley of oaths and execrations) who shall dare to say to us, thus far shall we go, and no farther? Rules, laws and *modes of superstition* were made for the canaille, for the mushroom race, who sprang from dunghills, and on whom the sun of royalty has never shed its lustre. Scarcely any of the ancient philosophers could boast of this noble blood, and shall they presume to dictate to a nobleman, that is, perhaps, to a bastard of King Charles's

strumpet, or to the diseased offspring of a leprous, scrophulous, sorry race of puiſne lordlings, whoſe names are only recorded in the books of ruined tradefmen, and whoſe illuſtrious exploits are limited to the regions of a cock-pit, a horſe-race, a tavern, and a bawdy-houſe? Shall a carpenter's ſon dictate to a Fitzroy? His lordſhip pleads his privileges. Let him riot in debauchery, ſeducer innocence, break the peace of private families, laugh at all that is ſacred and ſerious, for is he not a duke?

You are indeed a duke; or, in other words, your great-grandfather, by good luck or good deeds, acquired for you that noble old manſion-houſe, that park, thoſe woods, thoſe lands, thoſe titles, all of which you baſely diſhonour. Though in your appearance you have not much of ducal dignity, yet we ſee your ducal coronet on your prostitute's vis-a-vis: we ſee you glorying in your ſhame, neglecting to pay your tradefmen, yet laſhing your gold on horſes and harlots; ſtooping to the meaneſt company and diverſions, yet retaining all the petty inſolence of family pride: we ſee you meanly ſneaking in a court; we ſee you rewarded notwithstanding the infamy of your private life, with offices of truſt and honour; we therefore acknowledge that you have all the common attributes and outward ſigns of the title which you happen to inherit. You have alſo had the honour of a divorce, and enjoy the envied and brilliant reputation of a profeſſed adulterer. With a character and qualities ſo noble, every Briton muſt acknowledge how juſtly you are ſaluted by the appellation of your Grace! how juſtly you are made the companion of a prince, and the privy counſellor of the King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, *defender of the faith*, and over all cauſes, *eccleſiaſtical* as well as civil, ſupreme! But, irony apart, who can be ſurprized, or who can lament, when ſuch wretches as yourſelf are the counſellors of kings, that the ſubjects rebel, and that the empire is diſmembered? Under a ruler like you, who would not glory in the illuſtrious character and conduct of a Washington?

When we read the liſt of dukes, marquizes, earls, viſcounts, barons, and baronets, exhibited in the Court

Calendar, we cannot help wondering at the great number of those who are sunk in obscurity, or branded with infamy; and at the extreme paucity of characters to which may be applied with justice the epithets of decent, virtuous, learned, and devout. Here we see a long list of titled shadows, whose names are seldom heard, and whose persons are seldom seen but at Newmarket and the chocolate-house. There we mark a tribe whom fame has celebrated for those feats of gallantry called in an old-fashioned book, adultery. Here we point out a wretch stigmatized for unnatural crimes, there a blood-thirsty duellist. Debauchees, drunkards, spentrifts, gamblers, tyrannical neighbours, and bad masters of families, occur to the mind of the reader so frequently, that they almost cease by familiarity to excite his animadversion. All this may be true, it will be said; but will it not be true of any other equal number of men? I venture to affirm that it will not. The power, rank, and opulence of the nobility, added to bad company and often to bad education, lead them beyond the line of common depravity. There is this also which distinguishes their errors from the usual errors of human infirmity; they boast of their enormities, and glory in their disgrace: exorbitant profligacy is considered as a mark of manly spirit: and all who are decent and regular, are ridiculed by the majority as tame, pusillanimous, hypocritical, superstitious, methodistical, prejudiced, or narrow-minded.

But allowing, what experience refutes, that the enormities of the nominal great are not worse than those of others, yet it cannot be denied that their influence on the community is infinitely more detrimental. The greater part of mankind are weak and ill educated; but to a feeble and ill-informed understanding, riches and titles appear to be the noblest distinctions of human nature. Whatever is said or done by the possessors of them, operate both as precepts and examples with irresistible force. It is sufficient, in the opinion of many a silly man and woman of fashion, to justify any eccentricity of behaviour, that a lord or lady, whom they proudly name among their acquaintance, has set the example. Deformity itself, awkwardness, rudeness,

become grace and politeness, when exhibited by some dutchess who affects fame by an impudent singularity. The court in Doctors-Commons affords frequent instances, in the present times, that vices, directly repugnant to the law of God, pregnant with injuries to society, and fatal to private virtue and private happiness, are become fashionable. It is a pride and pleasure among the blasted lordlings of the day, to stand forth in a court of justice, and avow themselves the destroyers of female virtue and nuptial felicity. They are travelled men; and like true patriots, emulating the manners of that nation which is endeavouring to destroy our political existence, they attempt to introduce the loose principles of conjugal libertinism into their own country. Those who have not travelled, imitate the noble youth who have; and thus is the sweet cup of domestic felicity almost universally embittered among those who, in the regions of fashion, pretend to superior skill in the art of enjoying life.



CLXII.

ON THE AFFECTATION OF EXTREME DELICACY AND SENSIBILITY,

EXTREME DELICACY, so esteemed at present seems to have been unknown in times of remote antiquity. It is certainly a great refinement on human nature; and refinements are never attended to in the earlier ages, when the occupations of war, and the wants of unimproved life, leave little opportunity, and less inclination, for fanciful enjoyments. Danger and distress require strength of mind, and necessarily exclude an attention to those delicacies, which, while they please, infallibly enervate.

That tenderness which is amiable in a state of perfect civilization, is despised as a weakness among unpolished nations. Shocked at the smallest circumstances which are disagreeable, it cannot support the idea of danger and alarm. So far from exercising the severities which are sometimes politically necessary in a rude state, it

starts with horror from the sight, and at the description of them. It delights in the calm occupations of rural life, and would gladly resign the spear and the shield for the shepherd's crook and the lover's garland. But in an unformed community, where constant danger requires constant defence, those dispositions which delight in ease and retirement will be treated with general contempt; and no temper of mind which is despised will be long epidemical.

The ancient Greeks and Romans were the most civilized people on the earth. They, however, were unacquainted with that extreme delicacy of sentiment which is become universally prevalent in modern times. Perhaps some reasonable causes may be assigned. The stoic philosophy endeavoured to introduce a total apathy, and though it was not embraced in all its rigour by the vulgar, yet it had a sufficient number of votaries to diffuse a general insensibility of temper. It perhaps originally meant no more than to teach men to govern their affections by the dictates of reason, but as a natural want of feeling produced the same effects as a rational regulation of the passions, insensibility soon passed among the vulgar for what it had no claim to, a philosophical indifference.

That respectful attention to women, which in modern times is called gallantry, was not to be found among the ancients. Women were unjustly considered as inferior beings, whose only duty was to contribute to pleasure, and to superintend domestic œconomy. It was not till the days of chivalry that men shewed that desire of pleasing the softer sex, which seems to allow them a superiority. This deference to women refines the manners and softens the temper; and it is no wonder that the ancients, who admitted not women to their social conversations, should acquire a roughness of manners incompatible with Delicacy of Sentiment.

Men who acted, thought and spoke, like the ancients, were unquestionably furnished by nature with every feeling in great perfection. But their mode of education contributed rather to harden, than to mollify their hearts. Politics and war were the only general objects of pursuit. Ambition, it is well known, renders all

other passions subservient to itself; and the youth who had been accustomed to military discipline, and had endured the hardships of a campaign, though he might yield to the allurements of pleasure, would not have time to attend to the refinement of delicacy. But the modern soldier, in the present mode of conducting war, is not compelled to undergo many personal hardships either in the preparation for his profession, or in the exercise of it. Commerce, but little known to many ancient nations, gives the moderns an opportunity of acquiring opulence without much difficulty or danger; and the infinite numbers who inherit this opulence, have recourse, in order to pass away life with ease, to the various arts of exciting pleasure. The profession of divinity and law, leave sufficient time, opportunity, and inclination to most of their professors to pursue every innocent amusement and gratification. The general plan of modern education, which among the liberal consists of the study of poets and sentimental writers, contributes perhaps more than all other causes to humanize the heart and refine the sentiments: for, at the period when education is commenced, the heart is most susceptible of impressions.

Whatever disposition tends to soften, without weakening the mind, must be cherished; and it must be allowed that an unaffected Delicacy of Sentiment, on this side the extreme, adds greatly to the happiness of mankind, by diffusing an universal benevolence. It teaches men to feel for others as for themselves; it disposes them to rejoice with the happy, and by partaking to encrease their pleasure. It frequently excludes the malignant passions, which are the sources of the greatest misery in life. It excites a pleasing sensation in our own breast, which, if its duration be considered, may be placed among the highest gratifications of sense. The only ill consequence that can be apprehended from it is, an effeminacy of mind, which may disqualify us for vigorous pursuits and manly exertions.

In the most successful course of things, obstacles will impede, and disagreeable circumstances disgust. To bear these without feeling them, is sometimes necessary in the right conduct of life: but he who is tremblingly

alive all over, and whose sensibility approaches to fore-ness, avoids the contest in which he knows he must be hurt. He feels injuries never committed, and resents affronts never intended. Disgusted with men and manners, he either seeks retirement to indulge his melancholy, or, weakened by a continual chagrin, conducts himself with folly and imprudence.

How then shall we avoid the extreme of a disposition, which in the due medium is productive of the most salutary consequences? In this excess as well as all others, reason must be called in to moderate. Sensibility must not be permitted to sink us into such a state of indolence, as effectually represses those manly sentiments, which may very well consist with the most delicate. The greatest mildness is commonly united with the greatest fortitude, in the true hero. Tendernefs joined with resolution, forms indeed a finished character, to which reason, co-operating with nature, may easily attain.

The affectation of great sensibility is extremely common. It is however as odious as the reality is amiable. It renders a man detestable, and a woman ridiculous. Instead of relieving the afflicted, which is the necessary effect of genuine sympathy, a character of this sort flies from misery, to shew that it is too delicate to support the sight of distress. The appearance of a toad, or the jolting of a carriage, will cause a paroxysm of fear. It pretends to a superior share of refinement and philanthropy. But it is remarkable, that this delicacy and tendernefs often disappear in solitude, and the pretender to uncommon sensibility is frequently found, in the absence of witnesses, to be uncommonly unfeeling.

To have received a tender heart from the hand of nature, is to have received the means of the highest enjoyment. To have guided its emotions by the dictates of reason, is to have acted up to the dignity of man, and to have obtained that happiness of which the heart was constituted susceptible. May a temper thus laudable in itself, never be rendered contemptible by affectation, or injurious to its possessor and to others, through the want of a proper guidance.

No. CLXIII.

ON TRUE PATIENCE, AS DISTINGUISHED
FROM INSENSIBILITY.

HOWEVER common, and however intense the evils of human life may be, certain it is, that evils equally great, do not affect all men with an equal degree of anguish; and the different manner of sustaining evils, arises from one of these two causes, a natural insensibility, or an adventitious fortitude, acquired by the exertion of the virtue of PATIENCE.

Apathus, when a school-boy, was not remarkable for quickness of apprehension, or brilliancy of wit; but though his progress was slow, it was sure, and the additional opportunities of study, which he enjoyed by being free from those avocations which vivacity and warmth of constitution occasion, made him a tolerably good scholar. The fullness of his deportment, however, alienated the affections of his teachers; and, upon the slightest misdemeanours, he often underwent the punishment of the rod, which he always bore without a tear, and without complaint.

He had not long been at school, before his father and mother died of a contagious fever. Preparatory to the disclosure of so mournful an event to an orphan son, many precautions were taken, many phrases of condolence studied. At length, the master took him aside, and after several observations on the instability of human affairs, the suddenness of death, the necessity of submission to Providence, and the inefficacy of sorrow, told him, that his parents were no more. To this, young Apathus replied, by observing, without any visible alteration in his countenance, that he suspected something of that kind had happened, as he had not received his letters at the usual time; but that he had not said any thing on the subject, as he thought his being possessed of a fine fortune by the event, was a matter that concerned nobody but himself: "For (says he) as the death was sudden, there probably was no will, and my father being pretty warm, as they call it, and I being an only son, I think I shall be very well off." Here he

was interrupted by his master, who was now desirous of some degree of that grief which he had before been solicitous to prevent.—” “And are you not affected “(said he) with the loss of the dearest friends you had “in the world?” “Why, Sir (replied the insensible) “you have just now been teaching me to submit to “Providence, and telling me we must all die, and “the like; and do I not practise your precepts?” The master was too much astonished to be able to answer, and hastily left the young man; who probably concluded the day with a feast of gingerbread, or a game at marbles.

Soon after he left school, he took it into his head to enter into the state of matrimony. But here let the gentle reader be informed, that he was not induced to submit his neck to the yoke by any of those fine feelings which constitute love. The object of his choice had ten thousand pounds; and he considered that ten thousand pounds would pay for the lady's board. When the little prattlers were arrived at the age when none can behold them without pleasure, they were seized with an unfavourable small pox, and severally carried from the cradle to the grave. The constant attendance of the mother, on this occasion, brought on a fever, which together with the weakness occasioned by an advanced state of pregnancy, proved fatal. Then at last, Apathus was observed to fetch a sigh, and lift up his hands to heaven—at the sight of the undertaker's bill. A thousand misfortunes in business have fallen to his lot, all which he has borne with seeming fortitude. He is now, at length, reduced to that state, in which gentlemen choose to take lodgings within the purlieus of St. George's fields; but there is no alteration in his features; he still sings his song, takes his glass, and laughs at those silly mortals who weary themselves in wandering up and down the world without controul.

Thus Apathus affords a striking instance of that power of bearing afflictions which arises from natural insensibility. Stoicus will give us a better idea of Patience as a virtue.

From that period at which the mind begins to think, Stoicus was remarkable for a quality, which, in child-

ren, is called shamefacedness. He could never enter a room full of company without shewing his distress, by a violent suffusion of blushes. At school, he avoided the commission of faults, rather through fear of shame than of punishment. In short, an exquisite sensibility, at the same time that it gave him the most exalted delight, frequently exposed him to the keenest affliction. Thus, from being acquainted with grief, though a stranger to misfortune, he acquired a habit of bearing evils before any heavy ones befel him.

Stoicus was designed for a literary life, which, to the generality of mankind, appears almost exempt from the common attacks of ill-fortune: but if there were no other instances of the peculiar miseries of the student, Stoicus alone might evince the groundlessness of such an opinion. From a sanguine temper, he was prone to anticipate success; and from an enterprizing disposition, was little inclined to sit down contented without a considerable share of reputation. Influenced by his love of fame, he ventured to appeal to the public taste, and actually sent into the world a performance of great merit: but as the work wanted some popular attractions, it was soon neglected, and sunk into oblivion.

An evil of this kind, perhaps, the merchant or the manufacturer may treat with contempt. They, however, who, with the same feelings, have been in the same predicament, will know the anguish which secretly tormented the disconsolate Stoicus. This disappointment was the first affliction of his life, and on this he long meditated without intermission. He has not again ventured to publish, and therefore has had no cause of uneasiness from the ingratitude of the many-headed monster: but the evils of his private life have been numerous and afflictive beyond conception. The death of an amiable wife, a constant state of sickness, expectations continually disappointed, have concurred to overwhelm him—but all their efforts have been fruitless. The reflections of Philosophy and religion fortify him against every attack, and I never visit him without observing a placid smile of resignation diffused on his countenance. He is sensible of the real weight of every evil, and at the same time sustains it with alacrity. He draws resources

from himself in every emergency, and with the nicest feelings is become perfectly callous.

This is genuine Patience, and though the former may by some be thought a happiness, the latter only can be esteemed a virtue.

Sensibility, with all its inconveniencies, is to be cherished by those who understand and wish to maintain the dignity of their nature. To feel for others, disposes us to exercise the amiable virtue of charity, which our religion indispensably requires. It constitutes that enlarged benevolence which philosophy inculcates, and which is indeed comprehended in Christian charity. It is the privilege and the ornament of man; and the pain which it causes is abundantly recompensed by that sweet sensation which ever accompanies the exercise of beneficence.

To feel our own misery with full force is not to be deprecated. Affliction softens and improves the heart.

Tears, to speak in the style of figure, fertilize the soil in which the virtues grow. And it is the remark of one who understood human nature, that the faculties of the mind, as well as the feelings of the heart, are meliorated by adversity.

But, in order to promote these ends, our sufferings must not be permitted to overwhelm us. We must oppose them with the arms of reason and religion; and to express the idea in the language of the philosopher, as well as the poet, of Nature; every one, while he is compelled to feel his misfortunes like a man, should resolve also to bear them like a man.



No. CLXIV.

CURSORY REMARKS ON THE ELOQUENCE OF THE PULPIT. IN A LETTER.

ELOQUENCE is numbered among those arts which instead of making a progressive improvement in the course of revolving ages, have greatly receded from their original excellence.

The funeral orations and panegyrics of a few Frenchmen, are the only pieces among the moderns

which make pretensions to rhetorical composition. These, however, appear very elaborate and unnatural ; whether from the barrenness of the subjects, or from the weakness of the orators, is foreign to our purpose. From whatever causes it proceeds, it appears, that ancient eloquence is not restored by those efforts which are allowed to have been most successful.

In England, so generally is a taste for solid argument and subtle reasoning diffused, that mere flights of imagination, when unsupported by truth and argument, are little attended to. Thus it has been said, we have no truly classical history of our own country. Elaborate collections of facts, proceedings of parliament, and accurate descriptions of our navies and armaments, fill up, with a jejune detail some of our most celebrated histories. A great deal of sagacity has, indeed, been exerted in the adjustment of contested æras, unwearied labour in illustrating obscure passages in our annals, and much patience in the examination of our records. But where, after all, is the painting of a Livy, and the concise elegance of a Sallust ?

It is not therefore surprising, that a people who admit not unnecessary embellishments in matters of taste, and who can fall in love with naked truth even when she is at liberty to dress herself in the garb of fancy, should reject mere ornamental flourishes in the important transactions of political debate, and the serious proceedings of a court of judicature.

Thus the eloquence of the ancients, is not, perhaps, to be found either in the senate or the forum of Britain. There is, indeed, a very great degree of merit in many of the harangues spoken in those places, but they come not up to the idea of Grecian or Roman eloquence. The defect however is probably not so much owing to a want of ability, as to a voluntary compliance with the taste and genius of the nation.

