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THE LIFE

OF

WILLIAM ROSCOE,

BY HIS SON

HENRY ROSCOE.

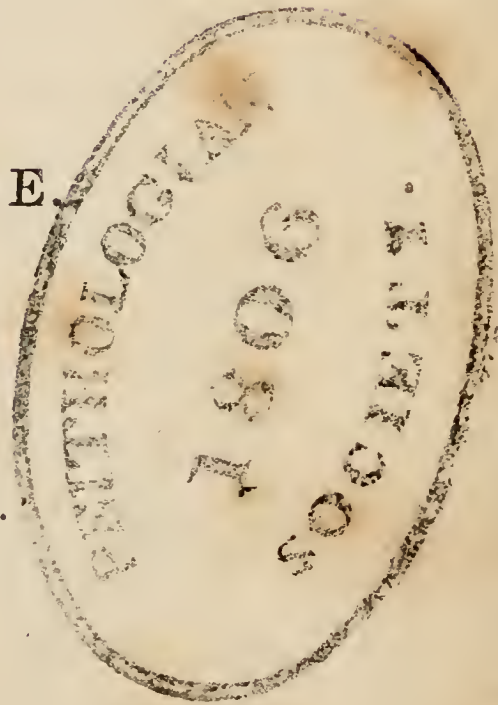
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

BOSTON:

RUSSELL, ODIORNE, AND COMPANY.

1833.



1866
1867

1868

1869

CAMBRIDGE:

CHARLES FOLSOM, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY.

P R E F A C E .

IN preparing the following volumes for the press, it has been the object of the writer, not merely to detail the incidents of Mr. Roscoe's life, but to present an enlarged view of his opinions upon the many important subjects in which he interested himself. In the performance of this labour, Mr. Roscoe's extensive correspondence has been resorted to as the principal source of information; and, whenever it has been possible, the personal narrative of his life, and the expression of his opinions, have been given in his own words; and thus a much more accurate and spirited picture of both has been presented, than if the writer had attempted to embody them in language of his own. The size of the work is perhaps increased by the plan thus adopted, but that circumstance will be found amply compensated by the interest and authenticity imparted to the narrative. It is a satisfaction to the writer to know, that Mr. Roscoe's own opinion was in favour of thus deriving the history of an author's life from his writings.*

* See the Preface to the Life of Pope, p. xxi.

In making use of the valuable and copious correspondence which Mr. Roscoe left, the writer has been careful to select such parts only as relate to the personal history of the subject of the Memoir, or contain the expression of his own sentiments, and has scrupulously avoided the insertion of other topics.

An apology may, perhaps, be thought by some to be necessary for the publication of the life of a father by his son. The writer can only allege in excuse of his attempt, that a strong feeling of duty prompted him to the task. He felt that the example of Mr. Roscoe's life ought not to be lost to the world; and he persuaded himself that one who had long enjoyed the privilege of studying his character through many of the changes of his eventful life, and to whom his mind and heart were ever open in the confidence of domestic intercourse, — one who had felt the beauty of his character, and had been deeply impressed with the importance of the principles, by the operation of which that character was formed, — could not be considered as altogether an unfit person to give to the public the narrative of his life.

The writer is well aware how delicate is the task which he has undertaken, and how open he must be to the observation, that his partiality has induced him

unduly to extol the character of Mr. Roscoe. He does not profess to be free from the feelings which might lead to such representations; but he has scrupulously endeavoured to subdue them, and has upon every occasion, where the merits of Mr. Roscoe have come in question, relied upon the opinions of others, where such opinions have been expressed.

In the concluding chapter he has indeed ventured, after much hesitation, to present a connected view of Mr. Roscoe's character, and upon this portion of his labours he looks with much distrust. He feels, however, reassured by the reflection, that in performing this difficult and painful task he has not been misled by any vain idea of adding to the personal fame of Mr. Roscoe, but has only been actuated by a desire to point out, for the benefit of others, the result of those great principles, by which his life was governed. If, in making this attempt, he has been betrayed into exaggerated representations, the candour of the public will, it is hoped, overlook the offence.

Respecting the success of the work, so far as his own labours are concerned, the writer feels no anxiety. His duty, with the exception above mentioned, has been little more than that of placing in order the valuable materials which came to his hands. But he does

feel anxious, that a work, containing the opinions and delineating the character of one whose great object was to advance the happiness and the improvement of mankind, should not fail to produce those beneficial effects, which the principles it developes are so well calculated to ensure.

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CHAPTER I.

1753 — 1781.

Family of Mr. Roscoe — his birth — loses his mother at an early age — his own narrative of his childhood — his reluctance to the discipline of a school — quits school at twelve years of age — assists his father in gardening — is placed with a bookseller — articled to an attorney — his attachment to reading and to poetry — imitations of Shenstone — attention to his profession — his early friends. — Memoir of Francis Holden — Robert Rigby — Miss Done. — Causes which led to the formation of Mr. Roscoe's poetical character — his early poems. — Ode on the formation of a society for encouraging the arts of design, &c. — Mount Pleasant. — Letter from Sir Joshua Reynolds — smaller poems — other studies — “Christian Morality.”

THE family of Mr. Roscoe, for a considerable period before his birth, had been settled in the central part of Lancashire, where they lived in humble circumstances. The name, which in other parts of the country is an uncommon one, occurs not unfrequently in those districts.*

* No record of the family is found in the Herald's College, except the information furnished by Mr. Roscoe himself, to Sir Isaac Heard, Garter Principal King at Arms, who had expressed a wish to trace its origin. In a letter to that gentleman, written in the year 1797, Mr. Roscoe says, “From all that I can learn, it appears, that whilst other families have rolled on for centuries in distinct and appropriate channels, mine has always been mingled in the common mass, and has composed a part of the immense tide that daily falls into the ocean of oblivion. The *Origines Guelficæ* occupy five folio volumes, whilst the *origines* in question will find ample space in five lines. I shall return the pedigree you have been so good as to sketch; and if any of my descendants 500 years hence should be desirous of knowing who was their ancestor, I hope that your kindness will

Mr. Roscoe was the only son of William Roscoe and Elizabeth his wife, who had also an only daughter, Margaret, afterwards the wife of Daniel Daulby, Esq.

At the period of Mr. Roscoe's birth, his father kept a public-house, called "The Bowling-Green," in the neighbourhood of Liverpool, a place much frequented for the recreation afforded by its garden and bowling-green. His father continued for many years in the same business, to which he united the cultivation of an extensive market-garden.* He was a man below the middle stature, but of remarkable bodily strength and activity; of much vivacity of temperament, and greatly attached to field-sports and other amusements, for which his son never displayed any taste. He lived to attain a very considerable age; and two years before his death, which took place in 1796, he was removed by Mr. Roscoe to his own house at Birchfield, where his latter days were soothed by the continued attentions of his children.

Mr. Roscoe's mother, a woman of superior mind and warm affections, exercised an influence over his character, the effects of which, to the latest period of his life, were never obliterated. The grateful respect and attachment which he bore her memory, were frequently

not be lost, and that your records will remain to give them the information." In a letter written about the same time to his brother-in-law, Mr. Daulby, Mr. Roscoe says, "Amongst my new acquaintances is Sir Isaac Heard, who has been extremely civil to me, and is desirous of tracing the pedigree of the noble family of the Roscoes, which has hitherto, I find, baffled all his researches. I told him I was a good patriarch, and the proper person to *begin* a family, as I had six sons, &c. Accordingly, the whole descent is registered; and the Roscoes and Daulbys may now go on *in sacula saculorum*. Amen."

* In the latter part of his life he retired to his native place, Charnock, where he was supported for many years by his son.

evinced when he referred to the period of his childhood ; and he always dwelt with particular pleasure on the years during which he had experienced her watchful and affectionate care. The following lines, written soon after her death, though evidently a juvenile production, are interesting, as expressive of his feelings towards her : —

“ O! best of Mothers! Thou, whose guardian care
Sustain'd my infant life, when, weak and faint,
I pour'd the feeble cry! Thou, whose kind hand
Through scenes of childhood led my devious steps
Towards Virtue's arduous way, and bade my soul
With ceaseless assiduity attempt
The glorious road! Thou, whose preserving hand
With friendly aid restrain'd my boist'rous speed
When maddening passions ruled! To thee I owe
Health and existence! and shalt thou not claim
One filial sigh, and bid one starting tear
Fall from my eye? —

What splendid scenes had Hope too fondly sketch'd
Of future bliss! But ah! at Death's approach
The fairy colours faded, and the piece
Remain'd a gloomy void. No more I saw
In distant view, through Fancy's magic glass,
The best of Mother's, when by age oppress'd,
Beneath my roof retired, my care to tend
Her sinking frame, to raise her drooping heart,
With converse sweet — or, if deprived of sight —
To lead her where the opening roses shed
Ambrosial odours round ; and vernal gales
Breathe gently o'er the field.”

Of the childhood and early life of Mr. Roscoe, the following account is derived from a letter addressed by him, a few months before his death, to one of the oldest and dearest of his friends ; in which he proposed to amuse himself, during those hours which sickness now

disabled him from devoting to more serious pursuits, by tracing for the eye of his friend a brief narrative of the principal events of his life: —

“ I was born on the 8th day of March, 1753, at the Old Bowling-Green House, on Mount Pleasant, one of the oldest houses yet standing in Liverpool, and of which an excellent drawing, by that rising artist, Austin, is engraved, and given in the account of that town, now publishing by Fisher and Co.; but in the following year I was removed, with my family, to the New Bowling-Green House, on Mount Pleasant, which my father was building at the time of my birth, but which has since been taken down to make way for more modern dwellings.

“ Of that interval of time I know little worth recording. Yet, when I tax my memory, I find some circumstances which give indications of my future character. One of these is, a decided aversion to compulsion and restraint, insomuch that I remember, to this day, being carried to a schoolmistress by a servant with a rod, not without violent struggling and opposition, before I had the honour of being breeched; and throughout my future life, it was with great difficulty that I was induced to submit to the restraints and attendance necessary to acquire any share of learning.

“ This incident reminds me of the following Address to Liberty, in the second part of ‘ *The Wrongs of Africa* :’ —

— ‘ At my birth,
 What though the Muses smiled not, nor distill’d
 Their dews Hyblean o’er my infant couch;
 What though they scatter’d not their fading flowers;
 Yet thou wert present, thy diviner flame
 Play’d round my head. Impatient of control,
 My young step follow’d where thou led’st the way,

And, far as memory traces back my years,
My soul, though touch'd with human sympathies,
Revolted at oppression.'

“ At six years of age, I was taken from under the care of my good old schoolmistress, and placed under the tuition of Mr. Martin, who kept a daily school for boys in Paradise Street, in the middle of Liverpool, where I improved myself in reading English, and where I was frequently admitted to the use of his little book-case, filled with the best authors of that period. To his care, and the instructions of a kind and affectionate mother, I believe I may safely attribute any good principles which may have appeared in my conduct during my future life. It is to her I owe the inculcation of those sentiments of humanity, which became a principle in my mind. Nor did she neglect to supply me with such books as she thought would contribute to my literary improvement. Amongst others, I still remember, with great pleasure, a periodical work, entitled, ‘The Library,’ in prose and verse. Many pieces of the latter description I committed to memory; some of which I retain to this day.

“ After remaining about two years with Mr. Martin, I was removed to Mr. Sykes, who kept a school in the same house, for writing and arithmetic, to which were added, instructions in English grammar. As he had a numerous school of boys, I found myself here obliged to fight my way till I had taken a certain station, and could distinguish my superiors from my inferiors. (With respect to my new master, he was a good instructor in what he professed to teach, and a kind-hearted man, although on one occasion I incurred his severe displeasure, by having been guilty of whipping a top, with one of my school-fellows, a few minutes beyond the

time appointed for commencing school in the afternoon. On this occasion, the master proposed to make an example of us to the scholars. His mode of correction was not by the shameful and indecent method of flogging yet so prevalent in England, but by means of a small cane, which he held in his right hand, whilst, taking that of the culprit in the other, he inflicted on his back a sufficient number of strokes, which from a powerful man to a child, were at least an adequate punishment for any childish offence. He ordered me up to him, and, taking my hand, began to bestow the usual discipline upon me. It was the common practice of the unfortunate scholar who underwent this disgrace, to endeavour to free himself, as soon as the master relaxed his grasp, and to make his escape. On the contrary, I stood immovable on this occasion, and patiently received all that was administered. When, at last, the master stopped, expecting I should retire, I stood, without the slightest indication of emotion of any kind, till, provoked at my contumacy, he again seized his cane, and impressed on me such a memorial of his ability, as remained on my back a considerable length of time. This was the first and the last time that I ever experienced the punishment of a school, and I believe neither my master nor myself retained afterwards any sentiment of ill will towards each other.)

“ When I was twelve years of age I quitted school, my master having reported that I had learned all that he was capable of teaching me; which included a knowledge of the common rules of arithmetic, mensuration, and algebra, and should have included an acquaintance also with English grammar, to which, however, I had rather imbibed a dislike than otherwise. The numerous occasions of leisure during this period of my life were

devoted to other employments. Adjoining to my father's property was a considerable manufactory of British china-ware. With the painters employed in these works I became intimate, and frequently assisted them in their labours, in which I was tolerably expert. Among these was Hugh Mulligan, an engraver of copperplates, as well as a painter, who some years afterwards published a collection of his own poetical compositions in a quarto volume, some of which are not without merit. He became a kind of Mentor to my youthful years; and my acquaintance with him, under different circumstances, continued till his death, at an advanced period of my life. I also became a tolerable joiner, and about this period made for myself a bookcase with folding doors, which served me for many years, and which I filled with several volumes of Shakspeare, a great part of whose historical plays I committed to memory; to these were added the Spectator and other valuable works, which I perused with great pleasure. One of these books I have yet in my possession, marked with my name, on the 5th of June, 1765, when I was little more than twelve years of age. The book referred to is, the poems of Mrs. Catherine Philips, 'the matchless Orinda,' a writer of the time of Charles II., of considerable merit, who died, amidst the admiration of her contemporaries, at an early age, and is applauded by Cowley in his Odes, both living and dead. Nor can it be denied, at the present day, that her works have in them a depth of true feeling, and a spirit of poetry, which will keep them in remembrance.

“According to my best recollection, I was at this period of my life of a wild, rambling, and unsocial disposition; passing many of my hours in strolling along the shore of the river Mersey, or in fishing, or in taking

long walks alone.* On one occasion, I determined to become a sportsman; and, having procured a gun, and found an unfortunate thrush perched on the branch of a tree, I brought him to the ground with fatal aim; but I was so horrified and disgusted with the agonies I saw him endure in death, that I have never since repeated the experiment.

“Having quitted school, and committed my English grammar to the flames, I now began to assist my father in his agricultural concerns, particularly in his business of cultivating potatoes for sale, of which he every year grew several acres, and which he sold, when produced early in the season, at very advanced prices. His mode of cultivation was entirely by the spade; and, when raised early, they were considered in that part of Lancashire as a favourite esculent. When they had attained their proper growth, we were accustomed to carry them to the market on our heads, in large baskets, for sale, where I was generally intrusted with the disposal of them, and soon became a very useful assistant to my father. In this and other laborious occupations, particularly in the care of a garden, in which I took great pleasure, I passed several years of my life, devoting my hours of relaxation to reading my books. This mode of life gave health and vigour to my body, and amusement

* “Most persons,” says Mr. Roscoe, in his *Life of Pope*, “can relate some dangers of their youth from which they have escaped with difficulty.” He has, however, himself forgotten to relate, in this narrative, an incident which had nearly proved fatal to him. During one of his strolls along the shore of the Mersey, while the tide was out, he lingered so long, that the returning waters had closed round the bank on which he was standing, before he perceived the danger of his situation. Being unable to swim, his only chance of escape was by fording the water while it was yet passable. This he was fortunately able to accomplish, with considerable difficulty.

and instruction to my mind; and to this day I well remember the delicious sleep which succeeded my labours, from which I was again called at an early hour. If I were now asked whom I consider to be happiest of the human race, I should answer, those who cultivate the earth by their own hands.*

“Being now in my fifteenth year, I was called upon to make choice of a profession, when my attachment to reading induced me to prefer that of a bookseller. I was accordingly placed with Mr. Gore, a respectable tradesman in Liverpool; but, after remaining there for a month, and not finding the attendance on a shop reconcilable to my disposition, I quitted him, and returned to my labours. In the following year (1769) I was, however, articled, for six years, to Mr. John Eyes, jun., a young attorney and solicitor in Liverpool; and thus entered upon an anxious and troublesome profession. I passed all the hours I had to spare in perusing such authors as fell in my way, among whom Shenstone was my great

* This narrative of Mr. Roscoe's early history resembles, in very many of its circumstances, the account he has himself given of the youth of Pope. The Poet left school at the age of twelve, and went to reside with his father, who, like Mr. Roscoe's, supported himself partly by the cultivation of a garden. The same desultory studies, amongst which an attachment to poetry appears pre-eminent, were pursued by both; and the description which Pope has given of himself, at this period of his life, might well be applied to the youth of his biographer: — “I followed every where as my fancy led me, and was like a boy gathering flowers in the woods and fields, just as they fell in my way; and these five or six years I still look upon as the happiest part of my life.” (*Life of Pope*, p. 16.) In their aversion to compulsory instruction, also, they closely resembled each other. “I never learned any thing,” says Pope, “at the little schools I was at afterwards, and never should have followed any thing that I could not follow with pleasure.” Both Pope and Mr. Roscoe may “be properly ranked amongst that class of remarkable persons who have been their own instructors.”

favourite, till from admiring I began to imitate him. Amongst several of these early productions, I find I have preserved the following verses in his praise : —

‘ON MR. SHENSTONE AND HIS WRITINGS.*

O Shenstone, favourite of the Nine,
 What sweetly varying powers are thine !
 ’Tis thou canst bid the soul to glow
 With purest joy, or melt with woe ;
 O’er thee bright Fancy waves her wings,
 And strikes for thee the trembling strings,
 And soft Simplicity combines
 To warble through thine artless lines.
 Far from the glitt’ring scenes of care,
 Thou breathed content thy native air ;
 Too good for wealth, too great for pride,
 Thou lived beloved — respected died.
 When first thy genuine warblings stole
 With gentlest magic on my soul,
 So soft, so sweet, so clear, so strong
 The tide of music roll’d along,
 That, quite enraptured by the strains,
 Methought with thee I trod the plains,
 Reclined with thee in shady bowers,
 Survey’d with thee the opening flowers,
 The spacious lawn, the rising hill,
 The rural cot and sparkling rill ;
 But soon the dear delusion fled,
 And left reflection in its stead.’

“ On one occasion, my master having unexpectedly made his appearance in our office intended for business, into which he seldom entered, found a copy of these lines lying on the desk, which, having read, he asked if they were mine, and being answered in the affirmative, paid me what I then thought a great compliment,

* Written January, 1771.

by observing, that I must have copied them from some other writer. This admiration of Shenstone, I retained for several years, as I find by some lines, written at a subsequent period, where, referring to the animosity with which poets too often regard the talents of each other, I have said, —

‘ Why pour’d sweet Shenstone his enchanting lay,
Stamp’d as a trifler in the page of Gray,
Or why should Gray deserve a better fate,
Below the good, but far above the great,
While Johnson tears the laurel from his bust,
Degrades his memory, and profanes his dust?’

“ Shenstone was not, however, long the sole object of my poetical adoration; his claims being divided with Goldsmith, whose ‘ Deserted Village ’ was first published about this period, and passed through several editions. That these authors have fallen into neglect, when compared with the more energetic and ambitious poets of the present day, I am well aware, and yet I know not whether these writers are not as deserving of estimation as those of modern times, who, in endeavouring to become more natural, have too often fallen into the vulgar and the mean, and, instead of improving, have debased the public taste.”

Here, unfortunately, the manuscript abruptly concludes. The lassitude of illness, and the unfavourable effect produced upon Mr. Roscoe’s health by any mental exertion for the last year or two of his life, prevented him from proceeding with his projected sketch, — a circumstance the more to be regretted, as the materials which remain for delineating the incidents and feelings of his youth are few and imperfect.

Absence of restraint, and perfect freedom of thought and of action, during the early period of life, though

favourable to originality of mind, do not always contribute to form a useful and well-balanced character. The sequestered studies which add strength and fervour to the poetical temperament, and which inspire a love of intellectual pleasures, too often unfit those who pursue them for the irksome duties and the active engagements of life. We, consequently, seldom find, in the history of men of letters, that they unite with their mental pre-eminence that capacity for affairs which is often possessed by persons of meaner endowments. In youth, more especially, it is difficult to impress upon the mind devoted to intellectual pursuits, the wisdom and the necessity of a strict regard to the routine of common duties, and to the active business of life. It might have been expected, from the strong attachment of Mr. Roscoe, at this period, to literary studies, and especially from the cultivation of his poetical taste, that the graver business of his profession would sometimes have been neglected; but the circumstances in which he was placed, as well as the peculiar character of his mind, prevented him from falling into this dangerous error. The total dependence, not only of himself, but of his father and his sister, upon his future exertions, afforded a most powerful motive for assiduity; while the natural energy of his mind prevented him from remaining satisfied with pursuits, however pleasant or instructive, not leading to that independence, which ought to be to every man the first object of his exertions.

Throughout the whole of his clerkship, therefore, his literary improvement was made a secondary object; his great design being to acquire a competent knowledge of his profession, and to render himself useful to his employers. After the death of Mr. Eyes, he served the remainder of his clerkship with Mr. Peter Ellames,

an eminent attorney of Liverpool, to whom his industry and talents gave great satisfaction. During the whole of this period he resided with his father, having had the misfortune to lose his mother some years previously.

Notwithstanding his strict attention to business, some hours were still left vacant, and these were gladly devoted by him to the improvement of his mind and to the cultivation of his taste. In this agreeable task he was stimulated by the sympathy and society of several friends of his own age, with whom he passed much of his leisure time, and in the selection of whom the character of his own mind was clearly manifested. An attachment to elegant literature, a love of study, a relish for the beauties of nature, and a heart capable of returning the warmth of friendship, were the qualities which distinguished the early companions of Mr. Roscoe. Of these, no one was more loved or admired by him than Francis Holden, of whom he has said, in recalling the superior qualifications of his friend, "that he seemed to realise in himself the accomplishments both of body and mind which have been attributed to the admirable Crichton."*

Francis Holden was descended from a family, many members of which had distinguished themselves by their progress in scientific pursuits. At fifteen years of age he had arrived at manhood in person, in manners, and in mental acquirements. His figure was powerfully yet elegantly formed; and his strength and agility were such,

* The following account of Francis Holden is derived from Mr. Roscoe's own notes. He appears to have had, when he made them, some intention of recording the incidents of his own early life; but he did not persevere in his design; and the pages contain merely the history of that youthful friend, whose genius and acquirements first excited his literary ambition.

that he scarcely ever took a walk into the fields without exhibiting, for the amusement of his companions, feats of bodily dexterity which might have extorted the applause of a crowded theatre. To the extraordinary endowments which he possessed, he added such a cheerful vivacity, and so unassuming a modesty, as to relieve his friends from the sense of inferiority which his splendid talents and extraordinary accomplishments were so well calculated to inspire. To those who knew Francis Holden, the accounts of Pico of Mirandola, and of Leo Battista Alberti, ceased to appear incredible.

At a very early age he became an assistant in the school of his uncle, Richard Holden, at Liverpool, where he taught the mathematics, and the Greek, Latin, French, and Italian languages. In his extemporaneous translations his talents were very conspicuous. So correct, elegant, unembarrassed, and concise were his versions, that they might, without correction, have been committed to the press. Soon after his arrival in Liverpool, he became accidentally acquainted with Mr. Roscoe, who, although he was at that time very deficient in the acquirements by which Holden was so much distinguished, attracted the regard and friendship of the youthful scholar. They became, during their leisure hours, almost inseparable companions; and it was at the solicitation of his friend that Mr. Roscoe first commenced the study of languages, receiving from him gratuitous instructions in French. In these studies he made a rapid progress; and the capacity of enjoying the same authors in the same language became a new bond of union between the friends.

After remaining a few years in Liverpool, Holden removed to Glasgow, with the view of improving himself by attending the lectures of the professors in that University.

He resided there with the widow of his uncle, John Holden, well known by his learned treatise on music. "My uncle," he says in one of his letters to Mr. Roscoe, "died the morning after I arrived. He declared all along that he only lived to see me. I cannot say any more. You shall hear more of this shortly." In the midst of his studies, which he describes as extending to twelve hours a day, Holden found time to maintain a correspondence with his friend; and his letters, many of which still remain, are full of the animation and intelligence which distinguished their writer.

Having finished his studies at Glasgow, Holden accepted an offer to accompany a young gentleman of fortune to France, where he resided for some time. Upon his return to England, he again visited Liverpool, improved in his acquirements, but unaltered in his affections. The friend who had enjoyed the benefit of his society, and of his instructions, had not, in the mean time, been idle.

During the absence of Holden, Mr. Roscoe had devoted much of his leisure to the acquisition of the dead languages, — a study which he prosecuted in conjunction with two other friends, Mr. William Clarke and Mr. Richard Lowndes, with whom, to the close of their lives, he remained in habits of the strictest intimacy. After the return of Holden, the four associates were accustomed to meet early in the morning, and to pursue their classical studies till the hours of business arrived. Hitherto Mr. Roscoe had made no attempt to acquire a knowledge of the Italian language; and it was by Francis Holden that his attention was first directed to the literature of that country. In their evening walks, Holden was accustomed to repeat passages from the most celebrated poets of Italy; and the pleasure with which he recited their verses, producing a strong impression upon the mind of

Mr. Roscoe, led him to apply himself to the study of the Italian language; which, however, he describes himself as having acquired rather by slow degrees, and by gradual application, than by any sudden and laborious effort. The first idea of writing the life of Lorenzo de' Medici appears to have occurred to him in the course of these studies.

Having now no certain occupation, Holden determined to engage in the study of the law; for which purpose he went to London, and became a member of one of the Inns of Court. In this design he relied much upon the advice of his friend, whose kind offices towards him he acknowledges in the following letter:—

“MY DEAR ROSCOE,

“The day after I received your inexpressibly kind letter, I waited upon Messrs. Lyons,* who received me with all the marks of a sincere friendship, and promised to do all in their power for me—particularly to recommend me to the gentleman you spoke of. I have heard no more of that business as yet, but I cannot refrain from writing to you. My time now goes on more pleasantly. I have met with one or two Glasgow friends, who treat me with an affection something like yours, if they did but know how to express it, or to entertain me as well. No, my dear Roscoe; it will never be my fate, it will never be my wish, to meet with so faithful, so engaging a friend. I would not learn to do without you, for fear of inconstancy. * * * I will make you my director in matters of law, and will prepare myself in such a manner as to be of real service to him who will please to employ me; for nothing is more oppressive to a generous heart, than to be in arrears for favours received. Must

* The professional agents of Mr. Roscoe.

I tell you, my friend, that this thought has given me no small uneasiness? I know it is not in my power to repay your kindnesses to me, nor to be of half the service to you which you can be to me; and you have always done all you could. What I would desire is, not that you should waste your time in reading law books with me, which you know already; but that you would answer those questions, and explain those difficulties, which must occur of course to a young beginner; and that you would furnish me with books, which I cannot at this time afford to purchase. But above all, that you will not put me upon the footing of one whom you think yourself obliged to entertain at the expense of your time, &c., but use me as one whose duty and desire is to render himself as useful to you as possible, and as little burdensome. If you will promise me these things, I shall be happy if Mr. Lyon succeeds with Mr. Crompton the special pleader; and if not, I will console myself, conscious that want of merit, not of friends, was my loss; and that want of merit is one of Epictetus's "*τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῶν*," or things in our own power; and consequently I will take care not to be long without it, by your assistance, who are a part of myself. Adieu, my dear Will."

The difficulties which Holden had to encounter in putting into execution his design of qualifying himself for the bar, sometimes threw a gloom over his spirits, which communicated itself to his letters. "There is nothing," he says, in a letter written from London, "I more ardently desire, than that our friendship may continue through life. It began at an early period, and perhaps before either of us was able to judge what were the essential qualities of a friend. I have learned since, by disappointments, to know and value them; and may truly pay you that compliment which Hamlet pays to

Horatio. I only fear you will become too serious and too wise, not to discover imperfections in me, which will outweigh the few good qualities to which I can have any pretensions. Believe me, Roscoe, reflections of this nature, co-operating with retirement, hard study, and bad health, sometimes throw a gloominess upon the prospect of my future life, which makes me regard it with an indifference amounting to disgust. 'Tis a most disagreeable situation, to have nothing to do but study in hope of some distant advantage, and only exist at present, that we may begin to live some years after. I long to be in some active employment,—no matter what, provided I can get called to the bar when the time comes. * * * If something does not fall out to my mind, you will see me in Liverpool in June, where I shall be happy, at least while with you. But pray write to me often before that, and put me in humour with the world and myself. I often see David Samwell, and philosophise with him upon the comparative merits of a savage and a civilised life; and we seem both to be of our friend Rousseau's sentiments. Samwell is a man of humour, and a great genius, but indolent: he is going out again with a Captain King, who had long been Cook's lieutenant. * * * I have called once or twice upon Mr. Deare, who got the medal for a piece of sculpture, and find him a very agreeable young man, though rather deficient in other branches of education. It gives me pleasure to be informed of your progress in Italian; but I do not agree with you in thinking it inferior to the Latin in any respect; to the Greek, I own, it is infinitely inferior,—I mean, when the Greek is pronounced as it ought to be. If you can spare the plan I gave you for the Italian verbs, pray send it me with your next letter, for I do not remember it perfectly."

Pecuniary considerations rendered it necessary that Holden, while engaged in the study of the law, should adopt some measures for his present subsistence; and the plan which he pursued ultimately led him to abandon his legal studies. He removed to Cambridge; where his very remarkable acquirements, and engaging manners, soon procured him friends. Having obtained a competent number of pupils to afford him a liberal income, he took a house at Chesterton, and married; but he had not resided more than two or three years at that place, when the symptoms of approaching consumption threw a gloom over his prospects, and compelled him to take a voyage to Lisbon, as the only chance for his recovery. Whatever might have been the effects of a southern climate, he did not live to experience them.

Another of the friends to whom Mr. Roscoe was attached by a similarity of pursuits, and especially by a mutual taste for poetry, was Robert Rigby, a young man of fine talents, who, like himself, occasionally devoted his pen to poetical compositions. The two friends were accustomed, not only to study together, but, when their occupations permitted them, to make excursions into the country, — a circumstance alluded to in the following lines addressed to Mr. Rigby: —

“ Friend of my heart! how blest, with thee,
Of late I traversed with unwearied feet
The wide champaign — o'erjoy'd to see
The woodland charms, and breathe an air more sweet;
To taste that unreprieved delight
Which the keen breast with thrilling transport warms,
When full upon the unbounded sight
Luxuriant Nature opens all her charms,
Where smiles the extended lawn in glowing pride,
Sinks the green vale, or swells the airy hill,
Waves the rude grove its hoary branches wide,
And down its bosom steals the darkling rill.

This, this is transport; but, alas!
 Too soon the transient Eden disappears,
 And, fraudulent as the artist's magic glass,
 The faded prospect now dissolves in tears.
 Ah! what avails the gentler heart,
 That beats to every finer feeling true,
 Can taste each bliss that genius can impart,
 And catch from nature's face each varied hue —
 The breast with sympathy that glows,
 When on the houseless head the rude storm showers —
 If Poverty her hateful form oppose,
 Damp all their fires, and deaden all their powers —
 For the sweet hour of leisure doom'd to sigh,
 Yet waste in ceaseless toils the inglorious year,
 To see the friendless child of woe pass by,
 And only pay the tribute of a tear?
 Yet envy not the wretch whose countless hoards
 To narrow bounds have circumscribed his soul;
 More bliss to generous minds one hour affords;
 Than he can feel whilst circling ages roll."

The spirit of despondency which breathes through many of Mr. Roscoe's early pieces, and with which, in his youthful life, he had sometimes to contend, is forcibly displayed in the foregoing lines.

To the early and sudden death of Robert Rigby, who was drowned while crossing the Irish Channel, Mr. Roscoe alludes in some lines addressed, many years afterwards, to Dr. Currie.

" 'T was thus, in health's high bloom and youth elate,
 My Rigby yielded to his early fate."

To the friends already mentioned, in whose society Mr. Roscoe spent many of the happiest years of his early life, may be added a young lady, who, to the usual accomplishments of her sex, united high cultivation of mind, and considerable poetical talents. Miss Maria Done, with her sisters, Mrs. Bewley and Mrs. Holmes,

resided in Westmorland; but an intimacy with some of Mr. Roscoe's friends in Liverpool, and temporary visits to that place, led to an acquaintance with him, which gradually ripened into friendship. They occasionally corresponded, and exchanged the productions of their Muse. Several of Mr. Roscoe's early pieces are addressed to this lady; and to her he originally inscribed his poem of "Mount Pleasant," in some lines which do not appear in the printed copy. The character of Miss Done was of the most admirable and elevated class, as appears both from her poetry and her correspondence. She afterwards married Mr. John Barton. Subsequent to this event, she, with her sisters, still continued on the same friendly footing with Mr. Roscoe and his family for many years; and Mr. Barton became one of his warmest friends, and most frequent correspondents. Her son, Mr. Bernard Barton, to whom her poetical talents have descended, and her daughter, Mrs. Hack, the author of many valuable works for children, are well known in the literary world. Some idea of her powers as a poet, and of her feelings as a friend, as well as of her fine discernment and just appreciation of the promise held out by Mr. Roscoe's early years, may be formed from the following lines. They occur at the conclusion of a poem "On Pride," dedicated to him, and written in the year 1774.

"But cease, my Muse! unequal to the task,
 Forbear the effort, and to nobler hands
 Resign the lyre — thee, Roscoe, every Muse
 Uncall'd attends, and uninvoked inspires.
 In blooming shades and amaranthine bowers
 They weave the future laurel for thy brow,
 And wait to crown thee with immortal fame.
 Thee Wisdom leads in all her lonely walks;
 Thee Genius fires, and moral Beauty charms:

Be it thy task to touch the feeling heart,
Correct its passions, and exalt its aims ;
Teach Pride to own, and owning, to obey
Fair Virtue's dictates, and her sacred laws :
To brighter worlds show thou the glorious road,
And be thy life as moral as thy song."

The causes which led to the formation of that lively taste for poetry, which was so early developed in Mr. Roscoe, are not difficult to be traced. Strong natural feelings, and an ardent and sanguine temperament, form the foundation upon which the poetical character is built. This native susceptibility to the influence of poetry received, in his case, no check from that strict attention to other pursuits which the ordinary education of young persons imposes upon them ; and his desultory studies were more frequently directed to the pages of the poets, than to the writers whose works are generally put into the hands of the young. The habits of his early life were also favourable to the same influences, as may be clearly traced in the account he has given of his childhood — of his meditative and retiring disposition — and of his solitary walks along the shores of the Mersey. The love of poetical composition continued to acquire power, as it will ever do under such favouring circumstances ; and before he had attained the age of twenty, he had produced some poems of no inconsiderable merit. In these, the youthful efforts of his Muse, may be discovered the dawnings of his character.

Having become, in the year 1773, one of the founders of a Society for the Encouragement of the Arts of Painting and Design, in the town of Liverpool, he commemorated the event by an Ode, which was his first published piece. It was afterwards reprinted, with the poem of "Mount Pleasant," in the year 1777.

This was favourably noticed in some of the Reviews of the day; and the following passage, containing a comparison between music and painting, was selected as a specimen of the author's manner:—

“ When just degrees of shade and light
 Contend in sweetest harmony,
 Then bursts upon the raptured sight
 The silent music of the eye.
 Bold as the base's deeper sound,
 We trace the well imagined ground;
 Next, in the varying scenes behind,
 The sweet melodious tenor find;
 And as the softening notes decay,
 The distant prospect fades away;
 Their aid if mingling colours give,
 To bid the mimic landscape live;
 The visual concert breaks upon the eyes,
 With every different charm that Music's hand supplies.”

A similar comparison between the great masters of poetry and painting, displays the early taste of the author for the arts as well as for literature.

“ Majestic, nervous, bold, and strong,
 Let Angelo with Milton vie;
 Opposed to Waller's amorous song,
 His art let wanton Titian try;
 Let great Romano's free design
 Contend with Dryden's pompous line;
 And chaste Correggio's graceful air
 With Pope's unblemish'd page compare;
 Loraine may rival Thomson's name;
 And Hogarth equal Butler's fame;
 And still, where'er the aspiring Muse
 Her wide unbounded flight pursues,
 Her sister soars on kindred wings sublime,
 And gives her favourite names to grace the rolls of time.”

Before attaining his twentieth year, he made a bolder attempt; and in imitation of the “Grongar Hill” of

Dyer, and the "Edgehill" of Jago, he selected, as the subject of his poem, Mount Pleasant, an eminence overlooking the town of Liverpool.

"The shades of Grongar bloom secure of fame;
Edgehill to Jago owes its lasting name;
When Windsor Forest's loveliest scenes decay,
Still shall they live in Pope's unrivall'd lay:
Led on by Hope, an equal theme I choose;
Oh! might the subject boast an equal Muse!
Then should her name the force of time defy,
When sunk in ruins Liverpool shall lie."

In this poem he not only celebrates the growing importance of his native town, its commerce, and its public institutions, but attempts, as he often did in after life, to direct the attention of his townsmen to the more liberal pursuit of literature and science, "and to abate that spirit of enterprise and thirst of gain, which, when too much indulged, is seldom productive either of virtue or happiness."*

"Ah! why, ye sons of wealth, with ceaseless toil,
Add gold to gold, and swell the shining pile?
Your general course to happiness ye bend,
Why, then, to gain the means, neglect the end?
To purchase peace requires a scanty store;
— Oh, spurn the groveling wish that pants for more!
And thirst not with the same unconquer'd rage,
Till nature whitens in the frost of age;
But rather on the present hour rely,
And catch the happier moments ere they fly;
And whilst the spring of life each bliss inspires,
Improve its gifts, and feed the social fires;
Let Friendship soften, Love her charms disclose,
Peace guard your hours and sweeten your repose:
Yet, not regardless how your joys endure,
Let watchful prudence make those joys secure."

* Advertisement to "An Ode on the Institution of a Society in Liverpool, for the Encouragement of Designing," &c.

The temper and tastes of Mr. Roscoe, at this period of his life, are manifested in the following lines:—

“ Oh still at midnight’s milder hour, be mine
 To trace with raptured eye the Bear decline!
 Catch the pure gale as from the main it springs,
 Salubrious freshness dropping from its wings;
 — Then, cares forgot, and sorrows soothed to rest,
 Each ruder passion banish’d from the breast,
 Mild as the hour, and cloudless as the skies,
 The mind on stronger pinions loves to rise;
 And loosen’d from the dull restraints of day,
 Expansive gives the springs of thought to play.
 Bold, active, vigorous, through the enfranchised soul
 The nobler trains of fair ideas roll:
 The ardent glow that wakes at friendship’s name,
 The thirst of science, and the patriot flame;
 The generous fear, that wounds the youthful breast,
 To live inglorious, and to die unblest;
 A liberal scorn of every low desire,
 Of all that knaves pursue, and fools admire,
 Of fortune’s stores, of splendour’s sickly blaze,
 Precarious bliss, and unsubstantial praise.”

That inhuman traffic, against which, throughout the whole length of a life extended beyond the common period, the voice of Mr. Roscoe was unceasingly raised, was not unnoticed in this early poem. “Mount Pleasant” contains his first protest against the Slave Trade.

“Mount Pleasant,” which was not published until the year 1777, met with a favourable reception in many quarters. It had previously been submitted to the cultivated judgment of Dr. Enfield, who returned it to Mr. Roscoe with the following letter:—

“I cannot take leave of your excellent poems, without thanking you for the pleasure they have afforded me. They cannot fail of being highly acceptable to every reader of classical taste, and will, I am persuaded,

obtain for their author no inconsiderable share of reputation. The few liberties which I have taken, have been rather with a view to express my respect for the writer, than in expectation of making any material improvement in the poems."

Amongst other persons to whom Mr. Roscoe presented a copy of his poems, was Sir Joshua Reynolds, from whom he had the gratification of receiving an opinion favourable to their merits, and of learning that the suffrage of Mason had been given in their favour.

"I am now to return you my thanks for the present of your poetical works, which I have read with the greatest pleasure. It is approaching to impertinence, to say that I was much surprised at seeing such excellence in a work which I had never heard of before, or the author's name reached my ears; however, I found other people were not quite so ignorant. I mentioned the poem to Mr. Mason, who dined with me a few days ago. I do not recollect that he knew your name, but he was well acquainted with the poem, which he read when it was first published. I had the satisfaction of hearing my opinion fully confirmed by his authority."

Of the early poetical taste of Mr. Roscoe, a record remains in several manuscript volumes, in which he had made a selection from the writings of the popular poets of the day, together with such fugitive pieces as had attracted his notice. Shenstone holds a distinguished place in the collection, in which Goldsmith and Collins also appear to be favourites. Several original poems by himself are inserted in these volumes, as well as in the selections of one in whose studies he took the greatest interest. At the commencement of one of the volumes containing those selections, the following verses appear, written in his own hand:—

“ In the blest round of youth’s delightful hours,
How sweet through Fancy’s flowery fields to stray,
Catch the wild notes inventive Genius pours,
And stamp on lasting leaves the genuine lay.

“ Nor think those hours to trivial cares consign’d,
Thou with the favouring Muses may’st employ ;
’T is they who harmonise the youthful mind,
And waken every avenue to joy.

“ Bid the free soul the groveling crew despise,
Whom humbler hopes of power and riches move ;
Bid the free soul to nobler prospects rise —
To Fancy, Friendship, Harmony, and Love.”

It was not alone to the pursuits of elegant literature, and to the pleasures of poetical composition, that Mr. Roscoe’s studies were directed. More serious enquiries occasionally engaged his attention. An early and careful perusal of the Sacred Writings had led him to reflect much upon subjects which do not usually engage the attention of the young, and gave a tone to his character observable throughout the whole course of his after life. Amongst his youthful writings is a small volume, to which he had given the title of “ Christian Morality, as contained in the Precepts of the New Testament, in the Language of Jesus Christ.” To this little tract, Mr. Roscoe, towards the close of his life, added the following memorandum:—“ Done when I was very young—very erroneous and imperfect.” It had been submitted to Dr. Enfield, apparently soon after it was written, and a few verbal corrections and occasional remarks occur in the handwriting of that excellent man.

In the introduction to this work, Mr. Roscoe points out the peculiar beauty and perfectness of the moral precepts contained in the New Testament, and explains

his motives for the selection and arrangement which he had made.

“The object of the ensuing sheets is to collect, in one uniform and regular system, the moral duties which are inculcated in various parts of the New Testament, by the direct and immediate words of our Saviour, and thereby to promote the knowledge and practice of virtue, and to render the study of the Scriptures more easy and pleasant.

“It is a melancholy but true observation, that whilst the speculative and abstruse parts of the New Testament have been the subject of endless debate, and enquiry, and contention, the moral or preceptive part has been too often overlooked and forgotten; and hence, in a great degree, has arisen that dreadful perversion which has so deeply injured the cause of true religion.

“If the Christian scheme was intended for no other purpose than to instruct mankind in Divine mysteries, the compiler of the following pages has deceived himself, and his work is useless; but he is bold to ascribe the Divine mission of Christ to another and more beneficent purpose; for it is his persuasion, that the Christian religion was designed by the Almighty to promote the eternal happiness of mankind, by the truest pursuit of their temporal welfare; to instruct them in the practice of virtue; and to prompt them, by every inducement that can influence rational and eternal beings, actively to pursue that course of conduct which alone can render them finally happy.”

The author enforces this remark from the precepts and example of Christ; and particularly, for this purpose, quotes the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vii. 15.) as “so explicit and striking, that it must appear superfluous to insist farther on an interpretation of the Christian doctrine.

“It is not intended to touch in the least on speculative points, nor even to demonstrate the belief necessary to salvation: these must be the employ of a much superior understanding. It must, however, be remembered, that innumerable volumes have been written to compile a system of belief from the Sacred Volume, and to separate its doctrines from its precepts; yet these authors are not accused of depreciating the necessity of a blameless conduct: for once, then, let us endeavour to render the practical part more useful, by connecting it under one point of view, without being censured as inimical to the belief of the more abstruse parts of the Sacred Scriptures. The excellence of these precepts cannot be too much insisted on, and equally command the attention of, and are necessary to be obeyed by, all sects, parties, and denominations.”

The author concludes, by saying, that he “believes this to be the first attempt to extract from the New Testament a complete rule of conduct.” It is, perhaps, worthy of notice, that in 1831, when Mr. Roscoe had the pleasure of a personal introduction to Rammohun Roy, he had the satisfaction of showing to the author of the “Precepts of Jesus,” the youthful production of his first religious enquiries and impressions.

The work itself is divided into three heads: viz. Duty to God; Duty to our Fellow Creatures; and Duty to Ourselves. Each of these is illustrated by apposite quotations from the precepts of Christ, connected together by a “few short illustrations and reflections, suggested to the author by the plain and literal signification of the different passages.”

The spirit of purity, mercy, forgiveness, and charity, which breathes throughout the New Testament, seems peculiarly to have fixed the attention of Mr. Roscoe in

the composition of this tract; and it was to the operation of these divine principles upon his conduct and temper throughout life, that may be attributed all that was most attractive and most exalted in his mind and character.

CHAPTER II.

1781 — 1787.

Is admitted an attorney, and enters into partnership at Liverpool — his acquaintance with Miss Jane Griffies, and correspondence with her — his marriage with her — visits London — his taste for collecting prints and books — his love of art. — “Society for promoting Painting and Design” established at Liverpool — his lectures there — his first acquaintance with Fuseli — writes “The Origin of Engraving,” a poem — reference in that poem to Lorenzo de’ Medici — his collection of prints — his correspondence with Mr. Strutt, author of the “Dictionary of Engravers” — his contributions to that work — is elected an honorary member of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester.

HAVING completed the period of his clerkship, Mr. Roscoe was, in the year 1774, admitted an attorney of the Court of King’s Bench, and commenced the practice of his profession at Liverpool. In the course of the same year he entered into partnership with a gentleman of the name of Bannister; but this connection lasted only a short period. A second engagement of the same kind was more fortunate; and, in conjunction with Mr. Samuel Aspinall, who had long been known by the respectability of his practice, he became actively engaged in the duties of his profession.

He did not, however, neglect the studies which had already attracted so much of his attention; and, in the society of the friends who have already been mentioned, he continued to prosecute his literary enquiries during the intervals of business.

Amongst those with whom, at this early period of his life, Mr. Roscoe was in habits of intimacy, was the family of Mr. William Griffies, a respectable tradesman of Liverpool. Of the three daughters of Mr. Griffies, the second, Jane, soon attracted his admiration, and won his affection, by her gentle yet lively manners, by the sweetness of her disposition, and by the many admirable qualities of her truly feminine mind. Although the state of his circumstances at this time gave little promise of an immediate union with the object of his attachment, it was not the wish, and perhaps it was scarcely in the power, of one possessing the frank and ardent character of Mr. Roscoe, to conceal from her the feelings she had inspired. From that moment, to the close of his long and eventful life, he never found reason to regret, for one instant, the judgment of his youth.

A similarity of tastes, if it could not add strength to an attachment founded upon higher principles, yet lent it no mean ornament. Affection may be won by sweetness of disposition, and esteem and respect by talents and by virtue; but no other quality can confer the nameless interest which arises from a happy congruity of tastes and of pursuits. To feel with one heart, to judge with one mind, and to look to the same high and pure sources for happiness, are the most beautiful links in the golden chain of domestic union. At an early age, Miss Jane Griffies had evinced a great attachment to literary pursuits, especially to poetry; and had selected and arranged, with much taste and judgment, a collection, in several volumes, from the works of the most popular writers of the day. A journal, which she was in the habit of keeping at this period of her life, is also a proof of her love of study, and of her pleasing and simple style of composition. To promote and encourage

her taste for writing, Mr. Roscoe, although they both resided in the same town, induced her to commence a correspondence with him; which, continuing for many years, until the period of his marriage, forms an interesting record of his views and feelings at this period of his life.

“Your journal,” he observes, in one of the earliest of these letters,* “is now discontinued; and as I know you have an aversion to being idle, I should think myself very fortunate could I engage your leisure hours in a communication of this kind. Nothing can be more innocent — nothing more rational; and though the generality of mankind might think it a little silly, I hope you and I have too great an opinion of our own consequence to be guided by vulgar opinions.

* * * * *

“I cannot help pleasing myself with the reflection, what an infinite variety of subjects this intercourse would give rise to. Convinced of the perfect confidence which subsists between us, how freely might our thoughts expand themselves! The desire of pleasing might cause some little attention to the mode of expression, whilst the certainty of a mutual indulgence would prevent us from being apprehensive about trivial inaccuracies.

“I own this scheme begins to grow a favourite with me, and I beg my dearest Jane will not overthrow my expectations.”

In a letter, written soon after the foregoing, he alludes to the circumstances which, for the present, prevented his marriage.

“It is a remark which has been made by us both, that our situation is a very particular one. Whilst we

* Dated March 30, 1777.

are separate, we enjoy every convenience that a frugal competence can afford; but there seems at present to be an invincible bar to our united happiness, which time only can remove. If, however, we are unfortunate in this circumstance, let us be grateful to Providence for the many advantages we enjoy, to make amends in some degree for the suspension of better times. The frequent opportunity we have of enjoying each other's company — sometimes in an unreserved and uninterrupted exchange of sentiments; the similarity of our tastes and dispositions; and, above all, the conviction we have of the lasting continuance of each other's affection: these are advantages seldom experienced amongst lovers, and which, if they cannot confer happiness, must at least banish discontent.

“ My dearest Jane cannot imagine how proud I am to reflect, that whilst numbers around us are almost every day united upon sordid, capricious, and unworthy motives, we have chosen a nobler plan, and formed a connection upon the most liberal, the most disinterested principles. Conscious of the rectitude of our conduct, and the innocence of our hearts, we have nothing to fear; but can place our confidence in that great Being who never deceives those who put their trust in him — that Being who has ever been a guardian to us both, and who, I hope, will at length crown his goodness by rendering us happy in ourselves, and in the knowledge of each other's happiness.”

Occasionally more gloomy prospects of the future presented themselves, and it was with difficulty that he reconciled himself to his situation. — “ It would be impossible for me to attempt to write on any other subject, whilst I feel so much anxiety from the thought of our unfortunate and hopeless situation. Deprived as we are

of almost the most distant prospect of an union that can promise a probability of happiness, how can our attachment be unembittered? It is in vain that I love my Jane with the most unreserved affection, or that she assures me of a return of my passion. Obstacles that appear insurmountable forbid us to indulge the thought of a more endearing connection.

“It is but of late that I have felt the full force of this misfortune. Always ready to flatter myself, I imagined a time might come that would be more favourable to our wishes. That expectation now subsides; and in the prospect of my future life I see no object that can reasonably induce me to desire its continuance.”

The pain which the postponement of his hopes occasioned, was, however, alleviated by the reflection, that the self-denial he practised enabled him to support those whom nature and fortune had made dependent upon his industry.

“Hitherto,” he observes, in a letter written during the same year, “my path through life has been clouded with anxiety; and though the pleasures of love and of friendship have at times raised me above the recollection of unhappiness, the consciousness of my situation always returns with additional uneasiness; yet, my dearest Jane, think not I blame the dispensations of that Being, whose goodness to me has been manifested throughout my whole life. If my own situation is not the most desirable, it is with no common degree of satisfaction that I reflect, I have been enabled, so far, to screen a helpless parent, and a deserving sister, from the hardships of an unfeeling world; and whilst I make that reflection, I never can be wholly unhappy.”

The same ideas are expressed in the following lines, written about the same period:—

“ Oh! if, upon my natal morn,
 Plenty had fill'd her liberal horn,
 And Fate thy hopeless lover blest
 With arts to win thy gentle breast ;
 Then thou, the partner of his life,
 Hadst own'd the tender name of wife ;
 Thy smiles had every bliss improved,
 Thy sympathy each care removed,
 Thy calm advice his passions sway'd,
 Thine hand, in sickness, rais'd his head ;
 Whilst he, with love's pervading eyes,
 Had mark'd thine embryo wishes rise,
 And ere to full perfection brought,
 Precluded every anxious thought.

“ But Heaven forbade — some happier youth,
 (Oh, may he equal me in truth!)
 Born under favouring stars, shall gain
 That heart thy Roscoe loved in vain —
 For him that candid smile shall rise,
 On him shall beam those lucid eyes ;
 His ears those much loved accents bless,
 And his be every fond caress.
 — Oh, may he know thy worth, and own
 A soul to love that worth when known ;
 Whilst I for humbler views resign
 Each flattering hope that once was mine ;
 Resolved, whilst penury remains,
 To seek no partners in my pains,
 But thankful still, if Heaven supply
 The hard earn'd fruits of industry,
 Enough to soothe a sister's fears,
 And screen a parent's sinking years.”

Many poetical pieces are scattered through this correspondence. “ I must yet,” he says, in a letter, dated the 9th of May, 1777, “ copy you a sonnet, if I have room, which I suppose some of my brethren would call an extempore, as it has been fabricated in about ten minutes : —

“ O my loved Julia! in whose tender breast
 Each fairer virtue ever finds a place,
 And every milder charm and softer grace,
 With each ennobling passion loves to rest;
 Thou who, in humble state, canst boast a mind
 In loftiest spheres that might applauded move,
 Yet shrinking from the public gaze, to find
 The warmer transports of domestic love —
 Like some fair flower, that, hid from human eye,
 Pours all its fragrance on the trackless vale,
 Has thy unsullied life its vernal glow
 Accomplished — and that happier shepherd I,
 To whom kind Heaven the treasure did reveal,
 Dearer than every gift its kindness could bestow.”

Occasionally a few verses of a lighter and livelier character are interspersed, as in the following parody of his favourite Shenstone. — “ I think I some time since promised to make you a present of an inkstand, and I have accordingly got one for you; but when I once begin to rhyme, I never know where to leave off, so must present it in verse: —

“ A present I’ve bought for my fair,
 An inkstand of curious device,
 But to tell what it cost I’ll forbear,
 She’ll say ’t was a barbarous price.

“ For he ne’er could be true, she averr’d,
 Who in nicknacks his money would spend,
 And I lov’d her the more when I heard
 Such savingness at her tongue’s end.”

In the spring of the year 1778, Miss Jane Griffies visited London, where she had an opportunity of gratifying the literary tastes of Mr. Roscoe, by assisting him in the collecting of his library, which, from his earliest youth, had been one of his chief pleasures. “ Let me know,” she says, in a letter addressed to him soon after

her arrival, "what particular books of the Elzevir editions I must buy, and the extent of the price, as I called at a place where there will be some in a few days." In a subsequent letter she sends him a list of such books as she thought would be suitable to his collection. "I am obliged," he observes in his answer, "beyond measure, by your kindness in sending me the list of books; indeed, my dear Jane, there is nothing gives a more indisputable proof of affection, than those little attentions to the pursuits and inclinations of each other which have long marked our connection, and in which I hope you have never found me deficient." — "I thank you," he says, in another letter, "for the trouble you have taken in procuring and sending me the list of Elzevirs from Otridge, which I have looked over; but they are so extremely dear, that I really cannot find in my heart to purchase any. I could like Cicero vastly, but three guineas is a most enormous price for ten volumes not above the breadth of my three fingers. I this day got a catalogue published by Lockyer Davis, in Holborn, out of which I should take it as a very particular favour if you would get me the undermentioned books. If it is convenient, I would have you send them the first opportunity, as I fear they will otherwise be gone, and I am particularly anxious about the first book. * * * Should you get the above, or any of them, you will be so kind, if you dare venture (which indeed I have no right to expect) to pay for them, and get the bookseller to send them to the next wagon, directed to me."

While Miss Griffies was residing in London, the lady who had supplied the place of the mother whom she had lost in her infancy, was seized with an alarming illness, and it became the duty of Mr. Roscoe to communicate the distressing intelligence of her sickness, and

subsequently of her death. This portion of the correspondence illustrates so well a peculiar quality of Mr. Roscoe's mind, — the firmness and resignation with which he ever submitted to the inevitable misfortunes of life, — that it would be unjust to omit it.

“ As I cannot write on any other subject, whilst I have any circumstance to communicate which can in the least degree affect your peace of mind, I am under a necessity of acquainting you that for these three days past Mrs. Wilson has been very low and poorly, and from her great age and natural weakness, there is, 'in my opinion, great reason to apprehend she cannot get over any considerable length of time. We are not without hope that a few days may restore her to her usual state of health, as you know she has often sudden complaints, which she as speedily gets the better of. But should it be otherwise ordered, I trust you will submit to the appointments of Providence without murmuring at its dispensations; and, instead of indulging an excess of grief (equally injurious to your health and inexcusable in a moral view), will return thanks to the Author of all good for the length of days this good woman has enjoyed, and the many comforts she has equally received and communicated for such a length of time. Whatever the sincerest affection and kindest tenderness could do for her, I have been a witness she has long experienced. And to add to her former blessings, she has not even now the least degree of pain, nor makes the least complaint, and her death (whenever it happens) will, I apprehend, be as calm, easy, and imperceptible, as a person falling asleep. Tell me, then, what more is to be wished for, unless we were impious enough to desire that she should never die ? ”

The next letter communicates the account of Mrs. Wilson's death.

“ It is now my painful office to give you the melancholy information that Mrs. Wilson is no more. She died about two o'clock this afternoon, without a struggle or even a sigh, and will undoubtedly now participate in that happiness which God has appointed, as the reward of a life spent in undissembled goodness, in usefulness and innocence.

“ If in this painful moment you perform that duty which you owe to yourself, to your friends, and the memory of the deceased, you will call your reason, and even your affection to the living, to your assistance, and submit, with a calm and humble resignation, to an event which was alone in the power of Providence, and which you had every reason to expect could not be far distant; and instead of repining at the dispensation, your emotions should be only those of gratitude to God for his kindness to her through a long and happy life, and his greater kindness in allotting to her an easy and tranquil death.

“ It is not, my dearest Jane, that I would wish you to repress entirely those emotions of tenderness which a heart sensible as yours must feel on the loss of a person so deservedly dear to you. Nature will not be restrained by the intrusion of cold advice and unfeeling reasoning; and where we are deeply wounded, we must deeply feel. Yet, my dearest girl, the severest sorrow has its intervals; and it is at these moments I would wish you to consider those favourable circumstances in this event which I have before pointed out to you, and which cannot fail of affording you real consolation. Your sisters bear the event with resignation, and, as they have nothing to feel for the deceased, only distress themselves

on your account. As I am certain you bear them the sincerest affection, this will be another inducement to you to avoid indulging an excess of grief.

“I must again repeat to you, do not, by any means, harbour a thought of leaving London till the time you intended. There needs no reason to convince you how fruitless such a scheme would be; and, I again repeat, what almost irks me to say, we should be sorry to see you, as it will be depriving yourself of pleasure to answer no purpose.”

In a letter written a few days afterwards, he points out the uselessness of immoderate grief.

“But you will, perhaps, tell me that your painful sensations are not entirely selfish; that they have a reference to the loss you have lately sustained; and that you lament the respected person who has been your guardian from your infancy. Need I urge any thing to convince you of the weakness and folly of such conduct? As well might you lament the condition of a friend, who, from a state of precarious indigence, pain, and sickness, was suddenly restored to health and to affluence. When neither yourself nor the person you grieve for, are, in any respect, objects of compassion, but, on the contrary, in a state of prosperity, how can you find food for sorrow?

“Another, and, perhaps, a more efficacious way, will be for you to mingle in the amusements and diversions of the gay place you are now in; and that, not merely as a spectator, but as a partaker. There is, perhaps, a kind of delicacy which represents a conduct of this kind as too little respectful to the memory of the person we lament; but it is certainly a false kind of delicacy, as it serves only to make ourselves miserable without a shadow of advantage to our lost friends, who, we must suppose, if they now superintend our earthly concerns, would be glad to

see us cheerful and happy in the joint pursuit of our pleasure and our duty, rather than wasting our time, our health, and our peace of mind, in vain and fruitless, not to say criminal, lamentations."

As the professional engagements of Mr. Roscoe increased, and demanded an additional devotion of his time and attention, he found it necessary to circumscribe, in some degree, those more agreeable studies which he had hitherto pursued with so lively a relish. His great object now was, to make himself sufficiently independent to gratify the first wish of his heart; and with this view he applied himself with unremitting assiduity to the discharge of his professional duties. His industry and intelligence soon won the regard of his partner, Mr. Aspinall, with whom he lived upon terms of the most friendly understanding. "I am extremely happy," he says, in a letter written in the spring of the year 1779, "in my present connection; my partner is one of the most well-behaved, and, at the same time, one of the most friendly hearted, sincere men I ever met with, and has, on every occasion, behaved to me with a great deal of affection and generosity: as I know his temper and his wishes, it gives me an opportunity of repaying his kindness, which I should think myself ungrateful if I neglected." In the same letter he states his own views with regard to his settlement in life, from which it will be seen how free his mind was from any feelings of vulgar ambition.

"You know my sentiments with regard to pecuniary matters, and I hope the principles and grounds of my opinions are not entirely imaginary. My utmost ambition would be to attain, by the industry and labour of my early days, such a competency as would enable those around me, and with whom I should be most

nearly connected, to know themselves secure of the necessaries of life, in any event, and permit me to enjoy a few tranquil years of leisure and retirement, under the guidance of my own native and unrestrained disposition; which has ever had a tendency to avoid crowds, noise, and contention, in the company of a few, very few, chosen friends; whilst the unabating ardour of conjugal affection, increased and refined by years, should add a double relish to every enjoyment. To you I need not point out the advantages of this plan, and the good effects which may arise from a steady pursuit of it; and I flatter myself I have shown some adherence to it already, in quitting some enticing and pleasing pursuits, which must have inevitably interfered with my general design. It is true, the amusements of poetry and the incense of praise constitute of themselves some degree of happiness, and, it may be said, happiness should never be slighted. But, alas! I am a traveller; and before I intend to indulge myself, I purpose to get to the end of my journey. If every beautiful prospect, and every shepherd's pipe, must allure me out of my road, what probability is there that I shall ever find myself at rest?"

"How should I rejoice," says his correspondent, in her answer to the above letter, "were your circumstances such as allowed the indulgence of those pursuits so consistent with your genius, so agreeable to your taste; but though it may be prudent to make a sacrifice of them at present, yet I hope it will prove a momentary one, and that, after a short time, an establishment in your profession will yield you more leisure, and lead to the renewal of those pleasures you now relinquish."

The circumstances of Mr. Roscoe's situation at this time are alluded to in a very pleasing manner by his correspondent, Mr. Barton:—

“It is time to say something with regard to yourself. Have you yet recovered from your lameness? How are you going forward in your new connection? When did you hear from London? And when ——? I perceive you have already filled up the blank, and I hope the question will ere long be an unnecessary one. Need I add (but I am sure I need not), that whenever the endearing connection takes place, I most sincerely wish it may be attended with all the happiness that can (and surely the most substantial happiness may) result from it. In some cases, too, we may, I think, most justly, do more than wish — we may both hope for and expect this happiness. Where cultivated understandings, sensibility of heart, and, above all, an honest, undissembled, mutual attachment, are to be found in the married state, happiness, and that of the most refined and rational kind, cannot possibly be wanting; may it be yours, my worthy friend, to find, as I am well convinced you deserve it.”

