THE

FRIENDS, FOES, AND ADVENTURES

OF

LADY MORGAN.

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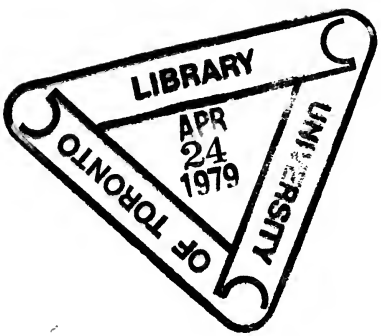

PREFACE.

WRITTEN on Irish ground, amidst the scenes of Lady Morgan's early life and labors, the Author's object in these pages has been rather to assist the researches of an accomplished English lady, who is understood to be gathering materials for the life of Lady Morgan, than to place himself forward as the Biographer of his gifted country-woman. That the writer has no ambition to appear publicly in such a character, is as evident as the motive which led to these jottings. The *Athenæum* of May 7th, 1859, has conclusively observed:—"So very little is known of Lady Morgan's early life—and so much debate has been held upon it in the political and literary squabbles of party men and women—that any light is welcome."

With the exception of some few alterations and additions, the following memoir has been reprinted from the *Irish Quarterly Review* of July, 1859.

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During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, a family of staunch Protestant principles and high respectability, settled in Connaught, of whom Robert MacOwen,* Sub-agent and Land-Steward to Sir John Browne of Castle Margaret, County Mayo, was a collateral descendant. But M'Owen's tastes inclined much more strongly to literature than to land; he was fonder of Shakespeare than of sheep-shearing; he preferred theatres to trees, full benches to fat bullocks, and thought more highly of the Hay-market than of hay-making. He liked Home better than hoggets—but not, we may add, his Connaught home, which had latterly become distasteful to him—and whilst some neighbouring agriculturists hung delighted on the bleatings and lowing of cattle, M'Owen could alone listen with pleasure to the strum of an orchestra, or the wild strains of his native country. His scantily furnished book-shelf displayed Massinger instead of Mawe; "Bowman on Farming," gave place to Beaumont and Fletcher; he was fonder of reading Rowe, than reaping rye, and loved human fairs better than cattle fairs.† Every day confirmed M'Owen more strongly and decidedly in his gay and theatrical tendencies. In in-

* The sept of MacOwen or MacKeon are of Norman descent, and the original name, as we are informed by Mr. O'Callaghan, was Bissett. In Lodge's Irish Peerage, v. i., p. 263, we have some account of Mancel de Bissett, to whom Henry III. gave the manor of East Bridgford. The Bissetts were afterwards ennobled—*vide* Lodge. v. vii. p. 105.

† "As a singer, a player, a manager, he made himself a reputation in Ireland—was more successful, it is said, among the ladies than behind the lamps."—*Athenæum*, April 16th, 1859.

trepid defiance of the "pooh, poohs!" and scowls of his "agrarian friends" he openly preferred canvas scenery to the grand Mayo mountains Croghi Patrick and Nephin; he pronounced a green curtain vastly superior in point of attraction, to the green sward; and foot-lights much pleasanter than foot-paths. Robert M'Owen was completely stage-struck—a passion which it may well be supposed an imprudent connection which he formed, with a buxom actress of celebrity, by no means diminished. On the strength of an acquaintance and Connaught relationship with Oliver Goldsmith, M'Owen applied to that great man to use his influence in promoting the objects which he had in view. Goldsmith entered *con amore* into the matter; he not only cordially promised to assist M'Owen in his project, but personally introduced him to David Garrick.

From that day all bucolic pursuits were abandoned for evermore in favour of the histrionic and the musical.

Robert M'Owen was born in Connaught at the close of the year 1744, and as Goldsmith's light was finally quenched in 1774, it may naturally be inferred that the events to which we have alluded had all taken place before the theatrically struck land-steward had reached the age of thirty. Garrick at once gave M'Owen something to do on the boards; but as a preliminary to his success the veteran actor impressed upon M'Owen the expediency of anglicising his cognomen into the softer orthography of Owenson.* "Would Macklin," said he, "have been as popular in England, had he not laid aside the broguish MacLoughlin of his fathers?" The hint was taken, and provincial playbills soon announced "first appearance of Mr. Owenson on any stage." The *debutant* had too much passion for a theatrical life to experience the slightest emotion of timidity or awkwardness. He flung himself, heart and soul, into every part which the stage manager allotted to him; and the result was that Owenson's engagement became a decided success. After a time he strengthened his popularity by calling a new accomplishment to his aid. He took lessons in singing from Doctor Arne as well as from Worgan, the composer of the beautiful Easter Hymn "Hallejujah." Worgan found Owenson an apt pupil, and urged him to cultivate the vocal taste, which he

* Innumerable entreaties were urged with a view to make Miss O'Neill change her name, but all to no effect; at last Sir William Becher, on December 18, 1819, succeeded in effecting the desideratum, inasmuch, as from that date, Miss O'Neill became Lady Becher.

did with such effect, that our player not only mastered the science of singing, but became in a short time able to compose original airs, and to put new words and symphonies to old ones. Owenson is said to have been the author of many charming Irish airs—amongst others, "My Love's the Fairest Creature;" but we are assured by Samuel Lover that in the original Irish of *Shelv nha chonos haint*, it has so long existed that all trace of the original composer is lost. An anonymous writer has pronounced Owenson to have been "the author of the music, with original words, of the song now popular as Rory O'More, and appropriated by Mr. Lover as his own," but Mr. Lover denies that he ever claimed as his own exclusive composition, that highly popular tune.

In 1776, Owenson received through Garrick's influence an engagement at Covent Garden Theatre. We have said that Owenson, when sick of his agricultural life at Castle Margaret, was fonder of reading Rowe, than of reaping rye; and this old predilection for Rowe was now sustained by our player attempting at Covent Garden, the somewhat ambitious part of *Tamerlane* in Rowe's celebrated tragedy of that name. From some of the leading London newspapers Owenson received high encomiums both on the score of his commanding figure, and his marked histrionic talent; but the *Theatrical Review* ran counter to this generous tone of criticism, called him "a gawkey," and pronounced his assumption of the part of *Tamerlane* as a gross insult to common sense and good taste. Driven from London by this poisoned arrow, "Mr. Owenson from the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden," proceeded to go the round of the provincial houses, starring it at some, and accepting very subordinate parts at others—until having made some noise at the Shrewsbury Theatre he took advantage of his temporary celebrity to make a proposal of marriage to Miss Hill, an English lady, and the lioness of the Shrewsbury company. The offer was accepted, a romantic flight ensued—why, we have not been able to ascertain—and the nuptials of the happy pair were speedily celebrated. The first fruit of this alliance was the subject of these pages. Her birth occurred, on shipboard, at sea, in 1778; so that no country can claim the honour of Lady Morgan's nativity; but as it took place when crossing the Irish Sea, she may fairly be called an Irish woman, even though her subsequent career had never been distinguished by those ennobling characteristics of nationality which have rendered the name of Lady Morgan so valued in Ireland.

Owenson was proud of his baby and resolved to celebrate its christening with becoming festivity. Ned Lysaght, the once famous extempore Irish poet, was invited to attend in the onerous capacity of sponsor, or God-papa; and Ned, with characteristic good nature, at once accepted the responsibility. He and Owenson, as two very eminent boon companions, wits, poets, and singers of convivial songs, it may well be supposed that some rivalry existed between them; but it is pleasant to find that the old adage, "two of a trade never agree," was not, in this instance, verified. Lysaght, for many years after continued to regard the tiny child with a fatherly feeling of affection and pride; and when, in 1809, death snatched him away, she felt with bitter sorrow, her doubly orphaned position.

Sydney Owenson had begun making verses before she had left the nursery. In a poetic address to her only sister Olivia, afterwards Lady Clarke, our authoress plainly states this fact:

Have I from childhood then, been writing,
And erst I well could write, inditing,
In scribbling ever still delighting;
Since first the muse
Did kindly string my infant lyre,
And o'er my mind poetic fire
As kind infuse;

Since first young Fancy's meteor beam
Did on my dawning genius gleam,
And wrapt me in poetic dream:
As oft I strove
To sing, a sigh, a smile, a tear,
Or haply, an idea dear
Of infant love!

At Sydney's premature development of bardic genius, Lysaght's interest in his little god-daughter strengthened to intensity: and in the fulness of his delight the convivial Commissioner seized his pen and threw off the following characteristic fragment.—

The muses met me once not very sober,
But full of frolic at your merry christening!
And now, this twenty-third day of October,
As they foretold, to your sweet lays I'm listening.

They called you "Infant Muse," and said your lyre
Should one day wake your nation's latent fire:
They ordered Genius garlands to entwine
For Sidney:—Me, i'faith, they plied with wine."

Lysaght survived until March 2, 1809, when he sank amid a wail, into his cold grave. He is now utterly forgotten; but one has merely to open the newspaper files of the day to ascertain that his death produced almost as singular, as strong, and as widely spread a sensation as that of "Rare Ben Jonson" himself. From the Dublin *Correspondent* of March, 1809, we rescue the following:—

"Adieu, thou soul of jest, for e'er adieu!
Wing'd by thy wit, the fleeting moments flew;
None still could say (to truth however blind)
That Lysaght's pungent jokes were e'er unkind:
Rais'd by his pun, convulsing laughs have roar'd
Round the wide circle of the festive board;
Death's frigid hand has chill'd that honest tongue,
Whence Clare's or Grattan's mimic accents rung;
Nor jest, nor jocund song, one day could save
Their gay possessor from the gloomy grave;
Wit, Patriot, Virtue, sunk alive with him,
And prov'd at length this life itself a *whim*."—JUVENIS.

Upon turning over a dozen or two more pages, filled with details of Sir JohnMoore's disastrous retreat,and the other political news, and excitement of the day, we find a second tribute to the memory of Lysaght, and written, we are inclined to think, by Owenson.—

"*He was a fellow of infinite jest, and most excellent humour and fancy.*"—SHAKSPEARE.

"Ye Friends of Genius, and of Wit draw near,
Shed o'er this Tomb a tributary tear;
Here LYSAGHT lies—Alas! of what avail
Is it to rise or fall in Fortune's scale?
The Rich, the Poor, the Humble and the High,
Wise men and Fools when Death decrees must die;
No Pomp of wealth, or Treasures of the mind
Can keep its victim one short span behind:
Death conquers all, and to the silent grave
Consigns alike the Monarch and the Slave.—
Yes—For if sterling Genius, Wit refin'd,
A sportive Fancy, an enlightened Mind,
A Muse's tongue to breathe the Seraph lay
Could have opposed a premature decay;
LYSAGHT had lived—nor could the hand of Fate
To such endowment fix so short a date;
Still would his Wit delight, his Humour flow,
And all his Talents in full lustre glow:
Nor would HIBERNIA bending o'er his Urn,
This Son of Genius and of Fancy mourn."—AMICUS.

Lysaght was a perfect type of the Irish gentleman of the old school. Lavish of money, he found himself at the age of thirty-five, with little but his pen and his pedigree. Convivial, gay, of high and dauntless spirit, he held hair-triggers as often as hock-tumblers in his right hand. Fond of the pleasures of the table, he had also a taste for the terrors of the field. Though sometimes eager to resent, he was perhaps more often impatient to forgive. As a second he was constantly in requisition: and thereby hangs a tale worth the telling. A virulent opponent of Catholicism, the Right Hon. Geo. Ogle, coarsely uttered at a public dinner in Dublin, "a papist would swallow a false oath as easily as I would a poached egg." Lysaght directed the attention of Mr. Coyle, a Catholic mercantile gentleman, to the words. Mr. Coyle was justly indignant; he committed the offensive words to paper, and approached the swaggering Privy Councillor in the Royal Exchange, asking if he had uttered them, and adding, "Sir, I am of that persuasion." Mr. Ogle turned to Alderman James, but Coyle insisted on an immediate and categorical answer. After some hesitation, Ogle admitted that he had uttered the words, and did not disavow them. "Then," replied Coyle, "your conduct was ungentlemanlike, and unworthy of a man and a Christian."

After some days' private consultation with his friends, whether a Privy Councillor could condescend to call out a mercantile gentleman, Mr. Ogle was assured by his particular friend, J. C. Beresford, that the dignity of a P. C. would not screen him from the notice of such an insult. Mr. Ogle sent a challenge to Mr. Coyle, which was accepted, and Edward Lysaght acted as second to the latter. The parties met and exchanged four shots without effect. Coyle insisted upon sending home for his own pistols, for he would not quit the ground, till one or the other fell. Thereupon, J. C. Beresford, who with many hundreds were on the field, went up to Mr. Ogle, and told him, that finding Mr. Coyle so determined, he begged to be allowed to draw up an explanation. J. C. Beresford wrote in pencil upon a paper, which he rested on the crown of his hat, a declaration from Mr. Ogle, that the words he had uttered were not meant to apply to the *Catholics*, but to *rebels*, on which Mr. Coyle declared himself satisfied. Previous to the settlement, Judge Chamberlain had entered the field, and commanded the principals and seconds to attend at his house to enter recognizances; but Lysaght declared, that this circumstance should not, and it did not prevent the explanation.

This was among the first efforts made by the long down-trodden Catholics of Ireland to regain their feet, and to wrest the scourge from the grasp of their tormentors.

Lysaght wrote a great number of merry national songs. One in particular descriptive of low Irish life at Donnybrook Fair will probably live for ever. Paddy

"Steps into a tent just to spend half-a-crown,
Comes out, meets a friend, and for love* knocks him down.
With his Sprig of Shillelah and Shamrock so green."

In politics Lysaght had unfortunately no fixed principle. A patriot to-day and a courtier to-morrow, he would fling awkward squibs at the feet of royalty now, and the next minute hurl a disconcerting cracker into the ranks of the popular party. He ridiculed the opponents of the Union with his pen, and received cash in acknowledgement from Lord Castlereagh.† Of his rebel effusions the stanzas containing,

"Green were the fields that our forefathers dwelt on,

And

Where the loud cannons rattle to battle we'll go,"

were the most spirited and stirring.

Thomas Moore was a warm admirer of Lysaght's genius, and strains. Dean Meyler recently informed us that in a conversation which he had with Moore in 1833, the latter expressively observed—"I look back on Lysaght with feelings of admiration and love. All his words were like *drops of music.*"

But this digresssion is, we fear, almost unpardonable. To return to the "infant muse," as Lysaght called his tiny god-child.

Mr. Owenson selected the name of Sydney for his little daughter, in fond recollection of the benevolent government of Sir Henry Sydney in the reign of Elizabeth, during which auspicious period, the Protestant family from whom he was

* "*Joy*" in Lysaght's original version.—Ed.

† Sir Jonah Barrington, an uncompromising and formidable foe to the Union, tells us in the *third,* and suppressed volume of his *Personal Sketches,* that Lysaght lampooned him unmercifully. "I told him," writes Sir Jonah, "that if he found me a good chopping block, he was heartily welcome to hack away as long as he could get anything by the butchery. He shook me cordially by the hand, swore I was 'a d——d good fellow,' and the next day took me at my word, by lampooning me very sufficingly in a copy of verses entitled '*The Devil in the Lantern.*'"

collaterally descended had settled in the West of Ireland. This statement is made on the authority of Lady Morgan.

The next glimpse which we obtain of Robert Owenson, after the harsh criticism of the *Theatrical Review* on his "gawkey" personation of Tamerlane, is in the year 1775, when we find him joint proprietor of Smock-alley Theatre with Thomas Ryder; but the latter being unable to discharge an arrear of rent which had accumulated, he was necessitated to surrender the theatre to Richard Daly, of whom John O'Keefe and Sir Jonah Barrington, have left us so many amusing details in their respective "Recollections." Owenson's pecuniary losses by his connection with Ryder must have been considerable; but there are no documents in existence to furnish an idea of their extent. The quondam land agent would seem, for the moment, to have been thoroughly sick of theatricals. Owenson now embarked in mercantile concerns, and became a wine merchant; but he soon got tired of his new vocation; and abandoned sherry for Sheridan, and rum for Rowe. In 1779, we find him figuring at the Theatre Royal, Crow-street, Dublin, and regarded as one of the most respectable and popular performers on the Dublin boards. His appearance told strongly in his favour; all accounts, traditional and documental, concur in representing Owenson as the possessor of a noble, stalwart figure, a commanding aspect, Celtic features, with a most gentlemanly manner and deportment. The attack of the *Theatrical Review* had stung Owenson to the quick, but it did not nerve him to renewed exertion and stronger ambition; tragedy in general, and *Tamerlane* in particular, were abandoned as a bad job; and the lighter walks of comedy, and Irish drama, were now trod, with considerable success, by Mr. Owenson. His commanding figure and deportment were points which, as already observed, told well in his favour.

Dramatic singers were scarce moreover; Incledon and Braham had not yet appeared before the public; and the lessons which Owenson had some years previously received from Worgan and Arne, now stood to him gloriously. "His singing the Irish songs," writes one who knew Owenson well, "being master of the Irish language, as also a perfect musician, as to voice, had great effect with the admirers of our national melody. His Major O'Flaherty, was a great favourite; but his prime character was Teague in the *Committee, or the Faithful Irishman,* in which, wrapped in a blanket, and flourishing his great oaken

cudgel, he sung an Irish planxty, perfect in language, style and action; all which rendered his benefits very substantial; Owenson sent me over this tune, and to it I wrote the Finale to the *Poor Soldier*." *

About 1780, Owenson used to perform the character of "Phelim O'Flanagan," in a popular interlude which introduced various Italian and Gaelic songs, including the original of Carolan's *Receipt for Drinking*, and the famous Pleá paca na Ruabcac in Irish and English.† The latter version, if we remember rightly, began :—

"O'Ruarc's noble feast will ne'er be forgot,
By those who were there, and by those who were not."

Owenson's great success in singing that class of strain to which we have alluded, was attributable to the profound acquintance with the Irish tongue, which he necessarily formed during the long period of his sojourn in Connaught, where the vernacular language is spoken almost exclusively by the laboring classes, among whom the duties of his situation obliged him to mix.

The Dublin Theatre was, at the period of which we write, in a condition the very reverse of prosperous. The actors were most irregularly paid, and many strange expedients are recorded to which the performers resorted in order to compel the manager to pay up arrears. John O'Keefe, in his "Recollections," informs us that one night when the lessee as King Lear was supported in the arms of an actor who played Kent, the "latter in a whisper said, 'If you don't give me your honour, sir, that you'll pay me this night, I'll let you drop about the boards.' The manager, alarmed, said, 'don't talk to me now.' 'I will,' said Kent, 'I'll let you drop.' Mossop was obliged to give the promise, and Kent got his money."‡

In 1780, Ryder, the manager of Crow-street Theatre, was reduced to great embarrassment in consequence of an opposition theatre in Smock-alley. On one occasion when the play was by command of the Lord Lieutenant, the players came forward and announced that the company, having been for some time unpaid, would not perform. The manager, then confined to his room from severe illness, advertised that he would appear on the stage and state his case to the public. When Ryder came for-

* Recollections of John O'Keefe, vol. i. p. 355.
† Gilbert's History of Dublin, vol. ii. p. 203.
‡ Recollections of John O'Keefe, vol. i. p. 158.

ward his appearance was so ghastly that the audience called the prompter to bring him a chair, seated on which he read various documents to show that the most clamorous performers were these who in reality had the least cause of complaint. Robert Owenson made an effort to answer Ryder, but the audience would not listen to him.*

The result of a few substantial benefits at Crow-street enabled Owenson to hire successively some of the provincial Theatres in Ireland; and accompanied by a small but select company he went the round of them in 1781. Early personal associations, as well as ancestral considerations, led him to give the preference of selection to the Province of Connaught. For several years subsequently we find him performing alternately at Castlebar, Sligo, and Athlone, together with his diminutive, but singularly precocious daughter, who in 1788 was brought forward as "An Infant Prodigy." "I well remember," writes the late Dr. Joseph Burke of the Rifle Brigade in a letter before us, "I well remember the pleasure with which I saw Owenson personate Major O'Flaherty in Cumberland's then highly popular Comedy of the *West Indian*, and I also well remember that the long-afterwards widely-famed Lady Morgan performed at the same time, with her father, either in the *West Indian* or an afterpiece. This took place at Castlebar before the merry, convivial Lord Tyrawley and the Officers of the North Mayo militia. Their reception was euthusiastic in the extreme."

Richard Daly was the high-flying Lessee of the Theatre Royal, Crow-street, Dublin, at this period. He held the patent conjointly with Francis Higgins, surnamed the Sham Squire, who as we learn for the first time from the recently published Cornwallis Papers, received the Government reward for the betrayal of Lord Edward Fitzgerald. The *Dublin Evening Post*, then the exclusive organ of the popular party, poured a perpetual broadside of ridicule on Daly and Higgins. The Sham Squire was the proprietor of the Government newspaper of that day, and Daly seems to have been vilified on no other grounds than those furnished by the old adage, "show me the company you keep, and I will tell you who you are." In the *Dublin Evening Post* of May and June, 1789, we find frequent poetic squibs exploding at Daly's expense. One which casually mentions the name of Owenson we subjoin. Daly's days of prosperity were, at this time, numbered:

* Gilbert's Dublin, ii. 204.

And is it come to this, at last, he cried,
Gone is the food of all my former pride;
No more will actors on my steps attend,
Or humble actresses obedient bend.
No more will authors at my levee wait,
No more I'll damn their works in pompous state;
No more shall Bellinggen's frail charms avail.
And now no stage is left me but a gaol.
E'en now perhaps with joys does Chalmers burn,
And Owenson will kick me in his turn.
* * * * * * * *
Yet this shall end my woes and me, he cried,
And drew the glittering weapon from his side;
But as too hard the yielding blade he prest,
The tragic tin bent harmless on his breast.

It is a fact worthy of note, and curiously illustrative of the lax system of law prevailing in Ireland at the period of which we write, that Richard Daly having swore that in consequence of this Poem he had received damages to the amount £4,000! Lord Chief Justice Clonmel granted a fiat against the Proprietor of the *Evening Post*, marked with that exorbitant amount, although the damages subsequently given by the Jury were £200 only. The Chief Justice's unconstitutional conduct was brought before Parliament, and the result was a law restricting the judges in future to an inferior and definite sum.

Moore in his *Memoirs of R. B. Sheridan*, tells us that in consequence of the bad acting of Lee as Sir Lucius O'Trigger, the famous comedy of *The Rivals* failed on its first representation. In Ireland the play became intensely popular; and it is no extravagant flight of imagination to conjecture that Owenson's personation of the belligerent Irish Baronet contributed, in no small degree, to the success of the piece. It was as a delineator of the Irish character—not of slang characters, but of Irish gentlemen, such as Tyrone Power achieved with such *eclat*—that Owenson eventually became so famous; and there can be no doubt that Sir Lucius was a rich treat in his hands. That Owenson was among the cast of the characters at Crow-street, has not been recorded by Moore, but in the *Dublin Chronicle* of May 10th, 1791, we find it announced that "on Thursday, May 12th, will be presented a comedy, called *The Rivals*—Sir Lucius O'Trigger, Mr. Owenson."

But it was in the character of Major O'Flaherty that Owenson took the public heart by storm. Richard Cumberland, the author of the play, went specially to witness Owenson's vivid realization of this favorite conception. The veteran

dramatist was in ecstacies at Owenson's acting; and when at length, the curtain fell, he bemoaned, almost with tears, that he had not given the major more to do and say.

But perhaps that which reflects the highest honour on the memory of Robert Owenson, is the generous and uncalculating protection and patronage which he afforded the unfortunate poet, Dermody, favorably pseudonymed "the Irish Chatterton." An account of this more than kind conduct on the part of Owenson runs, stragglingly, through a memoir of Dermody, in two volumes, written by the late James Grant Raymond in 1806. This somewhat diffuse narrative, we shall endeavor, in justice to Owenson's memory, to condense.

"While Dermody was thus employed in the painting-room, as superintendent of the glue, oil, and colour-pots," writes his biographer, "Mr. Cherry, now of Drury-lane theatre, with great rapture brought one morning into the green-room a poem written, as he said, by a most surprising boy then in the house. The subject of it was highly agreeable and entertainiag to the performers: being a sarcastic comparison between Mr. Daly, patentee of the Theatre Royal, and Mr. Astley, manager of the equestrian theatre; in which the feats of the latter were humorously and satirically enlarged upon. The description which Mr. Cherry gave of the boy, together with the merit of the composition, raised among the performers the greatest curiosity to see him; and, led on by Cherry, they rushed from the green-room to the place where the painter and his wonderful attendant were at work. If their astonishment was excited on hearing the poem read, it was now increased tenfold at the sight of the author. Infantine in appearance, and clad in the very garb of wretchedness; with a meagre, half-starved, but intelligent countenance; a coat much too large for him, and his shoulders and arms seen naked through it; without waistcoat, shirt, or stockings; with a pair of breeches made for a full-grown person, soiled and ragged, reaching to his ancles; his uncovered toes thrust through a pair of old slippers without heels, almost of the magnitude of Kamtskatka snow-shoes; his hair clotted with glue, and his face and almost naked body smeared and disfigured with paint of different colours, black, blue, red, green, and yellow:—thus in amazement stood before them, with a small pot of size in one hand, and a hair-brush in the other, the translator of Horace, Virgil, and Anacreon!—Each of the performers felt a sympathetic glow of tenderness

for the wretched boy, and each seemed anxious to administer to his necessities. Among the number was Mr. Owenson; a gentleman conspicuous for his domestic attachments, and distinguished by his humanity. In him Dermody found a benefactor: he treated him with tenderness, received him into his family with affection, clothed, and became a second parent to him.

"At the appointed time, Dermody made his appearance at the house of his new friend. The description which Mrs. Owenson had received of him from her husband, raised in her mind the greatest anxiety; and, being a lady of extreme feeling and sensibility, on seeing before her a child so forlorn and destitute, she burst into a flood of tears, clasped him in her arms, and gave vent to the noblest feelings of humanity.

"When he had partaken of some refreshment, which was pressed upon him with the warmest cordiality, Mr. Owenson asked him if he had any knowledge of the history of the college, or of its members. He answered, that the only information he had ever received, was that which magazines had occasionally given him. As Mr. Owenson's plan was to get him introduced to some distinguished person in the university, he thought that a theme on the subject which he had just mentioned would be a probable mode of paving the way to so desirable an object: he therefore gave him a slight account of it, and desired him to write down his thoughts in verse, and to notice the professors and students of the present day. Dermody took his leave; and in less than three quarters of an hour returned with about fifty lines, written as if he had been acquainted with the history of the university since its foundation was laid. Mr. Owenson was so much astonished at what he had done in the short time of his absence, that he began to doubt the possibility of his having been without some secret assistance from more matured talents; and lest he himself should be imposed upon, and laughed at for his credulity, he immediately carried pen, ink, and paper, into an adjoining room, gave him another subject to write upon, closed the door, and with impatience waited the result. In twenty minutes he re-entered, and produced a poem that would have made any further disbelief in his genius a crime. Mr. Owenson, being now fully convinced that he was in every respect what he had been represented to be, with all the reality of friendship and the ardour of humanity, put in force the plan of getting him an immediate introduction to the college." So far Mr. Raymond.

Owenson's generous interest in the boy increased, and through the instrumentality of his kinsman, the Rev. Dr. Young, afterwards bishop of Clonfert, he labored with success in getting Dermody admission to the university of Dublin. Dr. Young, who was a Senior Fellow and Professor in the college, undertook to superintend the young poet's studies.

"Though the prospect was flattering," continues Mr. Raymond, "which now opened for Dermody's future comfort and pursuits, Mr. Owenson's zeal was still unabated; and he carried and introduced him in the same garments to many of the most exalted characters in Dublin. His reception was uniformly such as humanity could wish. Mr. Owenson always introduced him in rags, that his appearance might excite both wonder and compassion. The general plan which he adopted when the ceremony of introduction was over (which sometimes created much mirth) was, to ask for a Horace; and desire the gentleman or lady of the house either to open the book and take an ode by chance, or to fix on any particular one, and then in the presence of the company he made Dermody translate it into English verse; which he always did with a peculiar grace, and in as short a time as any person could construe it in. When Mr. Owenson had fully satisfied their curiosity and gratified the feelings of the company, he generally left them, in order that at a future time he might have a claim on their generosity.

"He now fitted up an apartment for him in his own house, stripped him of his rags, made him the companion of his children,and treated him with all the endearing affection of a father. He had just lost his only son, and he considered this as a substitute sent by Providence. Mrs. Owenson, who loved genius under whatever form it presented itself, and who united to this intellectual propensity a benevolence the most unbounded, entered with the fondest solicitude into the interest of the child of her adoption, and taught her two amiable daughters to consider him almost as a being of a superior order. Her injunction was at all times held too sacred to be disobeyed; but in the present case indeed it was unnecessary; from their mother they inherited the tender throb of sensibility, and light and pleasant as the day was the task they had now to perform.

"As soon as a new wardrobe was prepared for Dermody, he made a burnt-offering of his old, and committed his former habiliments to the flames with classic solemnity; creating his new sisters, high-priestesses of the altar, and their mother the

presiding idol of the ceremony. While he stood in silence viewing the flames, his conscience appeared to strike him; and with a want of refined delicacy which his youth rendered innocent and perfectly excusable even before such spectators, eagerly snatching his *breeches* from the general conflagration, he thus apostrophized them."

But the poem, which is below Dermody's average power, the reader will readily excuse us for withholding.

In eccentricity of movement, mental and bodily, and in tendency to laziness, Dermody was "every inch a poet;" and Mr. Owenson soon discovered, to his no small chagrin, that the bard's attendance at college had been most capriciously irregular. Whenever he paid Dr. Young a visit it was to discharge a flood of tears at the scholastic drudgery which had been opened, by special favour, to him; and to bewail the loss of these caresses which he once enjoyed in the arms of the muses. "As often as possible," writes Mr. Raymond, "he would sculk from what he called torture, and spend his hours playing with his adopted sisters, or in writing sonnets appropriate to the familiar incidents of their happy home." Although Dr. Young possessed a poet's cognomen he had neither bardic tatent nor taste; and Dermody, as may be supposed, soon fell into dire disgrace at Alma Mater.

Mr. Owenson's intentions to serve Dermody did not stop here. He introduced the boy to the Rev. Gilbert Austin, a clergyman of great worth and learning who at that time kept a school of deservedly high repute in Dublin. Mr. Austin entered earnestly into the matter, and a plan was immediately adopted for the completion of his studies. Dermody continued for some time to attend the academy; but he evidenced greater regularity in seeking his meals and bed at the house of his benefactor, than in penetrating the depths of Murray's Logic, or unravelling the mysteries of the Greek Lexicon.

Not long subsequent to this date we find Dermody thus addressing Mr. Owenson.

> Long has my muse, devoid of wonted fire,
> Her song neglected, and unstrung her lyre;
> Too long, alas! has felt the iron hand
> Of dire affliction;—but at thy command
> Again she tunes her strain; again she tries
> On feeble pinion eagerly to rise;
> Again the bard renews his ancient lays,

And humbly dares attempt to sing thy praise;
Praise which, though void of ev'ry grace of art,
Yet flows unstudied from a grateful heart;
For though no flatt'ry decks my servile line,
Yet truth superior makes thy fame divine.
I say but that which modesty might hear,
Yet unabash'd confess these lines sincere.

But these lines by no means convey an adequate idea of Dermody's ordinary poetic power.

"His adopted sisters," continues Mr. Raymond, "in whose society he passed so many happy hours, were too affectionately regarded not to receive frequent tender marks of his esteem; and in the innocent play-mate they found the kind admonisher.

Dear girls, in youth and beauty's prime
Despise not friendship's graver rhyme;
Friendship, that marks your early bloom
Perfection's brightest tints assume.
The tints of modest worth divine,
When sense and harmless wit combine,
Prompt each low passion to control,
Or bind in rosy chains the soul.
Oh, ever charming! let not Pride,
Usurper bold, your breasts divide,
Nor fashion beauteous nature hide;
Assur'd your soft eyes' radiant hue
Can heal, disturb, and conquer too:
Oh! let not Affectation, queen
Of the nice lisp, the mincing mien,
And studied glance, obscure their rays,
Blighting the bloomy wreath of praise.
Yet, sure, this idly moral strain
Is both presumptuous and vain:
For well your tender hearts I know;
Hearts formed to melt at every woe,
Virtue to sooth, vice to chastise,
And shine in bounteous pity wise.—
Yet num'rous is the tinsel race
That hover round a lovely face,
As round the candle's beamy blaze
Their brother-insect wildly plays.
When by those idiot suitors prest,
'Mid the gay flatt'rers falsely blest,
Ador'd and borne by sighs, you move
On the frail, floating, clouds of love;
When fell Deceit, in angel guise,
True demon, plans the pleasing lies;
Look round, and if you haply see
No honest face—oh! think on *me*.

The unfortunate young poet was not long in falling into as high disfavor with Mr. Austin as he had previously done with Dr. Young. Some practical Anacreontic tendencies aroused the virtuous ire of the clergyman. He quarrelled with Dermody; ordered him to perform some menial offices; and the poet retaliated by writing a very caustic lampoon on his preceptor. Mr. Austin had previously shewn him many solid acts of kindness; but all intimacy was now irrevocably at an end, and the frail bard was forbidden Mr. Austin's house for ever. "Mr. Owenson," says the biographer of Dermody, "was not one of these stern and relentless moralists, who, for a few youthful irregularities, would abandon the object of his care to perpetual distress. He grieved at the cause which obliged Mr. Austin to withdraw his protection; but at the same time he had the tenderness not to suffer the late object of it to be driven forth an outcast, to despair and perish."

He accordingly introduced Dermody to Mr. Atkinson, Judge Advocate of Ireland, through whom the poor boy-poet was patronised and almost adopted by Lady Moira. But even this great patroness of literature became, eventually, disgusted with Dermody, who had now fallen into habits of intemperance and levity. He sank from bad to worse until at last death seemed a happy release to his misery.

In this deplorable state Dermody remained for a considerable time, and were it not for his tried and steady friend Robert Owenson, by whose interest he was enabled to publish a volume of poems, he would probably have perished for want of bread. So assiduous was Owenson in his exertions to make the publication profitable that he frequently took his stand in an eminent bookseller's shop, and not only offered the book for sale to the persons who entered, with an introductory sketch of the doleful history of the luckless bard, but absolutely accosted the passengers who passed the door. The biographer of Dermody assures us that Mr. Owenson "was very generally known and respected, and he was rarely unsuccessful in these applications." Owenson thus procured him considerable relief. Nor were Dermody's personal applications to the good natured actor less productive. That his situation was often as pitiable as his benefactor's liberality was praiseworthy and acceptable will appear from the following correspondence:—

To Mr. Owenson, No. 60 *Dame-Street.*

Your bounty to me has been like the Ocean, boundless and illimitable. From my appearance I am almost ashamed to call upon you. I shall only say that I have fasted for a longer time than caused the death of Chatterton.

THOMAS DERMODY.