In the pulpit, indeed, we may find some vestiges of ancient oratory : but waving at present the enquiry, whether we resemble the ancients in this point, I shall proceed to transcribe a few observations on pulpit eloquence in general, which I collected not long ago by accident.

One evening last autumn, as I was walking in the fields near the city, to enjoy a little fresh air, I observed a man, somewhat advanced in years, and of a composed aspect, sauntering in the same path with myself, seemingly in profound meditation. For a considerable time neither of us chose to commence a conversation; till at length, when a tacit familiarity between us had removed the reserve of strangeness, the old man opened with an usual introductory topic, the serenity of the evening. For my own part, I never refuse to join in one of the most reasonable, as well as most agreeable pleasures of human life. By degrees, the severity of my companion's countenance brightened up as the conversation grew warm, and he had told me he had just been hearing an excellent sermon at an evening lecture, and, as was his usual way, had taken this little turn in the fields to meditate on serious subjects without interruption. I must own I was rather startled at hearing this, apprehending I had fallen into the company of some methodistical enthusiast, who would endeavour to make a profelyte; but upon farther conversation, I found myself agreeably mistaken. The old man made some reflections, which, as they struck me at the time, I entered among my minutes as soon as I returned home.

“ You must know, Sir, said he, that I am an old
“ fashioned man. I go to church on Wednesdays and
“ Fridays, according to my good old grandmother's
“ directions, who (well I remember it) used always to
“ appoint me the bearer of her large print prayer-book
“ bound in purple morocco. To these early impres-
“ sions, perhaps, I owe all my oddities; and you will
“ easily imagine what a queer fellow I am, when I in-
“ form you, that I put my family to the inconvenience
“ of dining, on Sundays, a full hour sooner than com-
“ mon, for no other reason in the world but that I may
“ do my duty towards my Maker, by going to church
“ in the afternoon. While my neighbours are at the
“ playhouse, or the tavern, I can make shift to kill
“ time at an evening lecture; and I often follow a
“ famous preacher of a charity sermon, with all the ar-
“ dour with which a favourite player inspires the fre-
“ quenters of theatrical entertainments. These are

“ my usual diversions, and really, Sir, they have
 “ some advantages attending them. In the first place,
 “ they are not expensive; for what is a shilling thrown
 “ away now and then upon a trifling whim, since every
 “ man has his hobby-horse; such as relieving a suffering
 “ fellow-creature, or contributing to the education and
 “ support of a poor orphan? Secondly, I can go into
 “ any church, within the bills of mortality, without
 “ danger of being pushed, and squeezed, and trod
 “ upon, and stifled to death, as sometimes happens to
 “ those who follow more fashionable diversions; nay,
 “ and I can sit the whole time without being in the least
 “ overheated.

“ Now, Sir, as I have constantly attended to various
 “ sorts of pulpit eloquence, I suppose I may pretend,
 “ without vanity, to be some judge of it. Do not,
 “ however, expect that I shall bring proofs of the just-
 “ ness of my remarks from your Aristotles, your Tul-
 “ lies, or your Quintilians; for I am a plain common
 “ man, and if I have any sense, God knows it is only
 “ plain common sense.

“ Let me premise, that I shall now and then make
 “ use of the usual terms of division and subdivision.
 “ Such, for instance, as those edifying little words,
 “ First, secondly, thirdly, to conclude, to come to
 “ my next head, and the like. Consider, sir, I have
 “ been long used to this style, and naturally run into
 “ it.

“ Of preachers, I shall reckon four kinds; the Fine
 “ Man, the Pretty Preacher, the Good Textman, and
 “ the Humdrum.

“ First then of the first (forgive my sermonical
 “ style) namely, of the *fine man*:

“ A stentorophonic voice is the fundamental excel-
 “ lence of your Fine Man, and a powerful excellence
 “ it is. No sooner has the Fine Man uttered the pa-
 “ thetic and significant phrase, to conclude, than I
 “ have heard the whole row of matrons, in the middle
 “ aisle, with one accord cry, ‘ humph,’ and immedi-
 “ ately second their exclamation with a torrent of tears,
 “ which flowed down their withered cheeks, interrupt-
 “ ed only by sighs and sobs. The next qualification is

“ flexibility of muscles. From this excellence arise these
 “ violent contortions of the body, that wringing of the
 “ hands, beating of the breast, rolling of the eyes,
 “ foaming of the mouth, and one or two more symp-
 “ toms of madness, which never fail to gain the ap-
 “ plause of the weeping congregation. The next—
 “ but what am I about, Sir? in truth I cannot recollect
 “ any real excellencies; as for sense, learning, argu-
 “ ment, these are not to be expected in your Fine
 “ Man: but then the want of these is abundantly sup-
 “ plied by noise, nonsense, and grimace.

“ To come to my second head. Secondly then, as
 “ was before laid down, we treat of the *pretty*
 “ *preacher*.

“ The *Pretty Preacher* is an imitator of the *Fine*
 “ *Man*. As a copy, he is somewhat fainter than the
 “ original. He whines, he sobs, he roars, but roars
 “ like any nightingale, as Shakspeare has it. A soft
 “ effeminate voice, a pretty face (for look ye, Sir, a
 “ pretty face is a more powerful persuasive, than the
 “ arguments of a Chillingworth) and a white handker-
 “ chief, are the constituent parts of a *Preacher*.

“ These two sorts of *Preachers* are complete masters
 “ of the passions, without in the least addressing the un-
 “ derstanding. In truth, I cannot help comparing them
 “ to a fiddler of old time, I remember to have heard
 “ of at school, who made stocks and stones dance mi-
 “ nuets, and rivers run the wrong way, and played a
 “ hundred such pranks merely by the sound of the
 “ fiddle strings. Just in the same manner a *Fine Man*,
 “ and a *Pretty Preacher*, can force the tear from the
 “ eye, and the shilling from the utmost recesses of the
 “ pocket, by dint of sound, which, in this case, is
 “ never the echo of sense.

“ To come to my third head. Thirdly then, the
 “ *good textman* lays down good plain rules of morality,
 “ and confirms every precept by a quotation from
 “ holy writ. The graces of elocution he never aims
 “ at. Rhetorical flourishes, new remarks, or beau-
 “ tiful language, are not to be required of him.
 “ In short, the intelligent part of the congregation will
 “ seldom find their understandings enlightened, or

“ their fancy amused by him; but the plain sober-
“ minded Christian, provided he can distinguish what
“ the preacher says, may carry away something for
“ his edification.

“ To conclude with my fourth and last head. The
“ *humdrum* seems to consider preaching and praying
“ as a kind of work, which if he performs so as to
“ get his wages, he is satisfied. He reads the liturgy
“ as he would read a newspaper. He endeavours
“ neither to please, to strike, nor to convince, but
“ thinks the duty sufficiently well done, if it is but done
“ according to the rubrick, and at the established sea-
“ sons. To give him his due, he commonly preaches
“ the best divinity in the language; for as he is too lazy
“ to compose, he has nothing to do but to make choice
“ of the most celebrated compositions of others. He,
“ however, murders every sentence he reads. For the
“ most part, he chuses doctrinal rather than practical
“ discourses; but the misfortune is, that while he is
“ making the mysteries as clear as the sun at noon-day,
“ his audience is commonly asleep as fast as a church.
“ In a word, you may form some idea of this kind of
“ Preacher, by taking a view of Hogarth's print of the
“ sleepy congregation, where there is a Humdrum
“ holding forth, so as effectually to infuse peace and
“ quietness into the minds of his hearers.”

Here the old man's avocations obliged him to con-
clude the conversation, with expressing a wish, “ That
“ men of virtue and learning, as the clergy generally
“ are, would not let the effect of their excellent prayers
“ and discourses, which, if well delivered, might reform
“ the world, be in a great measure lost through indif-
“ ference or affectation.”

No. CLXV.

ON THE SUPERIOR VALUE OF SOLID
ACCOMPLISHMENTS.A DIALOGUE BETWEEN CICERO AND LORD
CHESTERFIELD.*Esse quam videri.*

SALL.

Cicero. **M**ISTAKE me not. I know how to value the sweet courtesies of life. Affability, attention, decorum of behaviour, if they have not been ranked by philosophers among the virtues, are certainly related to them, and have a powerful influence in promoting social happiness. I have recommended them, as well as yourself. But I contend, and no sophistry shall prevail upon me to give up this point, that to be truly amiable, they must proceed from goodness of heart. Assumed by the artful to serve the purposes of private interest, they degenerate to contemptible grimace, and detestable hypocrisy.

Chest. Excuse me, my dear Cicero; I cannot enter farther into the controversy at present. I have a hundred engagements at least; and see yonder my little elegant French Comtesse. I promised her and myself the pleasure of a promenade. Pleasant walking enough in these elysian groves. So much good company too, that if it were not that the canaille are apt to be troublesome, I should not much regret the distance from the Thuilleries. But adieu, mon cher amie, for I see Madame *** is joining the party. Adieu, adieu!

Cic. Contemptible wretch!

Chest. Ah! what do I hear? Recollect that I am a man of honour, unused to the pity or the insults of an upstart, a *novos homo*. But perhaps your exclamation was not meant of me—If so, why——

Cic. I am as little inclined to insult as to flatter you. Your levity excited my indignation; but my compassion for the degeneracy of human nature, exhibited in your instance, absorbs my contempt.

Cheff. I could be a little angry, but, as bienséance forbids it, I will be a philosopher for once—A propos, pray do you reconcile your, what shall I call it—your unsmooth addrets to those rules of decorum, that gentleness of manners, of which you say you know and teach the propriety as well as myself.

Cic. To confess the truth, I would not advance the arts of embellishment to extreme refinement. Ornamental education, or an attention to the graces, has a connection with effeminacy. In acquiring the gentleman, I would not lose the spirit of a man. There is a gracefulness in a manly character, a beauty in an open and ingenuous disposition, which all the professed teachers of the arts of pleasing know not to infuse.

Cheff. You and I lived in a state of manners, as different as the periods at which we lived were distant. You, Romans, pardon me, my dear, you Romans—had a little of the brute in you. Come, come, I must overlook it. You were obliged to court plebeians for their suffrages; and if *similis simili gaudet*, it must be owned, that the greatest of you were secure of their favour. Why, Beau Nash would have handed your Catos and your Brutuses out of the ball room, if they had shewn their unmannerly heads in it; and my Lord Modish, animated with the conscious merit of the largest or smallest buckles in the room, according to the temporary ton, would have laughed Pompy the Great out of countenance. Oh, Cicero, had you lived in a modern European Court, you would have caught a degree of that undescribable grace, which is not only the ornament, but may be the substitute of all those laboured attainments which fools call solid merit. But it was not your good fortune, and I make allowances.

Cic. The vivacity you have acquired in studying the writings and the manners of the degenerate Gauls, has led you to set too high a value on qualifications which dazzle the lively perception with a momentary blaze, and to depreciate that kind of worth which can neither be obtained nor understood without serious attention, and sometimes painful efforts. But I will not contend with you about the propriety or impropriety of the out-

ward modes which delight a monkey nation. I will not spend arguments in proving that gold is more valuable than tinsel, though it glitters less. But I must censure you, and with an alperity too, which, perhaps, your graces may not approve, for recommending vice as graceful, in your memorable letters.

Chest. That the great Cicero should know so little of the world, really surpris'es me. A little libertinism, my dear, that's all; how can one be a gentleman without a little libertinism?

Cic. I ever thought that to be a gentleman, it was requisite to be a moral man. And surely you, who might have enjoyed the benefit of a light to direct you, which I wanted, were blameable in omitting religion and virtue in your system.

Chest. What! superstitious too!—You have not then conversed with your superior, the philosopher of Fernel. I thank Heaven, I was born in the same age with that great luminary. Prejudice had else, perhaps, chained me in the thralldrom of my great grandmother. These are enlightened days, and I find I have contributed something to the general illumination, by my posthumous letters.

Cic. Boast not of them. Remembr you were a father.

Chest. And did I not endeavour most effectually to serve my son, by pointing out the qualifications necessary to a foreign ambassador, for which department I always designed him? Few fathers have taken more pains to accomplish a son than myself. There was nothing I did not condescend to point out to him.

Cic. True: your condescension was great indeed. You were the pander of your son. You not only taught him the mean arts of dissimulation, the petty tricks which degrade nobility: but you corrupted his principles, fomented his passions, and even pointed out objects for their gratification. You might have left the task of teaching him fashionable vice to a vicious world. Example, and the corrupt affections of human nature, will ever be capable of accomplishing this unnatural purpose. But a parent, the guardian appointed by nature for an uninstructed offspring introduced into a dangerous world, who himself takes upon him the office of

seduction, is a monster indeed. I also had a son. I was tenderly solicitous for the right conduct of his education. I intrusted him indeed to Cratippus at Athens; but, like you, I could not help transmitting instructions dictated by paternal love. Those instructions are contained in my book of Offices; a book which has ever been cited by the world as a proof to what a height the morality of the heathens was advanced without the light of revelation. I own I feel a conscious pride in it; not on account of the ability which it may display, but for the principles it teaches, and the good, I flatter myself, it has diffused. You did not indeed, intend your instructions for the world; but as you gave them to a son you loved, it may be concluded that you thought them true wisdom, and withheld them only because they were contrary to the professions of the unenlightened. They have been generally read, and tend to introduce the manners, vices, and frivolous habits of the nation you admired—to your own manly nation, who, of all others once approached most nearly to the noble simplicity of the Romans.

Chest. Spare me, Cicero. I have never been accustomed to the rough conversation of an old Roman. I feel myself little in his company. I seem to shrink in his noble presence. I never felt my insignificance so forcibly as now. French courtiers, and French philosophers have been my models; and amid the dissipation of pleasure, and the hurry of affected vivacity, I never considered the gracefulness of virtue, and the beauty of an open, sincere, and manly character.



No. CLXVI.

CONJECTURES ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ORIENTAL AND SEPTENTRIONAL POETRY.

THE productions of the mind, like those of the earth, are found to have different degrees of vigour and beauty in different climates. In the more

northern regions, where the nerves are braced by cold, those works are the commonest, and attain to the greatest perfection, which proceed from the exertion of the rational powers, and the painful efforts of the judgment. The sciences, like the hardy pine, flourish on the bleakest mountains; while the works of taste and fancy seem to shrink from the rude blast, with all the tenderness of the sensitive-plant, and to require the genial warmth of a nearer sun to give them their full luxuriance and maturity. Aristotle, Newton, and Locke, were the natives and inhabitants of temperate regions. Experience indeed seems to prove, that all the mental powers exist in their greatest degree of strength and perfection among those who inhabit that part of the globe which lies between the tropic of Cancer and the Arctic circle. No complete and celebrated work of genius was ever produced in the torrid zone.

But whether the diversity of genius in countries nearer or remoter from the sun proceeds from natural causes, or from the adventitious circumstances of different modes of education, different views, and a different spirit of emulation, it is certain that the productions of Eastern and Northern genius are dissimilar. Some ingenious critics have indeed pointed out a resemblance between the Gothic and Oriental poetry, in the wild enthusiasm of an irregular imagination. And they have accounted for it, by supposing, with great probability, that in an emigration of the Asiatics into Scandinavia, the Eastern people brought with them their national spirit of poetry, and communicated it to the tribes with whom they united. The resemblance, therefore, in works produced since this union, does not prove that the Northern and Oriental genius were originally alike. Those productions of either which are allowed to be original, and to bear no marks of imitation, have perhaps no other resemblance than that which commonly proceeds from the similar operation of similar faculties.

It seems, indeed, that a cause may be assigned for this diversity of Northern and Oriental productions, without attributing it to an essential difference in the original constitution of the human understanding. The imagination is strongly affected by surrounding objects,

and acquires vigour by frequent exercise. He who is placed in a climate where the serenity of the weather constantly presents him with blue skies, luxuriant plantations, and sunny prospects, will find his imagination the strongest of his faculties; and, in the expression of his sentiments, will abound in allusions to natural objects, in similes, and, in the most lively metaphors. His imagination will be his distinguishing excellence, because it will be more exercised than any other of his faculties; and all the powers both of body and mind are known to acquire vigour by habitual exertion. He, on the other hand, whose lot it is to exist in a less favoured part of the globe, who is driven by the inclemency of his climate to warm roofs, and, instead of basking in the sunshine amidst all the combined beauties of nature, flies for refuge from the cold to the blazing hearth of a smoaky cottage, will seek, in the exercise of his reason, those resources which he cannot find in the actual employment of his imagination. Good sense and just reasoning will therefore predominate in his productions. Even in the wildest of his flights, a methodical plan the result of thought and reflection, will appear, on examination, to restrain the irregularities of licentious fancy.

Consistently with the theory we find Oriental poetry exhibiting the most picturesque scenes of nature, and illustrating every moral sentiment or argumentative assertion by similes, not indeed exact in the resemblance, but sufficiently analogous to strike and gratify the imagination. Strong imagery, animated sentiment, warmth and vivacity of expression, all of which are the effects of a lively fancy, are its constant characteristics. The accuracy of logic and the subtlety of metaphysics, are of a nature too frigid to influence the Oriental writer. He feels not the beauty of demonstration, he pursues not a chain of argument, and he submits to the force of persuasion, rather from the dictates of his feelings than from rational conviction. He endeavours to influence his reader in the same manner, and commonly excites an emotion so violent, as to produce a more powerful effect than would be experienced even from conclusive argumentation.

No. CLXVII.

CURSORY REMARKS ON THE POETRY OF
THE PROPHETS, OF ISAIAH IN PARTI-
CULAR, AND ON THE BEAUTIES
OF BIBLICAL POETRY IN
GENERAL.

THE Sibylline oracles owed their solemn air, their credit, and their power over the fancy, to the dark and difficult style in which they were composed. Virgil's *Pollio*, supposed to have been written from a hint taken from the books of the Sibyls, is the most admired of his *Eclogues*; and a great share of the pleasure derived from the perusal of it, is justly attributed to the judgment of the poet, in leaving more to be understood than meets the air. The forebodings of *Cassandra* were not attended to by the Trojans; and perhaps the true reason was, that they were not completely understood. The witches in *Macbeth* add to the terrible solemnity of prophetic incantation, by its darkness and uncertainty.

