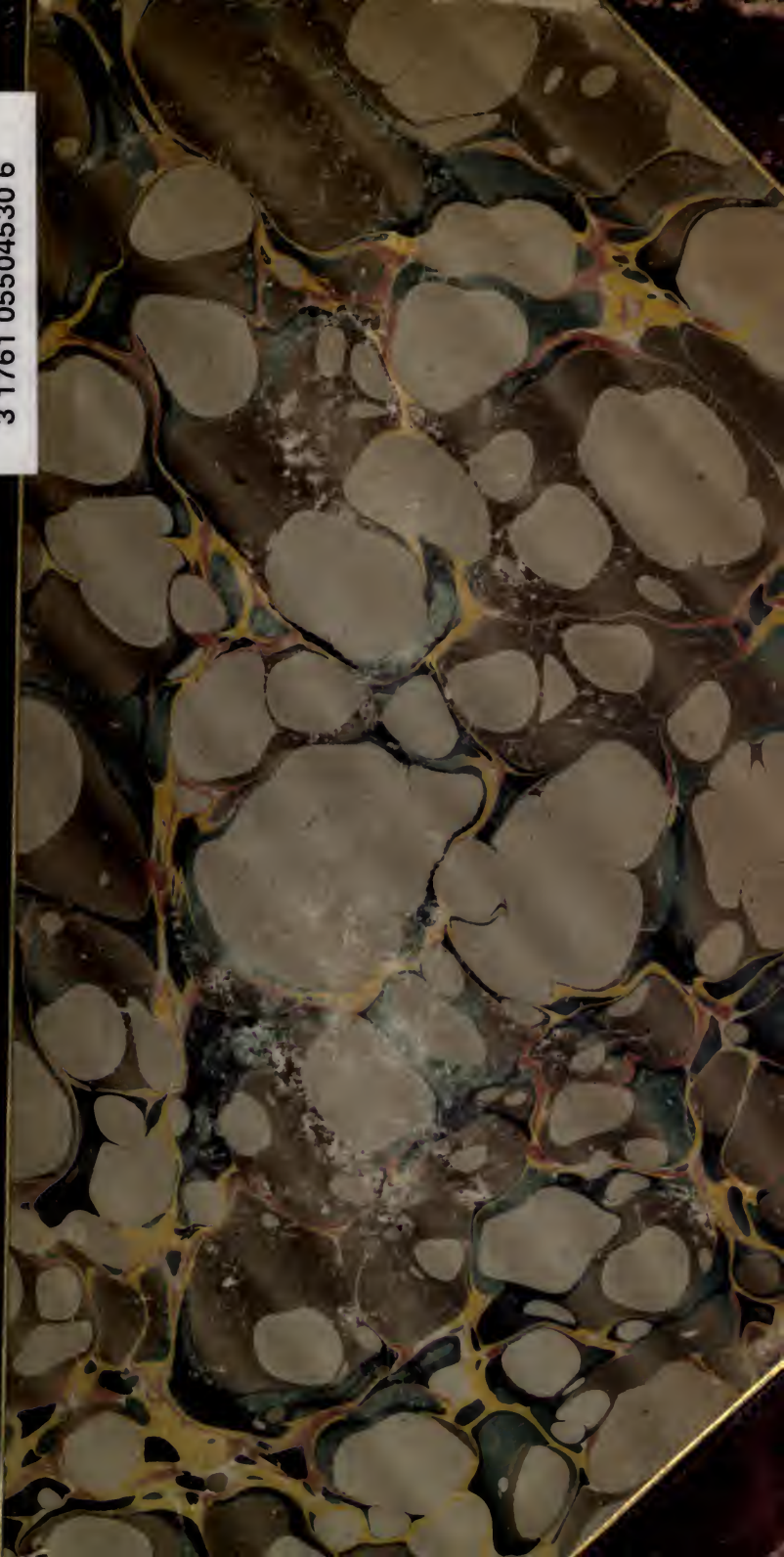




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OF  
ENGLISH LITERATURE.

VOL. I.

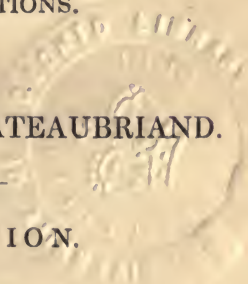
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S K E T C H E S  
OF  
ENGLISH LITERATURE;  
WITH  
CONSIDERATIONS  
ON THE  
SPIRIT OF THE TIMES,  
MEN, AND REVOLUTIONS.

BY  
*François Auguste René*  
THE VISCOUNT DE CHATEAUBRIAND.



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## P R E F A C E.

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THIS View of English Literature, which is to precede my translation of Milton, consists of

1. Some detached pieces of my early studies, corrected in style, rectified with regard to opinions, enlarged or condensed, as relates to the text.

2. Various extracts from my Memoirs; extracts which happened to be connected directly, or indirectly with the work which I here submit to the public.

3. Recent researches relative to the subject of these volumes.

I have visited the United States; I have lived eight years as an exile in England: after residing in London as an emigrant, I have returned thither as ambassador. I believe that I am as thoroughly acquainted with English, as a man can be with a language foreign to his own.

I have read most conscientiously all that it

was my duty to read on the subject discussed in these two volumes. I have rarely quoted my authorities, because they are known to men of letters, and men of the world care nothing about them. What do they want to know about Warton, Evans, Jones, Percy, Owen, Ellis, Leyden, Edward Williams, Tyrwhit, Roquefort, Tressan, the collections of the historians and poets, manuscripts, &c.? I will nevertheless mention here one French work, precisely because the journals seem to have neglected it too much. Long articles are occupied with frivolous publications, but scarcely twenty lines are bestowed on instructive and serious books.

The *Essais historiques sur les Bardes, les Jongleurs, etc.* by the Abbé de la Rue, is a work that deserves to fix the attention of every friend of sound criticism, of an erudition acquired at the source, and not composed of scraps stolen from some forgotten investigator. One of my honourable and learned colleagues of the French Academy does not always, it is true, agree with the historian of the bards : M. de la Rue is *Trouvère*, and M. Raynouard, *Troubadour* ; it is the old quarrel of the language of Oc and the language of Oil.\*

\* At the moment of writing this commendation of the Abbé de la Rue, of whom I know nothing but his works, I have re



The *Idée de la Poésie anglaise*, (1749) by the Abbé Yart, and the *Poétique anglaise* (1806) by M. Hennel, may be consulted with advantage. M. Hennel is thoroughly acquainted with the language of which he treats. Besides, several collections are announced; and to the genuine lovers of English literature, the *Bibliothèque anglo-française*, by M. O'Sullivan, will leave nothing to wish for.

In this Review of English Literature I have treated at considerable length of Milton, because it was written expressly on account of the *Paradise Lost*. I analyse his different works, I show that revolutions have approximated Milton to us; that he is become a man of our times, that he was as great a writer in prose as in verse; prose conferred celebrity on him during his life, poetry after his death; but the renown of the prose writer is lost in the glory of the poet.

I ought to premise that in this Historical View I have not stuck close to my subject: I have treated of every thing—the present, the past, the future; I digress hither and thither. When I meet with the middle ages, I talk of them;

ceived intelligence of the death of this friend of Sir Walter Scott's.

when I run foul of the reformation, I dwell upon it; when I come to the English revolution, it reminds me of our own, and I advert to the actors and the events of the latter. If an English royalist is thrown into jail, I think of the cell which I occupied at the prefecture of police. The English poets lead me to the French poets; Lord Byron brings to my recollection my exile in England, my walks to Harrow on the Hill, and my travels to Venice—and so of the rest. The book is composed of miscellanies which have all tones, because they relate to all things: they pass from literary criticism, lofty or familiar, to historical observations, narratives, portraits, and recollections, general or personal. That I may not take any one by surprise, that the reader may know from the first what he has to expect, that he may be aware that English Literature here forms but the ground of my medley, the canvass for my embroidery, I have given a second title to this work.

HISTORICAL VIEW  
OF  
ENGLISH LITERATURE.

VOL. I.

B



HISTORICAL VIEW  
OF  
ENGLISH LITERATURE.

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INTRODUCTION.

OF THE LATIN AS THE SOURCE OF THE LANGUAGES  
OF LATIN EUROPE.

WHEN a powerful people has passed away ; when the language which it used has ceased to be spoken ; that language remains a monument of another age, in which we admire the master-pieces of a broken pencil and chisel. To tell how the idioms of the tribes of Ausonia became the Latin idiom ; how much of the character of the barbarous tribes who formed it was retained by that idiom ; what it lost and

gained by the conversion of a free government into a despotic government, and still later by the revolution effected in the religion of the State; to tell how the conquered and conquering nations introduced a number of foreign expressions into this idiom; how the wrecks of this idiom formed the base upon which arose the dialects of the west and south of modern Europe—would be the subject of an immense philological work.

Nothing, indeed, could be more curious and more instructive than to take up the Latin at its commencement, and to follow it to its end, through the different ages and changes. The materials for such a work are ready prepared in the seven treatises of John Nicolas Funck: *De Origine Linguae Latinæ Tractatus—De Pueritiâ Latinæ Linguae Tractatus—De Adolescentiâ Latinæ Linguae Tractatus—De virili Ætate Latinæ Linguae Tractatus—De imminente Latinæ Linguae Senectute Tractatus—De vegetâ Latinæ Linguae Senectute Tractatus—De inerti et decrepita Latinæ Linguae Senectute Tractatus.*

The Doric Greek language, and the Etruscan and the Oscian language of the hymns of the Salii and of the Law of the Twelve Tables,

the articles of which, in verse, were still sung by children in the time of Cicero, produced the rude language of Duilius, Cæcilius and Ennius, the lively language of Plautus, the satirical of Lucilius, the græcised of Terence, the philosophic, dull, slow and spondaic of Lucretius, the eloquent of Cicero and Livy, the clear and correct of Cæsar, the elegant of Horace, the brilliant of Ovid, the poetic and concise of Catullus, the harmonious of Tibullus, the divine of Virgil, the pure and chaste of Phædrus.

This language of the age of Augustus—I know not at what date to place Quintus Curtius—became as it is degenerated, the energetic language of Tacitus, Lucian, Seneca, Martial; the copious language of Pliny the elder; the flowery language of the younger Pliny; the saucy language of Suetonius, the violent of Juvenal, the obscure of Persius, the inflated or flat of Statius and Silius Italicus.

After it had passed through the grammarians, Quintilian and Macrobius; through the epitomists, Florus, Velleius Paterculus, Justin, Orosius, Sulpitius Severus; through the fathers of the Church and the ecclesiastical writers, Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrosius, Hilary

of Poitiers, Paulinus, Augustin, Jerome, Salvienus; through the apologists, Lactantius, Arnobius, Minutius Felix; through the panegyrist, Eumenes, Mamertinus, Nazairius; through the historians of the decline, Ammianus Marcellinus and the biographers of the *august history*; through the poets of the decline and fall, Ausonius, Claudian, Rutilius, Sidonius Apollinaris, Prudentius, Fortunatus; after it had received from the change of religions, from the transformation of manners, from the invasion of the Goths, the Alans, the Huns, the Arabs, &c. accessions rendered absolutely necessary by new wants and new ideas—this language turned to another barbarism in the first historian of those Franks who began a new language after they had destroyed the Roman empire among our ancestors.

Authors have themselves noted the successive alterations of the Latin from age to age. Cicero asserts that in Gaul many words not admitted in Rome—*verba non trita Romæ*—were employed; Martial uses Celtic expressions and boasts of so doing; St. Jerome says that, in his time, the Latin language was changing in every country—*regionibus mutatur*; Festus, in the fifth century, complains of the



general ignorance that already prevailed relative to the construction of the Latin; St. Gregory the Great declares that he cares little about solecisms and barbarisms; Gregory of Tours claims the indulgence of the reader for having in style and words transgressed the rules of grammar, with which he was not well acquainted—*non sum imbutus*; the oaths of Charles the Bald and Louis the German show us the Latin just expiring; the religious writers of the seventh century praise those bishops who can speak the Latin with purity; and the councils of the ninth century enjoin the bishops to preach in the *rustic Roman* language.

It was therefore from the seventh to the ninth century,—between those two precise periods,—that the Latin was metamorphosed into Roman of different shades and different accents, according to the provinces in which it was spoken. The correct Latin, which reappears in the historians and writers commencing with the reign of Charlemagne, is no longer the *spoken* Latin but the *learnt* Latin. The word Latin soon signified nothing more than the *Roman* or *Romance language*, and was afterwards used to express language

in general: “ *les oiseaux chantent en leur LATIN.*”

This civilized language, the offspring of a barbarous language, differs in its elements from a barbarous language emanating from a civilized language. The first must be more original, because it has been created by itself, and has merely developed its germ; the second—the barbarous language, grafted upon a civilized language, loses its natural sap, and bears foreign fruit.

Such is the Latin with reference to the barbarous idiom which gave birth to it; such are the modern languages of Latin Europe with reference to the polished language from which they are derived. A living language springing from a living language continues its life; a living language formed from a dead language is in some degree affected by the death of its mother; it retains a number of words which are also dead, and which no longer convey the perceptions of existence, any more than silence expresses sound.

Was there, towards the conclusion of the life of the Latin language, an idiom of transition between it and the modern dialects, an idiom in general use on this side of the

Alps and of the Rhine? Was the *rustic Roman* language, so frequently mentioned in the councils of the ninth century, that *Roman*, that *Provençal*, language spoken in the south of France? Was the Provençal the *Catalan*, and was it formed at the court of the Counts of Barcelona? Did the *Roman* of the north of the Loire, the *Walloon Roman*, or the *Roman of the Trouvères*, which became the French, precede the *Roman* of the south of the Loire, or the *Roman of the Troubadours*? Did the language of Oc and the language of Oil borrow the subjects of their songs and their stories from *Armorican lays* and from *Gaelic lays*? Here is matter for a controversy that may last till the moment when the learned work of M. Fauriel shall throw light on this obscure subject.



## THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE,

DIVIDED INTO FIVE EPOCHS.

AMONG the languages formed from the Latin, I reckon the English language, though it has a double origin, but I shall show that, from the Norman conquest till the reign of the first Tudor, the Franco-Roman language predominated, and that, in the modern English language, an immense quantity of Latin and French words have remained incorporated with the new idiom.

The *rustic Roman* language was divided then into two branches: the language of Oc and the language of Oil. When the Normans had possessed themselves of the province to which they have left their name, they learned the language of Oil; it was spoken at Rouen, but Danish was used at

Bayeux. William carried the two French idioms into England with the adventurers who joined him from both sides of the Loire.

But, in the preceding ages, whilst the Gauls were forming their language from the ruins of the Latin, Britain, from which the Romans had long withdrawn, and where the nations of the North had successively established themselves, had retained its primitive idioms.

Thus then the history of the English language divides itself into five epochs.

1. The Anglo-Saxon epoch, from 450 to 780. Augustin, the monk, introduced the Roman alphabet into England in 570.

2. The Danish-Saxon epoch, from 780 to the invasion of the Normans. The principal relics of this epoch are the manuscripts called Alfred's and two translations of the four evangelists.

3. The Anglo-Norman epoch, commencing in 1066. The Norman language was no other than the Neustrian, that is, the French language of this side the Loire, or the language of Oil. In order to preserve the memory of their songs, the Normans employed characters, called *runstabath*: these are the Runic letters, and to them were joined those which Ethicus had previously in-

vented and for which St. Jerome had furnished the signs.

4. The Norman-French epoch. When Eleonore of Guienne had brought to Henry II. the western provinces of France from the Lower Loire to the Pyrenees, and princesses of the blood of St. Louis had successively married English monarchs, states, possessions, families, customs, manners, were so blended, that French became the ordinary language of the nobility, the ecclesiastics, the scholars, and the traders of the two kingdoms. In the Domesday book, a topographical survey and register of landed property, drawn up by command of William the Conqueror, the names of places are written in Latin, according to the French pronunciation. Thus a multitude of Latin words became incorporated directly with the English language, by religion and by its ministers, whose language was Latin, and indirectly through the medium of Norman and French words. The Norman of William the Bastard retained also the Scandinavian or Germanic expressions, which the children of Rollo had introduced into the idiom of the Frankish country conquered by them.

5. The epoch properly called English, when English was written and spoken as it exists at present.

These five epochs will be treated of separately, in the five parts into which this work is divided.

These five parts naturally range themselves under these heads :

1. Literature during the time of the Anglo-Saxons, the Danes, and the middle ages.

2. Literature under the Tudors.

3. Literature under the first two Stuarts, and during the Commonwealth.

4. Literature under the last two Stuarts.

5. Literature under the House of Hanover.

When we study the literature of different countries, a great number of allusions and traits escape us, if we do not bear in mind the manners and customs of the respective nations. A view of literature, apart from the history of nations, would create a prodigious fallacy : to hear the successive poets calmly singing their loves and their sheep, you would figure to yourself the uninterrupted existence of the golden age on the earth. And yet, in that same England of which we are treating, these strains resounded amid



the invasion of the Romans, the Picts, the Saxons, the Danes; amid the conquest of the Normans, the insurrections of the Barons, the quarrels of the first Plantagenets for the crown, the civil wars of the Red and White Rose, the ravages of the Reformation, the executions commanded by Henry VIII., and the burnings ordered by Mary, amid the massacres and slavery of Ireland, the desolations of Scotland, the scaffolds of Charles I. and Sidney, the flight of James, the proscription of the Pretender and the Jacobites—the whole intermingled with parliamentary storms, court crimes, and a thousand foreign wars.

Social order, separated from political order, is composed of religion, intelligence, and material industry. In every nation, even at the moment of the direst catastrophes and of the greatest events, there will always be a priest who prays, a poet who sings, an author who writes, a philosopher who meditates, a painter, a sculptor, an architect, who paints, chisels, builds, and a workman who labours. These men, surrounded by revolutions, seem to lead a life apart: if you look at them only, you see a real, a genuine, an immutable world, the base of the human edifice, but which

appears fictitious and foreign to the society of convention, the political society. The priest, indeed, in his hymns, the poet, the philosopher, the artist, in their compositions, the artisan in his work, mark occasionally the time in which they live, and the recoil of the events which wrung from them in more abundance their sweat, their complaints, and the productions of their genius.

To destroy this illusion of two views presented separately; to avoid creating that fallacy to which I have alluded, in the course of this chapter; and that I may not suddenly throw the reader unprepared into the history of the poetry, works, and authors of the first stages of English literature, I think it right to introduce here a general picture of the middle ages. These preliminary matters will facilitate the understanding of the subject.

## THE MIDDLE AGES.

### LAWS AND BUILDINGS.

THE middle ages present a grotesque picture, which seems to be the production of a strong but wild imagination. In antiquity, each nation springs, if we may so express ourselves, from its own stock; a primitive spirit, insinuating itself every where and showing its influence in everything, renders manners and institutions homogeneous. The society of the middle ages was composed of the wrecks of a thousand other societies: Roman civilization, nay, paganism itself, had left their vestiges in it; from the christian religion it received its faith and its solemnities; the Gothic, Burgundian, Anglo-Saxon, Danish, Norman barbarians retained the customs and character peculiar to their respective races. All kinds of property were intermingled; all kinds of laws were blended, the allodial, the fief, the mortmain, the code, the digest, the

salic, the gombrette, the visigoth law, the common law ; all the forms of liberty and servitude jostled one another ; the monarchical liberty of the king, the aristocratic liberty of the noble, the individual liberty of the priest, the collective liberty of parishes, the privileged liberty of towns, of the magistracy, of the guilds and artizans and traders, the representative liberty of the nation, Roman slavery, barbarous villenage, the servitude of the *aubaine*. Hence, those incoherent spectacles, those usages, which appear contradictory to each other, and which are held together solely by the bond of religion. You would almost take them to be different nations, wholly unconnected with one another, but who have merely agreed to live under one common master and around the same altar.

Even in its external appearance, Europe then presented a much more picturesque and national aspect than it at present exhibits. For buildings, the offspring of our religion and our manners, we have substituted, from affectation of the bastard Roman architecture, such as are neither in harmony with our climate nor appropriate to our wants. The cold and servile spirit of copyism has introduced falsehood into our arts, as the ground-work of Latin literature has destroyed in

our literature the originality of the Frankish genius. It was not thus that the middle ages imitated; the minds of those times also admired the Greeks and the Romans; they sought after and studied their works, but, instead of suffering themselves to be mastered by, they mastered them, moulding them to their will, rendering them French, and heightening their beauty by this metamorphosis, full of creative vigour and independence.

The first christian churches in the West were only temples reversed; the pagan worship was external, the decoration of the temple was external; the christian worship was internal, the decoration of the church was internal. The pillars were transferred from the outside to the inside of the edifice, as in the churches in which the believers held their meetings when they issued from the crypts and catacombs. The proportions of the church surpassed in dimensions those of the temple, because the christian congregation met beneath the roof of the church, whereas, the pagan multitude collected under the peristyle of the temple. But, when the christians became masters, they changed this arrangement, and adorned their buildings also on the side towards the landscape and the sky.

And, in order that the supports of the aërial nave might not be inappropriate to the structure, the chisel had cut them out ; nothing was to be seen but flying buttresses, pyramids, pinnacles, and statues.

The ornaments which were not essential parts of the edifice were adapted to its style ; the tombs were of Gothic fashion, and the church, which covered them like an immense canopy, seemed to be moulded upon their form. The arts of design shared in this flowery and composite taste : on the walls and on the windows were painted landscapes, scripture subjects, and scenes of national history.

In the castles of the great, coloured armorial bearings, inclosed in lozenges of gold, formed ceilings resembling those of the beautiful palaces of the *cinque cento* in Italy. Writing itself was drawn, the German hieroglyphic substituted for the rectilinear Roman letters, harmonized with the sepulchral stones. The detached towers which served for lookouts on the heights ; the castles embosomed in woods or perched on the tops of rocks, like the eyries of vultures ; the pointed and narrow bridges thrown boldly across torrents ; the fortified towns which you came to at every step, and the battlements of which

were at once ramparts and ornaments ; the chapels, the oratories, the hermitages, placed in the most picturesque spots beside roads and rivers ; the towers, the steeples of country churches, the abbeys, the monasteries, the cathedrals, all those edifices of which but a small number now exists, and whose fretwork time has blackened, filled up, or broken, had then the freshness of youth ; they had just issued from the hands of the workman. In the whiteness of their stones the eye lost none of the lightness of their details, of the elegance of their towers, of the variety of their wavings, their carvings, their chisellings, their pinkings, and all the whims of a free and inexhaustible imagination.

In the short space of eighteen years, from 1136 to 1154, not fewer than eleven hundred and fifteen castles were built in England alone.

Christianity raised at the general expence, by means of collections and alms, the cathedrals for the erection of which each state was not wealthy enough to pay separately, and scarcely any of which is finished. In those vast and mysterious edifices were engraved in relief and hollowed out as with a nipping tool, the decorations of the altar, the sacred monograms, the vestures and articles used by the priests. The banners, the

crosses of various composition, the cups, the shrines, the canopies, the copes, the cowls, the crosiers, the mitres, whose forms are met with in the Gothic, preserved the symbols of the worship at the same time that they produced unexpected effects of art. The gutters and spouts were very often carved into the faces of hideous demons or vomiting mouths. This architecture of the middle ages exhibited a medley of the tragic and the grotesque, of the gigantic and the graceful, like the poems and romances of the same period.

The plants of our soil, the trees of our woods, the trefoil and the oak, also decorated our churches, in like manner as the acanthus and the palm had embellished the temples of the country and the age of Pericles. Within a cathedral was a forest, a labyrinth, whose thousands of arches, at every motion of the spectator, crossed each other, separated, and entwined again. This forest was lighted by circular windows of painted glass, which resembled suns shining with a thousand colours beneath the foliage; externally the same cathedral looked, with its flying buttresses and its pinnacles, like an edifice from which the scaffolding had not been removed.