To this appeal Owenson replied:

"Accept the enclosed; and while so poor a man as myself can purchase a loaf you shall never want a share of it, in common with my dear girls. In answer to your former note call at Mr. Dixon's, corner of Crow-street, and by my desire he will give you three pair of stockings: it will be time enough to get some of that commodity when you enter the College, if ever you should have grace enough to accomplish so desired an object. Get them of such a kind as will be useful, not fashionable. Call at Rourk's and you will get a pair of shoes. I think you want them."

The biographer of Dermody adds: "Though foreign to the main subject it is a just tribute of praise due to Mr. Owenson to say, that he has bestowed an education upon his daughters which has enabled them to associate with the first characters for rank and talents in Ireland, and by whom they are esteemed. Miss Sydney Owenson possesses a true poetic fancy."*

It was not until eight years after the birth of Sydney Owenson, that her only sister Olivia, the subsequent Lady Clarke, made her appearance. A son followed, who died young; and these three children constituted the sole result of Robert Owenson's alliance with Olivia Hill. In what year Mrs. Owenson died, we have not been able to ascertain; but it is at least certain that she was not living in 1789.† She lived quite long enough, however, to leave an indelible impression on the mind of little Sydney, and to endear her memory, in a peculiar manner, to the children. In the course of some lines on her "Birth Day," written about the year 1798, when Owenson became reduced to comparative penury, Sydney refers to

"The cheap, the guileless joys of youthful hours,
The strength'ning intellect's expanding powers;
The doating glance of fond maternal eyes,
The soft endearment of life's earliest ties:

* Raymond's Life of Dermody, v. ii. p. 10.
† *Ibid*, v. i., p. 106.

The anxious warning that so often glow'd
On these dear lips, whence truth and fondness flowed.

Those lips that ne'er the stern command impos'd,
These thrice dear lips—for ever, ever closed!
The griefs with which my later life has teem'd;
The loss of golden hopes I fondly dream'd,
Of glittering expectations past away,
As sun-ting'd vapours of a summer day!

* * * * * *

What sweet and sad extremes I'm doom'd to know
From bliss ecstatic to corrosive woe:
Obscur'd, conceal'd, my future prospects lie,
Nor more I know than that I'm born to die."

The children must have been very young when deprived of their poor mother's protection, and from that sad day their love, as was only natural, became entwined around the remaining parent, with concentrated intensity. Owenson's domestic virtues were well calculated to promote this filial feeling. "I well remember," observed the late Counsellor George Stowell, in a conversation with J. C. O'Callaghan, "I well remember admiring the undeviating regularity with which Owenson, twice a day, would take his little daughters, Olivia and Sydney, out to walk. With a child tenderly held by each hand, Owenson, every inch a model widower, would daily leave the gaieties of the city behind, and treat his tiny daughters to a healthful walk in the calm country."

The following little Poem, written by Sydney Owenson in 1796, and suggested by a portrait of her father, is not without its charms and beauties:—

Dear shade of him my heart holds more than dear,
Author of all that fond heart's purest bliss;
Dear shade, I hail thee with a rapturous tear,
And welcome thee with many a tender kiss!

This brow indeed is his; broad, candid, fair,
Where nature's honest characters are wrote;
But o'er the beauteous transcript, morbid Care
And Time, of late, their ruthless fingers smote!

And this th' expressive eye, whose glance I've woo'd,
(For ah! beneath that glance each task seemed light;)
I've seen this eye with tears of fondness dew'd,
And through the lucid radiance beam more bright.

Seen it transfix'd with sweet, approving gaze,
On some faint strain the youthful muse inspir'd;
Seen it for hours pursue the pencil's maze,
With parent pride, and partial fondness fir'd!

But painter, far above thy wond'rous art
Were these dear lips ;—dear lips where ever play'd
The smile benignant, where the honest heart
In undisguis'd effusions, careless strayed !

Dear lips where oft each fond endearment glow'd,
Less prompt to emanate reproof than praise ;
Dear lips from whence the anxious counsel flow'd,
The moral precepts, or amusive lays.

These shoulders too I've climbed to steal a kiss,
These locks my infant hands have oft carest ;
These arms I oft have filled, and shared the bliss,
For ah ! with me, these arms a sister prest !

Twin objects of the tenderest father's care,
A mother's loss we rather knew than felt ;
Twin objects still of every ardent prayer,
On whom each thought, each fear, each fond hope dwelt !

Come then, thou thrice dear shade, for ah ! no more,
Thou true and lov'd resemblance will we part ;
For till the last faint thrill of life is o'er,
Dear shade, I'll wear thee next my beating heart !

And so she did. A more filially fond heart never existed ; and to the last day of Lady Morgan's long life, her father's memory and portrait were venerated and treasured by her with an ardour of enthusiasm, as edifying as it was intense.

In another juvenile poem, entitled "Retrospection," we catch a further glimpse of Sydney Owenson's mode of life in childhood. The concluding stanzas of this piece, which possess all the authentic interest of a little autobiography, we transcribe. Ill natured critics will not fail to seize eagerly on "the oaten-cake or new-laid egg," and to pooh, pooh ! such abbreviations as "*and 's.*" and "*Car'lan ;*" but it must be remembered, in extenuation, that the authoress was yet in her teens, and that the beauties of her youthful essay more than counterbalance its defects.

I sought the hawthorn tree, beneath whose shade,
Full oft I pass'd my truant hours gay,
The spot where once it bloom'd I quickly found,
The tree itself had droop'd into decay !

I sought the cot, near my parental home,
Where oft I stole the warlock tale to hear,
To feast on oaten cake or new laid egg,
I found the place ;—alas ! no cot was there ;

And you, ye treasur'd objects of my heart!
Dear, lov'd companions of my early days,
With whom I ran my life's first frolic course,
Mingled my smiles, and sung my untaught lays!

Oft on a stream that wound its trickling way,
I well remember, near our lov'd abode,
We venturous launch'd our barks of paper built,
Freighted with currants red, (delicious load.)

And as (true emblem of our careless days,
Gliding life's stream) we eager bent our eyes,
On passing ship, for theirs who swiftest sail'd,
Claim'd both the fleet and fruit, a glorious prize!

Full various were our sports, yet not in sports
Alone, pass'd on the tenor of our days;
To romps succeeded oft th' instructive page,
And even wisdom mingled with our plays!

The next verse alludes to the unfortunate Dermody, whom Owenson had so generously befriended. This kindness, it will be perceived, brought its own recompense.

And you my sometime brother, o'er whose birth
Genius presided! wit new strung his lyre;
The muse her future bard to slumbers sung,
And e'en his lisping numbers did inspire!

Thou form'd my infant taste, and from thy lips,
My mind imbib'd th' enthusiastic glow;
The love of literature, which thro' my life
Heighten'd each bliss, and soften'd every woe!

My sainted mother too, methinks I view
Thy endearing smile, my ever sweet reward;
For each unfolding talent ever gain'd
Thy fond approvings, and thy dear regard.

Even still methinks, soft vibrate in mine ear,
Thy well remember'd tones, and still I trace
In thy dear eyes, thy fond maternal love,
Catch thy last look, and feel thy last embrace.

The dying wish that hover'd o'er thy lips,
Thy last, last words, soft, trembling, broken, faint,
That my sad breaking heart receiv'd of thine,
And spoke the woman's conquest o'er the saint!

Were these, "dear child of all my tenderest care,
Transfer that duteous love to me you pay'd,
To thy dear sire;—live but for him," and died;—
Say blessed spirit, have I disobey'd?

Oft does my mem'ry sketch the social group,
At closing eve, that circled round the fire ;
Sweet hour that fondly knits each human tie,
Unites the children, mother, friend, and sire !

Full oft the legendary tale went round,
Historic truth, or Car'lan's heart-felt song ;
For though but little understood, I ween
We lov'd the music of our native tongue !

And oft went round the puzzling, forfeit game,
Play'd with nice art, and many a sportive jest ;
Repeated oft—yet sure to win a laugh,
For those we longest know, we lov'd the best !

Dear happy group, and e'en as happy good,
While guileless spirits from each other torn !
Why has the world unclasp'd thy social bond,
And left my heart its fond hope's wreck to mourn ?

Thus calmly flows some pure, expansive stream,
Pellucid, clear, while o'er its surface plays
The soften'd shade of each o'er-drooping plant,
The moon's pale beam, or sun's meridian rays !

But lo ! should earth's convulsive struggles throw
Th' impending rock in scatter'd masses o'er,
'Tis forc'd to disunite in sep'rate streams,
Dwindles to viewless rills, and 's seen no more !

No attempt has hitherto been made to trace the scene of Miss Owenson's scholastic exercises and acquirements. Having applied to a party competent to furnish authentic information on this head, we received for reply ; "Little Sydney was educated by Miss Crowe, who kept an eminent seminary in North Earl-street, Dublin."

In the Dublin Directory from 1787 to 1801, the name "Elizabeth Crowe, Milliner, 20 North Earl-street," appears on record. That this establishment had some connection with "the eminent seminary" up stairs, we are inclined to think likely. The local customs of the time sanctioned such a combination. Every student of the literary history of Ireland towards the close of the last century, is familiarly acquainted with the name of Samuel Whyte, the accomplished preceptor of the Duke of Wellington, Sheridan, Moore, and Emmet. Whyte was a man of distinguished erudition, and a poet of no mean calibre. His seminary was, as Moore's Life of Sheridan

informs us, the first in the metropolis. Wilson's Directories of the period thus notice it:—

"Whyte, Samuel, Master of the Seminary for English Grammar, Geography, &c. } 75 Grafton-street."
Whyte, William, Grocer, }

When we find that Whyte's* famous Academy for Young Gentlemen was admittedly none the worse for its proximity to figs, sugar, and bottled cider, it would be hardly just or fair to pooh! pooh! Miss Crowe's seminary for young ladies, because the shop below may have displayed a large and varied assortment of colossal hats, and other obsolete, but once fashionable articles of female head-gear.

The public are indebted to the Rev. James Graves, of Kilkenny, for having preserved the following characteristic and interesting, but not particularly important epistle, from little Sydney, at school in Dublin, to her father at the theatre, Cork. Marlborough-street, to which she alludes, is situated, as most people know, within one minute's walk of the site of Miss Crowe's Academy.

"*October*, 30, 1794.

"I have so often expatiated on the subject of suspence, that it would be mere tautology to say what I have felt at my D^r^ Papa's long silence; or rather to attempt saying, for sensations of that kind are easier conciev'd than express'd, and tho' your D^r^ Letter disipated my fears, yet I am not free from uneasiness. That affection which is ever alive in the bosom of

* Mr. Q——, of the Black Rock, now in his eighty-first year, is, with one exception, the last surviving pupil of Whyte's. That gentleman is our authority for the statement that the late Duke of Wellington received instruction at Whyte's academy. Mr. Q—— has heard his old precepter vauntingly declare, that he had flogged the breech of the subjugator of Tippoo Saib. How vastly would Mr. Whyte's pride have been increased, had he lived to boast that the conqueror of Napoleon had been under his hand, and piteously cried for mercy at his knees! Mr. Q—— tells us that Whyte's taste and talent for flogging were not inferior to Mr. Squeers's passion in the same direction. Although his right arm was short almost to deformity, it possessed great strength, and was the terror of every pupil. "Such brutal flogging," observes Mr. Q——, "would now no more be tolerated than an insolent attempt at assault and battery in the public streets." The very interesting reminiscences of Emmet with which Mr. Q—— has favoured us, we shall use on some future occasion. Whyte died October 4th, 1811.

a *fond* child shrinks with *sensitive* feeling from the touch of apprehension, and is only to be convinced by ocular demonstration. Thus (unthankful as I am) I shall never be happy until I see you comfortably seated by the fire-side in our little parlor, and myself still more comfortably seated on y^r^ knee (provided the burden be not too heavy) listening attentively while you the 'tale unfold,' and when 'tis finished I exclaim with Desdemona,.,'tis true 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true'; but the quotation would not be applicable to every part of your unfolded tale, as the conduct and benevolent attention of y^r^ Physician and Mr. Brennan, merits a better reflection; when I think on their goodness to you the words of Madame de Genlis always occurs to my mind, 'Virtue may be acquired, but goodness is a gift of nature,' and nature has been so profuse in that respect to both Gentlemen, that if acquired virtue had a mind to step in, she would not find a single vacant spot to take possession of: what happiness it would give me to return personal thanks to these friends in the most literal sense of the word, is needless to say, as every friend who by their efficacious endeavours have contributed to the restoration of my D^r^ Papa's health must be dear to me. You complain that I am sparing of my paper, but really, My Dear Sir, if you were enclosed within the walls of a boarding school y^r^ self, you would find something to say no easy matter. As for news you will see more in a day's paper than I could send you in a week; and for writing on any subject that may occur, it is not so easy as you *Beaux esprits* imagine. The muses, like all other ladies, are whimsical and inconstant, and it requires no little art to keep in their good graces. At one time they will preside over every line, at another they will scarcely deign to look over y^r^ shoulder: so you may always judge of my Muse's temper by the style of my letter. We spent two delightful evenings at Mrs. Lynche's of Marlborough-st. She is the most hospitable and the best natured woman I ever met with. There is a very fine grand forte piano, and I am highly gratified with my favorite amusement. We are to drink tea there tomorrow evening. I should not have visited them only I was pretty sure of y^r^ permission, as it was y^r^ wish I should go to the Play with them one night, and any one you would wish me to appear in public with, I am sure you would have no objection to in private. I sent Molly to Mr. Dixon's, who says there is no one in the world he would so soon have as yourself, and that tho' more than one have been about them he has kept them

for you.* You can have a drawing-room and dining-room, and bed-chamber on the first floor, and bed-chamber on the second, with kitchen entirely to y^r self for 40 guineas per year, they are fitted up in a very elegant style. God bless you my D^r Papa, take care of y^r self. "S. OWENSON.

"I sent to-day to Mr. Lee's for some music, he seem'd quite pleased that I did so, and begg'd I would send when ever I wanted any.†

"Mr. Owenson, Theatre, Cork."

Sam Lee, to whom Sydney Owenson alludes, was the leader of the band in Crow-street Theatre, and, as John O'Keefe tells us in his *Recollections*, the first public performer on the violin. He opened a music shop on Cork-hill, and a coffee-house in Exchange-street, both of which were much encouraged and frequented. He was by turns, witty, proud, resentful, and obliging. One evening, when returning to Dublin, after meeting some friends at a convivial dinner, he interchanged some warm words with one of them. In consequence of this he refused to walk on the same side of the road with his quondam friend: in a passion he crossed over to the other side, missed his footing, fell down a steep, received some inward injuries, and died.

Were it not for the hospitalities and kind attention which Mrs. Lynch of Marlborough-street uniformly shewed to our young authoress at this period, the contracted sphere of Miss Crowe's Seminary would, no doubt, have become at times insupportable. That it was not particularly attractive, the following Poem, suggested by "a shower which prevented the writer returning to school at the expiration of the Christmas Holydays," shews.

I ne'er did hail thy orient red,
Sol, when thou leav'st thy eastern bed,
And o'er the world thy glories spread,
and radiant power,
As when thou'st earth-drawn vapours shed
in heavy shower!

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* In the Dublin Directory for 1794, "*Thomas Dixon, Junior*, 60, *Dame-street*," appears. That this was the "Mr. Dixon" with whom Owenson lodged, is evident from the address of Dermody's letter, p. 21, *ante*.

† Curious postscript in a different hand. "Toby Anderson desires his comp^ts and hopes Mr. O. will soon be able to hurl, and begs to inform you that his dear long-sided sow has not been able to do anything as yet, and on Saturday next he hopes to have the Court to enlarge the felons, and then it will be Toby's turn. Miss O. forgot to mention Toby or the female cat. She says I am old Tabby. Eliza.

And oft I upward cast mine eyes,
(Tho' not I ween o'er weather-wise)
And gladsome view the frowning skies
while screaming crow
Proclaims the storm as high he flies,
to us below!

Now glad I hear the wind blow bleak,
View puss by fire her station take,
And grandmama loud moanings make
of shooting corn;
For rain these signs portentous speak,
and gloomy morn!

Glad see I muddled streamlet stray,
Whose course no sun-beam renders gay,
Reflecting nought but wat'ry ray,
and dimpled o'er;
While goslings on its surface play
before the door!

The clear, pellucid drops I view,
As large they fall, tho' yet but few,
And sweet as Californian dew
to me appear;
Or stream that prophet Moses drew
From rocky source for murm'ring Jew,
in desart drear!

Now glad I throw straw bonnet by,
For sure to school I cannot hie,
While flood Deucalion pours the sky,
t' arrest my feet;
And this excuse I'll plead so sly,
compulsion sweet.

Some doubts have been expressed as to the religious opinions in which Sydney Owenson was reared and educated. Her commentary on the following interesting quotation from Burke, furnishes some decisive information on this head. "'Sure I am,' says Edmund Burke, 'that there have been thousands in Ireland who have never conversed with a Roman-Catholic in their whole lives, unless they happened to talk with their gardener's workman, or to ask their way when they had lost it in their sports, or at best who had only associated with ex-footmen or other domestics of the third or fourth order; and so averse were they some time ago to have them near their persons, that they would not employ even those who would never find their way beyond their stable. I well remember a great, and in many respects a good man, who advertised for a blacksmith, but at the same time added, 'he must be a protestant.'

It is impossible that such a state of things (though natural goodness in many persons will undoubtedly make exceptions) must not produce alienation on the one side, and pride and insolence on the other.'

"It is to be hoped, and indeed to be believed, that the fatal spirit of prejudice thus strongly adverted to by Burke, is daily losing its influence; *for myself, though one among the many in my own country who have been educated in the most rigid adherence to the tenets of the church of England,* I should, like the poor Maritoanes of Cervantes, think myself endowed with very few 'sketches and shadows of Christianity,' were I to confine virtue to sect; or make the speculative theory of opinion the test of moral excellence, or proof of human perfection."*

Lady Morgan has been heard to say that her mother, though possessing many endearing domestic virtues, was a person of such excessive Puritanical tendencies, that, instead of stimulating the religious zeal of her children, she but too fatally gave them a distaste to "long-visaged sanctity," and all practices of the "Praise-God-bare-bones" school. To this circumstance may be attributed the occasional deistic tone traceable in some of the later writings of Lady Morgan.

After the death of her mother Sydney went on a visit to some of Mr. Owenson's friends and relations in Sligo, including Sir Malby Crofton of Longford House. The records of this period of her life are not numerous. Among other effusions however, indicating a thoughtful and religious spirit, one, written on a tomb among the ruins of Sligo Abbey, merits transcription.—

And must I, ghastly guest of this dark dwelling,
Pale, senseless tenant, must I come to this;
And shall this heart congeal, now warmly swelling,
To woe's soft languor, rapture's melting bliss?

And must this pulse that beats to joy's gay measure,
Throbbing to bloomy health, this pulse lie still:
And must each sense alive to guileless pleasure,
Torpid resist the touch of transports' thrill?

And must each sensate feeling too decay,
(Each feeling anguished by another's sorrow)
This form that blushes youth and health to-day,
Lie cold and senseless thus, like thee, to-morrow?

* Patriotic Sketches,—Lond. 1807, v. i, p. 62.

Terrific Death! to shun thy dreaded pow'r
Who would not brave existence? direst strife?
But that beyond thy dark shade's gloomy bow'r,
Faith points her vista to eternal life!

The Country Post-boy, a relic of the same remote era of Sydney's early life, is a pleasing portraiture of a character now almost extinct:—

Ah! careless wight, and e'en as careless, gay,
Slow winding down yon mountain's rugged brow,
Cheering with ballad blithe thy weary way,
And as thy thoughtless mule, as thoughtless thou!

Ne'er dreaming thou to many art a fate
Replete with baleful tidings; big with woe
To cloud th' illusive beam of hope elate,
Or blast the germ of love's first ardent blow!

To snap the golden, fragile thread of bliss,
Deface the smiling portrait Fancy drew;
Convey the last farewell, the dying kiss,
And change each tint of joy to mis'ry's hue!

To freeze the vital stream that warmly glows
Within the heart, to filial fears a prey;
The sad, but long expected task impose,
To weep the sainted parents swift decay!

Ah! orphan mourner, I can feel for thee,
For I, like thee, have cause to weep, to sigh;
Like thine, the parent heaven bestow'd on me,
Fled from her child, to claim her kindred sky!

Yet senseless wight, if thou the heart can'st wring,
And sadder certainty for sad doubt give;
Wealth, title, fame, 'tis also thine to bring,
And all for which the witless many live!

To the sad prisoner liberty convey,
To modest merit the unask'd award;
To dark despair restore hope's vivid day,
To injured innocence its just reward!

The authoress, with beautiful diffuseness, then proceeds to say that "When stillness breathes along the silent groves," she loves to hear the wild tones of the Post-boy's horn float on the distance:—

Now stealing faintly with vibration soft,
Now mingling louder with each passing gale,
Now 'midst the hills by echo answer'd oft,
And louder now, it rings along the dale!

How throbs each pulse, with every varied sound,
How many ardent expectations burn,
How does my heart within my bosom bound?
And how I fly to meet, yet fear to learn?

Yes, 'tis for me—each character I kiss,
Then trembling, hoping, break the well-known seal,
But why relate its tale of woe or bliss,
For ah! like me, who woe or bliss can feel?

The neighbourhood in which Sydney Owenson was located, possessed many striking natural beauties, and pleasing associations, peculiarly calculated to promote the growth of a warm poetic temperament. In her *Patriotic Sketches*, the authoress paints a few of the more prominent features of Sligo.

"The scenery which environs the town," she writes, "is bold, irregular, and picturesque: and though despoiled of those luxurious woods which once (in common with the rest of the Island) enriched its aspect, it still preserves many of those traits which constitute the perfection of landscape, hanging over a beautiful bay formed by the influx of the 'Steep Atlantic,' sheltered by lofty mountains, and reposing almost at the brow of a hill along whose base the River Gitley steals its devious way. The high road by which it is approached for the last twenty miles, winds through a scene of romantic variety, which frequently combines the most cultivated and harmonious traits, with the wildest and most abrupt images of scenic beauty. The groves, the lakes, the enchanting islands, and all the glowing charms of an Italian scenery which diffuses itself over the picturesque and cultivated scenes of Florence-court,* are suddenly replaced by a dreary heath, and a bold and continued mass of rocks, through which nature, time, and art, seem to have cut a deep and narrow defile which, entered at that hour sacred to the sombre grandeur of the true sublime, awakens in the heart of the traveller such a warning as the entrance to Dante's Inferno holds out." Miss Owenson, in her "Fourth Sketch," refers, at some length, to the romantic Glen of Knock-na-ree, situated within three miles of Sligo, and combining the finest ocean scenery, with many traits of striking picturesque landscape. Bathed in gloom, the overhanging rocks almost knit their towering summits. The authoress also vividly describes the cloud-capped Heights of Ben-

* The Seat of Lord Inniskillen.

bullen, and the Island of Innis-murry, celebrated in Irish legend, and famous in history as still containing part of the crosier of St. Molaire. A distant view of the undulating Coast of Ulster is also sketched; but a stronger interest is awakened by her account of Sugna-clogh, or the Giant's Grave, near the town of Sligo. Several immense stones are raised in a very curious and romantic manner, upon the ends of others, which seem pitched perpendicularly into the earth, and give to the eye an idea of Stonehenge. Sugna-clogh is one of these puzzling relics of a by-gone age, with which antiquarian ingenuity delights to amuse itself.

The singular water-flight of Glencar did not fail to excite the admiration of our authoress. Deriving its source from the summit of a lofty hill, whose base it scarcely reaches, the glittering element is again carried perpendicularly back, forming a species of water-spout. Its appearance when seen under the influence of an unclouded sun, rising like a pillar of light, is strikingly beautiful: the least variation of the air breaks it into a feathery spray, which falls at a considerable distance, like the misty shower of a summer's evening, tinged with the departing glow of the horizon. But there are other aquatic curiosities near Sligo. The steep Hill of the Hawk is the first point of land seen on this coast at sea, and has long served as a landmark to mariners. Notwithstanding the altitude of *Knock-na-shong*, its summit contains a well which ebbs and flows with the tide. Of both mountain and well, tradition has preserved many miraculous tales.

In her "Second Sketch" Miss Owenson tells us—"In days of childhood, in the happy recess of school-holidays, I have caught a distant view of Sligo Abbey, in a moment of such felicity as childhood only experiences, 'when we feel that we are happier than we know.' An idea of its venerable ruins had insensibly associated itself with the remembrance of the lively susceptibility I then possessed, to every impression; and that idea still preserving its ascendancy in my mind, rendered the object that gave rise to it, an object of peculiar interest, and ardent curiosity.

"I have always loved those scenes which connect the pleasures of intellect with those of sense, which are equally dear to reflection and to fancy, over which the mental sympathies extend themselves, and where the heart and the eye repose with equal satisfaction and delight; and as I involved myself amidst the ruins of Sligo Abbey, where doubtless "'Many a

saint and many a hero trod,"' the beautiful apostrophe of Volney floated on my memory: "'Je vous salue ruines solitaires! Oui: tandis que votre aspect repousse d'un secret effroi les regards du vulgaire, mon cœur trouve à vous contempler le charme des sentimenus profonds et des hautes pensées.'"

In 1794, Owenson, believing that the proverbial theatrical taste of Kilkenny furnished a good opening for the erection of a new and handsome theatre, in that city, accordingly embarked in the arduous and costly undertaking alluded to.* The work sped apace, but time proved that it reflected greater credit on Owenson's histrionic taste, than on his prudence. His capital was, by far, too small to justify him in undertaking, single-handed, so important and extensive a piece of business. The result, as might easily have been foreseen, was, that difficulties soon pressed, in bewildering succession, upon our player. His family, for a time, felt the cold grip of penury; and were it not for the steadfast friendship of a handful of sincere hearts, which sparkled, "few and far between," amid the dense and almost endless ranks of Owenson's professed friends and admirers, grim hunger and bitter sorrow might have weighed them down.

Nor were the few true friends to whom we have alluded any of the men "with handles to their names," who, in days gone by, were wont to invite Owenson, as a dramatic lion and convivialist, to their table. "His last friend," says Sir Jonah Barrington, "was old Fontaine,† a celebrated French dancing master, many years domiciliated and esteemed in Dublin. He aided Owenson and his family while he had the means to do so, and they both died nearly at the same time—instances of talent and improvidence."

In 1798, Owenson, in bad health, and worse spirits, retired from the stage. Deprived, by death, of the companionship of a fond wife, and freed, by poverty, from the attentions of many friends, he now looked to his loving daughters for solace and sincerity. In 1799 Sydney bade adieu to the picturesque and soul-inspiring haunts with which Sligo abounded. In a little bower, planned with her own head, and planted by her own hand, she composed an elaborate farewell ode, from which we cull a few closing couplets:—

* This edifice, afterwards immortalized as the scene of the far-famed amateur theatricals of Kilkenny, was pulled down in 1851, in order to make room for the erection of a public meeting room. A very small portion still remains.

† "John Fontaine, Dancing master, 43, Townsend-street," appears in the Dublin Directories, until 1803.

No more shall now my steps intrude
Amidst thy dreary solitude;
And thou my dear and lonely cell,
From whence I bade these scenes farewell,
The hand that did thy honours raise,
Would fain perpetuate thy praise;
For well, dear cell, has thou repaid
My labours with thy friendly shade;
Oft from th' unmeaning crowd I'd fly,
From fashion's vapid circle hie,
And beneath thy umbrage sought
The luxury of pensive thought,
Or view'd the moon's pale quivering ray,
Thro' thy woodbine portal play,
Or at the long expected hour,
Have flown to thee, dear conscious bower:
To catch (on some kind zephyr borne)
The welcome sound of post-boy's horn!
Impatient thro' thy foliage glance,
Impatient chid his slow advance;
Hear the dread "No," to my demand,
Yet fix'd remain with out-stretch'd hand,
With beating heart and eager eyes,
'Till hope in disappointment dies:
Or haply snatch th' expected bliss,
Print on each character a kiss;
Still on each tender sentence dwell,
While on each line a fond tear fell,
In which the fonder father prov'd,
How well his absent child was lov'd!
How true, how sweetly he could blend
In one, the sire, preceptor, friend.

* * * * * * * *

From listless solitude I fly
To meet the fond expectant eye;
Melt in a parent's warm embrace,
And in each fond endearment trace
The welcome of the throbbing heart,
Soft murmuring "No more we part."

Under the difficulties which resulted from her father's misfortunes, the subject of this memoir made her first literary essay in print. As Lady Morgan has herself acknowledged, in the Preface to *France*, the world has been indebted to Necessity—that great parent of exertion—for all the luxury of profit and pleasure which her writings have enabled it to treasure and taste.

In March, 1801, Sydney Owenson placed in the inky fin-

gers of Mr. A. Stewart, Printer, 86, Bride-street, Dublin, the manuscript of a little volume of poems, juvenile and otherwise. "The verse in this book," observes one of the first, as well as one of the most fastidious of recent critics,* " written before Byron had brought into existence the fresh rhythm and feelings of modern verse—is wondrously good of its kind—the time considered, and the preparations of its writer taken into account." This volume, the tiny book of a tiny author, was tolerably creditable to Mr. Stewart's press, if we except a few such awkward typographical oversights as "flutterer," for "flatterer," (p. 119); wearied eyes, " half dozing," instead of " half clossing on vacancy,"(p. 29.),and "To triumph," (p. 19) for " Io Triumphe." Miss Owenson's pecuniary means were too much pinched to enable her to cancel such leaves as contained matter which might, she thought, be altered for the better ; and we find various passages in the printed copy, neatly modified in her own autograph. In the *Hawthorne Tree,* for instance, an obliterating line is lightly drawn through

> " Nor olive by the ancients said
> Was sacred to the blue-ey'd maid !"

And:

> " Nor Minerva's olive flower
> Sacred to wisdom's heavenly power !"

is substituted by the authoress. The great patroness of literature, in Ireland at the close of the last, and the beginning of the present century, was Elizabeth, countess of Moira ; and to this high and accomplished lady little Sydney was graciously permitted to inscribe her maiden literary effort. " In sanctioning by your patronage," wrote Miss Owenson, " those little poetic sketches, you have conferred an honor on their author of which she is infinitely more sensible than capable of expressing the gratitude it has excited."

The Countess, though thoroughly English, by birth and descent, was filled by a hearty Irish nationality of feeling, from which too many members of the Peerage of Ireland have been invulnerably exempt. The daughter of Theophilus, Lord of Huntington, and sole heir of her brother, the tenth Earl, on whose death, in 1789, she succeeded to the Hastings Peerage, in her own right, this illustrious lady became the third wife of the humane and gallant Earl of Moira. Her generous con-

* *Athenæum*, April, 16. 1859.

duct in sheltering Lord and Lady Edward Fitzgerald, at the stormy period of 1798, as well as the uniform philanthropy and patriotism of her life, will long be remembered with gratitude in Ireland. Lady Moira died in 1808. Her once gorgeous residence, on Usher's Island, Dublin, is now the Mendicity Institution.

Mr., afterwards Sir R. Philips, of St. Paul's Church-yard, undertook to conduct the publication and agency of Miss Owenson's book in London; but being the work of an utterly unknown author, it was deemed advisable to secure in advance, as many subscribers as possible. An alphabetical list was accordingly prefixed to the little volume, and it is interesting at this distance of time, to glance over it. The first name is that of Joseph Atkinson, M.R.I.A., an Irish poet, who, although famous enough at one period, is probably better known now as the early friend of Moore and Dorothea Jordan.* Burke Bethal, Barrister-at-Law, also figures—a man whose witty and convivial propensities have been quenched by death within the last few years only. In the C. division,we have Dr. Young, Lord Bishop of Clonfert, Sir Malby Crofton, Bart., and Abraham Colles, M.D. Of the first, we may observe that the discovery of a principle in natural philosophy which he applied to gunnery, introduced him to the notice of the military viceroy, Lord Cornwallis, and in 1798, the belligerent Bishop was presented by his Excellency with the See of Clonfert. Sir Malby Crofton, of whom we have already spoken, was a relation of Owenson's, and a dear friend through life to the interests of his daughter. The death of Dr. Abraham Colles in 1843, was an irreparable blow to suffering humanity; and caused a blank in the ranks of the medical profession, which may not be for many years filled up. Among the other subscribers, were John Foster, last speaker of the Irish House of Commons; Lord Granard, whose saturnine portrait Sir Jonah Barrington, introduces in his work on the Union; the Countess of Granard, the accomplished daughter of Lady Moira, who, no doubt, amiably secured the patronage of the Earl and his lady; Sir Duke and Lady Giffard; the Patriot Duke of Leinster; the

* Mrs. Jordan, in a letter to Sir Jonah Barrington (*Personal Sketches*, vol. ii., p. 231,) writes:—

"Atkinson came to see me—quite as poetical as ever, and the best natured Poet I believe, in the world."

Countess of Moira; Sir Robert Lauder; Colonel King, M.P., afterwards Lord Lorton, who was tried for complicity in the murder of Colonel Fitzgerald, the base seducer of the beautiful Miss King; Thomas Moore, the Bard of Erin, with his father, mother, and sister; Counsellor M'Nally, who received a secret stipend from the Crown for betraying the professional secrets of the United Irishmen; Mrs. O'Beirne, of Ardbraccan Palace, the wife of Louis, Protestant Bishop of Meath, originally a Roman Catholic Ecclesiastical student; the Rev. Mr. O'Beirne, P.P. of Longford, the Apostate Prelate's brother; Captain, afterwards the Right Hon. William Saurin, whose tedious political regime in Ireland was a national calamity, and the Rev. Dr. Millar, the subsequently celebrated author of the Philosophy of History. Many more names appear on record, but those we have enumerated are the only ones which at this distance of time, are recognizable.

The modest Preface of Sydney Owenson to her first-born book is pleasant to read, and repays the labour of transcription. Dating from "Dominick-street, Dublin," we are told that "The mind of a young Author, on the eve of exposing to the gaze of public scrutiny, the cherished offspring of its solicitude, 'with all its imperfections on its head,' seeks to strengthen its hopes and tranquilize its apprehensions, by adopting every idea which leads to the belief, that the errors of youth will meet with that indulgence in a literary sense, which in a moral one it never fails to obtain—and if there is indeed

> 'In youth a prone and speechless dialect,
> Such as moves men,'*

on this principle at least the Author of this little volume may rest her claim to toleration. The fugitive trifles it contains, best evince in themselves the period in which they were written;—many of them a young 'imagination bodied forth' in those truant hours which childhood loves to steal from enforced avocation,—and many of them were the effusions of an heart newly awakened to happiness, or seeking to lose its little sorrows amidst the playful imagery of fancy's creation,—faithful transcripts from local and interesting originals, they were composed under the influence of the feelings; and their author writing what she thought, rather than thinking what she should write, realized with rapidity the 'idle visions of her brain,' or

* Shakspeare.

veiled beneath the fantastic drapery of poetic decoration the natural simplicity of those sentiments, which her heart owned and her understanding ratified."