Obscurity seems to have been the characteristic of all writings pretending to prediction. It certainly increased their poetical merit, though, among the Greeks and Romans, it was probably no more than a studied artifice to evade, if the event did not correspond to the prophecy, the imputation of imposture. Thus were the oracles of *Apollo* delivered in ambiguous phrases which frequently admitted a contrary, and always a doubtful, interpretation.

Without this artful proceeding their authority had not been so long maintained. Frequent failure, without any subterfuge to preserve the prophetic power unsuspected, would soon have silenced the Delphic priestesses. But while the ænigmatical prediction preserved the dignity of the oracle, by inspiring awe, it contributed to its security by facilitating evasion.

The Sacred Prophecies have that obscurity which distinguishes this species of writing. The final cause of it, however, was to exercise the faith and sagacity of man-

kind. The beauty which it adds to the poetry cannot be supposed to arise from design or skill in poetry as an art, but is the necessary result of natural propriety. And none but the unbeliever will suppose that, like the oracles at Delphes, they admitted a doubtful, in order to admit a double construction.

The prophecy of Isaiah abounds in the beauties of Oriental poetry. The translation is a literal one, and, though it may be found inaccurate by a Lowth or a Kennicott, will, I believe, hardly admit of improvement in force, simplicity, and animation.— It does honour to the feelings of the translators, who, though they have performed their task with so much spirit, had nothing else in view but fidelity. To refinement and taste they made no pretensions; and that their work is so well executed, must have been owing to the excellence of their natural sentiment. We have several literal translations of the ancient poets into English prose, which are in request among school boys. In these we find no remains of that beauty which has been celebrated from age to age from its first production. Few of these are rendered so faithfully, word for word, from their originals as the Scriptures, which, notwithstanding this disadvantage, are the sublimest and most interesting books in the English language.

That they are thus excellent, it may indeed be said, is not to be wondered at. They proceed from that real inspiration to which the celebrated writers of antiquity only pretended. And if the enthusiasm, which the imaginary assistance of a fabulous deity excited, could diffuse that captivating spirit over the works of a mortal poet which has charmed every succeeding age, it will be an obvious inference, that the genuine afflatus of the great Author of the universe must produce a work of eminent and unquestionable beauty. Such reasoning is plausible; but, in the present case, it may not be improper to observe, that the divine inspiration operated intentionally no farther than in dictating truth of representation, and in laying open scenes of futurity; and that the beauties discovered in the medium of composition, by which those primary ends are accomplished, are but collateral and subordinate effects. Considered

as such, every man of sentiment feels them of a superior kind, and if he judges by the criterion of his undissembled feelings, must acknowledge, that though they are sometimes resembled in Homer, they are seldom equalled, and never excelled. Take a view of the poetical beauties merely as the productions of Isaiah, a very ancient poet of Judæa, and his writings will surely claim the attention of a man of letters, as much as those of the native of Smyrna or of Asra.

They who pretend to an exemption from prejudice, evince the futility of their pretensions, when they attribute the general admiration of the Scriptures, as compositions, to opinions formed in their favour in the early period of infancy. The truth is, the prejudices which they have unreasonably adopted against the doctrines derived from those ancient books, extend themselves to the style and sentiment: but, surely, exclusive of the religious tendency, and of the arguments for the authenticity of the books, they claim a great degree of veneration from their antiquity, and justly excite the attention of criticism, as curious specimens of Oriental composition.

It might, indeed, have been expected, from the general taste which at present prevails for the remains of ancient English poetry, that those works, which justly boast a higher antiquity than any of the productions of North or South Britain, would have been particularly regarded. But, while the ballad of a minstrel, beautiful, perhaps, and well worth preserving, has been recovered from its dust, and committed to memory, the family Bible has been suffered to lie unopened, or has been perused by many only with a view to painful improvement, without an idea of the possibility of deriving from it the elegant pleasures of literary entertainment.

Yet even the vulgar often feel the full effect of beauties which they know not how to point out; and are affected with a very strong sense of pleasure, while they are reading the Scriptures solely from motives of duty, and desire of edification. In truth, among those whose natural taste is not corrupted by false refinement, which perhaps is the most numerous, though not the most distinguished part of the community, the Bible is read as

affording all the delight of pleasing poetry and history ; and it may, therefore, justly be said to be the most popular book in the English language.

But all readers, whether vulgar or refined, who fully feel and acknowledge the admirable touches of nature and simplicity, which are observable in every page of those writings, will, perhaps, receive additional satisfaction, when they discover that their taste is conformable to classical ideas of literary excellence.

There is, in the present age, a very numerous tribe of readers, who have formed their taste and sentiments from the writings of the philosophers of Geneva, and from the sceptical sophistry of our own countrymen. They are known to make pretensions to a very uncommon degree of refinement in their judgments of composition, and to condemn every work, whatever marks it may bear of a strong, though uncultivated genius, which wants the last polish of delicacy and correctness, and has nothing similar to those modern productions, with which alone they have been conversant. With all their boasted comprehension of mind, they seem to want ideas, which may operate as principles in forming a just opinion of those works, which were composed before the invention of systematic rules, and before native sentiment was superseded by the feeble, though elegant feelings, of which we boast in a very advanced state of civilization. Under these unfavourable prepossessions, the Bible appears to them as an assemblage of grossness and vulgarisms, which, therefore, without determining upon the authenticity of it, they avoid reading, apprehending that they can derive no pleasure from it, and that they may corrupt their style, and catch inelegance.

With these it would be a valuable point gained, for their own sakes as well as for society, if they could be prevailed on so far to lay aside their prejudices as to open the book, and judge of it from what they feel and remark on a fair examination. If they could once be induced to read it with avidity, from an expectation of literary amusement, they could scarcely fail of receiving, at the same time, a more important benefit.

In an age like the present, when all orders are in some degree addicted to letters, he certainly renders great service to religion, and consequently to society, who unites taste with theology, and excites the attention of the careless and sceptical to those books, of which a sense of duty enjoins the perusal, by setting their beauties in a new or a stronger light.

And that this opinion of the peculiar beauties of Isaiah is not singular, if it is necessary to appeal to any other proof than the common feelings of mankind, is evident from the judgment of a popular writer of our own, who, as he was indisputably a poet himself, will be allowed, by the most rigid critics, to be a competent judge of poetry. Mr. Pope's *Messiah* is one of the best known and best esteemed of his shorter works; but that it derived its chief merits from Isaiah there can be no doubt, and the amiable poet felt a pleasure to acknowledge it. Though suspected to have been less a friend to religion than to virtue, he neglected not the opportunity which this pastoral afforded, to form a comparison between Isaiah and Virgil, in a few parallel passages, fairly exhibited in a translation equally literal, and to exhibit the Oriental poet to great advantage. There are many parodies, imitations, and paraphrases of this animated prophet's poetry, all which, at the same time that they evince how difficult his excellencies are to be equalled, are proofs, that he has been generally admired as a poet.

But, after all, the reader must judge of the sacred writings for himself. If he attends to what he feels, and lays aside prepossession, his judgment will be favourable and just. To remove a single prejudice, which can prevent the universal acceptance of books of universal concern, is to contribute greatly to the general happiness. An attempt to render the prophetic writers objects of particular attention, in an age when our most ingenious theologians are employed in illustrating their meaning at a lecture wisely established for that purpose, must, at least, have the merit of being well timed.

And surely every one who wishes to promote the desirable coalition of taste with piety, must accept

with gratitude, the labours of the venerable Lowth, whose lectures on the poetry of the Hebrews, and observations on Iſaiah, have diſplayed, in biblical literature, the unexpected charms of claſſical elegance.



No. CLXVIII.

ON PREACHING AND SERMON WRITERS.

FEW institutions can contribute more to preſerve civilization, and promote moral and intellectual improvement among all ranks of people, than the eſta bliſhment of public lectures, in every part of the kingdom, periodically repeated after a ſhort interval.

Such is the light in which are to be conſidered the diſcourſes appointed by the wiſdom of the church, to be every where held on the recurrence of the ſeventh day. By theſe the meaneſt and the moſt illiterate are enabled to hear moral and philoſophical treatiſes on every thing that concerns their ſeveral duties, without expence, and without ſolicitation.

And whatever is urged by men who are ill-affected to all eccleſiaſtical institutions, there is no doubt but that great political, as well as moral, benefit is derived to ſociety from a practice thus univerſal. But it is a miſfortune long ago lamented that men are incapable of eſtimating the real value of advantages, till experience has ſhewn what it is to want them.

It is certainly true, that ſince the acquisition of books has been facilitated by their numbers, oral inſtruction is rendered leſs neceſſary. But though books are eaſily procured, yet, even in this age of information, there are thouſands in the lower claſſes who cannot read. Beſides, it is a well known truth, that the ſame precepts inculcated by a living inſtructor, adorned by a proper oratory, enforced by a ſerious and authoritative manner, produce a powerful effect, not to be experienced in ſolitary retirement. There is likewiſe a ſympathy communicated in a numerous audience, which attaches the mind more ſtrongly to the ſubject.

The obvious utility of discourses from the pulpit is proved by the decisions of experience. For, notwithstanding the complaints against the levity and profaneness of the age, churches are still frequented with apparent pleasure. And to be placed in a situation where a good preacher presides, is by many esteemed a very essential requisite to an agreeable retreat.

For excellent preachers this nation has been long distinguished; excellent, not so much in the talents of an orator, as in the composition of discourses. With an uncultivated voice, in an uncouth manner, accompanied with awkward attitudes, they have delivered harangues scarcely excelled in the schools of Athens. As the French have exhibited their characteristic levity even in their boasted sermons, so the English have displayed their natural solidity.

The sermons of the last century are indeed too long for the attention of modern indolence, but they abound with beauty that would reward it. Jeremy Taylor possessed an invention profusely fertile; a warm, rich, lively imagination; a profound knowledge of authors, sacred and profane, poetical, historical, philosophical. He has embellished his sermons with citations from them, and has interwoven their gold into the rich tissue of his own composition.

Nearly at the same time with Taylor arose Isaac Barrow, a mighty genius, whose ardour was capable of accomplishing all it undertook. The tide of his eloquence flows with smooth yet irresistible rapidity. He treats his subject almost with mathematical precision, and never leaves it till he has exhausted it. It has been said, that a late most popular orator of the House of Lords asserted, that he owed much of the fire of his eloquence to the study of Barrow.

His editor, Tillotson, is more popular. His merit is unquestionably great, and his fame has been extended to very exalted heights by the praises of Addison. He writes with sufficient judgment and perspicuity; but there are those who venture to suggest, that he has been too much celebrated as a model of fine composition.

They allow him every praise as a most excellent divine; but when they consider him as a writer, they think his

periods might have been shorter, and his rhythm more harmonious.

Sharp has been justly celebrated for the perspicuity of his style, and the ardent flow of unaffected piety.

Of a very different character from these, South has obtained a great and deserved reputation. Wit was his talent, yet he often reaches sublimity. He is, however, one of those authors who is to be admired and not imitated. To excite a laugh from the pulpit, is to inspire the hearer with a levity of temper ill-adapted to the indulgence of devotional feelings. The taste of the age in which South flourished gave countenance to pulpit jocularity. But though it is true that the lovers of comedy have found their taste gratified in the perusal of South's sermons, yet the man of serious judgment also will discover many solid arguments, many judicious observations, and many fine expressions, intermixed with a series of prosaic epigrams.

The sagacious Clarke pretended not to wit. He affected not the ambitious ornaments of rhetoric. He rarely reaches the sublime, or aims at the pathetic; but in a clear, manly, flowing style, he delivers the most important doctrines, confirmed on every occasion by well-applied passages from scripture. If he was not a shining orator, according to the ideas of rhetoricians, he was a very agreeable as well as useful preacher. He was not perfectly orthodox in his opinions; a circumstance which has lowered his character among many. Certain it is, that he would have done more good in the world, had he confined his labours to practical divinity. Speculative and polemical divinity commonly diffuses scepticism, without contributing any thing to moral reformation.

The sermons that have been preached at Boyle's Lectures are among the best argued in the language. They have been the laboured productions of the most ingenious men. But the whole collection never did so much good as a single practical discourse of Tillotson.

Atterbury was a polite writer. His sermons probably owed some of their fame, among his cotemporaries, who have lavishly applauded him, to his mode of delivery in the pulpit; for the Tatler says, it was such as would

have been approved by a Longinus and Demosthenes. He seems to have introduced the very judicious method of addressing the understanding in the beginning of the sermon, and the passions at the close.

Rogers, says his panegyrist Dr. Burton, possessed an eloquence, nervous, simple, persuasive, and beautiful. An unstudied elegance marks his style. He seems to have attained to that nice judgment, which adapted the same discourse to a rustic, a city, an academical congregation. In a professed eulogium it is indeed allowable to exaggerate; yet what Burton has advanced is confirmed by perusing the sermons of Rogers. They are perspicuous, solid, and written with remarkable ease.

Seed has obtained a great and deserved popularity. With a rich and sportive fancy he combined a solid judgment. Unlike the generality of those writers who affect to be flowery, he abounds in sound argument, and in just remarks on human life. A severe critic would condemn him for a profusion of embellishment; but I know not how it is, he had the skill to give repeated pleasure without satiety.

Such are the more popular of our English sermon-writers, the models of those many divines, who, with very great merit, possess not the reputation of remarkable originality. To enumerate them all were an endless task; for of no books in the English language has there been so unceasing a succession, as of sermons; and to speak of living writers with freedom, is too often like thrusting a hand into the nest of the hornet.

Of late there have appeared publications of sermons addressed to persons of particular ages or descriptions. Though some of them exhibited a highly florid eloquence, and were received with great applause, yet they were too much ornamented, and, like many kinds of food, possessed a sweetness which delights for a moment, but soon terminates in loathing. They amused the imagination, and sometimes touched the heart; but they left to the understanding little employment.

Sermons, which came forth with less eclat, will stand a better chance of descending to posterity. Such are those of Sherlock, Secker, and Jortin. The happiness of mankind is concerned in the preservation of their

works, while those of the frothy declaimer are daily dropping unregretted into the gulph of oblivion.

It is to be lamented that the glaring and meretricious embellishments of the superficial writer are more commonly imitated by young preachers, than the chaster beauties of the sound divine. Fine language, as it is called, with a few hacknied sentiments and addresses to the passions, often constitute the whole merit of discourses preached before the most numerous congregations in the metropolis.

The pastors of the largest flocks usually affect popularity. Extemporary preaching is one of the most effectual means of obtaining it. It always pleases the vulgar; probably because it conveys the idea of immediate inspiration. It is true also, that by pleasing the vulgar, it is enabled to affect them. But yet there are many reasons to prevent its reception among the judicious. It may raise the passions, it may communicate a momentary fit of devotion; but from its hasty production it can seldom be correct or solid. It is indeed, seldom attempted but by the superficial. The greatest divines have not been presumptuous enough to lay before their audience the effusions of the moment, but have usually bestowed much time and care in the composition of a single sermon. We are indeed informed that Clarke sometimes preached without written notes; but the number of his printed sermons is a proof that this was not his general practice. They who possess the abilities of a Clarke may, however, safely venture to produce an unpremeditated harangue. But they also would do right to recollect, that the orations even of Demosthenes himself smelt of the lamp.

Against those who prepare their discourses, a general complaint has been made, that sermons are become in these days merely moral essays. There was a time when a passage from scripture, well introduced, was esteemed a flower of speech far surpassing every ornament of rhetoric. It is now avoided as an ugly patch, that chequers with deformity the glossy contexture.

A professed christian preacher, addressing a professed christian audience, should remember, that, however beautiful his discourse, if it is no more than a moral discourse,

he may preach it, and they may hear it, and yet both continue unconverted heathens.

Every congregation of real christians wishes to find all morality deduced from scripture, and confirmed by it. Moral precepts, thus adorned, come from the pulpit as from an oracle. Scriptural language is not inclegant; but if it were, a preacher should let motives of duty exclude ostentation. In truth, he never appears to greater advantage, than when he seems to forget his own excellence, and to lose sight of himself in the earnestness of his endeavours to promote the welfare of his audience.



No. CLXIX.

ON THE NEGLECT OF ANCIENT AUTHORS.

IN A LETTER.

THOUGH it be true, as you remark, that in the present times, learning is universally admired, and the character of a man of taste and letters is affected not only in colleges but in polite circles; not only by the philosopher, but by the beau and the coxcomb; yet is it to be lamented, that there seems to remain no general relish for solid erudition, very little veneration for the inimitable productions of Greece and Rome, and but a slight attention to the more abstruse sciences and abstracted disquisitions. We read for pleasure, for amusement, for mere pastime, which dry argument and connected reasoning cannot always furnish. Light, airy, superficial compositions, without fatiguing the intellect, flatter the imagination; and for the sake of this empty satisfaction, to this trivial kind of reading is our time devoted without regard to improvement of morals, or enlargement of understanding.

From neglecting the writers of antiquity, we become ignorant of their beauties, vainly suppose that excellence is confined to modern authors, and that the ancients can be admired only by prejudice and bigotry. Even they who are really sensible of the excellence of

the classics, are willing, because they have neglected the study of them, to depreciate their merits, and to extenuate the infamy of their ignorance, by pretending that the knowledge of them is not desirable. Some there are, who, though they possess an admiration of the ancients, read them not in the originals, because they think it possible, without the trouble of loading their memories with dead languages to taste all their beauties through the medium of translations.

To those who affirm, that an admiration of the ancients is founded on prejudice, it is sufficient to reply, that the unanimous applause of whole nations for many ages, cannot, with the appearance of reason, be attributed to implicit attachment, or ignorant wonder.

As for those who condemn the Greek and Latin authors, because they will not take the pains to understand them, they are to be censured for their indolence, and despised for their artifice; and they who read a Horace, or a Virgil in an English translation, however well performed, must be told, that they will form no better idea of the inexpressible graces of these poets, than they would receive of the master-pieces of a Raphael or a Guido, from the daubing of a mere copyist. In the transfusion from one language to another, as it has been frequently remarked, the spirit evaporates, and seldom any thing remains but a *caput mortuum*.