At length the period arrived, when the state of his business permitted the union which had so long been the object of his wishes; and on the 22d of February, 1781, he was married to Miss Jane Griffies, at St. Ann's Church, Liverpool. For some years after this event, he devoted himself assiduously to the practice of his profession, though without altogether neglecting the studies more agreeable to his taste. Notwithstanding the additional expense of his new establishment, he continued to add to his collection of books; and “a sumptuous edition of Ariosto,” which he had commissioned his friend Mr. Barton to purchase for him about this time, appears to have revived that taste for Italian literature which he had derived from his friend Francis Holden.

In the spring of the year 1782, Mr. Roscoe visited London, on professional business, and took advantage of the opportunity thus afforded him, to add, so far as his slender resources extended, to his small collection of books and prints.

“Our trial,” he says in a letter to Mrs. Roscoe, “cannot possibly come on till the 28th or 29th of this month; so that I am likely to have enough of London, having already made some discoveries which many wise heads have made out before me, and handed to posterity by the name of proverbs, such as “Happiness begins at home,” — “Man never is, but always to be blest;” and those lines of Goldsmith certainly haunt me, — “Even whilst fashion’s brightest scenes,” &c. — but it is yet time enough to make complaints.

“I have laid out about forty shillings in prints, and find no inclination to any more extravagance in that article. My book account already amounts to a good deal more, but I trust I shall have prudence enough to restrain it in decent bounds. Be assured, I am not without a full sense of the danger I run in the many temptations which surround me in this line, but my affection for you is the great security which must prevent me from trespassing in this respect as well as in all others.”

“This morning,” says Mrs. Roscoe, in answer to the above letter, “I received your letter, and sincerely thank you for every kind consideration; but do not restrain yourself too much; and do me the justice to believe, that whenever I suggest a plan of economy it does not proceed from narrow motives, but from a consciousness of the many dependencies upon us. Heaven has hitherto favoured us with unlooked-for blessings, and, I trust, will continue the enjoyment of them.

To doubt its providence would be the highest ingratitude."

Even the very moderate expense upon which Mr. Roscoe at this time ventured in gratifying his taste for literature and art, was a source of anxiety to him. "There is one circumstance," he observes, in a letter addressed, during his visit to London, to Mrs. Roscoe, "which is a continual mortification to me, viz. the thought that I am not likely to get any thing by my journey exclusive of the expenses I have imprudently gone to in buying things which I might very well have done without. In books and prints I have spent full as much as I proposed, but have now put a stop to it, and shall keep myself within bounds. What I have purchased besides, I intend to convert into money on my arrival at Liverpool, which I can do without losing a farthing."

"You seem," observes Mrs. Roscoe, in answer to the foregoing letter, "to consider the present expenses of your journey as extravagant; but this I cannot admit of. You may not have another opportunity of visiting London again for a long time, and a little indulgence is only reasonable; but I perfectly agree with you as to the necessity of a general economy. By a strict attention to it now, we shall open a path to competence, and to that easy independence so desirable to us both. When I mention competence, you know my ideas are not extensive. I only wish to be in a situation to render a service to others without the disagreeable reflection of injuring the interests of those who depend on us alone. I have sometimes been afraid you have thought me sordid and ungenerous; but indeed I never valued money for itself."

During this visit to the metropolis, he was present at Westminster Hall on the occasion when Lord Mansfield, in imitation of the Lord Chief Justice North, desired the attorneys to proceed in the absence of counsel.

“I am just returned from Westminster Hall, and have seen Lord Mansfield trying causes without a single counsel in court. The attorneys pleaded for themselves, and most extraordinary figures some of them cut. This arises from an obstinacy on both sides, between Lord Mansfield and the counsel; the latter think it absolutely necessary to keep holiday on Whit Monday and Tuesday, while his Lordship thinks it better to despatch, as fast as he can, the causes which come before him, and to which every delay adds a considerable expense.”

The taste of Mr. Roscoe for elegant literature was early associated with a love of art. When about twenty years of age, he had been, as already stated, one of the most active members of the Society for promoting the Arts of Painting, Design, &c. at Liverpool, and had celebrated the institution by the publication of an ode. From the want of efficient support, this society had only a transient existence. In the year 1784, however, Mr. Roscoe in conjunction with Mr. Daulby, and some other gentlemen, endeavoured to create a taste for the arts in Liverpool by the revival of the “Society for promoting Painting and Design,” and by an exhibition of paintings and drawings under the patronage of that society.* Mr.

* The Catalogues of the two first exhibitions of the society, in 1783 and 1787, are now before the writer, and form interesting memorials of the history of Liverpool. Mr. Henry Blundell, of Ince, was the president for the first year, and Mr. Roscoe the vice-president; for the second year, Mr. Ashton was president, and Mr. Roscoe formed one of the committee. The exhibitors are chiefly natives of Liverpool: but a picture by Fuseli, two by Barrett, and two by Stothard, appear in the first exhibition; and in the second, the names

Roscoe ventured to introduce into the exhibition one or two drawings from his own pencil; and the ticket of admission was etched by his hand. Through his means, also, Sir Joshua Reynolds was interested in the undertaking. "I am very glad," he says, in a letter addressed to Mr. Roscoe, in October, 1784, "to hear of the success of your exhibition, and shall always wish to contribute to it to the best of my power."

One of the chief objects of this society was the diffusion of information on the subject of art by means of lectures; and in the course of the year 1785, several lectures "On the History of Art," and "on the Knowledge and Use of Prints, and the History and Progress of the Art of Engraving," were delivered by Mr. Roscoe. At the conclusion of one of the latter lectures, he took the opportunity of applauding the genius of Fuseli, at that time little known. He speaks of him as "an artist by no means inferior to any of those who dignify the present Royal Institution; and though," he adds, "the public are not yet in possession of any of his works in this line, I shall not be apprehensive of incurring any future impeachment of my judgment when I mention the name of FUSELI."

It was during his visit to London in 1782, that Mr. Roscoe first saw and admired the paintings of Fuseli, with whom he then contracted a friendship which was cemented by numerous good offices towards that celebrated painter. In a letter to Mrs. Roscoe, written at a later period, he mentions the pleasure he derived from the society of Fuseli:—"Last night Wakefield and I got tea and supped with Fuseli, who is in great spirits,

of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Gainsborough, Fuseli, Farrington, and Wright of Derby, occur.

and very friendly. * * * He is a wonderful man, and certainly the most agreeable companion that can be, when pleased; and even when not so, his very anger and resentment may be tolerated for the sake of the wit and liveliness they produce.”

Of the genius of Fuseli he had formed the highest opinion, and from the period of their first acquaintance he became interested in his success, and used his influence for him in the disposal of his pictures.

“A letter from me,” says Fuseli, in 1783, — “a letter, too, of acknowledgments for your very friendly and vigorous exertions in my favour, does not, perhaps, come with a very good grace. I might, indeed, plead the painter’s privilege with a poet, if I knew not that the habits of a more serious employment have made you an exception from the fraternity of Irregulars. All I can say is, that I have never forgotten those few agreeable moments spent with you in London, and on the road; and that the flattering hopes of being able to see you at Liverpool made me neglect writing. Those hopes have not yet left me; in the mean time I shall make it a point to employ myself in a manner not altogether unworthy of your good wishes and encouragements.”

In the year 1785, Fuseli, on the invitation of Mr. Roscoe, paid a visit to Liverpool, the recollection of which appears, from his letters, to have afforded him much pleasure.

It was about this time, while his attention was devoted to the study of art, that Mr. Roscoe produced a poem of some length, under the title of “The Origin of Engraving.” This piece, which has never been published, displays an intimate acquaintance with the different styles of the great masters in that branch of art,

and evinces no inconsiderable poetical skill in the introduction of the various descriptions.

The following lines allude to the revival of art in the fifteenth century, and, with the note appended to them, are curious, as showing the attachment of the writer, even at this period, to the great subject which afterwards employed his pen:—

“ In elder Greece when arms and science reign’d,
The finer arts an equal rank maintain’d;
High ’midst the rest, the Muse of Painting shone,
And bade the admiring world her wonders own;
To nature true, the graceful outline flow’d,
With more than life the vivid colours glow’d;
Applauding nations saw with grateful joy,
And wealth and honours crown’d the fair employ:
Yet whelm’d amid the wreck of former days,
Lie the gay monuments of ancient praise,
And though revolving years have spared the name,
Dimm’d is the radiance of the painter’s fame.

Long droop’d the sacred art — but rose at length
With brighter lustre and redoubled strength;
When great Lorenzo,* ’midst his mild domain,
Led the gay Muses and their kindred train;
Then, as the bard the imagined story drew,
The kindling artist bade it rise to view;
Till the strong comment shamed the sister art,
And found a nearer passage to the heart.”

* “ Lorenzo de’ Medici, called the Magnificent, (born in 1448, died in 1492,) was the director of the Florentine republic for upwards of twenty years, and the father of John de’ Medici, afterwards pope, by the name of Leo X. To the munificence and taste of Lorenzo is principally to be attributed the sudden progress of the fine arts in Italy at the close of the fifteenth century. But this is only a small part of his praise. If a full enquiry be made into his life and character, he will appear to be not only one of the most extraordinary, but, perhaps, upon the whole, the most extraordinary man that any age or nation has produced.”

For several years Mr. Roscoe had been in the habit of amusing himself, during the hours of leisure which his profession afforded, by forming a small collection of engravings, in the study of which he found great pleasure. The opportunities supplied by his occasional visits to London were gladly taken advantage of; and as the indulgence of the taste was at that period less expensive than at present, he succeeded in obtaining such a collection as enabled him to prosecute with gratification and advantage the study of this branch of art. The late Mr. Joseph Strutt being at this time engaged in preparing for publication his "Biographical Dictionary of Engravers," Mr. Roscoe communicated to him some observations on the art, the receipt of which Mr. Strutt acknowledges in the following letter, dated in 1785:—

"I received your obliging letter last night, with the excellent Essay on the art of engraving, for which I return you my most sincere thanks. The observations contained in it are, as you remark, entirely new; and, from the mode of their arrangement, precisely what are highly necessary to precede a work like mine. As you have kindly permitted me to make use of them, I shall certainly give them to the public in the form in which they stand, which cannot possibly, as I conceive, be altered for the better; and I hope you will favour me, whenever you can find leisure, with any observations that may strike you, either concerning the art itself, or any of the artists; for every assistance from a person of your taste and judgment will contribute greatly to the enriching of the work, which of course, as a mere dictionary, must be exceedingly dry."

In the Dissertation which is prefixed to his Dictionary, Mr. Strutt has accordingly availed himself of a portion of the Essay thus furnished, which he introduces with

this remark: — “With respect to the use and excellency of the art of engraving, I beg leave to subjoin the following observations. They were drawn up by a gentleman of great taste, and are the result of a critical examination of the greatest masters; and will, I trust, be still more acceptable to the public, as they are not the remarks of an engraver, but of a gentleman no other-ways interested in the cause, than as a man of science and a lover of the arts.”

It was at one time the intention of Mr. Strutt to add a third volume to his Dictionary, in the preparation of which he proposed to avail himself of the assistance of Mr. Roscoe. “I thank you,” he says, in a letter to the latter, “for your obliging permission to insert your name in the list of my benefactors, but still more for the name of *friend* which you have kindly added; and I sincerely wish it was in my power in any manner to return those singular favours and repeated marks of friendship which I have received at your hands. But instead of paying off any arrears, I am running still deeper in debt, as you will find, when I add, that a third volume must, of necessity, follow these two, exactly upon the plan you have proposed. It will be preceded by a dissertation upon etching in general, and painters’ etchings in particular, with complete (or as nearly so as possible) catalogues of the works of the greatest masters. This, as you justly observe, may either be connected with, or purchased separate from, the Dictionary.”

In consequence of this communication, Mr. Roscoe was induced to transmit to his correspondent an Essay under the title of “Remarks on Etching,” and “An Idea of a Chronological Collection of Engravings,” intended to form part of the projected third volume of the “Dictionary of Engravers.”

“I received your kind present,” says Mr. Strutt, “with the obliging letter enclosed in it. I have diligently examined the whole of the work, and think it is drawn up in an admirable manner; neither could it possibly have been comprised in a less compass. I want words to express my gratitude to you for the trouble you have been at on my account. I shall certainly print it as it stands, with very few additions to the names of the artists; the number of which, with the greatest propriety, is made as short as it can be.”

Engagements of another nature, into which Mr. Strutt entered, prevented him from carrying on his design of adding to his Dictionary; and the contributions from Mr. Roscoe were returned to him, with the following observations:—“I am highly obliged to you for your kind offers, and should receive them with the warmest gratitude if I was proceeding with the work, as I am well assured they would form a very valuable part of it. But let me endeavour to prevail upon you to give them to the public from your own hand. I mean your “Remarks on Etching;” to which may properly be added, the “Idea of a Chronological Collection,” &c. Any kind of information that I can possibly supply you with, you may at all times command. I again add, that I am confident you will greatly oblige the public by the publication. It will make a complete volume by itself, and the usefulness of such a work need not be pointed out.”

In the course of this year (1784), Mr. Roscoe was elected an honorary member of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester. His diploma bears the signatures of Dr. Percival and Dr. Henry.

CHAPTER III.

1787 — 1792.

Early opinions of Mr. Roscoe on the subject of the African slave trade — his allusion to it in the poem of "Mount Pleasant." — Publication of "The Wrongs of Africa" — translated into German. — Publication of the "General View of the African Slave Trade," his pamphlet in answer to the Rev. Raymund Harris. — Thanks of the Abolition Committee. — Publication of the "Inquiry into the Causes of the Insurrection of the Negroes in the Island of St. Domingo."

THE African slave trade constituted, at this period, a great part of the commerce of Liverpool. A numerous body of merchants and ship-owners, and a still more formidable array of masters of vessels, and sailors, looked to the continuance of that traffic for their emolument or their support. The wealth and prosperity of the town were supposed to depend chiefly upon this branch of commerce, and there were few persons whose interests were not, directly or indirectly, connected with the prosecution of it. Even those whose employments had no reference to commercial objects, found their opinions and feelings with regard to the traffic necessarily affected by the tone of the society in which they mingled.*

* The painful effect which the discussion of the Slave Question occasioned in Liverpool is described by Dr. Currie, in a letter written in the year 1788. — "The general discussion of the slavery of the negroes has produced much unhappiness in Liverpool. Men are awaking to their situation; and the struggle between interest and humanity has made great havoc in the happiness of many families. If I were to attempt to tell you the history of my own transactions

Under these circumstances it was hardly to be expected that Liverpool should be the place from which a voice should be heard appealing to the world on behalf of the captive African. Fortunately, however, the mind of Mr. Roscoe remained unshackled by the prejudices or the interests of those around him, nor did any motives of a personal nature operate to prevent the expression of his opinions. He had been gifted with those strong feelings of abhorrence to injustice, and of resistance to oppression, which are the great moral engines bestowed by God upon man for the maintenance of his virtue and his freedom. The "aversion to compulsion," recorded by Mr. Roscoe as one of his earliest characteristics, led him in his youth to form very decided opinions upon this question, which, in his after life, occupied much of his attention, and in which he had ultimately the gratification of knowing that he had laboured not unsuccessfully. In his poem of "Mount Pleasant," which, though written in the year 1771, was not published till the year 1777, he did not hesitate to brand with the opprobrium it merited, the traffic in which so large a portion of his fellow townsmen were engaged.

" There Afric's swarthy sons their toils repeat,
Beneath the fervors of the noon-tide heat ;

in this business, I should consume more time than I can spare. Altogether, I have felt myself more interested and less happy than is suited to my other avocations. The attempts that are continually made to justify this gross violation of the principles of justice, one cannot help repelling ; and, at the same time, it is dreadful to hold an argument, where, if your opponent is convinced, he must be made miserable." — *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 135.

In the same letter, Dr. Currie gives the history of a short poem, which appeared about this time, under the title of "The African," in the London papers, and which was the joint production of himself and of Mr. Roscoe. It has also been printed in Mrs. Riddell's "Metrical Miscellany," under the title of "Maraton."

Torn from each joy that crown'd their native soil,
 No sweet reflections mitigate their toil:
 From morn to eve by rigorous hands opprest,
 Dull fly their hours, of every hope unblest,
 Till broke with labour, helpless and forlorn,
 From their weak grasp the lingering morsel torn,
 The reed-built hovels' friendly shade denied,
 The jest of folly and the scorn of pride;
 Drooping beneath meridian suns they lie,
 Lift the faint head, and bend the imploring eye,
 Till death in kindness from the tortured breast
 Calls the free spirit to the realms of rest.

Shame to mankind! but shame to Britons most,
 Who all the sweets of Liberty can boast;
 Yet, deaf to every human claim, deny
 That bliss to others which themselves enjoy;
 Life's bitter draught with harsher bitter fill,
 Blast every joy, and add to every ill;
 The trembling limbs with galling iron bind,
 Nor loose the heavier bondage of the mind."

The writings of many excellent men, about this period, had attracted the attention of the public to the momentous question of the slave trade. Dr. Beattie, in his "Essay on Truth;" Wesley, in his "Thoughts on Slavery;" Adam Smith, in his "Wealth of Nations;" and Paley, in his "Moral Philosophy;" had exposed the cruelty, the injustice, and the impolicy of the traffic. Denunciations of its unchristian spirit began to be heard from the pulpit; and the question was brought before the legislature in the year 1776, by Mr. David Hartley, the member for Hull. The opponents of the traffic, at length, in the year 1787, united themselves together for the purpose of rendering their opposition more effective; and a committee was formed in London, which met weekly, for the purpose of considering the best means of procuring the abolition of the trade.

To promote the same great object, Mr. Roscoe took up his pen; and, in the summer of 1787, published the first part of the "Wrongs of Africa," a poem designed to awaken the feelings of the people to the horrors of the slave system. The profits of this poem were presented by Mr. Roscoe to the London committee, through his friend, Mr. John Barton, a member of that body. "This circumstance," observes Mr. Clarkson, in his 'History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade,'* "was not only agreeable, inasmuch as it showed us that there were others who felt with us for the injured Africans, and who were willing to aid us in our designs; but it was rendered still more so, when we were given to understand that the poem was written by Mr. Roscoe, of Liverpool, and the preface to it by the late Dr. Currie, who then lived in the same place. To find friends to our cause rising up from such a quarter, where we expected scarcely any thing but opposition, was particularly encouraging."

The first part of "The Wrongs of Africa" was intended to illustrate the mode of procuring slaves on the coast of that country. The manner in which the captives were obtained, by wars or by domestic treachery, is described; and the cruelties and privations to which they were subjected, are painted in strong colours. Throughout the poem, that love of freedom, that inextinguishable hatred of oppression, are displayed, which were such signal features of the writer's character:—

"Dear to the heart is Freedom's generous flame,
And dear the exulting glow that warms the soul,
When struggling virtue from the tyrant's grasp
Indignant rushes and asserts her rights."

* Vol. i. p. 280.

The following passage, in which the writer endeavours to show that, even in savage life, the natural affections exert their full influence, may be considered as affording a fair specimen of the poem:—

“ Nor yet unknown to more refined delights,
 Nor to the soft and social feelings lost,
 Was the swart African: wherever man
 Erects his dwelling, whether on the bleak
 And frozen cliffs of Zembla’s northern coast,
 Or in meridian regions, Love attends
 And shares his habitation; in his train
 Come fond affections, come endearing joys,
 And confidence, and tenderness, and truth.
 For not to polish’d life alone confined
 Are these primeval blessings, rather there
 Destroy’d or injured; mercenary ties
 There bind ill-suited tempers; avarice there,
 And pride, and lowering superstition, cross
 The tender union; but where nature reigns,
 And universal freedom, Love exults
 As in his native clime; there aims secure
 His brightest arrow, steep’d in keen delights,
 To cultured minds and colder skies unknown.”

In the following year (1788) appeared the second part of the “ Wrongs of Africa;” the subject of which is, the voyage of the slaves to the West Indian islands. The description of the dwelling of Matomba, the guardian of Cymbello, a native prince, who is captured and carried away, is a proof that, at this period, Mr. Roscoe had become attached to botanical pursuits.

“ Remote from peopled haunts, ’midst silent groves,
 Where palms and plantains intermix’d their shade,
 And spread their broad leaves to the scorching sun,
 Matomba’s dwelling stood.— A crystal stream
 Gush’d from the gloom and lav’d a chosen spot,
 That own’d his constant culture: Aloes there

Shot forth their vigorous stems, and hung their bells
 In graceful negligence; Hæmanthus spread
 His crimson bloom; the flowery Almond there,
 Profuse of fragrance, scented all the plain;
 And the gay Protea waved his silvery leaf,
 And glitter'd on the day;—a thousand plants
 The favourites of the sun, whose vivid tints
 Decay, and sicken, in our northern climes,
 There in perennial lustre smiled, nor fear'd
 The chilling blasts of Eurus.”

The captive Cymbello is visited by *Despair*, and the personification of that power is declared, by Dr. Currie, to be “one of the most sublime thoughts in modern poetry.”*

“Torn by conflicting passions, barr'd from air,
 With taunts and stripes insulted, and compell'd
 To share the anguish of desponding throngs
 That hourly cursed existence, soon began
 His vigour to decline, and on her throne
 Sat Reason tottering. Sleep refus'd to close
 His eyes, that gazing wild with maniac glare
 Froze in their sockets—when before their orbs
 Rose a majestic form, that, not confined
 Within the ship's scant boundary, rear'd her head
 Amidst the rolling clouds. Her right hand held
 A falchion dropping blood, and in her left
 A heart yet palpitating shock'd the sight.
 Dreadful she smiled, yet in her dreadful smile
 Lurk'd fascination: horrid was her voice,
 Yet did it vibrate on the wretch's ear
 Sweeter than music. ‘Prince,’ she cried, ‘I come
 To free from weak regret thy manly mind,
 And vindicate thy wrongs. To deeds of death
 Rise then! my steel shall point the way.’ She spoke,
 And clasp'd him to her bosom. Through his frame
 Ran fierce emotions of tumultuous joy;

* Memoirs, vol. i. p. 135.

He spurn'd the fond complaint; no more the sigh
Burst from his heart; his eyes forgot to weep;
Ambition now was hush'd; the patriot Hope
Expired; and Love himself the rule resign'd
To one unbounded thirst of dread revenge."

The opinions expressed with regard to this poem, both privately and publicly, were very gratifying to the author. His friend Mr. Barton, who had superintended it as it passed through the press, thus spoke of it:—"I have at last got the second part, which, to say the least of it, will not disappoint the expectations raised by the first part. I think the poet evidently improves as he advances, and I hope nothing will prevent his going further. To me the language and thoughts appear to flow with greater ease, without the smallest diminution of boldness or energy. I have never been more pleased or affected by any poetical production whatever, and (all compliments out of the question) I must say, I cannot but feel a pride in calling such an author my friend."

"The Wrongs of Africa" were subsequently translated into German, as Mr. Roscoe learned, upwards of twenty years after its publication, from the following letter:—"I shall beg leave," says his correspondent, Mr. Johnson, "to mention another circumstance which I hope will be, in some degree, interesting to you, as it will show you that Germans of literary celebrity have thought themselves well employed in rendering into their native tongue the least important of your works. During my residence at Leipsic, I became acquainted with a clergyman of the name of Kühn, who showed me the manuscript of a poem which has since been published; it was a translation of an English poem in two parts, entitled, 'The Wrongs of Africa;' and although I had not read the original, I easily recognised the author. I was sorry

to find, on my arrival in England, that the poem had never been completed, as otherwise I should have sent the conclusion to my friend, as I had promised."

But it was not in verse alone that Mr. Roscoe raised his voice against the continuance of a system so injurious to the interests of humanity as the African slave trade. In the winter of 1787 he published a short pamphlet, entitled "A General View of the African Slave Trade, demonstrating its Injustice and Impolicy; with Hints towards a Bill for its Abolition."* In this pamphlet Mr. Roscoe considers the subject in two points of view: first, with respect to its justice or iniquity; and secondly, with respect to its political advantages or disadvantages to this country: and that he did not altogether fail in establishing his arguments, may be inferred from the following observations of Dr. Currie, who, though a sincere friend to the abolition of the trade, yet regarded with a cool and dispassionate judgment the efforts of those who were labouring in the cause. † "A pamphlet has just appeared, entitled 'A General View of the African Slave Trade with Hints towards a Bill for its Abolition,' which puts the subject in a very clear point of view, and contains a brief, but masterly, chain of propositions that bear irresistible force. I recommend it to your perusal. The moderation of its language is likely to make it useful." ‡ Mde. Necker, whose zeal, for liberty led her to interest herself in the sufferings of the Africans, appears to have entertained the idea of translating this work into French. "On the subject of the Slave

* London: printed for R. Faulder, New Bond Street, 1788. One thousand copies of this pamphlet were printed.

† See his Letter to Mr. Wilberforce, in the second volume of his Memoirs.

‡ Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 51.

Trade," says Mr. Barton, in a letter to Mr. Roscoe, "I have nothing new to communicate, except that one of the London Committee has lately been in France, and dined at Paris with the committee established in that place with the same views as our own. Our friend says, the committee appears to consist of very worthy and respectable characters, and that they are very much in earnest to bring about the reformation we wish for. He particularly mentioned the zeal of M^{de}. Necker in this great business, and her intentions of publishing some tracts on the subject, so soon as she could obtain leave for that purpose, which is a confirmation of the account received at Liverpool of her having been translating the 'General View.'" From another of Mr. Barton's letters it appears that the pamphlet excited considerable attention in Liverpool. "I rejoice," says he, "to find that thy pamphlet has occasioned a ferment amongst the African merchants at Liverpool, and I trust it will occasion a ferment amongst our senators likewise, and produce the conviction we so much wish them to feel."

The "General View of the African Slave Trade" had not been many months before the public, when Mr. Roscoe found himself again called upon for fresh exertions in the same cause. The Rev. Raymond Harris, a clergyman of the Church of England, who had been educated for the Catholic priesthood, published, under the title of "Scriptural Researches on the Licitness of the Slave Trade," a work which was intended to tranquillise the consciences of those who carried on the traffic, by representing slavery as a system approved of by God. He proposed to show "its conformity with the principles of natural and revealed religion, as delineated in the sacred writings of the Word of God." This

bold attempt to degrade the noblest of all the attributes of the Deity,—his justice and his mercy,—met with many admirers. “Even people,” says Mr. Barton, in the same letter from which an extract has been made above, “the least likely to be influenced in their own judgments by arguments drawn from this quarter, have yet shown a wonderful desire to have such arguments pass for solid with others. I am assured that Lord Hawkesbury himself condescended to distribute some of Harris’s ‘Scriptural Researches,’ recommending them at the same time as containing unanswerable arguments in favour of the slave trade.”

Other persons, who felt that the interests both of religion and of humanity must suffer from a publication like this, were filled with indignation at its appearance. Dr. Currie, whose temperate mind and well-balanced feelings seldom permitted him to use harsh expressions, thus speaks of it:—“A little scoundrel, a Spanish Jesuit, has advanced to the assistance of the slave-merchants, and has published a vindication of this traffic from the Old Testament. His work is extolled as a prodigy by these judges of composition, and is, in truth, no bad specimen of his talents, though egregiously false and sophistical, as all justifications of slavery must be. I have prompted a clergyman, a friend of mine, to answer him, by telling him, that if such be religion, I would ‘none on’t.’”*

The reply to the “Scriptural Researches” might with great propriety have proceeded from a minister of religion, though it did not require any very considerable knowledge of divinity to refute arguments derived from an authority so obviously misapplied. The zeal of Mr.

* Memoirs of Dr. Currie, vol. i. p. 135.

Roscoe, however, did not permit him to wait until others engaged in the contest; and, in the summer of 1788, he sent to the press “A Scriptural Refutation of a Pamphlet lately published by the Rev. Raymond Harris, entitled ‘Scriptural Researches on the Licitness of the Slave Trade,’ in Four Letters from the Author to a Friend.”* As an argumentative piece, this pamphlet may certainly be considered as fully equal to any of the productions of Mr. Roscoe’s pen; nor could a more full and satisfactory answer to the sophisms of his antagonist have been wished for by the friends of the abolition. The work immediately attracted the attention of the London Abolition Committee, a member of which addressed to Mr. Barton the following letter on the subject:—

“At the desire of our committee, I have to request, that thou wouldst, with as much expedition as possible, communicate to the author of the Scriptural Refutation, &c. of Harris, their wishes to take off what remains of the impression (on his own terms of course), and in case that should not be sufficiently numerous for their purpose, they request the author’s leave to print a new edition. I beseech thee lose no time.”

In the letter from Mr. Barton, communicating this request, he says, “On my return from Brighton, I had the pleasure to receive a parcel ‘from the Author,’ containing six pamphlets, in answer to Harris. I immediately perused one of them myself, and gave the others to some of the most intelligent members of our committee, and we are all unanimously of opinion, that it is *the work of a master*, and by much the best answer that Harris has received.” The wishes of the committee

* London: printed for B. Law, Ave Maria Lane, Ludgate Street. 1788.

were immediately complied with by Mr. Roscoe; and the thanks of that body were transmitted to him in the following letter from Mr. Barton:—

“Immediately on the receipt of thy favour of the 5th, I communicated the contents (so far as they related to the ‘Scriptural Refutation’) to the committee in London, who were much pleased with the offer made to them, and very happy to accept of it. The following is an extract from their minutes:—

“‘At a Committee of the Society for effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, July 15, 1788.

“‘This Committee, impressed with a sense of the laudable zeal, and great abilities, manifested by the author of “A Scriptural Refutation of a Pamphlet, entitled Scriptural Researches on the Licitness of the Slave Trade,” do gratefully accept his offer, and request Mr. Barton to convey to him the thanks of the Committee, for the important service he has rendered the cause in which they are engaged.’

“I was not in town myself at the time of this meeting, nor have been since (nor do I know when I shall be again), therefore I have not seen the committee books; but, I suppose, this minute must have been preceded by another, in which the particulars of the offer made by the author would be stated.

“The Committee ordered a new edition, at the same time, which I should imagine must ere this be completed; so that the circulation of this pamphlet will very soon be general over every part of the kingdom, and I trust its utility will be as great as its circulation will be extensive. All who have read it, that I have yet met with, speak of it in terms of the highest commendation; and many are the enquiries and conjectures respecting its author.”

The insurrection of the negroes in the Island of St. Domingo, in the year 1791, having been made use of as an argument against the proceedings of the Abolitionists in this country, Mr. Roscoe was induced to examine this question with attention, and the result of his enquiry was given to the public in a short tract, entitled "An Inquiry into the Causes of the Insurrection of the Negroes in the Island of St. Domingo; to which are added, Observations of M. Garran-Coulon on the same subject, read in his absence by Guadet, before the National Assembly, February 29, 1792."* The particular object of this pamphlet was to review the account of the Insurrection, given in the speech of the Deputies from the General Assembly of St. Domingo to the National Assembly; in which the origin of the calamity was charged upon the *Amis des Noirs*, "by which name," it is said, in the English translation of the speech, "is distinguished in France, the party that have seconded the English project for abolishing the Slave Trade."

A more dreadful and appalling picture of aggravated cruelty and atrocity, than the speech of the Deputies exhibits, can scarcely be conceived. Murder and violence of every kind, were remorselessly committed, not only upon the persons of the whites, but upon such of the negroes as remained faithful to their masters, who were frequently put to death by the slow torture of fire. Such were the acts which the Deputies from St. Domingo accused "the Friends of the Blacks" with having caused in the island; and such were the consequences which the enemies of the abolition in England predicted, as the result of their adversaries' labours in our own colonies.

* London: J. Johnson. 1792.

Those who regarded these dreadful scenes with a calmer and more philosophical eye, beheld in them only the inevitable consequences of slavery: — “Are these enormities,” says Mr. Roscoe, “to be lamented? Surely they are. Can they excite our wonder? By no means. What is the state of the labouring negro? Is he not a being bound down by force? Labouring under constant compulsion? Driven to complete his task by the immediate discipline of the whip? Are affection, lenity, and forbearance, the result of oppression and abuse? When the native ferocity of Africa is sharpened by the keen sense of long-continued injury, who shall set bounds to revenge?”

But it was not alone from the fierce teachings of their own clime, that the negroes derived their lessons of blood. The white man had added his terrible instructions.

“Again,” adds Mr. Roscoe, “how have the fierce dispositions of savage life been counteracted or improved by the example of their white superiors? Resistance is always justifiable where force is the substitute of right: nor is the commission of a civil crime possible in a state of slavery. Yet the punishments that have been devised in the French islands, to repress crimes that could only exist by the abuse of the slave-holder, are such as nature revolts at. How often have these unfortunate beings beheld their fellows beat, in famine and distraction, the bars of an iron cage, in which they were doomed to pass, in inconceivable misery, the last days of their existence? Is it not known that, in these wretched islands, a human being has resigned his life in the torments of a slow-consuming fire? An unavenged instance of an act so awfully atrocious marks out for perdition the country that could suffer it. When the

oppressor thus enforces his authority, what must be the effect of the sufferer's resentment?

Other instances were not wanting to urge the Negro upon the track of blood. "Yet the Negro had other examples before his eyes. A dissension had arisen amongst the holders of the slaves: those who were before united in oppressing them, were now at variance among themselves. They had proceeded to open violence; whilst the slaves awaited the event with silence, though not with indifference. One party obtained an early superiority: the leader of the weaker number was taken; and the Negroes were spectators of the death of Ogé, a man who partook of their colour, *and who was broken alive upon the wheel*. Twenty-five of his followers shared the same fate. If the cold-blooded sons of Europe, educated in the habits of improved society, and affecting to feel the precepts of a mild and merciful religion, can thus forget themselves and insult their own nature, ought they to wonder that the African should imitate the pattern, and, if possible, improve upon their example?"

Amongst the atrocities detailed by the Deputies, are the two following instances:—

"At Great River, an inhabitant, M. Cardineau, had two natural sons of colour, *to whom he had given their liberty*, and who, in their childhood, had been the objects of his tenderest care. They accost him, with a pistol at his breast, and demand his money. He consents; but no sooner have they obtained it, than they stab him.

"At Acul, M. Chauvet de Breuil, Deputy to the General Assembly, is assassinated by a Mulatto, aged sixteen, his natural son, to whom he destined his fortune, having manumitted him from his childhood."

Upon these transactions, Mr. Roscoe makes the following remarks:—

“But the horrors of the slaughter increase. The white father falls a victim to the unnatural rage of his Mulatto son. Have human crimes their origin and causes in human affairs; or are they incited by some malignant demon, who possessing himself of that cup of affection, the human heart, pours out its contents, and fills it with poison? Alas! we vainly seek, in fable, the apology of our own depravity; and, unhappily, the causes of those transactions, which would scarce meet credibility in any other part of the globe, are in these regions of guilt too apparent. However the Author of nature may have instilled affection into the breast of a parent, as the means of preserving the race from destruction, we must allow, that the corresponding sentiment in the mind of the offspring is merely the effect of a long-continued course of care, partiality, and tenderness. Shall the harvest, then, rise up without seed? and where no fondness has been shown, shall filial attachments be expected? In a country, where it is by no means unusual for the known children of the planter to undergo all the hardships and the ignominy of slavery, in common with the most degraded class of mortals, is it there we are to seek for instances of filial affection?”

What must be thought of that condition of society, which, if we may believe the Deputies themselves, reverses all the feelings of the human breast? “The slaves,” say they, “who had been most kindly treated by their masters, were the soul of the insurrection. It was *they* who betrayed and delivered their humane masters to the assassin’s sword; it was *they* who seduced and stirred up to revolt the gangs disposed to fidelity. It was *they* who massacred whomsoever refused to become

their accomplice. What a lesson for the *Amis des Noirs!*”

“Upon this part of the address,” says Mr. Roscoe, “reflections still occur, in which the planter is deeply interested. An opinion is thus inculcated, which, if acceded to, and acted upon, must render the islands a constant scene of cruelty and bloodshed. We are told, that the slaves who had been most kindly treated by their masters were the soul of the insurrection; that it was they who had betrayed and delivered their humane masters to the assassin’s sword, and seduced and stirred up to revolt the gangs disposed to fidelity. Hear this, ye planters! and if there be one amongst you so singularly foolish as to harbour a lurking sentiment of humanity, let him for his own safety divest himself of it without loss of time! The Negro is a being, whose nature and dispositions are not merely different from those of the European, they are the reverse of them. Kindness and compassion excite in his breast implacable and deadly hatred; but stripes, and insult, and abuse, generate gratitude, affection, and inviolable attachments! Upon this principle, we are enabled to reconcile an apparent inconsistency in the address. ‘Slaves,’ we are informed, ‘were still found, who gave proofs of an invincible fidelity; and who made manifest their determination to detest the seduction of those, who would, with promises of liberty, inveigle them to certain destruction.’ If the humanity of the master only sharpens the appetite of revenge, is it difficult to discover by what mode of treatment the friendship of these slaves was secured? Be grateful, ye planters, to the man, who has at length disclosed this important truth; and admire his courage who has dared to avow it, even in the bosom of a nation devoted to liberty!”

In perusing this pamphlet, the reader will be but too forcibly reminded of similar calamities which have recently occurred in our own colonies, and which have been in the same manner attributed, not to their true cause, the demoralising and debasing nature of slavery, but to the interference of the abolitionists. The concluding observations of the writer are as applicable at the present moment as on the day when they were written.

“ If, however, no conclusions can be drawn from the history of these disorders, either to impeach the promoters of the abolition of the Slave Trade, or to deter the British Parliament from duly considering, and fully deciding on, that important measure, it will afford instruction of a different nature. Nourished in inveterate, and it will be feared irremediable, prejudices, it may show us, that the colonists are not the best judges even of their own interests; it may apprise us of the danger of sacrificing general principles of substantial justice to variable and temporising expedients; it may demonstrate to us, that the preservation of our own islands from similar disasters, depends on the early adoption of measures, which, whilst they are vigorous and decisive, are just, conciliatory, and humane; and may caution us, that, where we choose not to impart the beamings of hope, we excite not the ragings of despair.”

The merit of this pamphlet, in its application of general principles to particular cases, is remarked by Mr. Rathbone, in a letter to Mr. Roscoe, written many years after its publication: — “ I have been reading some other of your publications lately, and am struck with the ability and address with which you introduce *general principles*; and this is a talent of unspeakable value. They leave an impression, and apply to other subjects than those

which gave them birth. * * * Your account of the causes of the insurrections in St. Domingo is full of these general principles. It is, in my opinion, your great forte; and I earnestly advise you to cultivate it."

CHAPTER IV.

1788 — 1796.

Motives which led Mr. Roscoe to take a part in politics. — Celebration of the Revolution of 1688 — song on that occasion. — Commencement of the French Revolution. — Publication of the “Ode to the People of France,” “Unfold, Father Time,” “O’er the vine-cover’d hills.” — Progress of the Revolution. — Execution of the Brissotines. — Letter to Lord Lansdowne. — Publication of “Strictures on Mr. Burke’s Two Letters.” — “The Life, Death, and wonderful Achievements of Edmund Burke.” — State of parties at Liverpool — public meeting there. — Address written by Mr. Roscoe. — Singular proceedings. — Publication of “Thoughts on the Causes of the present Failures.” — The Literary Society — forced to abandon their meetings. — Letter to Lord Lansdowne. — Sonnet by the Rev. W. Shepherd. — Visit to London. — Domestic correspondence. — Count Rantzau — correspondence with him and with the Countess Rantzau. — Removal of Mr. Roscoe from the town of Liverpool. — “Inscription.” — Removal to Birchfield.

THE motives by which men are induced to take an active part in political affairs, are of a very varied character. In many instances high birth and party connections lead, as it were, naturally, into public life. Others, destitute of these advantages, are allured by the prospects which ambition opens, or by the hopes of profit which place affords; while others, again, are actuated by the love of popular distinction, — perhaps the most common feeling which leads men into the ceaseless anxieties, the ever-recurring disappointments, and the unthankful duties of political life. Governed by different motives, a few individuals are found, who, in their exertions on behalf

of the public, disregard the rewards which power, place, and popular applause bestow; satisfied with the conviction that, in directing their best efforts to the public good, they have not unworthily performed one of the first and most honourable of human duties. It is to this class of men alone that a country can look for faithful counsellors and for zealous servants. It is these alone, who, in their freedom from all sinister interests, and still more from all ill-directed ambition, will be neither warped nor misled in the performance of their lofty duties.

The motives which induced Mr. Roscoe, at an early age, to take a lively interest, and so far as his station in life permitted, an active part in public affairs, were un-mixed with any views of personal advantage or distinction. The opinions entertained by him on all the more important subjects of public discussion were far from finding general favour, even in the eyes of the populace; while those who professed them were avowedly obnoxious to the government, and to a great proportion of the wealthy and powerful part of the community. The advocates of French principles, as those who ventured to express liberal opinions were termed, incurred an odium which it required some fortitude of mind to withstand; and no one, who was not a witness to the state of English society at that period, can justly appreciate the merit of the persons who not only retained opinions so generally obnoxious, but continued publicly to profess them, and to despise the obloquy to which that profession gave rise.

Though the theatre of Mr. Roscoe's public exertions at this period of his life was remote and confined, it must not therefore be supposed that to others they were without any useful results, or that on his own part they demanded no sacrifices. The town of Liverpool had

not, indeed, at that time, acquired the station in the country which it now occupies ; but its rapidly increasing importance rendered the opinion of its inhabitants of some consequence in estimating the general state of public feeling. In forming and directing that opinion, Mr. Roscoe possessed no inconsiderable influence ; arising from the respect which his personal character inspired, and from the general confidence reposed in his sincerity and integrity. The state of society in Liverpool was at this time such, that there were few of its principal inhabitants with whom he did not enjoy a personal acquaintance ; and of the opportunities thus afforded him, in public and in private, of directing the minds of those around him to just views of political affairs, he always eagerly availed himself.

The character of his political opinions, which were formed at an early age, resulted from the mode in which his mind had been cultivated, and from the absence of that control and superintendence, in matter of opinion, to which in general the formation of political principles in early life is owing. His native disposition, therefore, displayed itself, in an attachment to the principles of freedom, in an opposition to injustice and oppression under every form, and in a zealous and generous desire to benefit his fellow creatures.

Although the intervals of leisure which he was able to snatch from his daily employments were usually devoted to literary studies, his mind was yet actively alive to what was passing in the political world. The first occasion upon which he appears to have taken any public part in politics was on the celebration, in 1788, of the centenary of the Revolution. Several gentlemen of Liverpool having met to commemorate that great event, Mr. Roscoe formed one of the party ; and the follow-

ing lines, written by him, were recited on the occasion : —

“ SECULAR SONG ON THE REVOLUTION OF 1688.

- “ Since Freedom here fix'd her immutable throne,
 A hundred long years wing'd with blessings are past ;
 Our fathers the sweets of her favour have known,
 But 't is ours to complete the full circle at last ;
 Then grasp the deep bowl, the full chorus prolong,
 To William and Freedom be sacred the song !
- “ When James, the worst heir of a tyrannous line,
 Had trampled on reason, religion, and laws,
 Like an angel commission'd by goodness divine,
 Then William arose, and asserted our cause ;
 Then grasp the deep bowl, the full chorus prolong,
 To William and Freedom be sacred the song !
- “ Could the sons of Britannia, supine and unjust,
 Be dead to the transports the season inspires,
 The spirits of those who now moulder in dust,
 Would speak from their ashes to kindle our fires :
 Then grasp the deep bowl, the full chorus prolong,
 To William and Freedom be sacred the song !
- “ To Nature the boon of existence we owe,
 But 't is Liberty crowns it with honour and joy ;
 The worth of her smile by experience we know,
 To enjoy it we live, to preserve it we 'll die :
 Then grasp the deep bowl, the full chorus prolong,
 To William and Freedom be sacred the song !
- “ Round this altar of Freedom united we bow,
 Our libations shall aid her unquenchable flame,
 Which here to transmit to our children we vow,
 Bright and vivid as when from our fathers it came :
 Then grasp the deep bowl, the full chorus prolong,
 To William and Freedom be sacred the song !”

Possessing principles and feelings like these, it cannot be supposed that Mr. Roscoe witnessed the com-

mencement of the French Revolution without sentiments of the most intense interest. The spectacle of a great nation rising up, as one man, to regain the station and the happiness from which it had been debarred by centuries of misgovernment, was one which might well awaken the sympathies of his heart. Nor was the splendour which surrounded the first efforts of the French to recover their freedom obscured by any clouds. In this glory of the first days of their Revolution it was that Mr. Roscoe dedicated his muse to the celebration of French liberty. In the prosecution of his studies he had been struck with the fine canzone of Petrarch —

“ *Quel ch' ha nostra natura in se più degno,*”

which seemed susceptible of being applied to the great struggle for freedom then taking place in France; and he accordingly imitated the Italian poem in “ *An Ode to the People of France,*” which was published at Liverpool, in the year 1789. The invocation to Liberty, “ *Libertà! dolce e desiato bene,*” is perhaps the most spirited part of the translation: —

“ Freedom! blest gift, whom none condemn who know;
 Dear is thy presence to this world below!
 Life vigorous grows where'er thy steps have trod,
 And man walks forth the semblance of a God;
 If thou be absent, life no joy affords,
 Despised its titled pomps, its useless hoards;
 But in thy presence every cottage charms,
 And Peace reposes in thy sheltering arms.”

At a period long subsequent to the publication of this Ode, Mr. Roscoe transmitted a copy of it, together with some other of his works, to Mr. Fox, who, in a letter to the author, expresses his admiration of the poem.

The interest which the friends of liberty in Liverpool felt in the progress of the French Revolution was manifested by a meeting held on the 14th July, 1790, to celebrate the taking of the Bastile; on which occasion Mr. Roscoe produced his well-known song, "Unfold, Father Time."

" SONG.

" Unfold, Father Time! thy long records unfold,
Of noble achievements accomplish'd of old,
When men, by the standard of Liberty led,
Undauntedly conquer'd or cheerfully bled;
But know, 'midst the triumphs these moments reveal,
Their glories shall fade, and their lustre turn pale;
While France rises up, and confirms the decree
That tears off her chains, and bids millions be free.

" As spring to the fields, or as dew to the flower,
To the earth parch'd with heat as the soft dropping shower;
As health to the wretch that lies languid and wan;
Or as rest to the weary — is Freedom to man.
Where Freedom the light of her countenance gives,
There only he revels, there only he lives;
Seize, then, the glad moment, and hail the decree
That bids millions rejoice, and a nation be free!

" Too long had Oppression and Terror entwined
Those fancy-form'd chains that enslave the free mind,
Whilst dark Superstition, with nature at strife,
Had lock'd up for ages the fountains of life:
But the demons are fled, the delusion is past,
And Reason and Virtue have conquer'd at last;
Seize, then, the glad moment, and hail the decree
That bids millions rejoice, and a nation be free!

" France! we share in the rapture thy bosom that fills,
When the spirit of Liberty bounds o'er thy hills;
Redundant henceforth may thy purple juice flow,
Prouder wave thy green woods, and thy olive trees grow,

For thy brow may the hand of Philosophy twine,
 Blest emblems! the myrtle, the olive, and vine;
 And Heaven through all ages confirm the decree,
 That tears off thy chains, and bids millions be free!"

But the pen of Mr. Roscoe was, in the following year, exerted still more successfully in the composition of his celebrated lines, "O'er the vine-cover'd hills and gay regions of France," — a song which, as might be expected from its beauty and its animating spirit, immediately became highly popular.

This composition, like the former, was written for the purpose of being recited on the anniversary of the 14th August. Upon that day, in the year 1791, the riots at Birmingham took place, and the celebration was afterwards discontinued in Liverpool, as well as in other places.

"O'er the vine-cover'd hills and gay regions of France,
 See the day-star of Liberty rise;
 Through the clouds of detraction unsullied advance,
 And hold its new course through the skies.
 An effulgence so mild, with a lustre so bright,
 All Europe with wonder surveys;
 And, from deserts of darkness and dungeons of night,
 Contends for a share of the blaze.

"Ah! who 'midst the horrors of night would abide,
 That can breathe the pure breezes of morn?
 Or who, that has drunk the pure crystalline tide,
 To the feculent flood would return?
 When the bosom of Beauty the throbbing heart meets,
 Ah, who can the transport decline?
 Or who, that has tasted of Liberty's sweets,
 The prize but with life would resign?"

"Let Burke like a bat from its splendour retire,
 A splendour too strong for his eyes;
 Let pedants and fools his effusions admire,
 Entrapt in his cobweb like flies.

Shall insolent Sophistry hope to prevail
 Where Reason opposes her weight,
 When the welfare of millions is hung in the scale,
 And the balance yet trembles with fate?

“ But ’t is over — high Heaven the decision approves,
 Oppression has struggled in vain,
 To the hell she has form’d Superstition removes,
 And Tyranny bites his own chain.
 In the records of Time a new era unfolds,
 All nature exults in its birth;
 His creation benign the Creator beholds,
 And gives a new charter to earth.

“ O catch the high import, ye winds, as ye blow;
 O bear it, ye waves, as ye roll,
 From regions that feel the sun’s vertical glow,
 To the farthest extremes of the Pole.
Equal rights, equal laws, to the nations around,
 Peace and friendship its precepts impart,
 And wherever the footsteps of Man shall be found,
 He shall bind the decree on his heart.”

As the revolution proceeded, — as the confidence of the people in the sincerity of the king decreased, — as the passions of various parties became more and more exasperated, — as the threats of foreign interference were redoubled, the aspect of political affairs in France grew darker and darker. It now became evident that despotism, amongst its most hateful qualities, possesses that of rendering those who suffer under its influence unfit for the wise enjoyment of freedom, until after a long and too often a sanguinary education; — that it is vain to expect from slaves, the discretion, the forbearance, and the magnanimity of freemen; and that the fatal retribution of the crimes of governments is found in the madness of the people. The oppression of the atmosphere is carried off in lightnings and in storms, and

despotism expires in tumults and in blood. The crimes of the French revolution have been by many absurdly charged on those alone by whose hands they were committed; while their governors, who had industriously extirpated the principles and feelings which would have prevented such excesses, have been represented as their martyrs. Time, and calm reflection, will teach the better lesson, that, to render a people humane, just, and moderate, their government must first set them an example of humanity, of justice, and of moderation.

Those who, like Mr. Roscoe, had witnessed with delight the birth of freedom in France, and watched anxiously over its cradle,—who had looked for peace, and happiness, and improvement, as the great results of the revolution, beheld with grief and dismay the alarming vicissitudes of its progress. The last hope of the friends of France seemed to expire on the scaffold of the Brissotines.

It was soon after this event, the intelligence of which he received with the deepest emotion, that the following letter was addressed by Mr. Roscoe to the late Marquis of Lansdowne:—

“The event which has pressed upon me with more weight than almost any other I ever as yet experienced, either of a public or private nature, is the execution of the Deputies in France,—men whom I had long been accustomed to look up to as the best friends of their country and of mankind; and for whom, if affection be acquired without a personal acquaintance, I may say I had a real esteem. Of these men, Verniaux was the most particular object of my regard. He seems to have possessed a grandeur and sublimity of imagination, coupled with an accuracy of judgment, beyond any of his associates; and if ever the love of his country was

apparent in any man, it was so in him. In lamenting the fate of these great men, I cannot, however, forget their errors, which, I am convinced, they themselves discovered when too late. Their graves were dug on the 10th of August, and the 2d of September passed their sentence. The remainder of their lives was a struggle to repair either their mistake in assenting to, or their want of energy in resisting, the violence that then took place. Fatal day! that overthrew the labour of years, and placed the fortunes of the human race on the chance of a die. Surely, nothing less than absolute despotism can admit of the application of the principle of force.

“Wherever the sense of a whole community can be peaceably taken, the insurrection of a part is treason. This forms the distinction between the destroyers of the Bastile and the heroes of the 10th of August, or their rivals of the 2d of September.

“As to the great point which the French think they have gained by the destruction of their monarchy, I think it of little consequence; not that I am become a believer in the maxim, that ‘whate’er is best administered is best,’ but because I think that a monarchy is capable of being as well constituted for the happiness of a people as a republic. And though, I hope, not superstitious, I cannot help thinking that the voluntary and solemn oath of a whole nation, to abide by a constitution which they took three years in framing, ought, if there be any thing serious or binding in human affairs, to have some weight. I will not trouble your Lordship with my feelings on the conduct of the French rulers subsequent to this shocking event. The horrid industry employed in the discovery of the other proscribed Deputies, the deliberate mockery of their trial, and the bloody indifference of the people at large, on the execution of

such men as Rabaut, who first rescued them from despotism, freezes my affections, and gives me a dislike, not only to the French, but to my species. Sorry am I to say, that this dislike is not much removed by any thing I can see in my own country, where the same selfish and slavish spirit that has contributed to bring on the enormities of France is apparent in the prosecution of all those who aim, by a cool, rational, and deliberate reform, to prevent a similar catastrophe here. With what face can our present administration commit Thomas Muir to the hulks, preparatory to his transportation to Botany Bay, when it is apparent to all the nation, that if *he* has been guilty, Mr. Pitt and the Duke of Richmond ought to accompany him? But the leaders have apostatised, and the disciples perish. This is enough. The founders of a sect become its persecutors! To whom shall we compare those who punish what they have themselves endeavoured to promote?

“I cannot conceive what can be the views of the people assembled in Edinburgh, under the name of the British Convention; but the whole is so ill-timed, and so ill-conducted, that I should easily be persuaded it was intended to bring additional odium on the cause of reform, did I not know, that one person appeared amongst them whose motives are beyond suspicion. I mean Lord Daer, whom I have seen in Liverpool, and whose heart, I am sure, is right. Why has he committed himself in such a business, and nipt his usefulness in the bud? Great harm has been done by the doctrine, so industriously inculcated by a sect of which I am a professing member, that whatever is ultimately right is to be pursued at all times. Perhaps, however, this arises rather from a misapprehension of the precept, than from the precept itself. It might be admitted in its general purport,

but then, whatever is right is always to be sought for by means likely to obtain it, and not by such as can directly tend only to the injury of the cause, and the ruin of the individual. If I wish for a prosperous voyage, I must wait for the wind and the tide; but if I resolve to attempt it in spite of both, I become the unpitied cause of my own destruction."

As the atrocities of the Revolution increased, it became the fashion in this country to attribute their origin, not to the degraded and servile state in which the people had been so long plunged, but to the operation of those principles upon which the Revolution itself was founded; as though freedom and equal laws produced nothing but oppression; justice and public order nothing but confusion; and peace and good-will the most barbarous and bloody actions. Amongst the foremost advocates of this doctrine stood Mr. Burke, who, wholly abandoning the guidance of his reason, laboured to inflame the passions of his countrymen, till he almost made his own madness theirs. Every principle, by which the freedom and happiness of man in civil society can be protected or vindicated, was unhesitatingly denounced; while those who professed such principles were pointed out for proscription. His *Thoughts on the French Revolution* were followed by his *Two Letters addressed to a Member of the present Parliament*; in which the war he had waged with the principles of the Revolution in France was extended to those opinions at home. Eighty thousand converts in this country were stated to have imbibed the dangerous doctrine, and to have become "pure Jacobins, utterly incapable of amendment." To stem this fatal tide of rebellion, infidelity, and anarchy, and to prevent the least approach towards pacific sentiments, was the object of of the "Two Letters." To that publication,

Mr. Roscoe, in the year 1796, sent to the press a brief answer, under the title of “*Strictures on Mr. Burke’s Two Letters addressed to a Member of the present Parliament.*” * In this pamphlet, after remarking upon the exaggerations of Mr. Burke’s statements, he exposes the real object of his writings, — the extermination of liberal principles, — an act not to be accomplished by the means recommended by Mr Burke.

“Let us endeavour to prevent the rising of the sun, or to stay the swelling of the ocean, for the material world is in some degree, subject to the control of mechanical force; but the intellectual world scoffs at the weak attempt which would limit its operations by the coarse and clumsy restrictions of bolts and chains.”

The principal part of the tract is directed to the subject of peace, with the view of showing that the French nation had not been, and was not, averse to a pacification, and that the interests of both countries would be secured by the termination of the war. The pamphlet concludes with the following remarks upon Mr. Burke’s political character : —

“It is wonderfully, and, no doubt, wisely directed by the Author of nature, that from the same soil and climate from which some plants draw their healthful and nutritive juices, others collect a poison the most destructive to the human race. It would seem, too, as if the human character displayed a similar diversity, and that some were intended by a natural rectitude and benevolence of disposition to select, from surrounding circumstances, causes of peace, charity, and good-will, whilst others can deduce from the same circumstances only the motives of hatred, envy, jealousy, and destruction. Wherever the latter

* This pamphlet is reprinted in the “*Occasional Tracts on the War.*” London. 1810.

disposition appears, there is no proceeding so open and generous, no transaction so honest, no purpose so virtuous, as not to afford food for its malignity. With whatever it comes in contact, it appropriates it by a kind of chemical affinity to its own nature; and if it does not find, creates in every thing around it, gall and bitterness. I shall not press on my reader the application of these remarks; but I confess it has always appeared to me extraordinary, that the same man, who persevered during a long course of years, in instigating the people of America to resistance against this country, and, by measures which in these days would infallibly have brought him to the bar of a criminal court, encouraged them to the defence of their independence, should, when a similar circumstance occurred in France, and when there was every reason to presume this great and desirable event might be accomplished *without* contention and *without* bloodshed, have excited a general outcry against the attempt.

“That the cases of America and France are exactly similar will not indeed be pretended; but the difference between them was such, as, upon all reasonable grounds, should have redoubled the energies of his mind in favour of the latter. If the actuating principle of Mr. Burke had been a generous and disinterested love of liberty, it is not possible that he should have beheld the rising efforts of the people of France with the obliquity of jealousy, or the frown of hostility; nay it is not possible that he should not have felt that prepossession in their favour, that solicitude for their success, which in the early part of the Revolution agitated the bosom of those who had been his associates in the cause of freedom: but, when the moment of decision arrived,—

‘T was then, O shame! O trust, how ill repaid!’—

he, with a perversity without precedent in the annals of apostasy, seized the operative moment to pour his drug into the healthful mass, and it curdled into poison. From that instant, his exertions to prolong, and by all possible methods to increase, the calamities of the war which he had excited, have been unremitting and successful; and lest some more fortunate combination of circumstances, some returning gleam of human commiseration for human sufferings, should lead the contending parties to listen to the voice of reconciliation, he sedulously collects the ingredients of discord from every passing transaction, and hoards up the phial of his vengeance till the moment when it is most likely to produce its effect. Ardent and impassioned in the cause of freedom in America, whilst the assertion of that freedom led to contention and blood, equally impassioned against the liberties of France, and prolonging by every means in his power the duration of the war, his character acquires a degree of consistency which his opponents have unjustly refused to his pretensions. *Tros Tyriusve*, it is not *the cause* that interests him. Alternately the advocate of liberty or despotism, just as his support or his opposition may serve to keep alive the flames of discord, he acts up to the constitution of his nature, and in the economy of the moral world performs an unwelcome, but, perhaps, a necessary part."

Aware that ridicule is sometimes as effectual a weapon as argument, Mr. Roscoe attacked the opinions of Burke in verse as well as in prose. In the year 1791 he wrote and printed a ballad, containing "The Life, Death, and wonderful Achievements of Edmund Burke," which he accompanied by a frontispiece etched by himself,*

* "I was unluckily out of town," says Fuseli, in a letter to Mr. Roscoe, "when your letter came with the enclosed bill and ballad. The ballad has some admirable stanzas, but I like the tune of the

representing Burke armed like a knight-errant, assailing Mr. Fox in the House of Commons.

“ Full tilt he ran at all he met,
And round he dealt his knocks,
Till with a backward stroke at last,
He hit poor Charley Fox.

“ Now Charley was, of all his friends,
The warmest friend he had ;
So when he felt this graceless blow,
He deemed the man was mad.

“ With grief his generous bosom rose,
A grief too great to hide ;
And as the stroke was somewhat hard,
He sat him down and cried.

“ But not a whit did Edmund feel ;
For at his friend he flew,
Resolved, before the neighbours round,
To beat him black and blue.

“ Then Charles indignant started up,
The meagre form he took,
And with a giant’s awful grasp
His rusty armour shook.

“ Oh, have ye seen a mastiff strong
A shivering lap-dog tear ? —
Then may ye judge how Edmund did,
When claw’d by Charles, appear.”

Amidst the anxieties which every friend of freedom experienced with regard to the issue of public affairs on the Continent, the state of political feeling at home was such as to cause the most serious apprehensions. The government and the more wealthy and powerful part of the

bill still better. Your modesty is great in thinking you could not have etched as well as the frontispiece.”

community, alarmed at the progress of opinions which aimed, as they imagined, at the overthrow of the settled institutions of the country, regarded with a timid jealousy the movements of their opponents. The lower orders, whose prejudices and ignorance suffered them to be easily misled, were prompted to acts of violence against those whom they were taught to view as the enemies of the king and of the constitution. The feelings of all classes of the nation were roused to a state of excitement which threatened the most dangerous consequences, and the fever of the public mind was designedly heightened by the government itself. The apprehensions of the weak and the passions of the violent were confirmed by a proclamation, representing, in strong colours, the dangers to which the nation was exposed by treasonable and seditious designs, and exhorting all persons to make diligent enquiry after the authors of the wicked and seditious writings which were disseminated over the country. The friends of the government were not slow in answering the appeal thus made to them, and loyal addresses to the king were poured in from every quarter.

In the town of Liverpool the loyal party, as they termed themselves, were not idle. The mayor of the borough, Mr. Tarleton (a younger brother of Sir Banastre Tarleton), desirous of distinguishing himself by his zeal, caused the celebrated charge of Mr. Justice Ashurst, and the address of the London Association, to be reprinted and circulated through the town. To counteract the effect of these papers, several persons, whose principles were regarded as ultra-liberal, formed themselves into a society, and published their resolutions in one of the Liverpool papers. To so high a pitch had party feeling risen, that those who were known to be members of this society were publicly insulted, and, after a very short

time, were compelled to discontinue their meetings. At this juncture appeared Mr. Pitt's celebrated proclamation already referred to, and the load of opprobrium under which the friends of peace and reform laboured was doubled. Unwilling that objects and motives, the most false and unjust, should be imputed to those who professed the same principles with himself, Mr. Roscoe drew up a declaration expressing the attachment of those who signed it, to the constitution, and at the same time, their resolution to seek a parliamentary reform by all legal, temperate, and constitutional means. This declaration was communicated to his friends, and was already extensively signed, when the mayor of Liverpool convoked a public meeting of the inhabitants to consider the propriety of addressing the king. An opportunity being thus afforded for a more open expression of opinion, the parties who had promoted the signing of the Declaration resolved to lay it aside, and to reserve their sentiments for the public meeting. Accordingly, on the previous evening, Mr. Roscoe prepared the form of an address, pursuing, in a great measure, the sentiments of the Declaration, but containing a more delicate allusion to the subject of reform. Three addresses having been proposed by different friends of the government, Mr. Birch (now Sir Joseph Birch) introduced that which had been drawn up by Mr. Roscoe. A stormy debate arose upon it, and violent efforts were made by their opponents to prevent the advocates of peace and reform from being heard. Mr. Roscoe, however, and some of his friends, succeeded in addressing the meeting; and after a contest of nearly two hours his address was carried, on a show of hands, by a considerable majority. The mayor, who presided, having declared the address carried, appointed the following Monday (the meeting being held on Saturday) for its signature in the Town Hall.

On that day a singular scene took place. The populace, who in the mean time had been excited by placards posted on the walls, assembled round the doors of the Town Hall, and insulted those who attended for the purpose of signing the address, which they defaced and destroyed, no peace officers being in attendance to prevent this outrage. They then sent for the mayor, called for his address; and upon one of the addresses rejected at the former meeting being produced, they voted it to be the Liverpool address. It was signed as such by the mayor and the persons present; and with 12,000 signatures attached to it was presented to the king.