## MIDDLE AGES.

### DRESS—ENTERTAINMENTS AND DIVERSIONS.

THE population moving around the edifices is described in chronicles and represented in vignettes. The different classes of society and the inhabitants of different provinces were distinguished, some by the form of their garments, others by local fashions. The people had not that uniform aspect, which the same mode of dress gives at the present day to the inhabitants of our towns and to those of the country. The nobles, the knights, the magistrates, the bishops, the secular clergy, the religious of all the orders, the pilgrims, the penitents, gray, black, and white, the hermits, the fraternities, the guilds, the citizens, the peasants, exhibited an infinite variety of costumes. We still see something of the sort in Italy. On this point we must appeal to the arts. What can the painter make of our

tight garments, our round hats, or our cocked hats?

From the twelfth to the fourteenth century, the peasant and people of the lower class wore a gray jacket, girt round the waist by a belt. The body coat of leather, the *pelicon*, the origin of the surplice, was common to all ranks. The furred pelisse and the long oriental robe enwrapped the knight when he had laid aside his armour; the sleeves of this robe covered his hands; it resembled the Turkish caftan of the present day; the cap adorned with feathers, or bonnet, served instead of turban. The ample robe was succeeded by a close dress, and that again by a loose robe. The breeches, so short and tight as to be indecent, came down no lower than the middle of the thigh; the hose or stockings were dissimilar; one leg was of one colour and one of another. The same was the case with the surcoat, part black and part white, and with the bonnet, which was blue and red. "And their garments were so tight to put on and to pull off, that it seemed as if they were being flayed. Others had their robes tucked up about their loins like women, and they had their bonnets prettily pinked all round. And they had their hose one of one coloured cloth and one of another. And

their sleeves and their lappets hung down almost to the ground; so that they looked more like merry-andrews than like other people. Certes, it was no marvel then if the Almighty thought fit to punish the French for their misdeeds with his scourge," (the plague).

Over the robe was worn on days of ceremony a mantle, sometimes short, at others long. The mantle of Richard I. was made of striped stuff, sprinkled with globes and half moons of silver, in imitation of the celestial system (Winesalf). Hanging collars served as ornaments alike for both sexes.

The pointed and stuffed shoes called *pouleyns*, or *poulains*, were long in fashion. The maker cut out the upper leather like the windows of a church. They were two feet long for the noble, decorated at the extremity with horns, claws, or grotesque figures. They were of such length that it was impossible to walk in them without fastening the points, which crooked upwards, to the knees with chains of gold or silver. The bishops excommunicated the *poulains*, and treated them as a *sin against nature*. They were declared to be "contrary to good morals, and invented in derision of the Creator." In England, an act of parliament forbade the making of any shoes or

buskins "with poleyns exceeding the length of two inches." The pointed shoes were succeeded by wide square-toed slippers. The fashions of that time varied as much as those of our days. The knight or the lady who invented a new fashion became a celebrated person. The inventor of poleyns was the English knight Robert le Cornu. (W. Malmesbury.)

The gentlewomen wore very fine linen next to the skin. They were dressed in high tunics covering the bosom, embroidered on the right breast with the arms of their husband, on the left with those of their family. Sometimes they wore their hair combed down smooth upon the forehead, and covered with a small cap interlaced with ribands; at others they allowed the hair to float loosely over their shoulders; at others again they built it up into a pyramid three feet high, suspending to it either wimples, or long veils, or stripes of silk, descending to the ground and fluttering in the wind. At the time of Queen Isabeau, it was found necessary to enlarge the doorways both in height and breadth, in order to afford a passage for the ladies' head-dresses. These head-dresses were supported by two curved horns, the frame-work of this structure. From the top of the horn on

the right side hung a piece of light stuff, which the wearer suffered to float, or which she drew over her bosom like a wimple, by twisting it round the left arm. A lady in full dress displayed collars, bracelets, and rings. To her girdle, enriched with gold, pearls, and precious stones, was fastened an embroidered pouch: she galloped on a palfrey, carrying a bird on her fist, or a cane in her hand. "What can be more ridiculous," says Petrarch, in a letter addressed to the Pope in 1366, "than to see men girthed round the body. Below, long peaked shoes; above, caps laden with feathers: hair tressed, moving this way and that, behind them, like the tail of an animal, and turned up on the forehead with ivory-headed pins!" Pierre of Blois adds that it was the fashion to talk mincingly. And what language was so spoken?—the language of Robert Wace and the Roman du Rou, of Ville-Hardouin, Joinville, and Froissart!

The luxury in dress and entertainments exceeded all belief: we are but paltry personages in comparison with those barbarians of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Then were seen at a tournament a thousand knights attired in a uniform robe of silk, called *cointise*, and on

the morrow they appeared in new vestments equally magnificent. (Matthew Paris). One of the dresses of Richard II., King of England, cost thirty thousand marks of silver. (Knighton). Sir John Arundel had no fewer than fifty-two complete suits of apparel for his own person, of cloth of gold or of tissue. (Holinshed's Chron.)

At another tournament, sixty superb horses richly caparisoned, each led by an esquire, first filed off one by one, preceded by trumpeters and minstrels; then came sixty young ladies mounted on palfreys, magnificently attired, each leading by a silver chain a knight armed at all points. Dancing and music formed part of these *bandors* (festivities). The King, the prelates, the knights, danced to the sound of viols, bagpipes, and *chiffonies*.

At Christmas, there were grand masquerades. In England, in 1348, there were prepared eighty tunics of buckram, forty-two masks, and a great number of grotesque dresses, for the masquerades. In 1377, a masquerade, composed of about one hundred and thirty persons disguised in different ways, afforded diversion to the Prince of Wales.

Ball, the mall, quoits, skittles, dice, were amusements in which all took a part. There is

still extant a note of Edward the Second's for the sum of five shillings, which sum he had borrowed from his barber to play at cross or pile.





## MIDDLE AGES.

### REPASTS.

AMONG the nobles, dinner was announced by the sound of the horn : this was called in France *corner l'eau*, because the company washed their hands before they sat down to table. The usual dinner hour was nine in the morning, and that for supper five in the evening. They sat on banks or benches, sometimes high, at others low, and the table was raised or lowered in proportion. From the bank or bench is derived the word banquet. There were tables of gold and silver chased : the wooden tables were covered with double cloths, called *doubliers* ; they were laid to resemble the surface of a river which a breeze has ruffled into little waves.

Napkins are of more modern date. Forks, with which the Romans were unacquainted, were also unknown to the French till the end of the fourteenth century : we meet with them for the first time under Charles V.

Our ancestors, in those days, ate nearly every thing that we do now ; nay, their cookery possessed refinements to which we at this day are utter strangers : Roman civilization had not perished in the kitchen. Among the dishes in the highest request, I find mention made of *dellegrous*, *maupigyrum*, and *karumpie*. What were these ? There was served up pastry of obscene forms, which were called by their proper names : ecclesiastics, matrons, and young ladies, rendered these grossnesses innocent by a modest ingenuity. Language was then stark naked. The translations of the Bible in those days were quite as crude and more indecent than the text. The *Instruction du Chevalier Geoffroy la Tour Landry, gentilhomme angevin, à ses filles* will furnish a specimen of the freedom then taken in language and instruction.

Beer, cider, and wine of all sorts, were consumed in abundance. Mention is made of cider under the second race of kings. *Claitre* was clarified wine to which spices were

added ; hypocras, wine sweetened with honey. In 1310, an English abbot entertained six thousand guests, before whom were set three thousand dishes. At the wedding feast of the Earl of Cornwall, in 1243, thirty thousand dishes were served up ; and, in 1251, sixty fat oxen were furnished by the Archbishop of York alone, for the marriage of Margaret of England with Alexander III., King of Scotland. The royal repasts were enlivened by *intermezzi* : all sorts of music were performed ; the clerics sang songs, roundelays, and virelays. “ When the king (Henry II. of England) goes abroad in the morning,” says Pierre of Blois, “ you see a multitude of people, running hither and thither, as if they had lost their wits : horses dash one against the other ; carriages upset carriages ; players, public women, gamesters, cooks, confectioners, singers, barbers, dancers, boon companions, parasites, make a horrible noise : in short, the confusion of foot and horse is so hideous that you would imagine the abyss had opened and hell vomited forth all its devils.”

When Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, travelled, he had two hundred horsemen in his train, consisting of knights, esquires, pages, clergymen, and officers of his household.

This cavalcade was followed by eight carriages, each drawn by five strong horses : two of these carriages contained beer, one conveyed the furniture of his chapel, another that of his chamber, and another that of his kitchen ; the last three were filled with provisions, apparel, and various other articles. He had, besides, twelve horses laden with coffers, containing his money, gold plate, books, clothes, and the ornaments for the altar. Each carriage was guarded by a very large bull-dog, having a monkey on his back. (Salisb.)

It was found necessary to enact sumptuary laws for the table. These laws allowed the rich only two courses and two sorts of meat, with the exception of prelates and barons, who were at liberty to eat what they pleased. They limited traders and artizans to the use of meat at one meal only ; for all the other meals they were obliged to content themselves with milk, butter, and vegetables.

## MIDDLE AGES.

### MANNERS.

UPON the roads the traveller met with litters, mules, palfreys, and carriages drawn by oxen, with wheels in the antique fashion. The roads were of two kinds, turnpike-roads and by-roads. Their width was regulated by law. The turnpike-road was required to be fourteen feet broad. The by-road might be shaded with trees, but no trees excepting such as were capable of affording shelter were permitted to border the royal roads. It was the vassals of the feudal lords who cut the infinite multitude of cross-roads by which the country is intersected.

These were the times of the marvellous in

every thing. The almoner, the monk, the pilgrim, the knight, the troubadour, had always adventures to tell or to sing of. In the evening, seated on the benches in the chimney-corner, they listened to the romance of King Arthur, of Ogier the Dane, of Lancelot of the Lake, or the story of the goblin Orthon, a great newsmonger, who came in the wind and was killed in a large black sow. (Froissart.)

Among these tales was to be heard also the *servante* of the *jongleur* against a felon knight, or a narrative of the life of a pious personage. These lives of saints, collected by the Bollandists, displayed an imagination not less brilliant than the profane stories; incantations of conjurors, tricks of swindlers and idlers, chases of were-wolves, redemption of slaves, attacks of robbers, travellers saved, and who marry the daughters of their hosts on account of their beauty (St. Maximus); lights which at night reveal the grave of some virgin amidst the bushes; castles which appear suddenly illumined (St. Viventius, Maura, and Brista).

St. Deicole, having lost his way, met with a shepherd and begged he would tell him where

he might find a lodging. "I know of none," said the shepherd, "unless it be in a place watered by springs in the lands of the powerful vassal Weissart." — "Canst thou show me the way to it?" asked the saint. "I cannot leave my flock," replied the shepherd. Deicole thrust his staff into the ground, and the shepherd, on his return from showing the saint the way, found his sheep lying quietly around the miraculous staff. Weissart, the cruel castellan, threatens vengeance against Deicole; but his wife Berthilde has a great veneration for the minister of God. Deicole enters the castle; the serfs eagerly come forward to help him off with his cloak: he declines their aid, and hangs it up on one of the sun's rays, which entered through the loop-hole of a tower. (Boll. t. II, p. 202.)

Giraldus, a native of Wales, relates in his *Topography of Ireland*, that, St. Kewen being at prayer with outstretched hands, a swallow entered at the window of his cell, and laid an egg in one of his hands. The saint did not drop his hand, nor did he close it, till the swallow had laid all her eggs and hatched her brood. In memory of this act of kindness and patience,

the statue of the hermit in Ireland is holding a swallow in one hand.

The Abbot Turketull had in his possession one of St. Bartholomew's thumbs, and he used it to sign himself in times of danger from storms and lightning.

The barbarians were fond of hermits. They were soldiers of different classes, equally tried, equally hardy, with themselves, sleeping on the ground, dwelling upon the rock, delighting in distant pilgrimages, in the vastness of deserts and forests. Thus hermits conducted battles: encamping at night in cemeteries, they there composed and sang to the armed multitude the *Dies iræ* and the *Stabat mater*. The Anglo-Saxons beheld no fewer than ten kings and eleven queens forsake the world and retire into convents. We must beware, however, of suffering ourselves to be misled by words: these queens were wives of pirate Northmen, arriving in barks, keeping their wedding in chariots, like the daughters of Clodion the Hairy, fair and beautiful Norwegian women, who had given up the gods of the Edda for the God of the Gospel, and the Walkiries for angels.



## MIDDLE AGES.

### MANNERS CONTINUED.

#### VIGOUR AND END OF THE BARBAROUS AGES.

To endeavour to sketch methodically a picture of the manners of those times would be at once to attempt an impossibility and to belie the confusion of those manners. On the contrary, all those scenes must be thrown pell-mell, just as they followed each other, without order, or were entangled in one common action, at one and the same moment. There was no unity, but in the general impulsion which carried society onward to improvement, by the natural law of human existence.

On the one hand chivalry, on the other the insurrection of the rustic population, all sorts

of licentiousness in the clergy, together with all the ardour of religion. Itinerant monks, travelling on foot or riding on sorry mules, preached against all these scandals, and were burned alive for their pains by the priests, whom they reproached for their dissolute lives, and drowned by the princes whose tyranny they attacked. Gentlemen, lying in wait near the high roads, robbed travellers, whilst other gentlemen became in Spain, in Greece, in Dalmatia, lords of renowned cities, to whose history they were utter strangers. There were courts of love, in which arguments were held agreeably to all the rules of Scottism, and of which the canons were members; troubadours and minstrels, roving from castle to castle, lashing the men in satires, praising the ladies in ballads; citizens divided into guilds, holding festivals in honour of their patrons, in which the saints of Paradise were mingled with the deities of fable; dramatic representations, *miracles* and *mysteries* in churches; *feasts of fools*; sacrilegious masses; gravy soups eaten upon the altar; the *Ite missa est* responded to by the three brayings of an ass; barons and knights engaging at these mysterious repasts to make war upon nations,

vowing upon a peacock or a heron to fight to the death for their ladye-loves ; Jews slaughtered and slaughtering one another, conspiring with lepers to poison the wells and springs ; tribunals of all sorts, sentencing, by virtue of all kinds of laws, to all sorts of punishments, accused persons of all classes, from the heretic flayed and burned alive, to adulterers bound together naked and led in public through the crowd ; the complaisant judge, substituting an innocent prisoner, instead of the wealthy murderer, condemned to die ; to crown the confusion, to complete the contrast, the old society civilized after the manner of the ancients perpetuating itself in the abbeys ; the students at the universities reviving the philosophic disputes of Greece ; the tumult of the schools of Athens and Alexandria mingling with the din of tournaments, feasts, and tiltings. Lastly, place, above and out of this so agitated society, another principle of action, a tomb the object of all affections, of all regrets, of all hopes, which was incessantly drawing beyond sea sovereigns and subjects, the valiant and the guilty, the former to seek enemies, kingdoms, adventures, the latter to fulfil vows, to atone for crimes, to appease remorse—and you have a picture of the middle ages.

Notwithstanding the ill success of the crusades, the East long continued to be, for the nations of Europe, the country of religion and glory : they turned their eyes incessantly towards that bright sun, towards those palms of Idumea, towards those plains of Rama, where the infidels reposed in the shade of the olive-trees planted by Baldwin, towards those fields of Ascalon which still retained traces of Godfrey of Bouillon, of Couci, of Tancred, of Philip Augustus, of Richard-Cœur-de-Lion, of St. Louis, towards that Jerusalem delivered for a moment, but fallen again into her bondage, and which appeared to them, as to Jeremiah, insulted by the passenger, drowned in tears, deprived of her people, seated in solitude.

Such were those ages of imagination and of vigour, which moved on with all these accompaniments, amidst events the most diversified, amidst heresies, schisms, and wars, feudal, civil, and foreign ; those ages doubly favourable to genius, either by the solitude of the cloister, when that was sought, or by a world the most strange and the most varied, when this was preferred to solitude. There was not a spot where some new circumstance was not occurring, for each lordship, lay or ecclesiastic, was a little state,

moving in its own orbit, and having its different phases ; at ten leagues' distance, customs were totally dissimilar. This order of things, extremely detrimental to general civilization, imparted an extraordinary impulsion to the individual mind ; hence, all the great discoveries belonged to those ages. Never did the individual live so much ; the sovereign dreamt of the aggrandisement of his dominions, the noble of the conquest of his neighbour's fief, the citizen of the extension of his privileges, the merchant of new channels for his trade. People were not thoroughly acquainted with any thing, they had not penetrated to the bottom of any thing, they believed every thing, they were at the entrance, at the threshold, of all hopes, in like manner as a traveller upon a mountain awaits the return of day-light, when he perceives its harbinger—the dawn. They made researches into the past as well as the future ; they felt the same joy on discovering an old manuscript and a new world ; they proceeded with rapid steps towards unknown destinies, as in youth we have all our lives before us. The infancy of those ages was barbarism, their maturity full of passion and energy, and they have left behind them a rich inheritance to the civilized ages which they bore in their fertile womb.



HISTORICAL VIEW  
OF  
ENGLISH LITERATURE.

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PART THE FIRST.





# FIRST AND SECOND EPOCHS

OF

## ENGLISH LITERATURE.

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LITERATURE AT THE TIME OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS, THE  
DANES, AND DURING THE MIDDLE AGES.

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OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS UNDER WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR—  
THE BRITONS.

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TACITUS—ERSE POEMS.

LET us now enter upon the different epochs of the English language and literature. The reader will easily place, upon the sketch which I am about to give, the authors and their works, as I make them pass successively before him. It begins with the Anglo-Saxon epoch ; but, before we turn to that, let us see whether there are not traces left of the language of the Britons during the domination of the Romans.

Cæsar treats only of the manners of those islanders. Tacitus has preserved some speeches of British chiefs. Passing over the harangue of Caractacus to Claudius, I shall only quote some passages of the speech delivered by Galgacus in the mountains of Caledonia.

“ The day of your liberty dawns. Deprived of our land and prevented by the Roman fleet from seeking refuge on the sea, nothing is left to us but arms. In the most remote corner of our deserts, out of sight even of the subjugated country, our eyes have not been shocked by the contact with foreign domination. Placed at the extremities of the earth and of liberty, hitherto the renown of our solitude and its fastnesses has defended us: now the limits of Britain are perceptible. Whatever is unknown is magnificent; but beyond Caledonia there is no nation to seek, nothing but waves and rocks, and the Romans are upon us . . . .

“ In the family of slaves, the last comer is the drudge of his companions. We, the latest and consequently the most despised in this universe of ancient servitude, we have nothing to expect but death, for we have neither lands, nor mines, nor ports, where they can keep us to labour. Courage then, ye, who cherish life or

glory ! The wives of the Romans have not followed them ; their fathers are not there to make them ashamed of flight : they look trembling at this sky, this sea, these forests, which they never before beheld. Cooped up and already conquered, they are delivered into our hands by our gods . . . Here your chief, here your army—there, tribute, labour, the sufferings of slavery. Eternal misery or revenge await you on this field of battle. March to the fight ; think of your ancestors, think of your posterity.”

After Tacitus, who has paraphrased a few expressions of Galgacus, preserved by tradition in the Roman camps, an abyss opens. Fifteen centuries pass before we again hear of the genius of the Britons, and then how ! Macpherson, transporting Ossian, the Irish bard, to Scotland, disfiguring the true history of Fingal, tacking three or four fatters of old ballads to a fiction, represents to us a poet of Caledonia with as much reality as Tacitus has represented a warrior. Since, after all, we have nothing but Ossian ; since the fragments, which might be given as compositions of the bards, belong rather to different kinds of minstrels whom I shall notice presently ; I am forced to avail myself of Macpherson’s work. But as the poems which

John Smith added to those published by the first editor of the Scottish bard are less known, I shall extract, in preference, a few passages from them.

“ Crimoina heard the tale of the tomb, she saw her Dargo brought home as dead. Silent and pale she stood, as the pillar of ice that hangs in the season of cold from the brow of Mora’s rock. At length she took the harp and touched it soft in praise of her love. Dargo would rise, but we forbade till the song should cease, for it was sweet as the voice of the wounded swan, when she sings away her soul in death, and feels in her breast the fatal dart of the hunter. Her companions flock mournful around: they assuage her pain with their song, and bid the souls of swans convey her to the airy lake of the clouds. Its place is above the mountains of Morven.

“ ‘ Bend,’ she said, ‘ from your clouds, ye fathers of Dargo; bend and carry him to the place of your rest. And ye, maids of Trenmor’s airy land, prepare the bright robe of mist for my love. O Dargo, why have I loved, why was I beloved, so much! Our souls were one, our hearts grew together, and how can I survive when they are now divided?—We were two flowers that grew in the cleft of the rock; and our

dewy heads amidst sun-beams smiled. The flowers were two, but their root was one. The virgins of Cona saw them and turned away their foot. They are comely, they said, but lovely. The deer in his course leaped over them; and the roe forbore to crop them. But the wild boar relentless came, he tore up the one with his deadly tusk. The other bends over it his drooping head, and the beauty of both, like the dry herb before the sun, is decayed.

“ ‘My sun on Morven now is set and the darkness of death dwells around me in all its smiling beauty. But, ere evening, it is set to rise no more; and leaves me in one cold, eternal night. Alas! my Dargo! why art thou so soon to set? Why is thy late smiling face overcast with so thick a cloud? Why is thy warm heart so soon grown cold, and thy tongue of music grown so mute! Thy hand, which so lately shook the spear in the battle’s front, there lies cold and stiff: and thy foot, this morning the foremost in the fatal chace, there lies dead as the earth it trod. From afar, over seas, hills, and dales, have I followed till this day, my love! thy steps. In vain did my father look for my return; in vain did my mother mourn my absence. Their eye was often on the sea; the rocks often heard their cry. But I have

been deaf, O my parents, to your voice ; for my thoughts were fixed on Dargo. O that death would repeat on me his stroke ! O that the wild boar had also torn Crimoina's breast ! Then should I mourn on Morven no more, but joyfully go with my love on his cloud !

“ ‘ Last night I slept on the heath by thy side ; is there not room, this night, in thy shroud ? Yes, beside thee I will lay me down ; with thee, this night, too, I will sleep, my love, my Dargo ! ’

“ We heard the faltering of her voice ; we heard the faint note dying in her hand. We raised Dargo from his place. But it was too late. Crimoina was no more. The harp dropped from her hand. Her soul she breathed out in the song. She fell beside her Dargo.”

Every reader may believe what he pleases of the translations from the Caledonian by Tacitus and John Smith. The historians are greater liars than the poets, without excepting Tacitus, who, however, poured his burning words upon tyrants, as quick lime is thrown upon corpses for the purpose of consuming them.

#### ANGLO-SAXONS AND DANES.

THE Anglo-Saxons having succeeded the Romans, and the Danes having come in their turn to the partition of Great Britain, it would be almost impossible to take a separate view of literature during the epoch of the Anglo-Saxons and that of the Danes ; I shall therefore treat of them together.

The Danes took with them their Scalds : these mingled with the Welsh Bards. In Wales there were three things belonging to a free man that could not be seized for debt—his horse, his sword, and his harp. Whole nations, in their heroic age, are poets : people sang in battle, they sang at entertainments, they sang before death ; they dreaded, above all things, dying in their beds, like women. Starcather, not having been fortunate enough to meet with death in fight, put a gold chain round his neck, and

declared that he would give it to the first passenger who would have the charity to rid him of his head. Siward, the Danish earl of Northumberland, ashamed of growing old, and fearing lest he should be carried off by disease, said to his friends : “ Put on me my coat of mail ; gird my sword by my side ; place my helmet on my head, my buckler in my left hand, my gilt battle-axe in my right ; that I may fall in the garb of a warrior.”

On the field of battle, the sound of hymns, accompanied with the clash of arms, burst forth in so awful a manner that the Danes made their horses deaf lest they should be frightened by it.