The reader has a right to expect that we should lay some extracts from this little book before him. Of these there are in truth, no dearth. Every imaginable object and situation seems to have formed the fair poetess's theme at various times; but we prefer to select such pieces as furnish an insight into Miss Owenson's mode of life at the remote epoch in question. Not a few of her poems are entitled to the rank of autobiographical fragments. There is an unmistakeable air of truthfulness about them; and the cautious reader need not fear that Sydney had much need to indulge in Poets'-license.

Fluent and flowing as was Sydney's pen and thought, we find that her muse did not always prove as obedient as might be desired. The capricious lady—we mean the muse, *not* Miss Owenson—was at last addressed in the following strain of semi-petulance, on the occasion of our authoress making a vain effort to write on a given subject:—

I swear it by Parnassus mount,
By Hippocranes' inspiring fount;
By Waters of Acidalus,
By sacred streams of Illysus;
By Helicon,—Castalian rill,
By Aganippe,—Pindus' hill;
Apollo's laurel, and his lyre,
Melpom'ne's tears,—Thalia's fire!
By wise Minerva's sagest owl,
By Royal Juno's sacred fowl;
By Cupid's bow,—and brother Loves,
By Venus' cestus,—and her doves;
By cup of Ganymede and Hebe,
By brighest beam of silver Phœbe;
By Ida's love-inspiring air,
Nay, by thy ingrate self I swear;
Ne'er from this moment to implore
Thy aid or inspiration more;
Nor sacrifice my youth's short day,
In begging a poetic lay;
Or wit to scribble song or sonnet,
When I should trim a cap or bonnet;
Entreat a spark of attic fire,
To animate my languid lyre,
When I as in my sex befitting,
Should take my work or mind my knitting!

For thee what have I not endur'd,
To scoffs, and taunts, and sneers inur'd;
By misses for thy favours maul'd,
By masters "learned lady" called!
By all avoided, lest my bite
Should set the simple things to write;
Whilst thou malignant more than they,
Hath some eccentric notion gay
Shot 'thwart my fancy—nay, I swear,
E'en in the sacred house of prayer,
I gladly seize it, thoughtless wight,
Forgot I came to pray, not write,
And in my prayer-book self indite!
While from my lips unconscious fall,
Nor sainted Peter, James, nor Paul;
But mount Parnassus, muses, fire,
Apollo, wit, Ionian choir;
Invoke no canonized maid,
But Yorick's or Cervantes shade!
Quick shrinks each pious soul away,
While sacred horror and dismay,
Each eye devout as quick invade,
Cast on the sacrilegious maid;
And tho' she prayed with might and main,
Alas! she finds contrition vain;
Nor credit gains from pious dame,
That you, sad Muse, not she's to blame;
Nor is this all, for oft with spleen
Thou'st darted on me, when I've been
In solemn convocation seated
'Midst female sages, who grave treated
On sermons, prudence, faith, and prayer,
Salves, conserves, silks, and china-ware!
Now flirting girls frail conduct chiding,
And now the price of lace deciding;
Now giving script'ral expositions,
Now quoting tradesmen's impositions!
Now on blest charity declaim,
And now traduce a neighbour's fame;
While as I solemn, prim, demure,
List' with attention to be sure,
Pop come you with poetic freak,
And on my prim attention break;
Breathe fire thro' the torpid creature,
And animate each cold, fix'd feature!
I start, look up, then seize a pen,
Write, smile, gaze round, and write again;
Then realize the golden thought,
And with enthusiasm fraught,
Io Triumphe—there's a line
Will speak me favoured by the Nine!

With look ecstatic I exclaim,
And strike amazed each frigid dame;
O'erwhelmed with fear and consternation,
Straight they convene a consultation;
Of grandmamas and spinster cousins,
Step-sisters, maiden aunts in dozens;
With broken sentence, nod, and leer,
" Where more is meant than meets the ear ;"
In whispers they converse and shew it,
The poor thing's mad, or worse, turn'd poet;
Then vow they'd pardon any crime,
In their own girls but love of rhyme,
Which should it epidemic prove,
Might well affect all those they love:
And spreading quick the cautioning rumour,
To exile from their presence doom her!
Yet all these evils I sustain'd,
Of persecution ne'er complain'd,
As long as thou wouldst kindly pay
A visit in a friendly way.

In this strain our little Poetess proceeds to reproach her muse with a tendency to unamiable and capricious desertion. She reminds her of the hours without number which were snatched from refreshing midnight slumber, and fervently devoted to her sake and service. She speaks of the youthful joys, "toilette, trinkets, dress, and toys—the dear short-lived teens best treasure,"—all sacrificed for the muse's sake. "And yet," she adds—

" You all these services forget,
Reject my incense, and despise
The votive off'rings I devise;
On my best invocation frown,
Nor with success one effort crown."

Sydney concludes in a strain of assumed petulance, forswearing

—— book, paper, ink, and pen,
Until!—thou smil'st on me again."

It was often at the most unseasonable moments that the muse would turn caressingly to Sydney. Sometimes when in bed at night, enveloped with darkness and Limerick blankets, a gush of inspiration would saturate the little Poet's brain. She often drew down the vengeful indignation of the elder female members of the household, who could not at all understand why " Miss Siddy, instead of lying tranquilly on her pillow, would suddenly begin mouching about the house, and fumbling at the well-slacked kitchen fire," with a dripping tallow candle which refused to light. Sometimes, Sydney, rather than disturb the sleeping household, would scrawl hasty hieroglyphic mems upon a big school slate which lay, awaiting the moment of inspiration, at her bed-side. At other times,

when out walking, she would suddenly desert her companions, and seeking a secluded green field dotted with lambs, would there, in pastoral peace and purity, woo her muse.

There is one poem addressed to Sleep, which it is not easy to read with dry eyes. It was thrown off during one of the many hours of bitter sorrow which clouded the brow of the ruined player and his devoted daughter. Poor Sydney longed for sleep to drown her care. Though essentially different in versification, this poem is, in style and sentiment, hardly inferior to Shakspeare's celebrated address to the same solacing restorative :—

Come, balmy sleep, thou transient, sweet relief,
Shed o'er my aching eyes thy soothing power ;
And mingle with the silent tear of grief,
One drop extracted from thy opiate flower !

Shroud in thy downy and oblivious veil,
The woes that still defer thy gentle reign,
And o'er my wearied senses softly steal,
The welcome bondage of thy unfelt chain !

Wrap in forgetfulness my care-worn mind,
Give to oblivion my prophetic fears ;
My mem'ry in thy magic thraldom bind,
Steal this sad sigh, and check these flowing tears.

O come ! and let imagination beam
O'er my soft slumbers her enchanting ray,
Shed her bright influence in some golden dream,
And hover round me with illusions gay !

Invoke the mimic Fancy to thy aid,
And all her frolic and aerial train,
With rosy visions cheer thy votarist maid,
And with sweet treach'ry steal her bosom's pain !

Each fond affection in my heart revive,
(By sorrow's torpid touch long lull'd to rest ;)
Once to each thrilling tone of joy alive,
But dormant now within my joyless breast !

Thus come delightful and delusive sleep,
Thus o'er my wither'd spirits claim thy power ;
In thy sweet balm my anguish'd feelings steep,
For years of suff'rings grant one blissful hour !

The ode "To a Tear" is also sadly suggestive :—

Ah ! when thou steal'st down pallid cheek,
Of poor affliction, sad and meek,
heart-easing tear :

"The Sigh" is the subject of another, but a differently toned effusion. In a piece, addressed "To Myself," an effort to cast

off care is traceable. We quote the lines in full because of their autobiographical interest:—

Ah! little maid, how blest the day,
When with the frolic hours, you gay
and careless rov'd
Thro' life, from woe, from trouble free,
Nor thought you e'er could parted be,
from those you lov'd!

Thine was the blest propensity,
To make that world a heaven to thee,
in which you mov'd;
Nor knew the cause that made thee blest,
That joy'd thy heart and warm'd thy breast,
was those you lov'd!

Quick did thy lively pulses play,
As quickly flow'd thy spirits gay,
secure you rov'd;
No thought of ill did ever scare,
Thy happy heart devoid of care,
with those you lov'd!

No woe thy bosom did invade,
Save those thine own compassion made,
by pity mov'd;
You wept,—yet ne'er did sorrow know,
But taught to weep for other's woe,
by those you lov'd!

And while the tear stood in thine eye,
Or on thy cheek would trembling lie,
it often prov'd;
That smiles irradiated thy face,
As in the eyes you'd rapture trace,
of those you lov'd.

The gloomy art thou ne'er did'st know,
Of conjuring up ideal woe,
but sportive rov'd;
Thro' Fancy's brightest, gayest scene,
For happy wer't thou then I ween,
with those you lov'd!

Gay was thy prattle, gay thy smiles,
Thy infant sports, thy infant wiles,
still unreprov'd;
By age or chill severity,
Nor frowns repelling e'er did see,
from those you lov'd!

Full many were thy childish ways,
To charm the dear parental gaze;
fondly approv'd

Was each faint effort of thy mind,
While to thy little failings, blind
were those you lov'd!

Ah! little maid, how blest the day,
When with the sportive hours, you gay
and careless rov'd
Thro' life!—alas! that day is o'er,
Since little maid art thou no more
with those you loved!

The experience of heavy afflictions did not render the breast of Sydney Owenson callous to trifling trials. We now find her tender heart bemoaning the death of her favorite lap-dog "Bell," which for "seven long years" was the constant companion of our little authoress. The introductory verse to eight succeeding stanzas, will probably be considered sufficient as a specimen :—

Since then thy life's "poor play is o'er,"
And thou can'st live to charm no more
who charmed so well;
Let me whose hours you oft beguiled,
Who at thy sportive ways oft smiled,
thy virtues tell.

The virtues and beauties of "a Thrush which sung every evening under the author's windows, during a summer residence in the country," are also cordially recognised and eulogised.

It was not only by the volume of poems already spoken of, that Sydney Owenson proved herself the inheritress of her father's idiosyncracies and talents. We now find her arranging to English words, twelve of the most beautiful and touching melodies, in the vernacular of her native land, and filially dedicating the work to Robert Owenson. Prefixed to this very beautiful collection is an Historical Preface, written with eloquence and erudition, in which she attributes the patriotic tone which pervades her writings, to the national enthusiasm which at an early age she imbibed from her father.

Some persons may require to be reminded that to Miss Owenson we are indebted for the charming Irish ballad of Kate Kearney. It first appeared anonymously as the *Beardless Boy;* and at once became popular. That Miss Owenson would have followed up the series there can be no doubt, had not Bunting, and Moore, and Sir John Stevenson, grasped with avidity at the happy idea of which she was the parent. There was a regular scramble for it. Bunting rushed vehemently forward, and did much, but his perseverence was not equal to

his matchless musical taste; and we believe he never brought the project to a completion. Although Moore has almost always received the exclusive credit for the admirable idea of the *Melodies,* he had too much honour to fail to recognize in his Preface to the first edition of that work, the labors of those who had trod the same path. We are told that "the public are indebted to Mr. Bunting for a valuable collection of Irish music, and that the patriotic genius of Miss Owenson has been employed on some of our finest airs."

Rich as was the harvest which Moore, Bunting, and Owenson reaped in the field of Irish music, we find, from the recent and highly successful labors of Dr. Petrie, that those industriously disposed can still glean in the same field, with ample profit.

"Owenson," says the *Freeman's Journal* of May 28th, 1812, in recording his death, "Owenson was the best Irish scholar of his day, and we may perhaps say, the last true Irish musician." These acquirements and intellectual tendencies have been perpetuated hereditarily. "The parodies," observes an Irish gentleman well informed on the subject, "the parodies of Lady Clarke in the Irish vernacular set by Sir John Stevenson, long formed the *délices* of musical society in Dublin, which the author of these lines remembers to have heard her sing with infinite grace and humour." This striking hereditary musical taste has been further instanced by Lady Clarke's daughter, Mrs. Edward Geale, assisting the Marchioness of Downshire in forming an Irish Academy of Music.

Miss Owenson's little volume of Poems lay, for a time, unnoticed and unbought; but the influence of the Countess of Moira at length prevailed, and innumerable persons purchased it in obsequious obedience to her ladyship's earnestly expressed suggestion. Once tested, the genuineness of the gems became strikingly apparent; their value daily rose in critical estimation; it became fashionable to praise them. They furnished many a languishing boudoir and drawing-room conversation with a theme which seldom failed to stimulate; in the pauses of the Spanish dance, or the Minuet de la Cour, they were referred to with other topics of *ton.* At last the *elite* of Dublin expressed a desire to view the casket from whence such pretty pearls came; and Sydney Owenson was forthwith installed on a little throne, in the centre of the brightest society of the metropolis. Her wit and vivacity, the nerve with which she swept the strings of her harp, and the exquisite modulations of her voice, in accompaniment, charmed widely, and

bound captive many a heart long wrapped in apathy. Local critics began to recognize "a considerable share of the poetic faculty" in the authoress's volume. Her fancy was graceful, and her verse flowing and harmonious. They had great hopes of the young poet, and augured a second edition for her volume.

These plaudits nerved the tiny girl to renewed exertion. Mrs. Radcliffe's vigour, as a novelist, had begun to flag painfully. Miss Porter's *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, and *The Scottish Chiefs* did not appear for some years later. Miss Edgeworth's *debut*, as a novelist, had not yet taken place. Clara Reeve, and Miss Burney were used up. Female romance-writers were few; and it seemed to Sydney Owenson that a favorable open lay before her. In 1802 appeared *St. Clair, or, the Heiress of Desmond*, a novel, in two volumes, by Miss Owenson. Every chapter bears, more or less, trace of a tyro's hand; but the book, nevertheless, possesses, in many passages, a hearty raciness of style, which cheers like the freshness of morning. The same remarks may be said to apply, in a great degree, to her next work, *The Novice of St. Dominick*, a novel published in 1804; but the too obvious effort, in the third and fourth volumes, to spin out the tale to the utmost possible length, spoils the *gout* which its perusal would otherwise enkindle. These works were far from being favorites with Lady Morgan when time had matured her judgment and style, and although bearing unmistakeable evidence of a want of knowledge of the world, together with great improbability of plot, we find, on consulting the various criticisms of the time, that *St. Clair* and the *Novice* were two very popular productions. The society of our authoress continued to be courted with avidity by fashionable circles—a further proof of her increasing prestige and success.

Practice makes perfect, and in trying her hand on a third novel, Miss Owenson contrived to avoid a considerable portion of the blemishes of style and taste which had previously exposed her to adverse criticism. In 1805 appeared a highly romantic and original novel, in three volumes, which at once threw her friends into an ecstacy of admiration. We allude to the popular and far-famed *Wild Irish Girl*. In this book she very artistically embodied such experience of the primitive national character as she had gained during her residence at Sligo, spangled by these flashes of genuine patriotism, which, through life, lent the fairest lustre to her halo of fame.

Joseph Atkinson, M.R.I.A., one of the early patrons of Sydney Owenson's youthful genius, read the *Wild Irish Girl** with feelings of singular pride and pleasure. In the fulness of this feeling he threw off the following complimentary poetic address to his fair young friend, Miss Owenson. We are unwilling to omit a line of verses written with such force, beauty, and truth. Critics of the present day will probably declare that the latter ennobling characteristic is hardly applicable to Atkinson's criticism, regarding the crude novels of *St. Clair* and *The Novice;* but, as we already observed, they were strangely popular at the time. No one laughed more heartily at their undisciplined and puerile romance than Lady Morgan herself, as soon as experience of the world, and ample mental culture, had rendered sound her thought and style. The unlucky rhyme of "yet" to "fit" is a serious blemish in Mr. Atkinson's lines; but, with these deductions, we may repeat our opinion that their "force, beauty, and truth," entitle them to preservation.

Whilst you with genius, and with patriot fire
The love of Erin in our hearts inspire,
Combine tradition with historic lore,
To prove her glorious deeds and worth of yore,
Our time shall hail you champion of her cause,
And future ages sanction our applause.
Then let a bard (tho' Fancy's powers decay)
This friendly tribute to your merit pay:
For though grown old, to court the Muse unfit,
Talents like your's I love and value yet.

"St. Clair" first deckt you with a laurel crown;
"The Novice" next bestow'd more high renown;
"The Irish Girl" a triple wreath shall give,
And, like our shamrock, ever-blooming live!
A nation's gratitude shall twine the band
To grace your temples, and your fame expand!
While we with symphathising souls bewail
The prince of Ifinmore's pathetic tale.

Thus while you rescue Erin's ancient race
From perjudice, contempt, and false disgrace,
O may the offspring of her present days
Aspire to emulate the worth yon praise,
While Education, nurs'd by Freedom's smile,
Spread Arts and Science thro' this favorite isle,
And may the genial scene your fancy paints
Descend from Heav'n to bless the Land of Saints!

* See p. 37, *ante.*

And as in rapture o'er your Harp we dwell,
Which you, like fair Glorvina, tune so well!
And hear a voice like her's that sweetly sings,
Warbling responsive to the minstrel strings—
And whilst we trace in this accomplish'd maid
The taste and science former times display'd,
Her filial love, her virues so correct,
Born to secure esteem and fond respect.
We can no longer doubt the picture true,
For sure Glorvina lives reviv'd in you;
And to complete the moral story told,
May you another Mortimer behold!

Dublin. J. ATKINSON.

The success of *The Wild Irish Girl* was almost unprecedented. In less than two years it ran through seven editions, in Great Britain, and its permanence of popularity was attested a few years ago, by Mr. Colburne reprinting it among his *Standard Novels and Romances.* We have been assured by the grandson of Lady Morgan's god-father, Mr. Lysaght, who had long watched her literary progress with an eye of parental interest and affection, that the only book which William Pitt read in the course of that period of prostration which preceded his death, was *The Wild Irish Girl* of Sydney Owenson.

The fair authoress, a year or two subsequent to the publication of her *Wild Irish Girl,* favoured the public with a detail of the circumstances which led to its origin. "I came," she goes on to say, "to the self-devoted task, with a diffidence proportioned to the ardour which instigated me to the attempt; for as a *woman,* a *young woman,* and an *Irishwoman,* I felt all the delicacy of undertaking a work which had for the professed theme of its discussion, circumstances of national import, and national interest.

"But though I meant not to appear on the list of opposition as a fairy amazon, armed with a pebble and a sling, against a host of gigantic prejudices: although to compose a national defence, to ward the shaft of opprobrium hurled at the character of my country, to extenuate the effects or expose the causes of its popular discontents, was as incompatible with my sex and years, as with my trivial talent, and limited powers; yet I was still aware that in the historic page, recent details, and existing circumstances of Irish story, lived many a record of Irish virtue, Irish genius, and Irish heroism, which the simplicity of truth alone was sufficient to delineate; many a tale of pathos which woman's heart could warmest feel, and truest

tell, and many a trait of romantic colouring and chivalrous refinement, which woman's fancy fondest contemplates and best depicts.

"Still however in that era of life, when the faculties of the mind abandon themselves to the wild impulse of imagination, or fondly hover round the local territories of the heart, I found it difficult and uninteresting to confine myself to a mere relation of facts; and in preference to a cold detail of 'flat realities,' determined on the composition of a national novel, spun from those materials which the ancient and modern history, manners, and habits of my country supplied; and while fiction wove her airy web, to draw the brightest tints of her variegated tissue from the deathless colouring of truth.

"To blend the imaginary though probable incident with the interesting fact, to authenticate the questioned refinement of ancient habits, by the testimony of living modes, faithfully to delineate what I had intimately observed, and to found my opinions on that medium which ever vibrates between the partial delineation of national prejudice, on one side, and the exaggerated details of foreign antipathy on the other; such was the prospectus my wishes dared to draw. If I failed in their accomplishment, that failure arose from the mediocrity of very limited talents, which I soon found were inadequate to realize all my heart dictated, or my hopes conceived.

"The world, however, had the indulgence to tolerate the execution in favour of the motive, and the reception with which it honoured *The Wild Irish Girl*, was such as surpassed my most sanguine expectations, and stimulated me to further exertion in that cause, which it is impossible to examine without interest, or to embrace without enthusiasm. Politics can never be a woman's science; but patriotism must naturally be a woman's sentiment. It is inseparably connected with all those ties of tenderness which her heart is calculated to cherish, and though the energy of the citizen may not animate her feelings to acts of national heroism, the fondness of the child, the mistress, the wife and the mother, must warm and ennoble them into sentiments of national affection. For myself, while my heart still triumphs in the principle which leads me to effuse over the world's ear the 'native wood-notes wild' of my native country, I would wish it to be believed that I have ever swept the strings of the Irish Harp, with the tremulous touch of conscious inability; that in humbly endeavouring to revive the faded shamrock, that which droops round my country's emblem,

I have ever brought to the grateful effort an anxious hope, rather than a sanguine expectation of success; and that in touching on the grievances of the lower orders of my countrymen, and their fatal but consequent effects, unswayed by interest, unbiassed by partiality, the hope of wooing the attention of abler minds to a subject on which my own has long dwelt with ineffectual anxiety, and unavailing regret, has been the sole motive of the feeble and individual efforts, I now humbly submit to the world's consideration."

On *The Wild Irish Girl* Sir Jonah Barrington * thus blows hot and cold. "Though a fiction not free from some inaccuracies, much inappropriate dialogue, and forced incident, it is impossible to peruse *The Wild Irish Girl* of Lady Morgan, without deep interest, or to dispute its claims as a production of true national feeling as well as literary talent. That tale was the first,† and is perhaps the best of all her novel writings. Compared with others, it strikingly exhibits the author's falling off from the simple touches of unsophisticated nature to the less refined conceptions of what she herself styles 'fashionable society.' To persons unacquainted with Ireland, *The Wild Irish Girl* may appear an ordinary tale of romance, and fancy; but to such as understand the ancient history of that people, it may be considered as a legend."

The Wild Irish Girl contained many portraits, drawn upon the spot from real life. Amongst others, was Denis Hampson, the Blind Bard of Macgilligan, who died shortly after at the age of one hundred and ten. His death is recorded in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lxxvii., p. 1232.

Through Lord Moira's influence, the peasant-poet Dermody (whom it may be remembered, Owenson most humanely befriended,) received in 1802, a commission in the army. But Dermody became a prey to disease, and died soon after. Shortly before his death, he met Sydney Owenson for the first time for some years; early reminiscences crowded upon him, and affected him visibly. These feelings partially found vent in a poetical letter which he sent to Miss Owenson. We cull an extract or two:—

> Studded with stars, the blue expanse of night
> Beams not a softer, a serener light,
> Than feels my heart, when every fibre glows
> With the fond eulogy thy lyre bestows;

* Personal Sketches of His Own Times, vol. ii., p. 156.

† *The Wild Irish Girl* was the third, *not* the first of her novels—Ed.

When first too weak to grasp the laurel bough,
I wove a rosy chaplet for thy brow;
And, in its various hues, would idly trace,
Some flowery semblance of thy charming face;
Oft would the sweet seduction of thy smile,
Attune my numbers, and enrich my style;
Whate'er of fair, or perfect I designed,
Was merely copied from thy form and mind;
How oft have I beheld in rapturous trance,
Thy graceful steps adorn the sprightly dance;
Or, fancy fixed th' angelic choir among,
Caught the mellifluous magic of thy song;
Come then bewitching as thou art, illume
My glowing numbers with immortal bloom;
Not only on my glowing numbers shine,
Let my bold spirit brighten with the line;
Hoarded with pious care within my breast,
Oh ever let thy dear idea rest;
There fixed, the silent, secret object be,
Of my poetical idolatry;

* * * * * *

So weaning for a while from Heav'n his ear
And sedulous each rival theme to hear,
Waller once more may see his SYDNEY'S name,
Revived in song, superior, and the same.

Miss Owenson's labours at the period of which we write, were of the most zealous, humane, and ennobling character. She did not selfishly reserve mental exertion for the highly successful and remunerative volumes which yearly fell from her pen; but through the medium of the public press, laboured in the generous cause of philanthropy and patriotism. Tothe *Freeman's Journal* she contributed letters frequently. One, dated November 22nd, 1807, we subjoin as a specimen. "This letter," wrote the editor, "regards a subject which is always welcome to an Irish mind. As the reader will perceive, it bears the signature of a lady well known in the literary and fashionable world."

Sir—While moral suffering is most acutely felt by minds of educated refinement, of native and acquired sensibility, human nature, in every state, in every stage, is alive to the keen pang of physical evil; and while the most perfect corporeal health is frequently found united to the "mind diseased," the thrill of pain, which quivers through the suffering body, famishes the mind's repose, and blunts, or destroy, its better faculties. In the sad list of ills, which "flesh is heir to," there are few more acute than that which severity of weather, "the jar of elements," brings with it, to those whom poverty exposes to all the

"penalties of Adam." If the couch of down, the carpet's velvet, the hearth's genial glow, the window's folded drapery, and all those comforts which luxury devises, and opulence bestows, cannot soften to the startled ear the tempest's blast, the thunder's roll—cannot shield from the delicate frame the sudden chill of piercing forst;—if a transient absence from the luxurious drawing-room, (tho' but to step to a scarce less luxurious carriage) congeals every limb; what must be their sufferings for whom no ray of hope beams; who, amidst the horrors of shipwreck, meet the most dreadful of deaths; or perishing with cold and want on land, meet a more tedious and scarce less pitiable destiny.

Along the snow-deep and half deserted streets, behold the shivering mother, urged by the keenest necessity a mother's heart can feel, faintly appealing to the charity of the few who pass her, for a trifle to purchase a scanty portion of fuel for the little wretches, who in some loathsome corner pine for her return. Behold the noxious retreat of poverty—the miserable garret—its damp walls—its desolated air—its shattered windows, (but ill fitted to resist the keen blast, or drifting snow) in its remotest part half covered by a tattered blanket;—the sickly, decayed tradesman—the tender father vainly endeavours to communicate to his clinging offspring that comfort and that warmth, he has long ceased himself to feel.—Glance into the wards of the Debtors' Prison —unbar the door of the untried delinquent's dungeon; even there the horrors of imprisonment are sharpened by the season's severities;—these are no fancy pictures in this city—they are, at this moment, too sadly realised. It is unnecessary to say more, for when did misery raise her fainting voice and find the Irish heart dead to her suppliant accents? As the season seems to set in with a rigour "not portentous of its end," some effort of public benevolence might be opposed to the evils of the existing moment, or some plan suggested to obviate the sufferings of a future day. The purchase and distribution of fuel, after the manner adopted in the soup-kitchens some years back, might, perhaps, be found adequate to the removal of the chief distress the poor and indigent are likely to sustain, or some better plan may be suggested by the actively benevolent, more efficacious in its tendency, That "we always succeed when we wish to do good," is an axiom advanced by a celebrated French philosopher, and to which every good heart will bring the testimony of its own experience. In the present instance, therefore, while the principle of national benevolence lives so warmly in every Irish

heart, the means of its successful exertion cannot long remain an object of speculation to Irish minds.

Nov. 22, 1807. SYDNEY OWENSON.

"The year of her birth," said the *Athenæum* of April 16th, "she would never tell." More than one anecdote might be told to shew Lady Morgan's wish to clip from seventeen to twenty years off her actual age. In 1855, Mr. William J. Fitzpatrick sent to Lady Morgan the old newspaper which contained the above eminently creditable letter, justly believing that after the lapse of half a century, it would interest the veteran authoress to see it again. We transcribe her acknowledgment, because it exhibits the peculiarity alluded to, and, in the next place, records an early effort of her pen, little, if at all, known.

"Lady Morgan presents Mr. Fitzpatrick her compliments, and *best* thanks for the enclosure of her *early—(very early!)* scrap of authorship, written when she but "*lisped in numbers.*" She has no recollection of the letter he has sent her, but she remembers writing something of the same kind on *behalf of the little sweeps of Dublin,* in her thirteenth year, which obtained notice from her friend "*The Freeman.*" * * *

The *specimen* of her autograph, which Mr. F. desires is INCLUDED in this illegible note, written with half-closed eyes!

55, N. William-st., Albert Gate, Hyde Park,
November 3rd, 1855."

In 1807, appeared "Patriotic Sketches, written in Connaught by Miss Owenson." Let us trace her movements from this book.

"I left Dublin in the autumn of 1806," she tells us, "with the intention of rambling through such scenes in the north-west of Connaught as I had not yet visited; and it was here my little journey began to receive its first decided character of interest; it was here that the impression made on my imagination insensibly communicated to memory the first of those rough sketches which, divested of the delicate pencil, touch the *pentimenti* (to use a technical phrase) of studied art, and practised judgment. I have copied with the same rude simplicity with which they were drawn in the moment of passing observation, as the heart was touched by objects of moral interest, or the fancy awakened by scenes of natural beauty. I had watched the last beam of the setting sun stealing his faded splendours from the last of

those lakes which precede the entrance of the cavern-path, and the broken and irregular masses of rock which arose pyramidically on either side, partially caught the retreating glow of the horizon, and displayed the greatest variety of light and shadow, till gradually opening, a rich and expansive prospect broke on the eye: the lakes and fairy land of Hazle-wood, the bold attitude of Benbubin, the beetling brow of Knock-na-bee, the ocean's gleaming line, commingling with the horizon, and the town of Sligo spreading irregularly along the base of a lofty hill, crowned with meadows, and successively betrayed by the expanding view; till the softening influence of twilight mellowed every outline into air, and dissolved every object into one mild and indistinct hue."

Many additional pages are devoted to Sligo. That tendency to regard, ever after, with an undue importance, localities first known, and revered in childhood, is traceable in Miss Owenson's remarks. It is absurd to compare Sligo in any one particular to Babylon or Thebes; and yet, the first chapter of her *Patriotic Sketches* contains such comparisons. Notwithstanding this puerility, however, there are many remarkably sound political suggestions, and numberless truly beautiful pictures of local scenery in the book—marred here and there perhaps by a few tinges of sectarian prejudice, which Sydney had imbibed from the essentially Puritanic atmosphere with which her infancy was surrounded.

"The ruins of Sligo Abbey," she writes, "though wildly irregular, are noble in decay. The arched entrance to the chapel, lofty and unimpaired, is still enriched with foliage, and that delicacy of ornament which forms so striking a contrast amidst the sombre heaviness of Gothic architecture. A stone gallery still surrounds the nave of the chapel. The delicate proportions and construction of the eastern window, still in good preservation, are ornamented with Gothic arches and curious tracery; the tower, elevated and conspicuous, has sustained no injury except in a partial dilapidation of its battlements; and three sides of the cloisters that once formed a large square, are still supported by a range of small fluted pillars, enriched with a variety of devices of the most minute workmanship, and crowned with an arched roof. These interesting ruins spread along an inclined plane, bathed by the river Gitley, which guides the eye (in its meandering course) to the delicious scenery of Hazlewood, and loses itself amidst those charming lakes which reflect on their expansive bosoms the most romantic shores and boldest mountains; while on the

other side of the river swells a range of pasturage hills, a distant view of the ocean is partially caught, and a chain of lofty mountains forms the bas-relief to the animated picture.

"Abstracted devotion or monkish luxury could never have found a site more appropriate to holy meditation, and more conducive to laic enjoyment; and the vale of Euzras, which sheltered in its bosom the celebrated abbey of Llanthoni, boasts less of natural charm, in the animated description of Giraldus Cambrensis, than the scenery which once surrounded the abbey of Sligo must have possessed, when the luxuriance of unhewn woods spread their shade over its romantic hills, and the intrusion of an ill built town, neither obscured nor deformed its extensive and varying prospect.

"Disposed by a certain tone of mind to behold with a touching interest, a scene never to be viewed with indifference, while a pre-existing train of ideas were refreshed and associated by the corresponding impressions which my senses received from every object around me, I sat down on the tomb of the royal O'Connor, and plucked the weed or blew away the thistle 'that waved there its lonely head.' The sun was setting in gloomy splendour, and the lofty angles of the abbey-tower alone caught the reflection of his dying beams, from the summits of the mountains where they still lingered: the horizon betrayed a beautiful gradation of tint, which insensibly softened into the reserved colouring of twilight, while broken hues, and irregular masses of light and shadow, flung through the pillars of the cloisters, or from the high-arched portals of the chapel, harmonized the general outline of the ruins, and shed around such aerial and indistinct forms, as fancy woos to aid the vision of her wildest dream. Nor did she now refuse to 'give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name.' Along each mouldering aisle, and gloomy cloister, her creative eye still pursued the close-cowled monk; the haughty abbot, pacing in all the solemn pomp of holy meditation the damp and checquered pavement; or caught the pious chieftain's warrior-form, as he made his sumptuous offering at the altar's foot, followed by the credulous and penitential crowd which the artful policy of John had lured thither, to expiate the past, and purchase the remission of future sins.*

"Such scenes are never to be visited with that interest which

* Roman Catholic Ecclesiastical writers support that there has never been any such monstrous principle maintained or advanced in their Canon Law.—Ed.

peculiarly belongs to them, in the broad glare of day's meridian splendour, since much of their picturesque effect is produced by the solemn stillness of the twilight hour, when the faintest breeze wastes not its sigh upon a 'desert air;' and when the dim discoloured light sheds a mystic hue on every object, and peoples the gloomy space with wild and fancied forms. The simplicity of reason, and the purity of truth, though they afford the clearest evidence to the mind, and sublime while they enlighten, deny to fancy that image so dear to her illusory desires; the simple conviction of an abstract faith gives no picturesque forms to her wondering gaze, affords no mysteries to her unlicensed wishes. A sensible personified religion is the creed she clings to, where the senses are the medium of belief, and credulity reposes on the enjoyments of imagination. Thus the faith of a Socrates was the faith of a philosopher, but the mythology of Homer was the religion of a poet.

"While my eye now rested on those objects that formed a festival to my fancy, which revelled in a train of visionary ideas full of poetical interest, my mind insensibly recurred to those events and circumstances in the religious and political history of my country, from whence these objects stole their interest; and tracing the sacred footsteps of Christianity, from the moment of its admission into Ireland, to the period of its existing influence, I sighed to reflect that those mild tenets by which it preached 'peace and good-will to all men,' were still opposed by the cold contracted dogmas of intolerance, flinging its gloomy shadow on religion's cheering rays, like the noxious vapour, which, rising from the corruption of the earth, meets and obscures the beam whose radiance comes from Heaven."

We catch more than one glimpse of the workings of Sydney Owenson's humane and sensitive heart.