In a letter to Lord Lansdowne, giving an account of these transactions, Mr. Roscoe adds, "The loss of an address, which I was in hopes would have conciliated all parties, and put an end to our political dissensions in Liverpool, is not, however, our only cause of regret. In order to justify the violence of their measures, our antagonists find it necessary to load us with all possible odium; to struggle against it only renders it more oppressive; and all we have now to do is to submit in silence, lest we occasion others of a more personal nature, with which several of us have been threatened, both anonymously and openly.

* * * * *

"In the course of the last fortnight, the only newspaper that would admit an article on the cause of Reform has been obliged, by the violence and threats of some intolerant individuals, to disavow its principles, and profess a thorough devotion to the prevailing frenzy; and though there are four weekly papers published, there is not one that will admit a contradiction to the grossest calumnies that can be devised against the friends of Re-

form, who have not now a public organ by which they can address the town of Liverpool.”

Not satisfied with repressing by every means in their power the progress of French principles at home, the government ultimately resolved to attempt the extermination of them in the country where they had their birth. There have been few periods in our history at which a war with France has been unpopular ; and when hostilities with the French Republic were announced, the intelligence was received with a general expression of satisfaction throughout the nation. As yet we had not been taught the bitter lesson, that the triumphs of our arms may be too dearly purchased, and that a few years of successful achievements in war may be followed by ages of national difficulty and distress. To those who, like Mr. Roscoe, regarded all wars not resorted to from the most urgent necessity as iniquitous and wicked, and who looked with peculiar aversion upon an attempt like this to repress the liberties of a foreign country by force of arms, the war with France was doubly odious. The commercial difficulties in which the country became deeply involved, soon after the commencement of hostilities, gave him an opportunity, in attempting to trace out the causes of these embarrassments, to express publicly his opinion of the injustice and impolicy of the war. The extensive mercantile failures which took place in the year 1793 were accounted for in various ways. By some, their origin was attributed to the undue extension of paper circulation ; and by others, to the improvident speculations of individuals ; but a different cause was assigned to them by Mr. Roscoe. He justly regarded them as owing to the sudden transition from a state of peace to that of war ; which, by affecting all the foreign commercial relations of the country, was destructive to

mercantile credit. These opinions he embodied in a short pamphlet, which he published under the title of "Thoughts on the Causes of the present Failures." * The work attracted some attention; and was noticed by the late Marquis of Lansdowne in the House of Lords. — "I was so much delighted with your little tract," says that nobleman, in a letter to Mr. Roscoe, "that I could not help mentioning both it and the author, in the House of Lords, in the terms which they deserve. The ministry, when I mentioned it, affected to sneer at it; but I have the pleasure to tell you, that several members of both Houses have been as much struck with it as myself. Your principles do you as much honour, as I feel your friendship must always do me. * * * It will give me always pleasure to hear from you, and I hope you won't forget the public." †

But the interest felt by Mr. Roscoe in political affairs did not prevent him from prosecuting his schemes of literary improvement. The study of the Italian writers employed at this time the greater part of his leisure; and he was thus gradually familiarising himself with that extensive subject, which he afterwards so successfully illustrated. In the society, also, of the intelligent friends by whom he was surrounded, he found a relief, both from the anxieties of his profession and from the disappointment of his political views. The occasional meetings, which took place in an evening at the houses of Mr. Roscoe and his friends, assumed so agreeable a character, that it was determined to give them a more permanent form; and "The Literary Society" was consequently founded. Amongst the members of this

* London: J. Johnson. 1793. Republished in "Occasional Tracts relative to the War." London. 1810.

† Letter dated 14th May, 1793.

friendly association were Dr. Currie, the Rev. W. Shepherd, the Rev. John Yates, Professor Smyth, Mr. Rathbone, Dr. Rutter, and Mr. Roscoe. Their meetings were held every fortnight, at their respective houses; and the hour before supper was devoted to the reading of papers or the discussion of literary questions. But even this peaceful and unoffending company was not exempt from the violence of party feeling. Upon the appearance of Mr. Pitt's proclamation against seditious meetings, and the consequent odium in which all who professed liberal principles were involved, the Literary Society found their meetings viewed with so much suspicion and jealousy, that it was thought proper, for the time, to discontinue them, nor were they afterwards resumed. This circumstance is referred to in the following extract from a letter addressed at the time to the Marquis of Lansdowne:—

“It was my intention to have stated to your Lordship some other instances of the consequences felt under the present system, where every man is called on to be a spy upon his brother; but I have already intruded much too far on your Lordship's time. I must, however, mention that I have, for upwards of ten years, been a member of a little society of about a dozen persons (Dr. Currie and others), who have, during that time, met in rotation at each other's houses. The object of our meeting was merely literary; but suspicion has for some time gone abroad about us, and I have good reason to believe we have been thought of importance enough to be pointed out to government by the collector of the customs here. Some of us having openly appeared on the late address, has, I believe, completed the business; and, in the present state of things, we have thought it expedient to suspend our future meetings.”

It was at this stormy and threatening period that the following sonnet was addressed by Mr. Shepherd to his friend : —

SONNET ADDRESSED TO MR. ROSCOE.

“When darkening clouds surcharge the moistened air,
 And frowning tempests roll along the sky,
 The prudent shepherd drives his fleecy care
 Where the grey rock uplifts its head on high :
 There, undisturb'd, he hears the roaring wind,
 And sees before him sweep the driving rain ;
 Or 'tween the gusts, beneath the crag reclined,
 In fading distance eyes the troubled main :
 So, when intestine broils or foreign rage
 With angry tumult fire the public breast,
 Let us, my Roscoe, fly the maddening age,
 And 'mid domestic comforts calmly rest,
 When wrath and discord through the nations roam,
 Thrice happy who possess and prize a peaceful home.”

Early in life Mr. Roscoe had acquired a lively taste for country pleasures and agricultural pursuits ; a taste which, for many years, he had little opportunity of indulging. About the year 1792, in travelling from Manchester to Liverpool, he was struck with the extensive track of uncultivated moss-land, which runs for some miles along the road in the neighbourhood of Manchester ; and it occurred to him, that the draining and improvement of this land might be made a source of profit, as well as a work of public utility. In conjunction, therefore, with his friend, Mr. Thomas Wakefield, who had been engaged in a similar undertaking, he resolved to apply for a lease of the moss ; for the purpose of procuring which they visited London in the winter of 1792. Being detained in town for some weeks by this business, Mr. Roscoe had an opportunity of

enjoying the society of many friends whom he highly valued, and of gratifying his taste by the purchase of a few works of art. The following short extracts are selected from his letters to Mrs. Roscoe, written during this visit: —

“ You must not conceive, because I have not troubled you with the particulars of our transactions and disappointments, we had not a specific object in view. The truth is, we have been led on day by day, always hoping the accomplishment of our purpose, and as often frustrated. To-day has, however, brought us to a point; and W. and I have offered a sum of money, which, I believe, will remove further objections, and put matters in train, in which case it is probable that two or three weeks may restore me to the place where all my affections are centered.

“ On Saturday I dined with the Marquis of Lansdowne, in a family party, and am to breakfast with him some day this week. On Thursday I am to meet Dr. Priestley at Dr. Aikin’s. In short, I endeavour to amuse myself as well as I can, and (don’t be alarmed) am not altogether unsuccessful. Fuseli sat with me at my lodgings last night. We dined with him a few days since; so that you see there is nothing to be apprehended for my health and safety.

* * * * *

“ Should D. D.* tell you that I have bought a large and magnificent collection of pictures, don’t believe him — it’s no such thing — a few trifles by which I shall gain cent. per cent., and Dan shall be the first man I take in.

“ I have many hopes of accomplishing our purpose; and if that be done, perhaps your vision of the little

* Mr. Daulby.

comfortable cot, and peace and contentment, and laughing at the follies and faults of the world, may be realised. For my own part, I am indifferent as to every thing but being restored to the bosom of my family, whether it be in town or country.”

The same strong attachment to domestic society is expressed in the following letter: —

“ This negotiation, with other affairs I have on hand, has kept me in close and perpetual employment; and it was with great difficulty I got to dine at Dr. Aikin’s yesterday, where I met with Dr. Priestley, Dr. Rees, Mr. Belsham, &c., and passed a few agreeable hours.

“ My way of life here I contrive to make as agreeable as circumstances will permit. The affairs I have on hand employ my full attention all day; but you will easily judge I am not much pleased with my solitary parlour in the evening, when my thoughts all turn towards my own little fireside. I am not, however, foolish enough to torment myself because I cannot at all times enjoy the pleasures dearest to my heart. A temporary absence of this kind is at times inevitable; and if we have only the happiness of meeting again, and seeing our little fellows in good health, it will repay us for the anxiety of our separation.”

“ After living a fortnight in the hurry of a coffee-room,” says Mr. Roscoe, in a letter written soon after the foregoing, “ I am now writing this letter in private lodgings, which I find very comfortable. The impossibility of being alone for a moment would, in another week, have made me half crazy; but here I hope to be able to summon up what little philosophy I have, and to learn to bear my present separation from the dear objects of my love, with temper and resolution, considering that what I am now endeavouring to attain will, probably, in

the end, enable us to place ourselves in a situation somewhat more suitable to our wishes, and add to the many blessings we already experience, that of being able to render some services to those about us.

“I have seen my old friend, David Samwell*, who did not at first recognise me, as I should scarcely have done him; but, on mentioning my name, he was highly pleased to see me. He is to take me to the Leverian Museum, and to explain the South Sea curiosities, &c. In a world like this, where our friends are constantly slipping from our sides, it is highly gratifying to meet with an honest fellow, after an absence of nearly twenty-five years.”

The friendship of Mr. Roscoe with Lord Lansdowne, and the character which he had already acquired for liberal studies, were the means of introducing him to most of the distinguished foreigners who visited Liverpool. Amongst others, a young Danish nobleman, the Count Rantzau, brought recommendations to him in the year 1793, which led to a friendship not commonly arising from so transient an acquaintance. The excellent dispositions of this young nobleman manifested themselves on his return to his estates, in an act of justice and humanity, referred to by Mr. Roscoe in the following letter, addressed to the Count in the year 1796:—

“Inexcusable as I must appear to you, in not having acknowledged the favour of your letter dated so long since as 11th February, 1794, I have not forgotten the very pleasant hours for which I am indebted to you on

* An early companion of Mr. Roscoe. He accompanied Captain Cook in one of his Voyages. A copious journal kept during this voyage by Mr. Samwell is now in the possession of Mr. Roscoe's family.

your visit to Liverpool, nor have I once ceased to feel those sentiments of sincere and respectful esteem to which that visit gave rise. The truth is, that having unavoidably deferred writing for a short time, and understanding from your letters that you were then undertaking a journey to Northern Jutland, I was at a loss to know your destination, till I had the pleasure, a few weeks since, to see your near relation and friend, Baron Buckwald, who honoured me with a visit, and gratified my enquiries respecting you. From him I learned (what I assure you gave me great pleasure) that you had entered into the matrimonial state, and had reason to expect every happiness which it can afford. It was with no less satisfaction I found that you had executed the benevolent intention which you did me the honour of mentioning to me, and had liberated your numerous vassals within your estates in Holstein. The accomplishments of rank, or the acquisitions of science, may command respect and admiration; but I venerate the man who can break through the prejudices of an unjust, though long established custom, and who finds a gratification in exchanging the authority and name of a master, for the more honorable title of a benefactor, a father, and a friend. I hope and trust that such examples of a wise and enlightened policy will not be without their effect; and that the liberty and happiness of the northern kingdoms of Europe may be effected by *just* and *gradual* steps, without those dreadful commotions which have been occasioned in other countries by the blind obstinacy of the rulers, and the headlong impetuosity of the people."

Of the noble act to which Mr. Roscoe refers, a more particular account is given by Count Rantzau, in his answer to the preceding letter.

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“ Having, since a long time, given up every hope of keeping any place in your memory, I was most agreeably surprised by receiving your favour of the 30th of September, and I seize with pleasure the opportunity you have the kindness of offering, to keep up a connection which I shall always consider as one of the most interesting fruits of my travels.

“ I may not conceal to you how much the approbation of my conduct, which a man in a far distant country, whom age and knowledge places far above me, flatters myself. It gives me the courage to entertain you further of those steps which are made in a small and peaceable country towards the civil accomplishment of the state of society.

“ It was in the year 1794, I granted liberty and property to the *glebæ adscriptis* of my estate. In 1796, shortly after my return from Italy, the noblemen and country gentlemen instituted a committee to examine the state of slavery in Holstein. The lovers of ancient time endeavoured to abuse this measure as a mean for continuing in our former state. Having been so happy as to be elected a member of the committee, consisting of eight noblemen and four gentlemen, I proposed the total abolition of slavery in Holstein and Sleswick, and was so happy to carry the measure, after the debate had lasted about thirteen months. This resolution was signed the 11th of March, and is already submitted to the royal approbation. The latter part of this century has seen many examples of sovereigns restoring part of their subjects to the rights of which another part had deprived them, but I think it the very first instance, where a privileged order has voluntarily received their slaves into the rank of citizens. If you see Lord Lansdowne, I beg you to do me the favour to inform him of this.

I am sure a thing of this nature will, notwithstanding the remoteness of the theatre and the smallness of the object, merit the attention and interest of that great man."

How long this interesting correspondence was kept up, does not appear. But the following letter, addressed by the Countess Rantzau to Mr. Roscoe, in 1814, evinces the confidence and attachment with which her husband had always continued to regard his friend:—

" Kiel, en Holstein, le 16 Février, 1814.

" MONSIEUR,

" C'est une inconnue, Monsieur, qui vous approche avec confiance. C'est la meilleure amie, la triste veuve, d'un homme qui a passé les plus beaux momens de sa jeunesse dans votre pays, qui est resté à jamais le paradis de son imagination. Vous l'avez alors comblé de vos bontés; il ne m'en a jamais parlé sans émotion; plusieurs de vos lettres et des marques distinguées de votre souvenir l'ont honoré depuis et sensiblement réjoui. M. Niebuhr, que le Cte. Rantzau a osé plus tard vous recommander, lui en a su un gré inexprimable — et c'est moi qui viens aujourd'hui, — sans aucun mérite — sans aucun motif que la confiance dans votre noble cœur, — et le souvenir que vous portez, peut-être encore, à l'homme aimable, adoré — qui n'est plus, — réclamer vos conseils.

" Je médite, Monsieur, d'envoyer mes deux fils aînés à Edinbourg," &c. Madame Rantzau then states her views with regard to the education of her sons, and requests Mr. Roscoe's advice and assistance in her arrangements for their benefit; she then concludes —

" Enfin, Monsieur, mettez-vous à la place d'une pauvre mère, triste, malheureuse, abandonnée trop tôt, hélas! par le soutien adoré, clairvoyant, qui guidait toutes ses

démarches ! Ah ! vous ne savez pas à *quel point* l'homme incomparable, qui n'est plus, avait tenu parole.

“ J'ose le dire sans aveuglement qu'il réunissait à l'esprit le plus mûr, le plus riche, le plus sérieux, le cœur le plus élevée, le plus désintéressé, le plus tendre ; j'ai vu disparaître tout cela, je l'ai vu à la fleur de ses ans fermer les yeux. J'ai survécu, parceque Dieu l'a voulu ; je suis faible, et malavisé, et je voudrais que ses enfans fussent dignes d'un tel père.

“ La confiance m'a entraîné vers vous, qu'il honorait d'une manière peu commune. Vous ne sauriez croire, Monsieur, combien il chérissait le souvenir des tems qu'il avait passé avec vous, et que de fois, que de fois il m'en a parlé avec attendrissement. *Daignez donc me pardonner et de me le dire !* J'ai perdu ce meilleur ami il y a deux ans. Dites-moi que vous pardonnez, Monsieur, à votre très-humble et très-obligée servante,

“ LA COMTESSE DE RANTZAU,

“ née Baronne de DIEDE.

“ Souffrez aussi que je vous remercie, Monsieur, du plaisir que m'a causé votre incomparable livre des Médecis ; il m'a distrait dans des momens où j'étais fort triste. Quoique vous écrivez en Français avec la même facilité, je préférerais que voulussiez répondre en Anglais, seulement je n'ai pas eu le courage de vous écrire dans cette langue.”

To this letter Mr. Roscoe returned the following answer : —

“ MADAM,

“ I had lately the honour of receiving your letter, dated the 16th of February last, communicating to me your views and intentions with respect to the sons of my

highly respected and amiable friend, of whose early loss I first received the painful account from your letter. Short as was the time during which I had the pleasure of Count Rantzau's acquaintance, I know sufficient of him to be able to appreciate his many great and excellent qualities, and deeply to feel for you, Madam, who have been so early deprived of his affection and society.

“It is, however, gratifying to me to find, that this afflicting dispensation of Providence has been supported by you in a manner worthy the chosen companion of such a man, and that your attention and care are earnestly devoted to prevent, as much as possible, the disadvantages his children must experience from the loss of such a parent. Happy, indeed, should I be, were it in my power to suggest any thing that might assist your kind maternal efforts, or give any useful information as to the plans you propose to adopt.”

Mr. Roscoe concludes the letter with giving her the information she desired, and requesting to be honoured freely with her commands.

Hitherto the residence of Mr. Roscoe had been entirely confined to the town of Liverpool; but, in the course of the year 1790, he removed to a house pleasantly situated at Toxteth Park, about two miles from Liverpool. The principal attraction of this residence was the immediate vicinity of a small but beautiful dingle, leading to the shores of the Mersey, and presenting many delightful prospects of the river, and the country beyond. The distance from Liverpool was not such as to prevent Mr. Roscoe either from attending to his professional engagements with punctuality, or from enjoying the society of the friends to whom he was attached, some of whose residences were, indeed,

brought nearer to him by the change. It was the beauty of "the Dingle" that suggested to his mind the following little poem, certainly one of the most pleasing productions of his pen:—

" INSCRIPTION.

" Stranger! that with careless feet
Wanderest near this green retreat,
Where through gently bending slopes
Soft the distant prospect opes;

" Where the fern, in fringed pride,
Decks the lonely valley's side;
Where the whitethroat chirps his song,
Flitting as thou tread'st along:

" Know, where now thy footsteps pass
O'er the bending tufts of grass,
Bright gleaming through the encircling wood,
Once a NAIAD roll'd her flood.

" If her urn, unknown to Fame,
Pour'd no far extended stream,
Yet along its grassy side,
Clear and constant roll'd the tide.

" Grateful for the tribute paid,
Lordly MERSEY lov'd the maid;
Yonder rocks still mark the place
Where she met his stern embrace.

" Stranger, curious, would'st thou learn
Why she mourns her wasted urn?
Soon a short and simple verse
Shall her hapless fate rehearse.

" Ere yon neighbouring spires arose,
That the upland prospect close,
Or ere along the startled shore
Echoed loud the cannon's roar;

“Once the maid, in summer’s heat,
Careless left her cool retreat,
And by sultry suns opprest,
Laid her wearied limbs to rest;

“Forgetful of her daily toil,
To trace each humid tract of soil,
From dews and bounteous showers to bring
The limpid treasures of her spring.

“Enfeebled by the scorching ray,
She slept the circling hours away;
And when she oped her languid eye,
She found her silver urn was dry.

“Heedless Stranger! who so long
Hast listen’d to an idle song,
Whilst trifles thus thy notice share,
Hast *thou* no urn that asks thy care?”

Mr. Roscoe continued to reside at Toxteth Park for three years, when, having purchased some land at Birchfield, on the north side of Liverpool, he erected a house upon it for himself, to which he removed in the year 1793.

CHAPTER V.

1795.

First idea of writing the Life of Lorenzo de' Medici — want of materials — assistance rendered by Mr. William Clarke at Florence — progress of the work — printing of the inedited poems of Lorenzo — the Life sent to press. — Mr. M'Creery. — Lord Orford's opinion. — Letter to Lord Lansdowne. — Publication of the Life — its popularity. — Letters from Lord Orford and Lord Bristol. — Opinions on the work — Lord Lansdowne, Dr. Aikin, the author of the "Pursuits of Literature" — correspondence with the latter. — Letters from Mr. J. C. Walker and Fuseli. — Dr. Parr's criticisms, and correspondence with him. — Favourable reception from the periodical critics — review by Fuseli in the Analytical Review — success of the work abroad — opinions of the Italian scholars Fabroni and Bandini — translation into Italian by the Cav. Mecherini, and correspondence with him — criticism of the Abate Andres — opinions of Morelli and Moreni — translation into German by Sprengel — letter to him — translation into French — republication in America.

IT has already been observed, that the idea of writing the Life of Lorenzo de' Medici occurred to Mr. Roscoe at an early period of his life, when, with the assistance of his friend, Francis Holden, he first began to study the literature of Italy. Amid the avocations of business, and the variety of other pursuits in which his taste or his duty led him to engage, the design slumbered, but was not forgotten. In perusing the Italian historians, and especially the Florentine annals of Machiavelli and Ammirato, he was accustomed to note the various passages which threw a light on the life and character of Lorenzo. His reading was at the same time directed as

well to the writers of that age, as to those later authors, such as Crescembeni, Muratori, and Tiraboschi, who have illustrated the literature of their country by their critical labours. Unfortunately, Liverpool did not at that period possess any public library to which, when he found his own collection deficient, he could resort; and amongst the first difficulties which he experienced in the prosecution of his task, was the heavy and discouraging one of a want of materials. This deficiency he had in part supplied by the diligence with which he examined the catalogues of the London booksellers, and the zeal with which, during his visits to the metropolis, he sought for the volumes which his labours required. Fortunately, also, the sale of the Crevenna and Pinelli libraries, occurring at this period, enabled him to procure many scarce and valuable works, for which he had hitherto enquired in vain. But the riches treasured up in the literary repositories of Italy still remained inaccessible to him; and his professional engagements precluded every idea of his being able to make a personal examination of them. Even if the zeal of a foreign agent could be relied upon, who could be discovered with knowledge and judgment equal to the task? “The impracticability of obtaining in this country,” says Mr. Roscoe, in the preface to his *Life of Lorenzo*, “the information of which I stood in need, would perhaps have damped the ardour of any undertaking, had not a circumstance presented itself, in the highest degree favourable to my purpose. An intimate friend, with whom I had been many years united in studies and affection, had paid a visit to Italy, and had fixed his winter residence at Florence. I well knew that I had only to request his assistance, in order to obtain whatever information he had an opportunity of procur-

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ing, from the very spot which was to be the scene of my intended history. My enquiries were particularly directed to the Laurentian and Riccardi Libraries, which I was convinced would afford much original and interesting information. It would be unjust, merely to say that my friend afforded me the assistance I required; he went far beyond even the hopes I had formed; and his return to his native land was, if possible, rendered still more grateful to me, by the materials he had collected for my use."

The gentleman to whom Mr. Roscoe was indebted for these important obligations, was Mr. William Clarke, the companion of his early studies, and the devoted friend of his maturer life. The state of his health having compelled him to seek a milder climate, he selected Italy as the place of his residence; and arriving in that country in 1789, he resolved to pass the winter at Fiesole, where he rented a furnished *villula* for the term of six months. The distance of Fiesole from Florence not being more than three miles, Mr. Clarke was in the daily habit of visiting the latter place, and of spending his mornings in the public libraries. Thus situated in the midst of those treasures which Mr. Roscoe so ardently desired to possess, himself an excellent classical scholar, and devoted to literary occupations, no one could have been discovered better qualified than Mr. Clarke for the agreeable task which his friend imposed upon him. At the close of the year 1789, Mr. Roscoe informed him of his design, and requested his assistance in the prosecution of it. This was readily and joyfully granted; though not without many expressions of regret that his friend was unable personally to join him in his researches. "I wish," he says, in a letter dated January 9, 1790, "you could have come into Italy yourself,

to animate my researches, or rather to render them useless, by your native penetration and accumulated *savoir*:" and again, in a letter written during the following month, — "How much I lament the impossibility of our being together in Florence! A month passed on the spot would considerably enrich your work. As I fear it cannot be as I wish, accept my endeavours to supply the desideratum."

The zeal and diligence of Mr. Clarke in the service of his friend, induced him to lose no time in enquiring into the various literary repositories of Florence. To the credit of the Grand Duke, his palaces, galleries, museums, and libraries, were thrown open, in the most liberal manner, to every stranger desirous of visiting them; while, in the other cities of Italy, access to the public collections was only to be obtained by means of a bribe. Even the public archives and state papers, lodged in the Palazzo Vecchio, — documents, which the jealousy of other governments has guarded with a scrupulous secrecy, — were accessible, on presenting to the Grand Duke a memorial, the prayer of which was never refused. To these valuable repositories, and also to the extensive library of the Marquis Riccardi, Mr. Clarke resorted; and with the assistance of the very learned Canonico Bandini, the Grand Duke's librarian, and of the Abbate Fontani, the keeper of the Riccardi Library, he gained access to many curious and valuable manuscripts relating to the history of the Medici. These he carefully examined, making notes of such portions of them as appeared most likely to furnish materials for his friend. From the copious and excellent catalogue, by Bandini, of the MSS. preserved in the Laurentian Library, he extracted the titles of such as contained the desired information. "I wish," he observes, in a letter

dated February 4, 1790, "you had an opportunity of examining the catalogue; because, it would enable you to point out to me what you would have me examine; but, as I foresee that this is not likely to be in your power, I shall go on in the method I have begun, that is, of taking an account of all such materials as seem to be connected with your plan, with accurate references, as you desire; so that on a review of these materials, *tête-à-tête*, we can send our commissions to this city, to have the needful transcriptions made. There will be no difficulty in finding amanuenses here for that purpose." Nor did Mr. Clarke confine himself to an examination of the manuscript treasures of Florence. He assiduously sought for the printed works of the authors who have illustrated the Medicean age; and when able to procure copies of those which Mr. Roscoe did not possess, he transmitted them to Liverpool. With the view of making himself well acquainted with the subject, he twice perused the Life of Lorenzo by Fabroni, with an especial reference to the authorities of that writer. "In a few days," he says, in a letter dated in the month of March, 1790, "I remove to Florence, to remain there from fifteen to twenty days, totally occupied with your hero, who has won my warmest veneration. I have gone through (twice) Fabroni's work. Many of his authorities will be useful to you. The life, which is composed in Latin, with laboured attention to the style, has more regard to the public conduct of Lorenzo than to his private character; with, however, some animadversions upon his patronage of learning and the arts. Yours, I am convinced, will be a more entertaining work. I need not recommend your taking time to digest it well. As I now know the principal sources that may afford materials, before I leave Florence I shall take

such a general view of them, that I can leave or send directions to have what is most within the compass of your plan copied and transmitted.”

With the valuable materials thus fortunately supplied to him, Mr. Roscoe proceeded with double ardour to the completion of his laborious yet agreeable task. Amongst the unpublished pieces transmitted to him from Florence, were many original poems of Lorenzo de' Medici, of whose poetical talents Mr. Roscoe had already formed a very high opinion. A small collection of these inedited pieces he sent to the press in the year 1791; and a limited impression of only twelve copies was printed, to be distributed amongst his literary friends. The volume is appropriately inscribed to Mr. Clarke, in a short dedication written in Italian, from which we may gather that no inconsiderable progress was already made in his *Life of Lorenzo*. “Ben sapete,” he says, “che il *MAGNIFICO LORENZO* autore di essi, vero Mecenate, e restauratore delle belle lettere nel secolo decimo quinto, è da molto tempo l' oggetto di mia somma reverenza, ed ammirazione; applicandomi io ad investigar le particolarità della sua vita, la quale spero mettere fra poco sotto gli occhi de' miei compatriotti, forse più estesamente, che non hanno fatto il *Valori* ed il *Fabroni*.” “Godo,” he adds, in conclusion, “che nel consecrare questo leggiere tributo alla memoria d' un uomo degno di perpetua lode e venerazione, mi sia presentata occasione d' unire insieme i nostri nomi siccome i nostri studj geniali ci hanno già da molti anni —

‘In nodo d' amistà congiunti, e stretti.’ ”

All the leisure which his profession allowed him was now dedicated to the *Life of Lorenzo*; and in the autumn of the year 1793 he committed the first sheets of

his work to the press. From a desire of encouraging the talents of those around him, he was led to intrust the printing of this work to Mr. John M'Creery, who, by his advice, had lately established a press in Liverpool. The typographical beauty of the first edition of the *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici* sufficiently attests the skill of Mr. M'Creery as a printer; but it was not merely the professional ability of this gentleman which won the regard of Mr. Roscoe. The undeviating rectitude of his mind, and the warmth and devotedness of his feelings, led to a strict friendship, which remained unbroken to the termination of Mr. Roscoe's life.* In the spring of

* Mr. M'Creery did not long survive his friend. In company with Mrs. M'Creery, and one of his daughters, he visited Paris in the autumn of 1831, and was residing in that city when the cholera made its appearance there. On the eve of departing for Switzerland, he was attacked by that dreadful disease, and fell a victim to it in the course of two days.

He was a man of much cultivation of mind, and possessed considerable poetical powers, which were uniformly devoted to the cause of truth, of freedom, and of human improvement. In his political opinions he was inflexibly consistent, and had won the esteem and confidence of many persons distinguished in public life. Laborious, exact, and skilful, he had the satisfaction of finding himself at length rendered independent by the practice of his useful and honourable profession; and he had begun joyfully to devote to literature the leisure he had earned.

Of his ardent and unflinching attachment to Mr. Roscoe, he has left a public memorial in the dedication of the two parts of his Poem of "The Press," published in 1803 and in 1828. But his friendship was better exhibited in the never-tiring zeal with which he availed himself of every opportunity to serve his friend, in the deep sympathy with which he entered into all the vicissitudes of his life, and in the promptitude with which, at a season of difficulty, he endeavoured to procure him support and assistance. How sensible Mr. Roscoe was of his friendship, may be best seen from the following letter, written in the summer of 1820:—

"MY EVER DEAR FRIEND,

"I have long wished to address a few lines of acknowledgment to you for your constant and invariable kindness to me and

1794, a considerable portion of the first volume of the *Life* was printed, and the sheets were transmitted to Mr. Edwards, the bookseller, of Pall Mall, with whom Mr. Roscoe was in habits of correspondence. By him they were laid before the Miss Berrys, whose intimate acquaintance with Italian literature rendered them very competent judges of the work. The character given of it by them to the late Lord Orford, induced that nobleman to apply to Mr. Edwards for permission to peruse the sheets; and the following note, which was immediately communicated to Mr. Roscoe, was highly gratifying to him, as proceeding from a person so distinguished in the literary world.*

mine, during our long and painful state of suspense, but have delayed it in the hope of seeing our concerns in a fair way of being satisfactorily arranged. That expectation is not, however, yet realised: and as I have to send an additional poem or two for my daughter Jane's little publication, I could no longer resist the desire of having a few words with you, and of assuring you that, though silent, I have not been insensible of that friendship which has been evinced under the most trying circumstances; nor of those kind and constant exertions on my behalf, which adversity, and the train of evils with which I have had to struggle, have only served to increase. I will not, however, dwell on this subject, which I well know is unnecessary between us, and from the weight of which I find a great relief in the perfect consciousness of my own mind, that the affectionate attachment you have shown me, and which has surmounted so many trials, cannot exceed that which I trust you well know is so sincerely felt by me in return."

* The satisfaction expressed by Mr. Roscoe at the judgment of Lord Orford seems to have excited the spleen of Fuseli. "I understand," he says in a letter to Mr. Roscoe, "that Lord Orford, the quondam Horace Walpole, has given an ample suffrage to what he saw of "Lorenzo." That he should have done so surprises me not, but I am a little hurt at your having wished for it. The editor of *Vertue's* trash should not have had much consequence in your eyes, though I shall not deny that there are *disjecti membra poetæ* in the "Mysterious Mother."

“ Lord Orford feels himself sensibly obliged by Mr. Edwards allowing Miss Berry to communicate to him the fragment of the Life of Lorenzo de’ Medici. Lord O. has not enjoyed so much and such unexpected pleasure for a long time, as from this most able, informing, and entertaining work, which, though it will leave a most agreeable impression on his mind, gives him great inquietude too, as he does not think that it will appear very soon,—an afflicting circumstance to Lord O., as *very soon* may be of great consequence to a very infirm man of seventy-six, who has no hopes of being so well amused as he should be by reading the completion of this work, for the sight of which he again thanks Mr. Edwards.”

The feelings with which Mr. Roscoe committed his labours to the press may be gathered from the following extract from a letter addressed to Lord Lansdowne :—

“ About the work itself, I confess I am less anxious. After having employed a great part of my leisure for some years past upon it, I feel at length something of the sensation described by Dr. Johnson on publishing his Dictionary, and may say with him, that I dismiss it into the world with *frigid indifference*. The truth is, it is a tale of other times, bearing but little on the momentous occurrences of the present day, and therefore not likely to be much applauded or abused by any party. I have, on all occasions, avoided violent and extreme opinions, and perhaps may be accused by some of having taken some pains to display the glossy side of aristocracy. Possibly, however, this may compensate for a certain degree of republican spirit which others will discover towards the close. I feel also some confidence from the idea that the subject is new to this country, and that the critics will not be yet prepared to take advantage of my

errors. The affairs of Italy, and particularly the transactions of the Medici, have been involved in endless confusion; and the only work which I have ever met with (not published in Italy), which gives any just idea of them, is that of Mr. Tenhove.

“ I am sensible that it may appear a strange waste of time to have employed so many hours on a subject which has no immediate tendency to develope or influence any of the important truths that are now unfolding; but I have at times consoled myself in the reflection, that if I should be fortunate enough to open a new source of rational amusement, my time would not have been uselessly employed; and that every thing which tends to soften down the irritation of political opinions, and introduce from past experience measures of moderation and forbearance, will finally tend to promote, in some degree, the general good.”

The Life of Lorenzo was at length published, in the month of February, 1796, by Mr. Edwards, of Pall Mall, whose first intimation of the success of the work was conveyed to Mr. Roscoe in the following letter: —

“ All your parcel (50) of the Life of Lorenzo have gone off in three days, and we are most cruelly teased for more. If they are not sent off, I beg they may come directly.”

On the following day he again wrote to urge the despatch of more copies.

“ Every body,” he says, “ tells me your second exceeds the first, though that gave the highest satisfaction. It is a subject of conversation in every company — not to be able to speak of it, or to say they are to have it from the next parcel, is to be void of all taste and discernment.”

The work, in short, had become *the fashion*. “We are most unfortunately deprived,” says Mr. Edwards, in another letter, “of receiving any parcel from you since the first fifty. I have sent day by day to the warehouse of the Duke of Bridgewater’s canal, and nothing is found there for me. I dare say, if you make enquiry, you will find them lying in your warehouse at Liverpool.”

“After such a train as your book was in, nothing could be more mortifying. For I know the ill effect it will have on our people of fashion. If they have not things at first, when they are talked of, they save their guineas, and by affecting to speak of what they are strangers to, give a very indifferent impression to their companions, who buy by hearsay. This, you will say, is nothing to you, who seek the applause of the learned few.”

“One, however, is corroborated by the other, and the mass of approbation, with its various concomitant conveniences, is the desirable reward of merit.”

“Notwithstanding your other business, remember I am fretting and harassed continually from the disappointment of being without a copy of your book.”

The avidity with which the work was sought for appears likewise by the following note from Mr. Faulder, a respectable bookseller in New Bond Street.

“I am so distressed for your ‘History of the Medici Family,’ that I am under the necessity of requesting that you will send me two or three copies by the very first coach, and the money shall be paid immediately to your order. Since I have been in business, I have not given so much offence, as by not being able to serve my friends with your work.”

The first edition of "Lorenzo" was published on Mr. Roscoe's own account; but soon after its appearance, he received a liberal offer (1200*l.*) for the copyright, from Messrs. Cadell and Davies, of the Strand, which he immediately accepted. A second edition was speedily put to press by these gentlemen, which was followed by a third in the early part of the year 1799.

On the completion of the second volume of the *Life*, it had been immediately transmitted by its author to Lord Orford, who acknowledged the receipt of it in the following letter:—

"Two days ago, sir, good Mr. Edwards brought me your eagerly expected, and most welcome, second volume. I must thank you for it immediately, though incapable of writing with my own hand. I have been extremely ill with the gout for above eleven weeks, and ten days ago was at the point of death with an inflammation in my bowels, but have happily lived to see the continuation of your work, of which I have already gone through two chapters, and find them fully equal to their predecessors. Indeed as I cannot express, in words of my own, my sentiments both of your work and of you, I shall beg your leave to transcribe the character of another person, which so exactly suits my thoughts of you, that I should very awkwardly attempt to draw another portrait, which I am sure would not be so like.

"Although these volumes appear to be rather the amusement of the leisure hours of a polite scholar, than the researches of a professed historian, yet they display an acquaintance with the transactions of Italy, seldom acquired except by a native. To a great proficiency in the literature of that country, Mr. Tenhove united an indisputable taste in the productions of all the fine arts, and a general knowledge of the state of manners, and the

progress of science, in every period of society. The fertility of his genius, and the extent of his information, have enabled him to intersperse his narrative with a variety of interesting digressions and brilliant observations; and the most engaging work that has, perhaps, ever appeared on a subject of literary history, is written by a native of one country, in the language of another, on the affairs of a third.'

"Nothing, sir, but your own extreme modesty, and impartial justice, would have blinded you so far as to have prevented you discovering that this must be a more faithful picture of yourself than it can be of Mr. Tenhove's imperfect performance, omitting *the language of a third*.

"In my own copy of your work, I shall certainly insert the quotation in lieu of *Testimonia Auctorum*.

"Give me leave to thank you (for your own sake too) for your improvement of the two lines beginning with *imagined evils*: you have completely satisfied me, sir; and since I find that you can correct as masterly as compose, I believe, that, with all my admiration and respect, I shall be impertinent enough to point out any new faults, if I can discover them, in your second volume.

"I hope, by this sincere sketch of my sentiments, I have so entirely convinced you of them that I can have no occasion to profess again how much

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obliged, and most delighted, and most obedient, humble Servant,

"ORFORD."

That Lord Orford, in the commendations thus freely bestowed, did not intend merely to flatter the vanity of

the author, may be inferred from the following letter addressed by the Rev. Mark Noble to Mr. Roscoe; from which it appears that his Lordship expressed his approbation to others in language almost equally strong: —

“ Though an entire stranger to you, I have ventured to transcribe part of a letter, which I have just received from Lord Orford, in answer to one I wrote when I presented his Lordship with a copy of my *Memoirs of the Medici Family*. Such praise from so great a judge must, I am certain, be highly gratifying.

“ Had I not been in the habit of keeping my letters, and this which I have received related to various other circumstances, I believe I should have sent you the original. I am extremely mortified that the distance precludes me waiting upon you, a small one would not. I should have been happy in your acquaintance, still more so in your friendship; but I am keeping you too long from the praises you so justly merit.

“ Extract of Lord Orford’s letter to me, dated from Berkeley Square, Jan. 12th, 1797: —

“ ‘ I have received, Sir, your “*History of the Medici*,” and am much obliged to you for it; it is well, and judiciously, and impartially written, and a satisfactory supplement to Mr. Roscoe’s *Lorenzo*, who, I think, is by far the best of our historians, both for beauty and style, and for deep reflections; and his translations of poetry are equal to the originals.’ ”

Another nobleman, distinguished by his attachment to the arts, as much as by the singularity of his character, expressed in lively terms his approbation of Mr. Roscoe’s labours. The Earl of Bristol, then resident at Rome, addressed to Mr. Cadell, the publisher of the “*Life of Lorenzo*,” the following note, in the month of January, 1797: —

“Lord Bristol’s compliments to Mr. Cadell, and begs to know the place of residence of Mr. Roscoe, the ingenious, learned, and elegant author of the ‘Life of Lorenzo de’ Medici’ — what is his profession — what his resources in life — what his connection — and what present of books, pictures, or statues might be most welcome to him?”

In answer to this generous and unlooked for proposal, Mr. Roscoe addressed to Mr. Cadell the following letter: —

“The note from the Earl of Bristol, which you have been so kind as to send me to-day, does me the greatest honour, and demands my warmest acknowledgments.

“I am happy in the present opportunity, by your means, of conveying to his Lordship my most grateful thanks for the generous intentions he has expressed towards me, and of assuring his Lordship with the deepest sense of his goodness, that as I had no motive in publishing my work but a sincere desire of promoting the cause of letters, and of doing justice to a great and neglected character, so the approbation of such an acknowledged judge in works of taste and literature, as the Earl of Bristol, is the highest compensation which I can possibly receive.”

A few months afterwards, Lord Bristol addressed to Mr. Roscoe a letter expressing in the warmest terms his admiration of the “Life of Lorenzo.”

“It is impossible to read your elegant and most interesting history of that ornament of human nature, Lorenzo de’ Medicis, and not feel at the same time a kind of triumphant enthusiasm that we possess a contemporary writer of such superior talents and such indefatigable industry, with a choice of the most interesting, instructive, animating subjects that can improve his countrymen and honour himself.

“Your documents are as new as they are authentic, and as interesting from the subjects as from the writer; and I have only to lament, that, being doomed, from a very frail state of health, to drag many years in a southern climate, I have not been the fortunate person to furnish so splendid and so useful an historian with those precious documents of which he has made so masterly an use.

“In the mean time I venture to exhort you, ‘*Perge ut incepisti,*’ and take for your next theme a subject still more extensive, still more exalted, and, of course, still more worthy of your very eminent abilities. ’Tis the sequel of Lorenzo that I propose to you, in the life of his son, Leo X. You see at once, Sir, what a glorious, interesting, animating era it embraces; and who so fit to paint the manhood of arts, of science, of religious reformation, as that happy and elegant writer who has so satisfactorily sketched and delineated their infancy?

“If, during my abode at Rome, I can in any way serve you by my connection with the Vatican Librarian, you may command me.”

In another letter, written soon after the foregoing, Lord Bristol urged Mr. Roscoe to visit Italy, offering him, at the same time, the use of his apartments at Rome, or at Naples. This invitation opened a tempting prospect to Mr. Roscoe; but his situation compelled him to decline so gratifying an excursion.

“It will not seem strange to your Lordship,” he says, in answer, “that I should feel some desire to visit a portion of the earth which has been so frequently present to my imagination, or that this desire should be increased by the accommodation so generously proposed to me by your Lordship. But, however forcible these inducements may be, there are others which are still more powerful, and which prohibit me from indulging even a distant

expectation of such an excursion. With the claims of a wife and eight children on my attention, I should feel little gratification in any pleasures which required a long absence from home, whilst the improvement of an extensive tract of waste moss land in the vicinity of Manchester calls for my constant superintendence. To say the truth, too, the striking picture your Lordship has given of the great seat of arms in ancient, and of arts in modern times, might almost shake the resolution of any one who was not determined, like Orpheus of old, to drag the object of his adoration from the jaws of hell itself. Under these united impressions, I must relinquish all idea of availing myself of your Lordship's goodness, assuring you, however, that I shall always hold it in the most grateful remembrance."

The sheets of the "Life of Lorenzo" were also communicated to the late Marquis of Lansdowne, and by him to Sir Samuel Romilly and M. Dumont. "I have had," says that nobleman, in a letter to Mr. Roscoe, "a gouty attack upon my stomach, which, though it has not confined me, has indisposed me to the least exertion, and made it a grievance to me so much as to take up a pen. But it did not prevent me a moment from reading the sheets which Edwards sent me. I assure you that I was quite delighted with them, and so were two much better judges, to whom I took the liberty of showing them. One is a counsel, Mr. Romilly, a particular friend of mine, who I wish was acquainted with you, and you with him; the other is M. Dumont, a Swiss, whom you may read of in the papers as having been a secretary of Mirabeau, and a political agent of mine."

Lord Lansdowne also, with that friendly partiality which distinguished his intercourse with Mr. Roscoe, took an opportunity of publicly eulogising the "Life of

Lorenzo.” “As there is no person,” says Mr. Roscoe, in a letter to his Lordship, “whose opinion I looked up to with so much anxiety as your Lordship’s, so the approbation you have been pleased to express of my book has given me the sincerest satisfaction, which is increased by the distinguished honour it received from your adverting to it in so favourable a manner in the House of Lords.”

On the publication of the work Lord Lansdowne expressed his approbation of it in the following terms:—

“Assured on all hands of the success of ‘Lorenzo de’ Medici,’ which has been far beyond any book I remember (and Mr. Hume’s publication of his first volumes is within my memory), we determined to reserve it till we went to Wycombe, and could have the full enjoyment of it free from interruption; and I can venture to assure you that great as our prejudice was in its favour, it exceeded our expectation. Miss Fox has begun to translate the prose pieces in the Appendix, and I am determined to learn Italian without delay. In the mean time we are all suitors to you, to put us into a course of Italian reading, but I am sorry that we must, for the present confine ourselves to translations. I do not know what the reason is, but Guicciardini is the only book of reputation which I have not been able to get through with pleasure.”

From various other quarters Mr. Roscoe received the most gratifying expressions of approbation. “Permit me,” says Dr. Aikin, in a letter addressed to him in May, 1796, “to return you my share of thanks for the pleasure you have communicated to the public by your admirable ‘History of Lorenzo.’ I have heard but one opinion of it, that it is the most elegant and interesting publication of the literary kind that has appeared in our language for many years; and sincerely am I rejoiced,

that a merit which has been so long conspicuous in the circle of your friends, is now fairly displayed and made manifest to the world at large."

Amongst these numerous and gratifying testimonies to the merits of the "Life of Lorenzo de' Medici," the most singular and unlooked for was that given by the author of "The Pursuits of Literature." The political sentiments which distinguished that celebrated work, and the severity with which every writer of liberal, or, as they were then termed, of jacobinical principles, was treated in its pages, seemed to render it very improbable that the writings of Mr. Roscoe would meet with a more favourable consideration. But the attachment of the author to Italian literature, and his gratitude for the contributions made to it by Mr. Roscoe, overcame even the violence of party feeling, and drew from him the following eulogistic notice:—

"But hark! what solemn strains from Arno's vales
 Breathe raptures wafted on the Tuscan gales!
 LORENZO rears again his awful head,
 And feels his ancient glories round him spread;
 The Muses starting from their trance revive,
 And at their ROSCOE'S bidding wake and live."

To these lines the following note was appended:—
 "See the 'Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, called the Magnificent, by William Roscoe.' I cannot but congratulate the public upon this great and important addition to classical history, which I regard as a phenomenon in literature, in every point of view.

"It is pleasant to consider a gentleman not under the auspices of an university, nor beneath the shade of academic bowers, but in the practice of the law, and business of great extent, and resident in the remote commercial town of Liverpool (where nothing is heard of

but Guinea ships, slaves, blacks, and merchandise), investigating and describing the rise and progress of every polite art in Italy, at the revival of learning, with acuteness, depth, and precision, with the spirit of the poet and the solidity of the historian.

“For my own part I have not terms sufficient to express my admiration of his genius and erudition, or my gratitude for the amusement and information I have received. I may add that the manner in which Mr. Roscoe procured from the libraries at Florence many of the various inedited manuscripts with which he has enriched the appendix to his history, was singularly curious; not from a fellow or traveller of the dilettanti, but from a commercial man in the intervals of his employment.

“I shall not violate the dignity of the work by slight objections to some modes of expression, or even to a few words, or to some *occasional sentiments* in the historian of *a republic*. But I recommend it to our country as a work of unquestionable genius and of uncommon merit. It adds the name of Roscoe to the very first rank of English classical historians.”

To the honour of this highly flattering notice Mr. Roscoe could not be insensible, proceeding as it did from a person eminently skilled in the same studies in which he himself delighted. He therefore thought it proper to express, to the unknown author of the poem,* the

* Much discussion has taken place with regard to the author of the “Pursuits of Literature,” who, like “Junius,” still remains involved in obscurity.

The following passage from a letter from Mrs. Riddell, dated 20th September, 1800, may serve to amuse those who are curious on the subject:—

“Do your absent friends the justice to believe that they can think of you, and admire you, at a distance; those who know you personally and those who know you by your works alone. There

gratification he had experienced at the manner in which his literary labours had been treated. At the same time, as a letter of thanks and compliments only might seem to convey a more general approval of the principles promulgated in the poem, than in truth Mr. Roscoe felt, he undertook the difficult task of limiting the approbation which he expressed. He likewise availed himself of the opportunity to correct some errors with regard to himself, into which the author of "The Pursuits of Literature" had fallen.

"Mr. Roscoe takes the liberty of presenting his sincere acknowledgments to the author of the 'Pursuits of Literature,' for the great pleasure and information he has derived from his very original, learned, and entertaining work; and is happy, at the same time, in an opportunity of expressing his grateful sense of the honour done him,

is one of the latter description in my neighbourhood just now *that must be nameless*, whose tribute of respect has been already paid in one of the most extraordinary productions that has been given to the world for a long while (I need not mention the 'Pursuits of Literature'). I know you were not insensible to it. I have had the pleasure of passing three or four months in the almost uninterrupted society of the very accomplished writer and scholar at whose feet the *reputation* of this work is generally laid, and with whom the envy and malevolence, as well as the admiration, now rest. I have had more questions asked me about you than I was well able to answer, from that quarter, but I could report nothing that did not seem to confirm the opinion conveyed in his very elegant application of a line from Vida:—

"Huic Musæ indulgent omnes, hunc pascit Apollo."

"I must add one piece of information that will make you smile. 'The vine-covered hills and gay valleys of France,' and its sister, 'Unfold, Father Time,' I ventured to show to the severe censor above alluded to, a day or two ago, who not only passes with unwonted toleration over 'a few occasional sentiments of that tendency in the historian of a republic,' but condescends to read these with delight, making every decent allowance for the poetical privilege."

in the very favourable notice taken in that poem of the 'Life of Lorenzo de' Medici;' and which is the more estimable, inasmuch as the author of the 'Pursuits of Literature' has so fully evinced, to every unprejudiced reader, his own thorough acquaintance with the various subjects which Mr. Roscoe has there had occasion to discuss.

"As Mr. Roscoe has just observed that a new and complete edition of the 'Pursuits of Literature,' with corrections and improvements, is now in the press, he thinks it incumbent on him to point out some inaccuracies respecting himself, which would have been of no moment, had not the author of the 'Pursuits of Literature' placed him before the public in so favourable a light. After having mentioned these particulars, he submits it to the author's judgment, whether they are sufficiently important to merit correction in the edition now proposed.

"In the first place, Mr. Roscoe begs leave to assure the author of the 'Pursuits of Literature' that he is not the author of the letter published under the name of 'Jasper Wilson,' nor had any connection whatever with the writing or publication of that work. At the same time, he wishes it to be understood, that he makes this avowal only for the sake of truth, and not from the apprehension of any imputation which might arise from his being considered as the author of that performance, which he conceives to be not only strictly constitutional, but as deserving, in a high degree, the serious attention of every real friend to his country.

"Mr. Roscoe also begs leave to notice another inaccuracy in the third part of the 'Pursuits of Literature;' viz. that the materials for the 'Life of Lorenzo de' Medici' were collected abroad by a commercial man in

the intervals of his employment. If this, indeed, were the fact, Mr. Roscoe would think, with the author of the 'Pursuits of Literature,' that it would by no means detract either from his book or himself, but this not being the case, Mr. Roscoe thinks it incumbent on him to notice it. The truth is, that Mr. Clarke, the gentleman referred to, (and who, to an intimate acquaintance with most of the European tongues, unites a thorough knowledge of the ancient languages,) was absent from home for upwards of seven years, in Italy, and other parts of the Continent; first, on account of his health, and afterwards for the same object that forms the title of the excellent poem before referred to, without any other business whatever. Mr. Roscoe observed, soon after the publication of the 'Life of Lorenzo,' a paragraph in one of the public papers, stating, that the book was written by a Liverpool merchant, with materials collected by an outrider, or to that effect. He did not think it worth his while to contradict the report of the day, though it was erroneous both as to him and his friend: but the 'Pursuits of Literature' will reach posterity; and, as Mr. Roscoe now hopes, through the partiality of the author, to 'pursue the triumph and partake the gale,' he is unwilling, so far as depends on himself, to give permanency to error.

"Mr. Roscoe would not think that he acted on this occasion with that candour, which he hopes it will always be his endeavour to maintain, did he not, in expressing his admiration of the "Pursuits of Literature," avow a difference of opinion with respect to some of the political subjects there discussed; consequently, with respect to the strictures on some distinguished characters, whose merits seem to have been measured by a political rather than by a literary standard. 'Politics,' as the

author of the 'Pursuits of Literature' observes, 'are temporary, but wit is eternal;' but if these be the perishable parts of his work, they are the only parts that will perish. It would, however, be unpardonable in Mr. Roscoe to object to that freedom of opinion which the author of the 'Pursuits of Literature' has in so handsome a manner conceded to himself; nor does he conceive that the difference, to which he has ventured to allude, is a difference in principles. The sound learning, and extensive acquaintance, of the author of the 'Pursuits of Literature,' both with modern and ancient history, are an ample pledge that he could not for a moment entertain sentiments adverse to the rational liberty, improvement, and happiness of mankind; even if this were not sufficiently evinced, as it certainly is, by numerous passages in his work. Of the best mode of obtaining these advantages, thinking men may be allowed to doubt, and good men may chance to differ—happy, indeed, if they would recollect, that, of all the calamities that can befall a nation, a spirit of mutual jealousy and vindictive resentment is the worst. Mr. Roscoe respectfully takes his leave of the author of the 'Pursuits of Literature,' with assuring him, in his own emphatic words, expressed in his last note, 'That the most ardent wish of his heart is a *secure peace* after a war for ever to be deplored, bloody, fatal, and expensive, beyond example.' And though Mr. Roscoe cannot join in the opinion that this war was *inevitable*, he hopes, that his wishes for the termination of it, and for the future union, tranquillity, and prosperity of this country, will not on that account be considered as less sincere."

To this communication the author of the "Pursuits of Literature" sent the following answer, written in that

feigned hand which he made the medium of his communications.

“The Author of the ‘Pursuits of Literature’ presents his compliments to Mr. Roscoe, and returns him many thanks for the favour of his obliging letter. He requests Mr. Roscoe’s acceptance of the new edition of his poem, with many corrections and additions. He hopes it will be found not unworthy of another perusal.

“The introductory letter is entirely new. The author of the ‘Pursuits of Literature’ *only* observed, that Mr. Roscoe was presented by Mr. Clarke with some of the poems in the Appendix, not in his ‘History of Lorenzo.’

“The author continues the same high opinion of Mr. Roscoe’s work. In political matters he differs a little.

“The hint about Jasper Wilson’s letter was reprinted before Mr. Roscoe’s note was received. If there should be any other editions, it shall be attended to. The author of the ‘P. of L.’ wishes Mr. Roscoe health, happiness, and the enjoyment of his well-earned and well-deserved literary honours; but fears he never may have the satisfaction of seeing him. The author will be happy to know if the parcel is received by Mr. Roscoe.”

It would occupy too much space to insert in this place the various gratifying criticisms which Mr. Roscoe received from his literary correspondents. A few extracts from the letters of persons of taste and learning may, however, be considered as properly admissible. The following passage is from a letter addressed to Mr. Roscoe by Mr. J. C. Walker, the author of the “History of Italian Tragedy:” — “Allow me, Sir, to embrace this opportunity of offering you my warmest thanks for

the pleasure and interesting information which I derived from the perusal of your Life of 'Lorenzo de' Medici.' It is, in my opinion, one of the finest pieces of biography in the English, or perhaps in any other language. It is also a clear, elegant, and highly satisfactory account of the rise of literature and the *belle arti* in modern Italy. A hermit among the mountains of Wicklow, literary intelligence and new publications are slow in reaching me: however, soon after the appearance of your work, my friend Mr. Hayley recommended it to me as a performance of singular merit in every point of view, and I then, as you may suppose, lost no time in obtaining a copy."

Fuseli, whose erudition and knowledge of art made him a very competent judge of many parts of the work, thus mentions it:—

"So much had I written when your dear epistle from Buxton found me; a balm to my wounded and over-balanced mind: 'Ecce iterum Crispinus!' But let me, if possible, forget my cursed self for one moment, and thank you for the genuine pleasure your book has given me. I value it not, you know, because its publication has been eminently successful, but because it deserves that success, and more; and does to you, and to my friendship for you, infinite honour. I am perhaps not so great a friend to Lorenzo as you; perhaps I may think on some other points, more closely connected with my pursuits, somewhat differently from you; but, take the whole together, there is no writer with whom, on all the various topics he treats, I coincide more heartily than with you. The style is, in my eyes, original, ample without being loquacious, pointed without being epigrammatic, and sententious without affectation.

“As it is likely I shall immediately review it (you know for whom), I reserve finding fault with you for that lucubration.

“The head of Lorenzo prefixed is admirable; you could never have got so good a thing here; but I am very much mistaken if, by invigorating a few traits, it would not make an excellent head of Richard III.”

But it was from Dr. Parr that Mr. Roscoe received one of the most gratifying, and certainly the most valuable, communications on the subject of his new work. That learned and accomplished scholar had no sooner possessed himself of the volumes, than he applied himself to the critical perusal of them, with a degree of industry and accuracy which few persons would have been capable of bestowing. The result of his labours, comprised in many folio sheets of paper, containing corrections of the Latin quotations and documents, observations on the English narrative, and various literary notices, suggestions, and remarks, applicable to different parts of the book, he laid before Mr. Roscoe.

The pleasure which this task afforded Dr. Parr, is described by one of his pupils. “I well recollect* the manner in which Dr. Parr devoured every page of Roscoe’s ‘Life of Lorenzo de’ Medici.’ After his first perusal of the book, he went through it again with me, to whom he dictated numerous critical observations and suggestions, which he enclosed in a complimentary letter to Mr. Roscoe; and which, I believe, led to a friendly intercourse between the Doctor and that gentleman.”

The following letter announced these valuable communications: —

* Field’s Memoirs of Dr. Parr, p. 440.

“For the liberty I am going to take with a gentleman whom I have not the honour personally to know, I have no other, and probably I could find no better apology, than the frankness which ought to subsist between literary men upon subjects of literature. Your ‘Life of Lorenzo de’ Medici’ had been often mentioned to me by critics whose approbation every writer would be proud to obtain; and as the course of reading which I pursued about thirty years ago had made me familiar with the works of Poggius, Pico of Mirandola, Politian, and other illustrious contemporaries of Lorenzo, I eagerly seized the opportunity of borrowing your celebrated publication from a learned friend at Oxford. You will pardon my zeal, Sir, and you may confide in my sincerity, when I declare to you, that the contents of your book far surpassed my expectation, and amply rewarded the attention with which I perused them. You have thrown the clearest and fullest light upon a period most interesting to every scholar. You have produced much that was unknown, and, to that which was known, you have given perspicuity, order, and grace. You have shown the greatest diligence in your researches, and the purest taste in your selection; and, upon the characters and events which passed in review before your inquisitive and discriminating mind, you have united sagacity of observation, with correctness, elegance, and vigour of style. For the credit of our national curiosity and national learning, I trust that the work will soon reach a second edition; and, if this should be the case, I will, with your permission, send you a list of mistakes which I have found in some Latin passages, and which, upon seeing them, you will certainly think worthy of consideration. Perhaps I shall proceed a little further, in pointing out two or three expressions which seem to me

capable of improvement, and in stating my reasons for dissenting from you upon a very few facts of very little importance.”

Mr. Roscoe, in acknowledging the receipt of this friendly letter, expressed the readiness and satisfaction with which he was prepared to receive the promised criticisms; and shortly afterwards Dr. Parr enclosed them to him, accompanied by the following letter:—

“I am determined to lose no time in acknowledging my good fortune upon the acquisition of a correspondent whose candour is worthy of his talents, and whose letters are fraught with all the elegance and all the vigour which decorate his publication. . . . I rejoice, Sir, not so much upon your account, as upon that of your readers, to whom you have opened so large and so delightful a field of entertainment and instruction, when you tell me that the ‘Life of Lorenzo’ has already gone through three editions, and that it will soon appear in an octavo form. The edition open before me is that of 1796. I borrowed it from the learned librarian of New College, Oxford; and I shall return it next week, because it belongs to a society, where you will have many readers very capable of appreciating your merit, and well disposed to acknowledge and to proclaim it. . . . By what the ancients would have called the *afflatus divinus*, I anticipated your willingness to let me speak with freedom; and your letter justifies me in ascribing to you that candour which is the sure criterion and happy effect of conscious and eminent worth. Indeed, Sir, I saw in your work vestiges of excellence, which in my estimation is of a much higher order than taste and learning. I found deep reflection, and therefore I expected to find a dignified and virtuous moderation in the science of politics. I met with sentiments of

morality, too pure to be suspected of hypocrisy, too just and elevated to be charged with ostentation; and give me leave to add, that they acted most powerfully on the best sympathies of my soul. If, in this season of old corruptions and new refinements, a Fénélon were to rise up among us; and if, by a conversion in the understandings and hearts of sovereigns, not less miraculous than that recorded of Paul, he were appointed to train up the heir of a throne to solid wisdom and sublime virtue, sure I am that he would eagerly put your book into the hands of his pupil, and bid him —

“Nocturnâ versare manu, versare diurnâ.”

“I am no stranger to the sweets of literary and social intercourse between kindred spirits; and therefore I wonder not that you call Dr. Currie your friend. Present my best compliments to him, and believe me,” &c.

“I last night,” says Mr. Roscoe, in reply, “had the pleasure of receiving your packet, containing your corrections and observations on the ‘Life of Lorenzo de’ Medici,’ and, without losing a moment, began the perusal of them. The great length to which they appeared to extend, alarmed and surprised me; the former, from an idea that my mistakes were almost innumerable; the latter, that the cleansing of such an Augæan stable had not entirely overcome your patience. . . . It is not incumbent on me to express the obligations I feel for the great labour and attention which you have bestowed upon my work, and which acquire a double value from that union of free remark and friendly expression which constantly occurs, and which, even if I were so weak or so ungrateful as to feel the slightest impulse of dissatisfaction against any one but myself for my own errors, have so effectually removed every emotion of the kind, that I

can justly say I have perused the remarks from beginning to end with uniform pleasure, approbation, and respect.”

From the periodical critics of this country, the ‘Life of Lorenzo de’ Medici’ met with almost unqualified praise. In the *Analytical Review*, published by Johnson, of St. Paul’s Church-yard, it was reviewed by Fuseli, who at that time was one of the most active contributors to the work. The judgment of one who, like Fuseli, had been long in habits of friendship with the author, and who had avowed to him his intention of writing the review, can hardly be referred to as an impartial test of the merits of the publication; yet the following character of it, given at the conclusion of the critique, will perhaps be thought, by more disinterested judges, to be not incorrect:—

“Notwithstanding the modesty of the title, the ‘Life of Lorenzo de’ Medici’ unites the general history of the times and the political system of the most memorable country in Europe, with the characters of the most celebrated men, and the rise and progress of science and arts. The greatest praise of the historian and biographer, impartiality, might be called its most prominent feature, were it not excelled by the humanity of the writer, who touches with a hand, often too gentle, those blemishes which he scorns to disguise. It is impossible to read any part of his performance, without discovering, that an ardent love for the true interests of society, and a fervid attachment to virtue and real liberty, have furnished his motives of choice, and every where directed his pen. The diligence and correctness of judgment by which the matter is selected and distributed, notwithstanding the scantiness, obscurity, or partiality of the documents that were to be consulted, are equalled only by the amenity with which he has varied his subjects, and the surprising

extent of his information. Simplicity, perspicuity, and copiousness, are the leading features of his style; often sententious without being abrupt, and decided without an air of dogma; that it should have been sometimes verbose, sometimes lax or minute, is less to be wondered at, than that it should never be disgraced by affectation or pretence of elegance. If we be not always led by the nearest road, our path is always strewn with flowers; and if it be the highest praise of writing to have made delight the effectual vehicle of instruction, our author has attained it."