Religion was on a level with these poetic manners. Fifteen young women and eighteen young men were one day playing at ball in a churchyard. Robert, the priest, who was reading mass, begged them to retire, but they only laughed at him. The priest prayed to God and St. Magnus to punish the impious crew by obliging them to sing and dance for a whole year. His prayer was granted. One of the party took by the hand his sister who was his partner in the dance ; the arm came away from her body, but she lost not a drop of blood and kept dancing on. For the whole year round the dancers felt neither cold nor heat, neither



hunger, thirst, nor weariness; nor did their garments become the worse for wear. The incessant motion of their feet wore down the mould to such a degree that they sank in it to the waist. At the year's end, Bishop Hubert broke the invisible spell which bound the dancers, who immediately fell into a profound sleep, which lasted three days and three nights.

An old woman, named Thorbiorga, a famous sorceress, was summoned to the castle of Earl Torchill, to tell when the plague and the famine which were ravaging his domains should cease. Thorbiorga arrived towards evening; she had on a gown of green cloth buttoned from top to bottom; a collar of glass beads; a black lamb-skin lined with a white cat-skin on her head; calf-skin shoes, the hairy side inward, tied with leathern thongs; gloves of white cat-skin, the hair inside; an *huntandic* girdle from which hung a pouch full of magical scrawls. The sorceress supported her feeble body by means of a staff with a copper ferule. She was received with high respect: placed upon an elevated seat, she was treated with goat's milk porridge and the stewed hearts of different animals. The next day, Thorbiorga, after arranging her astrological instruments according to the celestial theme, ordered her young attendant, Godreda,

to sing the magic invocation called *vardlokur*. Godreda obeyed, and sang in a voice so sweet that the household of Earl Torchill was quite transported. In those days most unfortunate would have been the wight who had not been born a poet.

Kings themselves were poets. Alfred the Great, Canute the Great, were the pride of the Walkiries. The Bards and the Scalds were feasted at the tables of princes, who loaded them with presents. "If I were to ask my host for the moon," exclaimed a bard, "he would give it to me." Poets have always shown a fondness for the moon.

Cædmon dreamt in verse, and composed poems in his sleep: what is poetry but dreaming!

"I know," said another bard, "a song that will soften iron; I know a song that will still the storm." These inspired personages were known by their looks: they seemed to be intoxicated: their air and their gestures were designated by a particular term: *skallviengl*—poetic frenzy.

The Saxon Chronicle narrates in verse a victory gained by the Anglo-Saxons over the Danes; and the History of Norway preserves the apotheosis of a pirate of Denmark slain, with

five more pirate chieftains, on the coast of Britain.

“ King Ethelstan, the chief of chiefs, who confers collars on the brave; and his brother, the noble Edmond, have fought at Brunan Burgh with the edge of the sword. They have cloven the wall of bucklers; they have vanquished warriors of renown, the race of the Scots and the men of ships.

“ Olaf has fled with few of his people, and he has wept upon the seas. The foreigner will not relate this battle, seated by his fire, surrounded by his family; for his kinsmen fell there, and his friends returned not from it. The Kings of the North, in their councils, will lament that their warriors dared to play at the game of slaughter with the sons of Edward.

“ King Ethelstan and his brother Edmond returned to the land of Wessex. They leave behind them the raven feeding on carcasses, the black raven with pointed beak, and the hoarse-voiced toad, and the eagle hungering for carrion, and the greedy kite, and the dun wolf of the woods.

“ Never was such slaughter seen in this island; never were more men slain by the edge

of the sword, since the Saxons and the Angles came from the East across the ocean, and landed in Britain — those noble artisans of war, who conquered the Welsh and subdued the country.”

Now for the song in honour of the pirate :—

“ I have had a vision : I saw myself at day-break in the hall of Valhalla, preparing all things for the reception of the men slain in battle.

“ I awakened the heroes from their sleep ; I told them to rise, to set the benches, to place the drinking cups, as for the coming of a king.

“ ‘ Whence comes all this noise ? ’ cries Bragg ; ‘ how is it that so many people are stirring, and that they are moving all the benches ? ’ ‘ It is because Erik is coming,’ replies Odin ; ‘ I expect him. Rise and go to meet him.’

“ ‘ But why doth his coming please thee more than that of any other king ? ’—‘ It is because he has reddened his sword with gore in many places ; it is because his bloody sword has been brandished in many lands.’

“ ‘ I salute thee, Erik, brave warrior ; enter.

Welcome to this abode! Tell us what kings accompany thee. How many come with thee from the fight?’

“ ‘ Five kings are coming,’ replies Erik, ‘ and I am the sixth. ’ ”

I could not do better than borrow this translation from the “ History of the Conquest of England by the Normans.” Let us benefit by the labours of Mr. A. Thierry, but let us learn from him what they have cost him. Our admiration will increase with our gratitude.

“ I had entered with ardour into a series of inquiries quite new for me. How extensive soever might have been the circle of these labours, my complete blindness would not have prevented me from travelling through it. I was resigned as much as a resolute man ought to be: I had made friendship with darkness. But other trials came upon me.

“ . . . . . Blind and suffering without hope and almost without cessation, I can bear this testimony, which, coming from me, will not be called in question--that there is in the world something more valuable than material enjoyments, than fortune, than health itself, that is, devotion to science.”

Impressive and affecting words for which I do not reproach myself with having digressed from my subject.

I have already said something on this point in my "Historical Studies." The Norman mariners themselves sang their voyages :

" I was born in the high lands of Norway, among people skilled in the management of the bow ; but I preferred spreading my sail, the terror of the husbandmen of the coast. I have also sped my bark among rocks, *far from the abodes of men.*"

This Scald of the seas might justly boast thus, since the Danes discovered Winland or America, *far from the abodes of men.*

Angelbert mourned over the battle of Fontenay and the death of Hugh, the bastard son of Charlemagne. Such was the frenzy of poesy that we find verses of all measures even in diplomatic documents of the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. A Teutonic song records a victory gained over the Normans in 881 by Louis, son of Louis the Stammerer. " I knew a king, called the Seigneur Louis, who served God with all his heart, because God rewarded him. . . He grasped his lance and his buckler, quickly mounted his horse, and flew to take vengeance on his enemies." Every body knows that a collection of

the ancient songs of the Germans was made by command of Charlemagne.

Expressions originating in the forests are essentially poetical as far as regards passions and images; they degenerate as they become more polished. The national songs of the barbarians were accompanied by the sound of the fife, the drum, and the bagpipe. The Scythians, at their festivities, twanged the strings of their bows. The guitar was in general use in Gaul, and the harp in the island of the Britons. The disdainful ear of the Greek and the Roman perceived, in the musical entertainments of the Franks and the Britons, nothing but the croak of ravens or inarticulate sounds which had no affinity to the human voice. When the nations of the North had triumphed, they were forced to change their tone, to deem this language harmonious, and to comprehend the commands which the master gave to the slave.

The military rhythms conclude with the song of Roland, the last song of barbarous Europe. "At the battle of Hastings," says the great historical painter whom I have quoted, "a Norman named Taillefer, spurred his horse to the front of the battle, and commenced the song of the exploits, famous throughout all Gaul, of Charle-

magne and Roland. As he sang, he played with his sword, throwing it high into the air, and catching it with his right hand. The Normans repeated these strains, or cried "God help! God help!"

" Taillefer qui mult bien chantoit  
 Sor un cheval qui tost alout,  
 Devant le Duc alout chantoit  
 De Karlemagne et de Rollant  
 Et d'Olivier et des vassaux  
 Qui moururent à Roncevaux."

These rhymes are by Wace, but Geoffrey Gaimar gives many more particulars concerning Taillefer. It is curious to observe how customs change and are nevertheless perpetuated. The drum-major, who tosses his cane into the air and catches it at the head of his regiment, is a tradition of the military *jongleur*.

There exists another instance, more ancient than even the battle of Hastings, of the provocations of military song. In 1054, William defeated the French at Mortemer in Normandy. One of his servants, climbing a tree, kept crying all the night :

Franceis, Franceis, levez ! levez !  
 Tenez vos veies ; trop dormez ;  
 Allez vos amis enterrer  
 Ki sont occis à Mortemer.



This singular herald-at-arms, thus insulting the vanquished enemy from the top of an oak, exhibits a striking picture of the simple manners of those times.



## THIRD AND FOURTH EPOCHS

OF

### ENGLISH LITERATURE.

ANGLO-NORMAN AND NORMAN-FRENCH EPOCHS FROM WILLIAM  
THE CONQUEROR, AND FROM HENRY II. TO HENRY VIII.

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#### ANGLO-NORMAN TROUVÈRES

AFTER the Norman conquest, the middle ages begin, and the aspect of things is changed. England has undergone in its language revolutions unknown to other countries. The Teutonic of the Angles drove back the Gaelic of the Britons into the mountains of Wales; the Danish, Scandinavian, or Gothic, cooped up the Erse among the Scotch highlanders, and adulterated the pure Saxon; the Norman, or the old French, confined the Anglo-Saxon to the conquered English.

Under William and his first successors, people wrote and sung in Latin, Caledonian, Welsh, Anglo-Saxon, the Roman of the trouvères, and

sometimes the Roman of the troubadours. There were poets, bards, jongleurs, minstrels, conteors, fableors, gesteors, harpeors. Poetry assumed all sorts of forms, and gave to its productions all sorts of names : lays, ballads, rotruenges, carols, chansons de gestes, tales, sirventois, satires, fabliaux, jeux-partis, dictiés. So far back as the sixth century, Fortunatus gives the name of lays, *leudi*, to the songs of the barbarians. There were romances of love, romances of chivalry, romances of St. Graal, romances of the Round Table, romances of Charlemagne, romances of Alexander, and sacred poems. In the " Dream of the God of Love," the bridge leading to the palace of the deity is composed of *rotruenges*, stanzas accompanied with the viol ; the planks are made of *dits* and *chansons*, the rafters of *sounds of the harp*, and the piles of *sweet British lays*.

Robert de Courthose, Duke of Normandy, eldest son of William the Conqueror, who was confined for twenty-eight years in the castle of Cardiff on the sea shore, learned the language of the Welsh bards. From the windows of his prison, he saw an oak towering above the wood which covered the promontory of Penarth. This oak he thus apostrophised : " Oak, planted in the bosom of the woods, whence thou beholdest the

waves of the Severn battling with the sea ; oak, nursed on these heights, where blood has flowed in streams ; oak, who hast lived amidst tempests, wo to the man who is not old enough to die !”

Another English prince, Richard Cœur-de-Lion was crowned as a troubadour. He had composed in his mother tongue, the Roman language of the south, a sirvante on his captivity at Worms. Among the poets his contemporaries, Richard is not the son of Eleonore of Guienne, but of the Princess of Antioch, found in the open sea, in a vessel entirely of gold, and the rigging of which was made of white silk. This vessel is the great *serpent* of the romancers. When the children of Arabian women were naughty, they threatened them with *King Richard*, and when a skittish horse started, the Saracen rider clapped spurs into him, saying, “ Did you imagine it was King Richard ?” William Blondel (who must not be confounded with the trouvère Blondel de Nesle) was one of Richard’s minstrels : we have not his faithful song, the tradition only of which has been handed down to us.

Nothing was more celebrated than the popular history of the *Marquis au court nez*.

William, an Anglo-Norman trouvère, has left in his poem on the *Joies de Notre Dame* a curious

description of Rome and its monuments in the eleventh century. He composed a very ingenious little poem on these three words—smoke, rain, and woman, which drive a man from his home : that home is heaven ; smoke, pride , rain, covetousness ; woman, lust ; three things which exclude from heaven, the home of man.

A monk of Mont St. Michel in the description which he gives of the diversions of that monastery, (then under English domination) tells us that “ below Avranches, towards Bretagne, there was once the forest of Cuokelunde, full of stags, but where now there is nothing but fish. In the forest there had been a monument.” The poet places the irruption of the sea during the reign of Childebert.

Geoffrey Gaimar, author of the history of the kings of the Anglo-Saxons, borrowed from the Welsh bards the Brut of England, which Wace translated from the Latin of Geoffrey of Monmouth. The latter, according to the Abbé de la Rue, had translated his version from the Low Breton original, carried to England by Walter Galenius, archdeacon of Oxford.

Brut or Brutus is a great grandson of Æneas, first king of the Britons. From King Brut was descended Arthur or Artus, King of Armorica, whose return we French Bretons expect, as the

Jews do the coming of the Messiah. Arthur instituted the order of Knights of the Round Table. All the knights of this order have their history ; hence it is that the first story has what the minstrels term *branches*, as in Ariosto one story begets another. Arthur and his knights are sketched after Charlemagne and his chevaliers. Is it not inconceivable how people can still seek the origin of these marvels in the false Turpin, who wrote in 1095, without perceiving that it exists in the history of the *Faits et Gestes de Karle-le-Grand*, compiled in 884 by the monk of St. Gall ?

The *Roman du Rou* is likewise by Robert Wace. Here is to be found the authentic history of the fairies of my country, of the forest of Bréchéliant, full of tigers and lions : the *wild man* reigns there, and King Arthur strives to pierce him with his great sword, *Escalibar*. In this forest of Bréchéliant murmurs the fountain of Barenton. A golden bowl is fastened to the aged oak whose boughs overhang the fountain : to raise a storm, you need only take up some water in the bowl and spill a few drops of it. Robert Wace had the curiosity to visit the forest, but could discover none of these things :—

Fol m'en revins, fol y allai.

A charm improperly used caused the death of Merlin, the enchanter, in the Forest of Bréchéliant. A pious and sincere Breton, I do not place Bréchéliant near Quintin, like the Roman du Rou; I take Bréchéliant to be Becherel, near Combourg. More fortunate than Wace, I have seen Morgen the fairy, and met Tristan and Yseult; I have taken up water from the spring in my hand—the golden bowl I never could find—and, throwing that water in the air, I have raised storms. In my Memoirs it will be seen what effect those storms have had upon me.

The anonymous trouvère, the continuator of Brut of England, is an Anglo-Saxon: he speaks with bitter animosity of William, who came “not to erect towns, but to destroy them; not to build hamlets, but to sow forests.” The poem contains an ingenious episode.

The Conqueror wishes to know what shall be the fate of his posterity. He convokes an assembly of high personages and the principal ecclesiastics of England and Normandy. The council, in great embarrassment, sends separately for the King's three sons. Robert de Courthose appears first. “Fair son,” says a learned clerk to him, “if the Almighty had made thee a bird, what bird wouldst thou be?”



—“ A sparrow-hawk,” replies Robert. “ That bird, for its courage is valued by princes, loved by knights, carried on the hand by ladies.”

After Robert de Courthose comes William Rufus. He would have “ wished to be an eagle, because the eagle is the king of birds.”

After William Rufus appeared Henry, his younger brother. He would have been “ a starling, because the starling is a simple bird that does no harm to any one, and flies about with others of its kind : if it is put into a cage it comforts itself by singing.”

Courthose, courageous as the sparrow-hawk, died in prison ; William, a king, like the eagle, was cruel, and came to a bad end ; Henry was mild, beneficent, like the starling : he had his troubles, but they were soothed by time—a long sad complaint, and much to the same tune.



## THE ANGLO-NORMAN TROUVÈRES CONTINUED.

### TERRESTRIAL PARADISE—DESCENT TO HELL.

AN anonymous trouvère describes the voyage of St. Bradan, an Irishman, to the terrestrial Paradise. The saint, accompanied by his monks, discovers in an island the paradise of birds: these birds respond to the psalms sung by the saint. They were probably the ancestors of the bird in the gardens of Armida.

In another island is a tree, with leaves of a pale red. White birds are perched upon the tree. One of these birds, being questioned by St. Bradan, gives this answer: "My companions and I are angels expelled from heaven with Lucifer. We obeyed him as our chief in his quality of archangel; but, as we did not share his pride, God has only banished us to

this island." Here is the repentant angel of Klopstock.

From the paradise of birds, St. Bradan, still attended by his monks, proceeds to another island, in which stands the abbey of St. Alban.

He again puts to sea, is attacked by a serpent, which a beast sent by God comes and battles with, and afterwards by a gryphon which is swallowed by a dragon. Strange fishes assemble to listen to the hermit celebrating the feast of St. Peter on the open sea.

The bark arrives at hell. The accursed region is enveloped in darkness: smoke, sparks, and flames form a veil impenetrable to the light of day. On a steep rock is perceived a naked man; his flesh, torn by the scourge, is ready to drop from the bones; his face is covered by a cloth. This wretch is Judas. He describes to the saint his inexpressible torments; there is a fresh one for every day in the week.

Marie, surnamed of France, by whom we have a collection of lays, turned into verse the Purgatory of St. Patrick of Ireland, which Henry, a monk of Saltry, originally composed in Latin, in the 12th century. The descent to the place of expiation was by a cavern, over which St. Patrick built a convent.

Two other trouvères took up the same subject. They conduct O'Wein to purgatory ; the knight passes by hell, the torments of which he witnesses, arrives at the terrestrial paradise, and approaches the celestial.

Adam de Ross sings in his turn the descent of St. Paul to hell. The archangel Michael performs the office of guide to the apostle. " My good man," says he to him, " follow me without fear and without suspicion. God commands me to show thee the gnashing of teeth, the pangs, and the anguish, which sinners undergo."

Michael goes first : Paul follows, repeating psalms. At the gate of hell grows a tree of fire ; from its branches hang the souls of misers and scandal-mongers. The air is full of flying imps who drag the wicked to the furnace.

The two travellers pursue their way through the desolate regions. The archangel explains to the apostle the torments inflicted for different crimes ; from the bosom of an immense forge, a vast mine, in which burning furnaces roar and sparkle, issue rivers of molten metals, in which demons are disporting. The further the envoys of heaven penetrate into the bowels of the earth, the more terrible become the torments. St. Paul is filled with pity.

They arrive at the mouth of a pit sealed with seven seals. The archangel removes the seals, and pushes back the apostle, till the pestilential vapour exhaled from the pit has passed off. From the bottom of this pit ascend the moans of the greatest sinners. St. Paul inquires how long their punishment shall last. "One hundred and forty thousand years," replies St. Michael, "though I am not quite sure of it."

The apostle begs the archangel to implore the Almighty to mitigate the punishment of these reprobate spirits. Their prayers, joined by those of other compassionate angels, are granted: God ordains that, in future, the tortures shall be suspended from Saturday till Monday morning. St. Bradan, in his voyage to the terrestrial paradise, had obtained the same favour for Judas. The term for this suspension of punishment is the same as that fixed for the first truces, which were called *peace of God*.

The middle ages are not the time of style, properly so called, but they are the time of picturesque expression, of natural delineation, and of fertile invention. We see, with a smile of admiration, what simple nations derived from the creed that was taught them. To their strong, lively, vagabond imagination, their cruel manners, their indomitable courage, their

ill-repressed instinct of conquest and travel, the priests, missionaries, and poets, presented marvellous torments, everlasting perils, invasions to attempt, but without change of place, in unknown regions. The terrestrial paradise, which the christian muse showed in perspective to the barbarians, a place of delight where they could arrive only by a long road and after severe hardships, was like that Rome which they had formerly sought at the extremity of the world, amidst a thousand dangers, torch and sword in hand.

The voyage of Ulysses to the Cimmerian fields, and the descent of Æneas to Tartarus, comprehend the primitive idea of these fictions. This idea was communicated to the christian ages by classic literature ; it is met with throughout the whole of the middle ages, by the title of *visio inferni*. The tree of fire, from the branches of which are suspended the souls of the covetous, is the elm to which dreams resort in the vestibule of Tartarus. (*Æneid.* B. VI.)

The three works of the trouvère of St. Bradan, Marie of France, and Adam de Ross, remind one of the paradise, the purgatory, and the hell, of the *Divina Commedia*. St. Paul is conducted to hell by the archangel Michael, as

Dante by Virgil. St. Paul is filled with pity, like Dante. St. Bradan finds Judas, as Dante met with him, the most tortured of the damned. In the trouvère, the pains of Judas are varied (the trouvère fixes the duration of his torments at one hundred and forty thousand years); in the poet, his misery is uniform, constant, as eternity.

Cancellieri asserts that Dante derived the ground-work of his composition from the *Visions of Hell* by Alberic, a monk of Monte Cassino, about the year 1120.



#### MIRACLES—MYSTERIES—SATIRES.

THE miracles and mysteries formed an essential part of the literature of all christian countries, from the tenth to the sixteenth century. Geoffrey, abbot of St. Alban's, composed the miracle of St. Catherine in the language of Oil: this was, as far as we yet know, the first drama written in French. The author had it performed in a church in 1110, and borrowed the copes of St. Alban's abbey for the use of the actors.

The clergy encouraged these exhibitions, as conveying public instruction in the history of christianity. The Grecian theatre had the same religious origin. The miracles and mysteries were performed in broad daylight, in churches, in the court-yards of courts of justice, in cemeteries, and in the crossings of streets in towns.

They were announced from the pulpit by the preacher, and frequently an abbot or a bishop presided at them with the crosier in his hand. The entertainment sometimes concluded with fights of animals, jousts, wrestling, dancing, and racing. Clement VI. granted one thousand years' indulgence to those pious persons who should attend the series of sacred dramas at Chester.

These performances were for the commonalty what tournaments were for the nobles. The middle ages observed a much greater number of solemnities than modern times ; genuine enjoyments are every where the offspring of national creeds. The revolution has not had the power to create a single durable festival ; and if there are still popular holidays in spite of incredulity, they all belong to the old christianity ; mankind do not attach themselves strongly to any pleasures but such as are at once recollections and hopes. Philosophy makes men dull ; an atheist people has but one festival—that of death.

Theatrical representations passed from the clergy to the laity. The merchant drapers of London exhibited the *Creation*. Adam and Eve appeared stark naked. The dyers enacted the *Deluge*. Noah's wife refused to go into the ark, and soundly boxed her husband's ears.

The course of lectures which M. Magnin is at this moment delivering will complete the circle of knowledge respecting the mysteries, and the epoch which preceded them—a subject replete with interest, and inherent in the bowels of our history.

Satires occupied a large place in the poetry of Norman England. The ladies, whatever respect was paid them by the knights, received very little from the jongleurs; these reproached them with their fondness for dress and dogs. “If you are going to visit a lady, wrap yourself up well, nay, borrow the cowl of St. Peter of Rome; for the moment you enter you will be attacked by dogs of all sorts. You will encounter the little ones leaping like squirrels, and enormous greyhounds rampant as lions.” (Abbé de la Rue.)

The ladies are also abused in the “Wedding of the Devil’s Daughter,” and in the “Apparition of St. Peter,” a poem against marriage. The pope, the bishops, the monks, the nobles, the rich, the physicians, the different conditions of life come in for their share in the *Roman des Romans*, the *Bezant de Dieu*, the *Paternoster des Gourmands*, the *Litanies des Vilains*, the *Credo du Juif*, the *Epître et l’Evangile des Femmes*, and es-

pecially in those general satires which bear the name of *Bible*.

The *Crede* of Piers Plowman\* is a bitter satire on the mendicant monks :

Than turned I ayen when I hadde al ytoted,  
 And fond on a freitoure a frere on a benche ;  
 A greet choul and a grym, growen as a tonne,  
 With a face so fat as a ful bleddere,  
 Blown bretful of brethe, and as a bagge honged  
 On bothen his chekes, and his chyn with a chollede  
 So greet as a gos ey, growen al of grece,  
 That al wagged his fleish, as a quick myre.

The nobility of both sexes sang, loved, enjoyed themselves, and at times did not believe too firmly in God. The Vicomte de Baucaire threatens his son Aucassin with hell, unless he parts from Nicolette, his mistress. The youth replies that he cares very little about paradise, full of idle half-naked monks, filthy old priests, and ragged hermits ; he would rather go to hell, where great kings, paladins, and barons, hold their plenary court ; there he shall find beautiful

\* Piers Plowman is a generic name, which most of the poets of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries have attached to their satires : thus there is the " Vision of Piers Plowman," by Robert Langland, the " Crede of Piers Plowman," composed about the year 1390 &c. These different works must not be confounded one with another.

women, who have loved minstrels and jongleurs, fond of wine and mirth. A troubadour says his *Pater*, that God may grant to all lovers the pleasure which he enjoyed one night with his OGINE.