"When the strained eye of sorrowing affection has followed the father and the husband, even till fancy gives what distance snatches from its view, the mother closes the door of her desolate cabin; and when (as is generally the case) her family are too helpless to relinquish her maternal cares and enable her to work, followed by her little children, and frequently by an aged parent, beggary is embraced as the only alternative to want and famine.* Sometimes with an infant on her back, and another in her arms, (while the ablest of her little train is always

* I this day overtook a mendicant group who were with difficulty creeping on before me: the mother, a delicate-looking woman, had

charged with the tin vessel which carries the sour milk supplied by charity, and another infant wanderer sustains the weight of the blanket which constitutes the only covering thrown over them at night), she commences her sad and solitary wanderings. How frequently, and in what opposite seasons, have I beheld these helpless and wretched groups straggling along the high roads, or reposing their wearied limbs beneath the shelter of a ditch! I have seen the feet of the heavily-laden mother totter through winter snows beneath her tender burthen: while the frost bitten limbs of her infant companions drew tears to their eyes, which in the happy thoughtlessness of childhood had never been shed to the unconscious misery of their situation, had not bodily pain taught them to flow. I have met them wandering over those heaths, which afforded no shelter to their aching brows, amidst the meridian ardours of a summer's day; when violent heat and insupportable fatigue, rendered the stream they stopped to drink a luxury the most exquisite. I have met them at the door of magisterial power, and seen them spurned from its threshold by him who should have redressed their grievances or relieved their wants; and I have seen them cheerfully received into the cabin of an equally humble, but more fortunate compatriot, where their wants were a recommendation to benevolence, and their number no check to its exertion. For never yet was the door of an Irish cabin closed against the suppliant who appealed to the humanity of its owner."*

The following Dialogue, further shewing the generous and practical interest which Miss Owenson took in her humbler fellow-countrymen, appears in the Ninth Sketch—"Are you laying in your winter's fire?"—"No, young lady, I am cutting this turf for his honour."

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a child on her back, another infant in a deep decay hung on the shoulder of a girl of twelve years old, and two more little ones followed. I asked the woman, what profession her husband was of: she said, "he was a slave;" for it is by this term that the labouring peasantry of Ireland invariably designate themselves. The woman looked ill: I inquired the cause. She replied that in those cabins where they gave her a lodging "for God's sake," she had for some nights back lain on wet straw, the rain which had continued for some days having penetrated through the roof of her lodging.

* As soon as a mendicant group approaches their door, it receives the accustomed kead-mille-a faltha; the circle round the fire is enlarged; a fresh supply of potatoes brought forward; and shelter for the night, and clean straw to repose on, voluntarily offered.

"What is your hire by the day?"—"Sixpence one half, and threepence the other half of the year."*

"Have you a family?"—"I have a wife and six children."

"Then of course you must have some ground for their maintenance?"—"Oh! yes, two acres at £5 an acre; but what with the tythe proctor, the priest's dues being raised, and the weaver having doubled his prices, that day goes by well enough, when we can afford a drop of milk to moisten the potatoes for the young ones."

"He paused for a moment, cast his eyes to heaven, shook his head expressively, and then abruptly applied himself to his labour with an effort of overstrained exertion, that seemed to derive its energy from feelings that dewed his rough cheek with tears, flowing from the sad heart of the father and the husband."

Traces of considerable erudition and reading spangle the pages of these sketches. It is indeed quite surprising how the youthful mind of Miss Owenson could have acquired so intimate a familiarity with such miscellaneous literature as Giraldus Cambrensis, Lord Verulam, Ware, Harris, Burke, Valancey, Voltaire, Helvetius, Mortesquieu, Sir E. Coke, Chandler, Walker, and Young. And yet, every other page contains references to the writings of these authors. Of foot notes we have what many readers would be inclined to regard as more than enough. Every "Sketch" abounds with them; and it would seem that the fair author had yet to learn that such illustrations, except when unavoidable, completely break the flowing beauty, and encumber the sense of literary composition. The reader, in the midst of the most beautiful details, is suddenly hurled to the bottom of the page by a falling star. The matter thus unartistically obtruded by Miss Owenson, might easily have been embodied with, good effect, in the text. The eye compelled perpetually to desert the page for an extraneous foot-note, and then to rise again unrefreshed, becomes after a while excessively fatigued; but these and other imperfections to which we have alluded, were all corrected by Lady Morgan, when experience and reading had matured her judgment.

* I have been assured, however, that sixpence a day, throughout the year, is in general the average hire in most parts of Connaught. Many persons still living remember it so low as fourpence.

But even at the present early epoch of her life, Sydney Owenson possessed peculiar and considerable intellectual power. Among other qualities rarely enjoyed by the softer sex, she exercised a singular facility in analytically drawing from present political premises, strikingly accurate political conclusions. Tithes, which more than twenty years afterwards excited so powerful a sensation as the monster grievance of Ireland, received their first blow in this unpretending volume of Miss Owenson's. The views expressed, and the language which clothes them, are sound, eloquent, and vigorous. In her Ninth Sketch, Miss Owenson, "with a lady's hand and a lion's heart," probes to the bottom, like an experienced surgeon, the festering germ of disturbance which then agitated Connaught, under the auspices of "the Thrashers." Suffice it to say that they sprang from the same cause which nearly thirty years after ensanguined the plains of Gortroe; Carrickshock, Dunmanway, Castlepollard, and Newtownbarry. But as this subject has been since tolerably well exhausted, and is not, in truth, a very inviting one, we prefer to follow Sydney Owenson on some of her Connaught excursions in search of the picturesque.

The Eleventh Sketch opens with an account of the traditions of Tyreragh and Tyrawley, and an eloquent allusion to her kinsman and friend, Sir Malby Crofton. "My heart had long owed a pilgrimage to this remote and little known barony," she writes, "for it was the residence of the dear and respected friend for whom that heart had long throbbed with an invariable pulse of gratitude, tenderness and affection." Further on she adds:—

"L * * * house,† the ancient family-seat of Sir M * * * C * * *n, Bart., was the goal of my little journey, and I reached its venerable avenue at a season of the day peculiarly favourable to the soft *chiaro-oscura* of picturesque beauty: with the old gloomy avenue of an ancient mansion-seat, there is, I think, invariably connected a certain sentiment which bears the heart back to 'other times,' and awakens it to an emotion of tender reverence, and melancholy pleasure. For myself, I have never walked beneath its interwoven branches uninfluenced by a certain feeling, in which memory's pensive spell mingled with the speculations of awakened fancy.

† Longford House—Colooney, Co. Sligo. This baronetcy is not to be confounded with that of Sir Morgan Crofton of Mohill House, Leitrim.—Ed.

"The lands and demesne of L * * * lie almost along the shores of the Atlantic ocean, and immediately beneath the shelter of Knockachree, from whose rugged base swells the lesser chain of the Ox-mountains, whose sides were once covered with luxuriant woods, and from whose towering summit rush innumerable torrents, which lessening into streams in their deep descent, water the plains beneath, and flow into the ocean. The shores on the other side of the bay are romantic and striking; the beautiful peninsula of Tandsago intervenes its cultivated landscapes, and most happily breaks the view, while the rude dashing of the waves against the bar, lends an effective sound; and the back scenery afforded by the mountains, wears a character of wildness and sublimity, which finishes a picture that betrays no deficiency but from that want under which it labours in common with the rest of the country, the want of plantation.

"Of the old castle of L * * * nothing now remains but a few fragments that mark its site, and are strewed amidst the vegetation which covers a cave, the probable asylum of many an unhappy fugitive in days of civil horror, or religious persecution. Near the spot where the castle once frowned, moulders the ruin of a small building, whose dilapidated portal still bears a Spanish inscription, intimating that it was the 'retreat of a priest."

Miss Owenson's tastes and tendencies were singularly and essentially Celtic. She regretted among other refined national grievances, that the harpers, the original composers and depositories of the music of Ireland, should have ceased to be cherished and retained by its nobility and gentry. She sorrowed to see that the warm ardent spirit of national enthusiasm, which had hung delighted on the song of national melody, to which many an associated idea, many an endeared feeling, lent their superadded charm, should have faded into apathy, and that neither the native strain, nor the native sentiment which gave it soul, touched any longer on the spring of national sensibility, or awakened the dormant energy of national taste.

Miss Owenson now appeared as a dramatic writer, and considering her father's theatrical passion and antecedents, it is almost surprising that she who possessed so much hereditary taste and talent, had not before tried her hand at a play. In the *Dublin Evening Post* of February 28th, 1807, we

read—"Miss Owenson's opera is in a forward state of rehearsal and will shortly appear before the public. Mr. T. Cooke,* who has on so many former occasions contributed to the public entertainment, has harmonised the music of our fair country-woman." The same journal on Thursday, March 5th, records:—"Last night Miss Owenson's opera was performed for the first time to a most brilliant and crowded audience, and received the greatest applause. Mr. Owenson made his first appearance these nine years, and met with a most flattering reception." The *Correspondent*, an influential journal edited by Counsellor Townshend, observes on March 14th—"It is no small compliment to the talents of our country woman Miss Owenson, and to the general estimation in which she is held that so distinguished a mark of favour should have been bestowed on her, as the personal attention of the Viceroy at the Theatre, on the night when the profits were devoted to her as the author of *The First Attempt*, and the flattering encourgement which his Excellency has given to the native talent of this kingdom is no less honourable in so distinguished a personage." The Viceroy alluded to was John, Duke of Bedford. Her Excellency Georgiana, Duchess of Bedford, was, of course, also present, and participated in the hearty congratulation which the Viceroy tendered Miss Owenson. Their patronage of the young dramatist was brought to an abrupt termination on April the 19th following, by the downfall of the Portland administration, and the removal of their Excellencies from Ireland. Miss Owenson, as events afterwards turned out, saw no reason to continue that feeling of regret, with which she had been filled by the departure of her noble and influential patrons. The Duke of Bedford was succeeded by the convivial Charles, fourth Duke of Richmond, who not only showed Sydney Owenson every ordinary mark of courtesy and patronage, but went so far as to knight her husband and brother-in-law.

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*. Tom Cooke was a rare musical genius. Born at Dublin in 1781, he was appointed at the age of fifteen, leader of the band in the Theatre Royal, Crow-street. Cole, the theatrical critic of the *Freeman's Journal* in 1802, alluding to Cooke and his brother who performed in the orchestra, said: "Notwithstanding there are two Cookes, we cannot say that they spoil the broth!" For several years afterwards the paper went by the derisive sobriquet of *The Kitchen-stuff Journal.* Notwithstanding his thorough "Hibernianism" of gesture and style, Cooke became an immense favorite in England.

From the hour that little Sydney received the gracious attentions of their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Bedford, she rose like a rocket in the estimation of the starched *elite* of Ireland. By the fashionable world, her society was courted with avidity; by the populace she was idolized. The *Freeman's Journal* of November 6th, 1807, observes—

"It may justly be said that this young lady is one of the greatest ornaments our country could ever boast of. She moves in the very highest circles, courted and admired, as well for her unrivalled talents, as her elegant and unaffected manners. She is realizing, we hear, a noble independence, by the exertion of her own cultivated and highly expanded mind, while places and pensions are bestowed on 'foul-mouthed railers'—enemies to the peace, the genius, and the virtues of our country."

Patriotic Sketches of Ireland, was followed by the *Lay of an Irish Harp, and Metrical Fragments*, which contained many beautiful gushes of poetic thought and imagery. We have not got a copy of this book upon our table; but if we remember rightly it contained lines to the following effect, which not only afford a specimen of the contents, but furnishes some insight into the character and idiosyncracies of the fair writer.

Too ardent to be constant long,
If love's wild rose I haply gathered,
I scarcely breathed its fragrant bloom,
When love's wild rose grew pale and withered.*

And yet hadst thou still been that lover,
That all, I hoped to find in thee,
I ne'er had turned a careless rover,
I ne'er had been thus idly free.

But o'er my life in fondness dying,
No sigh of love e'er breathed its soul,
Until some heart more fondly sighing,
My sigh into existence stole.

And if some tender pangs I cherished,
From thee I caught the pleasing anguish,
But when with thee, those sweet pangs perished,
I felt them in my bosom languish.

* If the instability which sometimes (perhaps too often) accompanies an ardent and even a tender nature, could admit of excuse, it might find it in the elegant sophistry of Marivaux, "Les ames tendres et delicat, (says he) ont involontaire le defaut, de se relacher dans leur tendresse, quand ils ont obtenu tout le votre. L'envie en vous plaisant leur fournit des graces infinies, qui sont delicieux pour elles, mais désquelles ont plât les voila decouverts!"

The avidity with which Miss Owenson's society was now courted and secured, made considerable inroads on that leisure which had previously been employed to such admirable literary effect, and pecuniary advantage. For the next two years no work from her pen appeared. At length in 1809, *Woman, or Ida of Athens,* a romance in four volumes, was published, containing many highly attractive descriptions of scenery, and individual portraitures, with several situations possessing much romantic interest, and picturesque beauty, but not altogether free from the occasional blemishes of taste which marked the earlier writings of Miss Owenson. *Ida of Athens* at once became a favorite although some of the leading reviews did their best to damn it. But this influential antagonism was perhaps the best attestation of the importance of the book. Even the lordly Byron condescended to go out of his way for the purpose of reading a lecture to Miss Owenson on the subject of her Athenian heroine. The passage to which we allude may be found in one of the notes to *Childe Harold.* *Ida of Athens* attained much ephemeral popularity, but the impression which any reader who now opens it will probably retain is, that Lady Morgan is never so successful as when on Irish ground.

Such was the popularity of Miss Owenson at this period, that the lower orders of her countrymen looked upon her talents as of a very influential kind. "A poor fellow, a letter-carrier," writes one who knew our authoress well, "of good general character, the father of a large family, was induced, in a moment of extreme distress, to open a letter committed to his charge, and to possess himself of a small sum of money, with the intention of restoring it in a few days to the owner. For this offence he was condemned to die. In the court in which he was tried, a scene of the deepest distress was exhibited by the presence and anguish of his aged father, his wife, and her helpless infants: but the crime was one of those which society never pardons. In such cases Cupidity and Apprehension are alike interested in striking terror, and Mercy and Hope must be silent at their bidding. From the gloom of the condemned cell this unfortunate criminal, like the drowning wretch who grasps at a straw, appealed to the imaginary influence of a popular writer, and the claim was irresistible to one whose domestic affections were the mainsprings of her being.

"On the receipt of his letter Miss Owenson addressed herself to the different barristers of her acquaintance; but the

reply she received was uniform. The crime was unpardonable, the man's fate was sealed, and interference could only expose her to mortification and defeat. Unintimidated by these dispiriting reports, she applied directly to Baron Smith, the presiding judge on the trial; and that amiable individual, rejoicing to have so good a pretext for tempering the rigour of justice, directed her to the foreman of the jury, with the promise, that if a recommendation to mercy could be procured from them, he would, in consequence of the conviction resting on circumstantial evidence, back it with his sanction. Miss Owenson saw the foreman of the jury, induced him to assemble the jurymen, and to sign the recommendation. She then drew up a memorial to the Duke of Richmond, the head of the Irish government; and, in one word, procured a commutation of the sentence to perpetual transportation. It is pleasurable to add, that on arriving at New South Wales, the reprieved man became an industrious and honest member of society; and supports his family in independence and comfort. A circumstance not dissimilar in its event, and even more romantic in the details, occurred to the immortal Jenner, who was the means of saving a youth taken prisoner under Miranda, and condemned to certain death under the horrible form of perpetual slavery on the military works of a Spanish American fortress. The recollection of such ancedotes is a source of the purest satisfaction. They tend to raise the literary character; they do honour to human nature, and they relieve the dark shade which almost uniformly obscures the political history of the species."

We now approach the must important period in the domestic life of Miss Owenson. Mr. C. T. Morgan was a surgeon and general medical practitioner in an English provincial town. The late Marquis of Abercorn in passing through it, *en route* for Tyrone, from his Scottish seat, Dudingstone House, Edinburgh, met with an accident which threatened dangerous results, and Surgeon Morgan was sent for. The Doctor was promptly in attendance, and for more than a week he remained night and day beside the noble patient's couch. Under the skilful treatment of Mr. Morgan, the Marquis at length became rapidly convalescent. He felt sincerely grateful to the young physician for his assiduous and efficient attention: and invited him on a visit to his Irish seat at Baron's Court, County of Tyrone, where the Marchioness was about to organize some splendid *fetes Champetre*. The invitation was accepted.

The Marchioness of Abercorn had a select circle of guests on a visit at the house, and amongst the number Miss Owenson. Mr. Morgan was a widower, but more literary and romantic and juvenile than the generality of widowers: a congeniality of tastes brought him and the young authoress into frequent conversation. Time passed swiftly and gaily, but in the midst of this festivity and frolic a letter arrived, announcing the dangerous illness of Robert Owenson, and summoning his daughter Sydney to Dublin. With weeping eyes, and a aching heart—but not on Morgan's account—she bade the young widower, a hurried adieu. Owenson made a short rally and survived until May 1812. Surgeon Morgan, in the mean time, with a smitten heart followed Miss Sydney Owenson, to Dublin; and persecuted her with declarations of the love which filled him to distraction. The popular Duke of Richmond invited the authoress and Mr. Morgan, to one of the private balls at the Viceregal Court. His Excellency, in the course of a lounging conversation with Miss Owenson, playfully alluded to the matrimonial report which had begun to be bruited about, and expressed a hope to have the pleasure, at no distant day, of congratulating her on her marriage. "The rumour respecting Mr. Morgan's *dévouement*," she replied, "may or may not be true, but this I can at least with all candour and sincerity assure your grace, that I shall remain to the last day of my life in single blessedness, unless some more tempting inducement than the mere change from Miss Owenson, to Mistress Morgan be offered me." The hint was taken and Charles Lennox, Duke of Richmond, in virtue of the powers of his office, knighted Surgeon Morgan upon the spot.

Leaving her father in improved health, Miss Owenson accepted the renewed invitation of the Marchioness of Abercorn, (who was the accomplished daughter of the Earl of Wicklow,) and returned to Baron's Court. In the *Gentleman's Magazine** of the day we read. "January 20th 1812, at Baron's Court, Tyrone, Sir C. T. Morgan, of London, to Sidney, eldest daughter of the veteran Irish comedian Owenson, and author of "the Wild Irish Girl," and "Woman, or Ida of Athens."

Thomas Charles Morgan was the only son of Mr. John Morgan of Charlotte street, Bloomsbury, who observing great intellectual promise in his son, spared no expense in procuring

* Gentleman's Magazine, vol. LXXXII. i. 87.

for him the benefits of a first class education. He first studied at Eton and the Charter House; at the age of eighteen he entered St. Peter's College, Cambridge, distinguished himself as a Greek scholar and a metaphysician, graduated as a Bachelor of Medicine in 1804, and obtained a medical deploma in 1809. Sir Thomas Charles Morgan, married first the daughter of William Hammond of Queen's Square, or according to another authority, of Chapnies, Herts, and by this lady he had one child, a daughter.

The pleasure which filled Robert Owenson at this desirable and as subsequent circumstances proved, an essentially happy alliance, was of sadly short duration. In the *Freeman's Journal* of May 28, 1812, we find the following interesting obituary details. We are inclined to think that if not absolutely written by either Lady Morgan or her sister Lady Clarke, they at least furnished the materials.

"Died, in Great George's street, Rutland-square, Robert Owenson, Esq. aged 68. This gentleman was a native of Connaught, and related to some of the first families in that Province. He was the best Irish scholar of his day, and we may perhaps say the *last true Irish Musician.* The revival of Irish Music within these last *thirty* years was *entirely owing to his exertions*, and his exquisite mode of singing his native airs, with their original words both in public and private. Mr. Owenson, who might have been called the Father of the Stage, early indulged his passion for the Dramatic life, and came out under the auspices of *Mr. Garrick,* to whom he was presented by his countryman and near relative, the celebrated *Dr. Goldsmith.** Having married an English lady of good connexions, he returned to Ireland, and became joint proprietor and Acting Manager successively of the Theatres Royal, and City Theatre, Dublin, and of the Londonderry and Kilkenny Theatres, the last of which he built at a considerable expence. Mr. Owenson had retired from his profession for some years before his death, but his exquisite, his unrivalled representation of Irish character still lives in the memory of many. When Mr. Cumberland saw him in his own Major O'Flaherty, he said 'he had

* "Owenson was a near relation of Goldsmith, and is said to have had the honour at an early period of his life, of being introduced by him into the most eminent dramatic and literary society of the age." *Women of the Time.* 1856.—Ed.

beyond any other person realised HIS idea of a *fine* IRISH *Gentleman.*' In his less advanced days he was not more popular in public life than sought after in the first circles of private society. His liberal education, singularly gentleman-like deportment, polished manners, and exquisite humour, rendered him a welcome guest at the first tables. He is author of some of the best Irish Songs extant. He played with taste and skill on several instruments, and was the *last surviving Pupil* of the two celebrated English Composers *Doctors Arne* and *Worgan.* He was passionately fond of literature, and was well known as the protector of the unfortunate *Thomas Dermody*, and many other young Irishmen of more talents than prudence. His conduct as a father (having early lost his wife), went far beyond the common line of parental duty and tenderness—his public life considered, *it was unexampled.*"

The Freeman's Journal adds : "Since the above had been prepared for publication the following favour had been left in our Letter Box. We can have no objection to add it as a flattering justification of what has been already said of the merits of Mr. Owenson :—

"Alas ! poor Yorick ! I knew him well, Horatio."

"We might quote the whole of this beautiful passage from Shakspeare, as illustrative of the merits and talents of the gentleman in question, who has lately paid the debt to nature, and whose public and private character deserves our greatest eulogium.

"We may say in honour of our country, that he was a true born Irishman, with all its native honour and goodness of heart. On the stage, where he was many years an excellent comic performer, none surpassed him in the Milesian walk, and the house often resounded with encore for the repetition of his songs, which always set the audience in a roar. His last appearance in the Drama (after many years of retirement) was in a Musical Piece called, *The Whim of the Moment*—written by his daughter Miss Owenson, now Lady Morgan, in which he performed an Irish Character, and to which Mr. Atkinson gave an excellent prologue.

"In domestic life, Mr. Owenson was always distinguished as an affectionate husband and loving father.

"We consider this tribute as justly due to the memory of the late Mr. Owenson, both as a gentleman of real worth, and as a credit to the profession in which he was so long a favourite.

"He has left two amiable daughters, Lady Clarke and Lady Morgan, to regret the loss of a dearly beloved parent, who were the comfort and delight of his declining days, who inherit much of his original genius, and who are equally esteemed in society." *

There are some passages in the foregoing, possibly a little too highly charged, but perfectly justifiable if written, as is quite possible, by a filial hand. Sir Jonah Barrington, in the year 1830, takes a critical retrospective glance at Owenson thus, and perhaps hits the truth more accurately.

"Mr. Owenson, the father of Lady Morgan, was at that time highly celebrated in the line of Irish characters, and never did an actor exist so perfectly calculated, in my opinion, to personify that singular class of people. Considerably above six feet in height;—remarkably handsome and brave-looking,—vigorous and well-shaped,—he was not vulgar enough to disgust, nor was he genteel enough to be *out of character:* never did I see any actor so entirely identify himself with the peculiarities of those Irish parts he assumed. In the higher class of Irish caracters (old officers, &c.) he looked well, but did not exhibit sufficient formal dignity: and in the *lowest,* his humour was scarcely quaint and original enough; but in what might be termed the '*middle class of Paddies,*' no man ever combined the look and manner with such felicity as Owenson. Scientific singing was not an Irish quality; and he sang well enough.—I have heard Mr. Jack Johnston warble so sweetly and so very skilfully, and act some parts so very like a man of education, that I almost forgot the nation he was mimicking: that was not the case with Owenson; he acted as if he had not received too much schooling, and sang like a man whom nobody had instructed. He was, like most of his profession, careless of his concerns, and grew old without growing rich."† We further learn from Sir Jonah that Owenson was associated with the *debut* of Dorothea Francis, afterwards the celebrated Mrs. Jordan. She entertained a great respect for, and reposed much confidence in Owenson, who took a warm interest in her welfare, and was the principal adviser of the step which led to the rejection of Lieutenant Doyne's matrimonial addresses.‡

* There are also a few obituary details regarding Owenson in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 82, p. 602.

† Personal Sketches of his own Times, by Sir Jonah Barrington, vol. ii., p. 219.

‡ *Vide*, also Boaden's Memoirs of Mrs. Jordan, vol. i., p. 14.

The house in Great George's-street, Rutland-square, where Owenson died, as recorded by the *Freeman's Journal* of the day, was the residence of the late Sir Arthur Clarke, Knight, of whom a few details may not be irrevelant.

Like Sir Robert Kane, Dr. Corrigan, the late Doctors Quinn, Labatt, and other men who have risen to professional distinction, Sir Arthur Clarke began his career in a pharmaceutical establishment. We first find his name and occupation in Watson's Dublin Directory for 1798, (page 27) thus:—"Arthur Clarke, apothecary, 12 Gardiner's-place." In 1807 he removed, as appears from the same authority, to 44, North Great George's-street; but Mr. Clarke, in changing his residence, did not change a line of business which gave him great facilities for gathering medical experience. It has been said that an apothecary, from the extent of his practice among the humbler classes—the bone and sinew of the land—possesses better opportunities for becoming acquainted with the diseases to which flesh is heir, than some high-flying physicians of glittering *prestige* whose practice is necessarily confined to the higher orders. Ample as are the opportunities of a modern apothecary for gathering experience, those in the last century had greater, for their number was considerably less. The list of apothecaries in the last century counts forty; at present there are one hundred and seventy licentiates. Until 1770 no Roman Catholic could become a pharmacopolist.

In 1808, Mr. Arthur Clarke had the good fortune to become acquainted with Olivia Owenson, the accomplished and only sister of Lady Morgan. Mr. Clarke married her in 1808, and we are glad to be able to fix the date in the most positive manner, for it sets at rest an amusing story which has long been current, professing to describe the manner in which Mr. Clarke obtained his knighthood. The old story has it that the sisters Owenson made a vow that they would never change their names unless for a title. Sydney, as we have seen, married Sir Charles Morgan, and when Mr. Clarke, the apothecary, proposed for her sister, he is said to have been told, in reply, that without a title he had no chance. He accordingly waited upon Charles, Duke of Richmond, whose *bonhommie* was proverbial, and whose habit of bestowing knighthoods Lever satirizes in *Charles O'Malley*, where the good natured Viceroy, in a maudlin mood, is represented knighting Corny Delany. "Please your Excellency," said Mr. Clarke (so the story

goes), "my situation is truly wretched and deplorable. I am passionately attached to Miss Owenson. She will not have me unless I am knighted—

Oft I begged, implored, besought her for a word—a glance of hope,
Hinting suicide as certain—pistol, river, razor, rope!"

The good natured Viceroy, fearful at the thought of having the love-sick swain's blood upon his head, smote him with the flat of his sword, exclaiming—"Arise, and be happy, Sir Arthur Clarke!"

We give this story because it is a funny one; but the details are inaccurate. Sir Arthur was married to Olivia Owenson in 1808, and not until 1811 did he receive the honour of knighthood. If Sir Arthur happened to be a knight *bachelor* in that year, it does not follow that he must have been unmarried.

The Duke of Richmond having become seriously indisposed from a cutaneous disease, Miss Owenson, who was exceedingly intimate at the Viceregal Lodge, declared *sans ceremonie* that if his Grace desired to be cured, he had only to consult her brother-in-law. The Viceroy consented; and Mr. Clarke having put his Excellency through a peculiar bathing process, a thorough cure succeeded. As a mark of gratitude the Viceroy created him a Knight Bachelor, and soon after he was presented with the freedom of the city.

In 1811, an unpremeditated encounter took place between an English sloop of war and an American frigate, which resulted in the loss of thirty lives to the British interest. War was soon after declared against England, and hostilities commenced in 1812. In the *Directory* of the day, we find the knight thus styled—"Sir Arthur Clarke, Agent for Sick and Wounded Seamen, 44, North Great George's-street."

He had now relinquished business as an apothecary. In 1814 his name vanished from that department of the Directory headed "Merchants and traders."

Sir Arthur gave considerable attention to the study of medicine from this date. He took out his degree, became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, and subsequently a Fellow of that body. In 1820 he established "the Medicated Bathing Institution, No. 18, Lower Temple-street," which continued open to a comparatively recent period, and was productive of very beneficial results to suffering humanity. A pun of Sir Arthur's in connexion with this establishment, is too good to omit telling; "I *was* a Knight

Bachelor," said Sir Arthur; "I am now the Knight of the Bath." *

Among the medical appointments held by Sir A. Clarke were Surgical Superintendent in the Naval Hospital during the wars, which marked the first quarter of the present century, Superintendent to the Revenue Cruisers, Surgeon to the Maison de Sante, and physician to the Bank of Ireland, and to the Metropolitan Police. Sir Arthur published various medical treatises including works on tubercular consumption, water, exercise, and diet, and a code of instructions in case of railway, steam boat, or other accidents. He was a strong advocate for the hydropathic system of medical treatment, and often had to bear many a stupid sneer from those who pertinaciously adhered to the old school and shut their eyes against conviction.

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* Sir Arthur Clarke was a very amiable and lively man, and a general favorite in Dublin Society. The author of these pages knew him personally, and received proofs of his good nature. He survived until October, 1857, when he fell with the leaves. The writer published an obituary sketch of the Knight in the papers of the day which begun uninvitingly as follows:—

"Poor Sir Arthur Clarke is dead. Small as he was—and a man of more liliputian dimensions, with the exception of Tom Moore, never trod our *pavè*—he will be greatly missed in Dublin, not only by his own personal friends, who esteemed him cordially; but by myriads of people who have long been familiar with his appearance in our streets. The late Judge Day was one of the oldest and steadiest of his friends. Sir Arthur and he were at one time almost inseparable, and it was a standing joke with the wags of Dublin, some thirty years age, to liken the great colossal judge and his diminutive companion to the 21st of June, inasmuch as they jointly constituted the *longest Day and the shortest Knight.*

"According to Dodd, Sir Arthur Clarke was born in 1778; but this is a mistake, for he first saw the light in 1773; and had consequently reached the patriarchal age of eighty-four. Sir Arthur's father, soon after the birth of his son, entered the British army, proceeded to America, and was one of those who were sent to the right about by Washington on the plains of Lexington and the heights of Bunker's Hill. In 1776 Clarke returned to Ireland with the remnant of Lord Cornwallis's forces. It would appear that he had always a taste for arms, having led Miss Sword, of the county Meath, to the hymeneal altar in 1771. "He who loveth the Sword, will perish by the Sword" was not verified in this instance, for never had man a more devoted wife. Sir Arthur used to say that his father was lineally descended from General Sir John Clarke, who was made a Knight Banneret by "bluff King Hal" on the field of the battle of Spurs."

Among those who laughed at the water cure was Charles Lamb. "There is nothing new or wonderful in it," he said dryly, "it is as old as the deluge, and in my opinion has killed more than it cured."

The five years which followed Miss Owenson's alliance with Sir Charles Morgan were spent partly abroad, and partly in Dublin. Lady Morgan's presence was at once courted with redoubled ardour by the highest circles of society—a circumstance which materially increased those invaluable opportunities for observation and gaining knowledge of the world, the utter absence of which had rendered *St. Clair,* and *the Novice of St. Dominick,* so juvenile in many parts. At the famous literary receptions of Lady Cork and Orrery, our little authoress was a constant and a favoured guest. "How pleasantly," writes Hepworth Dixon, "How pleasantly she described the days of Abercorn Priory, and of Lady Cork's 'blue parties,' where she starred it as a lioness, after the Thrales and Burneys of a past dynasty had vanished from the scene! These things made her historical,—and Lady Morgan was to society and literature something of what the Great Duke had been to state-craft and war."

The first novel with which Lady Morgan presented the public after her marriage was the somewhat rhapsodical lucubration in three volumes entitled *The Missionary, an Italian Tale.* The story is open to objection, but is so improbable that it can hardly be deemed a dangerous novel. The salient points of the narrative are, if we remember rightly, these. The Missionary is an Italian priest who repairs to India with a view to effect conversions to the Catholic church, of which he is himself a zealous and an able minister. Great success attends his labours at first, but in an evil hour, a Hindoo lady of surpassing beauty whom he had addressed in the language of fraternal charity, brings her rich black eyes, charged with subduing amatory power, to bear, with deadly aim, upon him. The struggle between duty and inclination which follows is in the highest degree terrific. In the course of a short time the lady is borne to eternity by an epidemic fever. Even the bed of death does not allay the unholy torment which rages within the Missionary's breast. He casts away his breviary and stole, and lives a sort of anchoritic life in the recesses of a gloomy cave, for her sake. Eschewing scull and crucifix, his sole companion is a pet fawn, which had once belonged and had

been often caressed by the beautiful Luxima. How the ideal priest ended his days we do not now remember, nor is it of much consequence; but our impression is distinct that no good moral in conclusion attempts to palliate the many objectionable details through which the reader has been dragged. Many of the scenes and descriptions are ludicrously romantic. It was, we think, in this novel that Lady Morgan spoke of some one clad in "*a tissue of woven air.*" The *Missionary* was probably the very worst of Lady Morgan's brain creations; and both style and story is worthy only of the Minerva press; but it had, notwithstanding, many admirers, foremost among whom stood the famous Lord Castlereagh.

We should not have paused to notice the *Missionary* at such length were it not that Lady Morgan herself, to the last moment of her life, attached some importance to it, although laughing airily enough at the wild romance and puerilities of the story. She considered that the picture it presented of Indian life, and some out-of-the-way oriental lore which it unfolded, possessed a certain didactic attraction, which far and away more than counterbalanced the defects of the story. That such was Lady Morgan's deliberate opinion, even after the lapse of forty years, we have the most conclusive evidence in the singular and significant fact, that the veteran authoress had been engaged just before her death in completely remodelling the *Missionary,* and in superintending its revision through the press. Lady Morgan considered that the Indian details with which the *Missionary* abounded, possessed for obvious reasons peculiar interest at present. When this romance was published, more than forty years ago, the East was very generally used as a *tabula rasa* for fictions of a didactic and romantic kind; but we might almost as justly expect that people would study Rassellas in order to learn the history and politics of Abyssinia, as to hope to gather accurate information regarding the state of India from this unworthy *Missionary's* escapades. Through the medium of *Luxima, the Prophetess, a Tale of India,* they have been reproduced in a modified shape, within the last month, and those who desire to read the narrative we have outlined can do so at any circulating library.

But it was not until the publication of *O'Donnell, a National Tale,* in 1815, that Lady Morgan's claims to take her place among the best novelists of the age became cordially and universally recognised by the public. The authoress, as we have said, was never so thoroughly at home as when on Irish

ground; and in illustration of this fact, the novels of *O'Donnell, Florence M'Carthy*, and *The O'Briens and O'Flahertys*, are eminently conclusive. These three essentially Irish tales—green from cover to cover, and racy of the soil—form a national literary shamrock, of which Ireland may well be proud.

In the novel of *O'Donnell* Lady Morgan broke new ground. She ceased to guide the adventures of puerile novices of St. Dominick, crude Idas of Athens, and frail Italian missionaries in India. *O'Donnell* was the vanguard of a noble host of Celtic ideal creations, profitable to study and worthy to imitate, which tended, in no small degree, to break down the Cockney prejudices which had so long existed, on the other side of the Channel, against Ireland. This novel displayed singular vigour of thought, and knowledge of mankind; and whether we laugh at the native eccentricities of M'Rory, sigh for the vicissitudes of the gallant O'Donnell, or smile at the lavish nothingness of fashionable life, we must acknowledge that we are under the influence of a spell with which true genius alone could invest us.