The matter may be preserved, the ideas justly exhibited, the historical part accurately represented; but the manner, the style, the beauties of diction, which constitute more than half the excellence of the classics, can seldom be transferred to a modern language. They who read translations only, are like those who view the figures of a beautiful piece of tapestry on the wrong side.

I must then earnestly recommend it to you, if you wish to taste the genuine sweets of the classic streams, to drink at the fountain,

No. CLXX.

ON THE RETIREMENT OF A COUNTRY
TOWN.

IN A LETTER.

*Romæ rus optas, absentem rusticus urbem
Tollis ad astra.*

HOR.

SIR,

MY father had a lucrative place in the Customs; but as his family was large, he was unable to leave us fortunes, and contented himself with placing us in such situations in the world, as would give us an opportunity of acquiring a decent provision, if we should not be wanting to ourselves. It was my lot, after having received a tincture of classical education, to be put apprentice to a genteel business at the west end of the town. As soon as I was out of my time, I set up for myself; and though I cannot boast that I was ever in a very great way, yet, by attention and frugality, I had accumulated, at the age of forty, a sum sufficient to enable me to live in a comfortable manner, without the anxiety and confinement of trade. A handsome legacy from a relation of my wife, at once determined me, in my long meditated intention, to sell off at prime cost, and retire.

I had always entertained a great idea of the happiness of living in the country. It was, indeed, natural in one who had dwelt near forty years in a dusty warehouse, amidst the dirt, smoke, and noise of the Strand; and who had seldom made an excursion beyond the cake-house at Hoxton, or the bowling green at Hackney.

One morning, while I was revolving in my mind the idea of retirement, I happened to cast my eye on an advertisement in the newspaper, in which a house, garden, and grounds, in a market town, about five and thirty miles from London, were announced to be let at fifty pounds a year. This appeared to me too advantageous a bargain to be neglected; for, you must know, I gave a hundred a year for my shop, the area of which

was no more than three yards by four; and here were twenty acres of land, and a mansion that would contain my house ten times over, to be let for half the money. There was no time to be lost: I shut up shop, took my wife and family down, and settled immediately.

As I did not go into the country on an æconomical plan, I was resolved to launch out a little, and live, as I could very well afford it, in a moderately genteel style. I set up a post-chaise, kept several horses, and two livery-servants. This appearance placed me on a level with the best families in the neighbourhood, and accordingly I was visited by all who claimed the rank of gentlefolks.

But, alas! I found not in this place, that happiness which I expected. I have been convinced by experience, that a market town is not a proper situation for the retirement of those who wish to taste the pleasures of rural life, and to pass the evening of their days in a state of tranquillity. That you may judge of the impropriety of such a retreat, I shall give you an account of my reception in it, and of several circumstances, which rendered it less fit for the enjoyments of those peaceful and domestic pleasures, which every one who retires from business expects, than the noisiest street in the metropolis of the empire.

The first visits were paid us from motives of curiosity, under the pretence of politeness. Our persons, our address, our characters, were examined with all the severity of criticism, but without the candour of benevolence. The various remarks that were made, furnished, with improvements and embellishments, an inexhaustible fund of conversation for the next three months; and I have had an opportunity of procuring the literal reports of one or two of our examiners, which, as they have entertained me, I shall communicate for your amusement.

In the morning, after her first visit, the squire's wife set out to ease her mind of the burden of intelligence under which it laboured; which she did, in every house she entered, in nearly the following words:

“ Well, have you seen the new-comers? Pray how do you like Mrs. Townsend? Oh! I have a charm-

ing little anecdote concerning her. You must know, I have learnt who she was before she was married. I thought as much—do you know her father was a cheesemonger in Thames-street—but he broke, you must know, and so Miss was taken from boarding school, and in process of time arrived at the high dignity of upper-maid to alderman Portseken's lady. But, being vast pretty, you must know, and having had a prodigious fine education, Mr. Townsend the common-council man fell in love with her, and married her. This is all fact, you may depend upon it; for our Sally heard it this very morning at the shop—Can't stay; but thought I would call and let you know. You see how high some people hold up their heads, but you'll understand how to look upon 'em now.—I have a little hundred places to call at;—so good morning.”

Miss Prue, a maiden lady of irreproachable character, set off on the same expedition, as soon as she could put on her morning cap. Brimful of news, she could hardly contain herself till she arrived (as Foote describes it) at the lawyer's brass knocker and mahogany-coloured door. No sooner was she seated than out it flew.

“ Well, Mrs. Leatum, we were at the new-comers' last night; and such a night! Why they know no more of cards, than if they had not been used to play above five or six times a week in their lives. As to the father and mother, one should not expect much from persons, who, I suppose, got all their money in Houndsditch; but really I pity the poor girls. They sat silent half an hour; and then asked me, Lord help 'em! if I had read the last new thing that came out. Pray what do you think of their persons?—Some people say the younger is handsome; and indeed she does seem very good-natured. But as to beauty!—all I shall say is—she does not please me. To be sure, they are both fair enough too—their features pretty regular, and some think their eyes very fine—but, Lord! so awkward, so modest, and yet, at the same time, so much of the city air about them, that they are absolutely intolerable.—In short, I don't chuse to speak out—I am always tender of

“ the subject of characters—but I have heard some-
“ thing—” Here she concluded with a whisper, and
in a great hurry withdrew.

The next house she called in at, was the apothecary's. The apothecary was glad of a mouthful of news for his patients. His patients swallowed it eagerly, and soon afterwards evacuated themselves on all their visitors, who went home, in great spirits, to spread what they had picked up among their families, and friends; and thus, in the space of twenty-four hours, it was communicated over the whole parish.

With respect to myself, at the first weekly club after our arrival, the 'quire, the attorney, the apothecary, and two or three gentlemen fops, who lived upon their means, as it is called, sat in judgment upon my character. After much debate, in which an equal portion of candour and discernment was displayed, I was found guilty of being a cockney, of never having hunted, of never having shot a partridge, of keeping a poor table, and yet, at the same time, living above my fortune; and lastly, of having a great deal of pride that little became me. The result was, that though they should condescend to call upon me, as long as my pipe of excellent Port lasted, yet I was not to be admitted a member of their jolly society.

It is true, I visit, and am visited; but as I really do not take much pleasure in a drunken bout; as I am not very well skilled in farming or fox-hunting; and from a tenderness of constitution, am obliged to be abstemious in the articles of eating and drinking, we commonly have more form in our meeting than cordiality. To assemble together for the sake of liberal and manly conversation is held insipid. My sons are never at home; and my daughters, who have been taught to set a high value on mental accomplishments, neither give nor receive much satisfaction in the company of those, who think it the very summit of education, to have learned, at a boarding-school, to dance and play a minuet:

The envy, the jealousy, and the impertinence of the lower sort of people, is not less conspicuous and troublesome than that of their superiors. If we send to buy any thing, we are forced to pay something more than

any body else, because we are the rich new-comers. If my cow happens to break into neighbour Hodge's field, she is pounded without notice, because, forsooth, she is the Londoner's cow. If we walk down the town, all the doors and windows are flung open, and crowded with spectators just as it is in London at my Lord Mayor's show. My poor wife and daughters silks and sattins are criticized with unrelenting severity.

Whenever my servants go to any shop, a set of gossips make a point of meeting them, in order to ask what I had for dinner, how much small beer is consumed by us in a week, and a thousand similar questions. No little art is made use of to persuade them that I am stingy, and that my place is the worst in the town; though, to my certain knowledge, I am so far imposed upon, being a stranger, as that I am forced to pay a third more wages than any body else in the neighbourhood.

Nothing passes in my house but it becomes matter of general conversation. If a cousin or an old acquaintance comes from London to spend a few days with me, no pains are spared to learn of the servants who and what he is; and if my servants know nothing about him, Miss Prue takes care to suggest, that he is in some low trade, a mere mechanic in his best suit of cloaths. If he should take an evening walk with my daughters, unaccompanied with me or my wife, he is going to be married to one of them directly. His name, his age, his origin, are immediately divulged: the fortune on both sides ascertained, and the day fixed.

If my wife and I happen to spar a little, as is usual among those who love one another with the sincerest affection, a report is immediately circulated that I use my wife, or that she uses me ill, and that, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary, we do not live happily together. I can never buy nor sell a horse, a cow, or a pig, nor change a servant, but I am called behind my back, a fool for my pains, and it is hinted that I do not know what I am about; and indeed, how should I, since I am a cit? If I make an alteration in my garden, dig a ditch, mow a pigstye, or thatch a hovel, my taste, my judgment, my prudence, are called in question, and it is charitably wished that I do not bring my noble

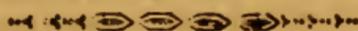
to ninepence, and my ninepence to nothing. If, by the carelessness of my cook-maid, a joint of meat should happen to be a little tainted in the dog-days, it gets wind, and it is immediately said that I feed my family on stinking meat for cheapness. If a loaf should be a little mouldy in damp weather, I am railed at for keeping my bread until it is spoiled, rather than give it to a poor creature who is perishing with hunger. In short, hardly a mouse can stir in any part of the house from the parlour to the scullery, but the barber, the chandler, shop-keeper, the landlady at the alehouse, the mantua-maker, and the chair-woman, find means to get a knowledge of it for the entertainment of their customers.

Till I lived in this place I never thought myself of such consequence as to merit general attention. In London, my next-door neighbour neither knew nor cared what passed in my parlour or kitchen. I can however easily account for this difference. In a market town, of no great opulence or extent, there are not objects enough to divert the idle. No plays, no auctions, no fine shops, no shew glasses. Scarcely any amusement for fops, gossips, and old maids, but thinking and talking on the affairs and families of other people. The settlement of a stranger in their town is food to them for years. They have been too long used to the natives to find any novelty in their concerns, and perhaps have been induced to regard them with that partiality of long acquaintance or of relationship, which precludes malevolence. But strangers are a lawful game; and the cruelty of little minds is found to take a pleasure in detracting from their characters, and defeating, by false and malignant representations, those schemes of happiness with which they flattered themselves in retirement.

Sick of such impertinence, and disgusted with the ill nature of all around me, I have resolved to quit the market-town, and have just hired a house delightfully situated in a distant village. It is the paternal habitation of a man, who, having hopes of rising at court, chuses to leave his charming retreat, for a small dark house in one of the dismal lanes that lead into the Strand. I shall have no near neighbours but the vicar, who is not only a learned, virtuous, religious, and be-

revolent, but also an agreeable man. His family, all of whom have that elegance of mind which results from a taste for letters, will be much with mine. They have already formed a reciprocal attachment. And I hope to have found at last, in this place, that happiness, which I vainly sought in a more frequented situation. Of this I am confident, that the honest simplicity of the rustics, if it is not agreeable, is far less disgusting, than the pert, affected, ill-natured airs and manners of the little half-bred gentry in little country towns.

The beauties of nature untouched by art, an air sweet as it blows over the blossomed vale, peaceful hours, social cheerfulness, domestic joys, rural dignity—these are mine in my village retreat. Nor do I regret the loss of formal visits, and that wretched intercourse with little minds, which, while it wore away life in insipidity, exposed me to the envenomed shafts of unmerited detraction.



No. CLXXI.

CURSORY THOUGHTS ON EPISTOLARY WRITERS.

WHEN a writer has distinguished himself in his studied performances, and pleased us in those works, which he intended for our perusal, we become interested in all that concerns him, and wish to be acquainted with his ideas, as they flowed, without any view to their publication, in the open communications of a private and friendly correspondence. Beautiful minds, like beautiful bodies, appear graceful in an undress. The awe which they inspire, when surrounded with all their dignity, is sometimes more striking than pleasing; but we feel ourselves relieved when admitted to their familiarity. We love to retire behind the scenes, and to observe the undisguised appearance of those, who please us, when industriously decorated for public exhibition. From this cause it has arisen, that the private letters of great men have been always read with peculiar avidity.

The Greeks, remarkable as they were for diversity of composition, have not left many models in the epistolary style. There is no doubt but that Xenophon excelled in it, though most of the letters which he wrote, have either not been collected or preserved. Those of Socrates, Antisthenes, Aristippus, Xenophon, Æschines, and Philo, have never been popular. Those which pass under the name of Aristænetus, are of a taste less resembling the attic, than the oriental. The descriptions in them are poetically luxuriant, but the language is not pure, nor the style simple.

The epistles of Phalaris have been much read by the learned; but though they are curious monuments of the genius of the tyrant, they are not admirable specimens of epistolary composition. They are better known from the violent dispute they occasioned between Bentley and Boyle, than from their intrinsic merit. In some part of that famous controversy, Bently says, with his usual acrimony, that Boyle had made a bad book worse by a bad edition of it.

Cicero, the world's great model in the oratorical and the philosophical, is no less eminent in the epistolary style. He rivalled his great patterns, the Greeks, in eloquence and philosophy; and he excelled them in his letters. His letters indeed, were the genuine productions of his unassisted genius, and have a grace peculiar to themselves. Many of his other works are professedly imitations; but conducted with that art which characterizes genius, and appropriates all it handles. His letters were not studied, they were the effusions of the moment, they arose from the occasion, and please from their air of truth and unaffected propriety. Whether business, pleasure, politics, philosophy, or conjugal and paternal affection, are their subjects, they are equally excellent, and always pleasing. He wrote them without the least view of their coming to the public eye, and to this circumstance they owe a great share of their merit, their freedom from affectation. Near a thousand of them remain, and furnish abundance of historical information, at the same time that they exhibit the best models for this species of writing. They are thought not to appear to the best advantage in the specimens,

which Dr. Middleton has inserted in his life of Cicero. No one was better able to do them justice than that great biographer; but it is said, he committed the task of translation to some inferior assistant.

There was an age when the letters of Pliny were preferred to those of Cicero. They have, indeed, the glitter of an artificial polish, but they want the more captivating grace of natural beauty. They were studied, and they wear the appearance of study. He who delights in elaborate and highly finished composition, will be gratified in the perusal of Pliny; but he will at the same time regret, if he has a taste for propriety, that this labour was not bestowed where it would have been better placed. In a philosophical discourse, or a formal harangue, we expect the interposition of art; but, in an epistle, we are better pleased with the genuine effusions of nature, than with the efforts of ingenuity.

Seneca's Moral essays have little right to the name of Epistles, with which he distinguished them. They are little more than a collection of common-place observations, abounding in wit and ingenious turns, but wholly destitute of elegance and grace. His faults indeed, are sweet, as Quintillian said; but it is a sweetness which cloy, and can scarcely please any but a vitiated appetite.

After the Latin had ceased to be a living language, many excellent books of letters were written in it. It was the universal language of learning. The literati of different nations, the rude languages of which would not repay the labour of cultivation, wisely chose to communicate their thoughts in the pure dialect of the court of Augustus. Some of the earliest of these are disgraced by the barbarism of the times. But Petrarch shines amidst the surrounding obscurity. True genius like his, was sure to display its lustre, though it laboured under the disadvantage of a prevailing corruption of taste. His language is by no means a model.

Politian had just pretensions to true genius. There is a warmth and vigour in his poetry, which fully proves him to have possessed the *mens divinius*. His epistles are elegant, but, like those of Pliny, whom he imi-

tated, they are formal and affected. Upon the whole, they are not unpleasing, and abound with beautiful language.

Erasinus, a name that shines forth with peculiar glory in the annals of literature, justly possesses the first rank among the modern epistolary writers. His style indeed is not purely Ciceronian, though it displays many of its graces. It is entirely his own, though it often rises to a level with classical excellence. He was not so scrupulously exact in his taste, as to reject a barbarous and Gothic expression, if it conveyed his ideas precisely. But he had the skill to use it with such propriety, that it acquired, in his writings, a grace and dignity. No man was better acquainted with the works of Cicero, and no man, after a few prejudices, formed in his youth, were removed, entertained a higher opinion of his beauties, or knew better how to imitate them. But he despised the sect of Ciceronians, who would scarcely admit a particle that was not to be found in their favourite author. He ridiculed them with admirable wit and eloquence, in his dialogue Ciceronianus; nor would he give countenance to so ridiculous an affectation, by any part of his writings. More studious of copiousness and variety of matter, than of a scrupulous imitation of any model, he selects the most expressive word he can find in the language, and, by a judicious composition, renders it agreeable and proper. With all their defects in point of purity of language, his letters are uncommonly entertaining; and have that spirit which genius can always exhibit, but which laborious dullness vainly imitates. There is a fund of Lucianic humour in all his mere familiar writings; in his colloquies it is most conspicuous; but it is always very remarkable in many of his epistles. Had he lived in an age when polite learning was more generally encouraged and cultivated, his productions would have been models of elegance, not inferior to the boasted reliques of antiquity. But, unfortunately, he was engaged in the unpleasing disputes of pedantic theologians; and, instead of treading the flowery paths of Greek and Roman literature, for which he was adapted by nature, was obliged to toil through the thorny mazes of a

barbarous, perplexed, and irrational system of divinity. His liberal mind soon perceived, and as soon avowed, the absurdity of the received modes and opinions; but he had too great a veneration for genuine christianity, to neglect those studies, which his profession, as a christian and an ecclesiastic, naturally led him to cultivate. He saw, and in great measure avoided the inelegancies which abounded in the theological writings of his times; but it was not easy always to be upon his guard against them; and his mind retained a tincture of them, as waters are polluted with the impurities through which they flow.

I omit a great number of epistolary writers, who had little merit of their own, and who derived all their fame from a servile imitation of Cicero. Among these is Paulus Manutius, who is said to have often spent a month in writing a single letter. We see, indeed, in consequence of this scrupulous attention, an elegant and truly Ciceronian phraseology; but we observe none of the native graces of unaffected composition.

Our neighbours, the French, have arrogated great merit as epistolary writers. Their genius and their language appear to be well adapted to excel in it. But some of their most celebrated writers have renounced the advantages which nature gave them, and have spoiled all the beauties of sentiment and vivacity, by an unseasonable profusion of wit. Balzac wearies his reader with the constant recurrence of laboured ingenuity.

Voiture abounds with beautiful thoughts expressed with great elegance. The language of compliment disgusts, in other writers, by its unmeaning sameness and formality. He has given it the grace of delicacy. But even he, though indisputably a fine writer, is justly censured by Bohours, for thoughts which the critic calls false. Like many others, he has neglected real beauties for artificial ornaments.