The success of the work on the Continent was no less striking than in England. From the scholars of Italy, who were best able to appreciate its merits, it met with a very favourable reception. The learned Fabroni, with a candour not inferior to his erudition, was the first to make it known to his countrymen; and though he was on the point of presenting to them a translation of his own 'Life of Lorenzo,' written by him in Latin, yet, on the perusal of the English work, he abandoned that design, and prevailed upon a young gentleman of Pisa, the Cavaliero Gaetano Mecherini, to give a version into Italian of the English life. The translation was accordingly published at Pisa, in the year 1799,* under the express patronage of Fabroni, who, in the following year, addressed a letter to Mr. Roscoe, congratulating him on the success of his labours.—"La celebrità," says that distinguished scholar, "che vi siete acquistata colla Vita di Lorenzo il Magnifico fa che io non mi penta di avervi dato un impulso di scriverla con quella

* Vita di Lorenzo de' Medici detto il Magnifico, del Dottore Guglielmo Roscoe; versione dall' Inglese, 4 tom. 8vo. Pisa, 1799. See the Illustrations of the Life of Lorenzo, p. 10. and the Appendix, No. III.

ch' io publicai del medesimo. Voi avete supplito alle mie mancanze, e se avessi saputo in tempo il disegno vostro, avrei potuto trarre da quei medesimi archivj da cui presi molti preziosi monumenti relativi al mio soggetto, altre memorie che avrebbero potuto rendere anche più copiosa l'opera vostra. Questa però e tale da non lasciare nulla da desiderare. Permettetemi che me ne congratuli con voi, con me, e coll' Italia nostra; e questa vi sarà anche più obbligata se, come sento, darete anche al pubblico la Vita di Leon X, sulla quale anch' io ho lavorato, pubblicando due anni fa il libro intitolato *Leonis X. Pontificis Maximi Vita.*"* The approving judgment of so celebrated a scholar as Fabroni was in the highest degree gratifying to Mr. Roscoe. "It cannot but give me pleasure," he says, in a letter to Mr. J. C. Walker, "to find that my work has had the good fortune to meet with the approbation of some distinguished scholars of that country (Italy), among whom I have the satisfaction to mention Monsignor Fabroni, Principal of the University of Pisa; to whose valuable 'Life of Lorenzo de' Medici,' and large historical collections on that subject, I have been so much indebted, and from whom I have just received a very obliging letter, offering me all his works, amongst which is a 'Life of Leo X.,' written in Latin, and published by him about two years ago. Fabroni I consider as a well informed, liberal, and judicious historian. His 'Lives of Learned Italians,' of which I have several volumes, is a great and national work, which will do him lasting honour. I look up to him as a sure guide, whenever I travel the same road with him; nor is there any man whose favourable opinion I should have been more anxious to obtain."

* This letter is published in the *Illustrations of the Life of Lorenzo*, Appendix, p. 86.

The venerable Angelo Maria Bandini, who presided for more than half a century over the Laurentian Library at Florence, and to whose labours in the field of literature even the most learned scholars of that country are indebted, also expressed in strong language his admiration of the *Life of Lorenzo*: — “*Eccede troppo la bontà sua verso di me,*” he observes, in answer to a communication from Mr. Roscoe, “*che altro merito non ho verso la sua degna persona, che quello di aver resa la dovuta giustizia all’ opera sua immortale della Vita del Mag^{co}. Lorenzo de’ Medici, uno di quei rari genj che nella rivoluzione dei secoli la natura produce, a confusione dei viventi.*” *

Mecherini’s translation was transmitted to Mr. Roscoe through the Marquis of Douglas, who was at that time travelling on the Continent, and who, immediately upon his return, addressed to Mr. Roscoe the following letter: —

“It is with particular pleasure that I address myself to a man whose extensive information and literary abilities have ensured him the esteem of the public. Nor is his reputation confined to his own country. I have been not a little gratified in hearing the ‘*Life of Lorenzo de’ Medici*’ most highly commended in Tuscany; and, as a proof of the estimation it is there held in, I am desired, by a friend of mine, to transmit the enclosed letter to Liverpool. I should tell you, Sir, that the translation of your work, which ought to accompany it, is not yet conveyed to England. It is packed up in a box of books of mine now at Leghorn. As soon as the case gets to England, I will forward your translation to Lancashire without delay. I shall say nothing of the

* Illustrations of the *Life of Lorenzo*, Appendix, p. 82.

young author who has so industriously sought to make known your work in Italy. He is a young man, a friend of Monsignor Fabroni, and one of the literary society at Pisa; and, being attached to the history of his country, naturally felt a lively sense of gratitude towards one who has investigated so interesting a period of it with so much ingenuity. In any communication, or in any thing that can testify my personal esteem for you, I shall most willingly assist you."

On receiving this communication, Mr. Roscoe immediately addressed to the Cavaliero Mecherini the following letter: —

"I had yesterday the pleasure of receiving, through the kindness of Lord Douglas, your very obliging letter of the 4th of June last, informing me that you had sent me a copy of your translation from the English, of the 'Life of the Mag. Lorenzo de' Medici.' This translation I had, indeed, already seen with the sensations of a parent who finds his offspring returned from a distant journey, improved in his appearance, language, and address. I shall, however, receive with additional pleasure, when it arrives, the copy with which you have honoured me; and shall regard it as a monument of that sincere esteem and attachment which a conformity of studies and pursuits cannot fail to inspire.

"You will readily conceive the satisfaction it must have afforded the author of a work on Italian literature, to find that his labours had been received by the judicious and learned of that country with not only indulgence, but protection and favour; but if there is a person whose approbation I should have wished to have secured beyond that of any other, it is Monsignor Fabroni, who has shown, by his own truly valuable and learned productions, how well he is qualified to judge on those subjects;

and who, in the kind communications with which he has favoured me, has displayed a degree of liberality and candour which have made an indelible impression on my mind, and secured to him my unalterable attachment and respect.

“ With regard to the work which, by your partiality, now appears in an Italian dress, let me be allowed to remark, that although I have observed, on some occasions, a difference of opinion between us, as appears by the Notes you have subjoined, yet, upon the whole, so far from being surprised at this diversity, I cannot but think it extraordinary that, in a work of such length, which has been the subject of consideration to two persons in different countries, of different religious habits, and opportunities of acquirement, there should be, in general, such an union between us, not only in matters of fact, but of judgment. In one instance (vol. iv. p. 112.), I could have wished that the original passage had either been given with the note, or the passage omitted without so pointed a reprehension; but it is of little importance; and I cannot, perhaps, expect that, in a passage where I certainly have not consulted the feelings of a great and respectable body of men, I should experience any extraordinary indulgence to my own.

“ Since the publication of the work which has procured me the honour of your notice, I have employed a considerable portion of my leisure in compiling the ‘Life of Leo X. ;’ in which I have made such progress, that I expect to send the first volume to the press in the course of the ensuing winter. As soon as this is completed, I shall have the pleasure of transmitting you a copy, as well as another for Monsignor Fabroni, to whose learned work on the same subject I shall stand greatly indebted, particularly in the more advanced stages of my

narrative. As this publication will probably extend to three or four volumes, it will be some time before I can hope to see it completed; but I shall make a particular object of forwarding to you the volumes as they come from the press, and shall think myself much honoured by any observations that may occur to you on the perusal."

Amongst the many other distinguished foreigners who expressed their opinions upon the work was the celebrated Abate Andres. "During my residence in Italy," says Mr. Francis Drake, in a letter addressed to Mr. Roscoe, "I lent your excellent 'Life of Lorenzo de' Medici' to several persons, who were eager to peruse a book which had acquired so much celebrity, and amongst others to the Abbé Andres, a Spanish Jesuit, a gentleman of very extensive reading, and a critic of high reputation in Italy. The enclosed paper contains his opinion of the merits of the work; and I have taken the liberty to transmit it to you, thinking that it might be very flattering and grateful to see how few and how insignificant the inaccuracies are which the Abbé fancied he has discovered in it, perusing it, as he certainly did, with the prejudices of his order and of his religious tenets, and with a jealous desire of diminishing the reputation of a work so superior in every respect to any thing which has been produced by his own countrymen; for, though he was formerly a Jesuit in Spain, I believe he is a Florentine by birth." — "I am equally honoured and obliged," says Mr. Roscoe, in reply to Mr. Drake, "by your communication of the paper of remarks on my 'Life of Lorenzo de' Medici.' I had, indeed, before seen them, through the favour of the Earl of Bristol; but, as they were anonymous, your letter gratifies me by acquainting me with the name of the author, which

I was very desirous of knowing. With the very learned and extensive work of the Abate Andres, ‘Dell’ Origine, Progressi, e Stato attuale d’ ogni Letteratura,’ I am well acquainted, and I think myself particularly fortunate that I should have obtained, in any degree, the approbation of so well-informed a critic, who, since the death of Tiraboschi of Modena, is, perhaps, the best literary historian in Italy. At the same time it must be confessed that his general approbation is pretty much counteracted by his particular criticisms, in some of which his reprehensions seem rather stronger than the occasion requires.”

The general commendation expressed by the Abate Andres is not inferior to that of the other Italian critics. — “Il piacere con cui ho letta la Vita di Lorenzo il Magnifico del Sig. Roscoe, e la sorpresa e meraviglia che m’ ha recato il vedere in un Inglese non mai venuto in Italia tanta cognizione e sì pieno possesso della letteratura Italiana, mi fanno sperare che tale opera, coronata dagli applausi de’ Letterati, otterà nuove edizioni, e desiderare che venga in esse purgata d’ alcuni lievi difetti osservabili soltanto perchè si trovano in mezzo a tanti e sì belli pregi; nelle avvenenti bellezze si rendono sensibili i più piccioli nei.”* The particular remarks of the learned critic are noticed by Mr. Roscoe in the “Illustrations of the Life of Lorenzo,” where he has, at some length, defended himself against them.

The Abate Jacopo Morelli, principal librarian of St. Mark at Venice, and the Canon Domenico Moreni, of Florence, likewise bore their testimony to the merits of Mr. Roscoe’s work. The latter, in his “Bibliografia Storico-Ragionata della Toscana,” has thus spoken of it:

* Illustrations of the Life of Lorenzo, Appendix No. IV.

— “Contiene questa Vita l’ Istoria di gran parte della Famiglia Medicea, * * * un opera sì bella che sembra fatta per l’ Italia, e che nell’ Italia dovea esser fatta.”* In the year 1809, Moreni edited a volume † which he dedicated to Mr. Roscoe, and in which he expressed, in high terms, his favourable opinion of the “Life of Lorenzo.” — “Ex quo Laurentii Medicis cognomento Magnifici, Artium et Platonicae Philosophiae Restauratoris Eximii, Vitam typis Liverpoolianis impressam promulgâsti, Italorum omnium et præcipuè Florentinorum admirationem, benevolentiam, et maximam tui existimationem tibi conciliâsti. * * * Alia quidem extat Laurentii vita, quam non multis abhinc annis Angelus Fabronius, Academiae Pisanæ Præses, conscripsit, eaque prorsus laudanda tum rerum delectu, tum elegantia Latini sermonis; at Tua latius sese extendit, et præter propria Laurentii gesta, quidquid ad rem tum literariam, tum politicam, tum bellicam illius ævi pertinet, miro nexu comprehendit, ita ut non Italiae solum, sed totius fermè Europæ historia potiùs appellari queat. Quapropter literaria Florentinorum historia maximam inde lucem acquisivit. Revera plures magni momenti quæstiones optimè elucidas, et resolvis, scriptores inter se discrepantes concilias, eximios viros, eosque plures eâ ætate, tum scientiâ, tum eruditione pollentès, et Laurentio, Mediceæque familiae acceptissimos enumeras, eorumque scripta percenses, et illustras, monumenta insuper perantiqua, et pretiosissima adeo accuratè detegis, et interpretaris, ut etsi in regionibus longe a nobis dissitis degas, in mediâ tamen urbe nostrâ scripsisse videaris. Hanc vero adeo celebras, adeo laudibus exornas, ut sapientiæ

* Illustrations of the Life of Lorenzo, p. 39.

† Petri Angelii Borgæi de Bello Senensi, 8vo. Flor. 1809.

sedem, doctrinæ emporium, ac universæ prope Italiæ Athenæum tunc temporis fuisse affirmare non dubites.”

In Germany, as in Italy, the *Life of “Lorenzo de’ Medici”* met with many admirers, and was fortunate enough to find a translator in the celebrated Kurt Sprengel, of Halle, a name well known both in the scientific and the literary world.* That translation appeared at Berlin, in the year 1797, and was enriched by the editor with many valuable annotations. A dedication by Sprengel to his brother was prefixed to it, containing an ingenious parallel between the characters of Lorenzo and of Pericles.† At the conclusion of the dedication, the writer has expressed himself in the following manner with regard to the general merits of the *Life* : —

“ I received the original of this work from my friend Forster in July last, to whom it was sent from England as a very interesting work. Not only my predilection for Italian literature, the study of which, as you know, has been the most agreeable employment of my leisure hours, but still more my profession, which embraces the sciences connected with physiology, prompted me to

* The character of this translation is described in a letter (dated 27th March, 1801,) from M. Hufeland, professor of jurisprudence at Jena, addressed to Mr. Roscoe. — “ La traduction Allemande est tombé dans des mains bien habiles. L’auteur est M. Curt Sprengel, professeur en médecine et directeur du jardin botanique à l’université de Halle, savant justement estimé à cause de sa profonde connoissance dans l’Allemagne pour être à nul autre second. Il est outre cela extrêmement versé dans la littérature Italienne des siècles passés. Sa traduction de votre ouvrage est très-estimée ; il n’y a que peu de morceaux qu’on a censuré comme ne rendant pas le sens de l’original, à la manière la plus exacte. Il a enrichi cette traduction des notes dont on fait l’éloge. Je n’en puis pas juger par mes propres yeux, n’ayant pas la traduction dans ce moment devant moi.”

† Illustrations of the *Life of Lorenzo*, Appendix No. I.

peruse this work with the greatest attention. As the author frequently refers to Fabroni, I endeavoured to procure that work likewise, and obtained the loan of it from a friend abroad. At first, I was, like Roscoe, inclined to translate Fabroni, and to take the additions from Roscoe; the more so, as the frequent digressions of the latter appeared to me to be detrimental to the unity of the work. But I soon found that the Italian was hesitating and partial in his judgments, and that he wanted, above all, the spirit of free discussion and extensive knowledge of the Englishman. I found, too, that the principal advantage of Fabroni's work, as a careful supplier of original documents, the most important of which Roscoe had already inserted in his work, must be dispensed with in a German publication; and, finally that the want of unity and of a fixed plan, which appeared to me on first opening Roscoe's work, was only imaginary, and vanished upon a mature and impartial investigation. I found, lastly, so many charms in the composition of the Englishman, that I readily preferred translating his work to rendering Fabroni into German, and endeavoured to supply out of Fabroni such references only as I found wanting in Roscoe."

The success of the work in Germany was communicated to Dr. Currie by one of his medical correspondents in that country. "You will have heard," says Dr. Currie to a friend in America, "of the great success of Mr. Roscoe's *Life of Lorenzo*. It far exceeds the hopes of his most sanguine friends. A third English edition is preparing, and two translations into German are advertised in the *Literary Gazette of Jena*: the one by Forster, who went round the world with Cook; the other by K. Sprengel, author of the "*Authentic History of Medicine*;" both professors at Halle. The

account given of it in this *Literary Gazette* (the first *German Review*) is extremely flattering."*

It was not until the year 1801, that Mr. Roscoe was informed of the translation of his work which had appeared in Germany. On learning the fact, he immediately addressed to Professor Sprengel the following letter:—

“It is only a few days since I had the pleasure of knowing that a work I published some years ago—‘*The Life of Lorenzo de’ Medici*’—had been honoured by a translation into the German language, to which I find prefixed your very respectable name. Accept my thanks, Sir, not for the choice you made of the work,—for you were led to that by higher motives than a personal consideration for its author,—but for the abilities and learning you have shown in supplying my deficiencies, and particularly for the beautiful parallel drawn in your dedication between the character of Lorenzo and that of Pericles; of the golden age of Florence, with that of Athens,—a subject on which I knew my own deficiencies too well to venture, and which I rejoice to find executed with a degree of feeling, learning, and taste, which stamp a real value on the work. The enthusiasm which I felt in the composition of my history, and in the contemplation of the character of the great man who forms its principal subject, is again revived by the just commendations you have bestowed upon him; and in this similarity of sentiments, and of studies—this desire to diffuse and to perpetuate the remembrance of those who have improved, ennobled, and humanised mankind—I feel a bond of union, a principle of attraction, which emboldens me, though a

* *Life of Dr. Currie*, vol. ii. p. 95.

stranger, to request your favourable regard, your esteem, and your friendship, as one who, in a remote part of the world, and under innumerable disadvantages, has experienced similar emotions with yourself, and which he can only regret that it has never been in his power to participate with you.

“I cannot help remarking it as a pleasing circumstance, that in the course of last year I purchased, through the means of a mercantile house here, the Herbarium of the late celebrated Dr. Forster, at Halle, with whom I perceive you have lived in habits of friendship. The specification of this collection had been entrusted to your judgment, and I again recognised you in another capacity. I mention this circumstance to show that our pursuits have another similarity, and that our dispositions (if I may be allowed the expression) touch at more points than one. You will have a pleasure in hearing, that the Forsterian Herbarium is arrived safe at Liverpool, and has given perfect satisfaction; and that its utility will not be confined to an individual, as it is now destined to become one of the chief ornaments of a museum belonging to a botanical garden, now forming in this place by the aid of a public subscription, and which I am in hopes will give an impulse to this most pleasing and attractive study, hitherto so greatly neglected in this part of the world.”

In the year 1799, a French translation of the *Life of Lorenzo* appeared at Paris. The translator, M. François Thurot, in a letter prefixed to the version, containing various criticisms upon the work, accuses the author of viewing his hero with too partial an eye, and of being unfaithful in his representations of the political history of Italy. In other respects, he speaks of the work in more commendatory terms:—“*J’ai trouvé*

comme vous, citoyen, le livre de M. Roscoe extrêmement recommandable, par les idées libérales, qui y sont répandues, par les connoissances étendues, et les recherches profondes qu'il renferme sur l'histoire et sur la littérature de la république de Florence, et même du reste de l'Italie. D'ailleurs, le ton de candeur, qu'y règne partout, la manière noble et décente avec laquelle l'auteur discute ou critique les opinions des écrivains qui l'ont précédé dans la même carrière, inspirent une estime réelle pour son caractère personnel, en même temps que son style harmonieux et élégant, son gout pur et éclairé, donnent de ses talens l'idée la plus avantageuse." *

In America, the Life of Lorenzo was not reprinted till the year 1803, when an edition was published at Philadelphia, by Messrs. Bronson and Chauncey; and the whole impression was immediately disposed of. "It would be a proof of insensibility," says Mr. Roscoe, in a letter to those gentlemen, "of which I am incapable, were I not highly gratified by this extension of my work through a new continent, and by the long list of eminent and respectable persons who, by their liberal encouragement of your proposed edition, have afforded it so unequivocal a testimony of their approbation; and this satisfaction is heightened by the consideration that this is the sentiment of a country where political, civil, and religious liberty are enjoyed in a degree almost unexampled in the history of the human race."

* Illustrations of the Life of Lorenzo, Appendix No. II.

CHAPTER VI.

1796 — 1799.

Mr. Roscoe, dissatisfied with his profession, relinquishes it. — Letters to Mr. Ralph Eddowes — Mr. Rathbone. — Visits London — becomes a member of Gray's Inn. — Society in London. — Letters to Dr. Currie, Mr. Rathbone, and Mr. Daulby. — Lord Orford's death. — Sir Isaac Heard. — Washington's genealogy. — Return to Liverpool. — Translates the "Balia" of L. Tansillo. — The Dutchess of Devonshire. — Sonnet to Mrs. Roscoe. — Letter from Lord Holland. — Dr. Currie's criticism. — Letter to Dr. Wright. — Visit to Mr. Daulby at Rydal Mount — his death — sonnet addressed to him — lines on his death. — Establishment of the Athenæum at Liverpool. — Letters to Mr. Edwards respecting Mr. Coleridge. — Robert Burns — letters respecting him — monody on his death — letter from Dr. Moore. — Publication of third edition of Lorenzo de' Medici. — Letter to Dr. Parr.

THE branch of the profession which circumstances had induced Mr. Roscoe to adopt, was, in many respects, ill suited to his character and tastes; and the desire which he felt to abandon it is frequently expressed in his letters to Mrs. Roscoe, written during those occasional absences from home, which his professional avocations required. In a letter addressed to her some years after the commencement of his practice, he says, — "The more I see of business, the more I lament the weakness of the understanding and the depravity of the human heart, and that sometimes wilful and sometimes involuntary blindness, which prevents the appearance of truth. Would to God I could find myself eased of the weight of business, and restored to your arms! and if I might indulge a still further wish, it should be to retire

with you to some peaceful retreat, where, with a sparing competence, we might live to ourselves, and bid adieu to an employment which preys upon my happiness, and disgusts me with myself and mankind.”

In another letter, also addressed to Mrs. Roscoe, from Carlisle, where he had been disappointed by the result of a business in which he was much interested, he says, —“ Believe me, I am almost disgusted with my profession, as it affords me a continual opportunity of observing the folly and villany of mankind. I must, however, submit to my task till such time as Providence shall think proper to enable me to dispense with it; and as soon as that is the case, it is my fixed resolution to withdraw myself from so hateful an employment. To obtain this desirable end, my own endeavours shall not be wanting, and I trust they will not be in vain. Those needless expenses which have hitherto been a continual drain shall be abolished, and whatever can be obtained by an honourable and upright attention to business shall be secured by economy and prudence.”

Though the success of Mr. Roscoe in his profession had fully equalled his expectations, and had been the means of affording him a very competent livelihood, he continued to look with anxiety for the period when he might feel himself justified in retiring from the anxieties of business. The scheme in which, in the year 1793, he had engaged, in conjunction with Mr. Wakefield, for draining and cultivating an extensive tract of peat-moss in the neighbourhood of Manchester, continued to occupy a considerable share of his attention, and in the ultimate success of this undertaking he felt the greatest confidence. To this source he probably looked for a recompence in relinquishing his profession, — a step which he took in the course of the year 1796, not long after the

publication of his "Life of Lorenzo de' Medici." The motives which led to this change are shortly adverted to in the following extract from a letter to his friend Mr. Ralph Eddowes, of Philadelphia:—

"Since I last addressed you, I have made a very important change, though not a local one, and have entirely relinquished my profession; having, however, first made an arrangement with my late partner, Mr. Lace, productive of some advantage to me. This I have been induced to do rather from a concurrence of many reasons, than from any one predominant circumstance; but I must, in truth, confess that a consciousness that I was not suited for the profession, nor the profession for me, has long hung about me, and that I have taken the first opportunity which has been allowed me of divesting myself of it altogether. Add to this, that my undertaking in the draining of Chat and Trafford mosses bears a favourable aspect; and that I shall be under the necessity of being so frequently absent from Liverpool, as would render it impossible for me to carry on the business of the law with satisfaction either to my clients or myself."

A note to Mr. Rathbone, written about the same time as the preceding letter, manifests very clearly the tone of Mr. Roscoe's mind at the period of this change.

"I am much obliged by the tailpiece to your letter of to-day, though, to say the truth, it amounts to nothing more than calling me (in very friendly terms) an idle and extravagant fellow, who is playing off the artful trick of getting hold of the conveniences and pleasures of life without performing any of its duties. This I relish the worse, as I am not sure that there is not some degree of truth in it; but I am much surer, that to toil and labour for the sake of labouring and toiling, is a

much more foolish part; and that it is the curse of God upon avarice, that he who has given himself up too long to its dominion shall never be able to extricate himself from its chains. Surely man is the most foolish of all animals, and civilised man the most foolish of all men. Anticipation is his curse; and to prevent the contingency of evil, he makes life itself only one continued evil. Health, wisdom, peace of mind, conscience, are all sacrificed to the absurd purpose of heaping up, for the use of life, more than life can employ, under the flimsy pretext of providing for his children, till practice becomes habit, and we labour on till we are obliged to take our departure, as tired of this world as we are unprepared for the rational happiness of the next.

“I have much more to say to you on this subject, but this is not the place for it. I shall therefore leave you to your

‘Double double,
Toil and trouble,
Fire burn, and caldron bubble,’

whilst I go to the arrangement of the fifth class of my plants, and take my chance of a few years in a work-house, some fifty years hence, which I shall think well compensated by having had the lot to live so long.”

Whether at the time of his retiring from business, Mr. Roscoe had any idea of resuming his profession, at some future period, as a barrister, does not appear; but from his silence with regard to such a design in his confidential letters, it may be inferred that no plan of the kind had been arranged. In the month of February, 1797, he visited London; and it was probably during his residence there that he determined to become a member of one of the inns of court, with a view to being called to the bar. He accordingly was entered at Gray’s

Inn, and kept Hilary term, which was the only progress he made towards this new object. The reasons which prevented him from the further prosecution of this design were various. The affairs of his late partnership were not yet finally arranged, his agricultural undertaking required his frequent presence, while that love of retirement, which had prompted him to abandon one branch of the profession, ultimately induced him to relinquish the study of the other. Though late in life for so important a change, it is to be regretted that Mr. Roscoe did not prosecute his intention of being called to the bar, possessing, as he did, those qualities which must in all probability have rendered his success certain.

The literary reputation which he had lately acquired by the publication of the "Life of Lorenzo de' Medici," and the kindness of the Marquis of Lansdowne, who happened at that time to be in town, afforded him the means of forming some new and valuable acquaintances, in the political as well as in the literary world. He had the gratification of becoming personally known to Mr. Fox and Mr. (now Lord) Grey, and of acquiring the friendship of Dr. Moore, the author of "Zeluco." Much of his time was also agreeably spent amongst persons whom he had long known and esteemed, but whose society his distant residence permitted him rarely to enjoy.

In his letters to his friends, Dr. Currie and Mr. Rathbone, he mentions, with pleasure, the various persons whom he had seen. In a letter to the former he says,—

"Your introduction to Dr. Moore was received by him with great kindness, and has been the source of much satisfaction to me. My wife and I dined there on Thursday. The party were Dr., Mrs., and Miss Moore; the Doctor's two sons, James, the surgeon, and Charles,

the lawyer; Mr. Gifford, the poet; Fuseli; *ma femme*, and myself. I hope I need not say our time passed very pleasantly. The Doctor is full of anecdote; Fuseli is a hero in conversation; Charles gave us some good imitations of the oratory of Burke, Dundas, &c.; Gifford is a little, rather common looking man, but shrewd and intelligent, though not very talkative. I have paid the Doctor several morning visits, and he has called on me. At one of these he showed me the original of Burns's life, and several other letters, papers, and poems; all of which, he says, are at your service, if you write the life. He will also consent, I doubt not, to his letters being printed, after having first perused them. Fuseli is an old acquaintance of the Doctor's, whom he calls a good, unctious, sociable, family man.

“I have been frequently with the Marquis (of Lansdowne) at morning visits, and am to dine with him on Tuesday. At one of these morning calls I met with Mr. Grey, and had a good deal of interesting conversation with him and the Marquis; and yesterday I met Mr. Fox there, and had a long discussion on the face of affairs at home and abroad, &c. In these accidental rencontres I consider myself fortunate; but I shall not at present attempt to sketch the conversation that took place. All I shall say is, that opposition, to judge from its leading members, seems to have now no certain system or bond of union. Whether these visits to the Marquis were mere ceremony, or portend some new arrangement, I know not, but presume the former. I left Mr. Grey with the Marquis, but out-sate Mr. Fox, as he instantly left the room when I got up to go away. The people here begin to talk about the French preparations; but nobody seems to care. The fact is, they are too busy to attend to such matters. ‘Two shall be grinding

at the mill,' &c.: you are too well read in the sacred volumes to stand in need of an interpretation."

The following letter was written, a few days afterwards, to Mr. Rathbone: —

"This morning, and at this hour, I was to have had the superlative honour of being introduced to the Duchess of Gordon; but recollecting that I could appear before her Grace in no other capacity than as one of those puppies,

—— 'who dangle up and down,
To fetch and carry sing-song thro' the town,'

I have thought proper to decline the challenge; and instead of acquiring new fashionable acquaintance, shall devote this half hour to old solid friendship.

"How you will envy me, when I tell you, that last Saturday, I had an hour's familiar conversation with Mr. Fox, at the Marquis of Lansdowne's, where I before had accidentally met Mr. Grey. Of these rencontres, I put nothing on paper; not altogether because of the old proverbs, 'Littera scripta manet,' and 'Nescit vox emissa reverti;' nor yet because of the provisions of the *two acts*; but because it would occupy too much of my paper, and require more time than I can at present spare. I dine to-day with the Marquis; but think there will be no company. Should any thing interesting occur, either there or elsewhere, I will again take up my pen.

"The people here are of opinion the French will pay us a visit; but they have no doubt that British courage will, with God's assistance, soon make them repent of their temerity. A shopkeeper in the Strand told me, that as God had fought for us when the enemy appeared off Ireland, He would not surely desert us when they attacked England. What can such a pious people

have to fear from a nation of infidels? When miracles are daily performed in our favour, it seems absurd to have recourse to human means. A few days since, I sent a short paper to 'The Morning Chronicle,' pointing out the necessity of *immediately* adverting to the alternative of peace, whilst it was yet practicable; but it has not been suffered to appear. In fact, every thing is matter of party; and as the ministry set up the cry of danger, the opposition papers take the other side of the question, and affect to consider their wailings as a further pretence to raise loans and impose taxes; and those who have only at heart the real good of the country, without regarding either ministry or opposition, cannot obtain even a hearing. I much fear the predominating idea of men of all parties is *individual, personal* aggrandisement, and that the welfare of the country is only a secondary consideration; or rather, perhaps, a cloak to cover their real purpose. There are only two classes of men; viz. those who would sacrifice themselves for their country, and those who would sacrifice their country to themselves. Which of these are the most numerous I shall not pretend to say; though I think I have in the course of my life met with an instance or two of the former."

To his brother-in-law, Mr. Daulby, then resident at the Lakes, Mr. Roscoe writes in a lighter vein:—

"From the midst of all the delights that London affords, I condescend to salute the lonely inhabitants of the solitary hills and cheerless wilds of Westmoreland. Here, every thing is life and gaiety; the rattling of wheels, the winding of horns, and the ringing of bells, performing a continual chorus; whilst with you, the chirping of a robin red-breast, or the lowing of a cow, is all that gratifies your ears. At this hour you are,

perhaps, complaining of the clear and nipping air, or incommoded with the beams of the noonday sun ; whilst here an impenetrable vapour screens us from his rays, and forms a soft and sociable atmosphere, breathed from the lungs of a million of people, who would not exchange this happiness for any other the world could give.

“ But to tell you the truth, my dear Dan, I begin to be shockingly tired of my abode. Except Fuseli’s pictures from Milton, which are certainly much beyond even my expectations, I have seen little which has pleased me in the way of art.”

In another letter to Mr. Daulby, he says, “ So far my journey has been agreeable enough ; but the hurry of engagements discomposes one’s mind, and the idea of neglecting to return civilities conferred embitters those which we receive. I have seen many literary and singular characters, and formed some connections, which may prove agreeable if not useful. Pictures I have bought none, — prints not above 40s. worth, — books a few ; and to-day I have ordered a few plaister busts and figures to be sent to Liverpool. I have seen many eminent political characters, but must take another opportunity of giving you particulars.”

During his stay in town Mr. Roscoe had hoped to have an opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with Lord Orford, who had frequently expressed a desire to meet him. Unfortunately at this period his Lordship’s state of health was such as to preclude the possibility of an interview. “ Soon after my arrival in town,” says Mr. Roscoe, in a letter addressed to Dr. Currie, “ I called at Lord Orford’s, but found him dangerously ill, and not in a state to be seen. I therefore introduced myself to his intimate friends, the Miss Berrys, who resided a long time in Italy, and with whom I dined

yesterday. They told me they had mentioned to him that I was in town, to which he answered, 'Alas! it is too late — I shall never see him.' He afterwards said, 'It is a melancholy thing to be so much dead and so much alive!' It is not yet improbable that he may so far recover, as that I may get a sight of him, which I confess would much gratify my curiosity." The illness, however of this venerable nobleman, who had held a distinguished rank in the literary world for more than half a century, proved fatal.

Amongst the persons with whom Mr. Roscoe at this time became acquainted, was the late Sir Isaac Heard, Garter principal King at Arms. This acquaintance led him to the knowledge of a singular fact respecting General Washington, which he afterwards communicated to an American gentleman in the following letter:—“ I have now the pleasure of performing my promise of repeating to you, by letter, the information I gave you in Liverpool respecting the memorial of General Washington and his family, drawn up in his own handwriting, and sent by him to the late Sir Isaac Heard, Garter King at Arms, to be enrolled by him in the records of the Heralds' College, London.

“ It is now about thirty years since I had the good fortune to form an acquaintance with Sir Isaac Heard, who was a kind friend, an excellent patriot, and, I need scarcely add, a very worthy man. On visiting him one day in his office in Doctors' Commons, I observed a portrait over the chimney piece, not sufficiently characterised for me to decipher, and to the best of my recollection not in the first style of art.

“ I could, however, perceive that it was not the representation of the personage who might have been expected to preside at the fountain of honour; and on expressing

my surprise to Sir Isaac, and enquiring whose portrait it was, he replied in his usual energetic manner, ‘Whose is it? Whose should it be? but the portrait of the greatest man of the age,—General Washington.’ On my assenting to this remark, he added, ‘Now, sir, I will show you something farther.’ And turning to his archives he took out some papers, consisting of several sheets closely written, saying, ‘Here, sir, is the genealogy and family history of General Washington, with which he has, at my request, furnished me, in his own hand-writing, and which I shall have a particular pleasure in preserving amongst the most precious records of my office;’ which I have no doubt he has accordingly done, and where I presume they may still be seen on application to the proper authorities.”

The visit of Mr. Roscoe to London was not extended beyond a few weeks, and he gladly returned to his home, and to the enjoyment of that leisure he had lately secured. But a state of complete inactivity was little suited to his character, and his mind turned eagerly to the same pursuits with which it had been recently occupied. Of his employments at this time a pleasanter picture cannot be conveyed than that given in the following short extract from a letter addressed by Mrs. Roscoe to her sister, Miss Griffies:—“My husband is a happy man in his various resources. He has this afternoon got a charming importation of plants from Vienna, which completes a part of his botanical collection. He is deep in Greek and historical researches, and, above all, you will be glad to hear, in good health and spirits.”

Italian literature again engaged his attention, at first without any particular object, but as he proceeded, new designs occurred to his mind. In perusing the writings of the Italian poets of the sixteenth century, probably

with a view to the composition of his "Life of Leo X.," he had been greatly struck with the "Balìa" of Luigi Tansillo, the contemporary of Ariosto and of Tasso. The simplicity and elegance of this poem, and the skill with which the subject to which it is addressed was treated, excited Mr. Roscoe's warm admiration, and induced him to present a version of it to the English public. The pleasant occupation also, which such a task afforded, was an additional encouragement to him to proceed. "It is not," he says in his preface to the poem, "the translator's intention to assert, that a previous consideration of these circumstances led him to undertake the present version of the poem. The truth is, that having of late enjoyed a greater share of leisure than he has formerly experienced, he has employed some part of it pleasantly to himself, if not usefully to others, in an occupation which, without requiring the exertion of original composition, satisfies the *besoin d'agir*, and by calming the reproaches allays the irritation of total indolence. He must also be allowed to observe, that the hope of promoting, in some degree, the laudable object which the author himself had in view, if it did not lead him to undertake the translation, operated as a chief inducement to lay it before the public."

The lines near the conclusion of the poem, in which the author alludes to the noble ladies of his own country —

"Or se vedessi (o giorni benedetti !)
Le Colonne, le Ursine, le Gonsaghe
Ed altre tai co' cari figli ai petti —"

suggested to the translator the introduction of a name distinguished amongst the *most* distinguished of the English nobility. But unwilling to take this step without

her permission, he applied to his friend Dr. Moore on the subject, from whom he received the following reply : — “ I spoke to the Duchess of Devonshire on the subject you mentioned in your letter. She will be highly pleased with what you propose. She was undoubtedly the first person of her rank in England who introduced the laudable custom which is recommended in Luigi Tansillo’s poem, and she is rewarded by the great resemblance in constitution and disposition between the child she nursed and herself. Her Grace has sufficient taste to be a great admirer of the ‘ Life of Lorenzo ; ’ and she is the more delighted with what you intend, because she relished the English translations in that work particularly. She spent six months in Tuscany ; understands the Italian perfectly ; and preferred several of the translations to the original ; and your book afforded her additional pleasure by recalling some very agreeable scenes to her memory.”

The lines in which her grace’s name occurs are the following, at the conclusion of the poem : —

“ O happier times, to truth and virtue dear,
 Roll swiftly on ! O golden days appear !
 Of noble birth, when every matron dame
 Shall the high meed of female merit claim ;
 Then loveliest, when her babe in native charms
 Hangs on her breast or dances in her arms ;
 Thus late, with angel grace along the plain,
 Illustrious Devon led Britannia’s train :
 And whilst by frigid fashion unreprest,
 She to chaste transports opened all her breast,
 Joy’d her loved babe its playful hands to twine
 Round her fair neck, or midst her locks divine,
 And from the fount with every grace imbued,
 Drank heavenly nectar, not terrestrial food.
 — So Venus once, in fragrant bowers above,
 Clasp’d to her rosy breast immortal Love ;

Transfused soft passion thro' his tingling frame,
 The nerve of rapture and the heart of flame.
 Yet not with wanton hopes and fond desires
 Her infant's veins the British matron fires ;
 But prompts the aim to crown by future worth
 The proud pre-eminence of noble birth."

The Duchess of Devonshire, in a note to Mr. Roscoe, expressed the gratification she had received from this introduction of her name, and the satisfaction she felt "in seeing the practice of nursing, of which she had ever been an enthusiastic advocate, so honoured and recommended as it was by the poem Mr. Roscoe has beautifully translated."

To this translation the following sonnet addressed to Mrs. Roscoe was appropriately prefixed : —

"As thus in calm domestic leisure blest
 I wake to British notes th' Ausonian strings,
 Be thine the strain ; for what the poet sings
 Has the chaste tenor of thy life exprest.
 And whilst delighted, to thy willing breast,
 With rosy lip thy smiling infant clings,
 Pleased I reflect, that from those healthful springs
 — Ah not by thee with niggard love repest —
 Six sons successive, and thy later care,
 Two daughters fair have drunk ; for this be thine
 Those best delights approving conscience knows ;
 And whilst thy days with cloudless suns decline,
 May filial love thy evening couch prepare,
 And soothe thy latest hours to soft repose."

"There is perhaps no part of the book," says Lord Holland, in a letter thanking Mr. Roscoe for a copy of the "Nurse," "that I like better than that which is exclusively your own, the sonnet to Mrs. Roscoe : of the merit of that species of composition, which is so highly esteemed and minutely criticised by the Italians,

I am afraid I have not a very accurate notion; but I know that I seldom read any in English that give any pleasure, and do not recollect one in the language, at this moment, which seems to me as pretty as that which you have prefixed to your translation."

The translation of the "Nurse" was submitted to Dr. Currie, who returned it with the following criticisms: —

"I have perused the 'Nurse' with attention, and upon the whole with much pleasure; and I see nothing either in the general impression it is likely to produce, or in the effect of particular passages, that should prevent your publishing it, or indeed render the measure doubtful. You must not, however, expect that it will increase the reputation of the biographer of 'Lorenzo de' Medici.' It is enough that it is not unworthy of him, and that you give it to the world, as the truth is, not as a laboured effort of your talents, but as the occasional occupation and amusement of a vacant hour, in the midst of more serious engagements. The versification is easy and flowing, and possesses considerable variety. Your numbers rise and fall with the sentiment they embody, which is generally, but not always, distinctly expressed. I think you have a few lines which might have been improved with a little care; but it is perhaps well to exhibit, in some cases, the marks of a little negligence to heighten the general effect. The compliment to the Duchess of Devonshire, which every body will read and quote, is very fine. The four lines beginning 'So Venus,' &c. are singularly beautiful; but I wish you had been *prompted* by the muse to a better or smoother termination. My objection is to *prompts the aim*; it is not, however, very material.

“The prose in your preface and notes is, as usual, easy, luminous, and correct. I see nothing to object to as to sentiment, and little or nothing as to style. Yet you have, I think, got one or two Latinisms. Why should Ranza *concede* the MSS. It might have been as well to *deliver* them, or perhaps still better to have given them up, p. 10. In the same page, line 10., you use *advert* to, as I suspect, for *mentions*; and in p. 14. *adverted to* is certainly employed for *detailed, examined, or discussed*. You are very fond of *adverting*.

“I have only farther to observe, that it will be wished by the ladies that you had translated the quotations in the notes as well as in the preface. I have no doubt the ‘Nurse’ will make some noise.”*

In a letter to Dr. Wright of Edinburgh (the friend of Dr. Currie), Mr. Roscoe thus alludes to his translation:—

“I beg you to accept my very sincere thanks for your present of your ‘Medical Admonitions,’ and for the obliging letter by which they were accompanied. * * * I, too, have had the temerity to rank myself as a fellow-labourer in the same good cause; and though I have lived too long to expect that any striking effects can be produced on the public morals and manners, either by exhortation or reproof, yet I certainly feel a sensible pleasure in seeing my translation recommended by those whose approbation is alone worth estimating; and in the hope that if these days of empyricism, of prophecy, of folly, and of barbarism, should be destined ever to have a termination, this slight production may have some effect in promoting those affections by which society is bound together, and effecting those beneficent purposes

* Life of Dr. Currie, vol. ii. p. 335.

at which it avowedly aims. Such are the hopes of authors! But the gloom thickens round Europe; and in the contest between principles pushed to their wildest extremes on the one hand, and total want of principle on the other, it is difficult to find a spot on earth where the mind can with satisfaction repose. In this mighty convulsion, all interference can only ruin the intermeddler; and the song of exultation, like the voice that animated it, must now be still. In the mean time, there is some consolation in reflecting, that the path of utility is not entirely closed; and that, although the people of the earth will allow of no interference in their devout determination to cut each others' throats, it may yet be allowed to recommend it to their consideration, whether it is proper they should be poisoned by quacks, or murder their children by unnatural neglect."

In the summer of the year 1797 the leisure which Mr. Roscoe had acquired permitted him to visit his brother-in-law, Mr. Daulby, then residing at Rydal Mount, near Ambleside; but he only arrived to be present at the last moments of one whom he had long esteemed and loved.

A refined and cultivated taste for the fine arts, and for elegant literature, led in early life to an intimacy between Mr. Daulby and Mr. Roscoe, which was afterwards drawn closer by dearer ties. Some years after the death of his first wife, Mr. Daulby was fortunate enough to win the affections of Miss Roscoe; and her brother was happy in seeing her hand bestowed upon so amiable and accomplished a man. It was probably about the period of this attachment, that the following sonnet was addressed by Mr. Roscoe to his friend:—

“Daulby! who oft hast bow'd beneath the smart
Of keen affliction, yet surviv'd to know

More blissful hours return, and through thine heart
 Health's temperate flood and native spirits flow ;
 Think not the hand that led thee through the gloom
 Will now forsake thee — still thy breast shall prove
 The lasting transports of a happier doom,
 Each charm of health, and every sweet of love.
 — Yet should thy God permit the storm to rise
 (His ways inscrutable to mortal eyes),
 Dim thy fair hopes, and bid thine ills increase,
 Despair not ; for while Virtue is thy guide,
 Secure thy bark shall stem the bursting tide,
 And gain the haven of eternal peace."

Amongst other works of art Mr. Daulby possessed a very complete and valuable collection of the prints of Rembrandt, of whose works he published a catalogue, which still maintains a high character among the collectors of prints. To this volume Mr. Roscoe added a preface of considerable length.

The taste and accomplishments of Mr. Daulby (which have descended to his children) are adverted to in the following lines, written by Mr. Roscoe at the time of his death : —

" O formed by Heaven of purer clay
 To kindle at the Poet's lyre,
 To catch from Art her magic ray,
 And melt at Music's raptured wire ;
 Yet may'st thou still with cold regard
 These transitory joys resign,
 Secure of Virtue's high reward,
 The approving smile of Power Divine."

It is one of the first duties of those who have derived from literary studies that gratification and improvement which they always impart, to afford every opportunity to others of obtaining the same rational enjoyments. This duty was never neglected by Mr. Roscoe, who was ever

anxious to communicate to those around him the advantages of which he himself partook, and who was especially desirous to cherish in others that taste for elegant literature which had contributed so much to his own happiness. His influence in this respect was felt, from a very early period, in the circle of his own immediate friends; and he eagerly took advantage of every opportunity to produce similar impressions upon the minds of his townsmen.

Previously to the present year (1797), the only literary institution which Liverpool possessed was a library, of a limited nature, the books of which were circulated amongst the subscribers. An establishment like this, though useful and improving, was obviously incapable of supplying that assistance which the researches of a scholar require. A gentleman of considerable literary talents, and an intimate friend of Mr. Roscoe, the late Mr. Edward Rogers of Liverpool, struck with the want of a more extensive library, and pleased with an institution devoted to literary purposes which he had seen at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, proposed to several of his friends the erection of a similar establishment at Liverpool. For some time the project was considered impracticable; but at length, by the exertions of Mr. Thomas Taylor, another of Mr. Roscoe's friends (member of a family distinguished for virtues and talents), and of Dr. Rutter, a number of gentlemen, amongst whom was Mr. Roscoe, were induced to assemble together for the purpose of introducing the proposed establishment to the notice of the public. A prospectus was drawn up by Dr. Rutter, and the plan being approved of, a public meeting was called, and measures taken to carry it into effect. Although party politics at that time ran very high in Liverpool, they did not operate to the detriment of this

design; and persons of all shades of opinion concurred in the establishment of an institution devoted solely to literary improvement.

The Athenæum consists of a news-room and library, now containing a very valuable collection of books in various departments of literature, upwards of 16,000 in number. Each proprietor has, in addition to the personal use of the library, the right of nominating one young person as a reader, and of introducing any number of strangers.

Such is the origin of an institution which has served as a model for many similar establishments in different parts of the country. It has been frequently supposed that the idea of it originated with Mr. Roscoe, an error which will be corrected by the above details. He was indeed a very active member of the committee, and devoted much of his time and attention to the selection and arrangement of the library; not the less eager to promote the interests of the new establishment because he could not claim for himself the honourable title of its founder.*

* The services of Mr. Roscoe to this institution were commemorated, after his death, in the following resolution:—

“ At the General Annual Meeting of the Proprietors,
July 12th, 1831.

“ On the motion of Mr. Ottiwell Wood, seconded by Mr. Adam Hodgson,

“ It was resolved,

“ That the proprietors of the Athenæum cannot separate without expressing their grateful recollection of the services this Institution derived at its first establishment from the late William Roscoe, Esq., and the great regret which they feel that it can no longer be benefited by the advice and assistance of a man whose literary, scientific, and benevolent exertions so justly entitled him to their esteem and admiration.”

The attachment of Mr. Roscoe to literature was extended to those who, like himself, had laboured in her service. His desire to be useful to such as stood in need of assistance is manifested by the following letter, addressed to the Rev. Mr. Edwards of Birmingham:—

“I had, some time since, the favour of a letter from you, intended to have been delivered by Mr. Coleridge, but had not the pleasure of seeing him, as I believe he altered his intended route, and did not pay a visit to Liverpool.

“I read with great pleasure his *Conciones ad Populum*, which I think contain marks of that disinterested ardour in the cause of liberty, and that abhorrence of violence and bloodshed under whatever pretence they may be resorted to, which in times like the present are so particularly necessary to be inculcated. Mr. Coleridge is one of the few individuals who have perceived the absurdity of the maxim, that it is lawful and expedient to shed the blood of those by whom it is likely that blood will be shed, and which thus authorises the commission of an immediate and actual crime, for the purpose of preventing one which is remote and uncertain, the pretexts of tyrants and of anarchists, at all times and in all countries.

“It was with much concern I found he had adopted the resolution of discontinuing his periodical paper of the ‘Watchman.’ I conceive he did not give it a sufficient trial, and that if he had persevered he would have found the extent of its circulation increase. Periodical works of this nature are generally slow in taking root, but when once established are very lucrative; and I have no doubt but the paper in question would, if continued, have been of very extensive utility.

“With the little volume of Mr. Coleridge’s poems I have been greatly delighted — his genius is of the highest class. The characteristics of a fervid imagination and a highly cultivated taste are visible in every page. I must, however, be allowed to remark, that where excellence is so abundant selection might be employed to advantage. He ought not, for a moment, to forget that he writes for immortality, which many have attained by condensing their excellencies, and many have lost by diffusing them through too large a mass. There are few authors who would not lose a considerable share of their reputation were the public in possession of all they wrote.

“It would give me much pleasure to be informed, that Mr. Coleridge’s prospects in life are such as are likely to give free scope to the exertions of those uncommon talents of which he is possessed; and I shall esteem myself much obliged by any information you can give me respecting him.

“His concluding address to his ‘Watchman’ deeply affected me, as it spoke the regret of a virtuous mind disappointed in its efforts to do good. I have since heard that Bristol is not a place likely to reward his merits. If so, might you not recommend it to him to pay a visit to Liverpool, where I know many who would be happy to see him, and who would have a particular pleasure in promoting any plan which he might suggest for rendering his talents advantageous to his country and to himself?”

Amongst the writers of the day there was no one whose genius and whose history interested Mr. Roscoe more deeply than those of Robert Burns. The vigour, beauty, and simplicity of his poetry, and the manly candour of his character, excited his warmest admiration.

In his "Life of Lorenzo de' Medici" he took the opportunity of paying a well deserved compliment to the poet, and was about to transmit to him a copy of that work, when he was informed of his death. But the productions of Mr. Roscoe were not wholly unknown to Burns, in whose hand-writing a copy of the song "O'er the vine-cover'd hills" was presented to Mr. Roscoe by Mrs. Riddell, accompanied with the following note:—

"Our friend Dr. Currie has mentioned to me that the enclosed poem, found amongst Burns's manuscripts, which we were looking through this morning, might be acceptable to you to place amongst your own, from the circumstance of its being written in the poor bard's hand about two years ago, and given by him to myself, as a poetical production to which he was enthusiastically partial." The interest which Mr. Roscoe felt in the fate of the Scottish poet is expressed in the following letter to the Rev. Mr. Edwards of Birmingham:—

"It has of late been my opinion that great talents are, in the present times, often repressed for want of a very small degree of encouragement; and the death of poor Burns, which has occurred since I wrote to you, confirms me in this opinion. I cannot express to you how sensibly I am affected by this event. I had not, indeed, the pleasure of his personal acquaintance; but at the time he was taken ill he was preparing for a journey to Liverpool, and had done me the honour (and it is an honour of which I shall always be proud) of sending me word that he intended to pay me a visit. His example has fixed the value of high poetical attainments in Scotland, and they amount to the place of an exciseman, with a salary of fifty pounds per annum. Such has been the munificence of the Scotch peerage and the Scotch gentry to a man who has done more honour to his

country than all the throat-cutters it ever bred. May they never have another opportunity of insulting genius with paltry and insidious rewards!"

The whole of Burns's manuscripts, "even to the copybook in which his little boy had been practising his writing*," having been sent to Dr. Currie, were, with the exception of such as were manifestly unfit for publication, laid by him before Mr. Roscoe, who perused them, as it may be supposed, with the deepest interest, and made various suggestions with regard to their publication. † The hints thus given met with the entire approbation of Dr. Currie, who produced in his "Life of Burns" one of the most delightful and instructive pieces of literary biography in the language.

The indignant sympathy felt by Mr. Roscoe in the fate of Burns was again evinced in a monody on his death, which was introduced by Dr. Currie in his life of the poet. "I formerly mentioned to you," says the biographer in a letter to Mr. Syme, the friend of Burns, "that I had received two monodies on Burns,—one by Roscoe, another by Rushton. They have both great merit, especially the first; but they have a common fault,—that of attacking the ingratitude of Burns's countrymen too violently. I objected this to my friend Roscoe, but I have not been able to prevail on him to alter his poem in this or in several other particulars; partly because there is no reasoning down the indignation of a poet on a subject of this kind, and partly because what poetry he writes, which is very little, he executes at a single exertion, and cannot be got to retouch." ‡

The indignation of Mr. Roscoe again breaks out in the following letter:—

* See the Life of Dr. Currie, vol. i. p. 271.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid. p. 268.

“I enclose you Robert Burns’s narrative. I send you also my rhymes, which have unaccountably taken somewhat of a satirical turn, and will perhaps be thought (at least in the North) more severe than the occasion requires. From what I can collect from his writings and his narrative, I am of a different opinion; and cannot but think that he fell a victim to the unfeeling neglect of his opulent countrymen, whose patronage he courted by every means consistent with the independence of his character, and whose bounty terminated in chaining him to a station which differs in no respect from that of a galley-slave, except that the latter only shackles the body, and the former both the body and the mind.”

The monody was much admired by all those who, like its author, sympathised deeply in the fate of the poet. The powerful effect which it produced on the feelings of Dr. Moore is described in the following manner by that gentleman:—

“I have been just telling your friend Dr. Currie that I was employed till after four o’clock this morning in reading the first volume of the new edition of ‘Burns,’ and in wandering through the other three volumes desultorily. After breakfast I took up the first again, and began to read your poem to my wife and daughter. When I came to the stanza beginning, ‘With stepdame eye,’ &c., my heart, which was much affected before, became at once so overwhelmed with an intermingled torrent of grief and indignation, that I could not articulate another line for some time.”

He then describes the emotion which affected him on reading other passages in the poem, and adds, —

“Though Mrs. Moore and my daughter were greatly affected, yet they were astonished at my agitation, because, notwithstanding my sensibility to the power of

poetry, age has rendered me less liable to the melting mood than formerly ; and I write this to thank you for restoring me, in this instance, to my youthful emotions.”

In the course of the year 1799 Mr. Roscoe was called upon to prepare for the press a new edition of his “Life of Lorenzo de’ Medici,” in which he availed himself of the numerous remarks, and the valuable information furnished to him, as it has been already stated, by Dr. Parr, to whom previously to the publication of the new edition he addressed the following letter : —

“Having now been called upon by Messrs. Cadell and Davies for a corrected copy of the ‘Life of Lorenzo de’ Medici,’ which I promised to prepare for the octavo edition, I have again gone over all the remarks with which you so obligingly furnished me some time since, and have finally incorporated your emendations into my work. At the same time I have made minutes of these alterations in the text corresponding to your remarks, in which I have at times stated the manner in which such alterations have been made ; and in the very few cases in which I have not strictly complied with your suggestions, I have endeavoured to give my reasons for such variation. These minutes I have not extended through the Latin corrections, because they have been adopted without a single exception, and in all cases with evident improvement to the sense. I now send you the minutes accompanied with such additional notes as I have found necessary, in consequence of the documents with which you have furnished me. The former will at least show, that I have not been insensible of the value of any remark with which you have honoured my work ; the latter, as I have taken the liberty of acknowledging to whom I am indebted for them, I think it indispensibly necessary you should see, not only as they will serve to

show what conclusions I have been induced to make from them, but that my ignorance or carelessness may not attach any blemish to a character to which it is impossible for me to add the slightest celebrity.

“When I consider the immense trouble which you have taken on my behalf, and the kind and friendly manner in which you communicated your remarks, I feel a sense of obligation which I shall not attempt to express, but which I am sure I shall retain unimpaired as long as I live.

“With the octavo edition, I am under the necessity of giving a translation of the Italian poems of ‘Lorenzo de’ Medici.’ Of the success of this attempt I have great doubts; but I have engaged myself in the undertaking, and, indeed, made some progress in it. I before hinted to you some of my objections to this measure, and received your very judicious opinion with the respect it always deserves. I now send you a few specimens, from which you will be better enabled to say what you think of this business. My principal difficulty is, as to the poem called ‘The Seven Delights of Love;’ the conclusion of which is greatly altered from the original, — but I know not whether affected modesty be not worse than open indecency.

“I hope you will think the ‘Oraisia’ of Lorenzo makes some amends for the levity of his other writings. It appears to great advantage in the original, whatever it may do in the translation.

“And now let me thank you for your last very obliging and welcome letter, which arrived and cheered me at a time when I was out of health, out of spirits, and on the point of removing, with a large family, to the house I am now in, about six miles from Liverpool. Yes, my dear sir, we must meet; and I hope in the

course of the present summer, at this place, where, if you can compound for the turbulence of children of all sizes, I can promise you a most hearty welcome and tolerable accommodation, with the society of a few friendly neighbours. Our friend John Pearson may, I hope, be induced to accompany you into this neighbourhood. If you take a journey this summer, and have not yet fixed your route, I shall not be without hopes that my wishes in this respect stand some chance of being gratified."

CHAPTER VII.

1799 — 1805.

Mr. Roscoe purchases Allerton Hall, and retires thither — his projected mode of life — his studies. — Inscription — letter to Fuseli — Change in his prospects — becomes a partner in the bank of Messrs. Clarke — letters to Dr. Parr and Lord Lansdowne — his studies suspended — his opinions on political affairs — letter to Lord Holland. — Establishment of the Botanic Garden at Liverpool — prospectus of that institution — address delivered previously to the opening of the garden. — Letter from Dr. Rush of Philadelphia. — Correspondence with Dr. Smith — visit of the latter to Allerton — dedication by him of “Exotic Botany” to Mr. Roscoe. — Mr. Roscoe becomes a Fellow of the Linnean Society. — Fuseli visits Allerton — letter from him. — Mr. Mathias — his Canzone, addressed to Mr. Roscoe — correspondence with him. — Dr. Currie — his friendship for Mr. Roscoe — his character and death. — Letter to Mr. Macneil. — Death of Mr. William Clarke — his character, and correspondence with Mr. Roscoe — lines addressed to him at Lisbon — letter on his death. — Death of Mr. Fox. — Letter to Lord Holland. — Visit to London. — Political affairs. — Letters to Lord Holland and Dr. Parr — visit of the latter to Allerton.

It seldom happens that those who have been long engaged in the active duties of life retain that taste for retirement which is often felt in youth. But it was otherwise with Mr. Roscoe, who never ceased to look forward with anxiety to the period when he should be enabled to retreat, from the harrassing cares of business, to the tranquillity of the country, and the peaceful pleasures of his literary occupations. After upwards of twenty years spent in a laborious and distasteful pro-

fession, the object he had so long had at heart appeared to be accomplished. In the spring of the year 1799, he became the purchaser of a moiety of the Allerton estate, a valuable property lying about six miles from Liverpool. Allerton Hall, which was attached to that portion of the estate bought by Mr. Roscoe, was originally erected in the reign of James I., but a part of that structure had been taken down about the middle of the last century, and a handsome stone edifice erected in its place. The house was surrounded by gardens disposed in the old English taste, and environed on every side by ample woods. To this pleasant residence Mr. Roscoe retired to prosecute at leisure his literary labours, and to enjoy the more healthy employments which agriculture and botany afford. Here he hoped, as he expressed himself in a letter to Dr. Parr, to realise the admirable picture which Jortin has drawn of the happiness which such a life affords: — “An honest and sensible man is placed in a middle station, in circumstances rather scanty than abounding. He hath all the necessaries, but none of the superfluities, of life; and these necessaries he acquires by his prudence, his studies, and his industry. If he seeks to better his income, it is by such methods as hurt neither his conscience nor his constitution. He hath friends and acquaintances of his own rank. He receives good offices from them, and he returns the same. As he hath his occupations, he hath his diversions also; and partakes of the simple, frugal, obvious, innocent, and cheerful amusements of life.” His chief literary employment at this period was the *Life of Leo X.*, in which his leisure permitted him to make considerable progress. He also resumed the study of the Greek language; and, from a note prefixed by him to the Glasgow edition of Homer, it appears that the *Odyssey*

had been this year the subject of his study. The charms of the country likewise revived his taste for poetry, and the following Inscription, which bears the date of 1800, was probably intended for one of the pleasant alcoves, with which the old gardens of Allerton were embellished.

“INSCRIPTION.

1800.

“Whoe’er thou art whom chance or choice may lead
 To share this rustic seat, this friendly shade,
 The healthful gales from wild-flowers fresh that blow,
 And all the extended prospect spread below ;
 If nature’s simple charms attract thy mind,
 If glows thy breast with love of humankind,
 All these be thine. For whether on thine eyes
 Green woods, bright streams, or peopled hamlets rise,
 Thy soften’d bosom then not only proves
 A sympathy with all that *lives* and *moves*,
 But (while the varied scene around thee glows)
 With all that *blooms*, that *murmurs*, or that *flows*.”

The benefit to his health which he found in his change of residence and his country occupations is referred to in the following extract of a letter written in the summer of 1799, to Mr. Fuseli: —

“I avail myself of this opportunity of informing you, without being questioned on that subject, that I am yet in existence, and, what I know you will be glad to hear, in better spirits than when I last wrote to you. From the experience I have hitherto had of my new residence, it promises to be productive of every advantage which I expected to find from it:—good air, opportunity, or rather necessity, of exercise, and a degree of retirement which is indispensably necessary to my peace of mind.

The latter you will, perhaps, believe, when I tell you that I am a mile and a half from any neighbour, but, at that distance I have on every side of me some of my most intimate and valuable friends. Such being the advantages I enjoy here, you will not wonder that I am exerting myself to secure the means of remaining here, without the necessity of further interference in the tumult of the town, which I hope in a short time I shall be able to do. I consider it as one great secret in the art of living, especially at a time when all the necessaries of life are so high, to obtain subsistence immediately from the earth; and accordingly I am surrounded with cows, hogs, turkeys, geese, cocks, hens, and pigeons; which, according to the good old maxim, ("Take, Peter, kill and eat,") I plunder and slaughter without mercy; and shall be very angry with you if you tell me (as is not unlikely) that I am keeping up my paltry existence at the expense of the lives of a number of beings, each of which is ten times happier than myself."

The tranquil enjoyments of the country, however, were not destined to be long his portion. In less than twelve months after removing his residence to Allerton he became deeply involved in the laborious anxieties of commercial life. The family of Mr. William Clarke, whose friendship and literary assistance, in procuring materials for the "Life of Lorenzo," have already been mentioned, had been long engaged in an extensive banking-house in Liverpool, the affairs of which, owing to various circumstances, were, at the conclusion of the year 1799, found to be in a position of considerable difficulty. The aid of Mr. Roscoe, as a confidential adviser, was requested by the partners, and he did not hesitate to lend his best assistance. Chiefly through his instrumentality, the difficulties which ex-

isted between the Liverpool bank and their London correspondents were removed, and it was the anxious wish of the latter, as well as the former, that Mr. Roscoe should render his labours complete, by becoming an active partner in the banking-house at Liverpool. The sacrifice which this change required was undoubtedly great. It compelled him to resign a mode of life which had long been the cherished object of his wishes; to forego, at all events for a time, those literary pursuits upon which his mind was so ardently bent; and to plunge into an untried and hazardous occupation. The motives which led him to take the part he did, are explained in the following extract from a letter addressed by him, in the spring of 1800, to Dr. Parr. After stating how happy he had felt in his country retirement, he says, "The step I took was not a matter of choice and inclination, but of imperious necessity. No sooner did it offer itself to me, than my determination was fixed. It was not my gratification, my pursuits, or even my interest, upon which the question arose. It was the irresistible claim of friendship, the right which society at large has upon the exertions of every individual, when he conceives he can be useful, that determined my purpose. I felt that my non-compliance would have embittered my future life. But though I have thus heartily devoted myself to my new undertaking, it need not surely follow that I have lost my individuality, and am become a new being. From the wreck of my former life and pursuits can nothing be saved? Must I for ever hereafter open no books but journals and ledgers, and breathe no air but that of the town? Happily for me, this is by no means the case; and though, from the peculiar state of the business when I engaged in it, it has hitherto required my unremitting attention, yet I already perceive

the probability that, at no great distance of time, I may again enjoy some portion of those pleasures to which I supposed I had bade a last farewell. The daily routine of my engagements does not appear so irksome as I had reason to expect. I have the advantage of kind colleagues and able assistants. My province, to say the truth, has already become rather that of superintendence and direction than of labour and detail. I still can retain with ease and satisfaction my country residence; my daily exercise is conducive to my health; my evenings, and occasionally a larger portion of time, will soon be spent with my family: and, upon the whole, what I have sacrificed appears to me to be much less than what I at first expected."