For forty years it was fashionable, among a band of ill-natured Tory critics, headed by the late John Wilson Croker, to ridicule, and sneer down Lady Morgan's pretensions, as a novelist and a writer. Never had an author more formidable critical antagonism to contend with. Single-handed, Lady Morgan encountered this terrific, organized, and almost impregnable band; and one by one they fell, vanquished and prostrate, at her feet. Since the grave has closed over this brilliant woman's labors, a few have endeavoured to regain their feet; and availing themselves of this unworthy advantage, they have sought to depreciate the abilities of her whom, living, they cravenly feared. It is pleasant, however, to be able to set the deliberately recorded opinion of the greatest novelist that ever lived, against the ill-natured, but perhaps not uninfluential, snivelling, and drivelling to which we have alluded. Sir Walter Scott was, himself a member of the Croker School, in politics. He entertained an unconquerable aversion to Lady Morgan's liberal and progressive views; and the following remarks, committed to his private diary, are therefore the more to be valued. "I have amused myself occasionally very pleasantly," he writes, "during the last few days, by reading over Lady Morgan's novel of *O'Donnell*, which has some striking and beautiful passages of situation and description, and, in the comic part, is very rich and entertaining."

"The originality of her style," recently observed the *Athenæum*, "will at once suggest itself, when it is recollected that ere *O'Donnell* appeared, Miss Edgeworth, by her *Castle Rackrent*, and *Absentee*, might have been thought to have made the Irish national tale her own. No two things, however, could be more distinct than her brain-creatures, and those of the more cautious and prudential authoress of *Gwin* and *Tomorrow*."

Touching some of the ill-natured criticisms of which we have spoken, old Joe Atkinson, in a poetic address to Lady Morgan, at this period, observed:

> "Since you sport the White Lily and Violet Blue,
> As an emblem of France, so descriptive and true,
> And blend the Sweet-briar, the Shamrock, and Rose,
> A garland of fancy and wit to compose;
> No wonder the critics are all in a rage,
> Their malice and envy against you to wage;
> And prove by their rancour they're spitefully jealous,
> That Women write better than such scribbling fellows.
> But O'Donnell shall come, with M'Rory, his man,
> To guard and defend you, and bring their dog Bran,
> To worry the *Curs*, who with venom abuse,
> And *bark* from the *den* of their snarling Reviews."

Never had an author more violent antagonism to encounter. "It is to me delightful," writes Sir Jonah Barrington, "to see a woman, solely by the force of her own natural talent, succeed triumphantly in the line of letters she has adopted, and in despite of the most virulent, illiberal, and unjust attacks ever yet made on any author by mercenary Reviewers."

Shortly after the peace of 1814, Sir Charles and Lady Morgan, full of a grand literary scheme, proceeded to France, and took advantage of every available opportunity to "mark, note, study, and inwardly digest," the manners, customs, history, idiosyncracy, and tendencies of that great nation.

Though a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, and constantly associating with distinguished members of that profession, Sir Charles Morgan relinquished medical practice at an early period of life, and devoted himself exclusively to literary and political pursuits. Sometimes, but not often, he wrote, in a popular manner, on medical subjects. In 1815 appeared his *Outlines on the Philosophy of Life*, which had for its object the diffusion of a more general knowledge of the fundamental facts of Physiology. The book was an able one, and

very successfully conveyed a popular view of the leading facts in Physiology, as they bear more especially on the moral and social animal.

In the Autumn of 1815, we find Lady Morgan in Paris picking up materials for her *magnum opus*. General Lawless, the distinguished united Irish Refugee, writing to his kinsman, Lord Cloncurry, on August 15th, 1815, says, "I have to acknowledge the letters confided to Sir Charles Morgan. I will write again by Lady Morgan. I like extremely this lady; she is agreeable, witty, and with as little conceit as can be found in a woman of her merit."*

The thorough fascination which even a momentary interview with Lady Morgan produced, having become quite proverbial peculiar faculties of access to the most exclusive circles of the gay metropolis, at once opened invitingly before her. Fated to encounter no *contre-temps*, or, "accidents by flood and field," from which few travellers, forty years ago, were exempt, she was *feted* in another sense wherever she went, and brilliant successes marked every step in her progress. No reserve was maintained—with the state of everything and everybody The Wild Irish Girl was made *au courant*. Intellectually enriched by these invaluable opportunities for observation Lady Morgan's notes on France daily expanded beneath her hand, while their style glittered brilliantly from the polishing touches of her elaborating pen. Amid a fever of expectation at home and abroad, this remarkable book was at length born to the world. In France the *Constitutionel*—then a most influential newspaper—reports progress: "La curiosité publique est vivement excité par l'annonce de nouvel l'ouvrage de Ladi Morgan—*La France*—des extraits en ont été deja lus dans les reveles particuliers et ces essais ont produit le plus grand enthusiasme—on va presqu' a dire qu'il n'a étè rien ecrit de plus brilliant, ni qui donna une idee plus exacte de la societè et des manieres de Paris—cet ouvrage doit paraitre à Paris et Londres en mème tems dans la semaine prochaine l'en agoute que les critiques Francais taillent deja leur plumes!" The *Journal de Paris*, another highly influential newspaper, tells us, not less authentically than truly:—"Lady Morgan has been run after, entertained, and almost worshipped in all our fashionable circles. She has studied us from head to foot, from court

* Personal Recollections of Lord Cloncurry, Second Edition, p. 140.

to village, from the boudoir to the kitchen. She has seen, observed, analysed and described everything, men and things, speeches and characters."

France, which may be safely regarded as the *chef d'ouvre* of Lady Morgan, is divided into eight books. The first treats of the Peasantry; the second and third of society. The three next are devoted to an account of Paris. The seventh book is consecrated *aux Spectacles.* The eighth and last, comprises sketches of the leading literary characters and eminent people of France, while the whole is richly spangled with a number of authentic and out-of-the-way anecdotes.

This complicated and laborious task, Lady Morgan executed with all the spirit inherent to an ardent mind, and all the truth which is characteristic of an honest and an independent one. Her remarks on French society, possessed peculiar interest, for they were not founded on hearsay, or on the result of metaphysical speculation, but were drawn from actual, and apparently very close observation. Exploring with care and accuracy the springs of political action, among all the factions which then disturbed and distracted the breast of La Belle France, Lady Morgan's work, while it afforded the friends of Liberty a high and valued treat, stung corruption to madness and revenge. Energetically written, lively, but not flippant, original, and pointed without affectation, polished, but not labored, and graphic without redundancy, the reader is transported, all but "body and bones," into the midst of the gay scenes which she so vividly and temptingly pourtrays. Whether Lady Morgan converses with the glittering courtier, the *petit proprietaire* of a few acres, the lady of high rank, or the great literary or political lion, we make one of the party, and at length retire from the *converzatione,* sometimes instructed, often refreshed, always amused. But the *salons* of the great would seem to have had less attraction for Lady Morgan, than the practical acquaintance, which, for generous purposes, she formed with the French peasantry. Happy as seemed their condition, she did not view it with unmixed pleasure. When she beheld the bright cottage garden, and the various comforts of the contented French peasants, the remembrance of the then wretched, oppressed, and degraded population of her own country, hurried to her mind, and furnished a contrast and comparison, which in a mind so sensitive as hers, must have created very painful sensations. "The finest flowers in

France," she writes, "are now to be found in the peasant's garden—the native *Rose de Provence*—the stranger rose of India, entwine their blossoms, and grow together amidst the rich foliage of the vine, which scales the gable, and creeps along the roof of the cottage. I have seen a French peasant as proud of his tulips as any stock-jobber florist of Amsterdam, and heard him talk of his carnations, as if he had been the sole possessor of the *semper Augustus!* Oh! when shall I behold near the peasant's hovel in my own country other flowers than the bearded thistle which there raises its lonely head, and scatters its down upon every passing blast; or the scentless shamrock, the unprofitable blossom of the soil, which creeps to be trodden upon, and is gathered only to be plunged in the inebriating draught, commemorating annually the fatal illusions of the people, and drowning in the same tide of madness their emblems and their wrongs."

This pleasingly expressed allusion to the national practice of drowning the shamrock in a bowl of punch, does not seem to have proved intelligible to Lady Morgan's English critics; for her old foe, the *Quarterly Review*, in a violent diatribe, triumphantly quoted the paragraph as a specimen of "the utter nonsense" which filled the book, and defied any reader to guess what such fine language as the above could possibly mean.

Lady Morgan's representations not being very favourable to the pretensions of legitimacy, her work, as a matter of course, was attacked with all the malignity and virulence for which the *Quarterly*, when under the Croker and Giffard management, was celebrated. The unmanly attack of the Review recoiled on itself. People began to ask themselves if the cause which it advocated was so totally defenceless by argument, so inadequately supported by physical force, as to require all the aid of scurrility, misrepresentation, and falsehood, to repel the attacks of its opponents.

The critic's revival of the old taunt which charged with Jacobinism, all sentiments hostile to the narrow views of a faction, was perhaps the less objectionable point in his review, since even the restricted press of Paris had previously done justice to Lady Morgan's political sentiments, and acknowledged that she had drawn the true line of distinction between the friends of freedom, and the partisans of licence. Indeed all the critical torture which could possibly be applied to isolated passages, and *ex parte* statements, failed to disguise the spirit

of British liberty in which her work was composed. For this reason we shall not stop to notice all the distortions, and disingenuous suppressions by which the reviewer sought to substantiate his charge. But as the elaborate article in question remains on record in every important library, public and private, it is only fair that we give the same permanence to a brief detection of some of the many "*ignorances and lies, by implication and deceit*" (to quote the reviewer's words) which animate his unmanly criticism.

Lady Morgan called the family of La Fayette "patriarchal," and this the reviewer absurdly construes into making La Fayette's children and grandchildren the *patriarchs*. Passing over the reviewer's misconception of the obvious elisions—"*no primogeniture*" for "no right of primogeniture," of "*Palais Conservateur*" for "Palais du Senat Conservateur," &c., we arrive (p. 267) at another false statement. Lady Morgan does not "make the low stupid blunder" of mistaking Pere Elise for a confessor: nor does she draw a comparison between his "spiritual influence over Louis XVIII., and that of Pere de la Chase over Louis XIV." Thirdly, the reviewer denies *Bouquets d'arbres* to be good French. He ought to have known that it was not only a phrase in daily use, but employed by some of the best authors. Fourthly, he quarrels with the translation of "*menin*" by the word *minion*. The offensive meaning attached to it rested, in this instance, solely with the reviewer. "*Like valour's minion*," occurs in Macbeth. "Sweet Fortune's minion," and "*minions of the moon*," in Henry IV. But a hundred other instances might be cited to justify Lady Morgan's application of this word. Menin is derived from *mener*, and signifies a friend, a follower. Fifthly, the etymology of Carousel, criticized at p. 269, is from Madame de Genlis, who surely ought to know French better than a British Quarterly Review. Moreover, Lady Morgan does not describe Louis XIV, as a flying Turk: and of this as of the other points to which we have referred, any reader of *France* can satisfy himself.

Sixthly, Lady Morgan does not say that she knew persons who lived under Louis XIV. The reviewer must have been very ignorant of Parisian life not to have known that "*Voltigeur de Louis XIV*," was then, and has been constantly since applied in Paris as a *Sobriquet* to the emigrant superannuated officers of the remodelled army. Seventhly, Lady Morgan did

not mistake *Cherubin* for the singular number of *Cherubim*. This gratuitous charge rose out of the reviewer's ignorance that Cherubin is the name of the *mandit page* in Beaumarchais' comedy. Eighthly, Lady Morgan did not suppose the battle of Fontenoy, at which the Irish Brigade obtained its memorable victory over the British, to have been fought under Louis XIV. She expressly attributes it to the reign of his successor—besides *compagnes a la rose* is not "jargon."

Ninthly, the reviewer seems not to have been aware that "the *atheist Voltaire*" wrote repeatedly and vehemently against atheism. Moreover, it would doubtless have slightly altered the critic's tone had he read the recently published and very valuable book of Lord Broughton, in which many misapprehensions in regard to Voltaire's real views are dispelled, and the evidence of the man who acted for thirty years as Voltaire's private secretary adduced, from which we learn that during that long period Voltaire was never known to utter, even in the unguarded intimacy of friendship, any remark of an infidel character. This,although strongly disapproving of many of Voltaire's writings, we deem it necessary to say.

Tenthly, Lady Morgan says: "bastilles, lettres de cachet, mysterious arrest, and solitary confinement, started upon my imagination, and I had already classed myself with the Iron Mask, and caged Mazarine, the Wilsons, Hutchinsons, and Bruces." To this the reviewer (p. 280) replies: "This is the *lie* by implication; Wilson, Hutchinson, and Bruce had grievously violated the laws; they were openly arrested, legally confined, publicly tried, criminally sentenced, and generously pardoned." Now what are the facts? Wilson, Bruce and Hutchinson were buried *au secret* in the gloomy cells of La Force on a bailable offence. In this illegal confinement they were detained until they would confess the truth of the charge. After two months' detention they were accused of high treason, and remained one fortnight under that unjust accusation. At length the latter indictment was cancelled as an act of justice, and in opposition to the wishes and passions of the court and the government. Nor were they ever generously pardoned. At the expiration of their sentence, and after seven months imprisonment, they were released from captivity.*

But the most serious charge against the Reviewer has yet to

* Vide *Morning Chronicle* September 6, 1817.

be made. Lady Morgan viewed many Catholic customs on the Continent with an eye of prejudice; and amongst the number certain processions in honour of the Blessed Virgin. It may be premised that in the revolutionary days of anarchy nearly every statue of the Holy Mother had been broken or defaced by sacrilegious hands, and Madonnas became very scarce in consequence. The reviewer disingenuously suppresses this fact, and garbles a passage of LadyMorgan's for the purpose of upbraiding her with licentious writing! After a damaging preamble the *Quarterly* quotes from our authoress: "The priests to their horror could not find a single *Virgin*, and were at last obliged to send to a neighbouring village to request *the loan of a Virgin*. A Virgin was at last procured; *a little indeed the worse for the wear;* but this was not a moment for fastidiousness, and the Madonna was paraded through the streets." The critic requests his readers (p. 281,) to consider what manner of woman she must be who displays such detestable grossness of which even a jest book would be ashamed, and cautions every parent against allowing Lady Morgan's work into his family, or his drawing room. By referring to the original passage it will be perceived that the reviewer has carefully omitted the words "*to carry in procession*," which if quoted would have made his unamiable insinuation clumsy, and probably would have undeceived the reader.

Belying in their own conduct the Scripture precepts of "Charity envieth not, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth in the truth," and "Judge not that you be not judged," the Quarterly Reviewers coolly remind the reader that on a former occasion they recommended the Bible to Lady Morgan's perusal, a request which they regret to find has been disregarded; while at p. 283, they inconsistently declare that Lady Morgan parodies Scripture for the purpose of turning it into ridicule, an accusation perfectly gratuitous.

Twelfthly, in the charge of "Impiety" against Lady Morgan, a passage from Madame de Maintenon in condemnation of "ingratitude envers le roi" is quoted (p. 283,) with approbation by the Reviewer. "Lady Morgan," adds the ultra loyalist, "is of a different mind." Who is this Madame de Maintenon? the kept mistress of Louis the Fourteenth. And who was the king whom, to quote the cant of the Reviewer, ought to have been honored as much as God is feared? The enemy of Civil and Religious Liberty, and the revoker of the edict of Nantes. The *Quarterly's* approval of the religious sentiments of Madame

de Maintenon sounds oddly after its denunciation of Lady Morgan's licentiousness.

Owing, we suppose, to the dearth of legitimate materials for hostile criticism, our Reviewer found it expedient to devote considerable space to some strictures on the score of "bad spelling." But Lady Morgan's preface ought to have disarmed criticism, at least on this head. "Having bound myself to my publisher," she writes, "to be ready for the Press before April, I was obliged to compose *à trait de plume*, to send off the sheets chapter by chapter, without the power of detecting repetitions by comparison, and without the hope of correction from the perusal of proof sheets. Printing in one country, and residing in another, it was not to be expected that the press would wait upon the chances of wind and tide, for returns in, or out of course." But it is useless to analyze further this illiberal attack of the *Quarterly*. To complete the task of developing its mistakes and misstatements would exceed, if possible, the tediousness of its author. We shall therefore turn to a light poetical version of the critique which from its pith and point is not likely to fatigue the reader. It came, if we mistake not, from the pen of Lady Clarke, whose poetical squibs in the Dublin newspapers, during the Anglesey Viceroyalty, attracted much attention. She had a remarkable taste for music and poetry. Moore, in his diary of October 16, 1821, speaks very favorably of a song which Lady Clarke had written and composed on the occasion of his return to Ireland. She also wrote one or more comedies of merit and originality, and were it not for the cares of a young family Lady Clarke would, doubtless, have come more frequently before the public. When Lady Clarke died we have not been able to ascertain. We have searched the Obituary of the *Gentleman's Magazine* for the last twenty-five years but without effect.

"The book we review is the work of a woman,
A fact which we think will be guessed at by no man,
Who notes the abuse which our virulent rage
Shall discharge on its author, in every page.
And who is this *woman*—no *recent* offender,
A Jacobin, Shanavest, Whiteboy, Defender.
She who published "O'Donnel," which (take but our word)
Is a monstrous wild "tissue of ALL THAT'S ABSURD"—
Indeed there's a something in all her romances,
Which, to tell our opinion, does not hit our fancies.
No, give us a novel, whose pages unfold
The glories of that blessed æra of old,

When Princes legimate trod on the people,
And the Church was so *high*, that it out-topp'd the steeple,
No, give us some Methodist's maudling confusion,
RELIGION in SEEMING, in FACT, PERSECUTION;
Some strange Anti-Catholic orthodox whining,
At this age of apostacy wildly repining ! !

This WOMAN !—we scarce could believe when we read,
Retorts all the charges we heaped on HER head ;
And leads to rebellion young authors, by shewing,
That calling *hard names* is by no means *reviewing*.
She boats that we've not spoiled her market in marriage,
That vainly her morals and wit *we* disparage ;
But surely that man is the boldest in life,
Who, in spite of OUR ravings, could take her for wife ;
And therefore we now set him down without mercy
As the slave of enchantment, " THE VICTIM OF CIRCE."

Now to come to the matter in hand—we advance
'Tis " AN IMPUDENT LIE," when she calls her book " FRANCE ;"
A title that would not be characteristic,
Unless for a large Gazeteer or Statistic.
For we hold that it is not allow'd in a work,
To form our opinions by *Ex pede Herc.*
She ought to have visited Lyons, Bourdeaux,
And peeped into Marseilles, and Strasburgh and Meaux ;
For though the design of the Congress miscarries,
And Jacobins kick against Louis—at Paris,
Though Freedom lies bleeding and chain'd *on the Seine*,
And the emigrants *there*, mould the state upon Spain,
In the rest of the kingdom, for what she can tell,
The impudent jade, things *may* go mighty well.

Next comes her arrangement !—when this we denounce
We must eke out our charge with a bit of a bounce;
And o'erlook the confusion which reigns in our head,
To charge it at once, on HER book in the stead—
Of this book, my good readers, in vain you may hope
An account of its merits, its plan or its scope ;
Eor the tale *she* relates does not chime with the view
Which *we* take of France in our *loyal review*.
And thongh we should rail, till our paper were shrinking,
Alas ! we should but *set the people a thinking*,
On the list of ERRATA 'twere better to seize,
For thence we may conjure what blunders we please.

These, mixed with the few, which the best author makes,
In a work of such length, and *our own worse mistakes ;*
With some equivocation, and some " *direct lies*,"
Of abuse will provide our accustom'd supplies :
Which largely diluted with loyalty rant,
With much hypocritical methodist cant,

Misquotations, mistatements, distortions of phrase,
Will set the HALF-THINKERS (we judge) in amaze,
And this "WORM MOST AUDACIOUS," this "woman so mad,"
This compound of all that's presumptuous and bad,
(Tho' we should not succeed in repressing her book,
And the youth of our land on its pages still look,)
Will preceive, with her friends, midst the people of fashion,
That the Quarterly scribe's in a desperate passion——

Postscriptum—we'd near made a foolish omission
And forgotten a slur on her second Edition.
Though perhaps, after all, she may have the last word,
And reply to our "wholesome" remarks—by a third—
And thus, like a sly and an insidious joker.
The malice defeat of an *hireling* CROKER!!

The allusion in the foregoing to her Ladyship having retorted the charges of the Quarterly, has reference to some spirited observations which occurred in the preface to the first Edition of *France*. It may be perceived that Lady Morgan received the furious charge of the *Quarterly* on the point of her already fixed bayonet. "While I thus endeavor," she goes on to say in a preface which modestly sought to excuse some trivial imperfections incidental to the haste with which the book was written, "While I thus endeavour to account for faults, I cannot excuse; and to solicit the indulgence of *that public* from whom I have never experienced severity, I make no effort to deprecate *professional criticism*, because I indulge no hope from its mercy. Their is *one* review, at least, which must necessarily place me under the ban of its condemnation; and to which the sentiments and principles scattered through the following pages (though conceived and expressed in feelings the most remote from those of *local* or *party* policy) will afford an abundant source of accusation, as being foreign to its own narrow doctrines, and opposed to its own exclusive creed. I mean the *Quarterly Review*. It may look like presumption to hope, or even to fear its notice; but *I*, at least, know by experience, that in the omniscience of its judgment it can stoop

"To break a butterfly upon a wheel."

"It is now nearly nine years since that review selected me as an example of its unsparing severity; and, deviating from the true object of criticism, made its strictures upon one of the most hastily composed and insignificant of my *early* works a vehicle for an unprovoked and wanton attack upon the per-

sonal character and principles of the author. The slander thus hurled against a young and unprotected female, struggling in a path of no ordinary industry and effort, for purposes sanctified by the most sacred feelings of nature, happily fell hurtless. The public of an enlightened age, indulgent to the critical errors of pages composed for its amusement, under circumstances, not of vanity or choice, but of *necessity*, has, by its countenance and favour, acquitted me of those charges under which I was summoned before their awful tribunal, and which tended to banish the accused from society, and her works from circulation; for 'licentiousness, profligacy, irreverence, blasphemy, libertinism, disloyalty, and atheism,' were no venial errors. Placed by that public in a definite rank among authors, and in no undistinguished circle of society, alike as *woman* and as author, beyond the injury of malignant scurrility, whatever form it may assume, I would point out to those who have yet to struggle through the arduous and painful career that I have ran, the feebleness of unmerited calumny, and encourage those who receive with patience and resignation the awards of dignified and legitimate criticism, to disregard and contemn the annonymous slander with which party spirit arms its strictures, under the veil of literary justice.

"In thus recurring to the severe chastisement which my early efforts received from the judgment of the *Quarterly Review*, it would be ungrateful to conceal that it placed

My bane and antidote at once before me,

and that in accusing me of 'licentiousness, profligacy, irreverence, blasphemy, libertinism, disloyalty, and atheism,' it presented a *nostrum* of universal efficacy, which was to transform my *vices* into *virtues*, and to render me, in its own words, 'not indeed a good writer of novels, but a *useful friend*, a *faithful wife*, a *tender mother*, and a respectable and happy *mistress of a family*.'

"To effect this purpose, 'so devoutly to be wished,' it prescribed a simple remedy; 'To purchase immediately a *spelling book*, to which, in process of time, might be added a *pocket dictionary*, and to take a few lessons in joining-hand; which superadded to a little common sense, in place of idle raptures,' were finally to render me that valuable epitome of female excellence, whose price Solomon has declared above rubies.

"While I denied the crimes thus administered to, I took the advice for the sake of its results; and like "Cœlebs in search of a wife," with his ambulating virtues, I set forth with my MAYOR and my ENTICK in search of that conjugal state, one of the necessary qualifications for my future excellencies. With my dictionary in my pocket, with my spelling book in one hand, and my copper-plate improvements in the other, I entered my probation; and have at last (thanks to the Quarterly Review) obtained the reward of my calligraphic and orthographic acquirements. As it foretold, I am become, in spite of the 'seven deadly sins' it laid to my charge, 'not indeed a good writer of novels,' but, I trust, 'a respectable,' and, I am *sure*, 'a happy mistress of a family.'

"In the fearful prophecy so long made, that I should never write a *good* novel, the *Quarterly Review*, in its benevolence, will at least not be displeased to learn that I have written some that have been *successful;* and that while my Glorvinas, Luximas, and Lollottes, have pleaded my cause at home, like '*very Daniels,*' they have been received abroad with equal favour and indulgence; and that *O'Donnel* has been transmitted to its author, in three different languages. Having thus, I hope, settled 'my long arrear of GRATITUDE with Alonzo,' I am now ready to begin a new score; and await the sentence of my quondam judge, in the spirit of one.

'Who neither courts nor fears
His favour nor his hate.'"

But even assuming that Lady Morgan's talents were far from being of the first order, the violent denunciations of her reviewers were quite unjustifiable. It had hitherto been held a sacred maxim in the canons of criticism, that when a female became a candidate for literary fame, even though her merits were not of the brightest, her very sex formed an appeal to the heart which forbid acrimony of censure, much less violent invective, or falsity of accusation, and secured at least the appearance of respect, even in the absence of those gallant and complimentary speeches which have been considered, from time immemorial, a species of homage justly due to the fair sex. In *The Statesman,* an able Whig newspaper of the day, the authorship of the violent attack of the *Quarterly* which charged Lady Morgan with little short of the seven deadly sins, is confidently attributed not to Croker but to the pen of the laureate Robert Southey. We transcribe a portion of this article. The violent tone of recrimination which pervaded the antagonism of the Whig and Tory parties in those days

is curious to glance back upon. "As Burke said," observes *The Statesman*, "*the age of chivalry is gone,* and a race of literary ruffians and political *renegades* have sprung up, who, to repay the world for the detestation in which they are held, spurn at every honourable feeling; and, insensible to the restraints of conscience, neither regard the claims of age or sex, of wisdom or virtue, but wage rude and indiscriminate war with all who will not consent to be as base, wicked, and infamous as themselves. By one of these literary assassins, Lady Morgan has had the honor of being attacked. It comes from the pen of that skulking and malignant *renegade,* the author of *Wat Tyler,* and appears in that ponderous production of scurrility and venom, called the *Quarterly Review.* In this attack, all that is contemptible in the *petty,* all that is cowardly and cutting in the *malignant,* all that is scurrilous in *vulgar venom,* are employed to wound the feelings and injure the reputation of Lady Morgan. Would it be believed, that, in this age and country, a being so thoroughly despicable and degraded could be found, as to charge this lady with all that is *false,* all that is *licentious,* all that is *blasphemous.* All who are acquainted with the *Wild Irish Girl,* and *O'Donnel,* the works of Lady Morgan, will know what station to assign the pensioned renegade, who has thus, with savage ferocity, assailed her reputation. Here, for the present, we take leave of this apostate and his prostituted labours, until we have an opportunity of contrasting some of his own Jacobinical works, with his recent lucubrations in his dark and scowling *Quarterly Review.*"

In the selection from Southey's letters, edited by his son, we find no allusion to this critical assault on Lady Morgan; although Southey repeatedly speaks of his laborious contributions to the *Quarterly,* and of the high estimation in which they were held by the Government. Lord Liverpool we learn, sent for Southey, and overwhelmed him with protestations of gratitude and esteem.

The *Freeman's Journal* was not alone the most influential of the liberal organs of Ireland at the period of which we write, but enjoyed a circulation exceeding that of any of its contemporaries, Conservative or democratic, as appears from an official return published in the *Freeman* of May 17, 1817. The editor of this journal from 1813 to 1818 was Michael Staunton, Esq., now the esteemed Collector-General of Taxes in Dublin. The following letter, chronologically in place here, is addressed to Mr. Staunton:—

Private.

"Lady Morgan presents her compliments to the Editor of the *Freeman's Journal.* Having learnt that during her recent absence from Dublin, he has had the kindness to mention her new work with approbation, she takes the earliest opportunity of offering her acknowledgments. She begs at the same time to mention, that as the hireling* presses of London, Paris, and Dublin, are at this moment let *loose against her work on France,* and as the *Dublin Journal*† has declared that the *long tirade* it has inserted against her from *Galignani's Messenger* has been translated *expressly for its columns!* Lady Morgan would be extremely happy to place in the hands of the Editor of the *Freeman's Journal* some French *critiques on her work,* this moment received from Paris, and done by the most eminent literary characters on the continent, and forming a complete refutation to the paragraphs inserted in the *Courier, Dublin Journal,* &c., &c.

"If the Editor could call on Lady Morgan any *time to-morrow,* and mention at *what hour,* Lady Morgan will be happy to see him, and trusts that he will have the goodness to

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* If the Laureate Southey, as has been asserted, were really the unmanly assailant of Lady Morgan, the epithet "hireling" is not amiss. In a letter dated October 5, 1816 *(Southey's Correspondence,* p. 215, v. iv.) he tells Mr. Beresford that "he must needs finish a paper in time for the present number of the Quarterly, for the love of £100."

† The *Dublin Journal* was first established about the year 1720 by Alderman Faulkner, the friend of Swift, Chesterfield, and the leading politicians and literateurs of the time. Faulkner having ably edited the paper for fifty years, it at length came into the hands of an illiterate and illiberal person named John Giffard, who from that date infused into its tone such violence, virulence, vulgarity, and mendacity, that in the present date its advocacy would be held detrimental to the cause of any party. Yet Giffard, originally a blue-coat boy, was preferred to places of honour and emolument by the Government. Giffard's personal demeanour was as morose as his pen was truculent; and for many years he enjoyed the sobriquet of "the dog in office," and his paper that of "the Dog's Journal." Giffard having accused Grattan of treasonable designs, the great orator retorted thus: "It proceeds from the hired traducer of his country, the excommunicated of his fellow-citizens, the regal rebel, the unpunished ruffian, the bigoted agitator. In the city, a firebrand; in the court, a liar; in the streets, a bully; in the field, a coward. And so obnoxious is he to the very party he wishes to espouse, that he is only supportable by doing those dirty acts the less vile refuse to execute." Giffard pocketed the insult. The last number of the *Dublin Journal* appeared ih 1825—*Madden's United Irishmen, Grattan's Speeches, Gilbert's Dublin,* &c. The ludicrous blunder about *Galignani's Messenger* is quite characteristic of the *Dublin Journal.*

pardon the trouble she gives him in favor of a cause of which he has already shewn himself the unsolicited, able and liberal champion.*

35 Kildare-street."

This closing remark of Lady Morgan's was none of the empty compliments which some people are fond of paying to their friends through the safe and comparatively irresponsible medium of private letters, but which they would shirk from stating publicly or in print. A stern sense of sincerity and consistency formed one of Lady Morgan's fairest characteristics. Among the notes to the first chapter of *Florence M'Carthy*, it is declared that "The *Freeman's Journal* is one of the most spirited, popular, and best conducted papers in the Empire."†

Le Journal de Débats, the organ of the French Court, was the architype from which all the minor revilers of Lady Morgan took their tone. From these dull plagiaries, in which scurrility takes the place of analysis, and flippant assertion is substituted for proof, it is gratifying to turn to the more important and liberal criticisms of the *Journal General*, the *Journal de Paris*, *Chronique de Paris*, *Le Constitutionel*, and *Mercure de France*. It was to these critiques that Lady Morgan, in her letter to Mr. Staunton, refers, and in the *Freeman's Journal* of the day they may be found quoted. One, from the pen of Benjamin de Constant, the distinguished orator, and author of the constitutional party in France, we are tempted to transcribe. Constant refutes in detail, and with admirable temper, the petulant objections advanced by Lady Morgan's foes.

"If," he writes, "she had represented the French as a debased and depraved nation; if she had lamented over the

* In the recently published "*Odd Volume*" of Lady Morgan's autobiography, Mr. Staunton is twice alluded to, first (p. 149) in a letter dated Paris, October 31, 1818, and again in another communication, dated March, 1819.

† It is also one of the oldest newspapers in existence, having been started, under the auspices of Brooke and Lucas, on Saturday, 10th of September, 1763. In one particular at least they seem to have been a century in advance of their time. The directors of the recent revolution in the price of newspaper literature, who claim the merit of having outstepped the march of progress, will be surprised to hear that the original price of the *Freeman* was one penny only.

corruption of manner, and the absence of morality and religion; if, in short, in comparing the existing moment with former epochs, she had presented a touching eulogium of the Gabelle and the Corvèe (of which she does not speak with the greatest reverence,) it is possible that her work would have been vaunted as a *chef d'œuvre,* her literary heresies would have been passed ever, and every formula of praise would have been employed to push her writings into public estimation. But Lady M. prefers a Constitutional Government to arbitrary powers; she elevates France, as it now is, above the France of former times; and these are faults which no virtues can redeem. It has been made a serious charge against her, that she has attempted to excuse the crimes of the Revolution. I have read her work and find no ground for such an accusation. Wherever the Author speaks of that period of mourning and of anarchy, the reign of terror, her language expresses the indignation with which she is penetrated. Whence then can this charge have originated? It is not difficult to discover. Lady M. does not unite in the same proscription the genuine lovers of liberty,and those sanguinary monsters, who, while invoking its name, were its most bitter enemies; she does not make it a crime in the Patriots of 1789, that they were ignorant of the secret of futurity; she absolves Philosophy from the errors of ignorance, and from the excesses of faction—and such opinions are not to expect toleration. The distinction she has thus drawn between the partisans of license, and the sincere friends of a regulated liberty, does honor to her discernment; it is just, it is true: and it requires all the blindness of thwarted personal interest not to preceive it. Such are the opinions of Lady Morgan, and it is in this sense alone that she is *revolutionary;* she will console herself from imputations thus hazarded, by reflecting how difficult it is, at certain epochs,to *speak the truth,* without injuring interests and shocking prejudices, which resist all modification or compromise. She will console herself, above all, in the conviction, that every enlightened and liberal mind will applaud the use she has made of her rare talents in the work under consideration."

An eminent thinker has said,that were we to call everything by its right name we should be stoned in the streets; and the reception which Lady Morgan's frank and truthful book met with tended to confirm the apothegm. In De Constant she found a steadfast and able ally. Strong links of friendship

continued to bind them together until the death of the great constitutionalist in 1830 broke them up.

The wholesome truths to which our authoress gave energetic expression led to a decision on the part of the then French Government, to refuse her re-admission to the country—a mandate, which, as we shall see, both Sir Charles and Lady Morgan, conscious of their rectitude, disregarded.