Our own countrymen have honourably distinguished themselves in this, as well as in every other kind of elegant composition. The epistolary style of Swift is thought, by many, to excel all others. It has purity, ease, expression, and force. Pope's letters are lively

and delicate. Shenstone's are much read ; but it may be doubted whether they have that peculiar and striking excellence, which should place them among the classics of our country.

The late Lord Chesterfield, though justly decried, as a moral instructor, is admired as a writer of peculiar elegance. No man more closely and successfully imitated the French, in every circumstance. Like them, he writes with perspicuity, vivacity, and that gracefulness which is sure to please, and which he so strenuously recommends. He is himself a proof of the efficacy of grace ; for, with all his merit, he was certainly superficial, and yet obtained a degree of fame, which more solid writers have seldom possessed.

Much has been said on the epistolary style ; as if any one style could be appropriated to the great variety of subjects which are treated of in letters. Ease, it is true, should distinguish familiar letters, written on the common affairs of life ; because the mind is usually at ease while they are composed. But, even in these, there incidentally arises a topic, which requires elevated expression, and an inverted construction. Not to raise the style on these occasions, is to write unnaturally ; for nature teaches us to express animated emotions of every kind in animated language.

The impassioned lover writes unnaturally, if he writes with the ease of Seigne. The dependent writes unnaturally to a superior, in the style of familiarity. The suppliant writes unnaturally, if he rejects the figures dictated by distress. Conversation admits of every style but the poetic ; and what are letters but written conversation ? The great rule is, to follow nature, and to avoid an affected manner.

No. CLXXII.

ON THE NECESSITY OF EXERCISE, AMUSEMENTS, AND AN ATTENTION TO HEALTH IN A LIFE OF STUDY.

IN A LETEER.

I Happened accidentally to meet a fellow-collegian, with whom, before we were separated by the caprice of fortune, I was intimately acquainted. Surely it is he, said I; but, alas, how changed! pale emaciated, with hollow and lack lustre eye, is this my old school-fellow, whose ruddy cheeks and cheerful countenance displayed health and happiness? What can have reduced my poor friend to so wretched a condition? Intemperance, or some dreadful disease, must have stolen away his youth, and hurried him to a premature old age.

While I was thus reflecting, he passed me without taking notice. He seemed indeed to be so entirely wrapped up in contemplation, as to pay no regard to external objects. My curiosity and friendship were too much interested, to suffer him to leave me without giving some account of himself. I soon overtook him, and he no sooner recognised me, and perceived my surprise at his appearance, than he proceeded to assign the causes of it.

“ You know, my friend, said he, my first and strongest passion was for literary fame. Flattered by my friends, and encouraged at my school, I persuaded myself I was advancing in the career of glory, and with all the ardour of enthusiasm, devoted every moment of my life to the pursuit of learning. Pu-erile diversions had no charms for me. A book was my sole delight, my constant companion, and was never laid aside, but while my mind was employed in composition. During my residence at the university, I spent the time which my companions allotted to rural amusements, in examining those repositories of ancient learning, the public libraries. I saw indeed the futility of scholastic logic; but a desire to qualify myself for the public exercises, led me

“ to the attentive perusal of Wallis and Saunderson.
“ The same motive engaged me in the dreary subtil-
“ ties of metaphysics. Such studies engrossed the
“ greater part of my first three years, with little ad-
“ vantage and no pleasure. The fatigue would have
“ been intolerable, had it not sometimes been allevi-
“ ated by the charms of poetry. My favourite Virgil
“ and Horace, and every polite writer of modern times,
“ afforded, in their turn, an agreeable recreation. My
“ exercises were honourably distinguished, and praise
“ to an ingenious mind is the best reward of learned
“ labours.

“ With my character for application and sobriety
“ (not to boast of my attainments) I found no difficul-
“ ty in obtaining orders. The head of my house pro-
“ cured me a curacy in a small country town. Thither
“ I went, not without my collection of books, the use
“ of which I would not have foregone for a mitre. I
“ had no other wish than to improve myself in learn-
“ ing, and to perform the duty of an ecclesiastic with
“ decency and devotion. I was happy in the prospect
“ of spending my time uninterrupted by the intrusion
“ of my academical friends, whom youth and high
“ spirits would often lead to a noisy behaviour little
“ consistent with meditation. My want of experience
“ concealed from me the difficulty of pursuing the line
“ of conduct which inclination pointed out. I found
“ it was necessary, to my good reception among my
“ parishioners, to give up the greatest part of the day to
“ a participation in their amusements. In vain was it
“ that I laboured to excel in the pulpit. There was
“ not a man in the place who had an idea of the dig-
“ nity or utility of literary excellence, and who would
“ not most cordially have hated even a Clarke or a Til-
“ lotson, if he had never been in at the death of a
“ hare, nor drank his bottle at the club. The parson,
“ in their idea of his character, was a jolly fellow in
“ black, who was to lead a careless life all the week,
“ and preach against it on Sundays. I could not bring
“ myself to take delight in a fox-chace, and though
“ good-nature prevented me from shewing my dislike,
“ I could never meet any of the hunters with satisfac-

“ tion. The little pleasure I took in the only society
“ that was to be obtained, still farther confirmed me in
“ my recluse mode of life. When my resolution ap-
“ peared unchangeable, I was suffered to live as I
“ pleased, with the character of an odd, but inoffen-
“ sive man. In this unmolested retreat, I found time
“ to go through a complete course of ecclesiastical his-
“ tory. I acquired a sufficient knowledge of the ori-
“ ental languages to enable me to read the Polyglott.
“ I wrote a great number of sermons and theological
“ treatises, and made many corrections in the vulgar
“ translation of the Bible. So wholly engrossed was I
“ by my darling pursuits, that I seldom left my cham-
“ ber. In vain did the vernal sun invite. The music
“ of a pack of hounds, which frequently passed my
“ window, had no charms in my ears. The rural
“ sports of every kind were tedious and insipid. To
“ my books I returned from every trifling avocation,
“ with redoubled pleasure, and endeavoured to repay
“ the loss of an hour in the day, by devoting a great
“ portion of the night to study.

“ It is really true, that my chief motive for appli-
“ cation was a love of learning. Yet I will be so in-
“ genuous as to own, I sometimes formed a wish, that
“ my small share of merit, if I had any, might attract
“ the notice of my superiors. There is a time of life
“ when fame alone appears to be an inadequate reward
“ of great labour. It flatters that natural love of dis-
“ tinction which we all possess, but it furnishes no con-
“ venience in the time of want and infirmity. There
“ was in the neighbourhood a little living of one hun-
“ dred a year, with a house and garden, in a style of
“ decent elegance which becomes a scholar. The pa-
“ tron was the esquire of the next parish, who had al-
“ ways treated me with singular respect. I was foolish
“ enough to suppose his regard for my character would
“ induce him to bestow his benefice on me; but I found
“ when it became vacant, he had staked and lost the
“ next presentation at a game at whist with a clerical
“ fox-hunter.

“ I was at last taken notice of by my diocesan. He
“ had heard of my indefatigable diligence, and recom-

“ mended me to an eminent publisher, as a proper per-
 “ son to make an index to a very voluminous work.
 “ I eagerly undertook the task, with a view to please
 “ so great a man, and finished it in less than a year and
 “ a half. The books were printed on a small letter,
 “ and this work did my eyes an injury which they will
 “ never recover; but it must be owned, on the other
 “ hand, that the bookseller gave me in return a bank
 “ note of ten pounds. An index author seldom ac-
 “ quires reputation. He is indeed seldom known; but
 “ if he happens to be discovered, the accuracy of his
 “ work is, in the opinion of many, a kind of disgrace
 “ to him. It seems to argue a degree of phlegmatic
 “ dulness and of patient labour, rarely in the power
 “ of genius. It will not therefore be thought wonder-
 “ ful that this laborious work produced no other effects
 “ than the injury of my eyes, and the payment of my
 “ taylor’s bill.

“ In this curacy I still continue, without any prospect
 “ of change, unless when blindness, occasioned by in-
 “ temperate study or the infirmities of age, shall oblige
 “ me to resign. I am not of a discontented disposition,
 “ nor do I relate my condition with a design to crimi-
 “ nate others for their neglect of me. Preferment I
 “ never sought by those methods which the world
 “ agrees to be the best suited to procure it. I have
 “ therefore no right to complain of the want of that
 “ which I did not rightly pursue. My motives for this
 “ communication is to prevent others from incurring
 “ misery by a too great attachment to objects laudable
 “ in themselves. I can never discountenance an atten-
 “ tion to literature. I still love it. I still venerate
 “ those that have excelled in it. But a sincere regard
 “ for many of the most amiable and useful of my spe-
 “ cies, induces me to remind them, that they have a
 “ body which requires a great share of their attention,
 “ and that no satisfaction arising from study can ulti-
 “ mately counterbalance the loss of sight, and that long
 “ train of nervous diseases superinduced by unremit-
 “ ted application.

“ I mean not to excite your sympathy: nor will I ex-
 “ aggerate my evils by discription. My appearance

“ has already convinced you that I am the victim of
“ disease. Nor will you hesitate to believe that the
“ stone, the gout, the hypochondria which have worn
“ out my tender frame, were derived from an attention
“ unrelieved by the usual and necessary relaxations—
“ Had I been wise enough to have mounted a horse
“ during the intervals of reading, and to have entered
“ into cheerful company at the close of a thoughtful
“ day, I might have prolonged my favourite enjoy-
“ ments to a happy old age.

“ I am a philosopher enough to bear with patience a
“ condition which I cannot alter; yet I sometimes
“ think, though without the least degree of envy, that
“ an old school fellow of mine, of a very different
“ turn from myself, is far happier. I remember I used
“ to laugh at him, and think him very silly, when, at
“ the time we were at the university together, he used
“ to miss an ingenious lecture for the sake of a ride,
“ and spend the three shillings with which I should
“ have bought a book, in the hire of a horse. It is
“ true, indeed, that he need not, and ought not, to
“ have neglected his mental improvement, because he
“ had many opportunities of relaxation after the hours
“ of study were elapsed. Yet if I judge of his conduct
“ by the apparent effects of it at present, it appears to
“ me in a less blameable light than it used to do. He
“ is now at the age of sixty-three, for he was somewhat
“ older than myself, and retains all the vigour and
“ alertness of a young man. His countenance is hale,
“ his limbs muscular, and he reads the service and the
“ newspaper, the only things he does read, without
“ spectacles.

“ He set out in life as friendless as myself. He en-
“ gaged in a curacy in a sporting country. His love
“ of field diversions soon introduced him to what was
“ called the best company. He possessed the external
“ graces of behaviour, and at the same time was deeply
“ skilled in horse-flesh, and had Bracken's Farriery by
“ heart. Such merits could not long pass unrewarded.
“ A baronet in the neighbourhood grew fond of him,
“ and introduced him to his family; one of whom was
“ an only daughter, of no great personal or mental

“ accomplishments. My friend, however, admired her
 “ fortune, and found no difficulty in obtaining her hand.
 “ The living on which he now resides was part of her
 “ portion, and though of no great value, yet it fur-
 “ nishes him with a pretty snug sporting-box. He com-
 “ monly reads prayers in his boots and spurs, while his
 “ hunter stands neighing in the porch till honest Moses
 “ has twanged through his nose the final and joyful
 “ Amen. It is true, my old friend has no taste, no
 “ learning, no refinement, but he has the use of his
 “ eyes, and a never ceasing flow of spirits; he can
 “ walk as well as ever, has an excellent digestion, and
 “ plenty to furnish it with constant employment.

“ But his example is not to be followed, since he
 “ has run into an extreme, more culpable, though less
 “ pernicious to himself than mine is to me. - Far hap-
 “ pier and wiser the philosophical Euphranor, who,
 “ with the warmest affection for learning, restrained it,
 “ as he has every other inordinate attachment, by the
 “ rules of prudence; and by paying all the attention
 “ which nature and reason require, to his body and to
 “ his mind, has advanced the condition of both to a
 “ high degree of attainable perfection.”



No. CLXXIII.

ON THE MERITS OF COWLEY AS A POET.

THE biographers of our English authors have some-
 times fallen into a mistake, which renders the truth
 of their story suspected. Their accounts are truly
 panegyrics. The hero of their tales, like the lover in
 the romance, is adorned with every good quality. Not
 content to relate facts with impartiality, they extenuate
 what is culpable, and exaggerate all that can admit of
 commendation. In truth, they who have exhibited the
 lives of our authors, have usually been the editors of
 their works; and either from a real and natural fond-
 ness for those things on which they have bestowed care,
 or from the less laudable motive of promoting the cir-

culatation of a book in which they were interested, have spoken too highly even of those who merit moderate applause. But it is not wonderful if the trader represents his own merchandize as the best in the market-place.

It was the lot of Cowley, to be handed down to posterity by a writer who was famous in his day for eloquence. Dr. Sprat probably undertook the office of a biographer with a design to display his talents in a species of oratory which the Roman rhetoricians called the demonstrative. He discharged it well as an artist, but failed as an accurate historian. By placing Cowley in the first rank of poets, he has in effect degraded him from the subaltern station which he had else preserved unmolested. Dr. Sprat owed much of his own fame to the poet who had compared his style to the gentle and majestic current of the Thames; and returned the compliment, perhaps from other motives than those of gratitude; for the higher Cowley was exalted, the greater honour was reflected on those whom he had commended. Of this celebrated Bishop of Rochester, Lord Orrery has said, few men have gained a greater character for elegance and correctness, and few men have deserved it less. And of the poet whom he praised, the great Dryden has with diffidence remarked, that somewhat of the purity of the English, somewhat of more equal thoughts, somewhat of sweetness in the numbers; in one word, somewhat of a finer turn and more lyrical verse, is yet wanting.

Whatever are his defects, no poet has been more liberally praised. Lord Clarendon has said, he made a flight above all men; Addison, in his account of the English Poets, that he improved upon the Theban bard; the Duke of Buckingham upon his tomb stone, that he was the English Pindar, the Horace, the Virgil, the Delight, the Glory of his Times. And with respect to the harshness of his numbers, the eloquent Sprat tells us, that if his verses in some places seem not as soft and flowing as one would have them, it was his choice, and not his fault.

Such is the applause lavished on a writer who is now seldom read. That he could ever be esteemed as a

pindaric poet, is a curious literary phenomenon. He totally mistook his own genius, when he thought of imitating Pindar. He totally mistook the genius of Pindar, when he thought his own incoherent sentiments and numbers bore the least resemblance to the wild, yet regular sublimity of the Theban. He neglected even those forms, the strophe, antistrophe, and epod, which even imitative dulness can copy. Sublime imagery, vehement pathos, poetic fire, which constitute the essence of the pindaric ode, are incompatible with witty conceits, accurate antitheses, and vulgar expression. All these imply the coolness of deliberate composition, or the meanness of a little mind; both of them most repugnant to the truly pindaric ode, in which all is rapturous and noble. Wit of any kind would be improperly displayed in such composition; but to increase the absurdity, the wit of Cowley is often false.

If the end of poetry is to please, harmony of verse is essential to poetry, for, without it, poetry cannot please. It is not possible, that any whose ear has been attuned to the melody of good composition, should read a single ode of Cowley without being shocked with discord. There is often nothing left but the jingle at the end to distinguish poems renowned for their sublimity, from affected prose: such poetry may justly incur the ridiculous title of Prose run mad.

Yet is there sometimes interwoven a purple patch, as Horace calls it; a fine expression, a truly poetical thought, an harmonious couplet; but it occurs not often enough to repay the reader for the toilsome task of wading through a tedious assemblage of disproportioned and discordant stanzas. Of such consist his Pindarics, which, though they procured him the greatest share of his reputation, deserved the least. Many of his other poems, if we consider the rude state of versification, and the bad taste of the times, have great merit; and had he made Tibullus his model, instead of Pindar, his claim to the first rank of poets had not been called in question. The tenderness of love, and the soft language of complaint; were adapted to his genius. But he chose to tread in the footsteps of Alcæus, as he

says himself, who, according to the Halicarnassian, combined the *μεγαλοφυνε και ηδυ*, or adopted the grand, as well as the sweet.

That he had a taste for Latin poetry, and wrote in it with elegance, the well known Epitaph on himself, upon his retirement, and an admirable imitation of Horace, are full proofs. But, surely, his rhetorical biographer makes use of the figure hyberbole, when he affirms that Cowley has excelled the Romans themselves. He was inferior to many a writer of less fame in the *Musæ Anglicanæ*. But still he had great merit; and I must confess I have read his Latin verses with more pleasure, than any of his English can afford.

But, after all the honours that have been accumulated on his name as a poet, his great merit consisted in prosaic composition. In this department he is an elegant, a pleasing, a judicious writer. His love of retirement and contemplation qualified him for a moralist; and it is much to be lamented, that he did not devote a greater part of his time to a kind of writing which appeared natural to him, and in which he excelled. The language of his heart shines forth in the little he has left us, and we cannot but love it.

Much more of that language would have descended to posterity, if his friends, from a mistaken opinion of propriety, had not suppressed his private letters. Dr. Sprat and Mr. Clifford were avowedly possessed of many; and the very reason assigned by the biographer, for their suppression, should have operated in their publication. The letters that pass between particular friends, says he, if they are written as they ought to be, that is, I suppose, in an artless manner, can scarcely ever be fit to see the light. How great an injury would polite learning have sustained, if the friends of Cicero had thought like Sprat and Clifford!

They would better have consulted the reputation of the poet, had they pronounced the Pindarics unfit to see the light. Editors, in general, would act more honourably, in exhibiting only the best of their author's productions, than in praising, as well as publishing, all that has fallen from his pen. But, in truth, to have left out any part of his poems, would, in that age,

have been an unpardonable omission; for who should dare to mutilate a Pindar?

Time, the great arbiter of reputation, has already begun to strip the poet of his borrowed honours. A critic, whose genius and judgment keep pace with each other, and who illuminates every subject on which he treats, has allotted Cowley his just species of praise, and has given the world, in a judicious selection of his works, all that they possessed of real value.

Of these the prose forms a principal part. It is written in a style sufficiently flowing to prove that Cowley was not destitute of a musical ear; a circumstance which countenances the opinion of those who maintain that he affected a rugged style. Was it a compliance with the taste of the age, that induced him to affect deformity? Unfortunate compliance with a deplorable taste! He, as well as they whom he imitated, Donne and Jonson, were unquestionably possessed of great learning and ingenuity; but they all neglected the graces of composition, and will, therefore, soon be numbered among those once celebrated writers, whose utility now consists in filling a vacancy on the upper shelf of some dusty and deserted library.