CHANGE IN LITERATURE—STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE  
TWO LANGUAGES.

THE epoch of Anglo-Gallic, Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman trouvères, troubadours, jongleurs, and minstrels, extended over a period of nearly three hundred years, from William the Conqueror to Edward III. Feudality altered by degrees its spirit and its customs ; the crusades enlarged the circle of ideas and images ; poetry followed the impulse of manners ; the organ, the harp, and the bagpipe, acquired new sounds in the abbeys, in the castles, and on the mountains. Edward I., according to popular tradition, doomed to death the Welsh minstrels, who kept alive in the breasts of the ancient Britons the love of country and hatred for the stranger. Gray represents the last of these bards, commencing his song with these words :

Ruin seize thee, ruthless king !

Lays, satirical poems (sirvantois), versified romances, &c., became detached poetical compo-

sitions, abridged histories, proportioned to the extent of the memory. You perceive, from the very form of the poems, as well as the style and the expression of the sentiments, that a revolution has been effected, that centuries have passed away.

The introduction of Provençal and French poetry, by the aid of Norman troubadours and jongleurs, was attended with the inconvenience of depriving the Saxon compositions of their native originality; they became nothing more than an imitation, occasionally, no doubt, a delightful one, of a foreign nature. A poet compares the object of his love with a bird whose plumage assumes the hues of every flower and precious stone. Too discreet to make known his mistress to the profane vulgar, the lover gracefully says:

Hire nome is in a note of the nyghtingale;

and he sends the inquisitive to Jean to enquire this name.

The language of Oil, in use among the conquerors, holding the spoils of aristocratic wealth, recorded the deeds of knights and the loves of noble ladies. William the Conqueror, according to Sugulph, abhorred the English language. He ordered that the laws and judicial acts should be



written in French, and that children in schools should be taught in French the first rudiments of literature.

I have said that French and English properties were mixed together by the Conquest, and that French proprietors transferred their idiom to the conquered country. This is proved by the fact, that the religious of Brittany, of the Mans, of Normandy, possessed convents and abbeys in Great Britain; that families from the Ponthieu, Normandy, and Brittany, and, subsequently, from all the provinces brought by Eleanor of Guienne, or conquered by Edward III. and Henry V., possessed lands in the Anglo-Norman kingdom.

William the Bastard bestowed upon his son-in-law, Alain, Duke of Bretagne, four hundred and forty-two lordships in Yorkshire; they, subsequently, composed the earldom of Richmond (Domesday book). The Dukes of Bretagne, successors of Alain, infeoffed these domains to Breton knights, younger sons of the families of Rohan, Tinteniac, Châteaubriand, Goyon, Montboucher; and long afterwards the earldom of Richmond (honor Richemundiæ) was erected into a dukedom under Charles II., in favour of one of his own natural sons.

The French language despised and warred against that of the Anglo-Saxons. "At one time a Saxon bishop was expelled from his see, because he was ignorant of French; at another, monastic charters were torn to pieces, because they were written in Saxon; Norman judges would condemn an accused person unheard, because he spoke English only; for the same reason they would strip a family of their rightful inheritance, and dole out to it, as a favour, a small portion of its property." (Thierry).

The two rival languages were as the standards of two parties, beneath which a contest of extermination was carried on. It was a wide spread struggle; they supplied the barbarisms of the Latin which was then spoken; William Wyrcester wrote to the Duke of York: "et ARRIVAVIT apud Redbanke prope Cestriam," and he "arrived at Redbank, near Chester." John Rous said that the Marquis of Dorset and Sir Thomas Grey were compelled to fly, for having contrived the death of the Duke (the Duke of York, Regent under Henry VI.), Protector of England, quod ipsi CONTRIVISSENT mortem ducis protectoris Angliæ.

Both languages occasionally alternate in the same practical composition and rhyme together;

the jongleurs constantly extolled the beauty of the French ; they lauded

Mainte belle dame courtoise  
 Bien parlant en langue françoise ;

adding :

Il est sages, biaux et courtois,  
 Et gentiel home de par francois. .  
 Miex valt sa parole françoise  
 Que de Glocestre la ricoise.

---

Seïez de bouere et cortois  
 Et sachez bien parler françois

The *françois* always brought in the rhyme of *courtois*, to the manifest displeasure of the Anglo-Saxons.

Edward I. paid the most respectful attention to the reading of a Latin bull of Boniface VIII., and ordered it to be translated into French, because he had not understood its meaning.

Peter de Blois informs us that, in the beginning of the twelfth century, Gillibert was ignorant of English; being well versed, however, in Latin and French, he preached to *the people* on Sundays and holydays. Wadington, a poet and historian of the thirteenth century, intimates that he writes his works in French, and not in English, in order that he may be the better understood by *high* and *low*, a proof that the

foreign idiom was on the point of stifling the ancient idiom of the land.

There exists in the Harleian library a French and epistolary grammar for all professions, another in French verse, and a Roman-Latin glossary.

French works were occasionally translated into English; this, in the language of the poets, was done through commiseration for the *lewed*, the low and ignorant class.

For lewed men I undyrtoke  
In Englyshe tonge to make this boke.

The poor Scaldes, beaten by the troubadours of the victors, and living retired amongst the vanquished, laboured, by means of the multitude, to recover the ascendancy. They celebrated plebeian adventures, and in a series of pictures brought *Piers Ploughman* on the stage. Such was the line of demarcation between rival muses and rival people. The national muse taunted the gentleman with speaking only the French language:

French use this gentleman,  
And never English can.

A proverb said: "Jack needs nought but a knowledge of French to set up for a gentleman."

These divisions were of remote date. The Anglo-Saxon Earl Guallève (the renowned Waltheof) had been beheaded, during the Conqueror's reign, for having joined in the conspiracy of Roger, Earl of Hereford and Ralph, Earl of Norfolk. Guallève, Earl of Northampton, was the son of Siward, Duke of Northumbria. His body was removed by Abbot Ulfketel to Croyland. Having been taken up a few years afterwards, it was found entire, with the head united to the trunk; a slight streak alone indicated where the steel had severed the neck; by this collar of martyrdom, the Anglo-Saxons acknowledged Guallève for a saint. The Normans ridiculed the miracle. Audin, a monk of that nation, openly declared that the son of Siward had been no better than a traitor, and had justly forfeited his life. Audin suddenly died of a bowel complaint.

Abbot Goisfred, successor of Ingulf, had a vision. He beheld one night near the Earl's tomb Bartholomew the Apostle, and Guthlac the Anchorite, clothed in white garments. Bartholomew, holding Guallève's head, which had been restored to its place, said: "He was not beheaded." Guthlac, standing at Guallève's feet, replied, "He was once an Earl." The Apostle rejoined, "He is now a King." The

Anglo-Saxon population flocked in pilgrimage to the tomb of their fellow countryman. This story exhibits in a striking manner the separation and antipathy of the two nations. (*Orderic Vital.*)

In fact, the use of the French language is, according to Milton, of a much more remote antiquity, for he fixes the date of it in the reign of Edward the Confessor.

“ Then,” says he, began the English to lay aside their own ancient customs and in many things to imitate French manners, the great peers to speak French in their houses, in French to write their bills and letters, as a great piece of gentility, ashamed of their own: a presage of their subjection shortly to that people, whose fashions and language they affected so slavishly.” (*Hist. of England.* Book VI.)

RETURN, BY LAW, TO THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE.

AT the very moment when the French language was obtaining the ascendancy, owing to the victories of Edward III, to the permanency of English armies on the French soil, to the occupation of cities wrested from our country, this monarch, standing in need of the English *édaille* and *ribaudaille*, granted the use of the insular idiom in *civil pleadings*; nevertheless, the judgments resulting from these pleadings were always delivered in the French idiom. The very act of Parliament of 1362, which directs that the English idiom shall thenceforward be in use, is drawn up in French. It required nothing short of the scourges of heaven to combine with the laws in extinguishing the language of the conquerors; for it is remarked that on occasion of the great plague of 1349 the French idiom first began to decline.

Whilst Edward tolerated for his own purposes a very limited use of the Anglo-Saxon, he continued, as well as his court, to speak the French language. His mother was a princess of France, in whose name he asserted his right to the crown of St. Louis; the field of battle presents no difference between the combatants: in both armies, brothers are opposed to brothers, fathers to their children; Créci, Poitiers, Agincourt, exhibit no other picture than that of the disasters of a wide spread civil war. French was spoken by Philippa of Hainault, the consort of Edward III; she had Froissart for her secretary, and the curate of Lestines recorded in charming French the loves of Edward and Alice of Salisbury.

The guests of the *vœu du héron* converse in French; the too famous Robert of Artois is the hero of the feast.

By pronouncing the word *voire*—yes—Edward had taken to Philip of Valois the French oath which he afterwards violated. “Sire, you became a man of the King of France, my master, for Guienne and its dependencies, which you acknowledge yourself to hold of him as a peer of France, agreeably to the form of treaties concluded between his predecessors and yours, and to what you and your ancestors have done to



his predecessors, Kings of France, in respect of the same duchy.”

After the battle of Créci had been fought, the slain were counted ; the narrative comes to us from an Englishman, Michael de Northburgh (*Avesburg hist.*) “ Fusrent mortz le Roi de Beaume (Bohême,) le Ducz de Loreigne, le Counte d’Alescun (d’Alençon) le Counte de Flandres, le Counte de Bloys, le Counte de Harcourt et ses deux filtz ; et Philippe de Valois et le Markis qu’est appelé le Elitz (Elu) du Romayns eschappèrent navfrés, à ceo qe homme (on) dist. La summe de bones gentz d’armes qui fusrent mortz en le chaumpe à ceste jour, sans comunes et pédailles (gens de pied) amonte à mille DXLII acomptés.”

“ The King of Bohemia, the Duke of Lorraine, the Count of Alençon, the Count of Flanders, the Count of Blois, the Count of Harcourt and his two sons, were amongst the dead ; Philip of Valois and the Marquis who is called the Elect of the Romans escaped, it is said, with heavy hearts. The number of able men at arms who perished in the field of battle this day, independently of common people and foot-soldiers-amounts to 1542 dully counted.”

Whilst the English were thus enumerating in

*French*, the slain of the *French* army, it must have occurred to their minds that they had not always been conquerors, and that they preserved in their language the very proof of their subjection, and of the fickleness of fortune.

In the acts of Rymer, the originals, from 1101 to about 1460, are almost exclusively in Latin and French. The numerous statutes of the reigns of Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI, and Edward IV were drawn up, transcribed upon the rolls, and promulgated in French. We must descend to a period as recent as the year 1425 to discover the first English act of the House of Commons. Nevertheless, when Henry V besieged Rouen in 1418, the ambassadors whom he affected an eagerness to send to the conferences of the Pont-de-l'Arche, declined the mission under the pretext of their *not knowing the language of the country*; but this fact is of no value; Henry *was averse to peace*. After his death, the soldiers of his army are found speaking the same language as the Maid of Orleans, and giving evidence for the prosecution, on the trial of that heroic woman.

At last, the Parliament convoked at Westminster the 20th of January 1483, under Richard III, drew up the bills in English, and its

example was followed by succeeding parliaments. The three kingdoms of Great Britain were on the verge of adopting the French language: Shakespeare would then have written in the idiom of Rabelais.

CHAUCER. GOWER. BARBOUR.

At the same time that the public tribunals reverted by command to the native dialect, Chaucer was called to restore the harp of the bards ; but Gower, his predecessor by a few years, and his rival, still composed in both languages, and proved far more successful in French than in English. Froissart, Gower's cotemporary, has nothing to compare in point of grace and elegance with this ballad of the poet beyond sea.

Amour est chose merveïleuse  
Dont nul porra avoir le droit certain :  
Amour de soi est la foi trichereuse  
Qui plus promet, et moins aporte en main ;  
Le riche est povre, et le courtois vilain,  
L'épine est molle et la rose est ortie,  
En touz terrours l'amour se justifie.

L'amer est doulz, la douceur furieuse,  
 Labour est aise, et le repos grevein,  
 Le doel plesant, la seurté périleuse,  
 Le halt est bas ; si est le bas haltein,  
 Quant l'en mieulx quide avoir, tout est en vein ;  
 Le ris en plour, le sens torne en folie,  
 En toutz errours l'amour se justifie.

. . . . .  
 Ore est amour sauvage, ore est soulein,  
 N'est qui d'amour poet dire la sotie,  
 Amour est serf, amour est souverain,  
 En toutz errours amour se justifie.

The English language of Chaucer is far from possessing the polish of old French, which already attains some degree of perfection in this minor species of literature. Nevertheless, the idiom of the Anglo-Saxon poet, a heterogeneous medley of various dialects, has become the stock of modern English.

A courtier, a partisan of the house of Lancaster, a Wickliffite, faithless to his convictions, a traitor to his party, now banished, then travelling in foreign countries, at one time in favour, in disgrace at another, Chaucer had met Petrarch at Padua ; instead of ascending to Saxon sources, he borrowed the spirit of his songs from the troubadours of Provence and the admirer of Laura, and from Boccaccio the character of his tales.

In the *Court of Love*, Chaucer's lady assures him of happiness in the month of May; every thing succeeds well with any one who can wait. The first of May arrives, the birds perform the service in honour of the love of the poet, who is threatened with happiness; the eagle sings the *Veni Creator*, and the nightingale sighs *Domine labia mea aperies*.

The *Ploughman*, still the groundwork of old Piers Ploughman, is not deficient in spirit; the clergy, ladies and lords, are the objects of the poet's attacks :

Such as can nat ysay ther crede,  
With prayer shul be made prelates;  
Nother canne ther gospell rede,  
Such shul now weldin hie estates.

There was more mercy in Maximine  
And Nero that never was gode,  
Than there is now in some of them,  
When he hath on his furred hode.

The poet composed at his castle of Dunnington, beneath *Chaucer's oak*, his "Canterbury Tales," in the style of the Decameron. The English literature of the middle ages was in its origin disfigured by the Roman literature; modern English literature disguised itself at his birth in that of Italy.

In France this mania for imitation may perhaps have deprived the age of Louis XIV of an originality which would otherwise have graced it ; but, as Racine, Boileau, Bossuet, Fénelon, had happily drawn from none but Greek and Latin sources, the genius of the great monarch was found to harmonize with the genius of Athens and of Rome ; from this high alliance sprung works which, drawn from models, must in all times serve as models for future works.

Wickliff must be numbered amongst the English authors of Chaucer's age. His first act of reform was an English translation of the Vulgate, which is still consulted as a monument of the language. Treading in his footsteps, Luther translated the Bible into German, but from the Hebrew text.

From the time of Alfred the Great, the founder of British liberty, the nation never was wholly excluded from power. The poems, chronicles, and romances of England have an element which was formerly wanting to ours, the popular element. The dramatic action in the works of our neighbours is vivified by it, and hence arise beauties of contrast with religious, aristocratic, and chivalric manners. One is much surprised to find in Barbour, the Scot, and cotemporary with Chaucer, the subjoined verses on liberty :

an immortal feeling seems to have imparted immortal youth to the language ; the style and the words still possess fresh vigour :

Ah, freedom is a noble thing !  
Freedom makes man to have a liking ;  
Freedom all solace to man gives.  
He lives at ease that freely lives ;  
A noble heart may have none ease,  
Nor nought else that may it please,  
If freedom fail.

Our French poets were then far removed from that dignity of language of which Dante had set an example in Italy.



SENTIMENT OF POLITICAL LIBERTY—WHY DIFFERENT  
AMONGST ENGLISH AND FRENCH WRITERS OF THE 16th  
AND 17th CENTURIES—PLACE HELD BY THE PEOPLE  
IN THE ANCIENT INSTITUTIONS OF THE  
TWO MONARCHIES.

POLITICAL institutions have not less influence than morals upon literature. If the sentiment of liberty displays itself less at this period amongst the writers of our country than amongst those of England, the cause is to be found in the dissimilar positions of both ; having attained an unequal degree of public power by different roads, they could not have the same language.

It is worth our while to pause here for a moment, in order to extract from poetry the philosophy of history, which is often found concealed under it ; we shall better understand how French and English poetry have been led to speak of liberty, or to leave it unnoticed, when we recall to mind the part which each people performed in its national institutions. In what relates to England, I shall only have to transcribe a few

pages of a very short but excellent work, entitled "General View of the Constitution of England by an Englishman," a work far superior to what was once hastily written by the Genoese theorist Delolme, with Blackstone for his authority.\*

"For upwards of two hundred years after William the Conqueror, the English parliament was in its composition and its chief functions, nearly analogous to the parliament of Paris from Hugh Capet to St. Louis, with this difference, however, that the French parliament, though sometimes considered a national one, was only in reality the parliament of the duchy of France, and of a few other adjacent provinces, whereas the parliament of England was an assembly of the principal personages of the kingdom, and its authority was every where acknowledged.

"The members of both parliaments, English and French, were the barons, knights, and prelates, and a certain number of lawyers, all convoked for a limited time by letters from the sovereign. Each of these parliaments formed only a single house; they were as much a supreme court

\* Having been baffled in our search after this work, we are reluctantly compelled to translate from the French version of the author the passages which he has extracted.—*Translator.*

of justice as a political assembly. But whilst the members of the English parliaments were daily acquiring greater political importance, and their *consultative* insensibly merged into a *deliberative* voice, so much so that they ended by *legally* establishing their power to refuse every demand of their sovereigns, who might equally refuse assent to their demands, the members of the parliament of Paris were gradually deprived of their consideration, owing to the progressive increase of the kingly power : instead of obtaining a *deliberative* voice in important national affairs, they were daily less consulted on political questions, and at length came to be considered as being principally judges of the baronial court of the duchy of France.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Philip Augustus established the institution of the peerage, and rendered the peers members of the parliament of Paris, in order to augment its importance by an image of the ancient national baronage, without thereby lessening in any degree the royal influence. If, on the annexation of Normandy to the crown, he had conferred on the chief Norman barons and churchmen the right of being members of the parliament of Paris, and his successors had followed the same course in the different provinces of which

they successively obtained possession, the parliament of Paris would have become a real national parliament, like that of England, and the deputies of the principal cities would eventually have found their places in it. Philip, however, like his successors, deemed it preferable to allow of the separate existence of the *parliaments* or *estates* of those provinces which he united to the crown rather than aggregate them to the government of France. The provinces were also jealous of the maintenance of their own parliaments. St. Louis once summoned to the parliament a great number of the higher nobility and prelates of the whole kingdom, with deputies from several cities ; so that this parliament bore a perfect resemblance to the English parliament of the same period ; but this example was neither followed up by himself nor by Philip the Bold, his successor, who endeavoured, on the contrary, by every means in his power to discourage the high nobility from attending parliament.

“ It was Philip the Fair who gave the severest blow to the authority of Parliament, by his *invention* of the states-general, which never existed before his reign, whatever the framers of systems may assert to the contrary. By only allowing the prelates and higher nobility to attend the

*estates* by deputation, and by thus blending them with the rest of the nobility and clergy, he deprived them of all their importance; and as he likewise limited the functions of the *estates* to the expression of their *grievances*, he nearly reduced them to a mere nonentity.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Shortly after the regular introduction of deputies or knights of shires to Parliament, a great change took place in it, which was attended with highly important effects. This change consisted in the formation of the House of Commons, a formation which chance brought about, and of which the politicians of the time did not assuredly foresee the results. Independently of the subsidies provided by Parliament, since the towns had become political corporations, enjoying different privileges, it had been the practice of kings to demand of them, from time to time, and without the advice of Parliament, various sums of money, proportioned to the greater or less importance and wealth of those times. These sums of money were fixed by common consent between the royal commissioners and the chief inhabitants of each town. At last, under Henry III., towards the middle of the thirteenth century, the celebrated Earl of Leicester summoned to Parliament the deputies of the principal towns,

thereby hoping the more effectually to obtain from them the money he stood in need of for the prosecution of his criminal designs. This example, however, was not followed in succeeding Parliaments. It was only towards the close of the thirteenth century, in the year 1295, that, urged by the want of money, and harassed by partial negotiations with the burgesses of the different towns, Edward I. conceived the idea of regularly convoking two deputies from each town, at the time and place where the Parliament met. These deputies took no part in this assembly, and had no voice in the national deliberations. Their functions were restricted to the object of determining the sum of money which they might raise amongst themselves for the *tallage* of their respective towns. These deputies were at the same time authorised to represent the wants of their towns; and, with the view of raising from them the largest possible sum, every attention was paid to their complaints, and all requests on their part, which were deemed reasonable, were assented to. In the beginning, they deliberated separately from the barons and knights, and followed the instructions of their constituents in respect to the grievances they had to prefer, and the *maximum* of the tax they were to grant.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ It cannot be stated with perfect accuracy when the deputies of counties assembled, for the first time, in the same hall with the deputies of towns. Although these two species of deputies greatly differed from each other in regard to their political existence, there was, nevertheless, some uniformity between them in their common capacity of *representatives* of their fellow-citizens; and it is probable that the *knights* of shires, as well as the *burgesses* of towns, were often compelled to follow the instructions of their constituents. It was, therefore, deemed more convenient, for expediting public business, that they should meet together in the same hall, and that the result of their deliberations should be afterwards sent to the peers, rather than allow the knights to deliberate apart in the hall of the latter. It is likewise probable that the great barons, who began to consider the knights as their inferiors, were glad of a decent pretext for removing them from their assembly. Circumstances of a more accidental nature, such as the greater or smaller dimensions of the hall in which the peers met together, may have caused the separation of the members of Parliament. Be this as it may, it is certain that, at the commencement of the fourteenth century, the deputies of counties and those of towns met in the

same hall. There existed, however, in spite of this junction, a very striking difference between them; the knights of shires were the integral portion of the Parliament, and deliberated on all matters in the same manner as great barons or peers, whereas, the deputies of towns had no power beyond that of regulating the tax which their constituents were called upon to pay; this was no sooner done, than they were at liberty to return home without awaiting the end of the session. It is natural, however, to suppose that in proportion as the towns increased in wealth their deputies acquired greater importance; and that, instead of returning home when they had regulated the tax, they remained to attend to the deliberations of the knights respecting the laws in general, none of which were devoid of interest to them. By degrees they were consulted on the subject. From *consultation* to *deliberation* there is but a shade; accordingly, towards the close of the fourteenth century, the deputies of towns had acquired all the political rights enjoyed by those of shires, and they were all blended under the general appellation of deputies of the *Commons*."

It is impossible to explain in a clearer manner how the English Parliament acquired its for-



mation, and how, at the moment of attaining similar institutions, we were hurried into another course. The remainder of the pamphlet, where the author examines the principle of the English aristocracy, the nature of the pretended *veto*, and the imaginary balance of the three powers, evinces no less rectitude of judgment and adherence to facts.

In France, the so called Parliament of Paris, and afterwards the States General, were not divided into two chambers; the clergy, composing a separate class, were not blended with the barons, the peers, and the knights; the latter did not unite with the deputies of cities, but remained with the barons. The third estate continued separate. Thence arose three orders, classed according to numbers, the first, second, and third. This constitution of the States General, the national power of which was never acknowledged by all France; was re-produced in the distinct provincial states, the real sovereigns of those provinces. But the third estate, which never acquired, in the general or provincial states, any degree of importance, except in times of disturbance, usurped by other means the public power.

The *three orders* are always spoken of as essentially constituting what are called the States

*General.* It happened, nevertheless, that some bailiwicks named deputies for only *one* or *two* orders. In 1614, the bailiwick of Amboise did not name any for the clergy or the nobility; nor the bailiwick of Châteauneuf, in Thimerais, for the clergy or the third estate; the Puy, La Rochelle, the Lauraguais, Calais, the Upper March, Chatelleraut, failed to send any for the clergy, and Montdidier and Roy for the nobility. Still the states of 1614 were called *States General*. Accordingly, the old chronicles, speaking in more correct language, when they allude to our national assemblies, either call them the *three estates*, the *notable burgesses*, or the *barons and bishops*, as the case might be, and assign to those assemblies, thus constituted, the same legislative authority.