In a letter to Lord Lansdowne, written about the same time, Mr. Roscoe thus mentions the alteration in his prospects:—

"My own occupations and pursuits have, in the course of the last winter, undergone a total change; and from the situation of a recluse in a lonely residence six miles from Liverpool, I have again entered into the world, and taken an active part in the banking-house of my friends Clarkes, the conduct of which has devolved chiefly on myself. This measure was so sudden and unexpected, that I had scarcely time to analyse the motives of my conduct, before I was called on to decide; but it was rather the impossibility of refusing, than the desire of accepting, that determined what part I should take. The situation of the concern, at the time I entered into it, was such as to require the whole of my attention, which has been exclusively devoted to it for the last six months; but I have every reason to flatter myself that, in a very short time, so close an attendance may be unnecessary, and that I may be enabled to devote some portion of my time to other pursuits."

For a short period, the pressing engagements of his new situation put almost a complete stop to his literary labours. "The new occupations in which I am engaged," he says, in a letter to Mr. J. C. Walker, "have hitherto prevented me from bestowing the least attention on my studies. 'Leo' is perfectly at rest, and I begin to doubt whether I shall ever rouse him from his slumbers." It was not until the close of the year 1800, that he resumed his pen, when, as the winter approached, he devoted the long evenings, after his return from Liverpool, which he visited daily, to the prosecution of his biographical task. His interest in these labours was about this time revived, by the acquisition of some valuable manuscript materials from Florence, for which he was indebted to the kindness of Lord Holland, and the care of Mr. Penrose, chaplain to the British Embassy at the Court of Tuscany.

The sentiments of Mr. Roscoe on the state of political affairs at this time are developed in the following letter to Lord Holland, dated October 26, 1800. After advert- ing to the question of peace, he says —

"As I have been led to mention this subject, I will further venture to add, that, of all the opportunities which have hitherto occurred, of opening the eyes of the people to their true situation, the present seems to me the most favourable; and that, if any thing could induce the great and enlightened statesman, to whom you stand so nearly related, once more to exert his talents in the service of his country, this must be the time. The avowed object of the deliberations of parliament is to examine into the *cause* of the present distress. The nation at large are anxious for the result. An opportunity for negotiation is held out by our enemies. We are threatened with a hostile combination from the

North ; which, whatever may be its other consequences, will inevitably further abridge our resources. In this situation, every exertion will be made by the promoters of the war, to elude the knowledge of the real origin of the evil. The blame will be laid upon earth and upon heaven ; upon any thing but that which they well know to be the effective cause.

“ In the Upper House, your Lordship will, I hope, confute their destructive notions, with that clearness of argument and dignified freedom of speech, which have always characterised your exertions in the public service. The sentiments of the Marquis of Lansdowne, at such a time and on such an occasion, would produce an inconceivable effect ; but, in the other House, who is there that can place this great truth in so luminous a point of view — who can enforce it with so much energy, with so much sincerity, with so much eloquence, as Mr. Fox ?

“ From the time that the minister attempted to starve the people of France, England may date the commencement of its present distress. The immense purchases of grain made by government, at exorbitant prices, overturned the mercantile system of that traffic, and, by disgusting the regular men of capital, threw the trade into other channels. Since that period, the constant interference of government and its agents in the purchase of every article of food, for an immense military and naval establishment, has been a constant and enormous drain upon both the living and dead stock of the country ; and as government, in fact, never pay for what they consume, or in other words, are paid back by the people, it matters not to them at what price it is purchased. Nay, the agents of government enrich themselves ; whilst

the middle and lower classes of the community are pining under deprivations, or perishing in want.

“Faintly as I have been able to state my reasons, I flatter myself your Lordship will agree with me, that the opportunity is not only favourable, but the only one likely to be afforded for producing an important and beneficial effect; and that even the abilities of Mr. Fox could not have a greater subject for their exertion. His comprehensive mind will see how the war connects itself with our distresses at every point, and in every quarter; and should his endeavours happily be united with those of the friends of peace in both Houses, we may not yet despair of seeing a powerful and decided impression made upon the public mind.

“I know not what apology I can make for the freedom I have taken in thus expressing my sentiments on so momentous a subject, unless I may be allowed to plead the interest which I feel, in common with your Lordship, in the honour and prosperity of the country; and the desire of seeing it rescued from the grasp of those, who are not less hostile to the real happiness of this nation than they are to that of the human race.”

As the calls of business became fewer and less importunate, Mr. Roscoe was able to devote a larger portion of his time to other pursuits; amongst which the science of botany occupied some share of his attention. This study, and more particularly that branch of it which relates to English botany, had, from a very early period, been one of the favourite employments of his leisure hours. It was, therefore, with much satisfaction, that he perceived an inclination amongst several of his townsmen to encourage the establishment of a Botanic Garden near Liverpool; and, in conjunction with his friends, Dr. Rutter and Dr. Bostock, he prepared the following

prospectus, in which the advantages of such an institution are pointed out:—

“The prevailing taste for botanical studies, and the liberality displayed by the inhabitants of Liverpool in the encouragement of scientific pursuits, afford sufficient reason to conclude, that the establishment of a botanical garden in the neighbourhood of the town is at present a desirable and attainable object. To enlarge upon the advantages to be derived from botanical knowledge is not the object of this address. It is presumed, that its application to agriculture, gardening, medicine, and other arts, essential to the comfort and even support of life, is generally acknowledged. The claims which it has to our attention, when considered merely as an elegant amusement, ought not to be neglected—an amusement calculated to interest the understanding, whilst it promotes the health and vigour of the bodily frame. Even the cultivation of the fine arts, however alluring in its progress, and dignified in its object, must yield the superiority to the study of nature; for who will venture to compare the most finished productions of the painter and the sculptor, with the originals, whence they derived their ideas of beauty and proportion?

“It is, however, necessary to the progress of this science, that the student should be supplied with actual and living specimens. The imperfection of language to give an adequate idea of any vegetable production, must be generally admitted; and the most beautiful and accurate drawings fall infinitely short of that delicacy and minuteness of parts, on which its scientific distinctions essentially depend. Even the plants themselves, when collected and attempted to be preserved, are deprived of so many peculiarities incident to their habit and growth, that it is only from living plants that we can

flatter ourselves with the hope of obtaining those substantial distinctions which are necessary to discriminate those numerous productions, or of extending the limits of the science itself.

“ Without public institutions for the purpose of preserving such plants as are imported into the country, and in the acquisition of which so many men of great learning and talents have devoted themselves to long and dangerous voyages and expeditions, there is every reason to believe that considerable numbers will soon be lost to us. The great repositories are at present those of the nurserymen in the vicinity of London; but, when profit is the chief object, it is to be feared those plants alone will be propagated which will best repay the attention of the cultivator. Many scientific and opulent individuals, in different parts of the kingdom, have contributed not only to establish this study by their wealth, but to extend it by their talents; yet the taste of an individual may be supposed to attach to some favourite class of productions; and, at all events, a private collection cannot be expected, either in copiousness or permanency, to contend with a public institution, which is calculated to comprehend every known vegetable production, and to preserve them for a continued series of years, which, in many instances, is indispensably necessary to their perfection.

“ Of the expense and attention bestowed by many respectable individuals in supporting a pleasure-garden, the environs of the town afford numerous instances; what, then, must be the advantages of a garden properly laid out, and supplied with every beautiful production of vegetable nature which this kingdom affords, yet enjoyed at the small expense of an annual subscription? Even this subscription will, it is probable, be more than repaid,

by the privileges to which it is intended the subscribers shall be entitled, in having such plants or seeds divided among them as may be the increase of the garden, and can be occasionally spared without impoverishing the collection. To those who are already engaged in making a selection of plants, this institution will afford constant assistance, and may frequently preclude the necessity of obtaining them from a distance, at great expense and risk.”

The call thus made upon the liberality and public spirit of the inhabitants of Liverpool was speedily and satisfactorily answered; and a sufficient sum of money being subscribed, a piece of ground was presented, by the Corporation of Liverpool, for the purposes of the institution, and the garden was opened in the summer of 1802. A meeting of the proprietors being called previously to the opening, it was suggested to Mr. Roscoe, who then filled the office of vice-president, and whose duty it was, in consequence of the death of the president, Richard Walker, Esq., to preside at the meeting, that it would be desirable that an address should be delivered on the occasion. Although two or three days only intervened before the meeting, he assented to this request; and upon the day of the meeting he read before the proprietors an address, displaying the pleasures and advantages of botanical science. After vindicating the study of botany from the charge of being a trifling employment, and a mere nomenclature tending to burden the memory with a list of names, he thus states what may be termed the moral advantages of the science:—

“Nor are the advantages incidentally derived from these employments of slight account. Whoever has opened his mind to comprehend the extensive system of the vegetable kingdom, as arranged by that great

father of the science, the immortal Linnæus, and has traced it through its various connections and relations, either descending from generals to particulars, or ascending by a gradual progress from individuals to classes, till it embraces the whole vegetable world, will, by the mere exercise of the faculties employed for this purpose, acquire a habit of arrangement, a perception of order, of distinction, and subordination, which it is not, perhaps, in the nature of any other study so effectually to bestow. In this view the examination of the vegetable kingdom seems peculiarly proper for youth, to whose unperverted minds the study of natural objects is always an interesting occupation, and who will not only find in this employment an innocent and a healthful amusement, but will familiarise themselves to that regulated train of ideas, that perception of relation between parts and the whole, which is of use not only in every other department of natural knowledge, but in all the concerns of life. Independently, too, of the habits of order and arrangement which will thus be established, it may be justly observed, that the bodily senses are highly improved by that accuracy and observation which are necessary to discriminate the various objects that pass in review before them. This improvement may be carried to a degree of which those who are inattentive to it have no idea. The sight of Linnæus was so penetrating, that he is said never to have used a glass, even in his minutest enquiries. But our own neighbourhood affords a striking instance of an individual*, who, although wholly deprived of sight, has improved his other senses, his touch, his smell, and his taste, to such a degree as to distinguish all the native plants of this country with an accuracy

* Mr. Gough of Kendal.

not attained by many of those who have the advantages of sight, and which justly entitles him to rank with the first botanists in the kingdom.”

The museum of Dr. Forster of Halle, mentioned in the following passage, had been purchased by Mr. Roscoe for his own private collection, but was transferred by him to the Botanic Garden.

“In addition to these objects, it is also thought expedient that a library of works in natural history, and a collection of specimens of dried plants, should be formed with all possible expedition, as appendages to the institution. The foundation of the latter is laid by the purchase of the museum of the late Dr. Forster, which has been brought from Halle, in Germany, and is now under the care of our manager.

“This collection comprises many thousand specimens collected by the Doctor and his son, in the South Sea islands and other parts, and large contributions of plants from those illustrious botanists, Linnæus, Thunberg, and Jacquin, with whom Dr. Forster was in correspondence.

“To these we have no doubt of making considerable additions, from the liberality of several eminent men, who have already kindly expressed their intentions in this respect; among whom I may venture to mention Dr. Wright, President of the College of Physicians at Edinburgh, who is now obligingly preparing to send us specimens of the plants which he has himself collected in foreign countries, or which have been transmitted to him by his learned correspondents from different parts of the world.”

A copy of the address having been presented by the author to Dr. Rush of Philadelphia*, he received from

* In the year 1812 Dr. Rush transmitted to Mr. Roscoe a piece of the tree under which William Penn signed his treaty with the In-

that eminent and excellent man the following communication in reply : —

“ Dr. Rush requests Mr. Roscoe to accept of his thanks for his elegant oration delivered before the proprietors of the Botanic Garden in Liverpool. It could not have been sent to any person who more highly appreciates Mr. Roscoe’s character and writings. His history of ‘ Lorenzo ’ has been read with great delight by several members of Dr. Rush’s family, as well as by himself ; and Mr. Roscoe’s charming little poem, styled ‘ The Nurse,’ formed, a few months ago, a present to one of the Doctor’s female patients, to whom he wished to show a durable mark of his friendship and respect.”

The establishment of the Botanic Garden led to a correspondence with the celebrated Dr. J. E. Smith, which afterwards ripened into a warm and lasting friendship. In the year 1803 Dr. Smith paid a visit to Allerton, and the botanical pursuits of his friend received an impulse from his society. The gratification which this

dians. This was converted into an inkstand, and forms the subject of a small poem by Mr. Roscoe, which has been several times printed. The friendliness of the sentiments entertained by Dr. Rush for Mr. Roscoe may be learned by the following extract from a letter from a gentleman to whom Mr. Roscoe, in the year 1810, had given an introduction to Dr. Rush : — “ With the conversation and society of Dr. Rush I have been gratified and delighted far beyond my powers of expression, and shall ever consider my acquaintance with him as the greatest obligation your kindness has conferred. Blended with an appearance that universally inspires both veneration and esteem, he possesses the most fascinating suavity of manners, and powers of conversation, which (in a greater degree than I ever before witnessed or even could conceive) unite intelligence and wisdom with the most pleasing and unassuming address. ‘ If you go to England,’ said the good old man, ‘ tell Mr. Roscoe that I love him like a brother, and that a perfect accordance of sentiment and feeling supplies what our distant situations are so calculated to destroy.’ ”

visit afforded Mr. Roscoe is strongly expressed in the following extract from a letter addressed to Dr. Smith, immediately after his return to Norwich ; and it is pleasing to reflect that the feelings of warm attachment, which breathe through this letter, remained unimpaired to the conclusion of his friend's life :—

“ Amidst our frequent recollections of you at Allerton, we had begun to feel some anxiety on your account, which would by no means have been diminished, had we known that you and your companion were careering over the hills of Derbyshire on the top of a coach. Your letter has arrived just in time to alleviate our apprehensions, and to add to the cheerfulness of our Sunday's dinner, where you have as many friends as we number individuals. In rejoicing with you, as I most truly do, on your restoration to domestic happiness, I feel, however, a selfish hope that you may be encouraged at no distant period to pay another visit to Liverpool, and that you will prevail on Mrs. Smith to accompany you. I had almost begun to suspect that the cares of the world or the lapse of years had blunted in me those feelings, and diminished that capacity of attachment, which, in youth, are so ardently experienced ; but the fortunate incident which introduced me to your acquaintance has restored me to a better opinion of myself, and, however I may regret that we did not meet sooner, I gratify myself in regarding you as a friend of my early days, but lately found, if indeed I can be said lately to have found one whom I have known so long in his writings, and to whom I have been indebted for much pleasure, and, I hope, some improvement.”

The pleasure which Dr. Smith derived from this visit is expressed in a very lively manner in the following

letter to his friend Mr. Dawson Turner, dated from Allerton* : —

“ At length I sit down to write you a letter — *literally*, but not, I fear, *metaphorically*, with the pen of a Roscoe — that very pen which has just been correcting his manuscript ‘ Life of Leo X.’

“ I am here at his charming villa, six miles from Liverpool, looking over Cheshire and the Mersey to the Welsh hills.

* * * * *

“ My lectures are numerous and brilliantly attended, and seem to stir up a great ardour and taste for botany. The Botanic Garden promises well, though in its infancy, except the Stove, which is well filled and in the first order. The curator, Mr. Shepherd, is the properest man I ever saw for the purpose. I hope to procure him some useful correspondents, one of which shall be our friend Watts of Ashill.

“ You are acquainted with Mr. Roscoe’s taste and genius, — his manners, temper, and character are equal to them. I am surprised to find him so good a practical botanist. His library is rich in botany, and especially in Italian history and poetry. I fancy myself at Lorenzo’s own villa.”

The beautiful work of “ Exotic Botany,” published by Dr. Smith in the year 1804, was inscribed to Mr. Roscoe, in the following elegant and affectionate address : —

“ Dear Sir,

“ When, in your delightful retirement at Allerton, I felt transported to the villa of your own ‘ Lorenzo,’ I

* Life of Sir J. E. Smith, vol. ii. p. 302.

was agreeably surprised to find how large a portion of your attention scientific botany had shared, amid your ardent devotion to the historic Muse. Let this remind you of that time, so grateful to my recollection, and which, if I may judge by subsequent transactions, you do not wish to forget. Long had I been anxious to know the historian of the 'Medici;' but I now wish far more to cultivate and preserve the regard of a Roscoe. Allow me to subscribe myself,

“ Dear Sir,

“ Your obliged and affectionate friend,

“ J. E. SMITH.”

The gratifying honour thus conferred upon him Mr. Roscoe acknowledged in the following letter:—

“ It was not till late last night that I had the pleasure of receiving, through the hands of my booksellers, the first number of 'Exotic Botany,' and of perusing the affectionate, and to me highly gratifying address which you have done me the great honour to prefix to it. To such parts of it as are commendatory, I can only say, that although it be an arduous task, I will do the best I can to justify you to the world for the favourable opinion which you have ventured to express; and in this respect I feel as if I had been paid beforehand for a work which I have to perform: but in your kind and friendly expressions of attachment and esteem I experience the most unalloyed and perfect satisfaction, because I know that affection can only be repaid *in kind*, and that I am rich enough to make you a return. May this public seal of our friendship not only confirm it whilst we live, but long continue to unite our names in future times, as associates in our studies and pursuits, in our dispositions and our hearts.”

During the summer of 1805, Dr. Smith, accompanied by Mrs. Smith, again paid a visit to Allerton, where he remained several weeks, and confirmed the favourable impressions which his first acquaintance had created.

In the month of January, 1804, Mr. Roscoe, probably on the suggestion of his friend Dr. Smith, became a Fellow of the Linnean Society. Some years afterwards he contributed a few papers to its "Transactions," which will be hereafter noticed.

The literary labours of Mr. Roscoe at this time were agreeably diversified by the society of his friends. During a visit which Fuseli paid to Liverpool, in the year 1804, he passed much of his time at Allerton, amusing those around him by his wit, and informing them by his learning. His biographer relates, that as Mr. Roscoe was pointing out to him the improvements which had taken place in Liverpool, Fuseli observed, "I do not wonder that you look upon these with some degree of self-complacency, for they may be considered as the work of your hands, and as such I view them with interest; but methinks I every where smell the blood of slaves."* The gratification which Fuseli derived from this visit is expressed by him, in his usual strong language, in the following letter:—

"*Ecco mi giunto al strepitoso nido!* It is only since yesterday that I can consider myself as settled here, having been a visiter, ever since my arrival, at Johnson's *suburbano*, which is neither Allerton, nor Shepherd's botanic paradise, but a sweet and peaceful little neat hut embosomed in a wilderness of shrubs; and, what I like better, entomologic weeds; a close and humble neigh-

* Life of Fuseli, p. 376.

bour to the magnificent domain of some *nauwab*, but undisturbed by his four demons ycleped gardeners.

“Where shall I begin, where end my thanks for what I enjoyed, my regrets for what I left, when I parted from you, your wife, your sons, and daughters? My heart tells me it is nonsense to attempt, and so I drop it. A few such weeks as I have passed amongst you atone for months of care and misery, and add to the real sum of life.

“In this humour you would not expect that, if I had business to impart, I should now speak of it; we always wake, and too soon, alas! from a delicious dream. Expect soon more.”

Amongst the many distinguished scholars and men of taste with whom the literary reputation of Mr. Roscoe led to an acquaintance was Mr. Mathias, whose intimate and critical knowledge of the language and literature of Italy has, perhaps, never been equalled by a native of this country. Mr. Roscoe was naturally desirous of acquiring the favourable opinion and the personal acquaintance of so eminent a scholar; but it was not until some years after the publication of his first historical work that an opportunity of becoming known to him was afforded. In the year 1801 Mr. Mathias transmitted to Mr. Roscoe, through the hands of their mutual friend Mrs. Riddel, a copy of a selection which he had lately made from the poems of Petrarch; and from this period they continued to correspond occasionally upon subjects of literary interest, and to make a mutual interchange of their writings. The admiration which Mr. Mathias felt for the high literary character of his correspondent he manifested in a beautiful Italian canzone addressed to him, and prefixed to his edition of “Selections from Tiraboschi,” a distinguished honour, of

which Mr. Roscoe was justly proud. The reputation of Mr. Mathias as an Italian scholar must always render his judgment upon subjects connected with the literature of that country of the highest value; and it cannot, therefore, be improper, to present, in this place, a portion of the correspondence between him and Mr. Roscoe.

In the year 1803, Mr. Mathias transmitted to Mr. Roscoe the beautiful volumes which he had just published, of "Selections from the Commentaries of Crescimbeni," which were accompanied by the following letter:—

"It gives me pleasure to offer you a copy of the 'Commentaries on the Poetry of Italy by Crescimbeni,' which I have republished, detached from the historical part of the work, as I think it is a treatise of singular merit, and perfect in its kind. I conceive it may tend in an eminent degree to diffuse the knowledge, and promote the cultivation, of Italian literature in this country, in which I am sure you will feel yourself naturally interested; for, in whatever part of the civilised world that subject is brought forwards, the name of Roscoe cannot be far off.

"It is also my intention shortly to present the public with 'La Storia della Poesia Italiana,' as written by Tiraboschi, taken from his most valuable and voluminous history of Italian literature in general. It will accompany Crescimbeni with great effect, in my opinion; and will complete this part of the plan which I have formed, in the hope of giving honour and permanency, amongst my countrymen, to the greatest language of modern Europe. I wish they may have the sense and spirit to second the attempt. I propose to address this personally to you, as Italy acknowledges in you the patron and protector of her learned offspring; and will for ever

confess, that you have given the most illustrious example to all those who, though with unequal powers, may hereafter be desirous of advancing the glory of that parent of arts and learning. '*Propter amorem*' is at once my excuse and my satisfaction on this occasion.

"I shall be happy to hear that you, and all your family, have enjoyed your health since I had the pleasure of seeing you (for too short a time) in London last year."

"It gives me great pleasure to observe," says Mr. Roscoe, in answer to the foregoing letter, "that the literature of Italy has begun to attract the more particular notice of our countrymen; and I am highly gratified to find that its cause has fallen into such able hands as yours, who are in every respect qualified to set it off to advantage. One would have thought that the example of our great poets, and particularly of Spenser and Milton, would have recommended the Italians to the study of all those who are emulous of their honours; yet certain it is, that they have hitherto been unaccountably neglected in this country, and, excepting a very few eminent authors, may be said to be wholly strangers amongst us. Nor is it from the poets alone we should derive improvement. The literary history of Italy would open an immense fund of information far beyond what that of any other country (I do not except even our own) could afford. I am therefore glad to find that you have followed up your '*Componimenti Lirici*' with the '*Commentary of Crescimbeni*;' and that to these you still design to add the excellent work of Tiraboschi, as far as it relates to the history of poetry. Works selected with so much judgment, and published in so elegant and convenient a form, seem to me emi-

nently calculated to diffuse a more general relish for these studies, particularly at this time, when, as far as I can judge from my distant situation, the Italian language seems to be more attended to than it has ever before been within my memory. For your highly esteemed present of the volumes of Crescimbeni, and for your kind intentions towards me, I beg you to accept my best acknowledgments. To be associated in any manner in the attempt which you are so laudably making to recall the public taste to standards of real excellence will always be considered by me as a great honour. I should be glad to think that I have in any degree contributed to the success of this cause ; but, at all events, I can never regret those efforts which have obtained for me the obliging assurances of your esteem and friendship, — assurances in which I confide with pleasure, and which I repeat with sincerity, in the hope that I may ere long find an opportunity of confirming them in person.”

The edition of the “ Selections from Tiraboschi ” was forwarded to Mr. Roscoe a few months afterwards, with the following flattering letter : —

“ I have a particular satisfaction in offering to you the ‘ History of Italian Poetry,’ as written by the great historian of the general literature of Italy, Tiraboschi, which will be published in a few days. I am sure every scholar in this country will agree in the propriety of addressing this work personally to you, as you have every claim arising from its peculiar subject, which you have illustrated in one of the principal periods, by your talents and your erudition, and which is known and admired in every part of the civilised world.

“ If the Canzone, which is honoured by the prefixing of your name to it, should be considered by you as answerable to the dignity of its theme, in any manner, I

can assure you I have endeavoured by much thought, time, and attention, to render it not wholly unworthy of your perusal —

‘Non ita certandi cupidus, quam propter amorem.’

“I am inclined to hope that the language and literature of Italy may finally, under your auspices, be honoured, cultivated, and promoted in Great Britain; and I trust that these disinterested contributions to revive them may be favourably regarded. In the different addresses to *our* countrymen in the various Italian works I have presented to their notice, in the originals, I have fully explained my sentiments.”

“I have just had the pleasure,” says Mr. Roscoe, in reply, “of receiving the four volumes of the ‘History of Italian Poetry,’ extracted from the great work of the learned Tiraboschi; a publication which, like the others with which you have lately favoured us, will, I doubt not, contribute to diffuse a more general knowledge of the poetry and literature of Italy, which will be found the surest preservative against that degradation with which this country is threatened. It is not, however, as the republisher of these valuable works alone that your countrymen are indebted to you. The example which you have set before them of the proficiency which a native of England may acquire in the beautiful and expressive language of Italy, and of the success with which it may be adapted to every style of composition, from the most elegant and simple prose to the most elevated poetry, must operate as a still more powerful recommendation of the study of the Italian language. It must not, however, be supposed that the most thorough acquaintance with the language will communicate that poetic

fervour and vivacity so conspicuous in the Canzone which you have done me the honour to address to me, and in the perusal of which I know not whether I am more surprised at the powerful and well-supported strain of lyric poetry which it displays, or on finding some part of it lavished on such a subject as myself. In fact, my dear Sir, although I certainly am not insensible to the glow of honourable praise; and although the elevated and manly style in which it has been conferred, is still more gratifying to me; yet the satisfaction which I feel is not unaccompanied by sensations of a more painful nature; and I am too well acquainted with the insufficiency of my own pretensions, to consider this production in any other light than as a composition which I admire, and a mark of friendship of which I am proud. The public will not, however, I fear, allow me to appeal from so decisive an authority; and I experience the feelings of one who stands approved for merits of which he is not conscious, and pledged to the performance of labours far beyond his powers. But however low I may stand in my own estimation, I must not now allow myself to shrink from the more elevated prospect which you have pointed out to me; and it will, at least, be my endeavour to justify, by my future efforts, that favourable opinion which has been so partially expressed."

Having reprinted his *Canzoni Toscane* in the year 1806, Mr. Mathias addressed to Mr. Roscoe the following letter, accompanying several copies of the poem inscribed to him:—

"It gives me particular pleasure, whenever I have an opportunity of addressing you, or enquiring after you, and your important as well as truly classical employments, for which the world of letters is so much indebted to you.

“ Though you are in possession of all the Italian works which I have offered to the public, yet, as I have just been induced to reprint the two ‘ *Canzoni Toscane*,’ which I took the liberty of inscribing to you and Dr. Marcet, separately from the volumes to which I originally prefixed them, I indulge a hope that you will receive them in their new shape. I must also confess that one very principal motive for my reprinting them was this; — that if any person should be inclined to honour my Canzone so highly as to bind it up with either of your most valuable histories, he may now be enabled to do so; as I have printed it on exactly the same sized paper. I have also had a few copies taken off on a large paper, the same as that on which your magnificent edition of Leo X. is printed. The constant indulgence with which you have favoured my attempt to express the very high sense which I entertain of your meritorious and eminent services to the literary part of England and of Italy, leads me to hope that this feeble but sincere desire of paying still further respect to you will also be excused or approved.

‘ All’ opre vostre e pellegrine e nove
 Tue *sacrerei* la mia straniera lira,
 Straniera sì, ma fida.’

“ I hope that you will excuse my having put up a few copies of the Canzone for such of your friends as you think might wish it should accompany either of your works. It seems as if Italy must at last retire into Great Britain from the insults and injuries of the Corsican tyrant, and she will repose with gratitude at your feet. I should be happy to hear that all your family are well, and that you have enjoyed health and leisure for the most pleasing of all your labours, — those which you devote to literature.”

To this letter the following answer was returned by Mr. Roscoe: —

“I have had the pleasure of receiving your obliging letter, accompanying the copies of your two beautiful ‘*Canzoni Toscane*,’ and cannot sufficiently express how greatly I feel myself indebted to you for this additional instance of your kind partiality. The Canzone which you have been so good as to address to me, I shall be proud to prefix to my ‘*Life of Leo*,’ and to enable a few of my friends, devoted to Italian literature, to do the same. I shall thus, in some degree, gratify a desire which I always had, to see this elegant production precede my work; and which, indeed, nothing could have prevented (had you consented to it), but an apprehension that I might be considered as publishing my own praise, in having my name thus permanently united with yours in this favourite object of our common pursuit.

‘Che andrian le Muse lagrimose e sole
Senza onor di ghirlande e d’ auree cetre,
E muti si starian gli inni canori
Senza Te che Parnaso ami ed onori.’

“I continue to flatter myself, that at some period not far distant, I may have an opportunity of renewing our very interesting conversations on the literature and writers of Italy. If this should happen under my own roof, it would be doubly pleasant to me; and as it is probable that you may make an excursion during the summer, allow me to prevail upon you to direct your course to the north, and to pass a few days with me in my quiet retirement at Allerton.”

Amongst the most intimate friends of Mr. Roscoe, there was no one who had won more of his affection, or commanded more of his respect, than Dr. Currie. Their

acquaintance had commenced soon after the arrival of the latter in Liverpool: and to the period of his death, which occurred in the autumn of the present year (1805), their friendship had continued without interruption. The literary tastes and critical powers of Dr. Currie were highly valued by Mr. Roscoe, who submitted to his judgment the manuscript of a great part of his historical works, his translation of "The Nurse," and his occasional fugitive pieces. In a note enclosing one of the latter, he appropriately addresses him as "Sincerest critic of my prose or rhyme." His Muse, also, was not idle in the service of his friend; and some lines on the death of his children, and a sonnet, which have been lately published,* attest the warmth of his feelings. How secure the basis was upon which their friendship rested, — a companionship in virtuous exertions, — is seen in the concluding lines of the poem: —

"— Nor o'er our heads may many suns return,
 When we, my friend, may share the lot we mourn —
 Still in the dust this busy hand shall lie,
 Dim in its socket rest thy tracing eye:
 Meantime, whate'er of life its AUTHOR spares,
 Give we to generous aims and social cares;
 That when we rest in chill oblivion cold,
 And o'er our ashes numerous years have roll'd,
 Some happier effort may survive the tomb,
 Pregnant with bliss to beings yet to come."

In conjunction with Dr. Currie, Mr. Roscoe commenced, in the year 1790, a series of Essays, under the title of "The Recluse," which were published in the "Liverpool Herald," and of which the greater part were from his own pen. But it was not by a participation in

* Life of Dr. Currie, vol. i. p. 147.

these light and elegant pursuits alone that the friendship of Dr. Currie and Mr. Roscoe was cemented. It was strengthened by their joint endeavours to promote liberal principles, and to further benevolent objects, by their mutual anxiety to assist one another in designs of public utility, and by the promptitude with which they jointly came forwards at the public call. It is not surprising that the dissolution of a friendship like this should have been felt most deeply by Mr. Roscoe, whose sympathy for the fate of his friend was heightened by the singular instance of his attachment, recorded in the following letter, written immediately after Dr. Currie's death, to Mr. Macneil, the poet: —

“ Be assured, my dear Sir, that in our common attachment to our late much loved and lamented friend, I feel an additional bond of union between us. His influence yet survives, and forms fresh motives of confidence and friendship. * * * You will already, perhaps, have heard that the sufferings of our late excellent friend, towards the close of his life, were uncommonly severe; but it may be some satisfaction to you to know, that the firmness of his mind was equal to the trial, and that, amidst the most painful conflicts of his disorder, he was employed in an abstract attention to the nature of his symptoms, as if he had been making observations on the case of another person. Such a decided superiority of mind to body has seldom been exhibited, and reminds me of a most striking passage in a letter of Dr. Reid, given in Mr. Stewart's *Life* of that eminent man. ‘ To think that the soul perishes in that fatal moment, when it is purified by this fiery trial, and fitted for the noblest exertions in another state, is an opinion which I cannot help looking down upon with contempt and disdain.’ On this subject, I cannot refrain from communicating to

you some other circumstances attending his last moments, which afford an additional proof of the warmth of his affections, and the unbroken vigour of his mind. Whilst confined to his bed, he was accustomed to dictate to his son Wallace, who constantly attended on him, such sentiments as occurred to him respecting those matters in which he was most deeply interested—his family, his friends, his writings, and his opinions. This practice was continued to the very extreme of his rational powers, and was even renewed in the intervals of delirium immediately preceding his death. Some of these written memorials have since been communicated to me; and you will readily conceive what my feelings must have been, on finding one of them addressed to myself, tremulously signed with his own hand, intended to convey to me and mine his last blessing, and to give me some account of the state of his feelings on the most important of all topics, so far as he had then proceeded in what he himself denominates ‘the valley of the shadow of death.’ Such a pledge of affection more nearly resembles a communication from the world of spirits, than a message from a fellow mortal; and I shall, accordingly, preserve it as an inestimable memorial of the friendship of a man of high intellectual endowments, inflexible energy, and unbounded goodness of heart.”

In one of his latest papers, Dr. Currie had expressed a wish, that, on any thing that respected his memoirs, his “loved and excellent friend Mr. Roscoe” might be consulted; and for many years it was the earnest desire of the latter to present to the public the biography of his friend. The weight of business, however, and various engagements in which he became necessarily involved, prevented him from carrying this project into effect,—a circumstance which he never ceased to lament, till he

enjoyed the gratification of reading the admirable Memoir which the son of Dr. Currie has lately given to the world.

The death of Dr. Currie was followed by that of Mr. William Clarke, the early literary associate of Mr. Roscoe. In mentioning this double loss, in a letter to a friend, he says,—“It is true, the recollection of the sufferings which they had to sustain, and which they bore with uncommon fortitude, served in some degree to blunt the first emotions of sorrow, and to reconcile the mind to the loss of those, whose longer continuance in life would only have been a prolongation of anguish. But if the weapon was blunted, it has still inflicted an incurable wound; and to the last moment of my life I must regret the loss of these my long-loved friends, who, however they might differ in disposition, manners, talents, and character, united in regarding me with partial and unalterable affection.”

There was probably no one, among the many persons attached to Mr. Roscoe, in whose society he found greater delight than in that of Mr. Clarke. The liveliness, the simplicity, and the facetiousness of his manner, coupled with the great intelligence of his mind, and his love of literary pursuits, rendered him a peculiarly agreeable companion. Even during a long and afflicting state of ill health, spirits which never failed, and a good-nature not to be overcome, made his society delightful. So early as the year 1783, he was compelled, for the sake of the climate, to take up his residence abroad, where he remained for about seven years, during the whole of which time he corresponded regularly with his friend. These letters, written sometimes in Italian, sometimes in French, and occasionally in Latin, contain lively pictures of the countries which he visited, valuable

intelligence with regard to literary curiosities, and ever recurring allusions to the happy days which he had passed in the society of his correspondent. A taste for tranquillity and literary leisure was strongly felt by Mr. Clarke; and he frequently refers to the expected time, when, in company with his friend, he may hope to follow the bent of his inclinations.

“So, you are immersed in public business!

‘The world, the world will have its slaves.’

A little mortification will make retreat more enviable, more full of relish. Let us make all the haste we can, however, to get along a river side to peace and tranquillity. There Danté shall attend to conduct us to Hell, but not to leave us there; for we will not rest, till through the medium of Purgatory, we join Beatrice in the supernal regions.”

“I congratulate you,” he says, in a letter dated in 1783, “on the increase of your family; though I somewhat repine (while I applaud your resolution) at the imposition it lays upon you to join in the general contention for wealth. I expect to find you, on my return, as intently occupied in the pursuit as any of your neighbours. ’Tis in vain to resist the torrent; but your natural inclination will, I think, lead you to secure your retreat as early as prudence will allow; and I trust that period will not be a distant one, provided the moderation of your wishes continues. It is a true maxim, ‘To temperate bounds,’ &c. On this plan I hold myself ready to join you in any scheme of life you approve. I shall presently be qualified for the veriest hermit;—ease, quiet, temperance, reflection,—to these are my vows directed; not but that I sometimes shall leave my retreat, to feel a greater relish for it at my return.”

During Mr. Clarke's visit to Lisbon, the following verses were addressed to him by Mr. Roscoe : —

“ Ye hills with towering forests crown'd,
Ye plains by sultry sun's embrown'd,
Ye vales along whose vine-crown'd sides
The Douro rolls his rapid tides ;

“ Ye rocks grotesque, whose rugged brow
Glooms o'er the beating surge below,
Whence Lusitania's Genius eyes
The ocean mingling with the skies ;

“ From northern climes and colder shores,
My Clarke your mild retreats explores,
Hopeful to find their shades supply
That health his native fields deny.

“ Oh ! guide his steps, ye guardian powers,
Oh ! lead him to your greenest bowers ;
And whilst he treads the flowing vale,
Let health breathe strong in every gale.

“ Nor be your gifts to health confined ;
But soothe to peace his gentle mind,
Infuse contentment's healing balm,
And bid each anxious thought be calm.

“ Released from Winter's icy arms,
When Spring unfolds her op'ning charms,
Then rich in vigorous health restore
The wanderer to his native shore ;

“ With learning that disdains pretence,
With native wit, and manly sense,
Again to smooth my brow of care,
Again my social hour to share ;

“ To soothe by reason's kind control
Each wilder tumult of my soul ;
Within due bounds my hopes confine,
And make his temperate spirit mine.

“ So may nor whirlwind, blight, nor storm,
 Your verdant orange-groves deform ;
 So may your vines in cluster'd pride
 Pour in full streams their purple tide ;

“ Nor e'er within your favour'd bound
 The earthquake walk his wasteful round ;
 Which on Calabria's alter'd shores
 The trembling native now deplores.”

In the autumn of the year 1790, Mr. Clarke returned from the Continent ; and the pleasure with which he anticipated his re-union with one for whom he felt so entire a friendship, is beautifully expressed in a letter written immediately upon his arrival at Brighton. — “ A little while more will bring us, I hope, together. In your society, my friend, I look for the principal pleasure of my life. The commerce of the world gives me no real satisfaction, and I am not fit for it ; but as often as the calls of business will allow, your dwelling, whether in town or park, shall be my principal haunt. I know no enjoyments like those of friendship and retirement. My system (as far as is compatible with duty) being to stand aloof from the cares of the world, which are the source of much disquietude. The tranquil philosophy of our old friend Horace is much to my taste. His favourite maxim, of moderating our desires, is of all others the most important ; but, I know not how, we seem often to be carried along by a blind impulse, as if a fatality presided over our actions.”

In the summer of 1805, Mr. Clarke visited London for medical advice. His sufferings now almost overcame the delightful spirits with which nature had gifted him, and his letters to his early friend are full of the most affecting passages : — “ I must grasp the pen,” he says, in a letter dated the 15th of August, 1805, “ to say that

I was sorry to hear you have been poorly. *Mais j'espère que cela est passé.* Here I linger on, in a most lamentable state, with little prospect of amendment. My spirits seem likely soon to be completely worn out. I must console myself with the hope that, after so long an illness, I may expect an alleviation of the sufferings of my final exit. Believe me, *usque ad umbras silentes, ubi vagatur umbra Ricardi nostri,* vester addictissimus LE CLERC.*"

His sensibility to the sympathy of his friend he expresses in the following letter, written shortly before his death: —

"This post brought me your kind and affectionate letter, which has nearly overwhelmed me. I may literally say, I have bathed my couch with my tears. I prize, as I ought, your kind philosophical consolations; and they will, I trust, assist me in bearing patiently the ills incident to our nature. I would write more, but I am exhausted. Be persuaded that the impression of your kindness, and that of my other friends, is never to be effaced from my heart."

The loss of these long-trying and excellent friends made a deep impression on the feelings of Mr. Roscoe, and his more confidential letters contain many reflections produced by these affecting events.

"Surely, the misery that usually attends the close of life affords one of the strongest proofs of a future state of existence. For how is it possible to suppose that the same Supreme Being, who has distributed such various and extensive happiness to his creatures, would finally conclude the whole with pain and distress? This view

* Mr. Richard Lowndes, the early friend of Mr. Clarke and Mr. Roscoe.

of the subject is the only one that can afford us any real consolation, either for the sufferings of our friends, or for those which we must experience ourselves. After a life evidently intended to exercise our virtues, and improve our moral powers, death may be considered as the last great trial of our fortitude; the display of which, as it exhibits a complete triumph over the weakness of human nature, seems the best calculated to terminate our labours in this world, and accompany us on our entrance into the next. In the mean time, we who survive are like soldiers in an army, who, as their ranks are thinned by the enemy, draw nearer to each other.”

Not long after these events, Mr. Roscoe had to regret, upon different grounds, the loss of a man for whom he had ever entertained the warmest admiration and respect. In the magnanimous nature, the philanthropic heart, and the expanded political views of Mr. Fox, he recognised the qualities which compose the character of a genuine statesman, and for a long course of years he had been accustomed to regard him as the great hope of the nation. How sincerely and how deeply he lamented his loss may be learned from the following letter to Lord Holland: —

“I well know the poignancy of domestic grief is, on this occasion, enhanced by the consideration of the public loss of such a man, at such a juncture of time — a man in whom the nation seemed at length to have reposed its hopes and its confidence, and who was pre-eminently qualified, both by his talents and his disposition, to relieve her from the complicated evils in which she has, by a long course of misconduct, been involved. In this point of view, there have been few, if any, instances, where the sudden loss of great talents may be considered as so strikingly untimely and unfortunate.

But although this must be the first and natural impression on such an event, yet a due reflection will induce us to moderate our anxiety, and convince us that the expressions, ‘untimely and unfortunate,’ apply only to our own narrow conceptions and bounded views, and that, under the direction of Providence, the most alarming evils may not only be averted, but may become the instruments of good. Without this consoling hope, our present prospects would be dark indeed.

“Among the many great and striking endowments of Mr. Fox, there is one in particular to which I cannot help adverting, and which I trust will still continue to animate all those who have admired him in public, or loved him in private life. I mean that deep and intimate feeling for human nature, which has generally been estranged from the bosom of statesmen, but which was with him a part of his existence, ever actuating him to alleviate the evils, to vindicate the rights, to soften the calamities, and to increase, by every means in his power, the happiness of mankind. In this respect he is not lost to us. As long as our language remains, the powerful effusions of his mind will continue to improve and enlighten his countrymen, and to diffuse a milder and more benevolent spirit, not only in the recesses of private life, but in the direction of nations and the intercourse of states.

“This, my dear Lord, is his great and lasting praise ; and if we are not wanting to ourselves in pursuing the track which his genius and his virtues have pointed out to us, we may yet, in some degree, recompense ourselves for the great but inevitable loss which, in the common course of nature, we must, at one time or other, have had to sustain.

“The preservation of his speeches, in their best and most authentic form, is a sacred duty, which, I doubt not, will be most religiously observed. It is here that he still lives and breathes ; nor is there a single question essential to the great interests of mankind, but we can still resort to these invaluable records, as to his living self, for those liberal ideas, those extensive views, those impartial estimates of public conduct, those bold vindications of natural and political rights, those humane suggestions on behalf of all who suffer from injustice or oppression, which seem to have been the spontaneous result of his generous spirit and exalted mind, and which will secure to him the love and admiration of all future times.”

In the course of the year 1804, the interests of a young family who had been intrusted to his guardianship made it necessary for Mr. Roscoe to pass a few days in London. This visit gave him an opportunity of once more seeing the Marquis of Lansdowne, who was now rapidly approaching the close of his long and distinguished career. In a letter to Mrs. Roscoe, he says, “I am just returned from the Marquis. I have been deeply affected. He is very ill, but saw me ; and though he speaks with hesitation, his kindness both to me and W. is expressed in the most affectionate terms. More when I return.” In a letter to Lord Holland, written after the Marquis’s death, he says, “I am sorry to have occasion, so near the close of my letter, to recall a subject of such infinite regret as the death of the Marquis of Lansdowne. I saw him about twelve months since, and was apprehensive that his life could not be greatly prolonged. He spoke to me in the most affectionate terms, particularly requesting that I would continue the attachment I had always shown him, to his son Lord

Henry, — a recommendation which certainly did me great honour, but which was not necessary to induce me to comply with his wishes.” The correspondence between the Marquis of Lansdowne and Mr. Roscoe extends from the year 1790, down to the period of his Lordship’s last illness. Confidence, attachment, and respect for the opinions of each other, are freely manifested throughout the whole course of it. There were few subjects of political interest upon which the Marquis did not address his correspondent ; and in his open expression of sentiment, his capacious and liberal views, his attachment to freedom, and the accurate foresight of his judgment, reflect the highest honour on his statesman-like character. On the part of Mr. Roscoe, the correspondence is conducted with freedom, with sincerity, and with the respect due to the station and talents of his correspondent, and to the conspicuous part he had long acted in public affairs.

During this excursion Mr. Roscoe had the pleasure of occasionally enjoying the society of Dr. J. E. Smith, who happened at that time to be in town. In the following letter to Mrs. Roscoe he has given a slight sketch of his engagements during this visit :—“ I wrote you a few lines on my arrival on Saturday. I had scarcely finished, when Dr. Smith and Drake called on me, and I accompanied them to the Doctor’s lodgings, and was introduced to Mrs. S. and Miss F. S. I shall not attempt to describe them to you, lest you should think you have totally lost your wandering swain. I shall only say, that he who could see and hear Mrs. S. without being enchanted, has a heart not worth a farthing. Mr. Martin also called on me at the Temple Coffee-house. He was going on Sunday to dine with Dr. Aikin ; and Dr. Smith promised to be of the party.

I found a note from Mr. E., inviting me to dinner and bed, but I excused myself; and Dr. Smith, Drake, the two ladies, and myself, *intruded* ourselves *unexpectedly* at Dr. Aikin's table, and passed one of the brightest days in the summer of human life. Dr. A. was in high spirits, and seemed truly to enjoy our visit. His situation is perfectly suited to his wishes; and he declared that the present is the happiest period of his life. Miss A. is improved in her health, and preserves all her vivacity. After dinner Mr. Barbauld called, and conducted us to his incomparable wife. With her we found Mrs. John Taylor, and a long *et cetera* of the families which I cannot enumerate; and after half an hour's conversation, we returned to Dr. Aikin's to tea. On our return we sent Drake home in the coach with the ladies, and Dr. Smith, Mr. Martin, and myself, went to Sir Joseph Banks's. I was introduced to him, and received very kindly: invited to dine with the Royal Society on Thursday, and attend the meeting of that and the Antiquarian, which I intend to do. To-day I have devoted to business, examined all the poor old gentleman's papers and effects, in company with Mr. E., one of the finest old gentlemen of seventy-five that I ever met with. I had called on him at Clapton on Sunday, and apologised for my apparent incivility, but promised to dine with him to-day. After four hours' hard work in Mr. Dawson's lodgings, I accompanied him to Clapton Terrace, six or eight miles from town, and am just returned between nine and ten o'clock, with sundry valuables, safe from highway depredators. To-morrow I am engaged to dine at Mr. Barbauld's: Mr. Martin and Miss S. are to be there. In the evening I propose to go to the Linnean Society. Wednesday, a great part, with Dr. S. to Kew. Sunday at Mr. Creevey's, to meet Mr. Fox.

“I have paid several other visits, but have not yet been able to see the Marquis. Engagements crowd in, but I hope to arrange them so as to be free at the end of next week. On Sunday we called at Mr. Belsham’s, and saw our young friends, who are in perfect health: I shall call on them again before I leave town. I hope to see Mrs. Wakefield to-morrow. I write this with Harry Browne lecturing on *beef à-la-mode* in the next room, from which I hear every word as plain as if he sat beside me. I have now tired myself and you, but you will see that I lose no time; for which my constant stimulating principle is, that I may be once more at Allerton.”

The sentiments of Mr. Roscoe at this time, on the course of political events, may be gathered from his letters. In the following, addressed to Lord Holland, he has stated his views with regard to the condition of the Roman Catholics, and notices one of the great causes which was silently leading to their emancipation: —

“ March, 1805.

“I have somewhere, in that work*, alluded to the necessity there is, that statesmen and rulers should be aware of the changes in public opinion, and should accommodate their conduct accordingly; and I might have added, that enlightened rulers will foresee and anticipate such changes, and turn those circumstances, which would otherwise be ruinous, to their own or the public advantage. This, however, has not been the case of late with the administration of this country, who have given another striking proof of that want of knowledge of human nature which has always characterised them, in their present conduct towards the Catholics of Ireland.

* The “Life of Leo X.”

Can any thing be more apparent, than that the late commotions on the Continent have broken down all the old distinctions between Catholics and Protestants, and given rise to a new order of things, in which theological distinctions are absolutely lost and extinguished? Have we not been defending the Pope in his own capital? And is not the present existence of the Roman See owing to the interference of this country? Has not our great enemy united against us, not only his own motley empire, but the superstitious and Catholic government of Spain, and the Protestant and enlightened state of Holland? And shall we be the last people on earth to perceive these important alterations, and, through motives which have no longer any real foundation, place an insuperable bar between classes of people forming one nation, and that too at a time when the exertions of the whole country are required to preserve its very existence? The agitation of this question will, however, have done great good; not only from the knowledge, liberality, and temperate firmness displayed by the friends of toleration, but by the disgraceful ignorance and stupid superstition of its adversaries. The difference is such as cannot fail to be felt in every part of the country, and will have a tendency, more than any event that has yet occurred, to promote sentiments of moderation and goodwill among people of different religious persuasions, and particularly towards the Roman Catholics, and thus hasten the way to, that general toleration of speculative opinions, which it is yet to be hoped will finally take place."

In another letter, to the same nobleman, written at the close of the year 1805, he thus expresses himself on the subject of the war:—"The intelligence from the Continent seems to become every day more important, and

the war acquires a character of treachery, cruelty, and ferocity, which would disgrace an age of barbarians. I feel all this the more sensibly, from an apprehension that this country has been the cause of these calamities. I look back to the origin of the present contest, when peace and war hung equal in the balance, and the slightest portion of moderation and true good-will to mankind would have turned the scale on the favourable side. But Mr. Addington was suspected of being too tame a minister, and thought himself called upon to give a proof of his decision and firmness:—fatal and inconsiderate step! in which he abandoned his natural character, lost himself in the opinion of the true friends of their country, threw the reins of government into the same bloody hands that had so long and so disgracefully held them, and led the way to commotions, of which no human prudence can possibly foresee the event.”

A public fast having been directed to be observed in the year 1803, Dr. Parr took this occasion of expressing his sentiments upon political affairs, in a sermon which he preached in the parish church of Hatton. In this discourse, a copy of which he presented to Mr. Roscoe, he sketches, with his usual power, the character of a patriot; and denounces those who profane that hallowed name to the purposes of ambition, avarice, and national or individual pride. This publication drew from Mr. Roscoe a long and interesting critique, in the form of a letter, addressed to Dr. Parr; to whom, however, as appears from a memorandum made upon it, it was never sent. The following extract from this letter might almost be supposed to have been addressed, not by the politician to the divine, but by the divine to the politician:—

“ From these sentiments you will perceive, that although I agree with you in your definition of patriotism, and in the inferences you draw from it, as to the indispensable duty and necessity of a vigorous and national defence, yet I conceive this is not the only form in which the efforts of a true patriot may at present be displayed. You have well observed, that our patriotism must not be confined to *the endurance of pain, or the surrender of life itself*; and if ever there was an occasion on which efforts of an extraordinary nature were called for, it is at the moment when two nations are whetting the sword against each other, and commencing a career of horror and of bloodshed, of which no human power can foresee the consequences. Every pretended patriot, every proud and ignorant individual, can cry out for war, and urge on his neighbour to the work of destruction; but where is the man who will oppose himself to the national madness? Who will point out to both countries the absurdity of a contest, which has no adequate or even rational object in view? Who will propose, in the very moment of exasperation, measures of conciliation and of peace; and sacrifice himself in the public opinion, in the hope, however remote, of rendering to his country, and to almost all mankind, a real and effectual service? He who would dare to attempt this is indeed a patriot. He who should succeed in it would entitle himself to the gratitude and applause of all future times.

“ You will not, I am sure, conceive, that in stating these sentiments I consider myself as advancing any thing in which I believe you would not readily concur. They are, I flatter myself, too much in the spirit of the excellent discourse, which has given rise to them, to meet with any great opposition from you. But I should have been truly happy to have seen them more fully

recommended and enforced in the same energetic language, and with the same convincing arguments, that distinguish the whole of your sermon.

“Surely, whilst we are vigilant in our defence, we may keep our hearts free from that rancour and malevolence which shut out all prospect and all hope of reconciliation; and if we cannot attain to the Christian virtue of *loving our enemies*, we may at least guard against that diabolical spirit of animosity, which renders mankind more ferocious than wild beasts. Notwithstanding the present exasperation, which has been so artfully and wickedly excited between the two countries, opportunities will occur when the breathings of a more temperate spirit *will* prevail; and to prepare the way for it is certainly the duty of every true friend to his country. After all the outcry that our liberties are in danger, from the measures adopted by the French tyrant on the Continent, I fear we are in more danger from ourselves, than from all other nations upon earth.”

It was not until the spring of 1806 that Mr. Roscoe had the satisfaction of becoming personally acquainted with Dr. Parr, and of enjoying his society for some days at Allerton. This visit, which confirmed the friendship created by their literary intercourse, is mentioned by Dr. Parr in the following short letter, with his usual strong expression of feeling:—

“Dear Mr. Roscoe,

“I am now in my sixtieth year. I have conversed with the wisest and most learned of my contemporaries, and I say to you with great sincerity, that the days I spent with you, and your family, were amongst the happiest days of my life. I shall remember you; I shall esteem you; I shall praise you; I shall bless you, one

and all, again and again. Yes, dear Sir, I am thankful to Heaven for granting me such an intellectual and such a moral repast. I shall again be thankful, if I am permitted again to see you, and your wife, and your children."

CHAPTER VIII.

1805.

Histories of the age of Leo X., Paulus Jovius, Fabroni. — Collins's projected history. — Wharton. — Robertson. — Mr. Roscoe urged to undertake it. — Letters to Lord Bristol and Lord Holland. — Motives which influenced Mr. Roscoe. — Progress of the work. — Materials procured by Lord Holland — letter to him. — Assistance rendered by the Italian scholars. — Mr. Johnson's offer — correspondence with him — documents procured through him. — Information obtained at Paris by the Rev. William Shepherd. — Letter to Fabroni. — The progress of the work interrupted. — Sonnet. — Letter to Dr. Smith. — Publication of the work. — Letter to President Jefferson, and answer. — Letter to Dr. Smith. — Letter from Mr. J. C. Walker, and answer. — Letter from Mr. Mathias. — Other opinions in favour of the work. — Sonnet by Mr. Hayley. — Letters to Lord St. Vincent and to Dr. Parr. — Criticisms upon the work in the Edinburgh Review — in other publications. — Mr. Roscoe's feelings on the occasion — his answer to the Edinburgh reviewers in the preface to the second edition. — Letter to Professor Smyth. — Prepares, but does not publish, an answer to his critics. — Letter from Mr. Mathias. — Reception of the work abroad — in Germany — is translated there — is translated in Italy by Count Bossi — French translation — American edition. — Effect of his literary labours on the health of Mr. Roscoe. — Letters to Fuseli and Lord Buchan.

THE age of Leo X., fertile as it was in brilliant events, and illustrated by the revival of letters and arts in Europe, was long ere it found an historian. The life of the pontiff had, indeed, been written by Paulus Jovius, but not upon the extended scale demanded by the subject; and again, after the lapse of two centuries, by the learned Fabroni. But neither of these works, however

valuable as pieces of insulated biography, conveyed an adequate idea either of the political or of the literary history of that period. Such a work had, indeed, been meditated by several individuals, but it does not appear that any progress was ever made in the design. Collins the poet, about the middle of the last century, is said to have published proposals for such a history, — a project referred to by Dr. Warton, in his “*Essay on the Life and Writings of Pope* ;” and mentioned also by Dr. Johnson, with the observation that probably not a page of the history was ever written.* The design was revived, after the death of Collins, by Dr. Warton, in conjunction with some of his learned and accomplished friends. “*In a conversation,*” says Mr. Roscoe, † “*which I had the pleasure of enjoying with Dr. Warton, in the year 1797, the progress made in an undertaking which had been so long announced to the public became an object of my enquiry. By him I was informed that it had been the intention of himself, his brother, and several of their literary friends, to give a history of the revival of letters, not only in Italy, but in the principal countries of Europe, and that the history of English poetry by Mr. Thomas Warton was only a*

* It appears, however, from a communication made by the late Mr. Hayley to Mr. Roscoe, that Collins had proceeded so far as to prepare a preliminary dissertation to his work. “*Though the countrymen of the poet Collins,*” says Mr. Hayley, “*must ever lament his calamity, they have now no reason to regret that his projected history of Leo was never completed, — a work towards which he had made a greater advance than his friends, the Wartons and Johnson, imagined ; for one of my early companions informed me that an elder brother of his (intimate with Collins) had heard him read a preliminary discourse of great merit, which he intended to prefix to the work in question. I have reason to believe the discourse I speak of is irrecoverably lost.*”

† Preface to the “*Life of Leo X.*”

part of this great design. When we advert to the various and excellent critical productions of these liberal and learned brothers, and consider, that amongst the names of their coadjutors would probably have been found those of West, of Walpole, of Mason, and of Gray, we cannot sufficiently lament the want of public encouragement, which was, in all probability, the chief cause which prevented this noble and extensive undertaking from being carried into complete execution." At a later period, the history of the revival of learning was suggested to the attention of Dr. Robertson, but that accomplished writer does not appear to have encouraged the idea.

Other writers, amongst whom may be mentioned the author of the *History of the League of Cambray*, and Gordon, in his *Lives of Alexander VI. and Cæsar Borgia*, had illustrated the political events of this period; while its literary history had been treated of in the invaluable pages of Tiraboschi, and of Mazzuchelli, but no adequate history had yet been given of the Age of Leo X.

To Mr. Roscoe this subject had been suggested from various quarters, immediately after the publication of the '*Life of Lorenzo.*' He was strongly urged to the undertaking, both by Lord Orford and Lord Bristol; but it was some time before he resolved to engage in a work so laborious. In a letter addressed to the latter nobleman, in the month of April, 1797, he says, "Your Lordship's recommendation to me to continue my narrative through the age of Leo X. is certainly entitled to great attention, and will have considerable weight in any determination I may form in that respect. But the success of such an undertaking would not rest on myself alone. Whatever value my former work possesses chiefly arises, as your Lordship is well aware, from the documents

which I have had the good fortune to obtain ; and to retail amongst my countrymen a compound, elaborated from the works of Jovius, or even the collections of Muratori, and the Histories of Guicciardini, &c., would not, I confess, gratify the literary ambition even of so humble an author as myself."

To Lord Holland, who had liberally offered his services, in procuring from Italy any original documents which might be useful in throwing new light on the Life and Age of Leo X., Mr. Roscoe says, "It has been suggested to me that a further prosecution of the subject which has already been the object of my research, and an extension of it through the Life of Leo X., might not be uninteresting to the public ; and it is certain that I am not unprepared with considerable materials for this purpose. But the great extent of such a work, the difficulty of obtaining original materials to give a sufficient degree of novelty, and the devotion of time which it will unavoidably require, have hitherto made me hesitate on the expediency of such an undertaking. The information in your note, of the favourable idea entertained, by learned and well-informed Italians, of my former exertions, and the generous and unexpected offers of assistance in the acquisition of materials towards a further extension of the work, are powerful inducements with me to engage in such an undertaking ; and should I eventually adopt this resolution, I shall avail myself of your Lordship's recommendation to Fabroni, with the hope that you will excuse the trouble I may then be under the necessity of giving you."

The motives which influenced Mr. Roscoe in the decision to which he ultimately came, are adverted to in his preface to the "Life of Leo." "The same considerations which have deterred others from engaging in

so laborious and hazardous an attempt, would, in all probability, have produced a similar effect on myself, had I not been led, by imperceptible degrees, to a situation in which I could scarcely, with either propriety or credit, have declined the task.

“The history of the ‘Life of Lorenzo de’ Medici,’ the father of Leo X., had opened the way to a variety of researches, not less connected with the events of the ensuing period, than with those of the times for which they were immediately intended, and even that work was considered by many, perhaps not unjustly, as only the vestibule to a more spacious building, which it would be incumbent on the author at some future period to complete. Since that publication, the friendship and liberality of several distinguished characters, both at home and abroad, have supplied me with many valuable communications and original documents, which, without their countenance and favour, it would not have been in my power to obtain. To have withheld these materials from the public, would have defeated the purpose for which they were communicated; and to have shrunk from the task under such circumstances, would have given occasion for a construction almost as unfavourable to myself as the failure of success. These reflections have induced me, amidst the constant engagements of an active life, to persevere in an undertaking which has occasionally called for exertions beyond what my time, my talents, or my health, could always supply; and I now submit to the public the result of the labours of many years, in the best form in which, under the circumstances, it has been in my power to offer it to their acceptance.”

The additional leisure afforded to Mr. Roscoe by his retirement from business powerfully seconded these con-

siderations, and in the autumn of the year 1798 he began to apply himself sedulously to his new labours. For these he was partially prepared by the researches which the "Life of Lorenzo de' Medici" had demanded; and to the kindness of Lord Holland he was indebted for the first supply of original materials from the archives of Florence. "I have received letters from Florence," says his Lordship, in a letter dated the 12th of December, 1798, "in answer to your requests, and have every reason to hope that the business will be pursued with as much diligence as possible. The person who has undertaken to copy the manuscripts is highly flattered with the commission, and the Grand Duke has been so good as to facilitate his undertaking, by allowing him access at all times to the library, and by promising him any assistance he may require. Mr. Penrose intended to return to Florence, in a few days after he received my letter, and has engaged to superintend the transcription, as well as to make all possible enquiries about the manuscripts at Rome, which, however, were always in a very confused state, and a great part of which have been either removed or destroyed by the French. At any rate, I confide in Mr. Penrose making all the exertions possible, as he is too much a man of letters and taste not to contribute all in his power for the purpose of inducing you to favour the public with another historical work."

The manuscripts thus procured consisted of a series of letters and papers, forming two folio volumes, and illustrating, in a very copious manner, the early history of the Pontiff. "For this valuable collection," says Mr. Roscoe, in the preface to the 'Life of Leo,' "I am indebted to the obliging and disinterested interference of a nobleman, who adds dignity to his station, not only by

the firm and consistent tenour of his public conduct, but by his encouragement of those literary studies in which he has himself made so distinguished a proficiency.”