No. CLXXIV.

CURSORY AND GENERAL HINTS ON THE CHOICE OF BOOKS.

THE scarcity of Books, a few centuries ago, was the principle obstacle to the advancement of learning. The multitude of them is become, in the present age, scarcely less injurious to its interests, by distracting the student in his choice, and by diffusing an incorrect and undistinguishing taste.

To read all books on all subjects, would require an uninterrupted attention during the longest life even of an Antedeluvian. To read only the most celebrated, written in a few languages, is an employment sufficient

to fill up every hour of laborious application. For the sake then of saving time, and of directing the judgment of the inexperienced, it becomes an useful attempt to suggest some general hints, which may tend to facilitate selection.

One rule of the greatest consequence is, to read only or chiefly the original treatises in all the various departments of science, and of literature. Nearly the same space of time, though not the same degree of attention, is necessary to peruse the faint copies of imitative industry, as would appropriate to the student the solid productions of native genius. This rule is more particularly to be observed on the first entrance on study. The foundation must be laid deep, and formed of solid materials. The superstructure will often admit slight and superficial appendages. When we have studied the fine reliques of those who have lived before us, we may derive much pleasure from attending to the additional labours of contemporary genius. But to begin with these is to found, like the fool recorded in the Gospel, an edifice in the sand.

It were no less presumptuous than superfluous to address directions in the choice of authors, to the learned. But we may venture, without arrogance, to point out a few to the notice of the young and ingenuous pupil, with a design to abbreviate or facilitate his labour.

He who is entering on the study of divinity, will naturally devote his first attention to the scriptures. The original language of the Old Testament is often unknown even to the learned and ingenious; and notwithstanding what some critics have, as it were, officially observed on the subject, the neglect of it, though culpable is seldom attended with much disadvantage. But the knowledge of Greek is indispensably necessary, if theology is pursued as a profession.

The prophetical parts will claim the greatest share of attention in the perusal of the Old Testament. Dr. Hurd's Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies will be a sufficient guide for subsequent application to them. To illustrate the New Testament, it will be proper to have recourse to Percy's Key to it, to Trapp's Notes, to Locke on the Epistles, and to Mede on the Apocalypse.

With these assistances the student, who is not deficient in natural ability, will make a competent proficiency, even though he should totally neglect those myriads of treatises which have rendered the body of divinity, as it is called, enormous beyond comprehension.

The student in physic is commonly introduced to the knowledge of it by a public lecturer, who superintends, or at least directs, his course of reading. Natural and experimental science, in all their ramifications, are in some degree requisite to his further advancement. These alone will indeed render him ingenious in his closet, but will avail little at the bedside without other aid. To these must be added a most accurate observation of the human frame in all its fluctuations of health, disease, and convalescence. The reading of cases strictly delineated, is found to be the best succedaneum where actual practice and observation are precluded. System is in general delusive and insufficient.

To the professed lawyer, scarcely any book on the subject of law is uninteresting or useless. But he who pursues the study merely as an accomplishment in a comprehensive plan of education, will find all the necessary lights in the volumes of Grotius, Puffendorf, Burn, and Blackstone.

He who wishes to gain a complete knowledge of grammar, may succeed in his attempt without loading his memory with the works of Priscian, or of those thousands who have toiled in this circumscribed province. Let him, after having studied grammatically the elements of Latin and Greek, digest the *Hermes* of Harris, and the introduction of Lowth.

The art of rhetoric never yet formed an English orator. It is one of those artificial assistances of genius, which genius wants not, and of which dulness can little avail itself. But as there are excellent books written on it, the general scholar must pay it his attention. Let him then read Cicero on the Orator, and Quintilian's *Institutes*, and he need not trouble himself with those meagre treatises which give a hard name to the natural modes of expression, and teach us that, like Hudibras, we cannot open our mouths, but out there flies a trope.

He who is impelled by necessity or inclination to attend to logic, may with propriety neglect all the rubbish of the schools, and next to the stagyrite himself, study only the works of Saunderson, Wallis, Watts, and Harris.

If the barren field of metaphysics is ever capable of repaying the toil of cultivation, it can only be when the attention is confined to such authors as Locke, Hutcheson, and Beattie.

If ethics are to be considered in the systematical method of a science, the moral philosophy of Hutcheson may be recommended as one of the clearest, the most elegant, and the conciseſt treatiſes that have appeared upon them. The numerous writers who have fabricated fanciful and diſtructive ſystems, may be ſuffered to ſink in the gulph of oblivion never to emerge.

In natural philoſophy, the airy fabrics of hypothetical viſions ought not to claim the attention of a moment. The ſun of Newton has abſorbed the radiance of all other luminaries in his department. His works and thoſe of his followers will of courſe, ſupercede the infinite number of folios, which, to uſe the expreſſions of Horace, may be ſent to wrap up frankincenſe and perfumes, the only way in which they can now be uſeful. He to whom the works of the great philoſopher are unintelligible, may acquieſce with ſecurity in the illuſtrations of Pemberton and Rowning. The lover of natural hiſtory, zoology, and botany, will not be at a loſs in the ſelection of books, while fame reſounds the names of Buffon, of Pennant, of Linnaeus. The Romances of Pliny and his imitators will have no charms with the lover of truth.

To the claſſical ſcholar, the proper books are uſually pointed out by the ſuperintendants of his education; and when once he has taſted them, his own cultivated feelings will direct him in the choice of modern productions. Every one knows who were the beſt authors in the Auguſtan age; and the chief caution neceſſary is, that the text of a Virgil, a Horace, and Ovid, may not be loſt in the attention given to the tedious comments of a few Dutchmen. I have known thoſe who have toiled though the claſſics, *cum notis variorum*, much

less acquainted with them than he who never read them but in Sandby's edition. In attending to Burman and Heinsius, they overlooked the text; which was lost like a jewel in a dunghill. These laborious annotators explain what needs no explanation, and, with a little critical knavery, pass by a real difficulty without notice. I am convinced that a taste for the classics is rather impeded than promoted by the Dauphin edition, in which boys are initiated; but in which the words of the author are choaked, like wholesome plants among weeds, by the notes and interpretation. To be possessed of comments on the classics is however desirable, for difficulties will sometimes occur which at first sight perplex the most ingenious; but I should prefer, for common reading, such editions as that of Jones' Horace.

Directions for the formation of the lady's library have often been wanted by those, who, with an inclination for the elegant amusement of reading, have been unable to indulge it without danger, because they had none to guide them in their choice. In my humble opinion, the following books might have a place in it, not only without hazard of ill consequences, but with great advantage to taste, and to that personal beauty which arises from mental. All the periodical publications of repute that have been written on the model of the Spectator, Rollin's Works, Plutarch's Lives, Shakspeare, Milton, Pope, and the most esteemed historians of their own country, may be strongly recommended. To these, for the sake of imbibing a classical taste, may be added the best translations of the ancients, Pope's Homer, Dryden's Virgil, and Melmoth's Pliny. If French books are required, those of Boileau, Fontenelle, Le Pluche, and some select pieces of Voltaire and Rousseau, may with propriety be admitted. Novels, it is feared, will not be dispensed with: Those then of Richardson and Fielding are allowed, yet not without reluctance. Every thing indelicate will of course be excluded; but perhaps there is not less danger in works called sentimental. They attack the heart more successfully, because more cautiously. Religious books will find a place, but not without restrictions: for there is a species of devotional compo-

sition, which, by inflaming the passions and imagination, contributes to corruption, while it seems to promote the warmest piety. From their sensibility of heart and warmth of fancy, the softer sex is supposed to be most inclined to admit the errors of mystics and enthusiasts.



No. CLXXV.

CURSORY REMARKS ON THE ODYSSEY,
ON POPE'S TRANSLATION, MR.
SPENCER'S ESSAY, &c.

IT is generally agreed, that the *Odyſſey* is inferior to the *Iliad*. It is thought by Longinus, as well as by other critics, to have been the production of Homer's old age, when it may reasonably be ſuppoſed the ardour of his genius was in ſome degree abated. "In the *Odyſſey*," ſays that critic, "he may be juſtly ſaid to reſemble the ſetting ſun, whoſe grandeur ſtill remains without the original heat of his beams. Like the ocean, whoſe very ſhores, when deſerted by the tide, mark out how wide it ſometimes flows; ſo Homer's genius, when ebbing into all thoſe fabulous and incredible ramblings of Ulyſſes, ſhews plainly how ſublime it once had been. I am ſpeaking of old age, but it is the old age of Homer."

It is certain, that if the *Odyſſey* is not to be placed in the ſame rank with the *Iliad*, ſo neither ought it to obtain ſo low a claſs as to be overlooked and diſregarded. It has, however, been neglected by the moderns, and they who have been able to repeat the *Iliad*, have ſcarcely deigned to read the *Odyſſey*. Every ſchool-boy is acquainted with the anger of Achilles and its conſequences, while he neither knows nor is ſolicitous to learn the adventures of the wiſe Ulyſſes: though wiſdom, it may be ſuppoſed, would be commonly a better model for his imitation than valour.

An ingenious writer has endeavoured to vindicate the *Odyſſey* from the neglect in which it has long lain; but a prepoſſeſſion in favour of eſtabliſhed cuſtoms, has hi-

therto prevented our public schools from substituting it in the room of the Iliad. That the Iliad should be neglected is not indeed to be wished but that it should engross our whole attention, to the utter exclusion of the Odyſſey, is certainly unreaſonable.

The Iliad preſents us with a rough proſpect, like that of high mountains, craggy rocks, and foaming cataracts; while the Odyſſey exhibits a ſofter ſcene, and ſuggeſts ideas ſimilar to theſe which ariſe from the landſcape, where all is mild, ſerene, and beautiful. The one is like the pictures of Pouſſin, the other like thoſe of Claude Lorain. A reader admires the Iliad, but he loves the Odyſſey.

The works of Homer appeared ſo early in the world, and ſince their appearance have been ſo frequently praiſed and illuſtrated, that at this late period it is not neceſſary to add to the general panegyric. Suffice it to recommend the peruſal of a few authors, which may clear the way to the ſtudy of the Odyſſey. Among theſe, are the papers in the Adventurer on this ſubject, Pope's Notes to his Tranſlation, and above all Mr. Spenſer's very elegant and ingenious Eſſay. As to the Tranſlation itſelf, it abounds with faults and abſurdities. Without derogating from the merit of Pope as an original poet, we may venture to pronounce his Odyſſey a paraphraſe, rather than a juſt tranſlation of Homer. The copy no more reſembles the picture, than the portrait on a ſign-poſt uſually reſembles the perſonage intended to be exhibited. The chief beauty of Homer is ſimplicity, which, in the Tranſlation, is ſacrificed to a gaudy glare and artificial embellishments. As a poem conſidered by itſelf, it has many beautiful paſſages; but as a tranſlation, it is perhaps unworthy the reputation it has obtained.

To cenſure ſo celebrated a name, might appear arrogant in an individual, were he not ſupported by many and judicious critics. Mr. Spence, whoſe opinion is deciſive, and, *inſtar omnium*, points out defects in Pope's Tranſlation, which could never have eſcaped ſo great a poet but from haſte and wearineſs. In this work, Pope was aſſiſted by inferior writers; but as the whole is publiſhed under his name, he will ever be anſwerable

for its faults. The translation of the Iliad, though a very excellent model of versification, exhibits not a just picture of the simple, yet magnificent, Mæonian.

Mr. Spence's Essay, at the same time that it will exhibit the deformities of the Translation, will inspire a taste for the beauties of the original; and, indeed, the general remarks, which are interspersed with the greatest judgment and elegance, will contribute to each a just method of criticism in almost every species of poetry.

Mr. Spence was a truly classical writer. He was no less amiable in his manners than pleasing in his productions. That he chiefly wrote in dialogue is to be lamented; for that form, where the persons are fictitious, has seldom been approved in England, though it has often succeeded in France.



No. CLXXVI.

THOUGHTS ON THE OEDIPUS TYRANNUS OF SOPHOCLES, AND SEVERAL CIRCUM- STANCES RESPECTING THE GRECIAN DRAMA.

OF the three Greek dramatic poets, Sophocles is the most celebrated; and of the productions of Sophocles, the Oedipus Tyrannus is the most excellent. It has stood the test of the severest criticism. The unities of time, place and action, are inviolably preserved: and while the Tragedy satisfies the critic, who judges it by the laws of Aristotle, it pleases the common reader and spectator, who forms his opinion from the feelings of his nature. Never was there a tale more affecting than that of Oedipus, and never was it told more pathetically than by Sophocles. Many a tear has it excited from an Athenian audience, whose hearts were ever finely susceptible of the sentiments of humanity: but the best translation of it would not equally please in a modern theatre. Many other causes of its failure may be assigned, besides that simplicity, artlessness, and in-

complexity of fable, which the taste of the moderns is too much vitiated to relish.

In the first place, it must be considered, that every original composition must lose something of its beauty from the best translation. It is a common remark, that the spirit of an author, like that of some essences, evaporates by transfusion. Foreign manners and foreign customs, are seldom understood by a common audience, and as seldom approved. The majority of an English audience are unacquainted with ancient learning, and can take no pleasure in the representation of men and things which have not fallen under their notice. Add to this, that they love to see Tragedies formed on their own histories, or on histories in which they are in some manner nearly interested. When Shakspeare's historical dramas are represented, they feel as Englishmen in every event; they take part with their Edwards and Henries, as friends and fellow-countrymen; they glory in their successes, and sympathize with their misfortunes. To a similar circumstance may part of the applause, which the Athenians bestowed on this Tragedy of Sophocles, be attributed; for Oedipus was king of a neighbouring country, with which the Athenians were always intimately connected either in war or peace.

These considerations should teach us to content ourselves with admiring Sophocles in the closet, without attempting to obtrude him on the stage, which must always accommodate itself to the taste of the times, whether unreasonable or just, consistent or capricious.

In truth, the warmest admirer of ancient Greek poetry must acknowledge a barrenness of invention in the choice of subjects. The Trojan War, and the misfortunes of the Theban king, are almost the only sources from which those great masters of composition, Homer, Æschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles, have derived their subject matter. They have, indeed, embellished these little parts of history with all the fire of imagination and melody of poetry; but is it not strange, that in a country like Greece, where the restless spirit of military virtue was continually forming noble designs, and achieving glorious exploits, the poets could discover no illustrious deed worthy of being painted in never-fading colours,

but the worn-out stories of a wooden horse, and a Sphinx's riddle? It is difficult for an age like the present, which hungers and thirsts after novelty, to conceive that an audience could sit with patience during the recital of a story which all must have heard a thousand times; especially as it was unadorned with the meretricious artifices of players, with thunder and lightening, hail and rain, tolling bells, and tinsel garments.

But the sameness of the story of the Grecian poets became agreeable to the audience, through that veneration which every thing that bears a mark of antiquity demands. That the story on which a dramatic poem is founded, should not be of modern date, has, I think, been laid down as a rule. Nor is it the precept of an arbitrary critic, but is justified by nature and reason. Imagination always exceeds reality. The vulgar could never prevail upon themselves to look on scenes, to the reality of which they have been eye-witnesses, with the same ardour as on those which they have received from their ancestors, and have painted with the strongest colours on their fancy. In obedience to this rule, the Greek poets took their subjects from ancient facts universally known, believed, and admired: and the audience entered the theatre, to behold a lively representation of the picture already formed in their own imagination.

A modern reader has not a preparatory disposition of mind necessary to receive all that pleasure from these compositions, which transported an ancient Greek. He does not glow with that patriotic ardour which he would feel on reading glorious deeds of a fellow-countryman, when Homer represents a hero breaking the Trojan phalanx and encountering a Hector. He does not consider an ancient Theban or Athenian involved in the guilt of undesigned paricide or incest, nearly enough connected with him to excite his sympathy in a violent degree: but all these feelings in a Grecian audience, occasioned by a Grecian sufferer, account for that uncommon delight which they took in their dramatic representations, and for their freedom from that satiety which might otherwise have been occasioned by a simple and reiterated tale.

An English audience has lately shewn itself not so averse from the ancient Tragedy, as was expected, by its favourable reception of *Elfrida* and *Caractacus*, written on the Grecian model: but, perhaps, this event is not so much to be attributed to the revival of the refined taste of an Attic audience, as to the insatiable avidity of something new. The English are as fond of the *καίριοι* literature, as the Athenians were in politics: but, whether caprice or reason, whether taste or fashion, gave them a favourable reception on the English stage, it is certain that *Elfrida* and *Caractacus* are elegant poems, formed exactly on the ancient model, and may be read with great advantage by those who wish to entertain a just idea of the Greek Tragedy without a knowledge of the language.



No. CLXXVII.

CURSORY REMARKS ON SOME OF THE
MINOR ENGLISH POETS.

WE are told in the epistle to the Pisos, that poetical mediocrity is intolerable; yet we find that Poets, of inferior merit as well as fame, are read with pleasure.

It is true, indeed, that the loudest melody of the grove is poured forth by the lark, the blackbird, the thrush, and the nightingale; but it is no less true, that their pauses are often filled by the sweet warblings of the linnet and the red-breast. The lofty cedar that waves on the summit of the poetic mountain, seems to overshadow, and exclude, by its luxuriance, all other vegetation. He, however, who approaches it, will find many a violet and primrose springing at its root. He will often discover, amid a plentiful growth of weeds, a modest flowret lifting its humble head, and becoming more beautiful by seeming to conceal the native sweetness of its odour, and the lustre of its hues.

The first dignities in the commonwealth of letters are pre-occupied by such writers as Spencer, Milton, Dry-

den and Pope; but, at the same time, the numerous subaltern stations are frequently filled with honour.

Many poets of original beauty were in their own times so obscure as to be now totally unknown. Such are the authors of our most popular ballads, the general reception of which is a proof of their excellence, more convincing than the decisions of criticism. The learned Poet has commonly owed much of his excellence to imitation; but the ballad-writer drew only from his own resources when he sung the wild wood-notes of nature. Their metre often possesses a kind of harmony quite different from classical versification, indeed, yet at the same time pleasing to the uncorrupted ear.