As soon as the personal excitement and dissipation of mind which succeeded the publication of *France* had subsided, Lady Morgan devoted all her energies to a new national tale, with historical features, which under the title of *Florence M'Carthy*, appeared a short time afterwards. The best points in the native Irish character, with the richest flowers of the Irish dialect, were sketched with a masterly hand by Lady Morgan; and there can be no doubt that Banim, Griffin and Carleton drew much of their inspiration in depicting peasant life from the same source. Previous to attempting this exceedingly interesting and erudite novel Lady Morgan, as was her wont, saturated her memory with a large amount of reading, which bore upon the subject of it. From the late Mr. William Monck Mason Lady Morgan received much acceptable assistance in this respect. One of the letters which passed between these two eminent Irish literary characters we transcribe as a specimen of the general tone and purport of their correspondence. For the behoof of the English reader it may be premised, that Sylvester O'Halloran was an Irish Antiquary and Historian of considerable erudition who died in 1807.

"35, *Kildare-St.*, *Monday Evening*, [1818.]

My dear Sir,

I have done all with *Mr. O'Halloran* that *can be done* with, and so send him adrift. I have still five volumes of yours—would you lend me, for a few hours, Sir Richard Colt Hoare's Travels?—I long for a fine dry evening that I may walk down and drink tea with 'the lovely Mrs. Mason and her old china,' and gossip with you and see your great work. I always forget to ask you whether she or you

have had my little *France*, and if not, will you let me lend it to you?

Yours ever truly,
SYDNEY MORGAN.

Would you get one of your Irish scholars to translate the following elegant phrases into Irish, written in Roman characters, as I don't read Ogham with facility:—

'The Devil go with him.' 'My blessing on him—or on you.'

'I don't speak English.' 'Is that you?' 'Where are you come from?' 'Where have you been?'

What is the meaning of '*musha*,' a word in frequent use, and '*agus*?'

Send me back your own bit of red tape to tie round the rest of your books when I return them to you.

Tell Jane her Chancellor is flash in the pan, and fizzes well.†

P.S.—Morgan makes me open his letter to tell Mrs. Mason he dies to kiss her hand."

Mr Mason's "great work" to which Lady Morgan refers as being then upon the anvil, was published two years subsequently, under the title of *The History of the Antiquities of the Collegiate and Cathedral Church of St. Patrick, Dublin, from its Foundation*, 1190, *to* 1819. It contains more interesting and new matter relating to the life of Dean Swift than any professed memoir of the great satirist. Rowley Lascelles, in the *Liber Hibernice* (ii. 22) has pronounced an elaborate and brilliant eulogium on Mr. Mason's book.

The great success of *France* induced Mr. Colburn to offer Lady Morgan a very considerable sum for a similar work on Italy. But let us state the proposal, and the circumstance which led to it, in her own words. The "Odd Volume" of her recently published diary opens with:

"This morning, as I was on my knees, all dust and dowdyism, comes the English post—old Colburn—no! not old at all, but young enthusiastic Colburn in love with 'Florence

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* *Agus*, Anglice, *and*.

† It may be said that these remarks are too trifling to print. Trivial as they are, however, they display some character.—ED.

Macarthy,' and a little *épris* with the author! 'Italy, by Lady Morgan!' he is 'not touched, but rapt,' and makes a dashing offer of two thousand pounds – to be printed in quarto like 'France'—but we are to start off 'immediately,' and I have 'immediately' answered him in the words of Silemo in 'Midas'—

> Done! strike hands—
> I take your offer,
> Further on I may fare worse."

From August, 1818, to May, 1819, we find Lady Morgan sojourning in London, Paris, and Le Grange, in preparation for her journey to Italy. At the great metropolis Lady Morgan made the acquaintance of Lady Caroline Lamb, so famous for her mad adoration of Byron, her activity in personally canvassing the electors of Westminster on behalf of her brother-in-law, and for half-a-dozen light fashionable novels of which she was the author. The letters of this strange woman to Lady Morgan are among the best things in that "Odd Volume" of autobiography which the latter published in January, 1859. An idea of their originality may be formed from the following passage in a farewell letter to Lady Morgan: "you will probably see among the *dead* in some newspaper, 'Died on her voyage to Bonne berg a Hague, Lady Caroline Lamb, of the disease called death, her time being come, and she being a predestinarian." The striking portrait of Byron executed for Lady Caroline by Sanderson was bequeathed by its owner to Lady Morgan.

Another very remarkable female character with whom, as we gather from Lady Morgan's Diary, she associated closely during her *sejour* in London when *en route* for Italy, was the eccentric and accomplished lady of whom, as Miss Monckton, both Dr. Johnson and Miss Burney have left us some personal details, but who in 1818 rejoiced in the high sounding title of Lady Cork and Orrery, and Viscountess Dungarvan and Kinalmeakey. As illustrative of the eccentricities of this personage, we cull a droll entry from Lady Morgan's Diary.

"Lady Cork's fading sight induced her to borrow eyes from everybody who dropped in, in the course of the morning: I was frequently on service. One morning she said in her peculiar way, when I asked her how she was, 'Well, child, of course I am well, but I want you to write me two notes. I

am going to get rid of my page.'—'What! get rid of your pet!'—'Don't talk, child, but do as I ask you.' So I took up my pen, and wrote under her dictation, 'To the Duchess of Leeds. My dear Duchess, this will be presented to you by my little page, whom you admired so the other night. He is about to leave me; only fancy, he finds my house not religious enough for him! and that he can't get to church twice on Sundays. I certainly am not so good a Christian as your Grace, but as to the Sundays it is not true. But I think your situation would just suit him, if you are inclined to take him. Ever yours, M. Cork and O.'—'Now,' said she, 'fold that up, and put on the address, for fear of mistakes. Now my dear, begin another to your friend Lady Caroline Lamb, who,'tis said, broke her page's head with a teapot the other day.'—'A Tory calumny,' said I; 'Lady Caroline was at Brochett the very day the adventure was said to have happened at Whitehall.'—'I don't care whether it's true or not,' said Lady Cork; 'all pages are the better for having their heads sometimes broken; now write please: 'Dear Lady Caroline, will you come to me to-morrow evening, to my *Blue* party? I send this by that pretty little page whom you admired so, but who, though full of talent and grace, is a little imp, who, perhaps, *you* may reform but I cannot, *(Par parenthèse* the page just described as a little saint was the 'little imp' I was now desired to *prôner*.)—He is very like that boy you used to take into your opera box with you, and was so famous for dressing salad. I would not advise you to take him, if I did not think he would suit you. Ask any one you like to my Blue *soirée,* particularly Mr. Moore. Yours, in all affection, M. C. and O.' Now my dear, put that up, and good morning to you.'"

This signature of M. Cork and Orrery gave rise to an amusing equivoque. Having written an order to an upholsterer for some valuable article in his ware-house, she received for reply, "D.B. not having any dealings with M. Cork and Orrery begs to have a more explicit order, finding that the house is not known in the trade."

Lady Morgan pays a visit to the opera, which is lit up gaily and for the first time, with gas. The fair portion of the auditory, *to a man,* inveigh against it because it does not "become" the complexion so well as the light of spermaceti. At the opera Lady Morgan sees the newly married Duchess of Clarence

with "her yellow skin, lemon-colored hair, pink eyes and sharp features." She also goes to Almack's and criticises there also. But we prefer to follow her to Paris, where she arrived early in 1819 while the angry intrigue to displace the Duke de Cazes from his office of first favorite and first minister was at its zenith. Denon and La Fayette were in waiting to receive the distinguished visitor. The great General carries her off almost by force to his grand chateau at Le Grange, the picture of which as well as of La Fayette's very interesting family has all Lady Morgan's felicity and vividness of description. La Fayette is very communicative and tells Miladi many curious anecdotes, for instance, how he once went to a *bal* masqué at the opera with Marie Antoinette upon his arm, the king knowing nothing of it, with other *morceaux* illustrative of the *esprit d'aventure* in vogue in those days at the Court of Versailles, and in the head of the haughty daughter of Austria.

After a most delightful sojourn at Le Grange, passed in the society of the hero of two worlds, and of three revolutions, Lady Morgan went back to Paris, and met Humboldt, and Talma, and Cuvier, and Duchênois, who became constant guests at Miladi's saloon, and did with a *grace debonaire* for her what they would hardly have done to oblige crowned heads. With Denon she renewed an old and honorable intimacy. Auguste Thierry she notices and caresses as "a promising young *Litérateur*." Carbonel fascinates Sir Charles and Lady Morgan, but especially the latter, by his charming voice and passion for music; Auguste De Staël, Corinne's son, also figures at Miladi's receptions, and speaks English with the fluency of a native; we are also introduced to the Princess Jablonowski, "the only woman who was ever the intimate friend of Napoleon without being his mistress," Madame de Villetti, Voltaire's Belle et Bonne, who made Maladi a freemason, Baron Gerard, Jouay, Sismundi, Lacroix, De Ségur, Rochette, the vain and gifted d' Arlincourt, Constant, who praised her book on France so cordially, Dr. Portail,—all the prettiest women in short, and the brightest masculine minds of Paris flocked to the *Salon* of our great authoress, and made it quite an intellectual Elysium.

There was one very remarkable French woman, however, whose acquaintance Lady Morgan bitterly deplored that she

had failed to make. "I had to lament that Madame de Staël had left France at the moment when I entered it; and I was tantalized by invitations, which proposed my meeting her at the house of a mutual friend, at the time when imperious circumstances obliged me to return to Ireland. I thus was prevented from seeing one of the most distinguished women of the age; from whose works I had received infinite pleasure, and (as a woman, I may add) infinite pride."

But Lady Morgan did not always act the hostess. Her society was generally and eagerly sought after. Moore, in his Diary of October 17th, 1819, records: "went with Camac to see Sir Charles and Lady Morgan, her success everywhere astonishing. Camac was last night at the Countess of Albany's (the pretender's wife and Alfieri's) and saw Lady Morgan there in the seat of honour, quite the queen of the room. Capponi too, one of the great men of Florence, sent an order from Genoa to have apartments at the house of his *hommes d' affaires* ready for her on her arrival there." Moore, who suffered from illness at this period, congratulated himself, in the same day's journal, that Sir C. Morgan should have been then in Paris—a circumstance which shews that Moore entertained a high opinion of Morgan's skill as a physician. On October 19th, 1819, Moore was sufficiently recovered to dine "with the Morgans" and to hold an animated philosophical argument with Miladi.

Apropos of her conversational contests there is an amusing anecdote related of Mr. Curry, who, in a spirited discussion with her Ladyship at length got the worst of it. Our authoress, exaggerating the fashion of the day, wore little, or indeed we might say, no sleeves whatever to her dress; and a mere strap over her shoulders supported it. Curry was walking away from her little coterie, when she called out, "Ah! come back, Mr. Curry, and acknowledge that you are fairly beaten." "At any rate," said he turning round, "I have this consolation, you can't laugh at me in your sleeve." The portrait prefixed to the last edition of the *Wild Irish Girl,* furnishes an idea of Lady Morgan's style of wearing apparel thirty years ago.

Byron, who had attacked Lady Morgan in one of his notes to Childe Harold, having heard from Moore that she was about to write a record of travels and observations made in Italy, laughed disdainfully at the idea. "I suspect I know a

thing or two of Italy," he adds—"more than Lady Morgan has picked up in her posting.* What do Englishmen know of Italians beyond their museums and saloons and some hack * * *en passant*? Now I have lived in the heart of their houses in parts of Italy freshest and least influenced by strangers—have seen and become *(pars magna fui)* a portion of their hopes and fears, and passions, and am almost inoculated into a family. This is to see men and things as they are." A perusal of the book warned Byron to be henceforth slow in judging without ample evidence. Writing to Murray on August 23rd, 1821, he observes, in answer to some charges of plagiarism: "Much is coincidence: for instance Lady Morgan (in a really *excellent* book, I assure you, on Italy) calls Venice an Ocean Rome. I have the very same expression in Foscari, and yet *you* know that the play was written months ago, and sent to England; the *Italy* I received only on the 16th inst." Writing to Moore, on the following day, Lord Byron goes on to say—"By the way when you write to Lady Morgan will you thank her for her handsome speeches in her book about *my* books? I do not know her address. Her work is fearless and excellent on the subject of Italy—pray tell her so—and I know the country. I wish she had fallen in with *me*. I could have told told her a thing or two that would have confirmed her positions."

A book of travel more interesting than *Italy* had not appeared for many a day. After galloping through the critical passage of the Alps Lady Morgan enters upon Piedmont. She then sketches with a bright pencil her route through Lombardy, Genoa, Placenza, Parma, Modena, and Bologna, which concludes the first volume. The second comprehends her more interesting tour through Tuscany, Rome, Naples, and Venice; her chief guide would seem to have been Eustace's *Classical*

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* In a previous letter to Mr. Murray, Publisher of the *Quarterly*, Lord Byron observes: "With the reviews I havebeen much entertained. It requires to be as far from England as I am to relish a periodical paper properly: it is like soda-water in an Italian summer. But what cruel work you make with Lady Morgan. You should recollect that she is a woman: though, to be sure, they are now and then very provoking: still, as authoresses, they can do no great harm, and I think it a pity so much good invective should have been laid out upon her when there is such a fine field of us, Jacobin Gentlemen, for you to work upon."

Tour. When we remember that the latter work, written by a zealous Catholic priest, gave offence in Italy, it can hardly surprise that Lady Morgan's book should have been in these days proscribed by the King of Sardinia, the Emperor of Austria, and the Pope; and, as the authoress assures us in her preface to *Salvator Rosa*, "it became dangerous to receive letters, or to answer them."

It was Lady Morgan's fate through life to be obliged to contend, single-handed and almost unceasingly, against an organised assault of violent bludgeon criticism which had its origin in private and political motives, and which, in the case of any other woman, would have utterly crushed her. This band of desperado critics found an ally in a minor tribe of scribes who with pen-stilettos dipped in poison pursued her virulently. No doubt the ablest and most influential of the former band was the late Right Hon. John Wilson Croker, whose voluminous contributions to the *Quarterly Review* constituted him a red Indian in critical literature. His memory, to adopt the language of Mr. Maddyn, "is buried beneath a pyramid of scalps," and there let it lie.

The attack of the *Quarterly* upon Lady Morgan's *Italy* (which appeared early in 1821) was exceedingly, and most characteristically violent. Among other sweeping assertions, quite unsupported by proof, the reader is informed that "*Italy* is a series of offences against good morals, good politics, good sense,and good taste,"—that "this woman is utterly incorrigible,"—further, that, "her indelicacy, ignorance, vanity, and malignity," "exceed all credence,"—that "every page teems with errors of all kinds, from the most disgusting down to the most ludicrous;" and, by way of excuse for not adducing proof, the Reviewer has the cool effrontery to assert, "extracts could afford no idea of the general and homogeneous stupidity which pervades the work." A more sparkling or a more original *raconteuse* than Lady Morgan never lived; yet the critic would fain persuade his readers of the reverse, and with consummate coolness he speaks of "the narcotic influence of her prating, prosing, and plagiarism." In the same breath that he censures some alleged coarseness of language on the part of Lady Morgan, he falls into the same error himself, and adds: "notwithstanding the obstetric skill of Sir Charles Morgan, (who we believe is a man-midwife) this book dropt all but still-born from the press." More Billingsgate was

probably never stuffed into so small a compass. This unmanly attack occupies little more than four pages—a circumstance which exhibited the utter dearth of proof. It was, in truth, all assumption and assertion. As a specimen of the former *voila:* "We suspect that the intended publication of the travellers was announced before the journey itself was begun, and that the price of the embryo MS. paid the expenses of the travellers."

There appeared almost simultaneously with *Italy* another spirited and caustic, but, in the estimation of her friends, a somewhat injudicious retaliation by Lady Morgan upon her reviewers, under which they must have very keenly winced. To our thinking, however, it was the happiest and boldest effort of Lady Morgan's pen, and her friends have every reason to be proud of it. This elaborate production the *Quarterly* noticed in the concluding paragraph of its onslaught—a paragraph as flimsy in argument, as its dimensions were meagre. See the *Quarterly Review,* vol. xxv., p. 529.

Mr. Croker, knowing that Lady Morgan was sensitive on the subject of her age, took a mean revenge by henceforth uniformly speaking of her as "*Miss Owenson of the eighteenth century.*"* The subject of the when and where of her birth provoked a long discussion on the part of that ancient Tory faction to which her whole life was a formidable opposition. "Croker," observes the *Athenæum,* "issued a commission of inquiry—himself inquirer, jury, and judge against his brilliant countrywoman; and the pretended discoveries† of that acrimonious partizan amused the reading and talking world of London for a whole season."

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* Mr. Jeafferson, in his *Novels and Novelists* (v.ii. p.379) gravely follows Croker: "Lady Morgan's literary career commenced in the last century, years before Byron published a line, or Moore had fascinated voluptuaries with Little's Poems. Her first volume was a collection of short pieces in verse, and was produced ere she had completed her 14th year." This little book appeared, as we have seen, in 1801, when Sydney Owenson had entered on her 23rd year.

† Often has the name of Lady Morgan been taken in vain since. See, for instance, the *Universal Lexicon of Leipsic,* where, among other fictions, it is asserted that "Lady Morgan, in a fit of disappointed love, put an end to her life by the aid of her own cambric pocket-handkerchief!"

Mr. Croker was proverbially, and often offensively inquisitive. But in cross-examining Mrs. Clarke, so far back as 1809, he caught a Tartar. Demanding to know how often she had seen Mr. Dowler, the Duke of York's mistress retorted: "I believe the honourable gentleman can tell pretty well; for his garret-window, very convenient for his prying disposition, overlooks my house." Mr. Croker was at this time member for Downpatrick.

The virulence with which Mr. Croker pursued his gifted countrywoman was remarkable. To cause her a pang he never let an opportunity slip. For instance, in reviewing the *American Sketches* of Mr. Fearon, an English gentleman, who had incidentally given a kind word to Lady Morgan, Mr. Croker writes:—"He grossly libels his fair countrywomen in representing them fond of the writings of Lady Morgan. From *Ida of Athens*, the first of her monstrous progeny, to that last souterkin of dulness and immorality, *Florence M'Carthy*, they view them all with equal disgust."

In a review of Hazlitt's *Table Talk* (v. 26, p. 107) "the ravings of a maniac" are applied to the writings of Lady Morgan. In vol. xvii. (223) the unmanly epithet, "unwomanly brutality" is affixed to her, while (at p. 264, and *Seq.)* her alleged "blunders, bombast, and falsehood" come under Mr. Croker's lash. The violence of the censure saved her. Mr. Croker would seem to have been unaware that temperate criticism, and what an eminent writer has termed, *under-statement*, are far and away more effective than roaring denunciation.

The furtherance of the cause of Catholic Emancipation was the generous motive which led to all the national tales of Lady Morgan; and it was doubtless the transparency of the object, and the influence of the means, which enkindled the Tory wrath of Mr. Croker. Her works having been translated into several continental languages, the disabilities under which Ireland labored were thus published throughout the civilized world. It is generally an injudicious course for an author to give battle to critics who are almost sure to have the best of it; but the lacerating poignancy of satire, combined with the intrepidity of vengeance, with which Lady Morgan retorted upon them gave her a decided vantage ground. The admirably rich character of "Counsellor Con Crawley" in *Florence M'Carthy* was at once recognized as John Wilson Croker; and

Moore has recorded the fact that Croker winced more under the caricature than any of the many direct attacks which were made upon him. The sixth chapter of *Florence M'Carthy* introduces us to the Crawley family:—"If ever there was a period in the history of a country when it might be said, that 'Crime gave wealth, and wealth gave impudence,'" observes Lady Morgan, "it was that period in the history of Ireland, when rebellion, excited for the purpose of effecting an unwelcome Union, called forth all the worst passions of humanity, and armed petty power with the rod of extermination. The wealth, influence, and importance of the Crawley family took their date from that memorable and frightful epoch in the tragedy of Irish history, which produced both moral and political ruin to a long-devoted country, under every form of degradation, of which civilized society is susceptible. Previous to that period, the three brothers had remained buried in the obscurity which belonged to their social and intellectual mediocrity. The eldest, Darby Crawley, the country attorney, found his highest dignity in being the factotum of the two Barons Fitzadelm, the agent of their embarrassed property, on which he lent them money saved by his father in their service, until the little that remained of the estate fell into his hands. Through the interest of his employer, he had been put into the commission of the peace: the year 1798 found him a magistrate, and fortune and his *merits* had done the rest. The second brother, whose gravity was mistaken for ability by his father, (the illiterate land-bailiff of the Fitzadelms) was made a gentleman by the patent of a college education, and the legal degree of barrister-at-law. He had plied in the courts with an empty green bag, and more empty head, year after year with fruitless vigilance, till his energy, in the melancholy prosecutions produced by the rebellion, obtained him notice, patronage, place, and a silk gown."

But let us press on to chapter the sixteenth, where Lady Morgan figures as Lady Clancare, and some of Counsellor Con's flippant criticisms find expression.

"I think," said Lord Frederick, taking his coffee, and throwing himself on a divan, near Lady Georgiana, "we all appear to be buried in the tomb of the Capulets. I had no idea the divine Marchesa meant to consign us all to such immortal dulness. We are already almost reduced *aux muets interprètes*, and shall gradually fall into the eloquent silence of that round-eyed, tongue-tied, Lady Clan-

care, who *par parenthese* looks as if she were extracting us all for her common-place book, and will doubtlesss bring us out in hot-press, *sans dire gar !*"

"I doubt she will ever bring out anything half so good," said Conway Crawley: "as yet that is not in her line; she has had too few opportunities of studying fashionable life to attempt anything in that way. Her position here, at least, is so extremely obscure, that I believe the castle of Dunore is the first fine house in the country into which she was ever admitted."

"And," said Miss Crawley, smiling, and in spite of her former discomfiture, unable to contain her acrimonious spirit, "and perhaps it may be her last."

"Her principles," continued young Crawley, "as disseminated in her 'National Tales,' as she calls them, are sufficient to keep her out of good society here."

"I thought I had heard you say, Mr. Crawley," observed Mr. Daly, "that you did not know Lady Clancare was an author."

"I did not till this morning," said Crawley, a little confused. "When Lady Dunore mentioned the titles of her works, and the initials representing the author's name, I recollected having looked over those tomes of absurdity and vagueness, of daring blasphemy, of affectation, of bad taste, bombast, and nonsense, blunders, ignorance, jacobinism, falsehood, licentiousness,* and impiety, which it now seems are the effusions of the pseudo Lady Clancare."

Young Crawley, already flushed with wine, grew still more red with rage as he spoke.

"Oh, my dear Mr. Crawley," interrupted Lord Frederick, with unusual vivacity, "say no more, or you will make us in love with the author and her work together; for, really, a book that could combine all these terrific heterogeneous qualities, and yet be read, must be very extraordinary: *pour le moins.*"

"Very extraordinary indeed," said Mr. Daly, "considering that with all these vices and faults, they have been so read, and bought, as to realize an independence for their author, and enable her to carry on a suit which has deprived the elder Mr. Crawley of his dear Clotnottyjoy. It would at least appear, that in spite of professional criticism, the public are always with her."

"Oh, her flippant and arrogant ignorance has its market," returned Conway Crawley, "and the sylphed Miss M'Carthy, the elegant Lady Clancare, is, in fact, a mere bookseller's drudge. Her impudent falsehoods, and lies by implication, the impious jargon of this mad woman, this audacious worm——"

"Are you speaking of Lady Clancare, sir?" said General Fitzwalter, who had been talking to Lord Adelm, but who now turned

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* This was a most singular and happy anticipation of a judgment of the *Quarterly Review*. Exactly eleven years afterwards, in a violent diatribe on Maynooth (v. 37, p. 484) the *O'Briens and O'Flahertys* is referred to as "a strange farrago of ignorance, licentiousness, and Jacobinism."—Ed.

shortly round upon young Crawley, with a tone and look that stunned the hardy railer; "are you applying such language to a woman—to any woman?"

Counsellor Crawley, who was physically timid, shrinks back abashed, and takes up a book; while the marchioness enters leaning upon Lady Clancare's arm. "We have had a delicious walk of some miles, said Lady Dunore sinking into a chair and calling for coffee; while Lady Clancare modestly took her seat rather behind than beside, so as just to raise her face over the back of Lady Dunore's chair, in a position equally shy, and observing. For a moment she attracted every eye, and all sought to trace in her countenance some indication of the audacious lying, profligate, ignorant, and pretending Jacobin."

It was certainly a far fetched charge to accuse Lady Morgan of Atheism; and yet with this repulsive crime, the Tory Reviewers repeatedly upbraided her. How they could venture to advance an accusation so startling in the face of such ample irrefragable evidence to the contrary, will not fail to surprise modern notions of honour, gallantry and justice. Few writers made finer, or more impressive appeals and allusions to the Deity than Lady Morgan. "Gracious heaven!" she exclaims; "Is it for man, weak man, trembling in the consciousness of his own imbecility, to bear down upon his weaker brother? And should not every sluice of pity and toleration, be opened in his bosom for the fallibility of that creature whose nature he wears, in whose frailties he participates, and to whose errors he is liable? Atoms as we are, in the boundless space of creation! surrounded by mystery, involved in uncertainty, knowing not from whence we came, or whither we shall go, beings of an instant; with all our powers, all our energies hastening to decay! Is it for us to assume the right of empire, and refuse that mercy to others, which we all look for in common to Him, who is Himself perfection?"

In the sixteenth of her *Patriotic Sketches*, she says "that the rigid principles of Calvinistic faith may condemn the Irish peasant for indulging in harmless recreation after Mass on that day peculiarly devoted to the Being who made it the sacred season of his own repose; but whether the happy overflowings of a cheerful humble heart, blest and blessing in the short sweet season of its transient felicity, or the sombre meditation of systematic piety, according to the letter of the law, is the incense that 'smells sweetest to heaven,' it is for Him alone to judge to whom all hearts are known." Her reflections in the nineteenth sketch, "on the infringements of these rights which

hold their sacred charter from the voice of Nature's God," are not less touching.

For year after year this amiable and accomplished woman continued to be branded as an atheist in religion, and a latitudinarian in morals. "No matter with what ability slanderous attacks may be refuted," says Jerdan, "some of the dirt is sure to stick to you." Lady Morgan's case was no exception to the apothegm. Even since she has tranquilly passed into eternity there has been no disinclination in some quarters to fasten the guilt of infidelity on her life and soul. But no charge can possibly be more base or baseless. We have taken some trouble to be able to disprove it; and it is with no small pleasure that we find ourselves in a position to state, on the authority of a lady who possessed the friendship and confidence of Lady Morgan, that the great authoress never allowed a day to pass over without reading a chapter from the Sacred Scriptures. Indeed, Lady Morgan's acquaintance with the Bible can be doubted by none who read *Woman and her Master*, the Controversy with Cardinal Wiseman, and the preface to *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys*, not to speak of many other productions of her pen. *Woman and her Master* displays almost as thorough an intimacy with the Sacred Volume as the writings of Locke or Whately. But to shew how strongly the virulently fostered impression continues to exist even in quarters usually the best informed on all matters appertaining to literature, we shall cull a paragraph from a letter addressed to the writer of these pages by one of the first of living reviewers.

"For private reasons I avoided knowing Lady Morgan; but critically I am acquainted with all her points. She had an immense amount of brass and brilliancy; and was a very striking person in her way, but I always recoiled from her as a sort of female Voltaire, reared in a province, and fed on potato diet. She did not appreciate the hereditary Puritanism of the Irish Protestants, among whom she was born and bred, and she had no sympathy with the far descended traditional religion of the Catholics of Ireland. She scoffed and scorned, and ransacked the French *salons* in a wearisome way: but she had spirit, play of fancy, and as a novelist she pointed the way to Lever, whose precursor she was. The rattling vivacity of the Irish character; its ebullient spirit, and its wrathful eloquence of sentiment and language, she well pourtrayed; one can smell the potheen and turf smoke even in her pictures of a boudoir. Her attack on Croker was very clever, and had much effect in

its day. It is written on the model of the Irish school of invective furnished by Flood and Grattan."

With the exception of Mr. Croker, Lady Morgan never made a private enemy by the many satirical and singularly happy sketches of real life and men, of which she was the author. "No writer in our opinion," observes the *Illustrated London News* "ever hit off the Lords and Ladies of the Almacks of that day with a vein of humour happier; and it is no slight proof both of the fair and impartial generalisation with which she chose her characters, and of the inoffensive though piquant style of her portraiture, that the caricatures in which so many of their best friends might have recognised some of their traits never were received as personalities, never were known to give offence, never diminished by one member the happy circle which loved to crowd round the gifted artist."

The malignity with which the band of desperado critics, headed by Croker, pursued this brilliant woman knew not where to stop. In January, 1822, the influence of the great Tory placeman so far prevailed, that the opinion of the notorious Orange Attorney General, Saurin, with that of his colleague, the Solicitor General, were taken whether the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland had any power to confer the honour of knighthood; and both gave it as their decided opinion, that since the Union no such right has existed. The object is said, whether rightly or wrongly, to have been the dethronement of Ladies Morgan and Clarke. A copy of the opinion was sent to Lord Wellesley, as announced in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of the day; but the question, it would seem, fell into abeyance. Among those whose honours were declared to be null and void by the law officers of the crown in 1822, were Sir Arthur Clarke, (brother-in-law to Lady Morgan) Sir Edward Stanley, Sir Thomas Whelan, Sir Charles Morgan, Sir John Stevenson (Moore's colleague,) Sir Thomas Moriarty, and Sir William Betham. The latter, however, was a staunch Conservative: and if the design of the Tories were really to bring the Morgans and Clarkes to the dust, some friends must necessarily have perished in the *debris*. It is, we think, hardly creditable to the late Lord Jeffrey, who professed to conduct the *Edinburgh Review* on thoroughly liberal principles, that he should not have made some effort to sustain our authoress against the truculent attacks of its critical rival and political foe, the *Quarterly*. Yet Jeffrey held his peace. The contemptuous silence which he observed

towards Lady Morgan, was if possible more damaging than the censure which no one knew how to wield with more telling effect. At length in July, 1824, the *Edinburgh Review* broke silence on the subject; and the very first allusion to our authoress, under her maiden or married name, which found expression in the great Whig *Review*, occurs in an exceedingly acrimonious critique, on her *Life of Salvator Rosa*. This, if not as complete as it might be, is surely a very fascinating art-biography.

The next glimpse which the readers of the *Edinburgh Review* obtain of Lady Morgan is in the year 1825, when her *Absenteeism* apparently furnishes the critic with a theme. But the paper is a mere statistical disquisition on absentees; and the name of Lady Morgan is mentioned once only, and that with neither praise or censure. For many years after no further notice is taken by the *Edinburgh Review* of the labors of Lady Morgan.

The reason which induced Lady Morgan to select the life of Salvator Rosa in preference to that of other, perhaps more illustrious, Italian Painters was the peculiar character of the man, rather than the extraordinary merits of the artist. But though enthusiastically admiring the works of this great Neapolitan master, she estimated still more highly the qualities of the Italian Patriot who stood in the foreground of times not the most forward or tolerant, and in the teeth of persecution openly and fearlessly declared his sentiments. Rosa possessed a powerful intellect, bound by strong philosophical sinews, much deep feeling, with a wild and gloomy imagination, which came forth even in his most petulent sketches and careless designs. Lady Morgan having found during her Italian researches that Salvator Rosa's life had been greatly misrepresented, and strongly denounced, undertook the somewhat Quixotic task of combating these strictures, and in doing so, she obtained no thanks from the Roman Catholic party, and much abuse from the Conservatives.

In this, as in other works which preceded it, Lady Morgan expressed sentiments which, however creditable as strongly favouring liberty, were perhaps more or less open to objection in consequence of the intemperate language which sometimes clothed them. "The strong national enthusiasm of childhood," observes Mr. H. F. Chorley, a friend of Lady Morgan, "at once somewhat indiscriminate in its warmth and limited in its scope,

will be seen to have ended in fearless and decided political partisanship, in the espousing of ultra liberal doctrines, abroad as well as at home." But let us hear Lady Morgan's vindication. "For myself at least," she writes in her preface to the last edition of *O'Donnel*, "born and dwelling in Ireland amidst my countrymen and their sufferings, I saw, and I described, I felt, and I pleaded; and if a political bias was ultimately taken, it originated in the natural condition of things, and not in 'malice aforethought' of the writer."

Absenteeism, which was published by Colburn in 1825, and met with a large sale, had previously appeared in detached papers through the medium of the *New Monthly Magazine*. Written in that style of flowing energetic eloquence which characterised all the productions of the Irish de Staël, the work bears ample testimony of her love of fatherland, deep research, extensive reading, play of fancy, and piquancy of satire. The peculiar bent of Lady Morgan's mind, however, inevitably imparted a picturesque turn to her ideas, and induced her to view the subject less as an economist, than as a poet and a woman. To this graceful performance Sir Charles Morgan contributed a soundly studied and elegantly written preface.

In her exertions to promote Catholic enfranchisement Lady Morgan found in Sir Charles a zealous and most efficient ally. During the twenty years which this gifted and amiable man spent in Ireland, he devoted a considerable portion of his time, talents, and means to furthering the Catholic cause. Like the ancestors of the Geraldines, he soon became more Irish than the Irish themselves. He advocated the cause of the people and their religion not only in the public journals, but in the reviews and periodicals of the time: he loved civil and religious liberty with enthusiastic ardour, and his house, both in Dublin and London, was always open to sufferers in that cause from whatever land they came.*

* A writer has advanced the opinion that Sir Charles was of humble and impoverished extraction. Nothing can be more erroneous. Lady Morgan refers in her diary to her husband's aunt, "a wealthy old Lady *de Province*, who has more than once turned the scale of an election, and who boasts of her illustrious race as being descended from Morgan the buccaneer, and sister to the brave General Morgan in India." The old lady seems to have been a decidedly strong-minded woman. A gang of burglars having broken into her house she went alone to see what was the matter, and having found a fellow getting out at the window, she

Sir Charles Morgan was an able and researchful, as well as an eloquent writer. That the knight's prestige was not purely local is evidenced by the fact that his *Philosophy of Life* and *Philosophy of Morals* were translated into French by the Count de Tracy, an eminent metaphysician, and into Italian by another hand equally competent. To Lady Morgan's books of travel in France and Italy, Sir Charles contributed the chapters on law, medical science, and statistics. But his views on religion were unfortunately not as orthodox as might be desired. His sentiments had a decided tendency to materialism; and some of his metaphysical interpolations in the writings of Lady Morgan, drew her into not a few difficulties.

The house occupied by Sir Charles and Lady Morgan during their long sojourn in Ireland, was number 35 Kildare-street, opposite the great aristocratic Club which takes its name from that thoroughfare. It is a long and showy house exteriorly; but not possessing any back rooms the imposing appearance of size which it presents to the passer-by is, in a great degree, deceptive. The small portico which still shelters the hall-door was erected by the Morgans.