The great scholars of Italy, with that liberality which adds grace to learning, generously contributed their advice and assistance in procuring materials for the work. “In adverting to the assistance which I have derived from the city of Florence,” says Mr. Roscoe, in his preface, “that cradle of the arts in modern times, I must not omit to notice the favours conferred on me by the late venerable and learned Canonico Angelo Maria Bandini, principal librarian of the Laurentian library there. . . . To this eminent man, who retained his early and ardent love to literature to the close of his days, I am indebted for the communication of several scarce and valuable documents, both printed and manuscript, as well as for various letters, indicating to me, with the utmost attention and minuteness, those sources of information which his long and intimate acquaintance with the subjects of the following volumes had enabled him to point out.”*

The state of public affairs on the Continent, at this period, was such as to afford Mr. Roscoe little hope of procuring from Rome the valuable information which the archives of the Vatican, and the other collections in that city, afforded. He had also lost the friendly assistance of Mr. Clarke, whose researches had contributed so much to the enrichment of his former work; but for this loss he was, in a great degree indemnified by the unsolicited kindness of a stranger. When almost on the point of abandoning his work in despair, Mr. Ros-

* Some of the letters of Bandini are printed in the Appendix (No. VIII.) to the illustrations of the Life of Lorenzo de' Medici.

coe received from Mr. John Johnson, a gentleman then travelling through Italy, the most gratifying offers of assistance. "Having learned," says Mr. Johnson, "from Signor Bandini, that you are employed in writing the 'Life of Leone X.,' I take the liberty of informing you that I propose passing the ensuing winter in Rome, where it is probable that, from my acquaintance with the Cardinal Borgia, the Abbé Marini, Prefetto dell' Archivio Vaticano, &c. &c., I may be able to procure you some materials for your work. I confess I should not have taken the liberty of writing to you, until I had been able to give you some efficient indication of my wish to serve you, but from the idea that you could render my researches more useful, by giving precise directions respecting any particular documents which you might wish to have examined. . . . I beg to repeat, that nothing should have tempted me to obtrude myself on your notice, but the hope of augmenting the literary means of an author who has given to the world a work, which the literati of Tuscany read and speak of with astonishment and delight."

To this liberal and friendly communication, Mr. Roscoe replied in the following letter:—

"My very sincere acknowledgments are due for your obliging letter of the first of October, which should have been sooner answered, had I not been confined to my room by an attack of nervous fever, from which I am only just recovered. The interest which you are so good as to take in my researches respecting the Life of Leo X. encourages me to state to you, that, with respect to such information as the archives of Florence can supply, I am already, by the assistance of Lord Holland, possessed of copies of letters, &c. which compose two folio volumes, of upwards of 300 pages each. These,

with such assistance as I occasionally derive from the respectable Canonico Bandini, will furnish me the necessary information. Yet if any thing should occur to me, I shall take the liberty of addressing myself to the learned Abbate Fontani, to whose kindness I have before been indebted, and from whose very able assistance and advice I know I should derive great advantages.

“With respect to Rome, I have not yet had an opportunity of obtaining any materials from that quarter, although the Vatican certainly contains an immense fund of information respecting the subject of my work. Your assistance in this respect will, therefore, be considered by me as a great obligation. As my work will contain a pretty full account of the pontificates of Alexander VI. and Julius II., whatever relates to or elucidates either of their public characters will be of great use. With respect to the pontificate of Leo X., every thing that refers to it will be of importance to me, — whether it concerns his political transactions and negotiations, his encouragement of literature and art, his conduct both in public and private life; in short, whatever has any connection with his history, or with that of any branch of his family. I find, that anecdotes and circumstances, trivial and unimportant in themselves, often acquire value from comparison with other parts of a person’s character and conduct; and I wish to collect all I can respecting this pontiff, in order to enable me to appreciate, so far as is in my power, his very extraordinary and equivocal character.

* * * * *

“I would not, if it had been in my power, have lost a single day in replying to your letter, as I shall send the first volume of my work to the press in the course of this winter. Whatever, therefore, relates to the times of

Alexander VI. and Julius II. will be immediately wanted; but any memorials of Leo X. will be in time, if they arrive during the course of the next summer.

“The freedom which I have taken will convince you that I place an implicit confidence in your obliging offers, which are indeed made with such frankness, that I cannot hesitate in availing myself of them.”

The feverish attack mentioned in the foregoing letter was induced by the unremitting devotion with which Mr. Roscoe prosecuted his biographical studies, from which he was for some time interdicted by his friend, Dr. Currie.

The documents obtained from Rome, through the intervention of Mr. Johnson, consisted both of manuscripts and of printed books. Amongst the former was the fragment of an unpublished Life of Leo, written in Latin, and carried down to the year 1516. Amongst the printed books were many scarce and valuable tracts, which could not have been procured in England. But the kindness of Mr. Johnson did not terminate here. Having visited Venice on his return to England, he used his good offices with the celebrated Abbate Morelli, librarian of the S. Marco, and procured from him a list of books and documents which might be found useful to a biographer of Leo X. This circumstance led to a literary intercourse with Morelli, productive of much pleasure and information to Mr. Roscoe. *

The National Library at Paris contributed also to the materials for the work. The Diary of Paris de Grassis, of which extracts only had been printed, existed entire in that collection; and Mr. Roscoe was very desirous of

* A letter from Morelli is printed in the Appendix to the Illustrations of the Life of Lorenzo de' Medici (No. IX.).

inspecting other portions of the manuscript. "It happened, fortunately for my purpose," says Mr. Roscoe, in his preface, "that in the summer of the year 1802, my particular friend and neighbour, the Rev. Mr. Shepherd, well known as the Author of 'The Life of Poggio Bracciolini,' paid a visit to Paris. On this occasion, I scrupled not to request his assistance in examining for me the different manuscripts of the 'Diary of Paris de Grassis,' and making such extracts from them, in the original, as he conceived would be interesting. As no one could be better qualified for such a task, so no one could have entered upon it with greater alacrity. During his stay at Paris, a considerable portion of his time was passed in these researches, in which he met with every possible facility from the librarians; and, on his return, he brought with him several curious extracts, which have enabled me to throw additional light on the history of Leo X., and particularly on the singular circumstances attending his death."

The assistance of various persons of intelligence and learning in England was also freely afforded; and the spirits of the writer, which occasionally flagged in the course of his laborious task, were supported by the kindness thus extended to him. In transmitting to Fabroni a copy of the Life of Lorenzo, he describes the progress he had then made in the biography of Leo:—

"I wait for your 'Life of Leo' with the impatience of a traveller by night, who expects the moon shortly to rise and direct his way. In the course of last winter I sketched the first volume of my work on the same subject, which places Leo on the pontifical throne; the remainder will, I apprehend, occupy two other volumes, and the fourth will be devoted to the appendix. This arrangement, you will easily perceive, will require much

time to complete; and as I consider it rather as the offspring of my leisure than as my occupation, it will be some years before I can hope to lay my researches before the public. In the mean time, I have been assiduous, and not unsuccessful, in my enquiries. By the assistance of Lord Holland, and of Mr. Penrose, the British Resident at Florence, I have received numerous documents from the archives of that place, which have thrown great light on the life and early part of the pontificate of Leo X. These I have already employed in a great degree in my narrative, and I doubt not your learned and judicious work will furnish me with much additional information."

Although for some time after its commencement the "Life of Leo" proceeded with rapidity, yet it was seldom that the regular and uninterrupted attention of the author could be bestowed upon it. At the conclusion of the year 1799 the work was, as we have seen, thrown aside for many months, in consequence of the important commercial engagements in which he became involved, and which continued afterwards to claim the greater portion of his time. He was also, upon more occasions than one, prevented from prosecuting his labours by illness, induced by the intensity of his application. But notwithstanding these checks, the work continued to grow under his hands, and the labour of years gradually approached its conclusion.

To this period may be referred the composition of the following

SONNET.

"O'er the deserted waste of ages past,
As lone I wander, hover round my head,
Ye mighty Spirits of the illustrious Dead!

Mail'd Warriors, laurell'd Bards, whose fame shall last
 Through future times ! For you the gay repast,
 The social circle, and the downy bed
 I quit, and, by your bright illusions led,
 Pursue my course ; or when the wintry blast
 Sings o'er the heath, or Autumn browns the shade,
 Or Spring returns the face of Heaven to cheer ;
 Ah, not in vain my ardent vows be paid,
 And may your ripening honours full display'd,
 The dearest guerdon to your votary bear,
 For many a toilsome day, and many a patient year."

The feelings of Mr. Roscoe at this time are described in a letter to Dr. Smith, written on the 1st of January, 1804.

" On the return of our honest friend Shepherd, I wrote you a hasty letter, intending to have followed it by one more expressive of what I felt for your kindness to him ; but a most violent effort to free myself from the heavy task in which I am engaged, and the continual pressure of business, with my journeys between Allerton and Liverpool, have so devoured every moment of my time, that day after day has passed on, till the conclusion of the year, without my being able to fulfil my wishes. I am now, however, determined to be somewhat more my own master. Since you left Liverpool, I have copied and prepared for the press as much as will compose my two first volumes. The remainder is in great forwardness, and, if I enjoy my health for a few months, will, I hope, be completed. M'Creery begins to print with the new year, and promises to proceed with great rapidity. My arrangements with Messrs. Cadell and Davies are made to my satisfaction ; and in the spring of 1805 I am in hopes I shall make my appearance before the public in the pompous shape of four splendid quartos. The labour of correcting, &c. I regard as nothing, in

comparison with that which I have had in the collecting of materials, and in the composition of the work; and hence, though much remains to be done, I find my mind lighter than it has been for some time, on account of the long and laborious road that lay before me. You, who have so frequently engaged in important literary undertakings, will know how to sympathise with a brother author, in the enthusiasm of his pursuit, the cheering prospect of success, the apprehensions of disappointment, and the lassitude of fatigue; and will easily perceive that, as the barometer rises or falls through these degrees, it is to us writers the foul or fair weather of human life."

The long and tedious labour, which the composition of the work had required, rendered Mr. Roscoe, at its conclusion, sensible to little else than the relief which its completion afforded. "The work," he says, to one of his correspondents, "was advertised for publication on Saturday last. What its reception may be I know not, nor do I distress myself by any uncommon anxiety on that head. An author who has been so long employed in preparing his works for the public, resembles, in some respects, a man who has been a long time sick, and cares not whether he lives or dies, so that he be released from his trouble. This indifference, however, does not extend to the particular friends whom I have the happiness to know and esteem, and to whose pleasure and amusement I should be glad to think it was in my power to contribute."

At length, in the summer of 1805, the work, which had been in the press upwards of two years, was published.* The first impression, which consisted of 1000

* The time employed upon the composition of the "Life of Leo" may partly be gathered from the dates in the original MS., now in

copies, being double the number of the first edition of Lorenzo, was nearly all disposed of soon after its publication; and the most gratifying expectations were entertained by the author, with regard to the success of a work which he looked upon as the completion of his former task, and the termination of his historical labours. "Although the 'Life of Leo X.,'"¹ he says, in an unpublished tract, "is given to the public as a separate and independent work, yet it is evident that I considered it as a sort of continuation of my former history of the 'Life of Lorenzo de' Medici.' The transactions that occurred in the interval between the death of Lorenzo and the election of Leo include some events of the greatest curiosity and importance in modern history; and I was, therefore, unwilling to pass over them by a meagre and uninteresting narrative. Let me also confess, however it may subject me to the charge of arrogance and presumption, that I was desirous of embracing, as far as my subject would allow, the history of the principal events in Europe, from the downfall of Constantinople to the accession of Charles V.; and of thus connecting, although by a link of very inferior workmanship, the golden histories of Gibbon and of Robertson."

Mr. Roscoe, as was his custom, presented copies of his new work to many of his friends, and to a few distinguished persons to whom he was anxious to show his regard. Amongst the latter was Thomas Jefferson, then President of the United States, to whom the volumes were sent accompanied by the following letter:—

the library of the Athenæum, at Liverpool. The date at the commencement of the second volume is 5th December, 1800; of the third, 15th February, 1802; and of the fourth, 21st January, 1803. One half of his copyright in the work was disposed of to Messrs. Cadell and Davies for the liberal sum of £2000.

“It is with particular pleasure that I avail myself of the opportunity afforded me, by the publication of my ‘History of the Life and Pontificate of Leo X.,’ of requesting you will do me the honour of accepting a copy, as a very humble but sincere mark of the respectful esteem and attachment of the author. In thus venturing to introduce my own productions to your notice, I am sensible I may be accused of presumption; but from such a charge I find a sufficient shelter in the reflection, that history is the peculiar study of those in high stations, whose opinions and conduct have an important influence on the destiny of mankind. I also flatter myself with the hope that the principles contained in this work will be found in unison with those sentiments of enlightened toleration, liberal policy, and universal benevolence, which have been no less strikingly evinced in your practice, than energetically recommended and enforced in your public addresses to the nation over which you preside.

“I have transmitted these volumes through the hands of my particular friend, Mr. Ralph Eddowes, of Philadelphia; who some years since left this place to reside with his family in America, and whose talents, integrity, and temperate firmness would do credit to any country.”

“By some accident,” says Mr. Jefferson in reply, “which has not been explained to me, your letter of June 4, 1805, and the copy of your ‘History of the Pontificate of Leo X.,’ which you were so kind as to destine for me, have lain in one of our custom-houses near a twelvemonth. The letter is now received, and the book expected by the first conveyance. I pray you to receive my thanks for this mark of your attention; and I anticipate with pleasure the reading of a work, which, for its taste and science, will, I doubt not, stand worthily on the shelf with the ‘Life of Lorenzo de’

Medici.' My busy countrymen are as yet too actively occupied to enter the lists in the race of science. When the more extended improvement of their country, and its consequent wealth, shall bring them the necessary leisure, they will begin their career on the high ground prepared by their transatlantic brethren, from the days of Homer to the present time. May the range of their flight be worthy of the height from which it commences; and may the due employment of the talent given them by their masters in that line merit to them the benediction of 'Well done, good and faithful servants!' I pray you to accept my salutations, and assurances of great respect and consideration."

To his friend Dr. Smith, Mr. Roscoe thus wrote on the same occasion:

"I have long intended to write to you, but have been prevented by a continual succession of unavoidable occupation and bodily indisposition, and sometimes by the junction of both.

"Leo's reckoning is now made, and he must be sent to his account with all his imperfections. In the course of a few days after this comes to hand you will receive a copy, which, from its size, would terrify a man of much less occupation than yourself; and which you will naturally lay aside, till you can muster courage and find time to make so formidable an attack. Of the reception of this work I am, in many respects, doubtful; but I do not suffer my apprehensions to render me miserable. I have taken all the pains in my power, to make it deserving of the public notice; and have endeavoured to express the peculiar opinions which it may contain with decency, though with freedom. If all this will not do, I cannot help it; nor would I alter or suppress those opinions, to obviate censure or obtain applause. In one place or

another, I have found an opportunity of expressing my sentiments on the great subjects of politics, morals, religion, and taste, as well as on a variety of inferior topics, which I hope are not impertinently introduced; and by these sentiments I am content to be judged, so long as my book may continue to be read."

The most flattering testimonies of approbation, from those whose judgment on the subject was most worthy of regard, followed the appearance of the work.

"I should perhaps," says Mr. J. C. Walker, "have acknowledged sooner the receipt of the inestimable present which you have done me the honour to send me; but the truth is, I was so powerfully captivated by the charms of the work, that I could not prevail on myself to suspend the perusal, even to perform a duty of gratitude. I will not, however, delay any longer to offer you my warmest thanks for the rich accession you have made to my collection. I was not entitled to, nor did I presume to expect, so magnificent a present. I was not, therefore, less surprised than delighted at the receipt of it. It has been my study day and night ever since it reached me. 'It is,' as Mr. Hayley observes, 'a noble work, worthy of its subject and its author.'

"I am astonished at the immense mass of curious and interesting information it contains, and charmed with the clearness of the arrangement, and the simple elegance of the style. You, and your friend Mr. Shepherd, have completed, in a most masterly manner, the history of the revival of letters. I hope it is not true that you do not mean to pursue your researches further into the literary history of Italy. Such a determination would be matter of general regret.

"During the perusal of your work it often occurred to me, that every admirer of the golden days of Leo has

reason to rejoice that Dr. Robertson did not, as he once intended, occupy your subject. To the political part he might have done justice ; but in the literary department, and in the history of the arts, he would certainly have failed. Robertson shines in the cabinet and in the field, but (if I may so express myself) he does not seem at home in the academy. He does not appear to have cultivated with ardour what is generally understood by the term elegant literature ; nor does he seem to have had much taste in the fine arts : * so that his ‘ History of the Age of Leo ’ must have been very imperfect. It is no flattery to say that you have proved yourself qualified in every way for the great undertaking.”

“ I have to thank you,” says Mr. Roscoe, in answer to another letter from the same correspondent, “ for your obliging communication of the opinion of your Italian correspondent, and still more for that of Dr. Burney, on my late publication ; there being few persons now living whose judgment I should so highly respect, or whose approbation I should be so earnest to obtain. I fear, however, that neither these, nor your own kind encouragement, will induce me to engage myself further in the history or literature of Italy. Having said all that I had

* Hume appears to have held the same opinion as Mr. Walker. “ As to the *Age of Leo X.*,” he says, in a letter to Dr. Robertson, “ it was Warton himself who intended to write it ; but he has not wrote it, and probably never will. If I understand your hint, I should conjecture that you have some thoughts of taking up the subject : but how can you acquire knowledge of the great works of sculpture, architecture, and painting, by which that age was chiefly distinguished ? Are you versed in all the anecdotes of the Italian literature ? These questions I heard proposed in a company of literati, when I enquired concerning this design of Warton. They applied their remarks to that gentleman ; who, yet, they say, has travelled. I wish they do not all of them fall more fully on you.” — *Stewart’s Life of Robertson : Appendix.*

to say, I feel not the slightest disposition to intrude myself again on the public notice. If my writings have any merit, they are certainly voluminous enough; if not, I have already done too much. Having so long claimed the attention of others, I shall, in my turn, willingly become a hearer; and shall expect with impatience the result of your further enquiries on those subjects which you have, in some of their branches, so happily illustrated."

Amongst the various persons to whom Mr. Roscoe looked with anxiety for a judgment upon his labours, there was no one who held a more prominent position than Mr. Mathias; and it was therefore with peculiar satisfaction that he received the following letter, written immediately after the publication of the work:—

"I feel a very sensible pleasure in possessing this new and most interesting production of your genius, your learning, and your unwearied application for the essential interests of Italy and of this country; as it may be justly said of you, in the words of Ariosto to one of his friends —

"Tieni d' ambe le lingue i bei segreti."

"I have not yet had it in my power to gratify myself by the *continued* perusal of this great national work, but propose, when I return home from an excursion I am just about to undertake, to have that pleasure and satisfaction; the inspection of some detached portions of it have left me *con la bocca dolce*. It is peculiarly delightful to me, that the *Canzone* which I addressed to you, expressing my sense of the obligations which this country and Italy must for ever feel for your unparalleled exertions, is not forgotten on the banks of the Mersey. It is also a consolation that my boldness in attempting to

strike the lyre of Tuscany, and on such a subject, has met with that excuse I could scarce have expected.

“ *A Te drizzai il mio stil ; per te son oso
D' esser primo a versar nei nostri lidi
Del divin fonte che, con tanto onore,
Gustò di Paradiso il gran pittore.*”

You will pardon my altering a few lines of Alamanni as an apology for my presumption.”

From his publishers also Mr. Roscoe received very satisfactory information respecting his work. “ Of ‘Leo X.,’ ” they say, “ the accounts we have received from various quarters, including many of our most respectable literary friends, are of the most gratifying description. Dr. Gillies, Mr. Malone, Dean Vincent, Dr. Sturges, are amongst those who have very recently expressed their high satisfaction with the work.”

Nor were poetical testimonies to the merits of the work wanting. For the following sonnet Mr. Roscoe was indebted to the muse of Mr. Hayley.

“ Joy and renown attend the happy hour
When Taste and Truth their finish'd task proclaim
Their English temple to the Tuscan name !
ROSCOE ! on thee may all the Muses shower
Due wreathes of glory, graced with every flower,
Worthy to crown their fav'rite, skill'd to frame
This grand Pantheon of historic fame,
Secure to triumph o'er Oblivion's power.
'T is thine departed merit to embalm,
And drive Detraction's vultures from their prey ;
Thine the historian's, thine the poet's palm,
As Nature's mirror we thy work survey,
Faithful though vast ! Thus Ocean, clear and calm,
Reflects each light and shade the heavens display.”

“ I may well rejoice,” says Mr. Roscoe, in offering his acknowledgments to Mr. Hayley, — “ I may well re-

joice in the approbation of one of whose applause Gibbon was proud, and in whose friendship Cowper reposed with confidence; but I am too conscious of the defects of my publications to attribute to their merits that commendation, which is more properly the result of the liberality of your character and the benevolence of your disposition."

Satisfactory as were these testimonies of individual approbation, Mr. Roscoe was well aware that there were portions of his work which would be received by many persons with very different feelings. The tone of political sentiment prevailing throughout its pages, and the views taken of the character of Luther, and of the conduct of the early reformers, were little calculated to conciliate the favourable opinion of a large class of persons. That he was fully aware of the hazard he ran in treating of these subjects, appears from a letter addressed to Lord St. Vincent* a few weeks before the publication of the work.

"Your Lordship's repeated kindness encourages me to mention that a work on which I have been employed for several years, the 'Life and Pontificate of Leo X.', is now nearly printed, and will, I expect, make its appearance in the course of two months. On referring to this period it will immediately occur to your Lordship, that a publication on this subject must comprise some topics of considerable delicacy, as well in religion and politics, as in morals and literature; or, in other words, must involve those questions which have given rise to dissension and persecution in all subsequent times. In

* His Lordship was an enthusiastic admirer of the "Life of Leo." "A friend of Lord St. Vincent's," say Mr. Roscoe's publishers, "told us, two or three weeks ago, that the old hero was getting up every morning at five o'clock to read Leo X."

the account of the Reformation, I am well aware that my book will give satisfaction neither to the Catholics nor the Protestants; yet, of the two, I apprehend most the displeasure of the latter. The former have been so accustomed to be abused, that they will receive with patience any tolerable degree of castigation; but the latter, who conceive their principles and conduct to be above all censure, will be surprised to find their early leaders accused of a spirit of intolerance and uncharitableness, which has, unfortunately, continued with but little diminution to the present day. Should your Lordship ever honour the work by a perusal, I shall hope for a liberal and candid construction of my opinions, both on this and other subjects; assuring your Lordship that, however contradictory some of them may appear to the received notions, both of characters and of events, they have not been hastily adopted, nor are they now delivered to the world without the most serious and deliberate conviction that, if they attract any notice whatever, they cannot but be favourable to the cause of civil and religious liberty, and have a tendency to soothe those animosities between nation and nation, and sect and sect, which have so long afflicted our quarter of the world."

In a letter accompanying a copy of the Life of Leo presented to Dr. Parr, Mr. Roscoe thus alludes to the manner in which he has treated the character of Luther. "If the matter should have the good fortune to please you, I shall have less anxiety about the manner; and I flatter myself that, upon the most important topics, I shall not often be found greatly at variance with those liberal sentiments which you have frequently so well expressed, and so eloquently enforced. In appreciating the character of Luther, I have followed the dictates of my own judgment, without desire to flatter or intention to offend;

and whatever may be thought of my observations in other respects, they will not, I hope, be found to breathe that narrow and sectarian spirit which has characterised almost all preceding writers on this subject."

The anticipations of Mr. Roscoe, with regard to the reception which his work was likely to experience in some quarters, were fully realised. In the *Edinburgh Review*,* although some partial commendation was bestowed upon it, the work was noticed in that spirit of asperity which seems to have been designedly adopted in the earlier stages of that publication. "Affectation of sentiment, or of profound philosophical reflection," the critic observes, "is not less frequent, or less ridiculous, than the instances of affectation in style." The author is accused of prejudice against Luther and of partiality towards Leo; and the alleged misdating of a letter of the former is adduced as a proof of this assertion. At the conclusion of the *Review*, the faults of the work are summed up in the following passage:—

"Upon the whole, then, these ponderous volumes have disappointed our expectations of obtaining an adequate history of the revival of learning,†—worthy at least of the importance of the subject. The prevailing defect of the work is a minute and tedious prolixity, and the want of sufficient energy either of thought or of style. The accumulation of materials does not always add a proportionable value to history; and an author has learned but half the secrets of his trade who is ignorant of

* Vol. vii p. 336.

† "The Life and Pontificate of Leo X." did not profess to be, nor was it intended by its author, as a history of the revival of learning; a subject which, as will be seen from a letter subsequently given, Mr. Roscoe regarded as embracing a much wider range than his own work, and to the elucidation of which he did not profess himself equal.

the art of blotting, to which the greatest writers have been indebted for their success. No labour can be too great to attain to perfection; and if, instead of endeavouring, in his preface, to extenuate the general defects of his history, Mr. Roscoe had transcribed it over again, under the eye of some severe critic, and had resolutely reduced it to half its present size, the remainder, from the condensation of the narrative, would have acquired an additional value, when every idle anecdote or superfluous incident was carefully expunged, and the redundancy of sentiment or of diction retrenched. As it stands, the history may please the *dilettanti*, to whom the medallions and verses are, perhaps, a sufficient recommendation; but it neither will gratify the general reader, nor ought it to supersede any future efforts upon the subject, when the present edition has passed away. In general, however, its materials will always be valuable to future historians, by whom the author's opinions, in matters of taste and criticism, will always be respected, and his writings impress us with one uniform conviction that he is a truly amiable and benevolent man."

Such was the spirit in which the "Life of Leo X." was noticed in a journal professedly devoted to the extension of the same liberal opinions, which it had been the constant object of the author of that work to inculcate in every page.

Other journals pronounced a judgment equally unfavourable to the merits of the work. The *Christian Observer* declared that its author was "uniformly hostile to Christianity," and that "he had received a retaining fee from the Pope;" that "he was afraid of apparitions;" and that "he gave rise to a strong temptation to burn him." The *Critical Review* asserted, that "to approve of the moral and religious part of his work, would render

a person obnoxious to the Society for the Suppression of Vice ;” and bestowed upon his style the epithet of “ *mawkish*,” and upon the author the title of “ *Ignoramus*.” Nor did he escape much better from the hands of the conductors of the *Literary Journal*, who discovered in him “ the victim of ill-directed studies,” and stated that “ a well-informed child of ten years of age might give him the lie direct.”

Attacks of this nature few writers of any reputation have escaped ; and it would scarcely have been worth while to advert to them, had it not been for the purpose of showing the manner in which they were received by Mr. Roscoe. That he felt them, is true ; for the sting even of the smallest and most insignificant insect may occasion some degree of pain. But this feeling soon passed away from his mind.

The charge of misrepresentation and inaccuracy, preferred by the Edinburgh Reviewers, was the only one which could not be passed over in silence ; and Mr. Roscoe took advantage of the opportunity afforded by the publication of a second edition, to give, in the preface, a full answer to the accusation. At the conclusion of this preface he thus notices the criticisms upon that portion of his work which relates to the Reformation, and which was, in fact, the source of all the animosity of his critics.

“ I cannot, however, finally quit this subject without some notice of the charges which have been so generally connected with those before mentioned, and by which it has been insinuated, or asserted, that I have endeavoured to discredit the characters of the early reformers, and to depreciate the beneficial effects of the Reformation, as well by a reference to the well-known persecution of Servetus, as on other occasions. In answer to this, I must

be allowed to observe, that the idea that the following work is hostile to the Reformation, is a misrepresentation industriously circulated by those who, under the pretext of a warm attachment to the cause of Protestantism, are as adverse to all religious liberty as the most bigotted Roman Catholic; and that whoever peruses the following pages with an impartial eye, cannot fail to discover that, so far from depreciating the beneficial effects of the Reformation, I have only had to regret that it was not carried to the full extent for which its promoters originally contended. To this I can add, with great sincerity, that in adverting to the persecutions of which Protestants have been guilty, my only object has been to excite that abhorrence of persecution, under every form and pretext, which is the surest safeguard against its return. If it should appear, as has been imputed to me, that I have animadverted with more severity on the Protestants than on the Papists, it is because better things were to have been expected from them; because they, who asserted the right of private judgment in themselves, ought not to have denied it to others; because they, who have represented the cruelties and persecutions of the church of Rome as the greatest of her abominations, ought to have been peculiarly cautious how they gave rise to similar charges against themselves; and, lastly, because it is more painful to perceive a disgraceful blot among those with whom we are nearly associated, than among those who are further removed from us in principles and opinions. Hence the persecution of Servetus, conducted by Calvin, and approved by Bullinger and Melancthon, has been exhibited in those colours which it so justly merits; and should, if it were in my power, be still further raised up, as a perpetual beacon, to guard mankind against the possible

recurrence of an event which outrages at once the feelings of humanity, the dictates of common sense, and the religion of Christ. It is not on the doctrinal tenets of any established church, whatever its adherents may believe, that we are to rely for the rejection of those intolerant and persecuting principles which have for so many ages disgraced the Roman See. 'Luther, Calvin, Cranmer, Knox, the founders of the reformed church in their respective countries, inflicted, as far as they had power and opportunity, the same punishments which were denounced against their own disciples by the church of Rome, on such as called in question any article in their creeds.'* To have freed the human race from the dread of violence and persecution, in the exercise of religion and the pursuit of truth, would have conferred greater honour on Luther than the enforcement of any dogmatical opinions whatever. To his good intentions and incorruptible integrity the following work bears uniform and ample testimony: but with the restraints of his superiors, Luther could not shake off the trammels of his education; and his highest aim was only to establish another despotism in the place of that from which he had himself escaped. In thus sanctioning, by his opinion and example, the continuance of an exterior and positive control over the consciences of mankind, he confirmed the pretensions of the Roman See; and may more justly be said to have shared its authority, than to have invalidated its unjust assumptions. But the principles of toleration are derived from higher views; from an enlarged idea of the Supreme Being; from the cultivation of generous and social affections; and, in short, from the exercise of the Christian religion as taught by its great

* Robertson's Charles V., book ii.

Founder, and not as perverted by the ambition, the obstinacy, or the ignorance of his erring followers.

“ I trust it will be understood, that I have not engaged in the foregoing discussions without great reluctance. To malicious interpretations, ignorant cavils, and illiberal abuse, I entertain the most perfect indifference ; but in this instance an error of some importance has been gravely imputed to me. I could not expect that my readers in general should enter upon an examination of the different writers on this subject, and a long investigation of historical and ecclesiastical evidence, to determine between me and my censors ; and I have therefore thought it necessary to illustrate the subject by further authorities, and to confirm the opinion which I have before advanced. I feel it a duty towards those who have honoured my writings with their approbation, not to suffer them to be depreciated by an unfounded charge in a point of historical fact ; and a still greater duty not to relinquish the defence of those principles of liberty, of toleration, and of truth, which I have hitherto invariably asserted, and which I shall continue to maintain, independent alike either of censure or of praise.”

In a letter to Professor Smyth he says, “ I must not, for a moment, allow you to think that my feelings can be hurt by any of the critiques that have yet been published on the ‘ Life of Leo X.’ * * * To say the truth, I am more sensible to your observation, ‘ that my history might have been condensed,’ &c. than I am to all the abuse of the reviewer. Yet I am by no means disposed to concede this point without stating, in a few words, my reasons for the method adopted by me. Let me then be allowed to say, that I rather consider myself as, in some degree, an original historian, bringing before the public new documents, and laying before them full infor-

mation on the subject which I have treated, than as a writer extracting the essence of other historians, and giving, in a few brilliant passages, a general result. On this account, I am sensible that I may at times appear prolix; but if I can give real information, I shall be well satisfied, without being considered as a shining writer. If I have been fortunate enough to lay a solid foundation, others may ornament the superstructure; but whatever may be thought of my workmanship, the materials I have furnished can never be dispensed with, whatever additions may be made to them.

“After all, if the importance of the facts which I have related, and the interesting nature of the topics of which I have treated, be considered, it will appear that I have dwelt on them very briefly, and that it is, in fact, the number and variety of the subjects of which I have had to treat, rather than the extent to which I have carried my discussions, that have extended my work to its present length; which, after all, will, in the new edition, be comprised (without the appendix) in four very moderate octavo volumes. You shall soon hear from me again, probably with some observations which I have already drawn up, and which may be necessary to vindicate myself from those charges of inaccuracy and inattention brought forwards in such terms of triumph by the ‘Edinburgh Review.’”

The observations mentioned in this letter were fully prepared for the press, and contained an answer, not only to the strictures of the Edinburgh reviewers, but also to those of his other critics. On a more mature consideration, however, he abandoned the idea of publishing a defence of a work which had been received by the public with approbation, and by all competent judges with the most gratifying encomiums. Many passages of

this unpublished tract are written in his best style ; and it is to be regretted that the subject was not such as to render it worthy of publication. In the concluding paragraph Mr. Roscoe has expressed his wishes with respect to the character in which, as a writer, it was his ambition to be regarded.

“ With this publication, to which I have been reluctantly impelled, by the just defence of myself and my writings, I take a final and a grateful leave of the public in the character of a literary historian,—a character which I have been led to assume, rather by accidental circumstances, than by preparatory studies or deliberate intention. Having now laid before them what I had to communicate, I have finished my task, and return with fresh ardour to the humbler but not unimportant occupations of private life. If my productions should still continue to experience the indulgence of my readers, few of them will be inclined to deny that I have now written enough. If the censures of my opponents be well founded, I have long since written too much ; yet I would gladly flatter myself in the hope that my writings may preserve some faint memorial of their author, and may exhibit him as the friend of liberal studies, the admirer of whatever is excellent in the human character, and the advocate of truth, of liberty, and of virtue.”

Those upon whose taste and learning Mr. Roscoe could with safety rely encouraged him to receive these attacks upon his writings in silence. “ I trust you will long continue,” says Mr. Mathias, “ to reap the satisfaction and honour which must arise from all your well-directed literary labours, in a nation which should be grateful to you, and reject the idle attacks which are in vain directed against works which are permanent. If you will allow me on this occasion to use some expres-

sions in the canzone I have written to Mrs. Wilmot, they will have additional force and truth in my opinion : —

‘ Non paventar : ride del volgo i scherni
 L’ augel de’ vanni eterni
 Di rugiada del ciel sparsi e nudriti :
 Febo con alti inviti
 Per strada non battuta e pellegrina
 Più d’ un palma a te largo destina.’ ”

“ With respect to my own works,” says Mr. Roscoe, in his answer to the foregoing letter, “ to which you so obligingly allude, I can truly say that whilst I retain the favourable opinion of yourself and a few other enlightened friends, whom I consider as perfect judges of their merits and defects, I feel no anxiety about the censures of such critics as have pretended to decide upon them in some of the periodical journals. In estimating these critiques with as much impartiality as the feelings of an author will allow, I find nothing of sufficient importance to deserve a serious reply, except a charge in the Edinburgh and some other reviews, that I have, either through negligence or prejudice, affixed an erroneous date to a letter from Luther to Leo X., and stated it to be of the 6th April instead of the 6th September, 1520. This charge, of some importance in itself, is rendered more so by its being made the pretext of throwing a general calumny on the historical part of my work ; and I am therefore under the necessity of demonstrating, which I have it completely in my power to do, the correctness of my former statements, which I shall throw into a preface to the new edition, which will appear in a few weeks. Of this new preface I propose to print a few copies in quarto, one of which I hope to have the pleasure of sending to you, to be annexed, if you think proper, to the first edition of the work.”

The reputation which the "Life of Lorenzo de' Medici" had obtained on the Continent, and especially in Germany, where the translation of it by Sprengel had become very popular, prepared the way for the favourable reception of the present work. Soon after its publication in England, it found its way to the hands of a distinguished German scholar, M. Philip Henry Conrad Henke, whose acquaintance with the history of the revival of learning well qualified him for the task which he undertook. Having prevailed upon his friend Professor Glaser, whose proficiency in the English language was well known, to translate the work, he undertook to enrich the version, with a preface, notes, and dissertations; and, in the course of 1806, 1807, and 1808, it appeared at Leipsic, in three volumes, octavo. The manner in which M. Henke executed his task reflects the greatest credit on his erudition; and his approbation of the work, after his searching enquiries into its correctness, is one of the strongest testimonies that can be adduced in favour of Mr. Roscoe's merits as an historian. In his preface, the editor has entered largely into the character of the work, and his criticism may be usefully compared with that of the English reviewers. In particular he has done justice to the spirit in which the Life is written, to the correct appreciation of moral worth, to the reprobation of treachery and cruelty, to the exposure of all mean and grovelling vices, and to the uniform support of honour, truth, and virtue.

It was not until the year 1816 that a translation of the "Life and Pontificate of Leo X." appeared in Italy. In the course of that year the first three volumes of a version into Italian, from the pen of the Count Luigi Bossi, were published at Milan. It was fortunate that the undertaking fell into hands so able, Count Bossi

being distinguished by his attachment to the literary history of his country, and by the success of his own compositions. Like the German translator, he added, with industry and judgment, a variety of notes and documents illustrative of the original text; and the translation of the whole work was completed in the course of the year 1817, in twelve volumes, octavo, ornamented with numerous plates of portraits and medals. Of this translation upwards of 2800 copies have been dispersed in Italy, notwithstanding the denunciation of it by the pontiff, Leo XII., who consigned it to the *Index Expurgatorius*. Upon the receipt of the earlier volumes of the version, Mr. Roscoe addressed to Count Bossi the following letter:—

“I have had the pleasure of receiving your letter, accompanying the three first volumes of the translation into Italian of the ‘Life of Leo X. ;’ and I assure you I am fully sensible of the honour done to my work in its being thought worthy of being adopted into the language of that country to which it more particularly relates. This satisfaction is greatly increased by the consideration that those literary studies and pursuits, that have been so long repressed by the calamitous state of public affairs, are again reviving, as well in Italy as in other parts of Europe, and that we may hope once more to enjoy that friendly intercourse which extends the family of mankind, and is indispensable to their improvement and happiness.

“For the favourable manner in which you have spoken of my work, and for the attention you have paid in giving a faithful version of it, I feel myself much indebted, and can add with pleasure that, as far as I have examined it, I find it rendered with sufficient accuracy:—of the propriety of dividing the chapters into sections I entertain

some doubt. But if, on the one hand, it interrupts the thread of the narrative, on the other, it may, perhaps, tend to assist the recollection of the reader, which in a very long chapter is not unlikely to be wearied; and in this view I feel reconciled to the alteration.

“The disadvantages incurred by your having commenced your work from a French translation is a subject of much greater regret, as some of the passages omitted are essential to the course of the narrative, or consist of those reflections which naturally result from it. The omission of those passages by the French translator would be unpardonable, were there not some excuse from the wretched state of subjugation to which the press has been reduced in France by the jealousy of her rulers. You have, however, done all that was in your power to repair this defect; and in case your work should be reprinted will, I doubt not, take care that these passages are properly restored, so that the work may be, as you express it, *genuina ed intiera in tutte le sue parti*.

“I should have been happy to have marked my approbation of your labours, by complying with your request of furnishing you, with such additional documents as have come to my hands since the publication of my last edition; but my opportunities of collecting additional information since the publication of my work have not been great; and I am more likely to be indebted to those who have done me the honour of translating them, particularly into the German and Italian languages, than they are to be assisted by me. Allow me, then, to recommend to your attention, whenever you may have an opportunity of consulting them, the translations of the ‘Life of Lorenzo de’ Medici’ by M. Sprengel; and that of ‘Leo X.’ by Professor Glaser, with the annotations of the late M. Henke. In the prefaces, disserta-

tions, and notes on these works, you will find considerable information, and many questions candidly discussed. A taste for illustrating the literary history of Italy has of late made a considerable progress in Germany as well as in England; and I trust this taste will be still further extended, inasmuch as it is certainly to the labours of your distinguished countrymen, whose lives and works are thus commemorated, that Europe is chiefly indebted for the improvement and eminence she at this day enjoys.

“As a testimony of my respect, and of the sense I feel of the honour you have done me, may I beg your acceptance of a copy on large paper of the ‘Life of Leo,’ which I have ordered to be delivered to M. Vittore Lanetti, to be forwarded to you at Milan.”

A translation into French appeared at Paris in the year 1808, in four vols. octavo, from the pen of M. P. F. Henry, and a second and more correct edition was published in 1813. In the preface to the latter the translator says,

“Quant à ma traduction, je l’ai retouchée avec tout le soin dont j’ai été capable, sans que toutefois je puisse me flatter de l’avoir rendue digne d’un ouvrage que son mérite reconnu a fait passer dans presque toutes les langues de l’Europe.”

In America the “Life of Leo X.” was reprinted soon after its publication in this country, with the omission of the documents contained in the appendix. It had not, however, the success which attended the American edition of the “Life of Lorenzo.” — “My edition,” says Mr. Bronson of Philadelphia, who had republished the Leo, “has met with tolerable success, though it has not sold as rapidly as I had reason to expect. I have, however, the gratification of finding that it is highly approved

and relished by men who occupy the first rank of taste and literature in our country.”

The long and unintermitted labour which the composition of *Leo* had demanded, produced its natural effect on the mind of Mr. Roscoe, and some time elapsed before his health and his spirits resumed their usual tone. “For my own part,” he says in a letter addressed to Mr. Fuseli in the summer of 1805, “I am endeavouring to acquire the habit of idleness. After having finished my work, the sudden transition from extreme attention to a state of comparative leisure is not easy. The effects of that labour and fatigue, which I scarcely felt in the eagerness of pursuit, have now overtaken me—the storm is over, but the waves swell. I am idle without being at rest, and am obliged to turn to other occupations for relief. Luckily, these are neither few nor unimportant. The drainage and improvement of some thousand acres of land, which I am about to commence, might satisfy the rage of any reasonable man; and with this I have other objects, as you well know, which require no small portion of my time. As an author I have taken my final farewell of the public.”

With the publication of the “*Life of Leo X.*” the enquiries of Mr. Roscoe into Italian literature terminated. Further labours of the same kind were suggested to him, but he declined to attempt them. “The history of the rise and progress of literature and the fine arts in Italy,” he says in a letter to Lord Buchan, “which your Lordship recommends to my consideration, is, indeed, a noble subject, but to execute it would require a fortunate union of talents, acquirements, and circumstances, which it has not fallen to my lot to enjoy. In what I have already done I have taxed my exertions to the height, and neither my health nor my leisure would permit me to

engage in so extensive a work, or rather in two works. For perhaps the history of literature and of art should each be treated separately; and of these, if I were to make my choice, I should prefer the latter. An excursion to Italy, or rather a residence there for some time, would be an indispensable preparatory measure; but this I must leave to younger men, and console myself in the hope of having shown that, in the literature and the fine arts of Italy, may be found a rich and unexplored mine, in which the intellectual exertions of my countrymen may be certain of meeting with an ample reward."

CHAPTER IX.

1806-7.

Requisition to Mr. Roscoe to become a candidate for the representation of Liverpool — commencement of the election — state of parties — his return — celebration of his election — his speech on that occasion — leaves Liverpool to attend his parliamentary duties — his feelings on his change of situation — letters to Mr. Rathbone and to the Rev. W. Shepherd. — Mrs. Roscoe joins him in London — letter from her. — Debate on the Slave Trade, and Mr. Roscoe's speech. — Letter to Mr. Shepherd. — Speech on Sir S. Romilly's Bill for subjecting Real Estates to simple Contract Debts. — Dissolution of the Ministry. — His speech on Mr. Littleton's motion. — Speech on Mr. Whitbread's Bill for the Education of the Poor. — Parliamentary patronage. — He assists in founding the African Institution — his speech on that occasion — termination of his parliamentary career — riot on his return to Liverpool — declines to come forward again as a candidate — his address — address to him. — Letter from Dr. Parr. — He is nominated without his concurrence — his address on the conclusion of the election — address to the freemen. — Letter to Dr. Smith, and answer. — Refuses the appointment of Deputy Lieutenant.

ALTHOUGH from a very early period of life Mr. Roscoe had taken a deep interest in public affairs, and had manifested, not only by his writings, but also by the part he had taken in promoting public meetings in Liverpool, the strong desire he felt to render himself useful to the country, he had yet never entertained the idea that he should be called upon to fill the responsible situation of a representative of the people. It was therefore with the greatest surprise that, on the eve of the general election in 1806, he received a requisition from a number

of the most respectable burgesses of Liverpool, requesting him to come forward as a candidate for the representation of his native town. In the selection of a person to oppose the individuals who had long represented the borough, the friends of Mr. Roscoe were actuated by many considerations. His well known attachment to liberal principles; his long connection with the town; his acquaintance with business; his celebrity as a writer; and the universal respect with which his personal character was regarded, were powerful recommendations in his favour; while the warm attachment of his numerous private friends added zeal to the efforts of those who supported him merely on public grounds. On the 30th of October, only two days before the commencement of the election, Mr. Roscoe received the requisition; on the following day he issued his address to the electors, and on the 1st of November the election commenced. The contest was a severe one. Of the former members, who again came forward as candidates, General Gascoigne had represented the borough for ten, and General Tarleton for sixteen years. The former was a zealous supporter of Mr. Pitt's administration; and had recommended himself to the corporation and to the merchants by his active attention to their interests. General Tarleton, after a long alliance with the Whigs, had joined the party of their adversaries; and though he had thus forfeited the support of many of his former partisans, he was still surrounded by a considerable body of personal friends. The party of General Gascoigne, which included the Corporation of Liverpool, finding the opposition on the part of Mr. Roscoe likely to become formidable, effected a junction with the friends of General Tarleton; in the hope that, by *splitting* the votes of their mutual supporters, they should be enabled to exclude the new

candidate. The friends of Mr. Roscoe, considerable in point of numbers, and distinguished by their respectability, wealth, and intelligence, comprised not only the Whigs, but persons of every shade of opinion attached to liberal principles. Though the ardent zeal with which they engaged in the contest seemed to promise ultimate success, yet for several days the system of splitting votes kept the other candidates at the head of the poll. It was not until the fifth day of the election, that Mr. Roscoe obtained a majority even on the day's poll; but on that day it became obvious that the strength of his adversaries was exhausted; and on the seventh day the contest terminated, leaving Mr. Roscoe at the head of the poll, with a majority of nearly two hundred votes over General Tarleton, and of thirteen over General Gascoigne. When the number of single votes given for the respective candidates was examined, it was found that General Gascoigne had received 289; General Tarleton, 292; and Mr. Roscoe, 867.

Throughout the whole of the election Mr. Roscoe had been the popular candidate; the number of his supporters in the town quadrupling those of either of his antagonists.* His return, therefore, was hailed with the most enthusiastic rejoicings; and he was chaired through a greater assemblage of people than the town had probably ever before witnessed.

The return of Mr. Roscoe was celebrated on the 25th of November, by a large and respectable meeting of his friends, when he took the opportunity of declaring, more

* In the preface to "An Account of the Election," published by a supporter of one of Mr. Roscoe's adversaries, it is said, — "At this period the popular cry was completely in favour of Mr. Roscoe; and to walk the streets quietly in an evening, it was necessary to re-echo his name to the innumerable persons who saluted you with it."

at large than he had hitherto done, the principles by which his public conduct would be guided. After adverting to the situation of the Continent, and expressing his hope that the course of events might lead to the accomplishment of that most desirable object, an honourable and lasting peace, and after pointing out the necessity of retrenchment, he entered upon the two great questions, of the African Slave Trade and of Parliamentary Reform. To speak of the former in an assembly where some were present who were still engaged in the traffic was a task of considerable difficulty ; but Mr. Roscoe did not hesitate to avow, in the most distinct manner, his adherence to the opinions which he had so long held on the subject. He contended, indeed, as the justice of the case obviously required, that as the trade had been sanctioned by parliament, and long continued under the authority of the government, the persons engaged in it were entitled to a full compensation for the losses they might sustain ; but he pointed out the propriety of looking to other branches of commerce, and particularly to the East India trade, for an equivalent. On the question of parliamentary reform he thus expressed himself : —

“ The other subject, on which I wish to say a few words, is one of considerable moment ; it is that which is usually called a Reform in Parliament. But before I proceed, it may be necessary to enquire, what is meant by a reform in parliament ? If by a reform in parliament be meant any alteration in the established constitution of this country, as it has long existed in its three estates of king, lords, and commons, then I declare I am totally averse to any reform in parliament. I consider the king as the key-stone of the arch of the constitution, and that if he were taken away, the whole

must inevitably fall into ruins. I consider the nobility as a body of hereditary counsellors, adding dignity to the crown, and forming a powerful and useful barrier, on many occasions, between the crown and the people. I esteem the House of Commons, properly purified and constructed, as the legitimate organ of the public voice; and, therefore, if any innovation be attempted upon any one of these, to that you will always find me a decided enemy. But if by a reform in parliament be meant the purifying of the House of Commons from all kinds of bribery and corruption, whether that of electors, or of those who sit in that House, then I am a friend to reform in parliament. If it should be proposed that the elective franchise should be granted to great towns, and extensive bodies of men who do not at present enjoy them, then I am a friend to a reform in parliament. If it should appear that insignificant and corrupt boroughs have from time to time tainted the dignity of the house, and it should be thought proper to deprive them of the right of election, then I shall be found an advocate for a reform in parliament."

The principles of reform, professed upon this occasion by Mr. Roscoe, and in a few years afterwards more fully developed in a letter addressed to the present Lord Chancellor, are in effect the same which have since formed the basis of the great scheme so happily accomplished under the auspices of Lord Grey.

Parliament having assembled early in the year 1807, Mr. Roscoe, unattended by any of his family, left Liverpool for the metropolis. Upon his entrance into public life he had many difficulties to contend with. He was called away from the active management of a very extensive mercantile concern, upon the prosperity of which he was entirely dependent, and, unfortunately, soon after

his election, his partner, Mr. Leyland, whose name stood at the head of the firm, and whose wealth contributed to its stability, withdrew suddenly from the partnership. These circumstances, together with his separation from Mrs. Roscoe and his family, made his removal from Liverpool a source of much anxiety and disquiet to him. In addition to this, he felt no inconsiderable difficulty in adapting himself to the new mode of life which his public duties required. He had gone into parliament at a more advanced age than is usual, and with the weight of much public and private business of importance pressing upon him. The novelty of his situation became, in some degree, painful to him. He was conscious, also, that much was expected from him, which naturally increased his anxiety. His change of life was far, therefore, from contributing to his happiness. In a confidential letter to his friend Mr. Rathbone, written soon after taking his seat, he thus expressed the feelings under which he laboured:—

“The rest of your letter, my dear friend, rather oppresses than cheers me, in my present difficult and laborious situation. If my friends have formed such high notions of the extraordinary effects which I am to produce in my public character, I fear they will only meet with disappointment, and that I must reconcile myself to that failure with which I am so strongly threatened. Excepting on the first night on which I entered the House, there has been no debate on a popular subject; and though I had some intention of speaking, yet, upon the whole, I believe it was better on many accounts that I declined it. I find great caution necessary on my first outset; and my present resolution is not to engage in any hasty or precipitate measures, nor to commit myself in any way where I cannot main-

tain my ground. For this reason you must expect at present to hear but little of me in public ; but if on that account you think that I am insensible to the great objects of your letter, you will not do justice either to my intentions or my feelings.”

In reply to a letter from one of the most valued of his friends, the Rev. W. Shepherd, making some suggestions with regard to his new course of life, Mr. Roscoe says, “As to the rest of your cautions, they point not out the rocks on which I am likely to split. Deeper thoughts oppress and agitate me. I ruminate much, and do nothing ; yet I keep some objects in view, of which I may say with Milton, ‘The accomplishment of them lies not but in a power above man’s to perform ; but that none hath by more studious ways endeavoured, and with more unwearied spirit that none shall, *that* I dare almost aver of myself, as far as life and free leisure will extend.’ I shall only add in the words of the same great man, ‘De cætero quidem, quid de me statuerit Deus, nescio.’ Believe me, however, always most affectionately yours.”

In another letter, written soon afterwards to the same correspondent, he says, “You cannot readily conceive the difficulties that are to be got over in the House of Commons, particularly in *some* minds, before a person can acquire the habit of expressing his sentiments in a way to do either himself or his cause any credit. I certainly, however, do not despair of attaining it, though, from the state of my health, and a consequent depression of spirits, I have hitherto been deterred almost wholly from the attempt.”

In the month of February, 1807, he was joined in London by Mrs. Roscoe ; and her society, upon which he always set the highest value, contributed much to

the ease of his mind and the restoration of his health. "You will, I am sure, all rejoice with me," he says in a letter to Mr. Rathbone, "that last night my wife and Edward arrived safe in London. It was once my wish to have gone through the troublesome task which I have undertaken *alone*, without deranging my domestic connections; but to pass five or six months in banishment from my family and dearest connections I find is too bold an attempt." As he became more familiar with the proceedings of parliament his confidence revived, and the feelings which had oppressed him at his entrance gradually subsided. "By a constant attendance on the House," he says in a letter to the same friend, "I find myself more accustomed to its forms, and have made some good acquaintance. In a little time, when the election committees are over, its duties will be less laborious, and I shall begin to feel myself more at ease in my new station. I have spoken three or four times, which is, I believe, as often as any new member, but still find a reluctance to offer myself to the House. If the Catholic question be discussed, I shall, however, most probably attempt a bolder flight; but this will depend on circumstances. My wife's presence has contributed to restore both my health and peace of mind, which, I believe, had suffered before her arrival."

The favourable effect which a restoration to his usual domestic society produced upon the health of Mr. Roscoe, appears from the following extract of a letter addressed by Mrs. Roscoe to Mrs. Moss, her warmly attached sister, and the invaluable friend of Mr. Roscoe and his family:—

"I well know that Mr. Roscoe's health and welfare are always an object of great solicitude to you. He is now nearly well of the nervous complaint which had

assailed him from over-exertion and want of exercise, and his spirits are very good. Edward will have informed you that he conducted us to our lodgings an hour before he quitted London. The situation is within five minutes' walk of the House, and close to St. James's Park. This morning, being frosty, Mr. Roscoe rose from the breakfast-table and walked in the Park near an hour before he sat down to his writing. I yesterday returned the visit of a very intelligent woman, and had a most agreeable interview with her — Mrs. Erskine, wife to the Lord Advocate of Scotland. They were both *at home* to us. We called on, and saw, our excellent neighbour Miss Ashton too, whom I hope to see again soon. In the evening Mr. Roscoe went to dine with the Duke of Gloucester, where were present the Lord Chancellor, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Sidmouth, and a number more of the very great. The Duke pays Mr. Roscoe the most respectful attentions. Edward would tell you of his paying me a visit the morning after he knew I was in town. You know very well how I estimate all these things in themselves; but I never can be insensible to any mark of sensibility to Mr. Roscoe's uncommon merits, and which his own extreme humility keeps him wholly unconscious of."

As the period approached when the great subject was to be discussed in which, from his earliest youth, Mr. Roscoe had taken so deep an interest, his anxieties became great, lest he should not do justice to the cause which he had so much at heart. Mr. Rathbone having addressed to him a letter on the subject, containing many just and valuable reflections, he replied as follows:—

"I have received your excellent oration on the African slave trade, which, if delivered by yourself, would have the intended effect on the House. If I speak on

the subject, which, unless I am disabled by personal indisposition, it is my resolution to do, I shall probably adopt somewhat of a different line of argument, touching, however, though not so largely, on several of the topics in your sketch. If I should be able to get out all I have to say, it would perhaps be longer than yours, though I have not committed a word of it to writing. In this situation I cannot describe the anxiety I feel, lest I should be a weak and unworthy advocate of the great cause which I have espoused."

The following report of the speech of Mr. Roscoe on this occasion, fuller than that given in the Parliamentary Debates, was corrected by himself immediately after its delivery:—

"As the colleague of the honourable gentleman who spoke last, and as one of the representatives of a place where the trade, which it is the object of the present bill to abolish, has been carried on to a greater extent than in any other place in the kingdom, I cannot, I conceive, with propriety, give a silent vote on this occasion. That vote, Sir, will be in favour of the bill now before the House for the abolition of that trade. In giving this vote I shall at least satisfy my own feelings and my own conscience. But I trust, Sir, that I shall at the same time perform my duty to my constituents. For whatever may be thought of the people of Liverpool in other parts of the kingdom, I must beg leave to inform this House that they are by no means unanimous in support of the trade in question. On the contrary, a great and respectable body of the inhabitants of Liverpool are as adverse to the slave trade as any other persons in these realms, and I should greatly disappoint their expectations and their wishes, if I were not to vote for the abolition of that trade. After the length of time during

which this subject has been considered by the nation at large, after the frequent discussions it has undergone in this House, after the present bill has been passed by the Upper House of Parliament, and is now sent to this House for its concurrence, above all, after the full and able manner in which the noble Lord (Howick), who introduced the bill, has brought it forward, it is perfectly unnecessary for me to discuss the principle of the bill, or to detain the House by additional arguments in its favour. There is, however, one argument which has always appeared to me so clear, so conclusive, and so short, that I will venture to state it. Sir, the African slave trade has always subsisted only by an abuse. If we place the human race in any fair and reasonable situation, if we provide them with the necessaries and accommodations of life, they must, by the very law of their nature, inevitably increase. It is only, then, because the slaves in our West India islands are not in that proper situation, and are not provided with the proper necessaries of life, that a diminution of number continually occurs, and the slave trade becomes necessary to supply that deficiency. Now, Sir, the bill before the House will not only prevent the further prosecution of the trade to Africa, but will also effect another great and beneficial purpose, not contemplated on the face of the bill,—it will immediately improve and meliorate the condition of the slaves in the West Indies. For as soon as the planter shall be convinced that he cannot make up the deficiency of his slaves by purchase, as soon as he can no longer act upon the horrid maxim, ‘that it is better to buy a slave than to breed one,’ he will then be called upon, by a sense of his own interest, to pay that attention to the comfort and accommodation of his slaves which is so essentially necessary for their increase and

their happiness. Whatever apprehensions may be entertained as to the security and welfare of our West India possessions from the present measure, I hesitate not to assert that, in my opinion, it will, in the result, be found to be the first cause of the security and prosperity of those colonies. I well remember the time when the regulations made by this house on the middle passage were opposed by the merchants with the greatest warmth, as wholly destructive to their trade; but it is only a few days since that we heard their counsel at the bar of this House admit, that such regulations had rendered the trade much more advantageous than it had ever before been.

“In like manner, I trust that the time will ere long arrive when the West India planters will feel and acknowledge the beneficial effect, and will date the true prosperity of the British colonies from the time of the abolition of the slave trade. In discussing a question of this magnitude, affecting so great a portion of the human race, it is impossible to close our eyes to that part of the world which has suffered so greatly by the effects of the trade in question—I mean the coast of Africa. I should be sorry to accuse this country as being the sole cause of the state of ignorance and degradation in which that immense continent yet remains; but I must be allowed to say, that if we have not been the cause of the evil, we have at least contributed in a high degree to prevent its removal.

“When we consider the nature of the trade which we have carried on with that continent, when we reflect that the objects of our commerce have been our fellow-creatures; and that the articles we have furnished in return have been chiefly fire-arms, ammunition, and brandy, articles of destruction, articles of debauchery, I

cannot but fear that we have contributed in a great degree to prevent that civilisation and improvement in Africa which might otherwise have taken place. That this supposition is too well founded may be fairly inferred from the well-known fact, that the interior of Africa is more civilised and better cultivated than the coast, where our trade has been carried on, and where we have kept up that continual excitement so prejudicial to that unfortunate country. It is time that we should remove that excitement; and if we cannot contribute to the improvement of Africa, that we should not at least contribute any longer to her calamities and her degradation.

“But, Sir, although I think it unnecessary to enter into a further discussion of the principle of the bill, yet I have been well aware, that with respect to its mode of operation, or rather with respect to the time when such operation is to commence, some difference of opinion may be entertained. However anxious I have always been for the abolition of this traffic, it has been my uniform opinion that this should be effected by gradual and proper measures.

“And here I beg it may be most explicitly understood that, in speaking of gradual measures, it was never my idea that the trade should be continued for the advantage of those persons who are carrying it on. No, Sir, I would not continue the trade a month, a week, a day, on any such grounds.

“It was well observed on a former night in this House, that justice is due to all persons, as well to our own countrymen as to the natives of Africa. I fully assent to this observation. But in the distribution of justice we must cautiously distinguish between the rights of the claimants. It would be the height of injustice to balance the mere pecuniary interests of any one body of

men against the lives, the liberty, and the safety of any other body of men. They are claims of a different nature, and cannot be weighed with each other. That justice is due to the persons in this country who may be affected by the bill I readily admit; but it is due from this nation, and not from Africa, which has already suffered sufficiently from us.

“ Leaving, therefore, these claims out of the question at present, and regarding only the object of this bill, I must observe, that in a great measure, of this nature particularly, caution is necessary, that in producing a certain good we produce as little evil as possible.

“ Sir, we must perceive how difficult it is to legislate for those who are no parties to our deliberations.

“ I certainly am not without apprehensions that if this trade had been terminated by a sudden and immediate act, it might have been productive of dreadful consequences on the coast of Africa, where there is a great conflux of slaves, whose numbers might accumulate, and who, from the sudden and total cessation of the trade, might fall a sacrifice to the avarice or resentment of their owners. Before I left Liverpool, to have the honour of taking my place in this House, I thought it necessary to make a particular inquiry on this subject from a person well conversant with, and who had frequently visited different parts of the coast. From him I learnt, that at Angola, and other places on the southern parts of the coast, slaves were brought down in scanty numbers, and, consequently, little danger was to be apprehended from the immediate termination of the trade; but that on the more northern parts, and particularly at Bonny, the slaves are brought down in great numbers, being carried from the interior parts of the country for four, five, or six months, and that there some fatal consequences

might ensue if precautions were not taken against them. It was, however, his opinion, that a period of six, or at most nine months, would be a sufficient notice for terminating the trade; and as this space of time will be afforded by the present bill, I shall cheerfully assent to it as it now stands, and do conceive that as the trade has been gradually narrowed by the regulations adopted by this House, and as some further time is yet allowed by the bill for its final termination, the friends of a gradual abolition ought now to unite with the promoters of the present bill, in carrying this great and beneficent measure into full effect.

“ And now, Sir, as to the question of compensation to those persons who may be injured by the effects of the present measure, I cannot entertain a doubt that this House will be earnest to distribute justice in its proper degree to all who are entitled to it. The trade in question has been long carried on with the concurrence of the country, and under the sanction of the legislature, and has, till the present time, been thought indispensably necessary to the cultivation and possession of our colonial possessions. If, then, it should hereafter appear, that the persons engaged in carrying it on should sustain an actual loss by the operation of this bill, — not a loss of eventual or prospective profits, which they might have derived from continuing to carry on the trade (for to such a claim it would be absurd to listen), but a real and substantial loss, by not being able to withdraw their capital, and to close their concerns within the time limited by the bill, — then I must assert, that the persons making such claims are as well entitled to compensation as any persons who ever solicited the justice of this House. But, Sir, there is another compensation of a much higher and better nature to which the merchants of this country

are entitled. That compensation is to be found in the more extended trade and commerce of this country. When we consider the immense revenue which we are now called upon to pay, it is evident that the time is arrived when we must avail ourselves of all our resources ; when we look at the immense power acquired by the great tyrant of the Continent, we must perceive, that it is necessary to oppose to him an immense colonial power, whereby we may maintain and enlarge the maritime strength of our country. Under such circumstances, we ought to extend ourselves to the East and to the West.

“ It can be no longer concealed, that the question respecting the East Indies is now so closely connected with the safety and prosperity of this country, that they can scarcely be separately considered ; nor can it be supposed that we can any longer allow ourselves to be crippled in this essential branch of our commerce. Let there be no monopoly but the monopoly of the country at large.