It frequently happened, in the several provinces, that the third estate, though convoked, did not depute, and for an obvious reason, however it may have overlooked; the third estate had usurped the magistracy, to the prejudice of military men; it exercised, in that profession, a paramount sway, in the characters of judge, counsellor, solicitor, registrar, clerk, &c. &c.; it enacted the civil and criminal laws, and, aided by the encroachment of the Parliaments, it even wielded the political power. Three-fourths of the

ministers of the crown were taken from its ranks ; it frequently commanded the armies through the military dignity of marshal. The fortune, honour, and lives of the citizens were at its mercy ; all bowed to its decrees ; every head fell under the sword of its justice. When, therefore, it thus enjoyed *undisputed* possession of unlimited power, what occasion had it to avert a slender portion of that power in assemblies where it had been seen on its knees !

Metamorphosed into monks, the people had sought the shelter of cloisters, and governed society by religious opinions ; metamorphosed into collectors, ministers of finance, and manufacturers, the people had fled for shelter to the financial department, and governed society by means of gold ; metamorphosed into magistrates, the people had sought the public tribunals for shelter, and governed society by the arm of the law. That imposing monarchy of France, aristocratic in its parts, was democratic in its conjoint state, under the control of its sovereign, with whom it was in perfect harmony, and generally acted in concert ; this is the secret of its prolonged existence.

There can now be no difficulty in understanding why, in 1789, the third estate suddenly usurped power over the whole nation ; it had

seized all the high posts, secured all employments. The people, having had but a small share in the constitution of the state, but being incorporated in the other powers, found itself in a condition to conquer the only liberty which it lacked, political liberty. In England, on the contrary, having held for many centuries an important rank in the constitution, having put to death many of its nobility and of its sovereigns, bestowed and taken away crowns, the people finds itself arrested at the moment when it claims to extend its rights: it has to wage war against itself, it stands in its own way, and is an obstacle to its own progress. This is evidently the popular liberty of England under its ancient form, which is struggling at the present day against the popular liberty under its new aspect.

Well then, might Barbour extol that liberty in the noble verses I have quoted at the end of the preceding chapter: well might he extol it at a time when it was unknown in France to the author of the *Dictée*, of *l'Epinette amoureuse*, *ballades*, *virelais*, *Plaidoyer de la rose et de la violette*; a liberty equally unknown, at the same time, to Christina de Pisan, the Venitian, and to the translator of Æsop's Fables, who published them by the title of *Bestiaire*.

JAMES I. KING OF SCOTLAND. DUMBARD. DOUGLAS.  
WORCESTER. RIVERS.

JAMES I. the most accomplished and most unfortunate of those ill-fated sovereigns who reigned in Scotland, ranked as a poet above Barbour, Occleve, and Lydgate. A captive in England during eighteen years, he composed in prison his *King's Quair*, a poem in six cantos, divided into stanzas of seven lines each. Lady Jane Beaufort inspired his lay.

KING'S QUAIR—CANTO II.

Bewailing in my chamber thus allone,  
Despaired of all joye and remedye,  
For-tirit of my lhot and wo-begone,  
And to the wyndow gan I walk in hye,  
the world and folk that went forbye,  
As for the tyme though I of mirthis fude  
Myght have no more, to luke it did me gude.

And on the small grene twistis sat  
 The lytil suete nyghtingale and song  
 So loud and clere, the ympnis consecrat  
 Of luvis use now soft now loud among,  
 That all the gardynis and the wallis rong.

And therewith kest I down myn eye ageyne,  
 Quharre as I saw walkyng under the toure  
 Full secretely, new cumyn hir to pleyne,  
 The fairest or the freschest zoung floure  
 That ever I saw methought before that houre  
 - For quhich sodayne abate anon astert  
 The blude of all my body to my hert.

The prisoner is favoured with visions ; he is transported in a cloud to the planet Venus ; he journeys on to Minerva's palace. Recovered from his ecstasy, he approaches the window.

In hye unto the wyndow gan I walk  
 Moving within my spirit of this sight,  
 Quhare sodeynly a turture, quhite as calk  
 So evinly upon my hand gan lyt,  
 And vnto me sche turnyt hir, full ryt,  
 Of quham the chere in hir birdis assort  
 Gave me in hert kalendis of confort,

This fayr bird ryt in hir bill gan hold  
 Of red jerrofleris, with their stalks grene,  
 A faire branch, quhare written was with gold,  
 On every lefe, wicht branchis bryt and schen,  
 In compas fair full plesandly to sene,  
 A plane sentence, quwhich, as I can devise  
 And have in mynd, said ryt on this wise.

Awake! awake! I bring, lufar, I bring  
 The newis glad, that blissfull ben and sure  
 Of thy confort: now lauch, and play, and sing,  
 That art beside so glad an auenture:  
 Fore in the hevyn decretit is ye cure:  
 And vnto me the flouris faire did present;  
 With wyngis spred hir wayis furth sche went.

Quhilk up anon I take, and as I gesse,  
 Ane hundred tymes, or I forthir went,  
 I have it red, with hertfull glaidnesse,  
 And half with hope and half with dred it hent  
 And at my beddis hed, with gud entent,  
 I haue it fayr pynit vp, and this  
 First takyn was of all my help and blisse.

To James I. is to be ascribed the style of plaintive music unknown before him.

It was during the reign of James I, towards the year 1446, that Henry the Minstrel, or blind Harry, celebrated in his songs the warrior Wallace, so popular in Scotland. By some critics a preference is given to Henry the Minstrel over Barbour and Chaucer.

Dumbard and Douglas likewise flourished in Scotland.

In England, the Earl of Worcester and the Earl of Rivers, both patrons and promoters of literature, perished on the scaffold. Rivers and Caxton his printer and panegyrist, are the first authors whose writings have been handed down

to us by the English press. The productions of Rivers consisted in translations from the French; one, in particular, of Christina de Pisan's Proverbs.

Under Henry VII, the first of the Tudors, there existed many poets destitute of genius; one of the servants of that king who put an end to the war between the houses of York and Lancaster, possessed some talent for satirical compositions.



### POPULAR BALLADS AND SONGS.

THE popular ballads and songs, whether Scotch, English, or Irish, of the 14th and 15th centuries, possess, without being wholly unaffected, a character of simplicity. Unaffectedness is of Gallic growth, plainness proceeds from the heart, unaffectedness from the mind; a plain man is usually a good man; an unaffected may not always be a good man; unaffectedness, however, is always natural: plainness is often the effect of art.

The most celebrated of English and Scotch ballads are *The Children in the Wood* and the *Song of the Willow* altered by Shakespeare. The original exhibits the despair of a deserted lover.

A poor soule sat sighing under a sicamore tree

O willow, willow, willow!

With his hand on his bosom, his head on his knee:

O willow, willow, willow!

O willow, willow, willow!

Sing, O the green willow shall be my garland!

This song so powerfully captivated the imagination of English poets, that Rowe has not hesitated to imitate it from Shakespeare.

Robin Hood, a renowned robber, figures as a favourite personage in ballads: there are a score of songs respecting his birth, his pretended fight with King Richard, and his exploits with Little John: his long history in rhyme, and that of Adam Bell, resembled the Latin complaints of the *Jacquerie*, or the dying confessions which the people recited in our streets.

Or prions le doux Rédempteur  
 Qu'il nous préserve de malheur,  
 De la potence, et des galères,  
 Et de plusieurs autres misères

*Lady Ann Bothwell's Lament* is the *Dors mon enfant* of *Berquin*; the *Friar* is the adventure of Father Arsène, which latter is derived from the *Count de Comminges*. The *Hunting in Chevy Chase*, a very fine ballad, describes the fight between Earl Douglas and Earl Percy in a forest on the Scottish border.

The two ballads which, in my opinion, are least of a common place character, are *Sir Cauline* and *Childe Waters*: a knowledge of English is not requisite to appreciate their

rhythm; their measure is as distinct as that of a waltz; each stanza consists of four lines alternately of eight and six syllables: some redundant verses are added to the stanzas of *Sir Cauline*. The language of these ballads is not altogether that of the period in which they were composed; they seem to be clothed in a modern style.

Sir Cauline, a knight attached to the court of an Irish king, has fallen in love with Christabel, only daughter of that monarch; Christabel, like all the well educated princesses of that period, is acquainted with the virtue of simples. Sir Cauline is love-sick. On a certain Sunday, the king, after having heard mass, repairs to dinner. He inquires for Sir Cauline, whose duty it is to serve him with drink; a courtier replies that the cupbearer is in bed. The king desires his daughter to visit the knight and to carry him wine and bread.

Fair Christabelle to his chaumber goes,  
 Her maidens following nye:  
 O well, she sayth, how doth my lord?  
 O sicke, thou fayre ladye,

Now rise up wightlye, man, for shame,  
 Never lye soe cowardlee;  
 For it is told in my father's halle  
 You dye for love of mee.

Fayre ladye, it is for your love  
 That all this dill I drye :  
 For if you wold comfort me with a kisse,  
 Then were I brought from bale to blisse,  
 No longer would I lye.

Sir knighte, my father is a kinge,  
 I am his only heire ;  
 Alas ! and well you knowe, syr knighte,  
 I never can be your feere.

O ladye, thou art a kinges daughter  
 And I am not thy peere,  
 But let me doe some deedes of armes,  
 To be youre bacheleere.

Christabel sends Cauline to the hill of Eldridge, where a solitary thorn grows on the border of a moor. The knight of Eldridge is a foul paynim of mickle might. Sir Cauline meets him in single combat, cuts off his hands and disarms him ; Christabel declares that if she may not wed the conqueror, she will have no other feere.

In the second part of the ballad, the king who had gone out to enjoy the fresh evening breeze, unfortunately falls in with Christabel and Cauline engaged *in dalliance sweet*. He immures Cauline in a vault, and Christabel at the top of a tower. His first impulse was to slay the knight, for *an angrye man was hee*.

Yielding however, to the queen's entreaties, he was satisfied with condemning them to perpetual banishment: nevertheless, he attempts to console his weeping daughter, and orders a tournament. An unknown knight, clad in sable armour, enters the lists, followed by a giant, who is pledged to avenge the giant of Eldridge. The sable knight alone ventures to contend with the challenging miscreant, kills him, and dies of his wounds. Christabel also dies, as soon as she has recognized Sir Claudine in the person of the black knight, and dressed his wounds.

Then fayntinge in a deadly swoune,  
 And with a deep-fette sighe  
 That burst her gentle heart in twayne.  
 Faire Christabelle did dye.

Thus did the loves expire like Pyramus and Thisbe. The French ballad says of the latter

Ils étaient si parfaits  
 Qu'on disait qu'ils étaient  
 Les plus beaux de la ville—

verses breathing the purest nature, and such as, thank God, it is now the fashion to compose.

The subject of the ballad of Sir Cauline is to be met with almost every where. The ballad of *Childe Waters* depicts all that is most affecting

and pathetic in private life. The word *childe* or *chield*, *child* at the present day, is used by old English poets as a sort of title : this title is given to Prince Arthur in the *Fairie Queen* ; the king's son is named *Childe Tristram*. The subject of this ballad, with the exception of a few stanzas is as follows. It will be observed that Ellen repeats nearly verbatim the words of Childe Waters, in the same manner as Homer's heroes repeat the messages of the chiefs. Nature, when unsophisticated, possesses a common type, the impression of which is stamped upon the manners of all nations.

#### CHILDE WATERS.

Childe Waters in his stable stoode  
 And stroakt his milke-white steede :  
 To him a fayre yonge ladye came  
 As ever ware woman's weede.

Sayes, Christ you save ! good Childe Waters  
 Sayes, Christ you save ! and see  
 My girdle of gold, that was too longe,  
 Is now too short for mee.

And all is with one childe of yours,  
 I feel sturre at my side,  
 My gowne of greene it is too strait ;  
 Before it was too wide.

If the childe be mine, faire Ellen, he sayd,  
Be mine, as you tell mee ;  
Then take you Cheshire and Lancashire both,  
Take them your own to bee.

If the childe be mine, faire Ellen, he sayd,  
Be mine as you do sweare ;  
Then take you Cheshire and Lancashire both,  
And make that childe your heyre.

She sayes, I had rather have one kisse,  
Childe Waters, of thy mouth,  
Than I wolde have Cheshire and Lancashire both,  
That lye by north and southe.

And I had rather have one twinkling,  
Childe Waters, of thine ee ;  
Than I wolde have Cheshire and Lancashire both,  
To take them mine owne to bee.

To-morrow, Ellen, I must forth ryde  
Far into the north countrie ;  
The fayrest ladye that I can finde,  
Ellen must goe with mee.

Thoughe I am not that ladye fayre,  
Yet let me goe with thee ;  
And ever, I praye you, Childe Waters,  
Your foot-page let me bee.

If you will my foot-page bee, Ellèn,  
As you doe tell to mee ;  
Then you must cut your gowne of greene  
An inch above your knee.

Soe must you doe your yellowe lockes  
    An inch above your ee :  
You must tell no man what is my name ;  
    My foot-page then you shall bee.

Shee, all the longe daye Childe Waters rode,  
    Ran barefoote by his syde ;  
Yet was he never so courteous a knyghte,  
    To say, Ellen, will you ryde ?

Shee, all the long daye Childe Waters rode,  
    Ran barefoote thorow the broome ;  
Yet was he never so courteous a knyghte,  
    To say, put on your shoone.

Ride softlye, she said, O Childe Waters  
    Why doe you ride so fast ?  
The childe, which is no man's but thine,  
    My body itt will brast.

He sayth, seest thou yond water, Ellèn,  
    That flows from banke to brimme ?  
I trust in God, O Childe Watèrs,  
    You never will see me swimme !

But when she came to the water syde  
    She sayled to the chinne :  
Nowe the Lord of Heaven be my speede  
    For I must learne to swimme.

The salt waters bare up her clothes ;  
    Our Lady bare up her chinne :  
Childe Waters was a woe man, good Lord,  
    To see faire Ellen swimme.



And when shee over the water was,  
Shee then came to his knee :  
Hee sayd, come hither, thou fayre Ellèn,  
Loe yonder what I see !

Seest thou not yonder hall, Ellèn ?  
Of red gold shines the yate :  
Of twenty-four faire ladyes there,  
The fairest is my mate.

Seest thou not yonder hall, Ellen ?  
Of red gold shines the towre :  
There are twenty four fayre ladyes there,  
The fayrest is my paramoure.

I see the hall now, Childe Watèrs,  
Of red gold shines the yate :  
God give you good now of yourselfe,  
And of your worthy mate !

I see the hall now, Childe Watèrs,  
Of red gold shines the towre :  
God give you good now of yourselfe  
And of your paramoure.

There twenty-four fayre ladyes were  
A-playing at the ball ;  
And Ellen, the fayrest ladye there,  
Must bring his steed to the stall.

There twenty four fayre ladyes were  
A-playing at the chesse ;  
And Ellen, the fayrest ladye there.  
Must bring his horse to gresse.

And then bespake Childe Waters' sistèr,  
 These were the words sayd shee ;  
 You have the prettyest page, brothèr,  
 That ever I did see.

But that his bellye it is so bigge,  
 His girdle stands so hye :  
 And ever, I praye you, Childe Waters,  
 Let him in my chamber lye.

It is not fit for a little foot-page  
 That has run through mosse and mire,  
 To lye in the chamber of any ladye  
 That wears so rich attyre.

It is more meete for a little foot-page,  
 That has run through mosse and myre,  
 To take his supper upon his knee,  
 And lye by the kitchen fyre.

Now when they had supped every one  
 To bedd they tooke theyre waye :  
 He sayd, come hither, my little foot-page,  
 And hearken what I saye :

Goe thee downe unto yonder towne,  
 And lowe into the streete,  
 The fayrest ladye that thou canst finde  
 Hyre, in mine armes to sleepe ;  
 And take her up in thine armes twaine,  
 For filing of her feete.

Ellen is gone into the towne,  
 And lowe into the streete ;  
 The fairest ladye that she colde finde  
 She hyred in his armes to sleepe ;  
 And tooke her up in her armes twaine,  
 For filing of her feete.

I praye you nowe, goode Childe Watèrs,  
Let me lye at your feete :  
For there is no place about this house  
Where I may 'saye a sleepe.

He gave her leave, and faire Ellèn  
Down at his bed's feet laye :  
This done, the night drove on apace,  
And, when it was so near the daye,

Hee sayd, Rise up, my little foot-page,  
Give my steede corn and haye ;  
And give him nowe the goode black oates,  
To carry mee better awaye.

Up then rose the fayre Ellèn  
And gave his steede corne and haye ;  
And soe shée did the good black oates,  
To carry him better awaye.

She leaned her back to the manger side,  
And grievouslye did groane :  
She leaned her back to the manger side,  
And there she made her moane.

And that beheard his mother deare,  
She heard her woeful woe  
She sayd, Rise up, thou Childe Watèrs.  
And into thy stable goe ;

For in thy stable is a ghost,  
That grievouslye doth grone ;  
Or else some woman labours with childe  
She is so woe-begone.

Up then rose Childe Waters soone,  
 And did on his shirte of silke ;  
 And then he put on his other clothes  
 On his bodye as white as milke.

And when he came to the stable dore,  
 Full still there hee did stand,  
 That he might heare his fayre Ellèn,  
 Howe she made her monànd.

She sayd, Lullabye mine owne deare childe,  
 Lullabye, deare childe, dear :  
 I wolde thy father were a kinge,  
 Thy mothere layd on a biere !

Peace nowe, hee sayd, good faire Ellèn  
 Bee of good cheere, I praye ;  
 And the bridale and the churching bothe  
 Shall bee upon one daye.

A savage character reveals itself in this ballad. Childe Waters is an atrocious wretch ; he delights in putting his mistress to the test of the most abominable tortures of mind and body. Ellen, fascinated, submits to them with the resignation of a love which makes light of all sacrifices. She runs a long race on foot ; she swims across a river ; she submits to every species of humiliation in the castle of the twenty four women ; she patiently listens to her lover telling her with a sneer that he loves

the handsomest of them ; at his bidding she goes in quest of a prostitute ; she, poor Ellen, whom he had compelled to run barefooted in the mud, is to bring him that prostitute in her own arms, lest she should soil her feet. Not a murmur ; not a reproach ; and, when giving birth to her child, and in the pain of labour, she lulls it asleep with a nurse's language ; she prays for a throne for Childe-Waters, for herself a coffin. The cruel man is moved, and at last believes himself the father of the innocent little creature. May not, however the nuptials and the churching come too late ?

Have not Childe Waters and Childe Harold some features of resemblance ? Has Lord Byron, by chance, moulded his character on an old ballad-hero, as he had tuned his lyre to the old style of the poets of the XVth century ?

It is not impossible that the first idea of this ballad was borrowed from the tenth novel, tenth day, of the Decameron. Griselda, put to the test by Gualtieri, might have furnished the character of Ellen, and the very name of *Waters* is but a form of that of *Gautier*. Between the two stories, however, there exists the difference between English human nature and Italian human nature.

Before I take leave of the middle ages, I

should advert to a circumstance which may not have escaped notice : I have not spoken of the authors who wrote in Latin during the seven or eight centuries of which we have just taken a survey. This formed no part of the plan I have laid down for myself, because, in fact, the Latin literature of the middle ages, and those which preceded them, equally belongs to the Europe of this period ; whereas we are exclusively treating of the idiom or idioms peculiar to the English. Thus I have omitted all mention of Gildas in the sixth century, of Nennius, Abbot of Bangor, and of Aldhelm in the seventh ; of Bede, Alcuin, Boniface, Archbishop of Mentz and an Englishman, of Willebald, Eddius, a monk of Canterbury, Dungal and Clement in the eighth ; of Johannes Scotus, Erigena, of Asser author of the life of Alfred the Great, whose favourite he was, in the ninth ; of St. Dunstan and Elfric the grammarian in the tenth ; of Ingulph in the eleventh ; of Laufranc, Anselm, Robert White, William of Malmsbury, Huntingdon, John of Salisbury, Peter de Blois, Gerard du Barry, in the twelfth and thirteenth ; of Roger Bacon, Michael Scott, William Ockam, Mathew Paris, Thomas Wykes, Hemmingford, and Avesbury, in the thirteenth and fourteenth. Not but that the works of these writers are replete with matter of the high-

est curiosity for the study of history, of manners, of arts and sciences. It were much to be wished that we possessed translations of the principal productions of those authors.

Here ends the first part of this historical view. English literature purely oral, as it were, in its four first epochs, is rather spoken than written; handed down to posterity by means of a species of stenography, it has all the advantages and defects of improvisation; the poetry is simple, but incorrect; the history curious, but confined within a particular circle. We are now about to see the higher poetry stifling the familiar, and general history extinguishing petty history. This literary revolution is brought about by the gradual progress of civilisation, at a moment when a religious revolution is about to break up catholic unity and European society.





**PART SECOND.**



## FIFTH AND LAST EPOCH

OF THE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

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LITERATURE UNDER THE TUDORS.

ENGLISH poetry has, hitherto, appeared to us under catholic colours; the Vatican was the abode of the muses who sang beneath the half formed dome of St. Peter, erected for them by Michael Angelo; they are now on the eve of apostatizing and turning protestant. Their change of religion was not, however, felt in a very decided manner, for the Reformation took place before the language had emerged from its barbarism; all the writers of the first order made their appearance subsequently to the reign of Henry VIII. My observation relative to

Shakspeare, Pope, and Dryden will be seen hereafter.

Be this as it may, a chief feature pervades the epoch upon which we now enter; in the same manner as I portrayed the *middle age* to the reader, before I adverted to the authors of those times, it seems proper that I should preface the second part of this work by some inquiries on the subject of the Reformation. How was it brought about? what were its consequences to the human mind, to literature, to the arts, to governments? These are questions well worthy of our consideration.

HERESIES AND SCHISMS WHICH PRECEDED THE SCHISM  
OF LUTHER.

FROM the moment when the cross was planted at Jerusalem, attacks were unceasingly directed against the unity of the Church. The philosophies of the Hebrews, the Persians, the Indians, and the Egyptians, had become concentrated in Asia under the dominion of Rome; from this focus, kindled by the evangelic spark, issued that torrent of opinions as various as the manners of the heresiarchs were dissimilar. It were easy to draw up a catalogue of the philosophic systems, and place, in juxta-position to each, its corresponding heresy. Tertullian acknowledged that heresies were to christianity what philosophic systems were to paganism, with this difference, that philosophic systems were the truths of pagan worship, whereas heresies were the errors of the christian religion.

St. Augustine reckoned, in his time, eighty-eight heresies, beginning with the Simonians and ending with the Pelagians.

The church withstood the attacks of all ; her perpetual struggle accounts for those councils, synods, assemblies of every name and every species, which are noticed from the very dawn of christianity. Nothing is so wonderful as the indefatigable activity of the christian community : intent upon defending itself against the edicts of the emperors and against persecutions, it was moreover called upon to combat its own children and its domestic enemies. The very existence of the faith was, no doubt, at stake : had not heresies been constantly cut out of the bosom of the church by canons, denounced and stigmatized in writings, the people would have been at a loss to understand to what religion they belonged. In the midst of sects propagating themselves unopposed, and assuming endless ramifications, the christian principle would have been exhausted in its numberless derivations, as a river is lost in the multitude of its channels.

The middle ages, properly so called, were not free from schism. Several innovators in Italy, Wicliff in England, Jerome of Prague and John Huss in Germany, were precursors of the reformers of the sixteenth century. A multitude of heresies were at the bottom of those doctrines, which gave rise to the frightful crusades against the unfortunate Albigenses. In the very schools

of theology a spirit of curiosity shook the dogmas of the church ; the questions at issue were by turns obscene, impious, and childish.