Of Poets once known and admired, several are fallen into total disrepute. Drayton was honoured by a commentator who must have given fame to any writer. If Selden's taste was equal to his learning, Drayton is indeed most highly distinguished. The *Polyolbion* is, however, no more read; and the slow length of the tedious Alexandrine in which it is written, will prevent its revival, as it has hastened its oblivion.

The *Gondibert* of D'Avenant has been the subject of critical controversy from the time of its publication. Its plan was originally defended by the great Hobbes, and its execution has been greatly praised. Yet few have attended to it with any pleasure, and still fewer have had a degree of patience sufficient to bear them through the perusal of it. The truth is, the stanza which he adopted, is better suited to elegiac than to heroic poetry. A beautiful descriptive passage, interspersed in the course of two or three hundred lines, will not alleviate the tedium of the rest; as an occasional flash of lightning cannot illuminate the continued gloominess of an extensive prospect.

For the honour of English literature, most of the poetical productions which were admired in the reign of Charles, should now be consigned to everlasting oblivion. The display, indeed, a sportive licentiousness of fancy, but they are incorrect beyond the example of any age. Some of the best poets of the times, among whom were Mulgrave, Dorset and Roscommon, though possessed of wit and taste, produced nothing worthy of

immortality. The morals of the age were as licentious as the taste; and the love of pleasure introduced an indolence, which admitted not an application sufficient to give the last polish of correct elegance.

The Study of the ancients and of the French, has gradually refined the national taste to a degree of fastidious delicacy; and writers who have possessed classical beauty have been read with admiration, though they have had nothing to recommend them to the notice of a Charles the Second or a Sedley.

The number of minor poets who displayed great merit, yet who seem to have derived it all from imitation, is too tedious to enumerate. Philips and his friend Smith were correct and classical in a degree superior to their contemporaries. Philips has performed the task of imitation, with an accuracy of resemblance scarcely equalled by any of his followers but Browne. The *Phædra* and *Hipolitus* of Smith has ever been esteemed a fine poem, and the beauty of the style and harmony of the verse induce us to regret that he lived to finish so few productions.

Within the space of half the last century, a desire to imitate the excellent models of our more celebrated bards, has crowded the middle ranks with a multitude too great to obtain, even for the deserving individual, any very distinguished fame. One Poet has arisen after another, and supplanted him as the succeeding wave seems to swallow up the wave that went before. Most of them have exhibited an harmonious versification, and have selected a profusion of splendid expressions; but have in general been deficient in that noble fire, and those simple graces which mark originality of genius. They are, however, read with pleasure, and sweetly fill up the intervals of avocation among the busy and commercial world, who are not acquainted with the Greeks and Romans, and with whom novelty often possesses the charm of beauty.

There is a force and solemnity in the poems of Tickell, which at least place him on a level with his patron as a poet. His *Colin and Lucy* is one of the most sweetly pathetic poems in the language.

Broome, though honourably associated with Pope in the work of translation, seems to have had scarcely any other merit than this to bear him down the stream of time.

Trapp wrote Latin verse with elegance, and was a good critic; but it has been observed, of his *Virgil*, that he had done wisely to have stopped at his preface.

The genius of Collins seems in some measure to have resembled that of Tickell. Dignity, solemnity, and pathos, are the striking features of his compositions. None but a true poet could have written the song over *Fidèle* in Shakspeare's *Cymbeline*.

The English *Tibullus*, Hammond, has written truly elegant verse; but I know not whether his representations greatly affect the heart, though they are approved by the judgment and imagination. They have, however served as patterns for the love-sick nymphs and swains who delight in giving vent to their passion in the language of poetry.

Love and its effects were beautifully described by the elegantly sensible Lord Lyttleton. To assert that he was remarkable for poetical genius, were to lessen, by endeavouring to exaggerate his praise. Force, fire, and an exuberance of invention, were not his excellencies; but that equable beauty of sentiment and diction, which results from an elegant mind. The graces distinguish his compositions, as the virtues marked his honourable life.

Moore's *Fables* display indubitable marks of genius; but he wants the simplicity of Gay and Fontaine. He shews, however, a talent for description, which would have shone in the higher kinds of poetry; and a delicacy of mind, which, it might be supposed, could be acquired only in a higher sphere than that in which he was born.

Genius and learning were possessed in a very eminent degree by Merrick. He had that peculiar kind of genius which qualified him to excel in the department of sacred poetry. It is to be wished, that his version of the *Psalms* were adopted in churches, not only in the place of Sternhold and Hopkins, but of Brady and

Tate. Such an event would be no less advantageous to piety, than to taste.



No. CLXXVIII.

CURSORY AND UNCONNECTED REMARKS ON
SOME OF THE MINOR GREEK POETS.

THE intrinsic graces of the classic writers have charmed every mind which was susceptible of the beauties of spirit, taste, and elegance. Since the revival of learning, innumerable critics have employed themselves in displaying the beauties which they felt, or in removing the difficulties and obstructions which retarded their progress in the perusal of the ancients. At present, there is scarcely any room for criticism on the ancients; and the most laborious Commentator finds, with regret, his profoundest researches, and his acutest remarks, anticipated by the lucubrations of former critics: but as there is scarcely a greater difference between the features of the face, than between the faculties of the mind in different men, and as objects must strike various feelings in various manners, the works of taste and genius may, on different reviews, furnish inexhaustible matter for critical observation. Upon this principle, authors, of the present age, venture to add to the labours of their predecessors, without fearing or incurring the imputation of vanity or impertinence.

The present remarks shall be confined to some of the Greek Minor Poets, without minutely attending to chronological or any other order.

In the union of dignity with sweetness, of melody with strength, the Greek is better adapted to beautiful composition, than any modern language. The Italian has all its softness, but wants its force. The French possesses elegance and expression, but is deficient in sound and dignity. The English is strong, nervous, flowery, fit for animated oratory and enthusiastic poetry, but abounds with Saxon monosyllables, ill adapted to

express the music of mellifluous cadence. To compare the Dutch and the German with the language of Athens, were to compare the jarring noise of grating iron, with the soft warblings of the flute. The other languages Europe are equally unfit for harmonious modulation, and indeed cannot properly be examined in this place, as the people who speak them, have not yet distinguished themselves by any writings truly classical.

The Greek Epigram naturally falls first under our present consideration. Of these little compositions, which owe their origin to Greece, none can be insensible of the beauty, whose taste is not vitiated by the less delicate wit of the modern Epigramatist. Indeed, to relish the simple graces of the Greek Epigram, the taste must not be formed upon the model even of the celebrated Martial. Among the Latin poets, Catullus approached nearest to the Greeks in this species of composition.

The Anthologies, still extant, are written by various authors, and there are scarcely sufficient Epigrams of any one, to discriminate his manner from that of others. Suffice it to remark in general, that their beauty does not often consist in a point, or witty conceit, but in a simplicity of thought, and a sweetness of language.

The golden verses of Pythagoras, though not remarkable for splendour of diction, or flowing versification, are yet highly beautiful in the concise and forcible mode of inculcating morality, and virtues almost Christian. The earlier philosophers of Greece conveyed their tenets in verse, not so much because they aspired to the character of poets, as because precepts, delivered in metre, were more easily retained in the memory of their disciples. Pythagoras has comprised every necessary rule for the conduct of life in this little poem, and he that commits it to memory, will not want a guide to direct his behaviour under any event: but though the morality of these verses is their more valuable beauty, yet are they by no means destitute of poetical merit.

That generosity of soul, which ever accompanies true genius, has, induced the poets and philosophers, of all ages, to stand forth in the cause of liberty. Alcæus, of whose merits from the monuments of antiquity we may

from the most exalted idea, first raised himself to eminence by a poem, entitled *Stasiotica*, a violent invective against Pittacus, at that time the tyrant of Athens. It has not escaped the general wreck, and we have only a few broken specimens of this celebrated writer's works preserved by the ancient grammarians. We must, therefore be contented to learn his character from the judicious Quintilian, and the learned Dionycius of Halicarnassus: the former of whom asserts, that he was concise, sublime, accurate, and, in many respects resembled Homer; the latter, that he had a grandeur, brevity, and sweetness, equally blended throughout all his compositions.

Stesichorus, according to Quintilian, was remarkable for strength of genius. He gave to lyric poetry, all the solemnity of the *Epopeæ*. Had he known how to restrain the impetuosity of his genius, it is said, he would have rivalled Homer: but unfortunately, the noble warmth of his temper urged him beyond the bounds of just writing, and he seems to have failed of excellence by a redundancy of beauties.

The fragments of Menander are sufficiently excellent to induce every votary of learning to regret the loss of his works. Some indeed have thought, that time never gave a greater blow to polite literature, than in the destruction of the Comedies of Menander; but as Terence has preserved his spirit and his style, perhaps the want of the original is compensated by the exact copyings of that elegant author. Quintilian, from whose judgment there is scarcely an appeal, has represented Menander as alone sufficient to form our taste and style. The few remains, preserved by Stobæus, whether the beauty of the sentiments, or the purity of the diction, be regarded, must be pronounced uncommonly excellent. They are, however, too generally known to require illustration.

Simonides is characterised by Longinus, as a poet remarkable for the pathetic. Of his writings very few have survived the injuries of time. The little poem on Danae, is, however, sufficient to justify the judgment of Longinus. Nothing can be more delicately tender, or more exquisitely pathetic. There is something inex-

preffibly pleasing to the mind, in the representation of a mother addressing a sleeping infant unconscious of its danger, with all the endearing blandishments of maternal tendness.

The other remarkable poem of this author, which time has spared, is of a very different kind. It is a satire on Women, and is well known by a prosaic translation of it, inserted in the *Essays* of a celebrated modern writer.

Alcman of Laconia is another melancholy instance of the depredations which the hand of Time has made on the most valuable works of antiquity. Of this author, once celebrated throughout Greece, quoted by the learned, and repeated by the fair, scarcely the name is known in the present age. Athenæus, Hephæstion, the scholiast on Pindar Eustathius, and Plutarch, have vindicated him from absolute oblivion, by preserving a few of his fragments. Love verses, which since his time have employed some of the greatest writers, and have been admired by the most sensible readers, were of his invention. All who preceded him had invariably written in Hexameter. He subjoined the elegiac verse, and may justly claim the honour of having invented that species of poetry, which Ovid and the other Latin elegiac Writers have since advanced to a most pleasing species of composition.

Archilochus wrote iambics and elegiacs; the former, satirical; the latter amorous. That he succeeded in his attempts, we have sufficient reason to conclude from the testimonies of the greatest critics of antiquity, Horace and Longinus. There is not enough of him remaining, to enable us to form a judgment of the impartiality of their decision, and we must be contented to acquiesce in their authority.

Lucian says, in one of his Dialogues, that the poets have given Jupiter many of his most pompous epithets, merely for the sake of a sonorous word to fill up a verse. The hymns of Orpheus abound with these expletives; and the reader is often disgusted with sounding verse almost destitute of sense. If, however, they were composed for music, they may pass uncensured by some; for it seems to have been generally and most absurdly agreed, and it

is observable at this day, that very little attention is to be paid to the words of Operas, Odes, and Songs, which are written merely for music. The poems of Orpheus, if those which are extant, are like all his productions, would certainly move no stones. What has been said of the hymns of this poet, may be extended to many other Greek compositions of the same species. General censure, will, however, seldom be just, and it must be confessed, that there are some among them, particularly those of Callimachus, truly sublime and beautiful.

There was a species of poetry among the Athenians, which, in some measure, resembled many of our English ballads. At the approach of a war, or after a victory or defeat, the poets and statesmen usually dispersed among the people some short composition which tended to animate them with courage, or to inspire them with joy. Solon, the wise legislator of Athens, was too well acquainted with the power of poetry over the human heart, to neglect this efficacious method of enforcing his laws and propagating his institutions among the lower ranks of the Athenians. There are still extant some of his pieces, which bear internal marks of having been purposely written to give the people a passion for liberty, to inspire them with a love of virtue, and to teach them obedience to the laws. They are, indeed, written in the elegiac measure, but have nothing of the soft amorous Strain which distinguishes the Ovidian elegy. They are manly, moral, and severe. By these, it is a well known fact, the Athenians were animated to resume a war which they had dropt in despair; and in consequence of the ardour which these inspired, they obtained a complete victory over their enemies.

Tyrtæus wrote in a similar style, but entirely confined himself to martial subjects. So strongly is military valour, and the love of liberty enforced in his little compositions, that it would by no means be absurd to attribute the victories of the Grecians over the Persians, as much as to a Tyrtæus, as to Miltiades or Themistocles. The effects of such political ballads have been frequently seen among the English in a time of war. Every one has heard of Lillabullero.—Many a poor fel-

low has been tempted to quit the plough and the loom for the sword, on hearing a song in praise of Hawke or Wolfe roared by his obstreperous companions. These verses are too deficient in point of elegance to admit of quotations, and the frequent opportunities of hearing them from the mouths of the vulgar, render repetition in this place unnecessary. The bards of Grub-street are commonly the authors of our martial ballads; but at Athens they were written by poets, statesmen and philosophers. We may judge of the influence of their productions, by the powerful effect of our rude and even nonsensical rhymes.

Few ancient authors have been less read than Lycophron. His obscurity not only retards, but disgusts the reader; yet perhaps his want of perspicuity, though highly disagreeable to the student, is an excellence in a work consisting of predictions. Prophecies and oracles have ever been purposely obscure, and almost unintelligible. The mind that attends to these uninspired predictions of paganism, voluntarily renounces reason, and believes the more as it understands the less; but whether Lycophron is to be praised or censured for obscurity, certain it is, that on this account he will never become a favourite author. Notwithstanding the labours of the great Potter, he is still difficult, and will probably continue to repose in dust and darkness, amidst the dull collections of antiquated museums.

The poems of Bacchylides, however he is neglected by the moderns, were highly honoured by an ancient, who was esteemed a complete judge of literary merit. Hiero hesitated not to pronounce them superior to the Odes of Pindar, which have been generally celebrated as the utmost efforts of human genius. The opinion of Hiero may however be questioned with an appearance of plausibility, when it is considered, that this character, as a critic, was established by his courtiers, who, to gain his favour, might not scruple to violate the truth.

The gay, the sprightly, the voluptuous Anacreon is known to every reader. His subjects, and his manner of treating them, have captivated all who are susceptible either of pleasure or of poetry. There is, indeed, an exquisite tenderness, delicacy, and taste in the sentiments, but I have always thought he derived no small

share of his beauty from the choice of expressions, and the peculiar harmony of his verses. It has been objected to him by rigid moralists, that his writings tend to promote drunkenness and debauchery. But this objection might in some degree be extended to a great part of the finest writers, ancient and modern. A man of sense and judgment will admire the beauties of a composition, without suffering its sentiments to influence his principles or his conduct. He will look upon the more licentious sallies of Anacreontic writers, as little *jeux d'esprit* designed to please in the hour of convivial festivity, but not to regulate his thoughts and actions in the serious concerns of life. Whatever may be the moral tendency of his writings, it is certain that as a poet he is unrivalled in that species of composition which he adopted. Many have been the imitations of him, but few have succeeded. The joys of love and wine have indeed been described by his followers, but their touches are more like the daubings of an unskilful painter, than the exquisite traits of a master hand. Cowley, whose genius certainly partook more of the Anacreontic than of the Pindaric, has been one of his happiest imitators, for he is rather to be called an imitator than a translator: but the English reader will not form a just idea of the merits of Anacreon, from those Bacchanalian songs which so frequently appear under the title of Anacreontic.

The passion of love was never more strongly felt or described than by the sensible Sappho. The little Greek ode, preserved by Longinus, the metre of which derives its name from her, has been translated by Mr. Phillips with all the air of an original. The Latin translation of Catullus appears much inferior to that of our countrymen. The Greek indeed is much corrupted, and as it now stands is, less pleasing than the English. Every one, who on reading it recollects its occasion, must lament that so warm a passion, so feelingly represented, was excited by an improper object.

Scaliger, whose judgment, though sometimes called in question, ought certainly to have great weight, bestowed very extraordinary praises on the writings of Ovidian; a poet, who, though he has been compared to

Virgil in his Georgics, is only perused by the curious in Grecian literature, and is known only by name to the common reader. The emperor Caracalla, under whom he flourished, is said to have been so charmed with his poems, as to have ordered him a stater for each verse. Modern critics will however, dare to call in question the taste of Caracalla. The works of Oppian consisted of halieutics, cynogetics, and ixeutics, the latter of which have perished by the injuries of time. He was a grammarian, which, in the idea of the Greeks, meant a professed scholar; and in every age the works of men, who possessed literature, have been less admired than the vigorous and wild productions of uncultivated genius. The former are contented to avoid faults, but genius labours after beauties only. Apollonius is more correct than Homer, and Johnson than Shakspeare; but Apollonius and Johnson are coldly approved, while Homer and Shakspeare are beheld with astonishment almost equal to idolatry. It should however be remarked to the honour of Apollonius, that the judicious Virgil borrowed several of his most celebrated similes from him, and perhaps he is not to be ranked among the *poetæ minores*. Oppian has met with the usual fate of grammarians, and has scarcely been read; but the reader of taste will yet find many passages, which, if they are not sublime, he must confess to be beautiful.

Tryphiodorus has been introduced to the English reader by the excellent translation of the ingenious Mr. Merrick. Homer he certainly imitated, and has succeeded in the imitation. Copies taken by great masters, though inferior in general, yet in some parts commonly rival their originals. Tryphiodorus reaches not the sublimer flights of the Mæonian bard, but he sometimes follows his less daring excursions at no distant interval. It is enough to recommend him to general approbation, that with a moderate portion of Homer's fire, he has more correctness. He may be read with advantage not only in a poetical, but in an historical view. Where Homer discontinued the thread of his story, Tryphiodorus has taken it up. Indeed this poem is a necessary supplement to the Iliad, without which the reader is left unsatisfied. Tryphiodorus is said to

have written another poem, called *Οδυσσεια λειπογραμματα*, in which he has omitted, through each book, the letter which marked the number of it. Such a kind of composition is trifling, and beneath a man of genius; but it must be allowed to be a work of great difficulty, and consequently a proof of great application. Nor ought it to injure the character of Tryphiodorus as a poet, but to be viewed as the wanton production of an ingenious, but ill-employed grammarian. If Homer wrote the battle of the Frogs and Mice, and Virgil discanted on his Gnat, without losing the dignity of their characters; inferior writers may indulge the inoffensive fallies of whim, without the imputation of folly or puerility.