“ Sir, I have long resided in the town of Liverpool. It is now upwards of thirty years since I first raised my voice in public against the traffic which it is the object of the present bill to abolish. From that time I have never concealed my sentiments upon it, in public or in private ; and I shall always think it the greatest happiness of my life, that I have had the honour to be present on this occasion, and to concur with those true friends of justice, of humanity, and, as I most firmly believe, of sound policy, who have brought forward the present measure.”

Of his feelings on this occasion, which he justly regarded as the most important passage in his whole life, he has given some account in a letter, written immediately afterwards, to his friend Mr. Shepherd.

“ You will, I am sure, rejoice with me most truly, on the triumphant manner in which the question on the slave trade has been carried through both Houses of Parliament; and you will also feel an additional gratification, that I have had an opportunity of speaking my sentiments publicly on the subject.

“ It required, I assure you, no small share of resolution to seize the proper moment to obtrude myself on the House, and to persevere against several competitors, all of them eager to distinguish themselves on the occasion. Mr. Fawkes, member for Yorkshire, and I, were equally unwilling to give way, till the Speaker restored order, and decided in my favour. What I had to say, was well premeditated, but had not been written. I delivered it with tolerable clearness, and, I believe, without embarrassment, but not with sufficient energy. I should tell you, that before the debate began, the Speaker called to me, as I was passing near him, and gave me, in very kind terms, the same advice which you had done; viz. to take my station at about two thirds of the House distant from him, that, in addressing him, I might be well heard. This I complied with, and found efficient. I have reason to think that, upon the whole, my speech gave satisfaction, as both Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Whitbread expressed themselves in particular terms to me to that effect. But what pleases me more is the idea, that by speaking so soon in the debate, and standing in the capacity of member for Liverpool, I may have contributed in some degree to that decision of sentiment which the House manifested in the result. My friend, Richard Sharp, who sat by me, says my vote was worth twenty. But it will be enough for me, if I can persuade myself that I have contributed in any degree to the success of such a cause.

“ I afterwards, with the assistance of my son Edward, committed my speech to paper, which he took down with him, and which you have perhaps seen. I have since recollected some omissions, but it will give you a sufficient idea of it.

“ We had a long debate on the same subject on Friday, and shall have another on Wednesday next. Wyndham has avowed his determination to oppose the measure ; Lord Howick, and it is said Sheridan, will defend it. There are so many persons who have not yet spoken, that I shall not attempt it again, unless I feel myself called on to explain.

“ On the whole, I find the attendance on the House of Commons, particularly whilst the election committees are sitting, a very arduous service. There are great difficulties to be surmounted, and it requires a degree of courage and of caution, not often united, to secure the favourable judgment of the House. Although I have spoken twice, my anxiety on this head is very little relieved, and I have reason to suspect that I partake this anxiety in common with many of those who have been much more accustomed to the House. I mean, however, to attempt it again when a proper opportunity occurs, being resolved that if there be any talent, it shall not, in times like the present, be buried in a napkin.”

To the vote given by him on this occasion he often referred, in his after-life, with expressions of the warmest satisfaction. In a letter written in 1812 to his friend Walter Fawkes, Esq., he says,—“ I am gratified to find that the few but interesting conferences we had together in St. Stephen’s are yet held in your remembrance. Tiresome as our sittings frequently were, we had our seasons of triumph and congratulation,—and the even-

ing when we rejoiced together on the abolition of the slave trade will never be forgotten by me.”

There was no member of the House for whose talents and virtues Mr. Roscoe entertained a more sincere regard than for those of Sir Samuel Romilly ; and when that distinguished and enlightened statesman brought forward in Parliament his bill for subjecting real estates to simple contract debts, the measure received the warm support of Mr. Roscoe. The following outline of his speech on this occasion is now given from a note of it, in his own hand, and may serve as an example of the style which he adopted in public speaking :—

“ I must beg leave, Sir, wholly to dissent from the opinion of the honourable member on the other side of the House (Colonel Eyre), and am, on the contrary, of opinion that the country is highly indebted to the honourable and learned member who introduced the bill, for proposing a measure of such manifest utility. Sir, it is to me matter of surprise that in a country like this, where there is such a continual and daily interchange between real and personal property, this measure should not have been sooner adopted. With respect to the objections which have been urged against the bill, as well on this as on a former night, I cannot allow to them any degree of validity. By some we are told that it will make a most dangerous inroad on the laws of our ancestors, and be an innovation on the constitution, as if laws were not to change with the changes and circumstances of the times to which they are applied. By others we are informed that it will be the downfall of the aristocracy, as if the aristocracy could only subsist by the non-payment of their debts. Next we are informed that a law of this nature will throw the landed estates of the country into the hands of East Indian nabobs, and that it will

even interfere with the elective franchise. Really, Sir, I can perceive nothing in the measure under consideration which can have the least tendency to produce any such effects. This bill, when passed into a law, will do nothing more than is done in this country every day. It will subject freehold estates to the payment of simple contract debts, a duty which is already performed by every honest man on making his will; yet what inconvenience has ever been derived from it? What injury to the constitution? Who ever discovered its injurious effects? Is it not, on the contrary, highly desirable that an honest creditor should be paid his just demands? In all cases of this kind, where the testator charges his estate with the payment of his debts, this bill will make no difference whatever. Its provisions will only be concurrent with the will of the testator; and whether the creditor recovers his debt under the will, or by the operation of this act, is to him a matter of little importance.

“It is only, then, in cases where a person possessed of freehold estates dies without subjecting them to the payment of his debts that this bill will apply. Now, Sir, such cases can only occur from two causes. First, where a person, knowing himself to be indebted, wilfully and purposely avoids making a provision for the payment of his debts. This, Sir, I cannot but consider as a crime of the highest magnitude. The perpetrator of it avails himself of the law to defraud his just creditor. And what is the moment of the completion of his crime? That awful moment when he quits this state of being, to appear in the immediate presence of his Creator. Surely, Sir, a law to prevent so heinous a crime cannot be too soon passed through this House.

“The second case, Sir, is, when a person, intending to make a will and to do justice to his creditors, is

snatched away without having an opportunity of carrying his intentions into effect. Perhaps in the midst of health he has postponed this important duty. Perhaps he feels that reluctance, common to some minds, to perform what he considers as a last act. Perhaps he perishes by some unforeseen accident, and leaves his estates to be inherited by some distant relation, who seizes upon them, and by refusing to pay the debts of his predecessor, leaves a stigma upon his name, which, if he had supposed that such a circumstance could have taken place, would have been regarded as the greatest calamity that could have befallen him.

“If, however, Sir, there be any gentleman in this House, whose moral taste is so peculiarly formed, as to be gratified with the injustice of the present system, there will still remain sufficient to satisfy him. In the first place, there is the whole class of estates for life, by which a person is enabled to live in high rank and great splendour, so as to obtain considerable credit among his tradesmen, yet at his death his estate passes to the person in remainder, wholly discharged from his debts. There will also still remain all the estates entailed in strict settlement, in which the present possessor either cannot, or will not, defeat the entail, and which pass to the person next in remainder, without being subject to the debts of his predecessor. Neither of these classes will be at all affected by the present bill.

“Nor are the copyhold estates of the country within its operation; and, indeed, I conceive this to have been the strongest objection which was, on a former night, raised against this bill by an honourable and learned member high in the law department. But although I could have wished to have seen copyhold estates included, yet I am satisfied with the reasons alleged, in this

respect, by the honourable and learned member who introduced the present bill ; hoping that on some future occasion its principle will be extended also to copyhold and customary estates.

“ Nor am I deterred from expressing this hope by any apprehension that in these wise, and just, and necessary regulations, we are encroaching on the institutions of our ancestors, or making alterations in the established law of the land.

“ Sir, it is the very end and object of our meeting to make such regulations as may from time to time be found necessary, and to vary the law, according to the circumstances of the times and the different situations in which the country is placed. In our present situation the measure now proposed is highly necessary and advisable, and I shall therefore give the bill before the House my most hearty assent.”

The circumstances under which the ministers were deprived of office in the spring of 1807 will not be easily forgotten. In accordance with the principles which they had always professed, and which they were known by the King to entertain, when he submitted to their appointment, they deemed it their duty to bring before parliament a question connected with the Roman Catholic claims. A measure so obnoxious to the prejudices of the King was received by him, not only with decided disapprobation, but with a command that his ministers should give a pledge that they would never in future attempt to bring forward the question. To this command, so unconstitutional in its tendency, they refused to submit, and the administration was immediately dissolved. Frequent and angry debates ensued in the House of Commons ; in the course of which the late Mr. Canning threatened the House with a dissolution

in the event of a majority against the new ministry. On the 15th of April, the Hon. W. H. Littleton moved a resolution, declaring the regret of the House at the late change in his Majesty's councils, which afforded Mr. Roscoe an opportunity of expressing his sentiments both upon the question which had given rise to the change, and upon the manner in which that change had been effected. In the course of his speech, he adverted particularly to the conduct of Mr. Canning. "Another striking proof of the disregard paid by the present ministry to the constitution of the country, and to the privileges of this House, may appear in the conduct of the right hon. member, to whom I have before alluded, as filling the office of one of his Majesty's principal secretaries of state, and who, towards the close of the debate to which I have before referred, thought proper to threaten this House, that if its members did not vote according to the will of the ministry, his Majesty would be advised to appeal to the people, or, in other words, to dissolve his parliament. Sir, I deeply regret, and shall regret to the close of my life, that not a member was found in this House to rise in his place and call upon you, Sir, to interpose your authority, and to stay the proceedings of the House, till it had expressed its resentment at the indignity which was thus offered to it." In recurring to this subject, as he occasionally did in his after-life, it was always with the strongest expressions of regret that he had not, on the instant, made an attempt to rouse the House to a sense of its privileges, when thus openly threatened by a minister of the crown.

In the course of this speech, he took an opportunity of stating, in a pointed manner, the cruelty of inflicting penalties and disabilities on those who, notwithstanding the injustice to which they were subjected, did not hesitate to range themselves in the ranks of our armies.

“Sir, I remember that when it was urged that the bill, to which I have alluded, would induce the Roman Catholics to enter into our armies and navies, that right honourable and learned gentleman observed, that, in this respect, the bill was useless; for that in spite of the Test Laws the Roman Catholics *did* enter into our armies and our navies; and that, therefore, we might as well avail ourselves of their services, and still retain the test laws to be used or not as might be found necessary. What, Sir! shall we then distrust those men who offer themselves to shed their blood in our defence, and to die by our sides? And what is this privilege which we are so desirous to retain? And what is the use which, under such circumstances, we could possibly make of it? Why, Sir, it is the privilege of saying to our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, when they return from their service, You have been fighting the battles of your king and country; and therefore the law has determined that you for ever be rendered incapable of suing either at law or equity; in short, you shall be put out of the protection of the law, and every one who pleases may plunder you with impunity. It is the privilege of saying, You have been faithful to your trust, and therefore the law has determined that you shall be disqualified from being an executor or administrator, or the guardian of the child of your nearest relation. It is the privilege of saying, You have devoted yourself to a military life, and have returned home in poverty but with honour, and therefore the law has determined that you shall pay a penalty of five hundred pounds. I am ashamed that it should be necessary at this day to answer such ungenerous arguments.”

The last occasion on which Mr. Roscoe addressed the House of Commons was upon Mr. Whitbread's bill

for establishing a plan for the education of the poor; the object of which was to provide a school, at which the children of the poor might be instructed, in every parish. This was the first of a series of measures which the enlightened statesman, from whom it emanated, had it in contemplation to propose, with the view of rescuing the poorer classes of the community from that state of degradation to which the operation of various causes, and more especially the weight of taxation, have reduced them. The basis of all improvement Mr. Whitbread justly regarded as consisting in that intelligence and knowledge of their real interests which education can alone confer, and in this view of the question he was warmly supported by Mr. Roscoe.

In the course of his short parliamentary life, Mr. Roscoe, as a friend of ministers, had considerable experience in that system of patronage which was thought necessary to keep the machine of government in motion. Innumerable applications were made to him, both by those who had claims upon him, and by those who had nothing to urge but their own desire of preferment. The rule which he laid down with regard to these applications he thus states in a confidential letter to one of his friends, whose request carried with it every recommendation which long friendship and sincere esteem could confer:—

“ You are right in supposing that the applications from Liverpool for places, &c. are very numerous. I divide them, however, into two classes, viz. first, such as relate to places *already vacant*, for which the applicant brings good recommendations; and, secondly, such as require *generally a good place, a tolerable place, an easy place, a place in the customs, &c.* or, in short, *any* place that may happen to offer. To the first of these I think my-

self bound to pay attention, and have not hesitated, where I thought the persons proper, to recommend them to his Majesty's ministers; but in the latter cases it is impossible for me to do any thing, as I could scarcely expect that they would promise me the reversion of a place not yet vacant, but on which some provident expectant might have set his eye. You will therefore see that your friend —— comes under this latter class, and that I can be of no service to him, for it is impossible for me here to know what places become vacant. If he will take an opportunity, when such an event occurs, to furnish me with proper testimonials, I will do the best I can for him consistently with the merits and pretensions of other candidates that may appear; and this I think is all you would wish me to say on the subject."

During his residence in London, and before the dissolution of that parliament of which he was a member, Mr. Roscoe was much gratified by being enabled to assist in founding "The African Institution," a society, the object of which was the civilisation and improvement of the natives of Africa. The first meeting, which was a highly respectable one, was held at the Freemasons' Hall, and the Duke of Gloucester, whose zeal on behalf of the enslaved Africans has reflected the highest credit on his character, took the chair. Mr. Roscoe, having been requested by Mr. W. Smith and Mr. Robert Thornton to address the meeting and to propose its thanks to Mr. Wilberforce, did so in a short speech; which he closed by observing, "That as this was the first public meeting held by the friends of the abolition after their great measure had been accomplished, he trusted it would not be passed over without marking the deep sense which they entertained of the pre-eminent

services of him who had laboured so successfully in their cause. Not that even this approbation, however grateful it might be, was necessary to him, — that his reward was not to be found in the applause of that meeting, — not in the admiration of the whole country, but in the conscious rectitude of his own conduct, and in the approbation of his God.” On the passing of the resolution, Mr. Wilberforce rose and observed, that however he might be gratified by the honour which was done to him, it was rendered much more estimable in his opinion by the quarter from which it came. That when he considered that the person who had thus seconded the motion had resided all his life in the very midst of a place which had been particularly distinguished by the share which it had taken in the African slave trade; and that, by his own strength of mind, he had risen above all the prejudices that surrounded him, and opposed himself with firmness to so great an abuse; when he considered that he had not only done this, but that he had also obtained the favourable opinion of his townsmen in so eminent a degree, as to be returned their representative in parliament, in a manner equally honourable to him and to themselves, he did, indeed, consider this as a great triumph.

Mr. Roscoe having been appointed one of the committee, took an active and zealous part in preparing the laws of the Institution, and in bringing it into operation. For many years he continued to manifest an interest in its success, and corresponded at considerable length with the Duke of Gloucester on the subject.

Thus terminated Mr. Roscoe’s short parliamentary career, before he had become well accustomed even to the forms of the House, or had acquired that confidence in his own powers which is so essential to render a man

distinguished in public life. He had acted the part of an independent member of parliament, and though from principle a strenuous supporter of the government, he never enrolled himself amongst the followers of the minister. Upon all questions of importance he formed his own conclusions, on which he invariably acted with firmness and decision. His natural turn of mind rendered any thing like intrigue, or even partisanship, distasteful to him, and he was therefore probably regarded as a person not altogether qualified to be admitted into the mysteries of ministerial arrangements. His station, as one of the representatives of the second commercial town in the empire, gave him considerable weight, which was not lessened by his personal character; and had he remained in the House, it is probable that he would have rendered himself extensively useful. He had the good fortune while there to acquire the friendship of several very excellent and distinguished persons, and amongst others, of Sir Samuel Romilly and Mr. Whitbread, with whom, after his retirement from parliament, he continued occasionally to correspond.

The inconvenience and anxiety that he had experienced during the short period of his public life did not induce him to shun a renewal of the same duties. As the dissolution of parliament approached, he expressed his resolution to his friend Mr. Rathbone in these terms: — “What line I am to take in this case, or what will be the wishes of my friends, I shall not anticipate. All I know and feel is, that I will not desert them as long as they think I can render any services, either to them or to the country. I do not,” he added, “augur much opposition from my conduct on the slave trade, as my opinions on it were well known; and I do not yet think so ill of the world as to suppose that

an adherence to one's own principles can be made a very substantial cause of reproach."

Unfortunately, in this supposition, Mr. Roscoe was mistaken. The part taken by him on the question of the slave trade, and the triumphant passing of the bill for the abolition of that traffic, had excited a strong feeling against him amongst the lower classes in Liverpool. In that town, as in other parts of the empire, the "No Popery" cry had been renewed; and the speech of Mr. Roscoe in favour of the Catholics was made use of, in order to excite against him the odium of the populace. The dismissal of the ministry also was not without its effects on the minds of many, while the short period, which had elapsed since the former contest, might be expected to create a degree of unwillingness on the part of his supporters, so soon again to incur the labour and expense which a contested election in Liverpool has always occasioned. Of these circumstances his adversaries eagerly took advantage. The cry that the trade of the port had been ruined was raised: every artifice to render him obnoxious to the electors was resorted to; and preparations were made to convert the spectacle of his return into a scene of tumult and bloodshed.

Mr. Roscoe made his public entry into Liverpool in the month of May. A numerous body of his friends, mounted and on foot, met him at the outskirts of the town. They had not, however, proceeded far on their return when it became evident that their progress to Mr. Roscoe's bank, from the windows of which it was intended that he should address the people, would be opposed. Strong parties of seamen, chiefly consisting of the crews of vessels lately engaged in the African trade, armed with bludgeons and other weapons, were disposed along the streets to obstruct the passage of the proces-

sion; and when it reached Castle Street, the principal street of the town, a scene of the greatest tumult and riot prevailed. At length the number and resolution of Mr. Roscoe's friends enabled them to force a passage through their adversaries, but not without many personal injuries to both parties. The horse on which Mr. Williams, a magistrate of the county, and a warm friend of Mr. Roscoe, was mounted, was stabbed in the body with a knife; and the most fatal consequences might have ensued, had not great forbearance been displayed towards the assailants. On reaching the bank, Mr. Roscoe attempted to address the crowds collected beneath the windows, but the tumult was renewed, and he was compelled to desist. Fortunately, the day passed off without further violence.

It now became necessary for Mr. Roscoe to decide upon the course which, under circumstances like these, it was his duty to adopt. While some of his friends strongly urged him to disregard the attempt to drive him from the contest by threats and by violence, to which they did not doubt their ability to offer a successful resistance, others expressed the most serious apprehensions as to the result. The great body of the electors, it was represented to him, were still favourably disposed towards him; and though it could not be denied that his popularity had, in some degree, suffered by his vote on the slave trade, yet his parliamentary conduct had entitled him to the continued confidence and exertions of his friends. These topics, though strongly pressed on the mind of Mr. Roscoe, failed to produce the effect which those who urged them desired. He saw, in the exasperation displayed upon his entrance, a determination to decide the contest by tumult and by violence; and he did not find it consistent, either with

his feelings or with his principles, to take any part in transactions which must, in all probability, have terminated in bloodshed. At the same time, it is not improbable that motives of a different kind, the weight of which he himself could scarcely estimate, had their influence over him. After some experience of political life, he had found it distasteful to him, and he earnestly longed to be relieved from a burden which he had been unaccustomed to bear,—a burden rendered still weightier by the reflection that it interfered with the performance of those private duties, upon which his own happiness and that of those around him depended. An opportunity now offered itself of retiring with honour from a contest, into which his sense of duty, rather than his inclinations, had led him to enter; and it is not surprising that, under such circumstances, he should have declined to act upon the advice which many of his friends so earnestly tendered.

His determination was conveyed to the public in the following address; in which he both enters into an explanation of his parliamentary conduct, and details the motives which induced him to retire from a second contest.

“ To the Independent Freemen of Liverpool.

“ Gentlemen,

“ After the many proofs of attachment and confidence with which you have honoured me, and which will ever be remembered by me with the warmest gratitude, it is with sincere regret that I announce to you my determination to withdraw myself as a candidate at the approaching election.

“ Called upon as I was by you on a former occasion, I laid aside all considerations of private interest and

personal convenience, and cheerfully obeyed your summons. From that time I have devoted myself to your service by a diligent performance of my duty in Parliament, and have uniformly maintained those principles and opinions which first recommended me to your choice. To the best of my power I have asserted the cause of justice, of humanity, of toleration, and of true constitutional British freedom; and amidst the changes which I have witnessed around me, I have certainly remained and now return unchanged.

“ Short as the duration of that parliament has been, its proceedings will always be recorded, in the annals of this country, with peculiar honour. During that period, I have had the satisfaction of giving my humble but disinterested support to men who, from their rank, their property, and their independence, could have no object in view but to promote the permanent interests and prosperity of the country; and of adding my public sanction to measures of the greatest national benefit and importance. Of these measures, some were carried into complete effect, and others were only frustrated by the premature dissolution of parliament, which his Majesty’s ministers thought it expedient to advise. A system of finance was proposed and matured, which surprised and gratified the country, by demonstrating, that no new taxes were necessary, and which regulated the public revenue and expenditure for a long series of years. The great principles of justice and humanity were asserted by the abolition of the African slave trade. A committee was appointed to examine into the abuses of excessive salaries and peculations in office, which had discovered frauds in public functionaries to a considerable amount. A bill was introduced, which was intended to add to our national security at this dangerous crisis, by uniting his

Majesty's subjects of all religious persuasions in the common defence of the country. To these great measures of public benefit I must be allowed to add the bills introduced by an enlightened member of the House of Commons, for improving the condition, raising the character, and providing for the education of those lower classes of the community, on which the strength and prosperity of a nation so essentially depend, and which, carried into effect, would ere long have alleviated those enormous parish rates which have of late increased with such alarming rapidity. To have had a share in these deliberations will ever be remembered by me as the chief pride of my life.

“No sooner was the dissolution of this parliament known, than I announced to you my intention of offering myself again to your choice. But on my arrival in Liverpool I found that the same arts of ministerial misrepresentation, which had been so industriously employed in other places to mislead the public mind, and had induced so many persons of independent character to relinquish their pretensions to a seat in parliament, had not been without their effect there also. To this more general prejudice was added a particular disapprobation, in some few individuals, of the part I had taken on the abolition of the slave trade. On these and other points it was my most earnest desire to have addressed myself to you. After having been met on my approach, and accompanied into the town by such a concourse of the most respectable inhabitants as was perhaps never before witnessed, except on the memorable occasion in November last, I made several attempts to obtain a hearing, and to perform what I consider a sacred and indispensable duty, by rendering an account of my conduct to my constituents. But, to the disgrace of themselves and

their employers, persons evidently stationed for the purpose prevented me, by their clamours, from all possibility of addressing my friends. Prepared for outrage, they suddenly attacked the large and respectable body of freemen by whom I was surrounded. Without the least restraint from the police of the town, many of my friends were grossly insulted, and some of them much wounded. Persons, whose peculiar province it was to have repressed such outrages, were observed actively employed in promoting them. An officer of the highest reputation and independence of character, to whom the town of Liverpool is under particular obligations, and who had honoured me by his presence, was insolently attacked, and his horse stabbed with a knife. Happily for the peace and character of the town, the feelings of resentment, thus wantonly and arrogantly excited, were suppressed by the consideration of the dreadful consequences which must have ensued, had my friends indulged themselves in that retaliation which was decidedly in their power. The example of firmness and moderation which they at this moment evinced confers on them the highest honour.

“ Under these circumstances, and wholly hopeless, in the present situation of public affairs, of rendering those services to my constituents or to my country, which could alone justify me in entering upon a contest, I have finally resolved not to afford, by my further perseverance, a pretext for those excesses, which, from what has already occurred, there is but too much reason to apprehend would be experienced in the course of the election. What will be the character of a parliament chosen under such auspices I shall not pretend to determine; but if the representation of Liverpool can only be obtained by violence and bloodshed, I leave the honour of it to those

who choose to contend for it, nor will I accept even that distinction, accompanied by reflections which must embitter every future moment of my life.

“ I have the honour to be,
 “ With the greatest gratitude and respect,
 “ Gentlemen,
 “ Your most obliged and most faithful Servant,
 (Signed) “ WILLIAM ROSCOE.

“Allerton Hall, May 5, 1807.”

On the appearance of this address, a numerous meeting of Mr. Roscoe's friends was held, and the following letter was transmitted to him, expressive of their feelings on the occasion: —

“ Sir,

“ It is with heartfelt concern that we have read your address, announcing your intention to withdraw yourself as a candidate for the representation of Liverpool.

“ Impressed with a high respect for your talents and your virtues, confident in your abilities, and still more so in your integrity, we invited you, the last autumn, to offer yourself as a competitor for that honour. At the expense of considerable sacrifices you complied with our invitation. Our joint efforts were crowned with the most brilliant success, and you took your seat as one of our representatives in the great council of the nation.

“ It is with pleasure that we discharge an incumbent duty in assuring you, that your conduct in that assembly meets with our entire approbation. In most of the particulars of that conduct you expressed our unanimous sentiments, and in whatever cases any of us might differ from you in opinion, we paid cheerful deference to the purity of your motives. It was never our object to send into

parliament a party agent, or an instrument of faction. Our honest ambition was, and is, to be represented by a man of undeviating honour, who would uniformly act according to the dictates of his conscience.

“Regarding you, Sir, as such a man, we have cherished an earnest desire that you should again yield your services to the independent burgesses of Liverpool, under the full persuasion that you retain the affectionate esteem of a great majority of your late constituents. We were not, indeed, insensible of the effects which had been produced by the misrepresentations of your opponents. But we were assured that a simple explanation on your part would have convinced those who have been deluded by groundless clamour, that an enlargement of the royal prerogative trenches not on the privileges of the sovereign; that your political friends, who comprise almost the whole body of the ancient nobility and gentry of the realm, can have no interest separate from the welfare of their country; that the enabling his Majesty to permit such of his Catholic subjects as he may think deserving of trust, to fight his battles, cannot possibly endanger the church establishment; and that the contest which now convulses the kingdom is not a struggle between the throne and a faction, but between honesty and peculation, between integrity and corruption.

“We are the more persuaded that these truths would have been brought home to the general feelings, from the unexampled attendance with which you were honoured on your arrival in Liverpool on Saturday last. As to the outrages which took place on that day, be assured we reflect upon them with mingled sensations of indignation and contempt. And we are confident that could you have been persuaded to authorise our firm but peaceable exertions in your favour, we should soon have

demonstrated that the sense of the town is not to be ascertained by the chalk or the pen of the incendiary, nor its spirit by the clamour and violence of intoxicated ruffians.

“As, however, you have declined to accept our services, however cheerfully proffered, we pay reluctant deference to your decision, expressing our warmest wishes for your health and comfort in your retirement, and assuring you that the concern which we cannot but feel on this occasion is much lessened by the prospect of your again residing amongst us, and gratifying us by the attentions of private friendship.

“Signed on behalf of a most numerous and respectable meeting of Mr. Roscoe’s friends,

“THOMAS RAWSON.”

From many quarters Mr. Roscoe received communications expressive of the strong regret which the late occurrences at Liverpool had occasioned. “I am seized alternately with stupor and indignation,” says Dr. Parr, in a letter written at this time, “at the state of public affairs. Do not suppose that I am a tame or careless observer of the strange and disgraceful events which have occurred at Liverpool. Disdain, I beseech you, to repel any accusations. All wise and all virtuous men will deplore your removal from parliament, and will detest or despise the artifices of your opponents. Reading, reflection, the society of wise men, and the conscious rectitude of your own intentions, will preserve you and me from the perturbation and dismay which other men may experience in these strange and eventful times. The yell of ‘No Popery’ has been heard even at Cambridge: the effects of it were visible in the late election; and on the walls

of our senate house, of Clare Hall chapel, and of Trinity Hall, I saw the odious words in large characters. The good sense of the country will not speedily return. There is a great and portentous change in the public mind, and you and I are at a loss to assign the cause, or to predict the consequences. So it is, that, amidst the fury of the tempest, and the wreck of our fairest hopes, I feel myself sustained and animated by the reflection that you, and those who supported you, deserved a better fate."

The resignation of Mr. Roscoe did not prevent the freemen of Liverpool from attempting to assert their own cause. A number of the electors, without any communication either with him or his late committee, met together for the purpose of considering the best means of securing his re-election. A subscription was set on foot, and instead of receiving bribes, the poorer voters cheerfully contributed their half crowns or half guineas to the expenses of the contest. About one hundred pounds having been raised in this manner amongst the common freemen, a number of gentlemen stepped forwards and offered their exertions in the same cause ; still without the sanction of Mr. Roscoe or his immediate friends. On the day of election he was nominated as a candidate, and the contest was kept up for seven days, when it terminated in favour of Generals Gascoigne and Tarleton by a large majority.

An effort so zealous and disinterested called for the acknowledgments of Mr. Roscoe ; which were accordingly expressed immediately after the conclusion of the election, in an Address, of which the following is the termination : —

“ In taking my leave of you in a public character, and returning to the avocations of private life, I feel conso-

lations of which no change, either in the opinions or the conduct of others, can ever deprive me. I have faithfully discharged, to the best of my abilities, the trust reposed in me; not by sacrificing my principles to my popularity, but by consulting the true honour and character, and, let me add, the real and permanent interests of the town of Liverpool, as well as of the empire at large. In the great questions that have of late agitated the country, I have taken that part to which I have been induced by an unalterable attachment to my king, a strict regard to the dignity and security of his crown, and a firm adherence to the genuine principles of the British constitution; and I have contributed my humble efforts towards promoting that affection, attachment, and brotherly union, amongst his Majesty's subjects of all religious denominations, which are now become indispensably necessary, as well to the internal tranquillity as to the general defence of these realms.

“With these reflections I could easily have consoled myself under much greater changes of popular favour than any that I have ever experienced. But your unsolicited patronage has removed all impressions of the kind; and I retire with the additional satisfaction of knowing that my public conduct, during the short but eventful period in which I have been your representative, has obtained the approbation of a great and respectable body of my constituents, and has preserved to me undiminished those connections of private attachment and friendship, which have hitherto been the chief honour and happiness of my life.”

Great regret was expressed by the political friends of Mr. Roscoe, when his resolution to retire from public life became known. How highly his services were valued, and how much the loss of them was felt, will appear

from the following extract from a letter addressed to him on this occasion by Lord Holland:—“Among the many mortifications to which an interest in political events exposes one, there is none greater than the success which a senseless cry sometimes insures over tried worth and a steady attachment to the cause of the people. Representative governments and popular elections being the best devices which human wisdom has contrived for the security of liberty, and the preservation of its spirit among the people, it disgusts one’s feelings, and humiliates one’s pride, to see them rendered the instruments of bigotry and prejudice; and to find the enemies of liberty triumphant in the very sanctuaries instituted for her protection. The instances of such a perversion of our best institutions have not been so numerous on this occasion as the fomenters of the cry expected that they would be; but, I assure you, your rejection at Liverpool is considered by us all as one of the greatest disgraces to the country, as well as misfortunes to the party, that could have happened.”

Of the line of conduct pursued by him on this occasion Mr. Roscoe never repented, firmly persuaded that it had prevented the occurrence of evils which his return to parliament could never have counterbalanced. In a letter to the Duke of Gloucester, written immediately after the publication of his address, he says, “At a time like the present, it was not without great reluctance that I withdrew myself as a candidate; but the more I reflect upon it, the more reason I have to be satisfied with my determination; for the violence of my opponents and their friends, and the prejudices of the town, are such, that I am persuaded my further interference must have produced the most unhappy consequences.”

How joyfully his mind reverted, from the cares and tumults of public life, to the calm pleasures of a private station, may be best learned from his own words. In a letter to Dr. J. E. Smith, written in the summer of 1807, he says, "I have for some time past rejoiced in the thought that I am likely to see you in Lancashire in the course of the present summer. I already anticipate the happiness I shall have in your society at Allerton, where I must at least claim some portion of your time, and where I shall be delighted to stroll and saunter with you through the fields in an evening, instead of being locked up, balloting for committees, in St. Stephen's. In truth, my dear friend, it requires but little of the efforts of others to drive me from public life. The only wonder is, that I was ever brought into it; and I sink back with such a rapidity of gravitation into my natural inclination for quiet and retirement, that I totally despair of ever being roused again to a similar exertion. Add to this, that the one great object which was continually before my eyes is now attained, and I shall have the perpetual gratification of thinking that I gave my vote in the assembly of the nation for abolishing the slave trade to Africa. Though not insensible to the state of the country, yet I see no question of equal magnitude; and am fully aware how little my efforts could avail in the political struggles of the times. Come then, my friend, and let us again open the book of nature, and wander through the fields of science. Your presence will increase my reviving relish for botanical pursuits; and when we are tired with those subjects, we will call in the aid of the poets and philosophers to vary our entertainments."

"After all the agitation and anxiety of mind," says Dr. J. E. Smith in reply, "which I have felt for some weeks past on your account, how delightful it is to find,

by your most welcome and interesting letter of the 25th of June, that you still possess yourself in undisturbed tranquillity; not like a reed that has bent before the storm, but like a palm-tree, around whose polished and upright stem the winds have whistled, without ruffling the lofty honours of its head! Such a plant can no more be nursed in St. Stephen's chapel, than the Norfolk Island pine, 250 feet high, in any of our stoves. You are now in your proper element; and very long may you continue so! The world is not worthy of you, 'nor the world's law.'

“The line of conduct you have pursued secures you from regret; and I trust you will soon look back on all that is past, with no less satisfaction, on every account, than self-approbation. I wished it rather for your triumph than your happiness; and really triumphs of any kind are worth but little:—‘One self-approving hour,’ &c., you know the rest; and *that* a good man has, independent of triumphs founded on the accidental justice of the world.”

Soon after his retirement from Parliament, Mr. Roscoe was gratified by receiving, in the following letter from the Earl of Derby, the Lord Lieutenant of the county of Lancaster, an expression of his Lordship's wish that he would suffer himself to be appointed one of the Deputy Lieutenants of the county:—

“Dear Sir,

“I have lately been applied to and desired to appoint some gentlemen in the neighbourhood of Liverpool to be Deputy Lieutenants of this county. I think I cannot in a better manner comply with this request than by applying to you, and desiring your permission to propose you to his Majesty to fill this office. If I

obtain it, I assure you I shall have great pride and pleasure in laying such a name before his Majesty, with the recommendation of,

“ Dear Sir,

“ Your obliged and faithful humble servant,

“ DERBY.”

To this communication Mr. Roscoe returned the following answer:—

“ My Lord,

“ I should have esteemed it a very great honour to have been recommended by your Lordship to his Majesty as a Deputy Lieutenant of the county, had I not been one of those, whom the operation of the test laws excludes from all offices of trust under government. I well know that if others thought with the same liberality as your Lordship, these disabilities would be removed; but whilst they remain, I think it better that those affected by them should implicitly submit to them, rather than by an occasional conformity to, or an open disregard of them, invalidate the reasons for their repeal.

“ With the deepest sense of this mark of your Lordship’s confidence, I remain,

“ My Lord,

“ Your Lordship’s most obliged

“ And most faithful servant,

“ W. ROSCOE.”

CHAPTER X.

1808.

Mr. Roscoe's Tracts on the War. — Publication of the "Considerations on the Causes, &c. of the War with France." — Character of Mr. Pitt in that pamphlet. — The attack upon Copenhagen. — Poem of "Copenhagen." — Letter to Mr. Wilberforce. — Success of the pamphlet. — Letter from Mr. Whitbread. — Letter to Mr. Wilberforce. — Impression made by the pamphlet. — Publication of "Remarks on the Proposals for Peace," &c. — Letter from Mr. Rathbone. — The pamphlet submitted to Mr. Whitbread — letter from him, and reply. — Mr. Roscoe's defence against his critics. — Letter to Professor Smyth. — Opinions on the pamphlet. — Letter from Mr. J. Graham. — Letters to the Marquis of Lansdowne and to Mr. Whitbread. — Some of his political friends differ from Mr. Roscoe on the subject of peace — he proposes and carries a pacific address at a public meeting at Liverpool. — Letter to Mr. Mathias.

ALTHOUGH no longer actively engaged in the duties of public life Mr. Roscoe was not insensible to the prospects of the country and to the progress of political affairs. He saw, with sorrow and dismay, that the spirit of hostility, which had given rise to a war almost unexampled in the expenditure of blood and of treasure, still continued to actuate the councils of the English government and he was impelled, by a sense of the injustice of this protracted contest, and of the dangers which the country incurred by its continuance, to exert

whatever influence he possessed, in directing the public mind to more pacific views. From the commencement of the French war in the year 1793 he had on various occasions, earnestly advocated the cause of peace. In his "Thoughts on the Causes of the late Failures,"* he had denounced the war as the origin of the evils under which the country was suffering; and in the year 1802 he again exerted himself in the same cause, by the publication of a short pamphlet under the title of "Observations on the relative Situation of Great Britain and France."† He now made another attempt to enforce these opinions, in a pamphlet, to which he gave the title of "*Considerations on the Causes, Objects, and Consequences of the present War, and on the Expediency or the Danger of Peace with France.*"‡

Now that Europe has long returned to a state of peace, and that this country has had an opportunity which she never enjoyed while the contest continued, of weighing the effects of the long and sanguinary struggle in which she engaged, it is unnecessary to recur to the arguments with which Mr. Roscoe enforced his opinions. The result has shown, but too forcibly, the correctness and the foresight of his judgment; and the peace which arrived at last, induced not so much by the wisdom of our own councils or the vigour of our own arms, as by the mad ambition of our enemies, reached us only just in time to rescue the country from destruction. Not one of the objects of those with whom the war originated has been accomplished. The French nation have once more expelled from amongst them those

* Vide ante, p. 93.

† Reprinted in the "Occasional Tracts on the War." 1810.

‡ Reprinted in the Tracts on the War.

whose fatal maxims of government were the occasion of the Revolution, and have, undisturbed by foreign interference, freely chosen for themselves their own rulers; while in this country, the principles of freedom and reform, which it was the unceasing endeavour of the war-party to crush, have attained a complete, and, it may be hoped, a lasting triumph. The only effect of the long and bloody contest has been to burden the country with a debt, the weight of which, even now, impoverishes her industrious population, oppresses her best energies, and still threatens her with destruction.

Though the subjects which form the topics of this pamphlet have partially lost their interest, yet the following passage, containing a character of Mr. Pitt, may not improperly be extracted:—

“With the battle of Austerlitz the confederation against France terminated, and with that terminated also the political career and the life of Mr. Pitt—a statesman to whom it would be unjust to deny the endowments of extraordinary talents, and the praise of having improved those talents in some departments, to a most uncommon degree. But these accomplishments, which ought to have rendered him a benefactor to his country, were unfortunately subservient to one predominating passion, which not only counteracted their good effects, but converted them into implements of danger and destruction. This passion he inherited from his father, who cherished it in the early years of his son, and directed his infant gaze towards that eminent station which he had himself once occupied. In his education nothing was left undone, that could qualify him to attain this object; and no one certainly entered into public life with equal advantages. There is, however, an essential difference between those qualities which are cal-

culated to obtain power, and those which enable us to make a proper use of it. Unfortunately, the system of education of Mr. Pitt was, in politics, that which Lord Chesterfield's is in private life. It was founded on too narrow a basis, and aimed too directly at its object. A cultivated mind and a humane disposition will render their possessor truly polite; sound principles and a real love of mankind, truly patriotic; but without these, neither the politeness nor the patriotism is any thing more than a whited sepulchre. The system was, however, successful: the young orator began his career in a manner the best calculated to display his powers. As he spoke, the hopes of freedom revived; corruption shrank before his glance, and the nation hailed him as her deliverer; but no sooner was the prize within his grasp, than he seized it with an eagerness, and retained it with a tenacity, which all the efforts of his opponents could neither impede nor relax. Having thus obtained the supreme power, the talents which had acquired it were employed with equal success to preserve it. The correction of abuses, the removal of peculation and corruption, the reform of the representation, the extension of religious and civil liberty, were now no longer the objects in view; or were only recalled at stated periods, to show how the minister could blast his promise without breaking his faith. Well schooled in all the routine and arcana of office, an adept in the science of finance and taxation, Mr. Pitt's great accomplishment was a thorough knowledge of the artificial and complex machine of government, and his great defect, a total insensibility to the feelings of mankind, and a thorough ignorance of the leading principles of human nature. Unfortunately for his fame and for his country, new situations arose, to which the hackneyed rules of a

narrow policy were totally inapplicable. A powerful nation, whose slavery had for ages been its reproach, threw off its shackles, and attempted to form for itself a limited monarchy. It was Mr. Pitt's first misfortune to be insensible to the grandeur of so glorious a struggle, his second to miscalculate its consequences. The first act of France was to hold out her emancipated hands to the free states of England and America; but the coldness of the minister soon convinced her that in this country she was not to expect a friend. That coldness soon degenerated into enmity and abhorrence, and through every change of circumstance and situation, through all the evolutions and forms of her government, whether monarchical, republican, aristocratical, or despotic, she found in him a decided and an inflexible enemy. With what success his hostility has been attended impartial history will show."

The attack upon Denmark, a neutral state, not with the view of preventing a possible junction with France, but for the purpose of forestalling that nation in an act of unexampled atrocity, is one of the subjects commented upon in the "Considerations," and denounced with all the energies of the writer's mind. Upon the justification of "the cruel necessity which obliged the British sovereign to have recourse to acts of hostility against a nation, with which it was his most earnest desire to have established the relations of common interest and alliance," Mr. Roscoe observes; "This passage contains the complete avowal of the principle upon which the British ministry acted. It presumes, not only that the laws of morality and justice, and the rules of good faith which attach one individual or one nation to another, may be dispensed with from temporary motives, but that either of the parties has a right to judge of such

motives, and to disregard those rules whenever he may think proper. That this doctrine cannot be supported must be apparent to every one, from the slightest observation of the consequences to which it must lead. At no period of society have mankind been so lost to the dignity of their nature and the interests of their association as to avow it. Even states and sovereigns at war, under circumstances of the utmost exasperation, have rejected it with horror; and it may truly be said, that the establishment of such a maxim, even between belligerent powers, is all that is now wanting to complete the downfall of Europe, and destroy the hopes of mankind. Jealousy, hatred, assassination, poison, treachery, cruelty, and revenge are its instruments, to be indiscriminately employed *as necessity requires*, and upon these grounds every crime and every atrocity may be equally justified."

The feelings of Mr. Roscoe, when highly excited, were often poured out in verse; and the sanguinary act which he thus reprobated in his pamphlet, became the subject of the following short poem.

COPENHAGEN.

— "Shroud me, shroud me, shades of night,
 Save me from the blasting sight!"
 Thus by Murder's screams awoke,
 Britain's troubled Genius spoke,
 Whilst beneath the northern star
 Gleam'd the purple cloud of war. —
 — Echoing thro' the midnight skies,
 Shrieks of fear and anguish rise,
 As the battle's furious rage
 Spares nor infancy nor age. —
 — "Stay," she cries, "ye ruthless bands,
 Stay your fratricidal hands —
 If your breasts with vengeance glow,
 Drive its fury on the foe —

But the wise, the just, the brave,
Britain's glory is to save."
Hark! the war-shouts louder swell;
Hark! the victor's tiger yell.
— Now the work of death is o'er,
Suffering Nature bears no more;
O'er the city's sea-girt steeps
Desolation sits and weeps;
There the mother, wandering wild,
Asks the stranger for her child,
And sacrilegious feet have trod
O'er the prostrate fanes of God.
Wretches! who, in evil hour,
Seized the trident of my power,
For whose guilt no time atones,
Murderers! whom my soul disowns,
Authors of your country's shame,
Recreants to a Briton's name;
What could prompt your furious rage
Thus the war with Heaven to wage,
In its decrees refuse to trust,
And boldly dare to be unjust? —
Say, can you pierce with steady eye
The folds of dark Futurity,
Control the stubborn course of Fate,
That good from ill may emanate,
That thus you raise, by fear unaw'd,
Your impious hands against your God?
— Supreme Creator! he with ease
Can smooth the waves and bridge the seas,
Can raise the feeble and forlorn,
And dash the pride of man to scorn.
Earth trembles at his mighty stroke,
At his touch the mountains smoke,
And changing at his powerful call,
Successive nations rise and fall.
Wretches! for whose dark misdeeds
Thus my soul in anguish bleeds,
By unprecedented crimes,
The reproach of future times;

Know, not long your impious sway
Thus shall blot the face of day.
— Rising from its native steep,
Soon th' indignant storm shall sweep,
That shall whelm, in dire disgrace,
You and all your blood-stained race.
— Then once more in Britain's isle,
Suns of brighter glow shall smile,
And the white-robed lustral band
From pollution cleanse the land ;
Then again shall Britain's name
Emulate her former fame,
And her arm be stretch'd to save
The just, the generous, and the brave !

On the subject of the attack upon Copenhagen, Mr. Roscoe had the misfortune to find his opinions at variance with those of some of the political friends with whom he had been accustomed to act, — a circumstance which he deeply regretted, not so much because it placed him in opposition to those whom he loved and respected, as because he was deprived of their assistance in the maintenance of the principles he had so much at heart. In a letter to Mr. Wilberforce, he has expressed this feeling in strong language. * * * “ What is it that has preserved the human race from utter degradation and ruin, but the assertion from time to time of these sacred principles of morality and justice, which are daily and hourly in danger of being lost amongst the violence and the wrath, the prejudices and the passions of mankind ? When these principles are combated and denied, the lines of demarcation are drawn between the opposing parties, and the last stand must be made for the preservation of that which is dearer than life. With an ardent spirit, but a feeble hand, I have plunged into the contest, and I naturally look round to those, who have on

other occasions shown themselves the firm and fearless friends of truth, of liberty, and of the best interests of mankind, for their countenance and support; or rather for their better and more effectual efforts to release me from a task to which I am unequal. Must I add, that I look with fear, and anxiety, and dread! That even in the small circle, in which I once had the pleasure and the honour of deliberating with you, for the benefit of a distant people and of future times, I am to reflect with sorrow, that there are some with whom I must now differ on one of the most important questions that ever came before a nation?

“I have not the presumption to arrogate to myself a superior delicacy of feeling on such a subject; far less would I assume the airs of a rhetorical moralist, carrying his ideas to an extreme inconsistent with the nature of human affairs; but, if ever there was a crime that bore upon its forehead its very name in burning characters, and which posterity will regard with peculiar horror, it is that which perpetrated the enormities at Copenhagen. Nor will it long escape notice, that this transaction was, if possible, still more impolitic than it was unjust.”

To another of his political friends who had justified the conduct of the British Government in this transaction, he wrote in language of almost indignant sorrow:—

“I certainly had flattered myself, that if there was a man in the kingdom, in whose sight the opinions avowed in my late publication would have found favour, it was yourself, and I may truly add that if there was any part of it, which I thought more likely than the rest to obtain this honour, it was that which related to the attack upon Denmark.

“I know of no circumstance that could have damped my hopes and depressed my feelings so much as to find

that this is not the case ; and I naturally ask myself what is to be expected from others, when those, on whose countenance and support I chiefly reckoned, in the humble attempt I had made to inform the judgment of the public, see this great object in a totally different point of view." — " But, independently of the particular nature and horrid consequences of this transaction, I must avow my decided opinion, that if the maxims and principles upon which such a transaction can alone be justified, be once established, there is an end of every thing that is sacred, just, and honourable amongst mankind. Treaties are no longer of any avail, and fraud and force will henceforth contend for mastery with each other. If such a pretext as that for the attack on Copenhagen be a sufficient justification, I will forfeit my head if there ever be one wanting to the end of time, for the greatest atrocity that the human imagination can devise. What is the final and essential cause of all the despotism on earth, but the tyrant's apprehension that if he does not cut off and destroy those around him, some danger, immediate or remote, may be apprehended to himself, and, therefore, his self-preservation, or what is called necessity, compels him to have recourse to bloody and destructive measures. When I reflect that fear has no limits, and that cruelty derives new fierceness from gratification, when I am told that the maxims of Bonaparte are henceforth to become the maxims of Great Britain, I tremble for the independence and the fate of what yet remains of Europe ; and see no repose for mankind till they are absorbed in that dreadful gulf of universal dominion, or rather of universal subjugation, towards which we are so rapidly tending."

The success of the " Considerations " far exceeded the expectations of the author. The pamphlet, which

was published in January, at the commencement of February had reached its fourth edition; and in the course of the year, eight large impressions of it were demanded by the public. Like every successful political work, it attracted various replies; one of which appeared at Liverpool, another in Edinburgh, and a third in London. Mr. Cobbett also devoted three letters in his "Register" to the consideration of its merits. But the idea that he had contributed in any degree to forward the cause of peace, was a full compensation to Mr. Roscoe for the obloquy and abuse with which his writings were received by his adversaries. "It cannot," he says in a letter to one of his correspondents, "have escaped your penetration how open my pamphlet is, from the nature of the subjects there discussed, to misrepresentations of various kinds, which I have not thought proper to guard against, as is the fashion of the times, by obtrusive professions of loyalty or continual abuse of our enemies. Having never, either in word, thought, or action, given ground for such imputations as some of my critics have, I find, thrown out against me, I should feel it a humiliation to vindicate that loyalty to my Sovereign, and attachment to my country, which no one has just grounds to impeach; and shall leave it to the public to judge between me and my assailants, without further answer." By many of his political friends he had the pleasure of finding his work spoken of in terms of warm admiration; and the following letter from Mr. Whitbread, who, like himself, had the subject of peace "nearest to his heart," and whose labours in parliament were at this time especially directed to the same object, afforded Mr. Roscoe the highest satisfaction:—

"I was highly gratified by the attention you were so good as to show me in ordering a copy of your pamphlet

to be sent to me, as every testimony of your regard and approbation is of the highest value in my estimation. I read the work with the avidity which my knowledge of the merits of the author in every way was so well calculated to excite, as well as the subject which he had treated, which of all others is the nearest to my heart. You may believe me, when I assure you that (exclusive of the note which is so peculiarly pleasant to me personally, and for which I sincerely thank you) my expectations, however highly raised, were perfectly satisfied, and that I esteem the production worthy of your fame and of the great work respecting which you have written. The positions you have taken are impregnable; the truths you have told are incontrovertible: and if any thing can give them their due weight in these disastrous times of fright and delusion, it will be the temperate and conciliating manner in which you have stated them. The public of these kingdoms and the world are greatly indebted to you for your labors; would I could hope the English public would allow the rest of mankind to profit by them.

“ You will have perceived that I gave notice some days since of my intention of submitting to the House a direct proposition on the subject of peace. I delay it for the purpose of seeing whether any further step will be taken by the French Emperor in consequence of the foolish and insolent refusal of his overtures, and because I think, for some parliamentary reasons, it may be brought forward with greater effect a short time hence. You have given me powerful assistance. I wish you were amongst us, that I might derive further aid from your exertions in the House; and in that wish I am sure I am joined by all who value independence, ability, and integrity. *You* avowed your opinion of the propriety of

my conduct, at a time when I felt myself impelled to act by motives too powerful for restraint. Many who then joined in the attempt to restrain me, now give me the late satisfaction of knowing that they agreed with me in opinion at the time. I thank them for their frankness, and it gives me additional courage to proceed.”

In the course of his speech on bringing forwards his promised motion, Mr. Whitbread took the opportunity of referring to the unceasing labours of Mr. Roscoe in the same cause, a circumstance most pleasing to the feelings of the latter. “As to myself,” he says, in a letter to Mrs. Rathbone, “I will confess to you I am gratified beyond the extent of my hopes by the circumstance which occurred in the House on Thursday night. To be mentioned with approbation by such a man, and on such an occasion, when the eloquence of the tongue was prompted by the best feelings of the heart, is, indeed, a triumph, the more gratifying the more it was unexpected.”

The anxiety experienced by Mr. Roscoe that his pamphlet should be favourably received in quarters where it might produce impressions serviceable to the cause of peace, appears from the following letter, addressed to Mr. Wilberforce, on the 30th January, 1808:—

“Before I had the pleasure of your obliging communication, I had desired my bookseller to send you a copy of my pamphlet, which I hope you have received. How happy should I be, my dear Sir, if I could flatter myself that I agreed with you on all subjects, as precisely as on that on which I have had the pleasure of seconding your efforts; and this, not merely for my own gratification, though I confess that would be great indeed, but because, from your extensive influence, great talents, and unexampled perseverance in every benevolent purpose,

I should yet flatter myself with the hope of seeing the calamities with which this country and mankind are threatened effectually removed. Knowing as I do, through every different shade of opinion between us, the perfect rectitude of your views, with what delight should I see you advocate the cause of suffering Europe, or rather the cause of the civilised world, with the same energy and success as you have done that of the oppressed Africans. I see with terror, not only the political, but the moral horizon daily grow darker, and I look up with anxiety to those few who alone can dispel the gloom, and whom I consider as the lights of mankind. I cannot, however, venture to flatter myself that any representations of mine can influence their determination, nor am I indeed insensible, that the earnestness with which I have enforced my own opinions, may, in many instances, rather give offence than produce conviction. If, however, I have written with warmth, many of those who espouse an opposite opinion have more than set the example, and as I feel the most decided conviction in my own mind, that I am actuated by no other motive than a wish to promote the cause of sacred morality and the true interests of my country, as far as consistent with the general rights of mankind, I should think myself inexcusable were I to engage in the contest with ‘a cold and unperforming hand.’ At all events, you will, I trust, allow me to retain some share of your indulgence and favourable opinion, assured, as you may be, that no difference as to *means, mode, or manner* (for as to the main end, and object, and view, it is impossible we can disagree) can ever diminish the high respect, and allow me to add, the affectionate attachment, with which I am, &c. &c.”

The impression made by this pamphlet is noticed in a letter addressed by Mr. Roscoe to Dr. Parr, and dated

the 1st of February, 1808:—"May I hope, my dear Sir, that if my hasty publication should engage your attention, I may have your favourable construction, at least as to my intentions and views? It has been already much noticed in London, where it was published a week since, and I have this morning a line from my printer, M'Creery, to say that he has just put to press a fourth edition. By many it is well spoken of; by some, and those amongst my friends in politics, it is complained of as bearing hard on the late administration; and by others, the advocates of war and desolation, it is abused in gross and open terms. I hope, however, that you will find, that on all the great points of politics and of morality, I have not deserted those principles which I have the pleasure to know we hold in common."

Soon after the publication of this pamphlet, Mr. Roscoe was induced, in consequence of certain papers respecting the proposals for peace being laid before parliament, to appear again before the public in a short tract intended as a sequel to the "Considerations." This tract, which he entitled, "Remarks on the Proposals made to Great Britain for opening Negotiations for Peace, in the Year 1807," was written for the purpose of showing that the ministers, whilst they professed themselves favourable to peace, had, in three distinct instances, demonstrated in the most decided manner, their unwillingness even to enter upon a negotiation for it. He then states the real nature and tendency of the petitions for peace, and lastly contends, that if, after all, it should be unattainable, the war ought to be conducted in a manner honourable to the country. To this tract he added a preface of considerable length, in which he shows the application of the principles of morals to the intercourse of states, and pleads in strong and feeling language the

cause of veracity, good faith, and honour. The following passages are not perhaps exceeded in any part of his works.

“The truth is, that a patriot must be a virtuous man, and a virtuous man will not commit or encourage injustice for the sake either of himself or others. After having participated his affections with those around him, he will be anxious to promote their interests; but he will promote them only in the same manner as he would his own. Schooled to the restraint of his own passions, he will not flatter and inflame those of the populace. In acting for his country he will seek for no advantages, but such as, under similar circumstances, he would endeavour to obtain for himself. If in the one case he would not waylay and rob an unsuspecting neighbour, in the other he would not enrich his country by piracy, violence, and spoil. In this he would do, not only what is abstractedly right, but what is truly and ultimately for the real interests of his country. The globe is a society of states, and nations as well as individuals have each their peculiar character. To grasp at temporary advantages, to oppress a weaker, or circumvent an incautious neighbour, may frequently, in private life, be attended with success; and states and nations may, in like manner, seem for a while, by a similar conduct, to promote their prosperity. But the foundation is unsound, and the edifice of their greatness is built on sand. By the system of Providence and the constitution of human affairs, a continual barrier is forming against such unjust aggressions, which are counteracted by the influence of public opinion, the distrust and resentment of surrounding states, and a thousand unforeseen circumstances, that either frustrate the expected advantage or retaliate its injustice, and not unfrequently subject the aggressor to the very evils intend-

ed to be inflicted on others. It is, therefore, only by strictly conforming to the eternal principles of right and justice, that we can consult either our own honour or our own interest; and to desert those principles when a particular occasion puts them to the test, is to exclude ourselves, by our own act, from the pale of civilised society, and to render ourselves as it were outlaws to the rest of the world.

“Such appear to be the positive and relative duties of the subjects of a free state; but if they who obey be accountable both to themselves and the public for the propriety of their conduct, they who are intrusted with the executive power of a state have a still more weighty task imposed on them. In claiming from the people a general assent to their measures, and a perfect unanimity of support, they must take care that such measures are consistent with the acknowledged laws of universal justice, and are not subversive of those first principles of morals which are antecedent to every other law of society. As man to man, there are certain duties incumbent on us, the violation of which no pretext of political necessity or national hostility can justify. To inculcate upon the people ideas of a contrary tendency, and to weaken their faith in the existence of political virtue, is not less impolitic than it is erroneous. That governments as well as individuals are actuated only by selfish motives, and that the professions which they are continually making of veracity, fidelity, honour, and frankness, are merely a cloak for their criminal views, are sentiments which it is thought a mark of penetration to have discovered, and a proof of sincerity to avow. But whatever may be thought of the sagacity of such politicians, to act upon the conviction of such sentiments is dangerous. God has not abandoned his creatures, nor are the common feelings of human nature

wholly extinguished amongst mankind. If there be depravity, there is yet integrity; if there be oppression, there is yet sympathy; if there be baseness, there is yet honour; if there be treachery, violence, and rapine, there are still the unextinguishable feelings of virtuous indignation and generous contempt; and they who direct their conduct, either in public or in private life, with a total disregard to these truths, will, whatever may be their temporary success, incur, upon the whole, not only disappointment but disgrace.”

Previously to the publication of this tract, Mr. Roscoe was very desirous of submitting it to the excellent judgment of Mr. Whitbread, whose devotion to the cause of peace was equally ardent with his own. The readiness with which the latter consented to perform this friendly office rendered the service still more acceptable. “Whitbread, who is a divine man,” says Mr. Rathbone, who was then in London with the view of forwarding the repeal of the celebrated Orders in Council, “is very anxious you should publish, and confident it will do great good. Do not think I wish to pay compliments: I would avoid them, could I otherwise say what I think. But he says, and I so clearly see, that your *name* will do much. He expressed the great pleasure it would give him to revise it, and an assurance that he would offer his unfeigned opinion, and you might then do as you thought best. We also agreed that it would prove the most dignified conduct to come forwards boldly and manfully again, and without noticing any attack of Cobbett, or any other person, tell the country what it imports them to know. This we think is the way to keep the high and firm ground on which you stand. You will judge for yourself. Make use of me in what way you please; and with much more effect you may make use of Whitbread. He is, indeed,

a delightful man: we have all at once jumped into an intimacy, and I cleave to him as a brother or a bosom friend." In a letter written shortly after the preceding, Mr. Rathbone says, "Mr. Whitbread told me that he had written to you, and Mr. Brougham assured me his remarks should go to you by the post of the 12th (the day on which we left London), which I strongly urged. Mr. W. said you and he had viewed some parts of the subject in different lights; but this did not, in his opinion, lessen the value of your publication. I am strongly of the same opinion. His is an excellent speech; and some parts towards the conclusion are admirably impressive. Yet it does not, on the whole, appear to me calculated to produce conviction in the way that your pamphlet is; nor do I expect it will be so generally read; and this was the opinion of Ridgway. I hope it is now come out, or that its appearance will soon take place, for I think it should follow Mr. Whitbread's pretty soon; and I hope, also, that you have not pruned it too much, in compliance with the suggestions of very prudential critics. With a large class, we must expect all works of such tendency to be very unpopular; and I see no signs that the violence or the acrimony of party spirit is likely to subside or even abate. This may render caution requisite in respect to the issuing of *any* publications, or taking *any* part in public measures; but it appears to me, that if either of these are advisable, then the only line to be pursued is to be explicit, vigorous, and decided."

The pamphlet was subsequently submitted, in the proofs, to Mr. Whitbread; and most of the alterations suggested by him, chiefly relating to matters of fact, were adopted by the author.* The proofs were accompanied by the following letter:—

* The copy sent to Mr. Whitbread, and returned by him, was care-

“At length I take the liberty of returning the pamphlet which you were so good as to submit to my perusal, with such remarks as have suggested themselves to me in the course of it. I have been prevented, by the constant pressure of material business, from giving earlier attention to it, in the way in which I wished to do it; and, indeed, I was anxious you should see the report of my speech, before you finally decided upon the difference between us, in some of our respective conclusions drawn from the papers. I directed Ridgway to send you three copies of my speech, begging you to accept one for yourself, and requesting the favour of you to give one copy to Mr. Martin and one to Mr. Rathbone, who will, I believe, have quitted London before this time.

“The spirit of equity, toleration, philanthropy, and patriotism, which pervades your pamphlet, is your own, and I have not the smallest doubt but that its publication will do essential service to the cause we espouse; and, indeed, it wants assistance.

“If I might suggest any improvement, it would be the compression of the preface, as being rather too long for a work of such a size. The sentiments are admirable throughout, and the language is such as was to be expected from its author.”

“It is upwards of a week,” says Mr. Roscoe, in answer to the above letter, “since I received the proof copy of my intended pamphlet, which had been sent you by my printer, accompanied by your letter and very judicious remarks; but it was not till yesterday that I had the pleasure of receiving the copies which you were so good

fully preserved by Mr. Roscoe, who has written on the fly-leaf the following memorandum:—“The late Mr. Whitbread did me the favour of perusing this pamphlet before it was published, and the observations upon it are in his handwriting.”

as to order to be sent me of your speech, for which I beg you to accept my thanks, as well on my own account as for my friends, Mr. R. and Mr. M., who will think themselves much honoured by your remembrance of them. The perusal of this last noble effort on your part, to enlighten our countrymen as to their true interests, has only confirmed the opinion I have so long entertained of the perfect rectitude of your principles and the correctness of your views. How it is possible for sophistry to misrepresent or dulness to misconceive such statements, is to me incomprehensible; such, however, is the present state of the public mind, that the stronger the light becomes the more obstinate the people are in closing their eyes against it. A wilful inflexibility seems to pervade all ranks; and if ever the hearts of a people were hardened, they are certainly those of our own countrymen.

“I have lost no time in comparing the passages marked by you in my pamphlet, with those which touch on the same subject in your speech, and in some instances I have implicitly adopted your recommendations, whilst in others I have ventured to adhere to the views I had before taken of the subject.”

In pursuance of Mr. Whitbread's suggestion, a portion of the preface was omitted, and amongst other passages the following expression of the writer's feelings with regard to the attacks upon his former pamphlet:—

“With respect to my own personal feelings, I am well aware that it would have been highly inconsiderate, at a season like the present, for me to have quitted my retirement, and entered on the turbulent stage of political controversy, if I had not been prepared for every consequence to which such a measure might give rise. On this occasion I may be allowed, like the younger

Pliny, when he was entreated by his friends to desist from the dangerous task of avenging the cause and bringing to public justice the murderers of Helvidius, to adopt the language of Virgil : —

‘*Omnia percepi, atque animo mecum ante peregi.*’ ”

This tract did not meet with the same degree of attention as its predecessor; and in despite of the exertions of those who, like Mr. Roscoe, laboured in the cause of peace, the supporters of the war continued to make proselytes. A fresh arena was opened for the combatants in Spain, and all idea of pacification was lost in the hope of defeating the enemy in this new struggle. On this topic Mr. Roscoe touches in the following letter to Professor Smyth : —

“My polite critics were never more mistaken than when they assert that I have a rage for writing pamphlets, whilst the fact is, that the hesitation and reluctance I feel on such occasions are inexpressible. Who can have any pleasure in putting his head into such a hornet’s nest? or in being held up to the public as a scarecrow? or what, but an idea (right or wrong) that what I have to say is of some importance, could induce me to undergo such an ordeal?”