In the tenth century, Valfrede raised his voice against the resurrection of the body. Béranger explained, in his own way, the mystery of the eucharist. The errors of Roscelius, Abelard, Gilbert de la Porée, Peter Lombard, and Peter of Poitiers, acquired celebrity. It was asked if Jesus Christ, as man, was anything ; those who denied it were called *Nihilianists*. At length the scriptures were wholly set aside, and arguments in proof of the christian truths were drawn solely from the doctrine of Aristotle. Scholastic divinity reigned paramount, and William of Auxerre was the first to resort to the terms *materia* and *forma*, applied to the doctrine of the sacraments. Heloise inquired of Abelard why quadrupeds and birds were the only animals brought to Adam to receive their names from him. Was Jesus Christ, between his death and resurrection, what he had been before his death and after his resurrection ? was his glorified body seated or standing in heaven ? was his body, which is eaten in the eucharist, naked or clothed ?—Such were the questions which engaged the most orthodox minds ; and Luther himself was less audacious in his investigations.





### ATTACKS AGAINST THE CLERGY.

SATIRES against the clergy, mixed with the well-grounded reproaches to which the priesthood had rendered themselves liable, kept pace, at all times, as I have elsewhere remarked, with heresies against the church; on this point, also, Luther fell short of his predecessors. The shepherds had become as depraved as their flocks. Who-soever desires to probe the interior workings of society in those days, should read the councils and the *charters of abolition* (letters of grace conceded by the sovereigns); in these are laid bare the wounds of society: the councils incessantly renew their complaints against the looseness of morals; the *charters of abolition* record the details of sentences and the crimes that gave rise to the royal letters. The capitularies of Charlemagne and of his successors are filled with enactments for the reform of the clergy.

The frightful story of the priest Anastasius being entombed alive with a corpse, through the

revengeful spirit of the Bishop Caulin is well known (Gregory of Tours). We read in the canons added to the first council of Tours, under the episcopacy of St. Perpert: "We have been told, horrible to relate, (*quod nefas*) that public-houses were established in churches, and that the spot which should be exclusively devoted to prayer and to the praise of God, echoes with the sound of noisy feasts, obscene language, disputes and wranglings."

Baronius, so favourably disposed towards the court of Rome, calls the tenth century the age of iron, such was then the depravity prevailing in the church. The distinguished and learned Gherbert, before he became pope, by the name of Sylvester II., and when only archbishop of Rheims, said: "Deplorable Rome, thou once affordedst to our ancestors the most dazzling lights; but now we only derive from thee the most frightful darkness" . . . . We have beheld John Octavian conspiring, in the midst of a thousand prostitutes, against the very Otho whom he had proclaimed emperor. He is overthrown, and Leo the Neophyte succeeds him. Otho withdraws from Rome, and Octavian enters it; he drives away Leo, cuts off the fingers, hands, and nose, of John the deacon, and, after putting to death many distinguished personages,

soon perishes himself. Can it still be possible to assert that so great a number of priests of the Almighty, worthy by their lives and their merits of enlightening the world, should submit to such monsters, destitute of all knowledge of divine and human sciences?"

St. Bernard evinces as little indulgence for the vices of his age; St. Louis was compelled to overlook the dissoluteness and disorder prevailing in his army. During the reign of Philip the Fair, a council was convoked for the express purpose of applying a remedy to the depravation of morals. In 1351, the prelates and mendicant orders laid their mutual grievances before Clement VII, at Avignon. This pope, who was favourable to the monks, rebuked the prelates in the following language: "Will ye speak of humility, ye who are so vain and pompous in your horses and equipages? will ye speak of poverty, ye who are so rapacious that all the benefices in the world would not satisfy your cravings? what shall I say of your chastity.... Ye hate mendicants, ye close your doors against them, whilst your houses are thrown open to sycophants and persons of scandalous lives (*leonibus et truffatoribus*)."

Simony was general; priests every where violated the rule of celibacy; they lived with

abandoned women, concubines, and servant-maids; an abbot of Noreis had eighteen children. In Biscay, no priests were admitted unless they had their gossips, in other words, wives, supposed to be legitimate.

Petrarch writes to a friend: "Avignon has become a hell, the sink of every abomination. The houses, the palaces, the churches, the thrones of the pontiff and the cardinals, the air, the earth, everything is impregnated with falsehood; a future world, the last judgment, the punishments of hell, the joys of paradise, are held in the light of absurd and childish fables." In support of these assertions, Petrarch quotes certain scandalous anecdotes respecting the debauchery of the cardinals.

In a sermon preached before the pope, in 1364, Doctor Nicholas Orem proved, by six arguments, deduced from the disregard of the Christian doctrine, the pride of the prelates, the tyranny of the heads of the church, and their aversion for truth, that Antichrist would not be long before he made his appearance.

These reproaches, handed down from age to age, were revived by Erasmus and Rabelais. All the world was struck with those vices, which a power long uncontrolled, and the rudeness of the middle ages, had introduced into the church.

Kings no longer submitted to the papal yoke ; the long schism of the fourteenth century had attracted the attention of the multitude to the disorders and ambition of the pontifical government ; the bulls were torn in pieces and burnt by order of the magistrates ; the very councils were intent upon the means of correcting abuses.

Thus, when Luther appeared, the reformation was in every mind ; he culled a fruit which was ripe and ready to drop. Let us, however, consider who this Luther was ; he will naturally lead us to Henry VIII., for he is connected with this monarch by his religious innovations, and by his quarrels with the founder of the English church.

The first of these is the fact that the  
British Empire has been the most  
successful in the world in its  
history. It has been the most  
successful in its expansion, its  
administration, and its  
defence. It has been the most  
successful in its economic  
development, its social  
progress, and its cultural  
achievements. It has been the  
most successful in its  
military conquests, its  
diplomatic negotiations, and  
its economic expansion. It has  
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expansion, and its administration.

## LUTHER.

MARTIN LUTHER, the creator of a religion of princes and gentlemen, was the son of a peasant. He tells his own story in a few words, with that impudent humility which springs from the success of a whole life.\*

“ I have often conversed with Melancthon, and related to him the minutest details of my life. I am the son of a peasant ; my father, grandfather, and great grandfather, were mere peasants. My father had removed to Mansfeld, where he became a miner. I was born there. That I should in after-life graduate as a bachelor, a doctor, &c., was not in my destiny. Have I not surprised many people by becoming a monk ? and afterwards by exchanging the brown cowl for one of another kind ? This greatly distressed

\* What I am about to relate of Luther is chiefly extracted from the work lately published by M. Michelet, under the title of *Mémoires de Luther*.

my father, who fell ill in consequence. I next fell to loggerheads with the Pope: married a nun who had run away from a convent, and have had many children by her. Who could ever have read this in the stars? Who could have foretold that such things were to happen?"

Born at Eisleben, on the 10th of November, 1483, sent at the early age of six years to the school at Eisenach, Luther earned his bread by singing from door to door. "I also," said he, "was a poor beggar, and have received bread at the doors of houses." Ursula Schweickard, a charitable lady, took pity on him, and paid for his education; in 1501 he entered the university of Erfurt. A poor and obscure boy, he opened that new era which commences with him, an era which so many changes and calamities were to render imperishable in the memory of men.

Luther at first devoted himself to the study of the law; but he conceived an aversion for it, and turned to theology, music, and literature; in his presence one of his companions was struck dead by lightning; he then vowed to St. Anne that he would turn monk, and on the night of the 17th July, 1505, he entered the Augustine convent at Erfurt: he shut himself up in a cloister with a Plautus and a Virgil, to change



the christian world. Two years afterwards he was ordained a priest. "When I said my first mass I was half dead with fright, for I had no faith; next came weariness, temptations, and doubts." Luther, with a view to strengthen his belief, travelled to Rome.

There he found incredulity seated on the tomb of St. Peter, and paganism revived in the Vatican. Julius II, with a helmet on his head, dreamt only of battles; and the cardinals, ciceronians in their language, were transformed into poets, diplomatists, and warriors. Ready to turn Ghibeline, papacy had, without being itself aware of it, abdicated the temporal authority; the Pope, by becoming a prince in the style of other princes, had ceased to be the representative of the christian republic; he had relinquished the fearful office of Tribune of Nations, with which the popular election had formerly invested him. This escaped Luther's observation; he only took the narrow view of things; and returned to Germany, being merely struck with the scandal exhibited by the atheism and corrupt morals of the court of Rome.

Julius II was succeeded by Leo X, Luther's rival; the pope and the monk divided the age between them; Leo X imparted to it his name, and Luther his power.

The pope was desirous of completing the church of St. Peter ; money was wanting for this object. Destitute of that faith which rendered the middle ages lavish of their treasures, Rome called to mind the days when christianity contributed by its alms to the erection of cathedrals and abbeys. Leo X authorised the Dominicans to sell in Germany the indulgences, the distribution of which was formerly confided to the order of Augustines. Luther, having become provincial vicar of the Augustines, declaimed against the abuse of these indulgences. He addressed himself to the Bishop of Brandenburg and the Archbishop of Mentz : he obtained only an evasive answer from the former ; the latter made no reply. He then publicly promulgated the theses, which he proposed to maintain against indulgences. Germany was shaken : Tetzal burned Luther's propositions ; the students of Wittemberg burnt the propositions of Tetzal. Astounded at his own success, Luther would willingly have retraced his steps.

Leo X heard from afar a clamour springing up beyond the Alps, and arising amongst barbarians. " A quarrel between monks," said Leo. The Athenians despised the barbarians of Macedonia. The predilection of the prince of the church for literature prevailed over

loftier considerations ; Brother Luther, in his opinion, was gifted with “ a noble genius.” *Fra Martino haveva un bellissimo ingenio.* Nevertheless, in order to humour his theologians, he summoned this noble genius to Rome.\*

Strong in the support of the Elector of Saxony, Luther evaded this command. Cited to Augsburg, he repaired thither with a safe-conduct from the emperor. He engaged in a disputation with Caetano de Vio, the pope’s legate ; they did not understand, they never understood, one another, in these contests of words. Luther appealed to the pope, who was better informed ; he acknowledges that, had the legate evinced less haughtiness towards him, he would have yielded, because at this time *he possessed but a faint knowledge of the pope’s errors.*

Leo X solicited the Elector of Saxony to deliver Luther into his hands : Frederick refused. Luther feeling more secure wrote to the pope as follows : “ I take God and men to witness, it never was my desire, neither do I now feel at all inclined, to shake the Roman church, or your holy authority. I fully acknowledge that this church is above all, that nothing should be preferred to it of what is in heaven and upon earth, save and except our Lord Jesus Christ.”

\* Bandello.

Luther was sincere, though appearances were against him ; for, whilst he thus explained himself to the pope, he said to Spalatin : “ I know not if the pope be not Antichrist, or the apostle of Antichrist.” Shortly afterwards, he published his book on the *Babylonish Captivity*, therein declaring that the church is in thralldom, Christ profaned in the idolatry of the mass, disowned in the dogma of transubstantiation, and a prisoner to the pope.

Striving to prove that his attacks were directed much more against papacy than against the pope, he said in a second letter to Leo : “ It is but just, however, much honored father, that, for once I should bear thee in remembrance. Thy fame, so much lauded by literary men, thy irreproachable life, would raise thee above all attacks. I am not so foolish as to complain of thee, when all agree in thy praise. I have called thee a Daniel in Babylon ; I have protested thy innocence. . . Yes, dear Leo, thou recallest to my mind Daniel in the den, Ezekiel amidst the scorpions. What couldst thou do single-handed against these monsters ? We may add to thee three or four learned and virtuous cardinals. You would infallibly be poisoned, were you to attempt a remedy for such crying evils. The days of the court of Rome are numbered.”

Upwards of three centuries have elapsed since Luther ventured this prediction; and the court of Rome is still in existence.

The monk's letters found Leo X engaged with Michael Angelo in the construction of St. Peter's, and writing to Raphael: "You will do honor to my pontificate." "*Leon X,*" said Palavicini, "*con maggior cura chiamò coloro a cui fosser note le favole della Grecia e le delizie de' poeti, che l'istoria della chiesa, e la dottrina de' Padri.*"

The Germanic croakings of Luther were impatiently borne by the Medicis, in the midst of the fine arts and under the pure sky of Italy. With a view to stifle those troublesome murmurs, and unwilling to believe in the danger of a schism, Leo drew up the bull of condemnation.

No sooner did the bull reach Germany, than the people mutinied; at Erfurt it was thrown into the river, and it was publicly burnt at Wittenburg: this proved the first spark of a conflagration which was to spread from Europe to every corner of the earth.

We are here presented with a noble struggle between Luther and himself, for, I repeat it, Luther yielded to his conviction. This struggle is ably pourtrayed in the work of M. Michelet, allowance being made for the translation which must unavoidably, and of necessity, clothe the

literature and ideas in the language of modern literature and the ideas of the present age.

In the opening of his treatise *de Servo arbitrio*, Luther says to Erasmus :

“ You doubtless feel somewhat abashed in the presence of so numerous an assemblage of learned men, before the assent of so many ages, illustrated by men so well versed in the sacred writings, which gave birth to such great martyrs, and were glorified by such numerous miracles. Add to these the more modern theologians, so many academies, councils, bishops, and pontiffs. On that side are arrayed learning, genius, numbers, greatness, elevation, strength, holiness, miracles ; what not besides ? On mine, Wickliff and Lorenzo Valla (Augustin likewise, though you forget him), then Luther ; a poor man, born but yesterday, standing alone, with a few friends who neither have learning, genius, numbers, greatness, sanctity, nor morals to lay claim to : their combined efforts could not cure a lame horse.....”

In this treatise *de Servo arbitrio*, Luther advocates grace against free will ; the man who extended, if he did not establish, the principle of *free inquiry* chained down the will of man ; these

contradictions are natural to us. There is, besides, no direct connexion between providential fatality and social despotism ; they are two distinct orders of facts, the one appertaining to the domain of philosophy and theory, the other coming under the jurisdiction of politics and practice.

Germany is the country of integrity, genius, and reveries. The more unintelligible the abstractions of hazy minds, the greater is the enthusiasm of those dreamers, who fancy they understand them. Luther's countrymen adopted the revived opinions of St. Augustin as their rule of faith. Luther more especially courted the nobility. He dedicated to the Lord Fabian de Feilitzsch his defence of the condemned articles : " May this writing plead in my favour with you and with all your nobility." He published his pamphlet : *To the Christian Nobility of Germany, on the improvement of Christianity*. The chief nobles who patronized Luther, were Silvester von Schauenburg, Franz von Sickingen, Taubenheim, and Ulrich von Hütten. The Margrave of Brandenburg solicited the favour of seeing the new apostle. Thus it is that in France, as well as in England, the reformers were kings, princes, and nobles : in France, the sister of Francis I. Jeanne d'Albret, Henry IV.

the Châtillons, the Bouillons, the Rohans ; in England, Henry VIII., his bishops, and his court.

When I expressed this opinion, in the *Etudes historiques*, I had the misfortune to wound, contrary to my intention, many susceptible minds ; I acknowledge that, in these our days of democracy, it is, perhaps, painful for those who claim to be the founders of popular liberty to find themselves, in their origin, *aristocrats*, descended from a race of princes and nobles : how can I help it ? I have strictly adhered to the truth ; a mass of undeniable facts might be adduced in support of it.

The diet of Worms was the triumph of Luther : he appeared at it before the Emperor Charles V., six electors, an archduke, two landgraves, twenty-seven dukes, a great number of counts, archbishops, and bishops. He entered the city, mounted on a car, escorted by a hundred gentlemen, armed cap-a-pee. A hymn was sung before him ; it was the *Marseilloise* of that day.

Notre Dieu est une forteresse,

Une épée et une bonne armure.\*

The people ascended to the house-tops to

\* Mr. Heine ; *Revue des deux Mondes*: Note by the Author.

It does not appear whether the author here quotes the authority of Heine for the fact or the sentiment. Be this as it



see Martin pass. Firm and moderate at the same time, the Doctor would retract nothing that he had asserted concerning doctrines, but he offered to disavow any unpleasant personality which might have escaped him. Thus, as it has been noticed by M. Mignet in a remarkable manner, Luther said *no* to the pope, *no* to the emperor. This affords evidence of conviction and of courage ; that courage, however, so easy to assume when a person is well defended, when he is surrounded by a great display, when he is stimulated by the ambition of becoming the leader of a sect, and by the hope of distinguished fame. For the rest, all the sectarians have said *no*. The heresy of Arius lasted upwards of three centuries in full vigour, and is not yet extinguished ; it divided the civilized world, and, with the exception of the Franks under Clovis, it exercised full sway over the Barbarian world : Alaric and Genseric, who sacked catholic Rome, were both Arians. Arias had said *no* long before Luther, whose doctrines have not yet attained the age of those of the priest of Alexandria.

may, what must be thought of that taste which can characterize Luther's noble hymn,

Ein fester Burg ist unser Gott,

as the *Marseilloise* of the time of the great Reformer !—

*Translator.*

Luther was encouraged in the very bosom of the diet ; nobles and counts had visited him. “ The pope,” says Luther, “ had written to the emperor, recommending him not to observe the safe-conduct. The bishops urged him to this course ; but the princes and states would not give their consent, which would have excited a serious commotion. I drew a signal advantage from all this ; *they must have had more apprehension of me than I had of them.* In fact, the landgrave of Hesse, a prince still in the prime of life, requested to hear me, called upon me, conversed with, and at last said to me ; ‘ My dear Doctor, if you are right, may the Lord God protect you ! ’ ”

Be this as it may, Luther’s appearance at the diet indicated some strength of mind, since John Huss, in spite of the emperor’s passport, had been burnt alive. When Christ appeared before Pilate, he was alone, even abandoned by his twelve apostles ; all the powers of earth were arrayed against him, and no regard was paid to the safe-conduct with which Heaven itself had provided him.

The diet published the imperial ban ; it was launched at Luther and his adherents. Voltaire pretends that Charles V. hesitated between the monk of Erfurt and Rome. The act of the ban

maintained the validity of the safe-conduct. The same Charles V., who granted a solemn audience to Luther, refused to hear Fernando Cortes.

The reformer withdrew; with a view to remove him from all danger, and perhaps by previous concert with Martin himself, the elector of Saxony had him carried off and confined in the castle of Wartburg. From this fortress Luther sent forth a multitude of writings, thus following the example of Athanasius, who, from the recesses of the grottoes of Egypt, still contended for the faith. Temptations assailed him; *his unsubdued flesh consumed him with a devouring fire*. In his Patmos (such was the name given by this second St. John to the castle of Wartburg), he fancied that he heard, at night, nuts shaking in a sack, and a loud noise on the steps of a staircase, guarded by a chain and an iron gate. This was a return of apostacy. Rendered uncontrollable by this friendly captivity, which imparted to him the semblance of a martyr, Luther spoke of nothing but *rooting up the cedars, of humbling the proud and hardened Pharaohs*. He wrote in harsh language to the Archbishop of Mentz, thus dating his letter—"Written in my desert, on the Sunday after St. Catherine, the 25th November, 1521." The Cardinal-Arch-

bishop of Mentz, humbly or proudly replied :  
“ Dear Doctor, I have received your letter ; I cheerfully bear a fraternal and christian reprimand.”

When preaching his new gospel, Martin said :  
“ I hope they may slay me ; but my hour is not come ; I must still further exasperate that race of vipers.” He at first hesitates to condemn monastic vows ; then, fortifying himself in his opinions, he declares that he has formed “ a vigorous conspiracy to destroy and annihilate them.”

He disapproved of the democratic theologians who trod in his footsteps, and waged war against images. “ If you desire,” he wrote to Melancthon, “ to bring them to the test, inquire if they have felt those spiritual throes and divine births, those deaths and those hells.”

He had begun to publish his translation of the Bible ; it was prohibited by princes and bishops ; as a sectarian and an author he grew impatient ; anger supplied him with an anticipation of the future. “ The people are stirring on all sides, and have their eyes open ; they no longer will, they no longer can, suffer oppression. It is the Lord who brings all this about, and shuts the eyes of princes to these threatening symptoms ; he it is who will consummate everything through

their blindness and violence ; methinks I behold Germany weltering in blood.

“ Let them be well assured that the sword of civil war is suspended over their heads.”

Who was it then, but Luther, who suspended the sword of civil war over the heads of those princes ?

In the same year, 1522, Henry VIII., then orthodox in his opinions, sent forth to the world the book to which I shall hereafter advert, which he had caused to be prepared, or perhaps corrected, by his chaplain and his theological ministers. The reforming monk abuses his colleague the reforming monarch. “ Who is, then, this Henry, this new Thomist, this disciple of the monster, that I should respect his blasphemies and his violence ? He is the defender of the church ; yes, of his own church, which he so highly extols, of that prostitute clothed in scarlet, drunk with debaucheries, of that mother of fornications. As for me, Christ is my chief ; I shall level, at one blow, that church and its defender, who are but one ; I shall dash them to atoms.” Unable to burn Luther, Henry VIII. replied ; his faggots were more formidable than his writings.

The reformation was gaining ground by the aid of printing, which seemed to have been dis-

covered just in time for the propagation of the new doctrines ; the Lutheran church was establishing itself ; what it has rejected and preserved of the dogmas of the Roman church is a matter of general notoriety. But the spirit of schism crept from all quarters into the new communion ; Calvin appeared at Geneva ; Luther was falling out with Carlostadt, and writing bitter pamphlets against him. The peasantry rose against their lords, and invaded the property of the ecclesiastical princes ; hence the disturbances in Swabia, Frankfort, Baden, Alsace, the Palatinate, Hesse, and Bavaria. In vain Luther exerted his utmost endeavours to disarm the mob ; in vain he exclaimed that revolt never could come to a prosperous end ; that whosoever wields the sword shall perish by the sword. The sword was drawn ; it was not to return to its scabbard until after two centuries of sacrifices.

In Luther's reply to the twelve articles drawn up by the peasantry of Swabia, some rational and just observations are to be found : he likewise tells the lords certain truths, which may have appeared bold to them ; but, carried away by the character of his reformation, which was hostile to the people, he evinces a revolting harshness towards the peasantry ; he does not bestow a single tear upon their misfortunes.

“ I am of opinion,” said he, “ that, rather than the princes and magistrates, every peasant should perish, because the peasants take up arms without divine authority . . . . No mercy, no tolerance, is due to peasants, but the indignation of God and men . . . . The peasants are under the ban of God and the emperor. One is justified in treating them like mad dogs.”

Nevertheless, those *mad dogs* had been let loose by the language of Luther. In respect of these men, placed *under the ban of God*, the emancipator of the human mind evinces no sympathy for popular liberties.

He fell out with all the sectaries who emanated from his reformation, and never forgave Erasmus for his *liberum arbitrium*.

“ So soon as I may be restored to health, I intend, with the blessing of God, to write against and crush him. We have permitted him to deride and to collar us ; now, however, that he would presume to act in the same manner towards Christ, we have resolved to oppose him . . . . To crush Erasmus, is, no doubt, like crushing a bug ; but my Christ, whom he derides, is of more consequence to me than the peril of Erasmus.

“ If I live, I hope by the help of God, to cleanse the church of his filth. He it is who

has sown and produced Crotus, Egranus, Witzeln, Œcolampadius, Campanus, and other visionaries or epicureans. Be it known that I will no longer admit him to be of the church.

“ When he preaches, his language sounds as false as a cracked vessel. He has attacked popery, and now he raises his head out of the sack.”

Erasmus and Luther had long been friends, and were both considered as heretics.

“ These,” as it is justly remarked by M. Nisard, “ are slight questions for the advocates of historical fatalism, who swell and elevate a man for every act done after his time, through causes which he neither could have willed nor foreseen ; but I no longer find them so unsuited to the present day. At that time, in fact, which of them left more substantial matters for posterity—Luther denying free-will, and replacing one dogma by another, or to speak more plainly, one superstition by another, or Erasmus claiming for man liberty of conscience ?\*”

The Turks having laid siege to Vienna, Luther nobly summoned the Germans to the defence of their country. The leagues of Smalkald, the anabaptists of Munster, followed in succession.