In this agreeably situated mansion there was regularly held for a long series of years, a still more voluminous series of most delightful and select literary reunions, which are remembered by the surviving favored few who had the privilege of access, with enthusiastic feelings of pride and pleasure. A constant guest was the brilliant, eccentric, and almost forgotten Charles Robert Maturin. Domestic sorrows and pecuniary reverses threw a gloom over the latter years of his existence; and, as a contemporary record informs us, every inducement failed to make him desert his melancholy hearth save the intellectual circle which Lady Morgan* illuminated by her sparkling wit, or the romantic solitudes of Wicklow wherein some of his richest veins of inspiration had been caught in happier bygone days. Among those who figured at Lady Morgan's conversazioni were, Sheil, Curran, Lords Cloncurry, Charlemont, Dunsany, and Miltown, Hamilton Rowan, Thomas Moore, Edward Moore, Judge Fletcher, North, Finlay, Kirwan

caught him by the leg, and held him until she examined every feature in his face so as to be able to swear to him. Her friends advised her not to prosecute lest the gang should avenge it, but she exclaimed, "Justice is justice, and the villain *shall* be hanged."

* Obituary Sketch of Maturin, *Gentleman's Magazine*, Jan., 1825.

the great chemist, Chief Baron Woulfe, Staunton, Hartstonge, Berwick, Corry, and the accomplished kinswomen of the hostess, Lady and the Misses Clarke. The rising artistic talent of Ireland received constant attention from Lady Morgan. Comerford, and Mulrennin, then a very young man, were constant guests. The promise of eventual eminence in his profession, which the latter at that early period exhibited, is noticed by Lady Morgan in her *Book of the Boudoir*. Kirwan, to whom we have alluded, was a man of eccentric and methodical habits. In declining one of Lady Morgan's invitations he urged, as an excuse, that it was not shaving day.

These evening meetings at the house of Lady Morgan rendered it a complete centre of Opinion in Dublin, and were not without influence in promoting the Catholic cause. Here the Catholic leaders invariably learned the latest and most authentic news of Cabinet thoughts, divisions, and difficulties. Lady Morgan maintained a correspondence with some of the most influential political personages; and the substance of their letters frequently oozed out, and shaped the course of the democratic leaders accordingly. In Mr. Torrens M'Cullagh's Life of Sheil we have some illustrations of this fact. For instance, "It happened that one evening at the house of Lady Morgan, a letter from Mr Hyde Villiers to his brother (the present Earl of Clarendon), then Commissioner of Customs in Dublin, was shewn to Mr. Woulfe. It presented anew the considerations stated by Lord Anglesey; and coming from one who was believed to be aware of the feelings and sentiments of the government, it carried no little weight. The contents of the letter were communicated to Mr. Sheil, who invited a second party to meet at dinner the following evening."

A poetical squib of the day casually refers in so humorous a way to these evening receptions of "Miladi," as Denon and La Fayette called her, that we are tempted to jot down the entire stanza from memory.

"Och Dublin City, there is no doubtin',
Bates every city upon the say;
'Tis there you'd hear O'Connell spoutin',
An' Lady Morgan makin' tay;
For 'tis the capital o' the finest Nation,
Wid charmin' pisantry upon a fruitful sod,
Fightin' like divils for conciliation,
An' hatin' each other for the love of God."

"Auld lang seyne" was not forgotten, and to the political reunions of the Marquis of Abercorn, who now resided almost

exclusively at Bentley Priory, Middlesex, Lady Morgan was frequently and cordially invited. Bentley Priory was, at the period of which we write, a centre of politics and fashion; and while similar receptions at its great rival, Holland House, wore an exclusively Whig complexion, those at Lord Abercorn's were of a much more mixed and general character. The social intercourse between chiefs of parties which subsisted at Bentley Priory, contributed much to soften public and political asperities. Many of Lady Morgan's writings not only received their inspiration at Bentley Priory, but were absolutely penned in the midst of the exalted and fastidious circle of guests which the Marquis of Abercorn had gathered around him. *The Missionary*, of which we have already spoken, was written under such circumstances; and not a few grave statesmen, disenthralled, for a few weeks, from the cares and turmoil of office, loungingly abandoned themselves to the luxury of listening to Lady Morgan, as she read aloud her exciting and wildly romantic story of *The Missionary*. Among those present were Lord Aberdeen, Lord Castlereagh, Lord Ripon (then Mr. Robinson, M.P.), Lord Palmerston, the Duke of Devonshire; and on another similar occasion, the Princess of Wales, the Duc de Berri, and the ex-King of Sweden. It is a remarkable fact that Lord Castlereagh, then Secretary for Foreign Affairs, was so fascinated by Lady Morgan, and her frail *Missionary*, that he offered to accompany the young authoress to town, and having sent for Mr. Stockdale of Pall Mall, the work was absolutely disposed of to that publisher in the study of Lord Castlereagh. The good nature of this distinguished statesman was the more remarkable as Lady Morgan had repeatedly, and forcibly, denounced the Legislative Union, of which he was in a great degree the author, as corrupt and calamitous, atrocious in its principle, and abominable in its means.

"Lady Morgan's anecdotes of this brilliant period of her varied life," observes one who knew her well, "were told with a gracefulness and tact always favourable to the illustrious persons with whom she was then associated, and if she much extenuated she 'set down nought in malice.'"

In Ireland, at the viceregal drawingrooms of the Marquis and Marchioness Wellesley, Lady Morgan frequently figured. "Here it was," writes one who participated in the Castle festivities, "here it was that I saw Lady Morgan for the first time; and as I had long pictured her to my imagination as a sylph-like person, nothing could equal my astonishment when the

celebrated authoress, in *propria persona*, stood before me. She certainly formed a strange figure in the midst of that dazzling scene of beauty and splendour. Every female present wore feathers and trains; but Lady Morgan scorned both appendages. Hardly more than four feet high, with a slightly curved spine, uneven shoulders and eyes, Lady Morgan glided about in a close cropped wig, bound by a fillet or solid band of gold, her face all animation, and with a witty word for everybody. I afterwards saw her in the dress circle at the theatre. She was cheered enthusiastically. Her dress was different from the former occasion, but not less original. A red Celtic cloak, formed exactly on the plan of Gren-uille's, fastened by a rich gold fibula, or Irish Tara Brooch, imparted to her little ladyship a gorgeous and withal a picturesque appearance, which antecedent associations considerably strengthened."

Our correspondent speaks of the unevenness of Lady Morgan's eyes. Though not perfectly straight, however, they were remarkably large, lustrous, and electrical.

The great secret of Lady Morgan's remarkable longevity, unflagging spirits, and unfading memory to the last, was doubtless traceable to the care with which, from her earliest days of authorcraft, she abstained from overtasking the brain, or making a toil of a pleasure. She never wrote to exhaustion, or drained the cup of inspiration to the dregs. For each hour of hard labour she took two for relaxation; and in every accessible bit of frolic and festivity she participated with hearty raciness and *abandon*. For instance, at the gay fancy ball given in Dublin by the Lady Mayoress in 1818, (a newspaper report of which lies before us) Lady Morgan is announced as supporting "with her wonted vivacity and talent" the part of "a French Flower Girl." Sir Charles Morgan sustains the character of a French Peasant, Sir Arthur Clarke that of an "old Grandmamma," Lord Cloncurry a Friar, General Cockburne, Sir Peter Teazle; "*Two superb and tasteful dominos*," Lords Charlemont and Caulfield; a Bogwood Man, Mr. Peter Burrowes, and "the Merry Wives of Windsor," Mesdames Crampton and Bushe.

Lady Morgan was probably induced as much by a sense of duty, as by inclination, to participate in every accessible source of gaiety and excitement in Dublin. For how could she be reasonably expected to depict scenes with accuracy of which she had not ocular demonstration and experience? "Whether,"

it has been justly observed by a contemporary critic, "whether it is a review of volunteers in the Phœnix-park, or a party at the Castle, or a masquerade, a meeting of United Irishmen, a riot at the Dublin Theatre, or a pig-day at Bog Moy—in every change of scene and situation our authoress wields the pen of a ready writer."

The volunteer review in the Phœnix-park under the auspices of the Duke of Belvoir (Rutland) to which Lady Morgan's critic alludes as an able and graphic sketch, may be found in the third chapter of *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys.* This unctuous Irish novel in four volumes, was published by Colburn in November 1827, and as Lady Morgan, throughout its pages, espoused the cause of the oppressed people with renewed ardour while mercilessly lashing the ascendancy party, it may well be supposed that the sluices of Tory invective were promptly let loose upon her. Although the Jesuits received some keen strokes of satire from the pen of Lady Morgan in *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys,* the work may be said to have had for its object the Civil Emancipation of Irish Catholicism. Never were labours more thoroughly disinterested.

"In again presenting an Irish novel to the public," wrote Lady Morgan, "I hope I am not doing a foolish thing: and yet I feel, that as far as my own interests are concerned, I am not doing a wise one. To live in Ireland and to write for it, is to live and write *poignard sur gorge;* for there is no country where it is less possible to be useful with impunity, or where the penalty on patriotism is levied with a more tyrannous exaction. Called, however, to the ground by the sarcasms of enemies, and by the counsels of friends, I venture forth once more, with something less perhaps of intrepidity, than when I 'fleshed my maiden sword' under the banners of 'The Wild Irish Girl;' but in the full force of that true female quality, over which time holds no jurisdiction—perseverance.

"I anticipate upon this, as upon similar occasions, that I shall be accused of unfeminine presumption in 'meddling with politics;' but while so many of my countrywomen 'meddle' with subjects of much higher importance;—while missionary misses and proselyting peeresses affect to 'stand instead of God, amongst the children of men,' may not I be permitted, under the influence of merely human sympathies, to interest myself for human wrongs; to preach in my way on the 'evil that hath come upon my people,' and to 'fight

with gentle words, till time brings friends,' in that cause, which made Esther eloquent, and Judith brave? For love of country is of no sex. It was by female patriotism that the Jews attacked their tyrants, and 'broke down their stateliness by the hands of a woman;' and who, (said their enemies,) 'would despise a nation which had amongst them such women?'"

The epoch which Lady Morgan selected for illustration had been hitherto untouched, and possessed deep interest in a national point of view as embracing events which prepared the Rebellion and accomplished the Union. An epoch of transition between the ancient despotism of brute force, and the dawning reign of public opinion, it was characterized by the supremacy of an oligarchy, in whom the sense of irresponsible power had engendered a contempt for private morals, as fatal as their own political venality.

"The portraiture of such an epoch," she goes on to say, "is curious from its evanescence, and consolatory by comparison with the present times,—times the most fatal to faction, and favourable to the establishment of equal rights, which Ireland has yet witnessed. It may also serve as a warning to a large and influential portion of the public, which has yet to learn, that to advocate arbitrary government, is to nourish moral disorder. In the ranks of intolerance, are to be found many, who make the largest pretensions to purity of principle, and to propriety of conduct. Should any such deign to trace, in the following pages, a picture of manners, far below the prevalent tone of refinement now assumed as the standard of good company, it may diminish their confidence in their favourite political maxims, to remark, that all which has been thus gained for society, has been obtained by a progressive abandonment of the system they advocate."

And here we must interrupt Lady Morgan for the purpose of protecting her memory from an unworthy imputation that has often been cast upon it. We shall say nothing of the cavils of sundry ephemeral critics, but there is one statement in a work of standard authority which certainly demands a protest. Speaking of Lady Morgan's *O'Donnell, Florence MacCarthy, and The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys*, Chambers' *Cyclopedia of English Literature*, (v. ii. 581) says: "One complaint against these Irish sketches was their personality, the authoress indicating that some of her portraits at the

Viceregal Court, and these moving in the 'best society' of Dublin, were intended for well known characters." But Lady Morgan, it seems, went out of her way to declare the contrary and to prevent the possibility of misconception. "The personages introduced on the scene," she observes in her preface to *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys*, "are those which belong to the times described. They are alike necessary to the *vraisemblance* of the story, and to the fidelity of the portrait: and 'I beseech, very heartily, at my desires, my requests, and my petitions,' the zealots of party spirit, and the purveyors of private scandal, to refrain from the application of my characters to their own purposes; and from the fabrication of false 'keys,' by which their petty larceny has heretofore attempted to rob me of the little merit of that 'fearlessness' with which I have held the mirror up to nature, without subterfuge and without evasion. May I be permitted here to observe, that with the exception of those public characters, whose delineation was almost a plagiarism, and whose peculiarities arose out of the political state of Ireland, and were necessary to the display of its story, I have drawn none but such as represent a class, or identify a genus. Even my Ladies Llamberis and Dunore were illustrations, not individuals. They were intended to represent the spoiled children of high society in all ages, from the charming Duchesse de Maine, with her inimitable *il n'y a que moi qui ai toujours raison*, to the modern mistresses of supreme *bon ton*,—all alike the creatures of circumstances the most unfavourable to moral consistency. However, I may have fallen *à main basse* on popes and potentates,—taken the field against Austria, to 'hang a calf's skin on those recreant limbs,' and put forth my protocol against the Holy Alliance, I have held private life sacred, and have religiously abstained from bringing forward a single anecdote or circumstance incidental to the life of any private individual. The only 'key,' therefore, that I acknowledge, is that which is to be found in the great repository of human nature.

"*Au reste*, I grieve, that in self-defence, I must wound the self-love of those 'walking ladies and gentlemen,' who affect to tremble lest 'Lady Morgan should put them into her book,'—by dropping into their 'unwilling ears' the secret that *tout bois n'est pas bon à faire Mercure*. Like Macbeth, 'I cannot strike at wretched kernes;' and not even for the

benefit of a puffing 'key' would I transfer to 'my book' the obscure insignificance and flippant pretension that bore and worry me in society. I also take the opportunity of averting the wrath of half the fair *Bureaucratie* of Ireland, roused by my palpable hit at a certain red velvet gown, in Florence Macarthy (for of the genuine aristocracy of rank or wit, I have no cause to complain), by informing those whom it may concern, that the said red velvet gown belonged to a person, with whom I had every right to take every liberty—even to the libellous extent of 'putting her into my book,' when, where, and how I pleased,—that is, to myself."

The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys, although professedly a fiction, was really a work of some historical importance, and may be safely consulted in many of the details by statistic or historic writers. We learn, for instance, from Moore's Diary (vii. 192) that General Corbet assured Moore that the account of his escape from Kilmainham, as given by Lady Morgan in this novel, was remarkably accurate in the leading particulars. The foot notes contained many rich, and but little known *morceaux* of Irish history. There are some tastes which the style of the work may not always please, but with its aim no critic, however cavilling, could well quarrel. *The O'Briens, and the O'Flahertys*, in common with its predecessors, exhibits a somewhat inconsistent love for republicanism and aristocracy.

The great O Novel, as they called it, was not received with much favour by the English reviews; and on one severe critique in the *Literary Gazette* a most important event in the annals of modern literature hinged. Lady Morgan's new novel having been noticed with strong animadversion by that Journal (which had for many years previously wielded potent influence in the world of letters, and as a weekly critical organ enjoyed a thorough monopoly) her publisher, Mr. Colburn, took great offence at it, and in conjunction with the late James Silk Buckingham, he started the *Athenæum*. Mr. Orme, in a private letter to William Jerdan, the then Editor of the *Literary Gazette*, speaks of this "very indiscreet article," and adds: "In confidence allow me to state to you, that overtures have been made to the house respecting a weekly literary journal by one of the first publishing and carrying houses in the trade, who, in conjunction with others of equal power, have determined to support such a paper, being careful that it is conducted with ability, discretion, and impartiality."

Mr. Jerdan can hardly be said to have been in a position to judge Lady Morgan's performances with a dispassionate and unprejudiced eye. "I confess," he writes in his *Autobiography*, "never to have admired aught of Lady Morgan but her talents; and I fancy there was no love lost between us; for I remember at one of poor dear Lady Stepney's soirées, that innocent being caught occasion to introduce Lady Morgan and myself formally to each other. I had a laugh in my sleeve, and I afterwards heard, through the kind communicativeness of the female coterie, that her Ladyship signified her wonder at the idea of presenting that odious man to Her!"

Jerdan's review of *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys* was exceedingly sarcastic. "Two or three years ago," said the *Literary Gazette*, "when we happened to dissent from Lady Morgan on some literary estimate, she published a replication in which she elegantly threatened to '*stir us up with a long pole.*' We have read *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys*, and we are convinced, by its length, that it is the identical pole which was then menaced." After cautioning the females of England against reading this book, Mr. Jerdan adds: "we grieve that such a picture should have come from the pen of a woman." "The libel, too, is wrought up with congenial spirit." "In all our reading we never met with a description which tended so thoroughly to lower the feminine character." "Mrs. Behn and Mrs. Centlivre, it is true, might be more unguarded; but the gauze veil cannot hide the deformities—and Lady Morgan's taste has not been of efficient power to filter into cleanliness the original pollution of her infected fountain."

To the simple accident of this caustic attack upon Lady Morgan, the birth of that mighty literary censor, the *Athenæum*, may be directly traced. While under the incubus of James Silk Buckingham, the *Athenæum* did not make much progress, nor did the labors of John Stirling, who succeeded him as editor, tend much to stimulate it; but from the hour that this Journal passed into the hands of Wentworth Dilke, it became almost by magic a powerful and profitable literary engine. It perhaps labored under one disadvantage during the editorial regime of Mr. Dilke. Dilke, although an able writer of fragmentary papers, never succeeded in writing a book; and authors who received a severe castigation at his hands were not slow in retorting that this "peevishness" arose

from his own failure in authorcraft. "His milk of human kindness," said one, "the thunder of failure has turned into vinegar." At length, the accession of Hepworth Dixon, an author of merit and importance, to the censorial throne of the *Athenæum*, rescued it from the vapid taunt of which we have spoken.

Her Ladyship's next lucubration was the *Book of the Boudoir*, a series of autobiographical sketches, and recollections of her friends. This work displays the wonted energy and sparkle of Lady Morgan's style. Like all autobiographical performances it had the fault of being a little egotistical. A long dialogue with Robert Owen, the famous Utopian Philanthropist, is characteristic and interesting.

In 1828, O'Connell paid a graceful tribute to the national feelings and achievements of Lady Morgan. "To Irish female talent and patriotism we owe much," he said: "There is one name consecrated by a generous devotion to the best interests of Ireland—a name sacred to the cause of liberty, and of everything great, virtuous, and patriotic—the name of an illustrious female who has suffered unmanly persecution for her talented, and chivalrous adherence to her native land. Need he say that he alluded to Lady Morgan. Her name is received with enthusiasm by the people of that country where her writings create and perpetuate among the youth of both sexes a patriotic ardour in the cause of everything that is noble and dignified." Considering her great popularity in Ireland, it is indeed no wonder that Lady Morgan should so long have preferred "Dear Dirty Dublin," as she herself called it, to a splendid house in Regent Street which the late Mr. Colburne offered her rent free.

The *Quarterly Review*, when under the editorial management of Mr. Lockhart, noticed, very trenchantly, a growing error in biographical composition. It remarked that such a favorable colour was usually spread over the picture that its fidelity must be rather worse than dubious. Everything unfavourable was omitted, "and upon the whole," added the *Quarterly*, "we feel corroborated in our doubts, whether the very best of this species of biography can be considered in any other light than a romance of real life—a picture of which the principal figure must be considerably flattered, and everything else sacrificed to its prominence and effect."

We, at least, have endeavoured to keep clear of the error

which the great critical organ of England has indicated, and while protecting the memory of Lady Morgan from the shafts of calumny, we have not hesitated to give attention to every honest expression of opinion on both sides. No picture is perfect without lights and shadows. A brilliant portrait deprived of shade, would be fit only for the lumber-room. Impressed with the truth of this remark, we shall make a few transcriptions from the note-book of Prince Puckler Moskau, who made a tour through England and Ireland in 1828 :—

"I was very eager," says the distinguished stranger, "to make the acquaintance of a woman whom I rate so highly as an authoress. I found her, however, very different from what I had pictured her to myself. She is a little frivolous, lively woman, apparently between thirty and forty, neither pretty nor ugly, but by no means disposed to resign all claims to the former, and with really fine and expressive eyes. She has no idea of mauvais honte, or embarrassment; her manners affect the *aisance* and levity of the fashionable world, which, however, do not sit calmly or naturally upon her. She has the English weakness, that of talking incessantly of fashionable acquaintances, and trying to pass for very *recherché* to a degree quite unworthy of a woman of such distinguished talents."

The German Prince adds, that Lady Morgan in conversation was often very biting and sarcastic, of which there cannot be, indeed, the slightest doubt.

John Wilson Croker, ever on the watch to give a cut to Lady Morgan, observed, in reviewing the Prince's book, that "She was an established authoress six-and-twenty years ago, and that if, according to the Prince's calculation, she was then only eight or nine years of age, she was such a juvenile prodigy, as would be quite as worthy to fill a show waggon at Bartholomew fair, as her ladyship's namesake, who was born with double joints, and could lift a sack of corn with her teeth when she was only six years old." Lady Morgan, on a closer acquaintance, would seem to have improved in the estimation of Prince Puckler, for in the diary of a subsequent day he tells us, "I spent a very pleasant evening to-day at Lady M's. The company was small but amusing, and enlivened by the presence of two very pretty friends of our hostess who sang in the best Italian style [the Misses Clarke]. I talked a great deal with Lady Morgan on various subjects, and she has talent and feeling enough always to excite a lively interest in her conversation. On the whole, I think I did not say enough in her favour in

my former letter. The conversation fell upon her works, and she asked me how I liked her *Salvator Rosa*. 'I have not read it,' replied I, 'because I liked your fictions so much, that I did not choose to read anything historical, from the pen of the most imaginative of romance writers.' 'O, that is only a romance,' said she, 'you may read it without any qualm of conscience. Ah,' said she, 'believe me, it is only *ennui* that sets my pen in motion; our destiny in this world is such a wretched one, that I try to forget it in writing.'"

In 1825, the Marquis of Anglesey declared in the House of Lords, that the clamours of the Catholic Association ought to be met, not by concession, but by powder and ball; and in a furious speech which did him little credit, he expressed his willingness to charge the disaffected Irish at the head of his hussars. To this speech he owed his nomination to the Viceroyalty of Ireland, by the Tory Administration of 1828. But the Marquis had no sooner arrived in Ireland, than he saw the necessity for Catholic Emancipation, and for a letter which he addressed to Primate Curtis, urging the Catholics not to abate one doit in their agitation, the Marquis was recalled. From the moment that his views assumed a liberal complexion, the Tory press began to vilify him as fluently as it had previously belauded him with fulsome panegyric; and not content with assailing his public character, they professed to have discovered that the Marchioness of Anglesey had been indiscreetly conducted in private some thirty or forty years before. In *Blackwood* of the day, then a rampant Tory organ, it is mentioned in an article headed "Ireland in 1829," that Lady Morgan 'glittered and fluttered the gayest among the gay in Lady Anglesey's court, and was positively sentimental in declaiming against the prudery and hypocrisy of those who refused to follow her example. The example, however, was not followed; the bait did not take. Lady Cloncurry and Lady Morgan, together with the Lady of the Chief Baron O'Grady [afterwards Lord Guillamore] and a few others, continued to enjoy a monopoly of the splendour and the favour." But all this is tinged by much partisan exaggeration.

The signal success which had attended the publication of *France*, induced Sir Charles and Lady Morgan early in 1829, to pay a second visit to that great country, and to write another book upon it. The vast and exciting changes which had gathered in the interval around the destiny of France,

tempted to action the graphic and speculative pen of Lady Morgan.

This second book on an old theme appeared in June, 1830, and at once became an authority. It was dedicated to Lafayette, "by his friend and servant, the author." The work chiefly comprised a picture of the state of society in France—a condition in part the result of Lafayette's own great example, and national influence.

"Having left Ireland," writes Lady Morgan," in the dark moment which preceded the bright rising of her great political day, —after lingering there, till hope delayed had made the heart sick,—we went abroad in search of sensations of a more gracious nature than those presented by the condition of society at home. It matters not whether any pre-conceived intentions of authorship influenced the journey; a second work on France can be alone justified, by the novelty of its matter, or by the merit of its execution.

"It may serve, however, as an excuse, and an authentication of the attempt, that I was called to the task by some of the most influential organs of public opinion, in that great country. They relied upon my impartiality; (for I had proved it, at the expense of proscription abroad, and persecution at home) and, desiring only to be represented as they are, they deemed even my humble talents not wholly inadequate to an enterprise whose first requisite was the honesty that tells the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. This I have done to the full extent of my own convictions, and to the utmost limit of the sphere of my observation: I answer for no more."

Sir Charles Morgan, who was a man of great erudition, speculative power, and singular observation, gave to this work considerable aid; among other articles, he contributed those on philosophy, primogeniture, and public opinion.

On Lady Morgan's return to Dublin, she at once resumed those brilliant, gay, and hospitable evening receptions, which during her absence, had been so sadly missed. On August 27, 1830, Moore, as mentioned in his Diary, dined at Lady Morgan's. Curran and Sheil, North and Edward Moore, with Lady Clarke, and her daughters, were present. Lady Morgan's fund of anecdote and drollery was, as usual, inexhaustible. As a specimen, Moore jots down, "Lady Morgan's story of her telling Lady Cork, on the morning of one of her assemblies, that she had just seen Sir A. Carlisle, who had been directing

and preserving the little female dwarf, Crachami. 'Would it do for a *Lion* for to-night?' asked Lady Cork. 'Why, I think hardly.' 'But surely it would if it's in *spirits*.' Their posting off to Sir A. Carlisle's, and Lady C. asking the servant for the little child. 'There's no child here, ma'am.' 'But I mean the child in the bottle.' 'Oh! this is not the place where we bottle the children—that's at master's workshop.' In talking of Irish pronunciation, Lord Gort saying in court, when some one was called forth, 'He's in *jeel*.' A lady, in describing the situation of her house, 'We've the *bee* in our rare.'"

Moore's Memoirs of Lord Byron were published about this time. It may be remembered that the noble Bard, in one of his letters, praised Lady Morgan's *Italy*. The following communication addressed to the Irish journalist Staunton, speaks for itself:—

[Private.]

Dear sir—The enclosed has just been sent to me extracted from Byron's Life by a dear friend of his. I should be obliged by your giving it with the other extracts in your paper. I know it requires no small share of courage, *moral and physical*, to quote *a single line in favour* of ONE *marked* out in this wretched country by *proscription*, by THAT party to whose cause *her life*, and all its best *prospects have been sacrificed*. I beg, therefore, if you have any apprehension on the subject that you will return the enclosed. I am, Dear Sir, &c.,

SYDNEY MORGAN.

35 Kildare street.

The seal on this letter displays the Irish Harp with other national and characteristic devices. The extract to which she alludes may be found, *ante*, p. 97.

On the accession of the Grey Ministry to power, with King William the Fourth, November 22nd 1830, they conferred, among other minor but just and judicious acts of patronage, a pension of £300 on Lady Morgan, professedly "in acknowledgment of the services rendered by her to the world of letters," but in reality as a just compensation for the sacrifices she had made to liberal principles, as well as for the uninterrupted stream of slander which Croker and his Tory colleagues had long brought to play, happily impotently, upon her reputation. The Grey Ministry did more. Sir Charles Morgan was appointed one of the Com-

missioners of Irish Fisheries: and the Reports on this subject, of which several appeared, from his pen, are remarkable for their perspicuity and cleverness.

Soon after the Revolution in Belgium, Lady Morgan made a tour though that country, and embodied in a new novel the result of her observation, as well as many exciting incidents of the recent Revolution in the Netherlands. This work was published under the title of *The Princess*. Although the scene of the story was laid far away from "the land of the Pats and Potaytees," several racy Irish characters, including Laurence Fegan, and Sir Ignatius Dogherty, trod the stage of this highly dramatic picture. Of this book, viewed morally, it may be said that the aim is faithful to the great object of Lady Morgan's life.

We once heard an eminent author inveigh against a brother scribe who had trod in a similar walk of literature. "Hang the fellow," he said, "years ago I took my stand on that field into which he has now intruded. I am sure I have toiled enough to make it my own. Physicians never interfere with each other's Patients, and the same feeling of etiquette ought to guide the conduct of authors. Why didn't the fellow kill a Hessian for himself? What business has he making love to my wife?" From this feeling of jealousy so usual among authors, Lady Morgan was strikingly exempt. It has been said that Lady Morgan's mantle has fallen to the gifted Irish authoress Mrs. S. C. Hall: and it is a remarkable fact that when this amiable lady first came before the public, Sir Charles and Lady Morgan, who then had the almost entire editorial control of a very influential magazine, did their best to encourage and applaud her. "They were ever ready to foster young talent"—writes Mrs. Hall, "and we call to mind, with gratitude, her generous criticism on the works of an author, whom a less generous nature would have noted as poaching on what she might have considered her own Irish preserve."

In 1834 Lady Morgan changed her home from Kildare Street, Dublin, to William Street, Hyde Park, London; but this change in no degree changed the veteran authoress's habits. Here, as in Ireland, her evening *converzationi* continued uninterrupted. The brightest and newest literary talent, with the soundest Liberal Opinion flourished, around her throne. Lady Morgan's powers of conversation baffle all description. "Her unbounded, unfading, unfailing freshness of memory," observes

a newspaper writer in 1855, "her liveliness of description, her inexhaustible wealth of anecdote, the readiness of rapartee, the variety of humour, the pliability of wit, the occasional richness and *abandon* of fun, the great faculty of adjusting herself to all moods; of drawing out all minds, the sovereign gift of making everybody pleased with himself, pleased with everybody else, and above all things, pleased with the amiable *ranconteuse* herself—such is the charm which makes Lady Morgan's boudoir the pleasantest afternoon or evening rendezvous of London to all who have privilege of admission." Mr. Jeafferson, in his Memoirs of the Novelists, says:—"Her house is still frequented by the most distinguished men of letters and leading personages in the world of fashion, and it is rare for a stranger of any note to visit our shores and quit them without having sought an introduction to the author of *Woman and her Master*." Another writer says—"There are many a wit, statesman, scholar, and man of science, who would as soon omit to answer the muster call of one of Lady Morgan's pleasant reunions, as in the good old days of French society, Voltaires, and La Rochefoucaults would have thought of deserting the *ruelle* of the Hotel de Rambouillet or the Carnevalet." Lady Morgan's panegyrist might have added, "legal magnate" to his sketch of the class of company who so long frequented her gay boudoir, Lord Chancellor Campbell being an invariable guest.

For leaving Ireland after she had received a pension for her patriotism Lady Morgan was subjected to many a sarcastic remark. But she defended herself by saying, that the political views she entertained would in Dublin have confined her to one phase of society, while in London she could choose from all. In ceasing to reside in Ireland, however, she did not cease to be an Irishwoman in heart and soul. Her old friends, and her new ones, together with members of her younger countrymen who, armed with letters of introduction perpetually made descents on that cheerful little boudoir in William Street, were always received with a hearty *cead mille a failthe*.

Ireland, as Lady Morgan tells us, was her earliest inspiration and her theme, and it would seem that from the moment she left its shores, her *cacoethes scribendi* flagged. Our authoress's first performance after her removal to England, was a work entitled *Dramatic Scenes from Real Life*, which Chambers' Cyclopædia of English Literature pronounces "very poor in matter, and affected in style." In 1840, however, Lady

Morgan brought her long train of creative literary efforts to a singularly beautiful and effective close by the publication of *Woman and her Master*. Lady Morgan's essentially masculine thought, and sense had long evoked the prejudices of certain affected critics who would have preferred a more uniformly feminine style, and selection of subject; but this grand and philosophical history of Woman, in which Lady Morgan came forward as the champion and historian of her sex, effectually silenced further objection.

Indeed this book effected, if possible, a strong reactionary feeling among the ladies. Some were disposed to resent the implied indignity of the title, notwithstanding that that definition of womankind had been sanctioned by Blackstone who gravely speaks in his Commentaries of "THE BARON AND HIS WOMAN."

In *Woman and her Master* Lady Morgan has carefully investigated one of the most important branches of social science—the position which woman should occupy in the order and progress of society. Following up the labors of Bentham, Godwin, and Condorcet, Lady Morgan sought, in the records of the past, guidance for the future. "She subjected the pages of History to a vigorous moral analysis; testing their facts with the skill of a critic, and deducing results with the wisdom of a philosopher." It is exceedingly probable Lady Morgan would have continued to a later era this work, which is in fact a History of Woman down to the fall of the Roman Empire, had not almost an utter deprivation of sight soon after obliged the authoress to relinquish her labors. Critically viewed, this book can only be regarded as a splendid fragment. Since the fall of the Roman Empire the condition of woman, by the progress of Christianity, and the Institution of Chivalry, has undergone greater change than in the previous four thousand years; and it is impossible not to experience bitter regret that circumstances did not permit Lady Morgan to work out her grand project to its full extent.

The work opens with an eloquent and an argumentative sketch of the progress of civilization, and the gradual supremacy of mind over brute force. This, Lady Morgan declared, was far from being complete, especially in the respective conditions and relations of the sexes; for, if the social system is still more imperfect as it relates to the "master," it remains much worse with his "slave," woman being "still a thing of sufferance,

and not of rights" as in the ignorant infancy of early aggregation when the law of the strongest was the only law acted on. "Even now," she asks, "when supremacy has been transferred from muscle to mind, has that most subtle spirit—that being of most mobile fibre—that most sensitive and apprehensive organization—has *she*, whom God placed to be a mate and a help to man, at the head of his creation, the foundress of nations, the embellisher of races, has she alone been left behind, at the very starting-post of civilisation, while around her all progresses and improves? And is man still 'the Master;' and does he, by a misdirected self-love, still perpetuate her ignorance and her dependence, when her emancipation and improvement are most wanting, as the crowning element of his own happiness? . . . . . .

If, in the first era of society, woman was the victim of man's physical superiority, she is still, in the last, the subject of laws, in the enactment of which she has had no voice—amenable to the penalties of a code, from which she derives but little protection. While man, in his first crude attempts at jurisprudence, has surrounded the sex with restraints and disabilities, he has left its natural rights unguarded,and its liberty unacknowledged. Merging the very existence of woman in his own, he has allowed her no separate interest, assigned her no independent possessions; 'for,' says the law—the law of man—'the husband is the head of the wife, and all that she has belongs to him.' Even the fruit of her own labour is torn from her, unless she is protected by the solitary blessedness of a derided but innocent celibacy."

The eloquent champion of woman, not content with asserting the moral and intellectual equality of the sexes, absolutely insisted upon female superiority, and among other evidence cited the great case of Adam and Eve as a proof of their social equality, and the mental pre-eminence of the first Mother, whose very name signifies in the Hebrew, *Life*, while the translation of *Adam* is—*Red Earth!*

In dismissing the subject of *Woman and her Master*, we may add, as a postscriptum, that the *Quarterly Review* at last offered to Lady Morgan some honorable atonement by praising her new work with a cordial good will. But had not the editorial control of the *Review* been in the hands of Mr. Lockhart, and not Mr. Croker, at this period, another savage onslaught would doubtless have been made upon her. By turning to

volume XLVI., p. 375, it may be perceived that *Woman and her Master* is pronounced to be "a very clever and amusing work." There can be no doubt, that although not avowed, Sir Charles Morgan contributed to this voluminous disquisition much of his metaphysical and philosophic lore.