“I think with you that the last pamphlet was too late, and what interest it had has been wholly taken away by new circumstances and events, in which some persons foresee the liberation of Europe. The liberation of Europe! alas! what can liberate countries sunk in the darkest superstition — the devoted slaves of despotic authority — who dispute only for the right of bringing back their former tyrants, adoring the Virgin Mary, and burning their neighbours? I execrate the rapacity and ambition of Bonaparte, and should be truly glad to see

his projects defeated; but with respect to Spain and Portugal, if the only result be that which is professed by themselves and confirmed by our government, that they are to return to the authority of their former dynasties, under the wretched governments which have so long oppressed them; if, after having driven out the invader, they are to relapse into the same intellectual and moral imbecility in which they have so long remained, I see little at which liberty can congratulate herself or humanity rejoice. My wishes, however, go with them. They are struggling, if not for civil or political freedom, for national independence; and if they should accomplish it by their valour, it is yet to be hoped that they will not resign, unconditionally, into the hands of their former rulers, those rights which they have preserved from the violation of foreign arms."

By many of the friends whose judgment he valued, Mr. Roscoe had the satisfaction of knowing that these efforts in the cause of peace were approved.

"The pleasure which I received," says Mr. James Grahame, the author of the beautiful poem of "The Sabbath," "from the reperusal of your Considerations on the causes, objects, and consequences of the present war, was alloyed with some portion of disappointment. The fifth edition is, I see, before the public; and yet the war-whoop is as loud as ever, and was as loud, before the dawn of the Spanish revolution had opened a new prospect to our view. That your impressive, your unanswerable arguments must have sunk deep into the minds of thousands, there can be no doubt; but on the mass of this people I fear that no impression can be made through the medium of their reason. They have ears, but they hear not. They exhibit an instance of that obduracy in folly and in pride which so frequently

precedes the downfall of nations. The preface to the remarks had quite an exhilarating effect. Your observations on national ethics are most excellent in themselves, and they are well calculated to impress the two great divisions of mankind, the generous and the selfish. I was particularly struck, and indeed solaced, by a fine passage, of which the following words are a part:— ‘God has not abandoned his creatures,’ &c. I thank you most heartily for the present. I prized the ‘Considerations’ very high before they had acquired the additional value which, as coming from yourself, they now possess. I feel, indeed, much honoured by such a gift, and much gratified by the expressions which accompany it. To be acknowledged by you as no unworthy ally in the cause of justice and humanity is truly most pleasing.

“The Spanish revolution has undoubtedly produced a conjuncture to which some of your arguments will not apply; yet the general strain of your reasoning will suit all times of warfare; for every war, even this of Spanish freedom against French despotism, ought to be waged (so far I mean as the directing councils are concerned) in the spirit of peace. I own I am sanguine with regard to Spain. I would like to know your opinion.”

The interest which the heroic efforts of the Spaniards to escape the dominion of France excited in the breast of Mr. Roscoe, may be gathered from the following passage in a letter addressed to the present Marquis of Lansdowne:—

“Since the publication of the two pamphlets which your Lordship is so good as to notice, a new aspect of public affairs has taken place, and any interest which they might have excited is lost in the great and unex-

pected events which have since occurred. Some of our modern politicians seem at a loss to reconcile an attachment to the cause of the Spaniards and Portuguese, with the dislike which every friend of civil and religious liberty must feel for their despotic and intolerant institutions; but this is not the question. The struggle is for national independence, whatever form of government or mode of religious worship they may choose to adopt; and the point in debate is whether they shall submit themselves like slaves to an imperious usurper, or assert their rights as a nation to adopt such sovereign and such form of government as they may think proper. Upon this subject there can scarcely be a difference of opinion; particularly amongst those who so strenuously contended that France had a similar right, and was very unjustly attacked in the exercise of it by her despotic neighbours. The consequences of the events that have already occurred are highly important to this country, if Spain and Portugal can be considered, as I truly think they may, as freed from the dominion of France; and although such events may not lead to a peace, they will open an intercourse between us and the continents of Europe and South America in the highest degree advantageous."

Again, in reference to the negotiations which took place in the year 1809, in a letter to Mr. Whitbread he says, — "If Spain, after the glorious struggle she is making, and all the assistance this country can afford her, should be eventually conquered, there is nothing to be done but to submit to unavoidable events, and to wait for better times; but to have abandoned our brave allies, and delivered them over by our own voluntary act to their tyrannical oppressor, would have entailed on this country a degree of infamy never to have been removed.

I could not even have supposed that any proposals could have been made for negotiation, in which the independence of Spain was not taken as the basis; and as this now appears not to have been the case, our ministers were, in my humble opinion, perfectly right in terminating the correspondence. If they had always conducted themselves with the same propriety and good faith, I should have been as happy, at least, to have applauded their conduct as I ever have been to censure it."

It was a matter of regret to Mr. Roscoe that his arguments in favour of peace failed, in some instances, to influence the minds of those whose political principles were in other respects in perfect accordance with his own. To one of his friends, for whose public and private character he entertained the highest esteem, but who differed from him on this subject, the following letter is addressed: —

"Conceiving, as I do, that the very existence of this country depends upon the speedy adoption of pacific measures, and that if ruin does not come from without, it will certainly come from within, I must own I should have been most particularly happy to have had the sanction of your opinion, in favour of the sentiments which I have ventured to lay before the public. It would, however, be unreasonable and absurd in me to expect that any assent should be given to those sentiments, further than the arguments adduced in their favour irresistibly demand; and if, after the deliberate and impartial consideration which I am sure you are disposed to give them, they have not produced the same conviction on your mind as they have on my own, I can only lament that the cause on which so much depends has not met with a better advocate.

“ To attempt to supply in a few words what I have not been able to accomplish in many pages would, I fear, be to no purpose; and if I have not already demonstrated, that a state of warfare is more likely to induce our powerful enemy to attempt the creation of a navy, and to afford him the opportunities of forming experienced seamen, than a state of peace, I have failed in one of my principal objects. Even now the result seems to me to be approaching with a celerity which ought to attract the notice of this country more than it has hitherto done; and what is more extraordinary, the commercial intercourse between France and this country, which has of late been extensive, has been carried on chiefly by seamen belonging either to France or her subject states; and thus, with our usual wisdom, whilst we are provoking or rather compelling Bonaparte to form a navy, we are assisting him in providing skilful navigators to man it, and admitting them daily into our harbours and our ports.

“ You will, I hope, do me the justice to believe that I am not one of those, who upon every difference of opinion are ready to accuse the motives of those who may differ from them, or allow such difference to interfere with sentiments of the sincerest attachment and the highest respect. If I were, the number of those whom I am happy to call my friends would be reduced to very few indeed. But even if I were actuated by any such unjustifiable and arrogant principle, it certainly could not operate with respect to yourself, with whom I have the pleasure of knowing that I agree in all the great points which are essential to the honour and happiness of mankind: — in the love of liberty; the desire to communicate it universally; the hatred of oppression and corruption; the desire of serving our

country in the best way we are able ; and, let me add what you so kindly refer to, a similarity of studies and pursuits. These, my dear Sir, are surely sufficient to cherish sentiments of kindness and of good will, and allow me to say, of friendship and attachment between us, without unreasonably expecting a similarity of opinion in every particular question, the decision on which must, as you observe, depend on the different education, connection, and habits, of those who judge upon it. If, however, in such cases either party had to apologise for the opinion he entertained, I fear it would fall to my lot ; especially if it were put to the vote of the country at large."

Whilst engaged in these political discussions, an opportunity was afforded Mr. Roscoe of enforcing his opinions amongst his own townsmen. In the early part of the year 1808, Mr. Rathbone and two other gentlemen had been deputed, by some of the merchants of Liverpool, to give their assistance to the opposition at that time making to the Orders in Council respecting neutrals ; an interference regarded with much jealousy by another portion of the mercantile community in that town. At the suggestion of the latter, who were desirous of supporting the government in the prosecution of the war, a requisition was presented to the mayor, requesting him to call a general meeting of the inhabitants of the town to address his Majesty, and assure him of their confidence in his present councils and government. The object of the meeting obviously was, under the pretext of expressing confidence in the administration, to throw impediments in the way of the parliamentary opposition then offering to the Orders in Council. An address to the King having been moved by the originators of the meeting, Mr. Roscoe proposed

an amendment, in which he expressed a sentiment which he strongly felt, that no difference of opinion, as to the grounds or nature of the war, ought to prevent or invalidate that perfect union and concurrence of all parties which was necessary to carry on the contest with vigour and success. In other respects the amended address was of a pacific tendency. "To these assurances we are led, as well by the duty and loyalty which we owe to your Majesty, as by a firm conviction, founded on your Majesty's constant and paternal regard to the welfare of your subjects, that a war requiring such unexampled sacrifices will not be protracted beyond the period that may be necessary for securing the honour and dignity of your crown and the rights and interests of your people." The address then submitted the propriety of terminating the war entirely to the wisdom of the King, as the sole constitutional judge, assuring his Majesty, that until that period arrived, the petitioners would spare no sacrifices in its prosecution. The address and the amended address having been put, the latter was most decisively carried by a show of hands; but the mayor, who presided, declaring that he could not ascertain the respective numbers, an adjournment was proposed from the Town Hall, in which the meeting was held, to the more capacious area of the Exchange Buildings. Before this could be effected however, after a short consultation with some of his friends around him, the mayor suddenly declared that the original address was carried. A scene of great tumult and confusion ensued; and notwithstanding the decision of the chairman, the greater part of the meeting adjourned to the area of the Exchange, where the amended address was read by Mr. Roscoe, and voted by a majority of at least twenty to one.

In thus devoting his mind to political discussions, Mr. Roscoe flattered himself that his labours were also subservient to the cause of letters. In forwarding the two pamphlets which he had lately published to Mr. Mathias, whose sentiments on public affairs did not coincide with his own, he expresses his hope that the interests of literature, to which they were both equally attached, might in the end be promoted by these graver studies.

“That I should have troubled you with the result of my political lucubrations may almost seem to require an apology; but as I should be sorry to write any thing which I could not offer to your perusal, so I relied on your favourable construction, in case of any difference of opinion between us. Nor have my late employments been so remote from my former objects and studies as may at first sight appear. It is, I fear, but too true, that this dreadful war, and the outrages and calamities to which it gives rise, have a strong tendency not only to increase and perpetuate national prejudices and animosities, but to extinguish all relish for literary pursuits. In attempting, therefore, to infuse amongst my countrymen a spirit of moderation and forbearance, that may eventually lead to pacific sentiments, I feel a conviction, that I am labouring at the only foundation on which the superstructure of national improvement can be built; and when to this I add, that not only the improvement, but the honour, the interest, and the safety of the country, appear to me to rest upon the same basis, you will, I am sure, agree with me, that under such impressions I could not have remained silent, or have asserted my opinions with less earnestness than I have done.”

CHAPTER XI.

1809, 1810.

Mr. Roscoe resumes his literary studies — letter to the Rev. W. P. Greswell — meditates a Life of Dr. Currie — assists Mr. Cromek in preparing his Relics of Burns — writes the preface to the Gallery of British Portraits — his enquiries into the History of Art during the middle ages — projects a History of the Progress and Vicissitudes of Literature and Art. — Death and character of Mr. Rathbone. — Mr. Roscoe an active member of the African Institution — communications to that Society — controversy with Mr. George Harrison — letter to the Duke of Gloucester. — Essay on the Right of Great Britain to compel Foreign Nations to abolish the Slave Trade. — Letter to the Duke of Gloucester. — Liberation of nine negroes at Liverpool — thanks of the African Institution. — Publication of “Occasional Tracts on the War.” — Letter to Mr. Whitbread. — Letter to Mr. Wilberforce. — Letter from Sir Philip Francis. — Publication of “Observations on the Speech of Earl Grey.” — Letter from Mr. Whitbread. — Letter to Lord Erskine — Letter to Dr. Aikin. — Letter from Sir S. Romilly. — Mr. Roscoe’s general opinions on peace. — Early writings on the subject.

FROM the tumult and anxiety of political controversy Mr. Roscoe was happy to turn away, and to resume those more congenial studies, from which his mind had been now for some time diverted. The prospect of a continued war, and a conviction of the futility of all attempts to give effect to more pacific sentiments, induced him to abandon for the present his fruitless opposition. “Whilst you,” he says in a letter addressed to his friend Mr. Greswell, “still continue to live, and converse with Horace and Virgil, with Pico and Politiano, I have launched out into the stormy ocean of politics, and been

assailed with all the artillery that the advocates for war and desolation can bring to bear upon me. Their attacks, however, neither alter my opinions nor disturb my peace; and my only cause of regret is, that I have not been able to impress my own convictions more effectually on the minds of my countrymen, so as to have prevented, if possible, the calamities which have since taken place, and of which it is impossible to see the termination. The rude reception which my advice has met with releases me, however, unless I have a wish to become a martyr, from further service; and I begin the year by devoting my leisure to pursuits more agreeable to myself and less invidious to others, — to the examination of such unpublished papers as I have by me on various subjects, and to the inspection and arrangement of my drawings and prints.”

In the course of this year he meditated with much earnestness the commencement of a work, which his friends had long expected at his hands, and which nothing but the urgency of public affairs had prevented him from attempting, — a *Life of Dr. Currie*. But the leisure which he had promised himself he was deprived of by circumstances which debarred him from the performance of this grateful duty.

In the mean time, as the literary representative of *Dr. Currie*, he watched with solicitude over the fame of *Burns*. *Mr. Cromek*, an engraver, and a devoted admirer of the poet, having, with much industry, collected a number of *Burns's* letters, and some of his unpublished poetical pieces, resolved to publish them as a supplementary volume to the edition of the works which had appeared under the superintendence of *Dr. Currie*. Before taking this step, however, he requested the advice of *Mr. Roscoe*; who, after perusing the whole of his

materials, pointed out the pieces which, in his judgment, were fitted for publication. The following letter (April 9, 1808) to Messrs. Cadell and Davies, the publishers of the intended volume, will show how anxious he was that Mr. Cromek (in conformity with the maxim that an editor is bound to suppress whatever the author himself would have suppressed) should give to the world nothing derogatory to the high character which the genius of Burns had obtained.

“ A short time after Mr. Cromek had begun to print his volume of Burns, the proofs of the first sheets were sent to me, when I was equally surprised and sorry to see that the work opened with some poems, of the admission of which I very much doubt ; but which, in that situation, would have given a very unfavourable idea of the work. I immediately wrote to Mr. Cromek, entreating him to stop the press till we had settled this point, as well as some others, which I had to remark to him. In consequence of this, he got into the mail, and came to Allerton, where we have gone over the whole work ; and I am sorry to say that, in my opinion, the seven sheets now printed must be cancelled, and the work begun again, although it will undoubtedly be attended with a very considerable expense. This mistake has arisen from a misapprehension ; it having been settled by Mr. Cromek and me, when he was last here, that the letters should be printed in chronological order, and which I supposed would be done ; but Mr. Cromek having these poems of earlier date, thought it would be proper to begin the book with them, and unluckily sent them to press before I knew of it.

“ I am particularly anxious on this subject, as I consider it a matter of great importance not only to the character of the poet, but to the credit and interest of

those concerned in the publication. Should any thing be admitted which may give just ground for censure, it will immediately be laid hold of, and the book will be condemned as containing only worthless and indecent fragments, which both the poet and Dr. Currie had rejected ; and not only would this affect the sale of the work, but it would also injure the character of Burns ; and, perhaps, depreciate, in a considerable degree, his other writings, for the property of which you have so liberally paid. In avoiding any imputation of this kind, the credit and interests of the author, the editor, and the publishers, all unite ; and I am truly happy to say that, in my judgment, there is no danger of it whatever, if prudent precautions be taken, which Mr. Cromek is not only willing but anxious to do. The materials are, in fact, excellent, and the more I examine them the more I am convinced that they will make a most interesting volume. Every thing is now arranged for its being immediately put to press, and the only circumstances to be regretted are the loss of time and the expense already incurred." — "I have only to add that I have undertaken to arrange the materials for the preface, and shall have great pleasure in attending to the progress of the printing, as far as my distance from town will allow, or rendering any other service which you or Mr. Cromek may wish."

About this period Mr. Roscoe was induced, at the earnest solicitations of his publishers, Messrs. Cadell and Davies, to furnish them with a preface for their magnificent volume, "The Gallery of British Portraits," a work in the course of which a portrait of himself, from a miniature by Mr. Moses Houghton, was published, accompanied by a short memoir.

While engaged in the political discussions of which some account has been given in the last chapter, Mr. Roscoe sought amusement and relief in the prosecution of some literary enquiries to which he had at various periods of his life devoted a considerable share of attention. The history of art, and the cause of the vicissitudes of taste had furnished him with subjects for his lectures before the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts of Design, &c., in the year 1784, and after that period the same subjects appear to have been frequently the objects of his study. In the composition of the "Life of Leo X." he was compelled to enter largely into the history of the revival of art; and it was probably this circumstance which suggested to him the idea of a work upon which he bestowed much labour, but which he never completed.

In a letter to Mr. William Smith, written soon after the publication of the "Tracts on the War," he says,—
"For a few days past I have sought for shelter from discussions about war, and parliamentary reform, and the bullion committee, which have for some weeks past occupied my attention, in the darkness of the middle ages; where I am endeavouring to trace out, amidst churches, and cemeteries, and popes, and Goths, and Vandals, the slender thread by which the arts of design were continued through the storms and desolation of this gloomy period. Of this subject I have often thought, and for some years past have collected memorials, as well in prints and drawings as in books, respecting it; and, although I am aware that there is not much to be discovered by the most diligent researches, yet I have found enough to convince me that the remarks of Vasari, Baldinucci, and other historians of the arts, as to their total annihilation before the time of Cimabue, are un-

founded, and that the subject deserves rather more attention than has hitherto been paid to it ; particularly as it seems to me, that if the present system of warfare and desolation continues, we shall shortly have to plunge again into a similar gulf."

In a letter to Sir James Smith, written about the same period, Mr. Roscoe says, " I am also looking into the state of the arts during the middle ages for a memoir, of which I have good materials." The collecting of these materials had been the study of many years ; and he appears at this time to have reduced them into order, and to have prepared the greater part of them for publication under the title of an " Historical Sketch of the State of the Arts during the Middle Ages." Subsequently this design was enlarged ; and he contemplated a much more extended work, to which he intended to give the title of " An Historical Inquiry into the Rise, Progress, and Vicissitudes of Taste, as exemplified in Works of Literature and of Art." Of the nature of this work, which was to be comprised in two volumes, an accurate idea may be formed from the following heads of the chapters which it was intended to contain : —

" Vol. I. chap. 1. Introductory Chapter on the Causes of the Rise, Progress, and Vicissitudes of Taste.

" 2. Origin of Taste, as exemplified in the History of the earliest People.

" 3. On the State of Literature and Arts anterior to their Rise in the Grecian States.

" 4. State of Letters and Arts among the Greeks.

" 5. Introduction of Works of Taste into Rome, and Progress of Literature and Art to the Death of Augustus.

" Vol. II. chap. 6. Progress and Vicissitudes of Literature and Art to the Year 400.

- “7. Progress and Vicissitudes of Literature and Art to the Year 1200.
- “8. Literature and Arts of the Arabs.
- “9. Progress and Vicissitudes of Literature and Art to the Year 1400.
- “10. Progress of Literature and Art to the Year 1500.”

In another scheme of the work three additional chapters are inserted, on the Rise and Progress of Literature and Art in Italy, France, and England.

Of this extensive and interesting undertaking a small portion only was executed. The third and fourth chapters seem to be nearly complete, and ample materials remain for the composition of some other parts of the work. Those materials consist of various dissertations upon different branches of art;—“On the Cultivation of the Polite Arts and particularly those of Painting and Design,” written at an early period; “On Painters’ Drawings;” “On the Practical Part of Painting;” “On the German Engravers;” “On the Origin of Engraving in Wood and on Copper;” together with several detached memoirs of the Italian painters.

In the spring of the present year (1809) Mr. Roscoe had the misfortune to lose his friend Mr. Rathbone, with whom he had lived for many years upon terms of the most confidential intimacy and the most attached friendship. The affection which had so long subsisted between them arose from the congruity of their opinions on all the most important subjects of human judgment, and from the equal devotion of their minds to objects of usefulness and benevolence. The character of Mr. Rathbone was of the highest cast; and it was ever the subject of deep regret with those who knew and appreciated him,

that a genius, which might have shone with the brightest lustre in the most extended sphere, was restricted to comparative obscurity. The talents for public life manifested by him on various occasions, when he came forwards in support of liberal principles, were of the first order. A friend to peace, to toleration, and to improvement, had he been placed in a situation where scope could have been given to his lofty and benevolent views, his name must have been for ever associated with his country's happiness and honour; but confined to the narrow limits of a private station, a man framed of the clay from which in former days heroes and martyrs were moulded, expended the strength which might have ruled a nation, in contests, the recollection of which has already passed away. It must not, however, be supposed, that the labours of such a man were lost. The influence of a mind like that of Mr. Rathbone, upon the community of which he was a member, was necessarily great; and it is to the efforts of him, and of those who, like him, in seasons of difficulty and danger, openly avowed their adherence to the interests of truth and freedom, that we may attribute the progress since made in the cause of political and social improvement. A short memoir of his friend was written by Mr. Roscoe, and printed in the *Athenæum*, a periodical work, published under the auspices of Dr. Aikin.* The following is the sketch there

* "You will have heard with sorrow of the loss of our invaluable friend Rathbone, who bore his sufferings with the patience of a martyr, and died with the fortitude of a hero. His character was not only excellent but of a peculiar kind of excellence, which, if accurately described, must render it interesting. It is my intention to attempt a brief delineation of it, for the '*Athenæum*,' which may perhaps occupy a page or two; and if you will have the goodness to reserve a space for it in your obituary for the present month, I will take care it shall be with you by the end of next week, or sooner if necessary." — *Mr. Roscoe to Dr. Aikin.*

given of Mr. Rathbone's private character:—" True excellence is always the more highly esteemed as it is the more nearly approached and the more intimately known; and notwithstanding the respect paid to his acknowledged merits in public life, it was in the social circle, and in the society of his family and friends, that his character appears in the most favourable aspect. On these occasions, it was impossible not to be struck with that soul of benevolence which disclosed itself in every word and look, and with that simplicity of manner which indicated that he had not a thought to conceal. As his views were extensive, and his experience considerable, so the tenor of his conversation was always instructive; and it may most truly be said of him, that a word scarcely ever escaped his lips that was not directed to some benevolent purpose, — to impart pleasure, to communicate knowledge, or to do good. His person and appearance were strikingly impressive, and conciliated attachment whilst they inspired respect. His manner was peculiarly natural and engaging; and throughout his discourse, the aptitude of his illustrations, and the playfulness of his fancy, always confined within the strictest bounds of propriety and decorum, never failed to delight his hearers.

" For a long time, the declining state of Mr. Rathbone's health had caused the most serious apprehensions to his friends; but a few months since, his complaints attained a more alarming form, and he had to struggle with sufferings beyond what generally fall to the lot of humanity. If there be a spectacle on earth more peculiarly deserving of admiration than any other, it is the contemplation of a firm and a virtuous mind, rising superior to corporeal sufferings, and shining forth in all its lustre amidst the ruins of its earthly frame.

“In the last period of the life of Mr. Rathbone, this spectacle was most eminently displayed. The moments that could be spared from actual suffering were assiduously devoted to the consolation of his affectionate family, and the society of his friends, with whom he conversed on his approaching death, not only with fortitude, but with cheerfulness. The faculties of his mind were unimpaired to the last moment; when, without a struggle, he resigned his spirit into the hands of his Creator.

“Thrice happy! who the blameless road along
 Of honest praise hath reach'd the vale of death!
 Around him, like ministrant cherubs, throng
 His better actions — to the parting breath
 Singing their blessed requiems; he the while,
 Gently reposing on some friendly breast,
 Breathes out his benisons; then, with a smile
 Of soft complacence, lays him down to rest,
 Calm as the slumbering infant.”

It had been the custom of Mr. Rathbone to inscribe, in a book devoted to that purpose, the names of those of his family, whom he had lost by death. In this volume, Mr. Roscoe has, in his own hand, thus recorded the death of his friend:—

“11th February, 1809.

“William Rathbone, died at nine o'clock in the morning, aged 51 years and 8 months.

“This domestic record, which contains the brief memorials of many of his beloved and respected relatives, registered by his own hand, and endeared by the warm expression of his affection, now receives the honoured name of

WILLIAM RATHBONE,
 Of Liverpool, Merchant,

a name which will ever be distinguished by independence, probity, and true benevolence, and will remain as an example to his descendants, of genuine piety, patient resignation, and of all those virtues which give energy to a community, adorn society, and are the delight of private life.

“Through life beloved! O let this votive line
Unite in death its author’s name with thine.

“WILLIAM ROSCOE.”

In the following sonnet, also, he has recorded the character and virtues of his friend:—

“SONNET ON THE DEATH OF MR. RATHBONE.

“Doom’d for a season to that frail disguise,
Whilst yet thy spirit felt its bonds of clay,
How through the gloom shone forth the imprison’d ray
Beam’d in thy smile and sparkled in thine eyes!
Prompting thee on to deeds of high emprise,
To plant thy foot athwart Oppression’s way;
To shield the weak, the sufferer’s pangs allay,
And soothe the widow’s woes, the orphan’s cries.
Thy mission now is closed. The sacred flame
From earth released, in other worlds expands,
Midst the blest regions of eternal love.
O glorious hour! when, midst her falling frame,
The imperishable soul superior stands,
Spurns her frail chain, and soars to realms above.”

From the period when, in 1806, Mr. Roscoe had assisted in founding the African Institution, he had actively endeavoured on all occasions to forward the objects of that association. Not only did he maintain a frequent correspondence with the President the Duke of Gloucester, and with Mr. Zachary Macaulay the Secretary, in which

he offered many suggestions with regard to their course of proceeding, and urged especially the great necessity of prevailing upon foreign nations to abolish the Slave Trade ; but he also zealously exerted himself in procuring such information in Liverpool, as might tend to prevent those fraudulent evasions of the Abolition Act which for some years after its passing were of too frequent occurrence.

Amongst the papers which he occasionally communicated to the Institution was one, in the shape of a letter to the Duke of Gloucester (dated March 20, 1809), in which he urged the necessity of encouraging a trade with Africa, as one of the surest means of promoting the civilisation of that country. Upon this letter, which appeared in the Appendix to the third annual Report of the Society, Mr. George Harrison, a warm friend to the improvement of the Africans, made some remarks, which were afterwards published in a periodical work called the *Philanthropist*.* Amongst other observations this gentleman expressed his apprehensions lest the communication of Mr. Roscoe “ might have the effect of damping the hopes and disappointing the expectations of many warm well-wishers to the cause of civilisation.” To a charge like this, publicly made, Mr. Roscoe conceived it to be incumbent upon him to give some answer ; and accordingly, in the spring of 1811, he printed a very short tract, under the title of a “ Reply to some Remarks by George Harrison, on a Communication from William Roscoe to the Duke of Gloucester, President of the African Institution, dated March 20, 1809.”

In this little tract he defends (what seems scarcely to have required defence) the proposition, that in attempting

* No. II., Jan. 1, 1811.

to civilise the natives of Africa the greatest assistance would be derived from a friendly and honourable traffic with them; "that whilst proper methods were adopted for civilising and instructing the inhabitants of Africa, the peaceful and friendly interchange of the conveniences and necessaries of life might assist in rousing their faculties to action, and engaging them by the most powerful principle in human nature to contribute to their own improvement." — "In the consideration of this question it would have been incumbent on Mr. Harrison to have shown, from the history of past events, that countries in a state of barbarism have been civilised by persons sent as professed instructors; and to have demonstrated, on the other hand, that the production and interchange of the necessaries of life had *no* share, or at least a *very inferior share*, in producing that civilisation which has extended over no inconsiderable portion of the globe."

On the subject of this controversy he addressed the following letter to the Duke of Gloucester, as President of the African Institution.

"Your Royal Highness will, I trust, excuse the liberty I have taken in enclosing, for your perusal, a brief reply to some remarks made by Mr. George Harrison, one of the Directors of the African Institution, in a letter which I had the honour to address to your Royal Highness in 1809, and of which the Institution published an extract in their report for that year.

"I confess, that as far as these remarks relate to myself, they appear, from his own statement, to be so unfounded, that I should willingly have left the decision to the candid judgment of his readers, but on further consideration, it appeared to me, that the sentiments avowed by Mr. Harrison were not only inconsistent with those enlightened views upon which the Institution has

hitherto acted, but likely to prove injurious to the best interests of those for whose benefit it was established. In fact, a considerable degree of prejudice seems to prevail against all those who have engaged in a direct and legitimate trade with Africa, although their motives and conduct are as different from those of their predecessors as light from darkness, and the existence of such an intercourse is indispensably necessary to the civilisation of those countries.

“ An idea has, I find, been entertained, that I had myself engaged in this trade ; but, in fact, I never had in my life any share or concern in any ship or adventure. My second son is, indeed, a partner in a mercantile house in Liverpool, which has sent out three ships direct from Liverpool to the coast, two of which returned last year, and the third is daily expected ; but with this voyage, I understand, their undertaking will close ; as the duties upon African produce are such that it cannot be imported with advantage.

“ Anxious as I am that every measure should be adopted that may eradicate the traffic for slaves, I cannot perceive that the regulations now proposed to parliament for that purpose will be more effectual than those which preceded them. The former act has been evaded, not because of the inadequacy of the penalties, but because of the difficulty of conviction, in an intercourse which can be carried on between the coast of Africa and foreign ports, though with the property and for the use of British subjects.

“ To increase these penalties will, therefore, only induce the slave-dealers to redouble their precautions ; and if they have not been convicted when punishable only by fine, they will certainly not be convicted when punishable by transportation or death. I have already too far

intruded on your Royal Highness's indulgence on this subject, but I cannot relinquish my decided conviction, that it is only by one great and virtuous effort that the slave trade can be effectually abolished, and until it can be demonstrated that power is improperly exercised when employed in restraining inhumanity and oppression, I am compelled to retain my opinion.

“Should the enclosed paper accord with the sentiments entertained by your Royal Highness on the subject in discussion, it will give me the greatest satisfaction.”

The subject adverted to at the conclusion of the foregoing letter had occupied much of Mr. Roscoe's attention. After the abolition of the slave trade by Great Britain, other states continued still to carry it on, and under the protection of their flags, British subjects, in many instances, were still engaged in the traffic. The consequence of this was, that the natives of Africa were deprived of the full benefit of the sacrifice made by this country, and that all hopes of permanently improving their condition were at an end, so long as the European nations were permitted to carry on the traffic for slaves. It therefore became a matter of the highest importance to ascertain the right of this country to interfere with other nations, and to insist upon the abandonment of a trade contrary to the first principles of humanity and justice. This inquiry, involving a consideration of the great principles of general and international law, Mr. Roscoe entered upon with much industry and solicitude, and the result was a Dissertation of considerable length “on the Right of Great Britain to prevent other Nations from carrying on the Slave Trade.” The greatest care and the most diligent research appear to have been bestowed on this paper, which presents an irresistible argument in favour of the right contended for, and is,

perhaps, the most closely-reasoned of all Mr. Roscoe's writings. It displays, at the same time, that animated style, which always distinguished his compositions when his heart was deeply engaged. After stating that it was probable that the remonstrances of this country might produce the desired result without resort being had to coercive measures, he thus proceeds:—

“By such representations as these, conveyed in that firm and temperate language which becomes a powerful nation, acting in a just and generous cause, there can be no doubt that all reasons for hostility would be avoided, and that the object would be accomplished not only without injury and without danger, but with the highest honour to this country. If, however, these expectations should be disappointed; if motives of pride, of obstinacy, or of interest, a predilection for tyranny and oppression, and an insatiable thirst of African blood, should frustrate the pacific efforts of this country to relieve the injured from the jaws of the oppressor, and to deliver him that is ready to perish, let her rise in her terrors, and repress the impious rage of the enemies of their kind. Let her vengeance be directed on those whom no admonition can convince, no example influence, no considerations of justice or of humanity restrain, till the objects of her resentment furnish to posterity an awful lesson, that the general rights and privileges of human society cannot, with impunity, be trampled under foot.”

How deeply he was interested in this subject appears by the following letter to the Duke of Gloucester, to whom he communicated the dissertation.

“I now perform a promise, which I some time since made to your Royal Highness, and take the liberty of submitting to you the result of my further thoughts on the means that yet remain to be adopted for terminating

the African slave trade. The ideas principally intended to be illustrated are, the necessity of the immediate interference of this country to induce foreign states to assent to its abolition, and the propriety and justice in case of refusal, of capturing all such vessels, of whatever country, as may be found engaged in the trade. Your Royal Highness will, perhaps, recollect that this idea was first started in a conversation which I had the honour to have with you at High Legh, and it seemed to me at that time to be a consequence of some observations which your Royal Highness had made on the subject. I afterwards reconsidered an assertion, which, I feared, had been too hastily made, but which further deliberation confirmed; and I have now the satisfaction to know, that on the principal point of the abstract right of this country to prevent other nations from carrying on the trade, your Royal Highness entirely coincides.

“The question of the expediency of such an interference, under present circumstances, as it involves the deepest considerations of national interest, is of more difficult solution, and on this account I postponed, in my last communication to your Royal Highness, entering upon its consideration, under an apprehension that a hasty and imperfect defence of it might rather injure than promote a cause on which so much depends. Since that time, I have deliberately reconsidered my former statement, and compared it with the opinions of the principal writers on general law, and the pages I now transmit to your Royal Highness are the result of this consideration. I cannot but be sensible, that the proposing any measures which may possibly tend to increase the causes of hostility between nations, unless such measures be indispensably necessary, is highly culpable, and I should consider myself as acting in contradiction to every principle and

feeling of my life, if I were to place myself in such a predicament. But, greatly as I deprecate it, and thoroughly convinced as I am that war is often resorted to upon insufficient and even criminal grounds, I cannot admit that the dearest and most indisputable privileges of the human race are to be abandoned to the caprice, the tyranny, or the avarice of those, who, in the plenitude of their power, may think proper to trample upon them. War, when engaged in for the defence of liberty, the vindication of justice, or the succour of the oppressed, is not only allowable, but when it can be waged with a reasonable prospect of success, is indispensable; and if it were not for this eternal and unshaken resistance of right to wrong, this rising up of justice, to crush and put down oppression, the interests of the human race would be surrendered, and their destinies decided upon by the most cruel, the most odious, and the most profligate of their kind."

In the year 1809 Mr. Roscoe was so fortunate as to receive the thanks of the African Institution, for his services in assisting to rescue some Negroes from an attempt to re-capture them in this country. A Brazilian vessel, called the *Monte de Carino*, under the command of a person whose name was Joze Antonio Cardozo, having arrived at the port of Liverpool, nine of the crew, who were Negroes, and had been slaves in Brazil, were immediately arrested under process from the Borough Court of Liverpool, at the suit of the captain, Cardozo, and lodged in the borough gaol. The affidavit of debt, upon which this process was founded, stated that these men were indebted to the plaintiff for advances of money. They were carried, in handcuffs, to the prison, where they remained for about a month; when the ship, being ready for sea, the captain, attended by his attorney and

a gang of men, went to the gaol and produced discharges for all the prisoners from his suit. The unfortunate captives, aware that on their release from confinement they should be hurried on board ship and carried out again as slaves, refused to quit the prison; their fellow-prisoners declared that they would protect them; and the gaoler, with a humanity which did him credit, afforded them the protection of the prison walls. These circumstances reaching the ears of Mr. Roscoe, an immediate inquiry was instituted into them; bail was, by his direction, put in, in all the actions; and, with the assistance of the magistrates of the town, who acted with alacrity in the affair, such proceedings were taken as effectually secured the freedom of the Negroes. Mr. Roscoe's exertions on this occasion procured him the thanks of the African Institution, conveyed to him in the following resolutions:—

“ At a meeting of the Directors of the African Institution, on the 5th December, 1809, —

“ A letter from Mr. Roscoe to the Secretary, dated the 22d November, 1809, having been read,

“ It was unanimously resolved,

“ That the thanks of this Committee, in the name of the African Institution, be given to Mr. Roscoe for his humane and successful interposition on behalf of nine black men, lately confined in the borough gaol of Liverpool by process for debt sued out by a Portuguese ship-master, with the purpose of securing them till he should be ready to sail, and then forcibly carrying them into slavery. The Committee congratulate Mr. Roscoe on his having thus been the instrument of delivering nine human beings from the dreadful state of Negro slavery,

and vindicating at the same time the justice of the British laws, which were fraudulently abused for purposes of oppression. The Committee also request the favour of Mr. Roscoe to communicate the thanks of the Institution to Messrs. Stanistreet and Avison, whose humane and liberal conduct and assistance in this business he acknowledges; and also to the keeper of the prison, by whose humanity the fraudulent and iniquitous purpose of the Portuguese master and his accomplices was frustrated, when it might otherwise have been carried into effect. The Secretary, in communicating this resolution, is requested further to thank Mr. Roscoe for his remarks on the general means of effecting more fully the abolition of the Slave Trade."

Though Mr. Roscoe seems to have made a resolution, after the publication of his pamphlets on the war, in 1808, to renounce, as vain, the attempt to promote the cause of peace, yet the interest with which he viewed the subject would not permit him to remain a passive spectator of the events around him. He determined to make one effort more to enforce the opinions which he deemed so essential to the safety of the country; and with this view he collected and published, in one volume, the various tracts which, since the commencement of the French war, he had given to the world in favour of peace. This collection contained three pamphlets, already noticed, which he had published anonymously:—"Thoughts on the Causes of the present Failures:" "Strictures on Mr. Burke's two Letters, addressed to a Member of the present Parliament;" and "Observations on the relative Situation of Great Britain and France." To these were added the two pamphlets published in 1808, of which some account has been given:—"Considerations on the Causes, Objects, and

Consequences of the present War, and on the expediency or Danger of Peace with France;" and "Remarks on the Proposals made to Great Britain for opening negotiations for Peace in 1807." The volume concludes with "Brief Observations on the Address to his Majesty, proposed by Earl Grey in the House of Lords, June 13, 1810."* "Of the following tracts," he says in the advertisement to the volume, "the three first were published without the name of the author, at the times of their respective dates. In thus uniting them with his later pieces, his chief object is to recal the public attention to the awful subject which they profess to discuss, and, if possible, to impress upon others those convictions which the occurrences of the last eighteen years have produced and confirmed in his own mind. How far his statements and reasonings have been justified by subsequent events, the present state of Europe in general, and of this country in particular, may sufficiently show. But whatever reception this volume may meet with, the author has thought proper to avow all that he has at any time written on this subject, and to commit it, as far as in his power, to future times, as an appeal against the promoters of a war, as unjust in its principle as it has been sanguinary in its progress and calamitous in its result."

That his expectations of making any impression upon the country by his arguments were very humble, appears from the following extract from a letter to Mr. Whitbread, written shortly before the publication of his "Tracts."

"Having, at different periods since 1793, published my sentiments on the subject of the war (some of the

* Post, p. 360.

earlier tracts anonymously), I have lately collected together and reprinted these pieces in an octavo volume, of which I hope soon to have the pleasure of sending you a copy. Should you ever find leisure to look into these melancholy and fruitless labours, I trust at least you will find nothing in the earlier part of them inconsistent with the latter, — a kind of merit which, in these days must from its very rarity be of some value.”

In a letter to Mr. William Taylor, of Norwich, he says, “How little I expect from these efforts I need scarcely state to you. The question of peace or war is long since gone by. There may, indeed, be some shades of difference in opinion as to the best mode of prosecuting the war; but, in the necessity of its continuance, all are agreed, — ministerialists, oppositionists, and reformers. The favourite doctrine of the latter is ‘that peace can only be substantially obtained through the medium of reform.’ I hold the converse of this to be true, and that no reform is likely to take place while we have to contend with a foreign enemy. Experience, ancient and modern, has shown, that, in proportion as nations have been endangered by war, their governments have become more despotic. This effect is inevitable. The foreign enemy must be kept out, and for this end the ruling powers must be strongly supported. When the storm blows hard, however the crew may quarrel, the first consideration will be to take care that the vessel does not drive on a rock.”

To Mr. Wilberforce he expressed, in the following letter, the painful feelings with which he regarded the continuance of the war, and the impossibility of giving a more pacific tone to the public mind : —

“Accept my thanks for the few lines with which you were so good as to honour me on the receipt of a copy of my Tracts on the War. I know of no right that I have to intrude upon you with opinions in which, I fear, you cannot agree; but I was desirous you should see that the pacific sentiments which I have of late avowed, and which have drawn down upon me so much odium and misrepresentation, are not new to my mind; but are the result of a serious and deliberate conviction, maintained through all the changes and fluctuations of the contest, and founded on a sincere and earnest desire to promote the interests and happiness of my country. I had certainly, at times, flattered myself with hopes that these efforts might have contributed to much more important purposes; but the obloquy I have met with from some quarters, and the neglect I have experienced from the community at large, have but too feelingly convinced me of the inefficacy of my attempts, and induced me to lament, with more anguish than I can express, that such a cause has not fallen into abler hands, and been felt and promoted, as I conceive it was entitled to have been, by those enlightened friends of humanity whose exertions and whose eloquence could not have failed of success. Disappointed in my expectations, I have chastised my mind into submission; and though I should be truly sorry to forfeit the favourable regard of many persons whom I venerate and esteem, shall console myself with the reflection, that what I have done was intended for the best.

“But I have already said more to you on this subject in the way of complaint than I have ever said to any other person; and I will not, therefore, conceal from you that, in a general view, I am tranquillised and consoled by the reflection that the Great Disposer of events stands

in need of no such feeble aid as any of his creatures can give, for accomplishing any purpose which he may in the course of his providence see proper to carry into effect; and that, therefore, to lament the failure of our individual efforts is equally wicked and presumptuous."

In the same tone of depression, or rather of resignation to evils which he had no power to remove, he addressed Sir Philip Francis, from whom he received the following answer:—

"I am not surprised at your giving up all hope of the country, much less at your intention to withdraw yourself from political discussion. An author whom I greatly respect has told me 'that in all ages the rage of popular violence has been principally directed against the best friends and benefactors of mankind.' So, if you are fortunate enough to escape unpunished from the public service, you must be satisfied with impunity, and consider it as a reward. There may, probably, be an exception in your favour, but the general rules of human justice are against you. The only traveller I know of, whose veracity is not to be suspected, informs us that, in the island of Glubdubdrib, he had an opportunity of conversing with the spirits of the dead; and he says, that 'having read of some great services done to princes and states, he desired to see the persons by whom those services were performed. On enquiry, he was told that their names were to be found on no record, except a few of them whom history hath represented as the vilest rogues and traitors. As to the rest, he had never once heard of them. They all appeared with dejected looks, and in the meanest habit; most of them telling him they died in poverty and disgrace, and the rest of them on a scaffold or a gibbet.' Nevertheless, if you believe, as I do, that great faculties are given in trust, and that duty

may survive hope, I cannot allow you to quit your station. The very worst of all the symptoms in the present case, is the universal indifference of the country to the dangers that surround it. Something must be done to rouse the people and bring them to their senses; and I, for one, shall look to you for some great contribution to that service. While I am here at Lord Thanet's, I shall read and study all your tracts again. You cannot give me wealth or power; but you can, and shall, give instruction. I will not suffer you to forget me, if I can help it. I would rather have accompanied Charles Fox to his grave, and into it, *egenus et exul uterque*, than have been witness to what I heard and saw in the last six months of his life. He missed the moment — *e curru descendens Teutonico*. He might have commanded, as you will do, his own Euthanasia. To my knowledge, more than twenty years of his life were heroic. Farewell, dear sir; do not yet despair of the Republic.”

While the collection of tracts on the war was in the press, an address to the King was moved by Earl Grey in the House of Lords, on the subject of the war, which left little hope of peace from the exertions of any party in this country. The advocates of peace had gradually deserted her ranks, till at length Lord Liverpool triumphantly declared, that whatever difference of opinion formerly existed on the subject of the war, he believed, amongst all sober and rational men, but little contrariety of sentiment remained. Some few there were, however, who despising these imputations, still continued faithful to their principles, and amongst these Mr. Roscoe was conspicuous. In Parliament Mr. Whitbread, with honourable consistency, still raised his voice in the cause he had so long and so ably supported. “I much fear,” he

says in a letter to Mr. Roscoe on the publication of his Collection of Tracts, "that the friends of peace are daily diminishing, and that the advocates for war are gaining proselytes. However small the band, I continue firmly attached to the standard, and am happy to have this additional proof that I have so able an associate."

The motion of Lord Grey occasioned the deepest feelings of regret in the mind of Mr. Roscoe. He saw those to whom alone he could look for support, yielding to the torrent which he had vainly endeavoured to stem; yet even this circumstance did not lead him to forego his own individual efforts in the cause he loved. Anxious to counteract, as far as lay in his own power, the effect of Lord Grey's motion, he immediately sent to press a short pamphlet, to which he gave the title of "Brief Observations on the Address to his Majesty, proposed by Earl Grey, in the House of Lords, 13th June, 1810," which he printed also at the conclusion of his Tracts on the War. In this publication he endeavours to show, that so far from peace being rendered less desirable, the progress of the war had demonstrated the still greater necessity of it, and he exposes the unreasonableness of those who were desirous of persisting in the war, lest France should take advantage of an interval of peace to increase her resources and augment her power. The low-minded jealousy which leads one nation to dread the prosperity of another is thus justly reprobated:—

"The Creator of the universe has not so disposed his works that the prosperity or aggrandisement of one state must necessarily imply the debasement or misfortune of another; and the two great communities of Great Britain and France are not less calculated to assist each other in the cause of national honour and felicity, than they are to oppose each other by arms and violence. It

must, however, unhappily be admitted, that so fortunate a result must be the offspring of more generous sentiments and more enlightened views, than are at present to be expected from the recent conduct of either of those two powerful countries; and that until such an event takes place, it will be incumbent on us, by every fair and justifiable effort, to maintain ourselves upon an equality at least with our rival state; but it would be no less criminal than it would be absurd to suppose, that the mere superiority of one state is a sufficient ground for the permanent hostility of another. In the community of nations as in that of individuals, Providence has determined that there shall be degrees of pre-eminence; and it is no more justifiable to attack a nation by war, on account only of its superior strength or greatness, than it would be in private life to assassinate every person of higher rank than ourselves. It is only by industry, by integrity, by knowledge, by the encouragement of enlarged and virtuous sentiments, by the cultivation of the human mind in every department of science and of art, that we ought to contend for superiority over others. It is by such contests only that the human race can be effectually improved, and it is these alone that counteract the calamities which the brutal struggles of physical strength have hitherto inflicted upon mankind."

Upon the scheme of a defensive and protracted warfare, to which Lord Grey appeared to be favourable, Mr. Roscoe observes, "That war, under every form, is an evil greatly to be deprecated will readily be allowed: but when the passions are irritated by wrongs, and inflamed by resentment; when to these are superadded the love of glory and the thirst of revenge, we feel, from the sentiments of our common nature, a sympathy with those who engage in the contest, which, in victory, ele-

vates and expands, and even amidst defeat and slaughter, soothes and consoles the mind: but when these incentives are withdrawn; when the courage and ardour of the soldier are extinguished for a cold, calculating, and inextinguishable hatred; when valour and enterprise, the shock of armies and the tented field, are no more, and a nation of warriors devotes itself to lie in wait for opportunities to attack the enemy with advantage, and to protract the calamities of war, — we sicken at the cheerless and deathlike prospect, and feel no emotions but those of horror and disgust.

“From the infirmities of our nature, war, as an ultimate appeal, is at times inevitable; but the common interest and the common consent of mankind require that the struggle should be speedy and decisive, and that the miseries of those who suffer by its consequences, without being partakers in its guilt, should not be unnecessarily prolonged. The thunder may roll, and the bolt may fall; but when the storm is passed, let us hope once more to see the atmosphere clear, and to enjoy the brightness of day. The calamities of the physical world are temporary. Earthquakes, plagues, and tempests have their season; but a protracted warfare is a perpetual earthquake, a perpetual pestilence, a perpetual storm; and to propose to any people the adoption of such a system, is to propose that they should resolve, not only to live in sorrow, in wretchedness, and in peril themselves, but to entail the same calamities on their descendants.”

Such were the sentiments which Mr. Roscoe wished to substitute for the violent, unjust, and destructive maxims, by which, at that time, the Government of this country were swayed. But these sentiments, as he himself truly said, were given to the winds; and the resources of the country were taxed to their utmost to support the sanguinary struggle.

In transmitting this pamphlet to Lord Erskine, he accompanied it with the following letter:—

“The decided opposition which your Lordship has uniformly shown to the war with France, from its unhappy commencement in 1793 to the present time, and the great and patriotic efforts which you have repeatedly made to terminate so disastrous a contest, induce me to intrude upon you with a short publication, in reply to such part of Earl Grey’s speech in the House of Lords, on the 13th June last, as relates to the subject of peace.

“Your Lordship will readily believe that it is not without great regret that I have undertaken thus publicly to controvert the opinions of one whom I so highly respect as Earl Grey, and that in this instance I fully participate in the feelings expressed by your Lordship on the debate; but I know your Lordship would be the last man to suppose that any motives of this nature ought to interfere with that imperative duty, which not only authorises but commands every individual, who conceives that he has any thing to advance that may serve the interests of his country, to state it freely and fully, without regard either to enmity or favour, and regulated only by the rules of decorum and the limits of the law.

“At the time the debate took place, I had collected together a few tracts which I had published at different times, from the year 1793, on the subject of the war, and reprinted them in one octavo volume, which was just ready for publication, when the unexpected avowal of Lord Grey’s sentiments, including the express assent of Lord Grey in favour of the prosecution of an indefinite war, deprived me of the hope of producing the slightest effect upon the public by any arguments which had been before advanced. I therefore thought it incumbent on me to obviate, as far as was in my power, any thing that

might appear like new reasons for the continuance of hostilities ; and if in this I have not been able to succeed, I am well convinced it is not because of the validity of such reasons, but of the inability of their opposer.”

The public mind had become averse to the idea of peace, and Mr. Roscoe had to regret the little effect which his pamphlet appeared to produce, — a circumstance which he has touched upon in the following letter to Dr. Aikin : —

“ How I can have delayed so long to thank you for your last kind letter, appears to me perfectly unaccountable. It is natural in sickness to reflect on our sins, and in the course of a ten days’ confinement, I vowed to St. Cosmus and St. Damienus, that as soon as I was able to hold a pen I would employ it in writing to you, and telling you how much I was gratified in finding that the observations I had ventured to publish on Lord Grey’s speech coincided so nearly with your own sentiments. This vow I now perform, and assure you most sincerely, that nothing could have been more gratifying to me than to find my statements approved by one who can look with an impartial eye, not only on the politics and parties of one country, but on the relative situation, conduct, and pretensions of all. It is to such critics alone that I confess I should wish to appeal ; but, as they are of rare occurrence, I must not be surprised that this last effort should share the fate of all the rest of the same nature, and should be equally disregarded by those who are in and those who are out of office ; by the friends of corruption and the friends of reform ; all of whom labour on in their purblind occupations with as obstinate a blindness to all general views, as if they had no more concern with the rest of the world, and cared no more for the destruction of our countrymen and the desolation of Europe, than they would for a war in the interior of Africa.”

From Sir Samuel Romilly, to whom he had presented a copy of his "Observations," he received the following letter : —

"I return you many thanks for your 'Observations on Lord Grey's Address.' I have read them with the greatest interest. To all your general reasonings I entirely agree ; and I have been very much struck with the great force and irresistible eloquence of the concluding passages. I cannot, however, but confess to you, that the present state of Spain appears to me to throw very great difficulty in the way of making an immediate peace. I agree that there seems very little prospect of the Spaniards succeeding ultimately against their oppressors ; but as long as there is a possibility of their success, I cannot think that we ought, by abandoning them, to seal their doom.* It is very true, that in an answer to Lord Grey, it was by no means necessary to discuss this difficulty, but I own I should have been extremely glad to have seen how you had considered it.

"I am very highly gratified by the kind things you say of me, and of the late unsuccessful attempts I have made to introduce some improvements into our criminal law. I greatly lament that they cannot have your powerful support in parliament, and that the distance we are removed from each other leaves me so little opportunity of cultivating your friendship, on which I shall always set the highest value."

With this tract terminated Mr. Roscoe's publications against the war, which had appeared at intervals, during the course of nearly twenty years. The motives by which he had been actuated in these long-continued en-

* Mr. Roscoe's sentiments on this question have been stated in a previous page.

deavours to prevent the effusion of blood, were founded not only upon principles of political expediency, but upon more extended views of human conduct. He regarded war as one of the worst of human evils, not only inconsistent with the interests of mankind, but in direct opposition to those Christian precepts by which the nations of Europe profess to be governed. Yet the peace which was the ardent object of Mr. Roscoe's wishes, was far from being the peace which is coveted by the timid or the servile: it was the peace which arises from the removal, by the exercise of reason and of justice, of all the causes of contention — the peace which coexists with freedom, with honour, and with virtue.

In a short paper, written apparently about the year 1790, to which Mr. Roscoe had given the form of a sermon, and prefixed the text of "Blessed are the peace-makers," he has defined his own idea of those qualities in which the character of a peace-maker consists. This discourse, never intended to meet the public eye, exhibits so forcibly and clearly the principles which were the invisible spring of the unyielding and undaunted perseverance, and even pertinacity, with which, in despite of all opposition and obloquy, he continued to hold and assert his views on the subject of the war, that the following extracts will perhaps not be thought misplaced.

"That the peace-maker is in a high degree acceptable to the Supreme Being, is evident from the positive assurance of our Saviour; but, in endeavouring to obtain this honourable distinction, it is indispensably requisite that we should form proper notions of the character and office of a peace-maker, for until we know its proper scope and aim, our endeavours to attain it will be to no purpose. In all our concerns we should take care that we distinguish the mark before we draw the bow, and we

shall then be sure our exertions, be they what they may, are not misdirected.

“Accustomed as we are to confine our views to the little circle that surrounds us, we often lose, or, at least, weaken, the spirit and purport of the moral precepts of our Saviour. Instead of taking them in the full extent in which he undoubtedly meant that they should be understood, we childishly apply them to trivial purposes and occasions. It is thus that the term of *Charity*, that prime spring of moral virtue, which inculcates forbearance, good-will, benevolence, and kindness to all the race of man, is often confined to mere pecuniary assistance, or the giving of a trivial alms; but envy, resentment, haughtiness, and pride, are as inconsistent with true *charity* as avarice itself. In like manner, when we speak of the Peace-maker, we are apt to consider him as one who bestows his time and attention in healing the little breaches that, in the common intercourse of life, may arise between those around him. But though this be, in some cases, a very meritorious employment, it is far short of that exalted virtue which has entitled its possessor to the appellation of blessed, from the mouth of Jesus Christ. Let us, then, endeavour to extend our views beyond these narrow limits, and to acquire more suitable notions of the dignity and importance of the character which is here recommended to our attention.

“Nothing can be more clear, than that he who employs his time and labour in reconciling those who are at variance, without removing the *cause* of contention, has ill performed the office he undertook, — such reconciliations, however sincere they may be in appearance, are seldom of long continuance. To remove, then, if it were possible, all causes of contention from the face of the earth, is the great office of a peace-maker. And

though this will not be in the power of *any* individual ; yet it is only by attending to this view of his duty, that he will be able to do any considerable portion of that great good. Nay, it is, on the contrary, very possible, that instead of being of service to his fellow-creatures *upon the whole*, he may, notwithstanding the sincerity of his endeavours, be doing them, upon some occasions, an essential injury. To explain more fully this important point, let me suppose that a disagreement has arisen in consequence of some civil or political law or regulation, that is evidently vague, imperfect, severe, or unjust. It may seem the part of a peace-maker to accommodate, to soothe, and to suppress the differences to which such a law may have given rise, and to unite in harmony the discordant parties. But is this attacking the evil at its root ? Had the mediator a proper idea of his office, he would endeavour not only to reconcile the particular quarrel to which he was a witness but to have the law in question amended, explained, or abrogated ; so as to prevent, in future, similar dissensions. Omitting this, he has only cut off a shoot from a tree that will send out a hundred others ; and so far from being of service to mankind, has, perhaps, prolonged the abuse, by concealing from the eye of the world its hateful effects.

“ Who, then, is the true peace-maker ? Not he who, sitting in voluptuous apathy, exclaims against every attempt to improve society, and remove the causes of contention, as an infringement on the doctrines of peace. Not he whose mild and timid disposition leads him to soften, to soothe, and to accommodate the dissensions that may sometimes occur, by prevailing on the unjust man to relax his harsh pretensions, or on the oppressed to submit to his further oppression.

“ These are neither peace-makers, nor the true friends of peace.

“But, blessed is the man who, with undeviating rectitude, endeavours to procure for every one that to which he is justly and indisputably entitled ; who, instead of reconciling the master to the slave, dissolves the odious relation ; who, instead of teaching to one sect of religion, principles of toleration, and inculcating on others a factitious gratitude, contends for an universal liberty of sentiment ; who, in a nation whose high privileges are reserved to *one class* of its inhabitants and refused to others, instead of exhorting the injured to acquiesce in their deprivations, adopts every firm and manly method of abolishing such absurd distinctions, and thereby placing all around him upon a just and equal footing ; and for ever removes those degrading, wicked, and preposterous regulations which have always been the disgrace of society, and will never cease to occasion hatred, jealousy, and contention, so long as they are allowed to exist.”

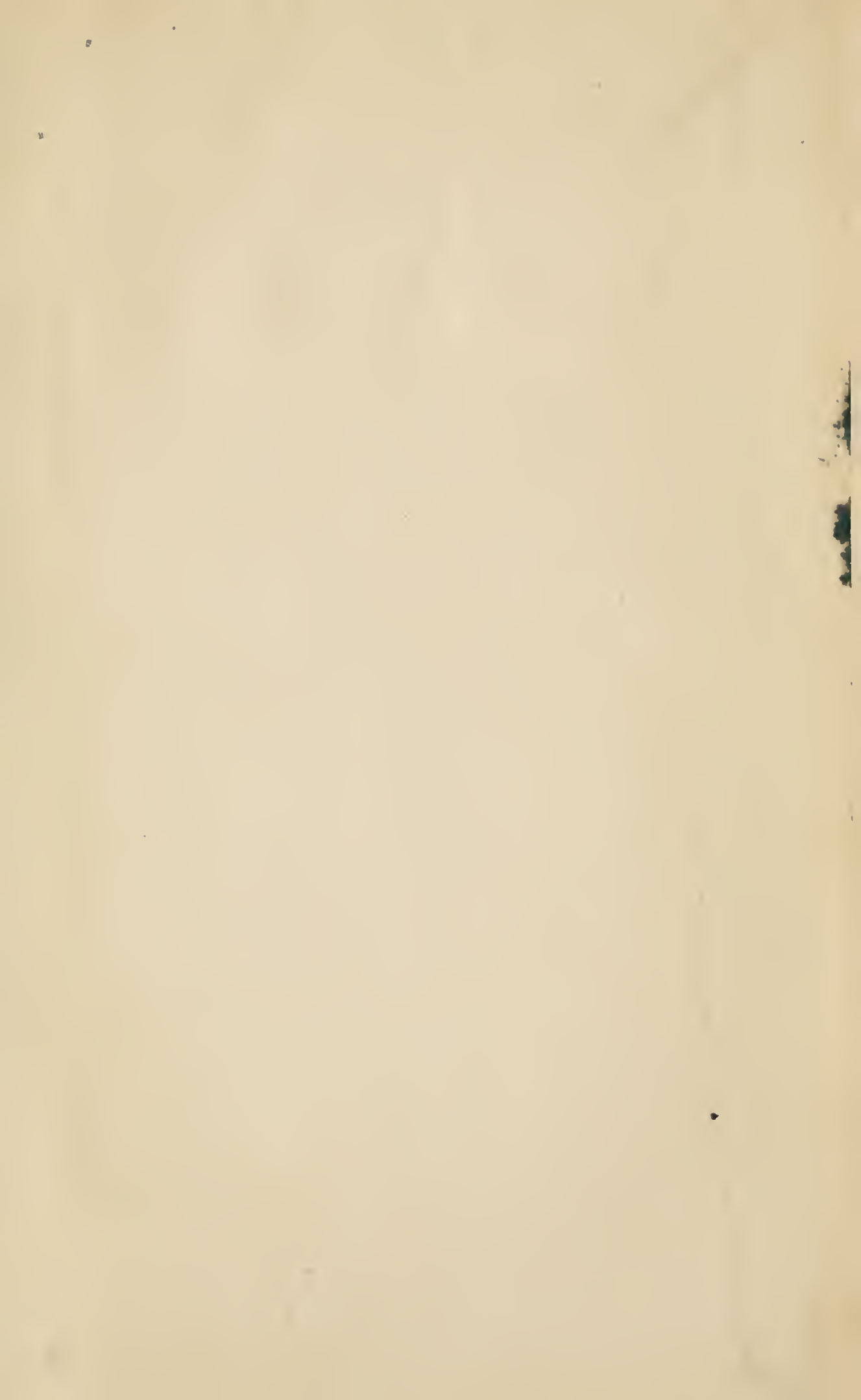
“The peace recommended in the text is not the peace of tyranny and subjection, it is the peace of equality and brotherhood. The despot may hold in awe his trembling slaves, who may quietly submit to his imperious commands ; but the peace-maker, whom our text pronounces blessed, will neither be found in him who orders nor in those who obey. Let him, then, who aims at the glorious distinction, begin by divesting himself of his unjust pretensions, and removing from himself the *causes* of offence ; let him be as willing to impart as he is to receive ; and when he has placed himself on a fair equality with those around him, he will then have proceeded so far towards meriting the appellation of a peace-maker, as not to be a maker of dissensions. He will have attained, at least, a degree of negative virtue that must, in its nature, precede any positive acquirements. And let me

be allowed to remark, that it is on the exercise of this disposition, that every noble and generous effort, every expectation of public and private happiness, depends. So much, then, for the character of a peace-maker, as it is connected with individual conduct; and if the same justice and forbearance were practised by *all*, we should arrive at that happy period when we should experience ‘peace on earth, and good-will to men.’

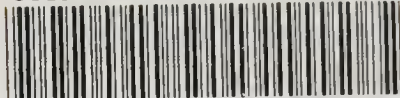
“But, alas! the admonitions of reason are too ineffectual to control the passions of mankind, by which they are continually prompted to seize with avidity every opportunity of personal aggrandisement and selfish gratification. Here, then, a wider field is opened for the exertions of the virtuous and the just. And it is only in performing their part with firmness, that they can entitle themselves to the full reward that attends on the promoters of peace, and the friends of human kind. Raise, then, thy views, thou who aspirest to this dignified character, beyond the narrow limits of private life; and contemplate, as far as is allowed to mortal faculties, the views and dispensations of Providence. There wilt thou discover that the intention of the great Creator of all, is the happiness of all His creatures; and thou wilt thence feel it thy most important duty to concur, as far as lies in thy power, in promoting that beneficent end.”

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