\* De Nisard. Erasmus, 2nd part. *Revue des deux Mondes*. 15th September, 1835.



The latter preached against the pope and against Luther ; they even preferred the first to the second ; they considered Luther as the friend of the nobility, and they cursed him as he had cursed the Swabian peasantry.



#### MARRIAGE. PRIVATE LIFE OF LUTHER.

LUTHER owed to his opinions a step which was the natural consequence and effect of them. He had thrown open the cloisters, thence sallied forth a crowd of men and women whom he was at a loss to dispose of ; he accordingly married, as much to set them a good example as to rid himself of his temptations. Whosoever infringes prescribed rules endeavours to draw the weak along with him, and to take shelter behind the multitude. People hope, by this assent of the many, to convey a belief in the justness and lawfulness of an act which was often the result of mere accident or of a thoughtless passion. Holy vows were doubly violated ; Luther married a nun. All this may perhaps be consistent with nature, but there exists a loftier nature ; however exemplary may be the virtues of a married couple, they can scarcely inspire confidence and respect when taking the conjugal oath at that

altar where their vows of chastity and solitude had been pronounced. Never will a christian pour into the bosom of a priest the concealed burden of his life, if that priest owns any other spouse than that mysterious church, which preserves the secret of errors inviolate, and administers consolation to sorrow. Christ at once a pontiff and a victim, lived in celibacy, and he quitted the earth at the close of his youth.

The nun whom Luther took to wife was named Catherine de Bora ; he loved her, lived in harmony with her, and laboured with his own hands for her support. He who made princes, and deprived the clergy of its wealth, remained a poor man ; like our early revolutionist, he gloried in his indigence. We read in his will these affecting words :

“ I declare that we have neither ready money, nor property of any kind. This is not to be wondered at, if it be considered that we possess no other revenue than my salary and a few presents.”

In his domestic life and his private opinions, Luther inspires us with interest. He has many noble ideas respecting nature, the Bible, schools, education, faith, and laws. His remarks on the press excite our curiosity ; an individual idea leads him to a general truth and to an insight into futurity.

“The press is the last and the supreme gift, the *summum et postremum donum*, by means of which the Almighty promotes the things of the Gospel. It is the last blaze that bursts forth before the extinction of the world. Thanks be to God, we at last behold its splendour.”

Let us listen to Luther in the privacy of his domestic feelings :

“This child (his son) and all that belongs to me, is hated by their adherents, hated of the whole host of devils. Nevertheless, this child is not disconcerted by his enemies, he is not disturbed at so many and such powerful lords bearing him so much ill-will ; he gaily sucks the breast, looks around with a loud laugh, and lets them snarl to their hearts’ content.”

Speaking again of his children in another place, he says :

“Such would have been our thoughts in paradise, simple and unaffected ; innocent, free from malignity and hypocrisy, we should have been in very truth, like this child, when he speaks of God, and feels so assured of him.

“What must have been Abraham’s feelings, when he consented to sacrifice and slaughter his only son? Assuredly he never said a word on the subject to Sarah.”

The last trait possesses a character of familia-

rity and tenderness bordering upon the sublime. He deploras the death of his infant daughter, Elizabeth :

“ Elizabeth, my little girl, is dead. Strange to say, her loss has left me a sick heart, a woman’s heart, so intense is my sorrow. I never could have imagined that a father could feel so much tenderness for his child.

“ Her features, her words, her gestures during life and on her death-bed are deeply engraved in my heart. Oh my obedient and dutiful daughter ! the very death of Christ (and what in comparison are all other deaths,) cannot, as it should, drive her from my memory.

“ Think, however, dearest Catherine, whither she is gone. She has assuredly finished a happy journey. The flesh, no doubt, bleeds ; such is its nature ; but the spirit lives and finds itself at ease. Children dispute not ! they believe as they are taught ; all in children is pure simplicity. Their death is free from cares and anguish ; they have no doubts, no temptations, at the approach of death, no bodily pain ; they but fall asleep as it were.”

When we read such tender, such religious, such affecting sentiments, our anger is appeased, we forget the fierceness of the sectary.

The death of his father inspired him with

these words, of biblical depth and simplicity :

“ I succeed to his name ; now am I, for my family, the *old Luther*. It is now my turn, my right, to follow him through death.”

When Luther became ill and sad at heart, he said :

“ The empire falls, monarchs fall, priests fall, the whole world totters, as the approaching fall of a large mansion is announced by little lizards.”

Luther's was a peaceful death ; he wished to die, and said :

“ May our Lord soon come and take me away ! may he come, above all, with his last judgment ; I am prepared to hold out my neck ; let him hurl the thunderbolt, and may rest be my portion !

“ Shame upon us ! we do not give the tithe of our lives to God ; and we presumptuously hope to deserve heaven by one good work ! What have I myself done ?”

\* \* \* \* \*

“ This little bird has chosen its place of shelter, and will sleep undisturbed ; it has no uneasiness, never dreams of to-morrow's home ; it remains quietly perched on its little branch, and leaves the care of itself to God.

“ I recommend my soul to thee, oh my Lord Jesus Christ ! About to quit this terrestrial body, and to be cut off from this life, I know that I shall rest for ever near thee.”

He again thrice repeated : *In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum ; redemisti me, Domine, Deus veritatis.* On a sudden, he closed his eyes and fainted away. Count Albert and his wife, as well as the medical attendants, employed all possible means to bring him to himself ; with much difficulty they succeeded. Doctor Jonas then said to him : Reverend father, do you die true to the faith you have taught ? He answered by a distinct *yes*, and again fell asleep. He soon grew pale, became cold, breathed deeply once more, and expired. \*

\* Extract from the “ Narrative of Jonas and Cœbius ” in M. Michelet’s work.



### PORTRAITS OF LUTHER.

THERE was the final *yes* which followed the *no* pronounced at Worms. Yes, Luther persisted, as did also the sects which originated in him ; but his refusal of all accommodation with those sects is a proof that he was not aware of the drift of the movement he had brought about. Thus it was that, in the presence of the landgrave of Hesse, he would yield nothing to Zuinglius, Bucer, and Œcolampadius, who besought him to come to an arrangement with them ; they would have given him Switzerland and the banks of the Rhine ; thus it was that he blamed Melanchton, who attempted to effect, between catholics and protestants, a reconciliation similar to that which Bossuet endeavoured to negotiate with Leibnitz ; thus it was that he condemned the peasants of Swabia and the anabaptists of Munster, far less on account of the disorders of which they had been guilty,

than because they would not remain within the circle which he had marked out for them. A man of gigantic conceptions, who aimed at changing the face of the world, would have soared above his own opinions; he would not have fettered those minds which aimed at the destruction of what he also pretended to destroy. Luther was the first obstacle to Luther's reformation.

The reformer was not, assuredly, deficient in spirit; after all, however, he did not display that commanding courage which so many martyrs and enthusiasts evinced in behalf of the catholic religion and of heresies; he was neither the invincible Arius, nor the indomitable John Huss; he only exposed himself on one occasion, thenceforward kept in the back-ground, vents the loudest threats from afar, boasts that he will brave every danger, but confronts none. He refuses to repair to the diet of Augsburg, and prudently remains shut up in the fortress of Coburg. He often says that he is *alone*, that he is about to descend from his Sinai, his Sion; but he remains there. When he spoke thus, so far from being *alone*, he was behind the dukes of Mecklenburg and Brunswick, behind the grand-master of the Teutonic Order, behind the elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse; before him

was the conflagration he had kindled, and none could get at him through this blazing barricade.

Let us be just towards Luther; he was a man of genius and imagination, a writer, a poet, a musician, and, moreover, a very worthy man. He has fixed the German prose upon a solid basis; his translation of the Bible, incorrect from his imperfect knowledge of the Hebrew, has stood the test of time: his psalms, composed after the Holy Scriptures, are still sung in the Lutheran churches. He was a disinterested man; a good husband, a tender father; setting aside the marriage between a monk and a nun. We discover in him that candid and genuine German nature, replete with the purest feelings of humanity, and inspiring confidence at first sight; but we also find in Luther that German coarseness, those virtues and talents, which are still inspired at the present day by that *false Bacchus*, accursed by another reformer, Julian the Apostate.

Luther was sincere; he only fell into schism after long struggles; after expressing his doubts, almost his remorse, he retains the temptations of the cloister. A susceptible man, who turns monk because a friend of his was struck dead by lightning in his presence, may well throw off the cowl upon witnessing the sale of indulgences;

this is not to be ascribed to profound views or lofty ideas. Luther seriously fancied himself assaulted by the devil; he struggled against him during the night, till the sweat covered his brow, *multas noctes mihi satis amarentulas et acerbas reddere ille novit*. When he was over tormented by the evil spirit, he put him to flight by uttering three words, which I cannot venture to repeat, but which may be read in the curious extracts in M. Michelet's work.\* Christ had spoken to Satan a different language; he had merely said to him: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Occasionally, in his exaltation of mind, Luther fancied himself possessed by the Divinity, shook off his own individuality, and exclaimed, "I don't know Luther. The devil take Luther."

Luther's eloquence was not of the choicest kind; and, when speaking of the pope, the Lama is too present to his mind. His doctrine in favour of the great is as relaxed as his eloquence is at times of a foul character; he almost admits polygamy, and allowed the landgrave of Hesse to have two wives. If he had not rejected the papal authority, he might have supported himself by a decretal of Pope Gregory II. in 762.

\* *Mémoires de Luther*, vol. iii, p. 186.

PORTRAITIS OF LUTHER BY MAIMBOURG, BOSSUET, AND  
VOLTAIRE.

THE justice done to Luther by catholic writers and priests, in the portraits they have drawn of him, must be recorded to their honour.

“ He was a man of lively and subtle mind,” says Father Maimbourg in his rather antiquated style, “ eloquent by nature, copious and polished in his language, very laborious, and so addicted to study, that he occasionally engaged his whole day, without his even affording himself leisure to take nourishment ; by this means he acquired tolerable proficiency in languages and in the writings of the fathers, to the perusal of which, and especially of St. Augustine, whom he turned to so bad an account. he was much addicted, contrary to the practice of the theologians of his day. His strong and robust constitution was calculated to bear him through his studies, without impairing his health ; he was of a bilious

and sanguine habit of body; his eye was penetrating and full of fire; the sound of his voice was agreeable, and very loud when he was once excited; he was of a proud, bold, and haughty deportment, which he could soften down at command, in order to personate an humble, modest, and subdued spirit, which was, however, of rare occurrence. Such is the true character of Martin Luther, who may be said to have combined in his person a remarkable admixture of some good and many bad qualities, and who was far more debauched in mind than in morals and in his private life, which was generally free from reproach."

Bossuet has drawn so impartial a portrait of Luther, that it might almost be deemed too flattering.

"The two parties who share the reformation between them, have alike acknowledged him as their author. The highest praises have been bestowed upon him by others, besides the Lutherans, his immediate sectaries; Calvin often admires his virtues, his magnanimity, his constancy, the rare ingenuity he displayed in his attacks against the pope; he is the trumpet, or rather the thunderbolt; a thunderbolt which has

awakened the world from its lethargy. it was not Luther who spoke; it was God who dealt his blows through Luther's mouth. He possessed, no doubt great strength of genius, great powers of speech, a vivid and impetuous eloquence, which engaged and delighted his hearers; extraordinary boldness, when he found himself backed and applauded, and an air of authority which made his disciples tremble in his presence, so that they dared not contradict him in trifles any more than in important matters. It was not the people alone who considered Luther as a prophet; he was represented as such by the initiated of his party, Melancton, who placed himself under his guidance at the commencement of these altercations, allowed himself at first to be so persuaded that there was something extraordinary and prophetic in this man, that he could not for a long time recover from his astonishment. In spite of the many defects which he daily discovered in his master; he wrote to Erasmus, in reference to Luther: *Prophets, you are aware, should be brought to the test, and not despised.* Nevertheless, this new prophet gave way to the most violent excesses of passion. He overstrained every thing; because prophets, at the bidding of God, uttered awful invectives, he became the most violent of men, the most

prolific in outrageous language. Luther spoke of himself in a manner to raise a blush among his friends. Proud of his knowledge, which was in reality slender, though great for the time in which he lived, and too great for his salvation and for the repose of the church, he placed himself above all men, not only those of his own, but of the most distinguished of by-gone ages. It must be acknowledged that he possessed much strength of mind; nothing was wanting to him but that rule of conduct which can only be found in the church, and under the sway of legitimate authority. Had Luther remained under this sway, so indispensable for all minds to submit to, and especially for fiery and impetuous minds, such as he possessed; could he have retrenched from his speeches his transports of violence, his scurrility, his brutal insolence; the strength with which he handles the truth would not have been wielded for the purposes of seduction. Accordingly, we still find him invincible, when he comments upon the ancient dogmas which he had drawn from the church; pride, however, was an unfailing attendant upon his triumphs."

Voltaire, *the patriarch of incredulity*, has been less lenient to Luther than the Jesuit Maimbourg



and the Bishop of Meaux, had proved themselves.

“ We cannot,” said he, “ resist a smile of pity, when we read of the manner in which Luther treated all his adversaries, and the pope in particular: “ Petty popekin, you are an ass, an ass’s colt; go gently; the ground is slippery; you might break your legs, and people would say: ‘ What the devil can this be? The little colt of a pope has broken its legs. An ass knows itself to be an ass; a stone that it is a stone; but these little asses of popes are not aware that they are asses.’ ”

These scoffings of Voltaire are just; but they tell for nothing.



#### OPINION OF LUTHER.

THE intellectual movement effected by Luther did not emanate from his genius : he had no genius. It must be remembered that the term genius, in the time of Bossuet, did not bear the signification which is now attached to it. Luther, I have already observed, was merely a man of considerable intelligence and considerable imagination. He yielded to the irascibility of his temper, without comprehending the revolution which he was accomplishing, and which he himself impeded by obstinately seeking to concentrate it in his own person. He would have failed, like all his predecessors, if the spoils of the clergy had not tempted the cupidity of power.

Since the event, people have systematized the reformation : it is the character of our age to systematize every thing, folly, meanness, and crime. We give the mind credit for crimes and acts and baseness with which it has had no relation, and which are merely the offspring of vile

instinct or brutal irregularity : we may fancy we discover genius in the appetite of a tiger. Hence those high-sounding phrases, those maxims upon stilts, which pass for wise, and which, passing from history or romance into vulgar language, enter into the commerce of paltry villany, of assassins who commit murder for a silver cup or the tattered gown of a poor woman.

It has been affirmed that free investigation was the constitutive principle of the reformation. In the first place, it is necessary to understand what is meant by *free investigation*. Free investigation of what? Of religion, or of philosophic ideas? These subjects had long been discussed without restraint. Is it the *free investigation* of social questions; of civil liberty? Certainly not! And this I shall prove in the succeeding chapter.

It is even doubtful whether *free investigation* in matters of religion really accelerated the anti-christian revolution, which is the fundamental idea of those with whom this free investigation is the favorite doctrine. Bayle, who cannot be suspected on this subject, makes the following just and profound observations : “ It is certain that the number of those who were luke-warm, indifferent, or disgusted with christianity, was diminished much more than augmented by the

troubles which agitated Europe on the occasion of Luther. Every one enthusiastically sided with one party or the other. Some remained in the Roman communion; others embraced protestantism. The former conceived for their communion more zeal than they had previously cherished; the latter were all ardour for their new faith. One cannot calculate the numbers who, according to the testimony of Coeffeteau, relinquished christianity on witnessing so many disputes."

If it be said that, within a given time, the *free investigation of religious truth* introduced, as a deduction or corollary, the *free investigation of political truth*; if it be said, with Voltaire, "it was not till after Luther's time that the laity dogmatized;" I readily admit it. But these consequences were brought about by the natural progress of civilization; and we had no need of the horrors of the League, the massacres in Ireland and Scotland, the murders of the German peasantry, the civil wars of Switzerland, and the thirty years' war. These torrents of blood, instead of accelerating the advance of the human mind, have checked its progress for the space of two centuries. The horrors of 1793 will retard, for an incalculable period, the emancipation of mankind. The reformation originated

simply in the haughty rage of a monk and the avidity of princes. The changes which had taken place in laws and manners during a century preceding the reformation led of necessity to changes in religious worship. Luther came at the right time; and that is all. He is an example of that reputation which chance and circumstances sometimes confer on men of very ordinary ability. I may here quote another judicious remark of Bayle's. "Wicliffe, and several others, had not less talent or less merit than Luther; but they attempted the cure of the disease before it reached its crisis."

Berington, in his "Literary History of the Middle Ages," says, as I have stated, that all necessary reforms would have been obtained without the infliction of so many misfortunes. Alluding to England, he says: "It is pleasing to recollect that, without civil or religious strife, and without those seeds of animosity being engendered, which no time is likely to eradicate, we should have seen abuses corrected; ignorance dispelled; rights maintained; learning restored; the arts keeping possession of our temples; and, in our own country, these noble edifices, the monuments of the generous piety of our ancestors, preserved from destruction, and made the asylums not of monkish indolence,

but of studious ease, modest worth, and christian philosophy.”

Protestantism may justly lay claim to virtues; but it is not much honoured in its founders: Luther, the apostate monk, the approver of the massacre of the peasantry; Calvin, the splenetic doctor, who burnt Servetus; Henry VIII, the revisor of the Missal, and who put seventy-two thousand persons to a cruel death; these are the three Christs of protestantism.





### THE REFORMATION,

BUT, putting the workman out of the question and considering only the work, there are truths which it would be unjust to deny. The reformation, by opening modern ages, separated them from the undefined interval which succeeded the termination of what are called the middle ages. It awakened ideas of ancient equality. It served to metamorphose a society exclusively military into a civil, rational, and industrious society. It gave birth to the modern property of capital; a moveable, progressive, and unlimited property, which opposes the limited, fixed, and despotic property of land. This is an immense benefit. But it is mixed up with much evil; and this evil historical impartiality will not permit us to pass over in silence.

Christianity commenced among the plebeian, poor, and ignorant classes of mankind. Jesus addressed himself to the lowly, and they rallied

round their master. Faith gradually ascended to the upper ranks, and at length found its way to the imperial throne. Christianity was thus catholic or universal. The religion styled catholic set out from the lowest, and finally reached the highest step of the social ladder. The pope-dom was only the tribunate of nations, when the *political age* of christianity arrived.

Protestantism followed an opposite course. It was first introduced among the heads of the body politic ; among princes and nobles, priests and magistrates, scholars and men of letters, and it slowly descended to the inferior conditions of life. The impress of these two origins remains distinctly marked in the two communions.

The reformed communion has never been so popular as the catholic faith. Being of princely and patrician origin, it does not sympathise with the multitude. Protestantism is equitable and moral, punctual in the discharge of duty ; but its charity partakes more of reason than of tenderness ; it clothes the naked, but does not warm them in its bosom ; it shelters the poor beneath its wings, but does not dwell and weep with them in their most abject haunts ; it relieves but does not feel for misfortune. The monk and the priest are the companions of the poor man ; poor like himself, they have for their companions the

bowels of Jesus Christ. Rags, straw, disease, and dungeons excite in them no disgust, no repugnance; charity imparts a perfume to indigence and misery. The catholic priest is the successor of the twelve lowly men who preached Christ raised from the dead; he blesses the body of the deceased beggar, as the sacred remains of a being beloved by God, and raised to eternal life. The protestant pastor forsakes the beggar on his death-bed; to him the grave is not an object of religious veneration; he has no faith in those expiatory prayers, by which a friend may deliver a suffering soul. In this world the minister does not rush into the midst of flames or pestilence; he reserves to his own family that affectionate care which the priest of Rome bestows on the great human family.

In a religious point of view, the reformation is leading insensibly to indifference, or the complete absence of faith; the reason is, that the independence of the mind terminates in two gulfs,—doubt and incredulity.

By a very natural reaction, the reformation at its birth rekindled the dying flame of catholic fanaticism. It may thus be regarded as the indirect cause of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the disturbances of the League, the assassination of Henry IV., the murders in Ireland, and of

the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and the *dragonnades*. Protestantism exclaimed against the intolerance of Rome, whilst she was murdering catholics in England and France, and scattering their ashes to the winds; whilst she was kindling piles in Geneva, sullyng herself with the atrocities of Munster, and dictating to Ireland the atrocious laws from which that country is scarcely yet released, after three centuries of oppression. What improvement is it pretended that the reformation wrought in doctrine and discipline? It boasts of the reasonableness of denying some mysteries of the catholic faith, whilst it retains others quite as difficult of comprehension. It attacked the abuses of the court of Rome; but would not those abuses have been destroyed by the progress of civilization? Have I not shewn that a general outcry had been long raised against those abuses?

The reformation, imbued with the spirit of its founder, declared itself hostile to the arts. It sacked tombs, churches, and monuments, and made in France and England heaps of ruins. By retrenching imagination from the faculties of man, it clipped the wings of genius, and compelled it to walk on foot. It burst forth on account of alms destined to erect for the christian

world the church of St. Peter. Would the Greeks have refused the appeal to their piety, if solicited for the means of erecting a temple to Minerva?

Had the reformation in its origin obtained complete success, it would have established, at least for a time, another kind of barbarism. Treating as superstition the pomp of the altar, as idolatry the masterpieces of sculpture, architecture, and painting, the reformation would have tended to banish the loftiest style of eloquence and poetry; to deteriorate taste by the repudiation of models; to imbue the mind with all that is cold, dry, doctrinal and punctilious; to substitute unaffected and material for a natural and intellectual state of society; to employ machinery and wheel-work instead of manual and mental operation. The operation of a single fact suffices to confirm these truths.

In the various branches of the reformed religion, that communion approximates more or less to the beautiful in proportion as it is more or less removed from the catholic religion. In England, where the ecclesiastical hierarchy has been maintained, literature has had its classic era. Lutheranism preserves sparks of imagination, which Calvinism would extinguish; and so with the other sects, descending to the quakers, who would reduce social life to coarseness

of manners and the practice of handicraft trades.

Shakspeare, according to all probability, if he was anything, was a catholic. Pope and Dryden were of that faith. Milton has imitated some parts of the poems of St. Avitus and Masenius ; and Klopstock borrowed most of the Roman points of belief. In Germany, in our own time, imagination did not take a lofty flight until the spirit of protestantism was enfeebled and perverted. Göthe and Schiller have exercised their genius on catholic subjects. In French literature, Rousseau and Madame de Staël form brilliant exceptions to the rule. But were they protestants after the manner of the first disciples of Calvin? Painters, architects, and sculptors of the dissenting sects now repair to Rome in quest of that inspiration which universal tolerance permits them to imbibe.

But I need not speak of Europe only ; the whole world is covered with monuments of the catholic religion. We are indebted to it for that Gothic architecture, which rivals in details and eclipses in grandeur the monuments of Greece. It is now more than three centuries since protestantism had its birth. It is powerful in England, Germany, and America ; it is the religion of many millions of men. What has it created?

It may point to the ruins it has made, and amidst which it has planted a few gardens and established some manufactures ; rebelling against the authority of tradition, the experience of time past, and the wisdom of old age, protestantism detached itself from the past, and planted a society without roots ; acknowledging as his father a German monk of the sixteenth century, the protestant renounced the splendid genealogy which the catholic is enabled to trace through a line of saints and heroes to Jesus Christ, and from Him to the patriarchs and the infancy of the world. The protestant age renounced at its birth all relationship with the age of St. Leo, who defended the civilized world against Attila, or with the age of the Leo who, terminating the barbarous world, embellished society when it was no longer necessary to defend it.