The last joint production of this devoted pair was *The Book Without a Name;* but it cannot be well regarded as embodying much new mental effort, being exclusively composed of final gleanings from the portfolios of the writers, and stray papers which had previously appeared in the magazines. An excellent copperplate portrait of Sir C. Morgan was prefixed to this work.

On August 28th, 1843, Sir Charles Morgan was summoned suddenly to Eternity. To the latest hour of his life he had continued his liberal and philanthropic labours by voice and pen. On the day of his funeral the *New Monthly Magazine* for September was published; and with many a sigh, and a moistened eye, people recognised in its pages an earnest, able, and hearty contribution from Sir Charles Morgan's pen, attesting the indomitable perseverance with which, to the last gasp of his existence, he had toiled in a generous cause. By his family and private friends, Sir Charles was beloved with an affection which time may mellow, but can never obliterate. Several earnest tributes to his worth appeared in the journals of the day. One in the *Examiner*, probably from the pen of Fonblanque, we transcribe: "a writer of great ability, an honest politician, an amiable and most enlightened man, he has claims to be long regretted by a wide circle of every class of opinion. While his mind kept equal pace with the progress of liberal views, his tastes were formed and resolutely fixed in what we call the best old school. He was never at a loss for the witty or the wise passage from Rabelais or Bayle. We turn to his last magazine paper—published as we write this, and find it closed with a quotation from the latter writer: 'Ne croyez pas que je me vante de n'avoir rien dit que de vrai: je ne garantie que mon intention, et non pas mon ignorance.' And truly if anything but the exactest truth ever fell from himself, it was ignorance, and not intention that betrayed him. The one most rare with him—the other most reliable and sound."

To the generality of readers it is hardly necessary to say that Sir Charles had no children by Lady Morgan. Had she been a mother she would have proved a fond and a wise one. Her

principles for the education of youth, were sound. In a tête-a-tête conversation with Mrs. Hall, on the subject of some young ladies who had been suddenly bereft of fortune, Lady Morgan said, with an emphatic wave of her dear old green fan, "They do everything that is fashionable—*imperfectly ;* their singing, and drawing, and dancing, and languages, amount to nothing. They were educated to marry, and had there been time they might have gone off *with*, and hereafter *from*, husbands. They cannot earn their own salt; they do not even know how to dress themselves. I desire to give *every* girl, no matter her rank, a trade—a *profession* if they word pleases you better ; cultivate what is necessary in the position she is born to ; cultivate all things in moderation, but *one* thing to *perfection*, no matter what it is, for which she has a talent—drawing, music, embroidery, housekeeping even ; give her a staff to lay hold of, let her feel '*this* will carry me through life without dependence.' I was independent at fourteen, and never went in debt."

After such a sound bit of teaching, she would, if a *superfine* lady was announced, tack round to her small vanities, ply her fan after a new fashion, and exclaim with such droll pretty affectation, "Why were not you here last night? I had two Dukes, the beautiful Mrs. P—— (never mind, the scandal is nearly worn out) the young countess who is so like the lady in *Comus*—the Indian Prince, who dresses the corner of a room so superbly, and is everything we could desire except *fragrant.* I am a liberal, but really since the Reform Bill, have ceased to count M.P's. as gentlemen, still they are M.P's, I had seven—certainly of the best men—*en route* to the Division. I told you two dukes and one duchess; but the delight was a new and handsome American, a member of Congress—I dare say he exchanged his Bible for a Peerage, the moment he landed at Liverpool! You should have seen his extacy when presented to a duchess, and how he luxuriated beneath the shadow of the strawberry leaves."

Notwithstanding the skill and attention of the best ophthalmists of London, Lady Morgan's sight far from improved, and for the next ten years she did not put pen to paper : at last, in December, 1850, a flash of the old genius attracted public attention. After long repose Lady Morgan donned her glittering armour and entered the lists of controversy with no less a personage than Cardinal Wiseman. The matter is curious

not only in a literary point of view, but as shewing the unquenched spirit, and undiminished powers of argument of the all but blind octogenarian.

In her great work on Italy Lady Morgan described, among other relics, the Chair of St. Peter. The authoress reported that when Denon, Champollion and other savans, accompanied Buonaparte to Italy, they began to grope into all sorts of antique remains; and the enthroned chair contained in the magnificent shrine of bronze which closes the view of the nave of St. Peter's was not exempted from the investigation. Upon the surface of the chair was discovered, according to Lady Morgan, a trace of curious hydrogliphics which having been copied and deciphered were found to be in the Cufic character and to contain the Arabian formula—"There is but one God, and Mahommed is his Prophet!" Cardinal Wiseman contradicted these assertions on evidence not easy to overturn, and declared that for three centuries the sacred chair had not been uncovered. Lady Morgan replied:—

"My Lord, I thank you for the indulgence with which your Eminence offers me the benefit of this 'ignorant mistake,' (and never did the Church grant a more gratuitous one!) but I decline profiting by it. My 'foolish and wicked story of the chair' was no mistake—of mine at least. It was related to me and accepted in the most implicit faith, on the authority of two of the greatest travellers, antiquarians, and virtuosi of their age, who were of that illustrious corps of Savans, the friends and companions in peace, and the intellectual staff in war, of the Emperor Napoleon—Denon and Champollion. The night before our departure from Paris for Italy, on our first, last, and memorable visit, many distinguished—I may say illustrious—men were assembled in our drawing-room in the Rue de Helder. Every one was offering an opinion as to objects most worthy of our notice,—when the Baron Denon, who, in one of the happiest phases of the most brilliant *raconteur* of his time, had been describing his visit to the Inquisition, when he accompanied Buonaparte into Spain, and when, satiated with the rueful relics, which that awful place revealed to his antiquarian curiosity, he fell asleep on the table of that terrible Hall of Council, where he actually passed the night—then related the anecdote of the discovery of the Chair of St. Peter, adding, 'The inscription was in a cufic character, that puzzled even Champollion and the most learned Arabic scholars of the

Institut.' And thus, 'I told the tale as it was told me;' carelessly and fearlessly, which has drawn down on my work the anathema of your Eminence's 'Remarks on Lady Morgan's Statements *regarding* St. Peter's Chair.'"*

This pamphlet contained a considerable quantity of ingenious special pleading.

"But is it *probable*, my Lord, that St. Peter, the humble fisherman of Galilee, permitted himself to be seated or carried in this gorgeous chair, on the shoulders of slaves, as his successor Pio Nono does at this day?—he who had so recently heard his Divine Master declare that 'foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head,'—he, to whose Eastern habits such a chair must have been repugnant! who had taught, not *ex cathedrâ*, but, like the Master he served, walking or reclining on the lap of earth?"

Lady Morgan's eye-sight was not much improved by this troublesome controversy with Cardinal Wiseman. The curious out-of-the-way Latin works, which she carefully examined and adroitly quoted with a view to sustain her in the wordy conflict, could never have been accessible to any other woman but herself. The acquaintance with Ecclesiastical Black-letter tomes, displayed by Lady Morgan in this pamphlet, was marvellous.

Lady Morgan's eyes enjoyed undisturbed repose from this date, save when an application reached the veteran authoress for her autograph; and requests of this character, she was always too amiable and too vain to refuse. Authors' "autographs" are in general, stately looking signatures, remarkable for nothing but hair-strokes, down strokes and a flourish. But whenever Lady Morgan furnished her autograph "by desire," she contrived to infuse into it a dash of that quaint and unctuous wit which had so long been a speciality with her. We transcribe one as a specimen:—

"Autograph by desire of William J. Fitzpatrick, Esq.
Sydney Morgan, her hand and pen—
She will be good, but God knows when.
William-street, Albert-gate, 17 May, 1853.

* Some persons have objected that Cardinal Wiseman's "Refutation" appeared somewhat tardily. Few seem to know, however, that its appearance in 1849 was a mere reprint. In the *Catholic Magazine* for May, 1831, (an old dead-and-gone periodical, printed and published at Birmingham) an article of hostility towards Lady Morgan on the subject of St. Peter's Chair, signed N. W., and accompanied by a rude wood-cut, may be found.

We have said that Lady Morgan had vanity, but it was a vanity so quaint and sparkling, so unlike in its frank honesty, to all other vanities, that it became absolutely a charm. "I am vain," she once said to Mrs. Hall, "but I have a right to be so; look at the number of books I have written!* Have I not been ordered to leave a kingdom, and refused to obey? Did ever woman move in a more false or a brighter sphere, than I do? My dear, I have three invitations to dinner to-day, one from a Duchess, another from a Countess, a third from a diplomatist—I will not tell you who—a very naughty man, who, of course, keeps the best society in London. Now what right have I, my father's daughter, to this? What am I? A pensioned scribbler! yet I am given gifts, that queens might covet. Look at that little clock, *that* stood in Marie Antoinette's dressing-room. When the Louvre was pillaged, Denon met a *bonnet rouge* with it in his hand, and took it from him; Denon gave it to me." Then, with a rapid change she added, "Ah! that is a long time ago, though I never refer to dates. Princes and princesses, celebrities of all kinds, have presented me with the souvenirs you see around me, and that would make a wiser woman vain. But do they not shew to advantage, backed by a few yards of red cotton velvet? If ladies did but know the value of that same velvet—know how it throws up, and throws out, and turns the insignificant into the significant—we should have more effect and less upholstery in our drawing-rooms."

"To the week of her death," writes one of Lady Morgan's friends, in a note to the writer, "she continued to give receptions every night regularly—even Sunday—with plenty of chat and coffee. The house was not large, and it was nightly crammed with body and brain. Lady Morgan used to glide about throwing incendiary sparks of wit into every group of inert matter; though almost blind, she somehow seemed always *au courant* with the progress of Literature; and every new book underwent oral criticism, in a style peculiar to herself—Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*, for instance, was praised. "Well, I cannot concur with you. The story is perfectly monstrous. I cannot understand making a lady who has committed some peccadillo, wear a great scarlet patch upon her chest. Why,

* Lady Morgan was the author of seventy-one volumes.—Ed.

if we were all obliged to wear scarlet patches in consequence of our peccadillos, we could never venture out of doors, and there would soon be an end to all society." Her house was a complete repository of curious articles of vertu, antiques, historical relics, autographs, and other memorials seldom revealed to the world. I was one night reclining in a *fauteuil*, when Lady Morgan glided up to me, saying, "You may be glad to know, Mr. ——, that the seat you are sitting on, was Horace Walpole's study chair. I bought it myself at the sale at Strawberry Hill."

"Everything in these rooms," observes Mrs. Hall, "was artistic, and when filled, you might have imagined yourself in the presence of Madame de Genlis, feeling that after the passing away of that small form which enshrined so much vitality, and so large and expansive a mind, the last link between us and the Aikins, the Barbaulds—the D'Arblays, would be gone."

Lady Morgan's literary ability was only surpassed by the strength and fidelity of her friendships. "There is," writes one of Lady Morgan's former guests, "no instance of any of her friends or acquaintances being at any time set aside, disregarded, or overlooked. The memory of the heart was with her particularly strong and retentive. However intended to shine in wide circles, Lady Morgan was never so engaging as in *petite comité;* however gracefully at ease amongst the highest, however all alive among the highest, she was never so perfectly at home as amongst her friends. Her wit and humour were never so irresistible as when blended with natural and generous outbursts of feeling."

Lady Morgan, though not wealthy, was in very comfortable circumstances. It is a fact exceedingly creditable to her, that about the year 1852, she transferred all her property to her nieces, with the right of inheritance, lest any unforeseen impulse of caprice should induce her, when her mind would become less strong by age, to make a less domestic disposition.

The remarkable constitutional pertinacity with which Lady Morgan retained, even after she had become an octogenarian, all her pristine vivacity, and power of fascination, was pleasingly noticed by the *Athenæum* a month or two previous to our author's death. The vigilant editor of that influential journal would seem to have regarded Lady Morgan in her green old age, as a dear old evergreen which had sustained many a storm, and which it

behoved him, in his capacity of pruner and cultivator in the garden of literature, to encourage occasionally by acts of generous and thoughtful attention. "As she then sang," observed the *Athenæum*, "she still sings. Some harps seem never worn and never out of tune. The chords obey her hands, as in the former day, throbbing as she flings across them eloquent and sprightly music. This faculty of liveliness, and bantering good humour, is strange, as it is admirable in one whose long life has been, so to say, a succession of siege and storm. In her youthful time, Lady Morgan was less a woman of the pen than a patriot and a partizan. Her books were battles. *The Wild Irish Girl* was her Marengo—*France*, her Rivoli—*Florence M'Carthy*, her Austerlitz—*Italy*, her Borodino. She underwent no Leipsic or Waterloo—the last calamity of noble minds—yet she must have suffered from the hail of shot and shell. Through more years than we care to say, her name was as signs among the combatants, her voice sounded as a trumpet through Whig and Tory camps, and a new book from her hand drummed a host of enemies and friends to arms. She wrote, too, in an age when, to be a woman, was to be without defence, and to be a patriot, was to be a criminal. Yet her spirits seem to preserve themselves into a mild old age; joyous as though her stream of life had run between green and flowery banks—graceful and noiseless—her girlhood, a romantic dream—her womanhood a prophetic care, blessed and crowned with that diadem of peace which the wise man covets for the daughter of his love." Knowing that the gods themselves are old, but forgetting that the muses are always young, the *Athenæum*, in reviewing her Diary, observed that, Lady Morgan had lived through the love, admiration, and malignity of three generations of men, and was, in short, a literary Ninon, and seemed as brisk and captivating in the year 1859, as when George was Prince, and the author of Kate Kearney divided the laureateship of society and song with Tom Moore. Lady Morgan viewed this kind courtesy with mingled feelings. She felt grateful and flattered by the applause of the *Athenæum;* but she did not altogether like to be reminded of her advanced age, or that those over whom she still exercised a strange witchery of fascination should be reminded of it. Under the influence of these feelings she addressed to her reviewer the following lines, which strikingly exhibit her vigour of thought to the last:—

My life is not dated by years,
For time has drawn lightly his plough,
And they say scarce a furrow appears
To reveal what I ne'er will avow.

Till the spirit is quenched, still a glow
Will fall o'er the dream of my days,
And brighten the hours as they flow
In the sun-set of memory's rays.

For as long as we feel we enjoy,
And the heart sets all dates at defiance,
And forgetful of life's last alloy,
With Time makes a holy alliance.

Then talk not to me of "my age,"
I appeal from the phrase to the fact,
That I'm told in your own brilliant page
I'm still young in fun, fancy, and tact.

SYDNEY MORGAN.

Lady Morgan was, indeed, pre-eminent in "fun and tact." If a friend complimented her on her looking so much better, she would reply, "perhaps I am better rouged than usual." A lady who was wont to indulge in insincere smiles of benignity, once said, "Dear Lady Morgan, how lovely your hair is—how *do* you preserve its colour?" "By dyeing it, my dear, I see you want the receipt." Lady Morgan disliked to be cross-questioned about her writings, and recoiled from the topic as "shoppy." A certain pompous lady of the pen, who frequently questioned Lady Morgan as to what she was doing, and where she got her "facts," asked one evening, when Miladi was very brilliant and entertaining, her authority for some fact in *Italy*. Twisting her large green fan, and flashing upon the querist the full blaze of her lustrous eyes, she replied, "We all imagine our facts, you know—and then happily forget them; it is to be hoped our readers do the same."

In May, 1858, Lady Morgan was completely prostrated by a virulent attack of bronchitis—a disease which had, in the previous November, consigned her brother-in-law, Sir Arthur Clarke, to the grave. No hope was entertained of Lady Morgan's recovery for many days; but an unexpected rally, attributable, in a great degree, to her own patience and tranquillity of mind, enabled the fair octogenarian to cheat death for the nonce. Undaunted by his near approach, she promptly availed herself of convalescence to resume her old and brilliant position as

queen of a sparkling coterie. But she did not devote her new spell of health and intellectual vigour to conversation exclusively. With the aid of Miss Jewsbury, as amanuensis, she arranged for publication a volume of her Diary and Correspondence, extending from August, 1818, to May, 1819, This period, as the reader may remember, was spent by Lady Morgan in London and Paris, in preparation for her visit to, and great work on, Italy. These *Passages from my Autobiography,* which were published by Mr Bentley, in January, 1859, possessed the same fault by which Moore's Memoirs and Diary were disfigured, namely, a too obviously intense enjoyment of fashionable celebrity and society, and the same excessive desire for aristocratic praise and recognition. The book contains several amusing passages, but, on the whole, wants depth and sentiment.

Poor Lady Morgan did not long survive the publication of this "Odd Volume" as she herself styled it on the fly-leaf. She passed tranquilly into eternity on April 14th, 1859, aged eighty-one, and with her became extinct the last illustration of high Whig society belonging to the world of Byron, Rogers and Moore.

"The last time we saw the Wild Irish Girl," observes Mrs. Hall, "she was seated on a couch in her bed-room, as pretty and picturesque a ruin of old lady womankind, as ever we looked upon; her black silk dressing-gown fell round her *petite* form, which seemed so fragile that we feared to see her move. We recalled to memory Maria Edgeworth, having believed her to be the smallest great woman in the world, but Lady Morgan seemed not half her size. Yet her head looked as noble as ever; the lines of her face had deepened, but her large luminous eyes were bright and glistening, her voice was clear and firm, her manner subdued—she was not at all restless, but spoke with confidence of arranging her autobiography, of which she had sent forth a little portion as an *avant courier.* She shewed us a large black trunk which she told us had, when she married, contained her *trousseau*—'during the happy interregnum between hoops and crinolines,'—and now was filled with manuscript; she spoke with affection of the dear relative, 'who never suffered her to feel that she was childless,' of her devoted servants (and they certainly deserved her praise) and of the kindness of her friends. She gave voice to one or two little sarcasms that shewed her acuteness was undimmed; but the hour flew swiftly and harmoniously; we promised to

come some evening soon, and rejoiced her maid by saying that though her ladyship was changed, she looked much better than we expected. We heard, what we know to be the case, that Lady Morgan during her illness, and indeed, always to her servants, was the most patient and gentle of mistresses. An unamiable woman could not have been beloved, as she was, by all around her."

"Life was so strong," observed the *Athenæum* in recording her death, "and spirits were so brilliant in the woman of genius who departed from amongst us only a few hours since,—enjoyment of society was so keen with her to the last,—habit of expression so eloquent,—and life and spirits and expression kept such perfect pace with the interests of the day, the changes of the hour,—that while recording the death of Lady Morgan we feel something of sudden surprise, besides much of personal regret." The timid tendency to shrink from fashionable society which marked the early life of Sydney Owenson, is exceedingly curious when contrasted with the passionate affection for it with which Lady Morgan's days closed. In 1799 the tiny girl, addressing her solitary bower, writes—

> Oft from th' unmeaning crowd I'd fly,
> From fashion's vapid circle hie,
> And beneath thy umbrage sought
> The luxury of pensive thought.

But although an ardent votary of fashion in the noon and evening of her life, Lady Morgan was keenly alive to the solemnity of death, and to the unseemliness of a fashionable cortege at her funeral. "Let no such ghastly mockery accompany my poor remains to their last resting place," she said; "I desire that my funeral may be strictly private, and limited to a hearse and one mourning coach." The dying wish of Lady Morgan was religiously obeyed.

On Sunday morning, April 17th, 1859, a coffin hardly larger than an infant child's, was lowered into the damp earth of old Brompton churchyard; and to that lonely grave many an Irish pilgrim will yet wander to gaze upon the storied urn of

Sydney Lady Morgan.

THIS Life preaches a moral, but it is a moral different from that which the panegyrists of Lady Morgan have hitherto sought to inculcate.

Lady Morgan was not, as has been asserted, in Chambers' *Cyclopædia of English Literature*, "a self-educated person." On the contrary she received, as we have shown, no stint of schooling—so much that it absolutely disgusted her. Her early writings in themselves smell of the hot atmosphere of the school-room: we feel ourselves sitting upon a hard form as we read; and the ring of the pedagogue's birch more than once grates upon our ear. Sydney Owenson's acquaintance with foreign languages, and familiarity with English classical literature, is apparent to the very verge of pedantry in her first works, and shows, that the education of the authoress had been very carefully attended to. The moral, therefore, is not, that by energetic self education in later life she triumphantly tore from her mind the myriad cobwebs which alleged intellectual neglect, extending over many early years, had created and increased; but the lesson which her life teaches is based on the great and significant fact, that with her own fragile female hand she not only parried undauntedly the assaults of a furious and organised host of Critic-Cut-Throats, but absolutely hurled them, one by one, to the ground; and the teeth that had been sharpened to gnaw this brilliant woman's heart, impotently bit the dust beneath her feet. Self-reliance and self-respect, without the support of which no genius can be secure or genuine, formed a prominent feature in her idiosyncracy. Those who are in fear of falling do nothing but stumble; and impressed by the truth of the aphorism Sydney Lady Morgan, with queen-like dignity and confidence, pursued the opposite course boldly. The blows aimed at her own fair fame she made recoil upon her assailants. The finest poetic genius that had ever shone on the world had been already quenched prematurely by the deadly grasp of John Wilson Croker; a violent attack in the *Quarterly*

Review killed poor unresisting Keats. An unadorned slab, almost smothered by rank weeds in the Church-yard of St. Werburgh, Dublin, communicates to the reader the melancholy fact, that Edwin, one of the most promising Irish actors, died in 1805, from a broken heart caused by an illiberal criticism in Croker's *Familiar Epistles on the Irish Stage.* "There is nothing so detestable," says Addison, "in the eyes of all good men, as defamation or satire aimed at particular persons. It deserves the utmost detestation and discouragement of all who have either the love of their country or the honour of their religion at heart. I have not scrupled to rank those who deal in these pernicious arts of writing, with the murderer and assassin. Every honest man sets as high a value upon his good name as upon life itself; and I cannot but think that those who privily assault the one, could destroy the other, might they do it with the same security and impunity." To virulent criticism the brilliant Montesquieu also fell an unresisting victim. Aristotle having been accused by critics of ignorance and vanity, poisoned himself in the intensity of his bitterness. Cummyns, an eminent Quaker, declared shortly before his death, that some ill-natured criticisms in the public papers, were hurrying him to eternity. Hereclitus, persecuted by his countrymen, retired in disgust from the world. Anaxandrides, dreading hostile criticism, burned his dramas. Racine died of extreme sensibility to a rebuke, and exclaimed that one severe criticism outweighed all the gratification which the concentrated praise of his admirers could produce. The melancholy death of Dr. Hawkesworth is attributable to a similar circumstance. Marsham burnt the second part of his valuable "Chronology" because some flippant critics assailed the first. Pelisson records the death of a promising young tragic author from the effects of L'Etoile's criticism. Disraeli, among other sadly interesting instances, reminds us that Ritson went mad from the persecution which he under-

went from ignorant reviewers, and died under the hallucination that they all surrounded his death-bed armed with weapons for his destruction. The learned Abbé Cassagne also went mad and died from a stroke of Boileau's literary lightning. Scott of Amwell, never recovered from a ludicrous criticism. Batteux became a prey to excessive grief. Newton suffered from the malignant jealousy of Leibnitz and others, and abandoned the publication of a valuable work on optics in consequence of some premature cavils. Innumerable instances might be cited to shew the number of brilliant minds who in all ages have weakly succumbed to the poisoned shafts of ambushed antagonism. What a vast amount of invaluable literary and scientific achievement have been thus lost irrevocably to the world! We do not deprecate adverse criticism when offered fairly and conscientiously; but we detest to see it made the vehicle of malignant assault from private or party motives, as was the case with the majority of the examples we have cited. Had Sydney Morgan bared that heart which blazed with pure patriotism, to the dastard stab, and submitted her dead body to be trampled upon, as Aristotle, Racine, Hawkesworth, Ritson, Cassagne, Montesquieu, and Keats, submitted and were trampled, this memoir would have had but an inferior moral to dignify it. That brilliant woman, however, grappled with the arm which sought to destroy her fair reputation, and possibly her life, and like the good fairy crushing the Evil Genius in a Pantomime, she smote the arch-Foe to the earth, and placed her tiny foot, cased in white satin, upon his ponderous coat of mail.

ERRATA.

Page 28 (Note), for "Thomas Dixon, junior," read Thomas Dixon, Hosier.
„ 62 „ "tout le votre," "vous plaisant," and "ont plàt les voila decouverts," read "toute la votre," "vous plaire," and "ont plut les voila desœvrées."

L'ENVOI.

The Editor did not discover in time for insertion in its proper place, the lines "on behalf of the little sweeps of Dublin," which Lady Morgan speaks of in her letter to Mr. W. J. Fitzpatrick, as having been "written in her thirteenth year." The copy of this little poem, from which the following has been transcribed, may be found in the *Freeman's Journal*, of Tuesday, December 8th, 1807.

THE LITTLE CHIMNEY SWEEPER.

(FOUNDED ON FACT.)

'Twas a keen frosty morn, and the snow heavy falling,
When a child of misfortune was thus sadly calling,
"Sweep, sweep—I am cold! and the snow very deep,
O pray take compassion on poor little sweep!
"Sweep, chimney, sweep!"

The tears down his cheeks in fast drops were rolling,
Unnoticed, unpitied, by those by him strolling:
Who frequently warn'd him at a distance to keep
While he cried—"Take compassion on poor little sweep!
"Sweep, chimney, sweep!"

In vain he implored passing strangers for pity,
They smil'd at his plaints, and that bantered his ditty:
Humanity's offspring as yet lay asleep,
Nor heard the sad wailings of poor little sweep!
"Sweep, chimney, sweep!"

At the step of a door half froze and dejected,
He sat down and griev'd to be shunn'd and neglected;
When a kind hearted damsel by chance saw him weep,
And resolv'd to befriend, yes, the poor little sweep!
"Sweep, chimney, sweep!"

Unmindful of sneers to a neighbour's she led him,
Warm'd his limbs by the fire and tenderly fed him:
And, oh! what delight did this fair maiden reap,
When she found a lost brother in poor little sweep!
"Sweep, chimney, sweep!"

With rapture she gaz'd on each black sooty feature,
And hugged to her bosom the foul smelling creature,
Who sav'd by a sister, no longer need creep,
Through lanes, courts, and alleys, a poor little sweep!
"Sweep, chimney, sweep!"

O'DONNEL.

(See p. 74 ante.)

Lady Morgan, in her Preface to the first edition of *O'Donnel*, tells us:—

"Having determined upon taking Ireland as my theme, I had sought in its records and chronicles for the ground-work of a story, and the character of a hero. The romantic adventures and unsubdued valour of O'Donnel, *the Red*, Chief of Tirconnel, in the reign of Elizabeth, promised at the first glance all I wished, and seemed happily adapted to my purpose. I had already advanced as far as the second volume of my MS., and had expended much time and labour, when I found it necessary to forego my original plan. In touching those parts of Irish history which were connected with my tale, it would have been desirable to turn them into purposes of conciliation, and to incorporate the leaven of favourable opinion with that heavy mass of bitter prejudice, which writers, both grave and trifling, have delighted to raise against my country. But when I fondly thought to send forth a dove bearing the olive of peace, I found I was on the point of flinging an arrow winged with discord. I had hoped, as far as my feeble efforts could go, to extenuate the errors attributed to Ireland, by an exposition of their causes, drawn from historic facts; but I found that, like the spirit in *Macbeth*, I should at the same moment hold up a glass to my countrymen, reflecting but *too* many fearful images. I discovered, far beyond my expectation, that I had fallen upon 'evil men and evil days;' and that in proceeding, I must raise a veil which ought never to be drawn, and should renew the memory of events which the interests of humanity require to be for ever buried in oblivion.

"I abandoned, therefore, my original plan, took up a happier view of things, advanced my story to more modern and more liberal times, and exchanged the rude chief of the days of old, for his polished descendant in a more refined age: and I

trust the various branches of the ancient house with whose name I have honoured him, will not find reason to disown their newly-discovered kinsman."

But her introductory remarks to the edition of 1835 are still more creditable and interesting :—

"'O'Donnel'" we are told, "was the first of a series of National Tales, undertaken with an humble but zealous view to the promotion of a great national cause,—the emancipation of the Catholics of Ireland. The attempt has been made the matter of grave censure, as a step beyond the position of the Author, and foreign to the scope of the genus. To this canon of criticism I cannot yet subscribe. Novels, like more solid compositions, are not exempted from the obligation to inculcate truth. They are expected, in their idlest trifling, to possess a moral scope; and politics are but morals on a grander scale. The appropriation of this form of composition to purposes beyond those of mere amusement, is not new. A novel is especially adapted to enable the advocate of any cause to steal upon the public, through the bye-ways of the imagination, and to win from its sympathies what its reason so often refuses to yield to undeniable demonstration. Even those sectarians who have taken the highest measure of moral propriety, and exclude with rigour all sources of amusement from the sphere of a religious life, have condescended thus to use the novel for the advancement of their particular opinions—as an organ not less legitimate, than powerful and effective.

"After all, however, if I became that much-reviled, but now very fashionable personage, a female politician, it was much in the same way as the *Bourgeoise Gentilhomme* spoke prose,—without knowing it; a circumstance perhaps not uncommon with Irish writers; for whatever may have been the quality of the author's mind, every fictitious narrative that has had Ireland for its theme, has assumed a more or less decidedly political colouring. If an imitation of life be necessarily an example, Irish life, in all its combinations, can only be an example of political error. For myself, at least, born and dwelling in Ireland, amidst my countrymen and their sufferings, I saw and I described, I felt and I pleaded; and if a political bias was ultimately taken, it originated in the natural condition of things, and not in "malice aforethought" of the writer.

"The same womanly sympathies have governed my writings

and directed my views for other countries; and I have never denounced a public wrong which has not come home to my own feelings through the spectacle of private suffering. In this, the proprieties of the sex cannot fairly be considered as compromised; and if the first step towards observation be to feel, and the second only to think, the female temperament cannot be so adverse to the perception of the higher moral truths as has been vulgarly and plausibly pretended. From the rack and the faggot of the middle ages, to the penal laws of Ireland, and the *carcere duro* of modern Austria, there are sources of the deepest of all human interests, and details of the wildest romance, beyond all that the most fertile imagination can devise, or fictitious narrative present. These are mines for the novelist to explore; and should they yield likewise lessons of practical wisdom, adapted to the awakening intelligence of the people of the great European republic, the circumstance is surely no derogation from their fitness for his purpose."

THE QUARTERLY REVIEW, LADY MORGAN, AND LAFAYETTE.

(See pp. 79-95 *ante.)*

The *Quarterly Review*, in noticing Lady Morgan's *France*, strongly animadverted on her admiration of the "vain, feeble, doating coxcomb, Lafayette." His deliberate resignation of the title of Marquis is not quite consistent with the character of "*a vain coxcomb.*" But let Lady Morgan vindicate him:

"It will scarcely be credited that such a statement," she observes, twelve years after, "in defiance of historical fact, and of cotemporary witnesses, and in utter recklessness of European opinion, should have been put forth to the British public, to work upon its timidity, and to insult its ignorance. Yet this picture of the idol of two great nations, of the friend of Washington and of Jefferson, of Fox and of La Rochefoucauld, of the respected of Napoleon, and the eulogised of Charles the Tenth—of the most illustriously virtuous man of his age and country, of the most consistent public character in ancient or modern story—this picture, in which every trait is a falsehood, and every touch a calumny, was risked by the paid organ of the British government, and was received unquestioned by the British nation! From what a

slough of slavery, from what a mire of prejudice, folly and self-satisfied debasement, has England emerged, since the very recent epoch, when such things could be dared, and the actors be rewarded and cheered by a mystified public."

Perhaps the best chapter in Lady Morgan's second Book on France is that devoted to a memoir of the life and actions of General Lafayette. The authoress thus sums up : "Since the moment when my impressions of this truly illustrious man called forth the observations of the Quarterly Review which paint him as sunk in feeble dotage, Lafayette has thrice been elected to the chamber of deputies, by the unpurchased voice of public opinion. His mind, brightening like a fine coin by the friction of use, has come out on every occasion on which the liberty of the people has called for his exertions, with a strength beyond that even of his first youthful vigour. He has resisted the various attempts made upon the freedom of the press and on the purity of election, with the same firmness that has distinguished all his votes, and with the same tenacity to original principles with which he started for the goal of immortality. His attendance on the duties of the chamber of deputies, strange as that fact may appear to very many of the honourable members of another legislative assembly in another country, is as constant and unwearied, as if age could not enfeeble his body, nor disgust nor languor assail his mind. Without the walls of the chamber, his influence is even more decided than within. He is indeed the centre upon which the whole liberal opposition moves—the guide to whom the youth and the aged alike turn with confidence and affection. His ascendancy is not obtained by flattering the multitude—it is not purchased by violence and exaggeration. It is not even the result of those all-commanding talents, which are occasionally found unconnected with honesty or judgment. He has not the eloquence of a Mirabeau, the brilliancy of a Canning, the financial capacities of a Neckar, nor the political philosophy of a Romilly or a Bentham. His persuasive power is the force of good sense and of self-conviction —the clearness of his views—and the earnestness with which he exposes them. In one word, it is the force of honesty, of public virtue, and of private worth.

"In 1825, (eight years after the appearance of the Quarterly Review with its "*feeble dotage*,") General Lafayette received and accepted an invitation to revisit the new world. The card came from the American people, and its object became the

"guest of the nation." It was not, alas! by the Washingtons and the Franklins that he was thus invited to the land to whose greatness and happiness he had so powerfully contributed. In the interval, but little short of half a century, another and another generation had sprung up to benefit by his labours: but the sentiments of love and gratitude to Lafayette were a national inheritance, treasured and transmitted by every American of every age. The guest of the nation was received by the sons and the grandsons, as the liberator had been by the fathers, when he came to share their perils and to promote their triumphs.

"His return to his country and to his family was noted by the same triumph that distinguished his visit to the western hemisphere; and each day of his life, up to the present hour, has added to his reputation, and to the brilliancy of his social position. Upon every occasion that has brought him before the public, in sorrow or in joy—at the funeral of his friend Foy, or at the festivals of French and American independence, so often celebrated in the capital of European civilization—he has appeared surrounded by his body guard, the "youth of France," and in the halo of national popularity.

"We had long been aware of this: previous to our present visit to Paris, we had been assured of his well-being by his delightful letters, and by those brilliant details of his public life, which the journals furnished even in *our* Ultima Thule; and yet when we arrived in 1829, the interval which had elapsed since 1820, his time of life, and the reiterated blows his feelings (we knew) had sustained, threw a shadow of melancholy over our expected meeting, which we had otherwise contemplated with pleasure and impatience. We had left him at La Grange years back, suffering in bodily health from the consequences of a wound; and since that time he had lost such friends as life could never again bestow—the friends of his youth, of his prime, the sharers in his labours, and the partakers of his triumphs. Domestic affliction, too, had laid its chill and terrible hand heavily on his noble heart. He had strewed flowers on the bridal grave of one who, in the order of nature, should have placed the cypress and the laurel on his own. These were events that I was aware had preyed upon a constitution which the dungeons of Olmutz had not destroyed; and bowed a spirit which the persecution of the powerful, and the calumnies of the vile had not broken.