In the perusal of some of these, and other of the Minor Poets, whose works are extant, the lover of the Grecian Muse finds a pleasing variety, after reading the more sublime and beautiful productions of Homer.



No. CLXXIX.

A CONCLUDING ESSAY.

THE writers of periodical papers have usually subjoined, at the close of their lucubrations, an account of the origin and progress of their work, explained the signatures of correspondents, and assigned each paper to its proper claimant.—I am now arrived at the End of the Second Volume, the boundary prescribed to my excursions: but I have, I believe, no information of this kind remaining to be communicated. I have already accounted for the origin of this work, and intimated, that the composition of it has served, at various times and in different situations, to amuse a few intervals of literary leisure; and, with respect to assistants and correspondents, the nature of the undertaking could not possibly admit them. If, therefore, any praise should be thought due, it must come undivided, and contribute to lessen whatever severity of censure may be incurred, the whole weight of which must fall without participation.

I mean not, however, to delude myself with an idea of influencing a reader by apologies: the submissions and excuses of authors are of little importance; the Public claims are uncontrovertible right to decide for itself on every composition which solicits regard: its final decisions are usually no less just than immutable.

Instead then of dwelling on such topics, I will take leave of the candid reader, if any reader should have had patience to accompany me so far, by a summary recapitulation, and perhaps addition of a few admonitions, which may be salutary. I pretend not to collect all the scattered remarks, which have preceded, into one point of view, but merely to repeat and add such as may possibly occur in filling up the paper which now lies before me. I hope the egotism will be pardoned on this and several other occasions, as it is by no means easy at all times to speak in the third person of one's self without evident affectation.

I have endeavoured, throughout the whole series of these papers, to warn those who are entering into life (and to them my admonitions are chiefly addressed) against the fashionable examples of the *rich and great vulgar*, which often militate against all that is decent, regular, virtuous, and learned. Unless we are taught in our youth to be on our guard against their destructive influence, we shall certainly incur imminent danger of corrupting our principles and practice, by a blind and bigotted imitation. Experience daily evinces, that, without this precaution, all the advantages of a virtuous and learned education, all the documents of paternal care, all prudential, moral, and religious restraints, may be totally frustrated. The rich and great may be considered as beacons on a promontory; and if they hang out deceitful lights, they who will allow no other signal to direct them (and the number of these is infinite) will probably be misguided in the voyage of their lives, till they are dashed on rocks or sunk in whirlpools. I think I can confidently declare that I was not influenced by splenetic or envious motives, when I attacked the Pride, Folly, and Wickedness of the *nominal great*, who justify every enormity, under the name of fashionable indulgence; but that I have been actuated solely by a

sincere conviction, that such an attack is the most effectual means of promoting the interests of virtue. Even an enemy will allow that it is not the most approved method of advancing private interest.

In adopting modes of address and external behaviour, the study of which appears to engross the attention of many, I have advised the young man to begin his work at the foundation; to correct his heart and temper, that the graces of his appearance may proceed from that copious and infallible source of whatever is pleasing, a disposition truly virtuous and unaffectedly amiable. I have exhorted him to avoid servility, adulation, preferment-hunting, and meanness of every kind; to endeavour indeed to please those with whom he converses, but to let the endeavour arise from benevolent motives, from an humane and Christian desire of diffusing ease and happiness among the children of one Almighty Father, and the partakers of the same miserable nature. I have advised him to be firm, yet gentle,—manly, yet polite: to cultivate every ornamental accomplishment which leads not to effeminacy, and to study to be as agreeable as possible, while he can be at the same time sincere; to despise, and most studiously avoid, that common but base character, which, with motives peculiarly selfish and contracted, pretends to uncommon good-nature, friendship, benevolence, and generosity; whose assiduities are proportioned to the rank or fortune of the persons whose favour is courted, without the least regard to virtue or attainments; whose politeness is that of a valet or French dancing-master, and whose objects, after all its professions and pretensions to liberality, are no less mean and dirty than those of a Jew-usurer. I have advised him to value the approbation of his own heart, and the comforts of a clear conscience above the smiles, the applause, and the rewards of a vain, a wicked, a deceitful, and a transitory world.

In literature, I have recommended the union of taste with science. and of science with taste; a selection of the best authors on all the subjects which claim his particular attention; a love of originals, and a due distrust of translations; a constant effort to obtain depth and solidity; a persevering, regular, indefatigable industry,

especially in the earlier periods of a studious course, not only because no distinguished excellence can be obtained without it, but also because a close attention to study, and an ardent love of letters in the juvenile age, is a great preservative of innocence, and conducts much to the diversion or extinction of passions and tendencies, which cannot be habitually indulged without sin, shame, and misery.

The general tenor of the moral admonitions of this book, has been to urge the young man to labour incessantly in overcoming the natural propensity of human nature to evil: to aim at perfection, though he knows he cannot reach it; to aim at it, because he will thus approach much nearer to it than if he gives up the pursuit in the timidity of indolence: to have courage enough to withstand ridicule, the weapon of the wicked in their subtle attacks upon virtue: to beware of the refinements of sophistry, and to be humble enough to learn his duty both to God and man, from the plain doctrines of his catechism: to beware also of the seducing influence of fashionable vice; of those unfortunate persons who, from a want of education, or from foolish pride, *live without God in the world*, and even in contradiction to the obvious precepts of natural religion; existing in a state which might almost be called the vegetable, if it did not in a greater degree participate of brutality.—Addresses of a serious kind are to them, for the most part, useless, as that pride, self-conceit, and self-importance, which leads them to adopt with ostentation the tenets of infidelity and the practices of immorality, usually renders them deaf and blind to all representations which come *unrecommended by opulence, rank, and libertinism*. They are wiser in their own eyes though they often neither read nor think, than the wisest moralists who have yet appeared. But the young man who has been taught not to be dazzled by the false lustre of their characters, will soon learn to pity their errors and shun their example. It is a just remark, which has been made by men intimately acquainted with the living world, that more are ruined by vices which they have adopted through vanity and silly imitation, than to which they have been seduced

by the violence of passion and temptation. He who lessens the force of such examples, and obscures those glossy colours which they derive from high stations and large fortunes, greatly promotes the cause of morality, and contributes much to prevent the misery and ruin of a rising generation.

In forming political principles, I would uniformly maintain the expediency of always leaning to the side of liberty and the people, and of withstanding, by all legal and rational means, the encroachments of power. All men who possess power, well established and confirmed, are naturally inclined to extend and engross it. Let a spirit then be constantly encouraged among the people at large, which may lead them to a jealous vigilance over the possessors of power, and animate them to a manly resistance on the slightest infringement of liberty. But at the same time, we must not suffer the artful pursuers of their own interest to delude us by a name enchanting in the sound: we are bound to consider, in our dispassionate moments, the nature of liberty; to see and acknowledge the necessity of subordination, and the happiness of being governed by the equitable operation of impartial laws; to consider the preservation of good order and public tranquility as greatly conducive to the perpetuation of liberty, when it is once established on a solid basis: to distinguish between a real love of liberty and a mere impatience of controul, which is found to prevail in the bosom of envious and malignant men: to discern the difference between real patriotism and a selfish opposition to present authority, in whomsoever invested, arising from a hope of partaking of it on their deprivation: to remember that experience has abundantly confirmed the remark, that the loudest advocates for liberty, while out of power, are often the most arbitrary and tyrannical, both in the exercise of power, when they have obtained it, and in their private life and natural dispositions: to beware of the needy adventurer in politics who has nothing to lose, and has no prospect of gain but in demolishing the fabric raised by others, and enriching himself in the general plunder. Such cautions can never be too frequently repeated to the

middle ranks, who have been too frequently deluded by the wicked pretensions of pseudo-patriots.

I have endeavoured to evince the propriety of appointing men of private virtue and good character, to the great, honourable, and efficient offices in the various departments in the state. It is difficult to conceive but that the accumulation of public honours and emoluments on professed infidels, on notorious gamblers, and on infamous debauchees, is at once destructive of morality, religion, and national prosperity. If, for instance, a Chancellor of Great Britain, whose office is peculiarly sacred, who has the disposal of church preferment, and whose life ought to have been free from infamous enormities, and whose character, no less unimpeached than that of an archbishop, should be stigmatized as a seducer of innocence, should live in a state of concubinage at the time in which he holds his venerable office, and evidently shew, *by his conduct*, a contempt for that union of the sexes which the laws of his country, and of his God, have instituted; would it not be such an insult on virtue, religion, decency, and *equity*, as all, whose feelings are not destroyed by dissipation, must deeply deplore and resent?—Could upstart insolence, a brow-beating audacity, and a dogmatical mode of decision, in the senate and at the tribunal, compensate the injuries which such an example must inflict, not only on the morals of a single professional body too licentious, but of community in all its ramifications? The promotion of such men, publicly known for the badness of their private life, argues a want of sincerity in governors, and eventually tends, more than any foreign enemy, to shake their thrones from under them. Resistance, indeed, under governors who act, in their appointment of ministers and officers, as if they considered the national religion merely as a mode of superstition, and morality as a baseless fabric of fancy or policy, and who yet assume the management of the church as well as of the state, and claim the title of Defenders of the Faith, becomes virtue instead of treason, and patriotism instead of rebellion. He who militates against such men, engages in a rational and an honourable crusade. No Turk

was ever a greater enemy to the religion of Jesus Christ, than such *most sacred* and *most Christian* Governors

It is certainly right to disbelieve and to reprobate all pretensions to public virtue wherever private virtue is *notoriously* deficient. Where private virtue is wanting, there can be no soundness of principle, and, without soundness of principle, no real virtue of any kind can subsist. Patriotism in a bad man, is but disguised wickedness, of a malignant nature, and usually proceeding from a deceitful, proud, an envious, a jealous, a cruel and a selfish disposition. The boasted abilities of profligate and corrupt characters, are often but the desperate efforts of a distress which has overcome all diffidence and restraint, and leads men to fight their way to promotion, by noise; effrontery, and overbearing presumption.

We all, indeed, love power, and it is an useful impulse which urges us to aspire at eminence; but though we may reasonably wish for a share of power, let us learn the virtue not to obstruct its salutary operation in the hands of others, merely because it is not in our own. The truest patriotism may often be evinced, by subduing the lust of power by submissive silence, and by cheerful acquiescence, in a contented retirement, and in an humble exercise of the private and social virtues. The lust of power, like all other lusts, is often most violent in diabolical dispositions, and the turbulent spirit which it produces is the bane of society.

But amidst our cautions, we shall do well constantly to remember that liberty, with all its attendant evils of faction and sedition, is, upon the whole, infinitely more conducive to the happiness and to the improvement of human nature, than the tranquil repose of established despotism. An arbitrary government diffuses a benumbing, freezing, soporific influence over the human faculties, especially in the middle and lowest walks of life; and there is no danger or inconvenience which ought not to be cheerfully incurred to destroy it from the face of the earth. The tree of liberty, so well planted and watered in America, will, I hope, flourish more and more; and impart many a slip and sucker to

grow in climates which now appear most congenial to its cultivation. In our own island, we must never neglect the opportunity afforded, by a time of distress, to correct the abuses of the constitution, and to push back the gigantic strides of power, with its auxiliary, corruption. Such are the auspicious periods, the golden moments, in which a portion of new health is to be infused into the vitals of the body politic: such the times in which the people themselves ought to amputate excrescences, and purge that corrupting influence which contains the seeds of disease and death to a free commonwealth; in which the right of election should be communicated to all who pay taxes to a certain amount, petty boroughs disfranchised, and counties enabled to send a number of members in proportion to their size, wealth, and populousness; in which Old Sarum should no longer be permitted to constitute as many representatives of the people of England as the county of York, and half as many as the metropolis of the empire.

It is impossible to recapitulate all the variety of suggestions which have preceded, or to make any great addition to them, in the limits of a single paper; neither was it my original intention. It is sufficient that a few of the most important points are touched upon in the conclusion of these volumes, with a view to leave a due impression on the mind of the reader, who may be induced, for want of something better, to bestow an idle hour on their perusal. The subjects of Behaviour, Letters, Morals, and Politics, have been already mentioned: it would be a reprehensible omission not to have reserved a place for a few hints on religion.

It appears to me to be one of the most important precepts, in forming our religious principles and ideas not fully to depend on the conclusions of our own reason; to distrust the acutest understanding; to be really humble; to reverence the opinions received by our forefathers; to remember the shortness of life, the imbecility of human nature, and to accept with pious hope, rather than with disputatious curiosity, the comfortable doctrines and promises of the received revelation. It will be a great inducement to this prime virtue of humility, to reflect on the diseases and pains both of mind and body incident

to our nature; on the terrible degeneracy into which we may fall, when deserted by the grace of God; and, at the same time, on the consolation and improvement of heart which may be, and is, derived, under every calamity and on the bed of death, from sincere devotion; to pray for faith when doubts arise; to beware of that weak and wicked vanity which instigates the deistical and sceptical pretenders to superior powers of reasoning, to write and publish their sophistical and presumptuous tenets on the national religion. Let us ever remember that common but excellent maxim, that we can lose nothing but what would hurt us, and may gain every thing that is valuable, by receiving, with humble hope, the religion of Jesus Christ.

Upon the whole, and after all the subtle disquisitions of proud philosophy; all the inventions which owe their origin to malice, vanity, or ingenuity; all the whimsical modes of living and thinking which Fashion dictates for the employment of her idle hours, or for the gratification of her full-blown pride; the plain virtues, as they are understood by plain men of honest hearts and good faculties, improved by a competent education, are the best security for comfort under all the circumstances, and in all situations of human life. Sedentary and recluse persons may amuse themselves, in the reveries of inactivity with speculative refinement and sceptical subtleties; but they who are really wise, and earnestly wish to obtain all the happiness of which they are capable in this sublunary state, must descend from the elevated regions of sophistry, and labour to acquire, with all the assistance of common sense and common honesty, the virtues of faith, humility, piety, and benevolence.—I am happy in the opportunity of adding my testimony, inconsiderable as it may be esteemed, that all plans of conduct, and prospects of happiness, independent of these virtues, must terminate in vanity and vexation; and that these shall supply a perennial fountain of such consolation as the world can neither give nor take away.

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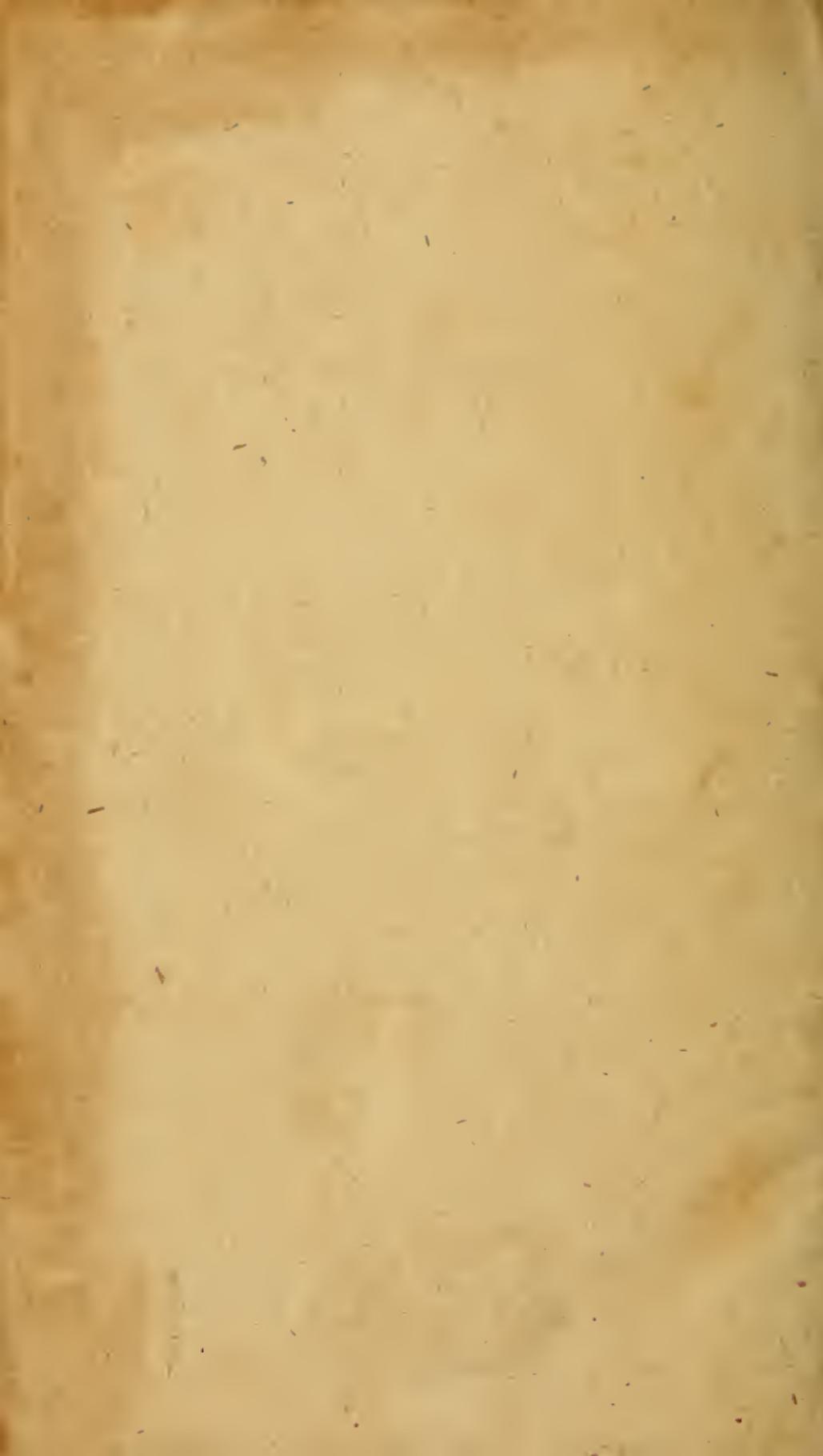


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