If the reformation restricted genius in poetry, eloquence, and the arts, it also checked heroism in war, for heroism is imagination in the military order. Catholicism had produced the knights of the ages of chivalry. Protestantism created brave and virtuous captains, such as La Noue ; but devoid of enthusiasm, Falkland excepted ; often coldly cruel and austere, less perhaps so in manners than in mind. The Chatillons were always eclipsed by the Guises. Henry IV, the

only warrior of true spirit and enthusiasm whom the protestants count in their communion, escaped them. The reformation produced those imperfect heroes, Gustavus-Adolphus, Charles XII, and Frederick; but it could not have created a Bonaparte. Though it may lay claim to such abortions as Tillotson and Claude, it could not give birth to a Fénelon or a Bossuet. It produced Inigo Jones and Webb, but not Raphael and Michael Angelo.

Writers have affirmed, that protestantism has proved favourable to political liberty; and it has emancipated nations. But do facts speak like writers?

It is certain that the Reformation was at its birth republican, but in the aristocratic sense; because its first disciples were gentlemen. The calvinists dreamt of establishing in France a sort of government composed of federal principalities, which would have made it like the Germanic empire. It would have been singular enough to have seen feudal issue revived by protestantism. The nobles instinctively embraced the new faith, through which was transmitted a sort of reminiscence of their vanished power. But, this first fervour having passed away, the people gained no political liberty by protestantism.



Look for example to the north of Europe : in those countries in which the reformation had its birth, and in which it has been continued, the mere will of the sovereign is the law. Prussia and Saxony have remained under the sway of absolute monarchy ; Denmark has become a legal despotism.

Protestantism never gained a footing under republican governments. It did not gain access to the elective and republican monarchy of Poland ; it was unable to invade Genoa ; it scarcely succeeded in establishing in Venice and Ferrara a little clandestine church, which speedily perished. The fine arts and the bright sun of the south were fatal to it.

In Switzerland it prospered only in the aristocratic cantons, which were congenial to its nature, and there not without a great effusion of blood. The popular or democratic cantons, Schwytz, Uri, and Unterwalden, the cradle of Helvetic liberty, expelled it.

In England, it was not the vehicle of the constitution, which was formed long before the 16th century in the lap of the catholic faith. When Great Britain separated from the court of Rome, the parliament had already judged and deposed kings ;—the three powers were distinct ;—taxes and troops were levied only by consent

of the Lords and Commons ;—representative monarchy was established and in operation : time, civilization, and the progress of knowledge would have conferred the improvements which were wanting, as effectually under the influence of the catholic faith, as under the dominion of protestantism. So far were the English people from gaining an extension of their liberties by the overthrow of the religion of their fathers, that the Senate of Tiberius was never more vile than was the parliament of Henry VIII: that parliament decreed that the mere will of the tyrant, who was the founder of the English church, should have the authority of law. Was England more free under the sceptre of Elizabeth than under that of Mary? The truth is, that protestantism has never operated any change in national institutions. Wherever it found a representative monarchy, or aristocratic republics, as in England or Switzerland, it adopted them: wherever it found military governments, as in the north of Europe, it accommodated itself to them and rendered them more absolute.

Though the English colonies have formed the plebeian republic of the United States, yet those States do not owe their liberty to protestantism. They were not emancipated by religious wars ; they rebelled against the oppression of the

mother country, which, like themselves, was protestant. Maryland, a catholic and very populous state, made common cause with the others, and now most of the western states are catholic. The progress of this communion in the United States of America exceeds belief. There it has been invigorated in its evangelical aliment, popular liberty, whilst other communions decline in profound indifference.

Next to this great republic of the protestant English colonies have arisen the great republics of the catholic Spanish colonies. In the struggle for independence, the latter certainly had greater obstacles to surmount than the Anglo-American colonies, which were accustomed to representative government, before they broke the feeble bond which attached them to the mother country.

One republic only has been established in Europe by the aid of protestantism, namely—the Dutch republic ; but Holland was a part of those industrious provinces of the Netherlands, which for upwards of four centuries had struggled to shake off the yoke of their princes, and governed themselves under the form of municipal republics, though peopled by zealous catholics. Philip II and the princes of the house of Austria could not extinguish the spirit of

independence in Belgium ; and in our own time it was the catholic priests who, for a brief interval, restored that country to the republican form of government.

There is only one branch of Lutheranism that has been political, and that is the Calvinistic branch, with its various ramifications, from the Anabaptist to the Socinian : yet this branch never did any thing for popular liberty. In France, the disciples of Calvinism were priests and nobles. If, in Scotland, Knox and Buchanan preached the sovereignty of the people, the Jesuit Mariana, la Boetie, and Baudin promulgated the same doctrines among the catholics. Milton, the enemy of those protestant kings, whom however, he could not prevent from re-ascending the throne, was also the partizan of *aristocratic republicanism*, and the great adversary of equality and democracy.

An attentive examination of facts must lead to the conclusion that protestantism has not promoted popular freedom. It has given to mankind philosophic liberty, but not political liberty. Now the former liberty, has nowhere led to the attainment of the latter, except in France, the true land of catholicism. How happens it that Germany, naturally philosophic, and already armed with protestantism, has not

advanced a single step towards political liberty in the eighteenth century, whilst France, of not very philosophic temperament, and under the yoke of catholicism, gained during that century all her liberties.

Descartes, the founder of a system of sceptical investigation, the author of the *Méthode* and the *Méditations*, the destroyer of scholastic dogmatism—Descartes who maintained that to arrive at truth it was necessary to reject all received opinions—Descartes was tolerated in Rome, pensioned by Cardinal Mazarin, and persecuted by the theologians of Holland.

The man of theory has a sovereign contempt for that which is practical. He looks down from the height of his lofty doctrine, judges men and things, meditates on the general laws of society, directs his bold inquiries even into the mysteries of the divine nature, and feels and thinks himself independent because only his body is chained. To think every thing, and do nothing, is at once the character and the virtue of philosophic genius. The philosopher wishes to see mankind happy. The sight of liberty charms him: but he does not care to see it through two windows of a prison. Like Socrates, protestantism may be said to have called minds into existence; but unfortunately

the intelligence which it has ushered into life have hitherto been only beautiful slaves.

Be it observed, however, that most of these reflexions on the Reformed religion are intended to apply only to the past : the protestants of the present day are not, any more than the catholics, what they formerly were. The protestants have gained in imagination, in poetry, in eloquence, in reason, in liberty, and in genuine piety, what the latter have lost. The antipathies between the different communions no longer exist. The children of Christ, from whatever line they spring, unite at the foot of Mount Calvary, the common birth-place of the family. The licentiousness and the ambition of the court of Rome have ceased ; and the Vatican is now distinguished by the virtues of the early Bishops, patronage of the arts, and the majesty of recollections. Every thing now tends to restore catholic unity ; with a few concessions on either side, concord would soon be established. To be enabled to shine forth in renewed glory, christianity wants only a superior genius, coming at the proper time and place. The christian religion is entering upon a new era : like institutions and manners it is undergoing the third transformation. It is ceasing to be political, according to the old social mechanism ; it is advancing to the great principle

of the Gospel: natural democratic equality between man and man, as it is acknowledged before God. Its flexible circle extends with knowledge and liberty, whilst the cross for ever marks its immoveable centre.





## COMMENCEMENT OF PROTESTANT LITERATURE.

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KNOX. BUCHANAN.

WHEN once a route is opened, men will be found ready to enter upon it. Henry VIII speedily followed Luther. By establishing the most barbarous of religions and political tyrannies, he proved how much the Reformation favoured independence of opinion and liberty.

Though I have affirmed that the beautiful in literature will be found to exist in a greater or less degree in proportion as writers have approximated to the genius of the Roman church, it must nevertheless be acknowledged that the change of religion was succeeded by an immediate improvement in English literature. But why? Because the Reformation took place before

the language emerged from barbarism. All the great English writers appeared after the reign of Henry VIII.

But if the innovations in religion, on account of the period at which they were introduced, did not establish a very visible line of demarcation in the ascending scale of literature, they traced a very deep line in the descending scale. The Reformation may be said to have severed the literature of Europe into two parts, which maintained a rivalry, and frequently an hostility, one to the other.

The examination and comparison of catholic and protestant literature, from the period of the division of ideas by the schism, would be a work useful to taste, curious to criticism, and calculated to throw a philosophic light on the history of the human mind. The literature of England, Scotland, Germany, Holland and calvinistic France, is not like the literature of that portion of France which remained faithful to her altars, nor like the literature of Spain and Italy. What would Milton, Addison, Hume, and Robertson have been if catholics? What would Racine, Bossuet, Massillon, and Bourdaloue have been if Protestants? These two opposite styles of literature have acted and reacted one upon the other. The eloquence of the pulpit, for example, has changed its course since the Reformation: the

pastors have preached morality and the priests dogma. The latter appeared to be intent only on defending themselves, harassed between Luther who pursued them and Voltaire who advanced to attack them face to face. The protestants went too far; the catholics have not gone far enough.

Politics and philosophy incroached upon the literature of the Reformation. That literature became formal and argumentative. Knox, an apostate Scottish priest, drew tears from the unfortunate Mary Stuart by his menacing fanaticism: he published *The First Sound of the Trumpet against Female Government*, and established the dogma of the sovereignty of the people in religious and political matters: *plebis est religionem reformare: principes ob justas causas deponi possunt, &c.* The bishop of Luçon, afterwards Cardinal Richelieu, refuted the principles of Knox in a controversial work. "Your party," said he, "have written that, by right divine and human it is permitted to take the lives of impious kings; that it is a thing conformable to the word of God, that a private man may by special instinct kill a tyrant. But this is a detestable doctrine, in every point of view, and will never gain admittance into the catholic Church.

Buchanan unfolded the same principles as Knox in his Treatise *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*. Knox and Buchanan lived at the commencement of the Reformation. They were the friends of Calvin and Theodore de Beza ; the latter were contemporaries of Henry VIII, and both had written as catholics before they wrote as protestants. Knox was a priest, Buchanan was the domestic preceptor of Montaigne. It may be seen in the prose writings of the former, and in the poetry of the latter, how the new doctrines modified their genius.

THE WRITINGS OF HENRY VIII.

THE same metamorphosis of style and ideas may be seen in the writings of Henry VIII. How widely different are the "Institutions of a Christian Man," and the "Erudition of a Christian Name," from the *Assertio septem Sacramentorum*, a treatise, which Hume observes, "does no discredit to his capacity!" The Apostle King, in his impartiality, burned a Lutheran and a Catholic together.

We have seen how the anger of Luther was provoked by the work of Henry VIII. It is a fact scarcely known at the present day that the *Assertio* passed through a vast number of editions. It was published in 1521, and forty years afterwards (in the year 1562) it was reprinted in Paris. It is preceded by a dedication from the *Invincible* Henry to Pope Leo X. Henry beseeches his Holiness to pardon him for having,

young as he was, amidst the occupation of arms and the various duties of the throne, ventured to defend religion; but he could not without indignation see holy things attacked and heresy flow in from all sides. He adds that he sends his work to the true judge, in order that he may correct any errors which he shall find in it.

The meek and benign sovereign next addresses his readers. He assures them that, without eloquence or learning, and prompted solely by fidelity and piety towards his mother church, the spouse of Christ, he has ventured to combat for her. He asks them if ever such a pestilence (the Lutheran doctrine) was spread among the flock of the Lord; if ever the serpent had such a poison as that distilled by the book on the captivity of Babylon?

Then entering upon his subject, he says a few words on indulgences, and supports the belief in purgatory. He places Luther in opposition to himself, and declares that he falsifies the New Testament. He establishes, by the authority of the Canons and by historical tradition, the universal power of Popedom, and he argues in favour of the seven sacraments. On the subject of the Eucharist, he replies to the objection against *water*, that if the catholic church mixes water with the wine in the chalice, it is

because blood and water flowed from the side of the dying Saviour: *quia aqua cum sanguine de latere morientis effluxit*. Finally, in his peroration, he implores all Christians to unite against Luther, as they would unite against Turks, Saracens, and all infidels.

Doctor Martin was irritated, and insulted Doctor Henry; and the latter addressed a letter to his cousin the Duke of Saxony. The duke lectured Luther, and the monk consented to write a more moderate letter to the king. In his letter, dated Wittemberg 1525, the repentant reformer states, that his indignation was not excited against his sovereign, but against the wretches, who presumed to promulgate a libel under the name of an august monarch, hopes that the king will be pleased to send him a mild and benign reply, and subscribes himself "your Royal Majesty's very humble servant, Martin Luther, signed with my own hand."

Henry, in his reply, excuses himself for not having earlier answered Luther's letter, which had been carried out of the way. He again tells the new apostle that his errors and heresies are scandalous; that his erudition and his arguments, which are neither well grounded, nor well maintained, prove a degree of perverse

impudence. "If thou be truly penitent, Luther," says the king, "throw not thyself at my feet, but at the feet of God."

The king, who was the husband of six wives, who sent two queens to the scaffold, who turned monks and nuns out of their convents, who founded a church in which the clergy were permitted to marry, and monastic vows were abolished, thus addressed Luther: "Send back to the cloister the wretched woman (*muliercula*) the adulterous spouse of Christ, with whom thou livest under the name of husband, in scandalous debauchery and double damnation. Pass the rest of thy days in tears and repentance for the multitude of thy sins. Return to thy monastery; there thou mayest recant thine errors, and, by the salvation of thy soul, redeem thy body from perils. There, lamenting thy pestilential heresies, and dissolute errors, implore the divine mercy, not with arrogant confidence, not by a gesture, a word, or a publican spirit, but with persevering penitence. Alter and amend thy ways; till then I shall be afflicted, thou wilt be lost, and through thee, wretched man, a multitude will perish."

That nothing might be wanting to complete this farce, Leo X conferred on Henry VIII the title of *Defender of the Faith*, which has been



borne by the protestant kings of England almost to the present day. In the Vatican, there was once a harp, which an Irish chieftain sent to the holy see in token of vassalage. Leo X sent it to the *Defender of the Faith* in order to infief Ireland to the crown of Great Britain. Ireland could not be offended at being given as a harp, when the investiture of Rome herself, was made by a short episcopal mantle: *prefectura Romanæ investum fiebat per mantum* (Decret. Innoc. III. L. I). If Henry VIII could have laid hands on Luther, there would certainly have been one reformer less in Europe.

It must not be forgotten that, whilst Henry VIII was declared *Defender of the Faith* by the court of Rome, Luther was elected Pope in one of the chapels of the Vatican, by the Lutheran soldiers of the catholic Charles V.

History presents many curious spectacles: but can any be more extraordinary than the dispute between Luther and Henry VIII, when we consider the characters of these two champions, and the revolution which they effected. Such are the instructors of nations, the anchorites of the rock, the austere children of the learned deserts of a modern Thebais, to whom men of reason, learning, and virtue, have submitted their consciences and their genius! How strangely is mankind led!

The first of these was the... the second... the third... the fourth... the fifth... the sixth... the seventh... the eighth... the ninth... the tenth... the eleventh... the twelfth... the thirteenth... the fourteenth... the fifteenth... the sixteenth... the seventeenth... the eighteenth... the nineteenth... the twentieth... the twenty-first... the twenty-second... the twenty-third... the twenty-fourth... the twenty-fifth... the twenty-sixth... the twenty-seventh... the twenty-eighth... the twenty-ninth... the thirtieth... the thirty-first... the thirty-second... the thirty-third... the thirty-fourth... the thirty-fifth... the thirty-sixth... the thirty-seventh... the thirty-eighth... the thirty-ninth... the fortieth... the forty-first... the forty-second... the forty-third... the forty-fourth... the forty-fifth... the forty-sixth... the forty-seventh... the forty-eighth... the forty-ninth... the fiftieth... the fifty-first... the fifty-second... the fifty-third... the fifty-fourth... the fifty-fifth... the fifty-sixth... the fifty-seventh... the fifty-eighth... the fifty-ninth... the sixtieth... the sixty-first... the sixty-second... the sixty-third... the sixty-fourth... the sixty-fifth... the sixty-sixth... the sixty-seventh... the sixty-eighth... the sixty-ninth... the seventieth... the seventy-first... the seventy-second... the seventy-third... the seventy-fourth... the seventy-fifth... the seventy-sixth... the seventy-seventh... the seventy-eighth... the seventy-ninth... the eightieth... the eighty-first... the eighty-second... the eighty-third... the eighty-fourth... the eighty-fifth... the eighty-sixth... the eighty-seventh... the eighty-eighth... the eighty-ninth... the ninetieth... the ninety-first... the ninety-second... the ninety-third... the ninety-fourth... the ninety-fifth... the ninety-sixth... the ninety-seventh... the ninety-eighth... the ninety-ninth... the hundredth...

#### HENRY VIII. CONTINUED.

HENRY VIII. wrote poetry as well as prose. He played on the flute and the spinett. He set to music ballads for his court and masses for his chapel, and he left behind him a motett, an anthem, and many scaffolds. He was certainly a troubadour of most imaginative genius. This man, who employed a wooden image of the Virgin as part of the materials for the pile at which the confessor of Catherine of Arragon was burnt;—who summoned before his tribunal the dead body of St. Thomas of Canterbury, tried it and condemned it to death, in spite of the legal maxim, *non bis in idem*; who caused faggots to be bound on the backs of five Dutch Anabaptists, and regaled his eyes with the spectacle of five moving *auto-da-fés*; he had

a fine subject for a romantic sonnet when, from the summit of a solitary hill in Richmond Park, he saw the signal which was transmitted from the Tower of London, announcing the execution of Anne Boleyn. What delicious satisfaction he must have enjoyed at that moment! The axe had severed the delicate neck, and stained with blood the beautiful hair, on which the poet king had lavished his fatal caresses.

SURREY—SIR THOMAS MORE.

IN the reign of Henry VIII we find Surrey and Sir Thomas More. The Earl of Surrey released English poetry from the forms of the middle ages, and conferred on it the impress of the Italian style by composing sonnets to Geraldine in the manner of Petrarch. It is supposed by some that Geraldine was Elizabeth Fitzgerald; but others allege that she was the daughter of Lord Kildare. Be that as it may, the beautiful and beloved lady *once was*, and is now no more. Surrey, being in Florence, addressed a challenge to every christian, Jew, Moor, Turk, and cannibal, declaring that he, Surrey, would maintain against one or all the incomparable beauty of Geraldine. Petrarch sighed for Laura, but did not fight for her. The English of those days displayed their chivalry and their passions among those ruins to which they now carry only their fashions and their *ennui*.

On his return to England, Surrey was impri-

soned in Windsor Castle by the orthodox Henry VIII, for having eaten flesh during Lent.

“ Here noble Surrey felt the sacred rage.”

POPE.

The last victim of the first protestant King of Great Britain was the noble lover of Geraldine. The reforming prince proved his attachment to literature by dooming to the block Sir Thomas More, and the poet with whose writings the era of modern English poetry commences. In the Tower of London are preserved the axes which struck off many illustrious heads. The bit of iron survives moulds which comprised power and genius.

Surrey, in his translation of some fragments of the *Æneid*, introduced the blank verse which Milton and Thomson adopted, and which Lord Byron rejected.

Sir Thomas More, like his good king, was a poet and a prose writer. Most of his works are written in Latin. The head of the chancellor was exposed, for the space of a fortnight, on London Bridge. Henry VIII, in his clemency, commuted the punishment of hanging, to which the author of “*Utopia*” was condemned, to that of decapitation. On being informed of this, the learned magistrate replied: “Heaven preserve my friends from the like favour!”

Within an interval of twenty-five years, at the period here referred to, prose was less successfully cultivated than poetry. It would be difficult to derive either profit or pleasure from a perusal of the writings of Wolsey, Cranmer, Habington, Drummond, and Joseph Hall, the preacher.





#### EDWARD VI. AND QUEEN MARY.

EDWARD VI and Queen Mary, who succeeded Henry VIII, and preceded Elizabeth, must be included in the list of British authors. The young king died at the age of sixteen. He was educated by two scholars of the time, John Cheke and Anthony Cooke, and he likewise received instructions from Cardan. Edward left a journal written in his own hand, which is useful for the illustration of history. The young sovereign, whose life was spent in privacy, and as it were in exile, enjoyed the leisure which other princes find only when banished to foreign lands.

Edward was a zealous reformer, and his sister Mary was a violent catholic. She brought back the nation by force to the Roman communion. Gardiner and others, who burned catholics for the reformation, burned for catholicism the protestants whom they had made such: thus we see in political revolutions, old men, who have uniformly adhered to the ruling power, rallying their

energies to recount their own baseness. The commons prostituted themselves to the will of Mary, as they paid obedience to the commands of her father. People changed their faith oftener than their garments. They swore to one thing and presently afterwards swore to directly the contrary ; and at length in the reign of Elizabeth, they returned to their first oaths. How many perjuries are required to make one fidelity !

Mary left behind her some Latin and French letters. Erasmus praised the former, but they are absolutely worthless ; as to the latter, they are illegible.

## THE REIGN OF ELIZABETH.

SPENSER.

FROM the time of Spenser the modern English poetry takes its date. The "Faerie Queene," is, as every one knows, an allegorical poem. The author has represented twelve private virtues, which are classed as in Ariosto. These virtues are transformed into knights, and King Arthur is at the head of the party. Gloriana, Queen of the Fairies, is Queen Elizabeth, and King Arthur is Sir Philip Sydney. Lord Buckhurst, in his "Mirroure for Magistrates," appears to have suggested the first idea of the "Faerie Queene." The form of Spenser's poem is modelled on that of the Orlando and Gerusalemme. Each canto consists of stanzas of nine lines. The six last cantos are wanting, excepting two fragments.

Allegory was in vogue in what was considered the elegant poetry of the middle ages. In the productions of that school we find Ladies' Loyalty,

Reason, and Prowess ; Squire Desire, Sir Love, and the Chatelaine his mother ; Emperor Pride, &c. What suggested these fancies to the poets of the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries ? Their classical education. They were trained up among the deities of antiquity, in a bygone world. The colleges sent forth men of subtile genius, who had no relation with the living world. Being christians, and therefore unable to avail themselves of the pagan divinities, they invented moral divinities. They invested these fanciful creations with the manners of chivalry, and mingled them with the inhabitants of fairy land ; they introduced them to tournaments, to the castles of dukes and barons, and the courts of princes, always taking care to conduct them to Lisseux and Pontoise, where *le beau françois* was spoken.

The poetry of Spenser is remarkable for brilliant imagination, fertile invention, and flowing rhythm ; yet with all these recommendations, it is cold and tedious. To the English reader the “ Faerie Queene ” presents the charm of antiquated style, which never fails to please us in our own language, but which we cannot appreciate in a foreign tongue.

Spenser commenced his poem in Ireland, in the castle of Kilcolman, situated in a grant of

three thousand and twenty-eight acres of land, part of the forfeited estates of the Earl of Desmond. There, seated at a hearth which was not his own, the rightful heirs to which were wandering in exile, he celebrated the hill of Mole, and the banks of the Mulla, without reflecting that the fugitive orphans were never to revisit their paternal haunts. The poet must have thought of the lines of Virgil :

Nos patriæ fines et dulcia linquimus arva ;  
Nos patriam fugimus.

Spenser is the author of a sort of essay on the manners and antiquities of Ireland, which I prefer to his "Faerie Queene."

The English formerly traded in their children, and sold them ; this commerce was carried on to a great extent with Ireland. A council held at Armagh in 1117, by the Irish ecclesiastics, declared that, in order to avert the wrath of Jesus Christ, the enemy of servitude, the English slaves throughout the whole island should be restored to their former freedom. (See Wilkin Concil. vol. i.) How have the Irish been requited for this generous resolution of their ancestors ? But for them the period of the deliverance of Christ is at length arrived.



### SHAKSPEARE.

WE now come to Shakspeare. Let us consider him at our leisure, as Montesquieu says of Alexander.

I quote from memory the titles of two pieces : *Every Man*, which was performed in the reign of Henry VIII., and *Gammer Gurton's Needle* performed in 1552. The dramatic authors contemporary with Shakspeare, were Robert Green, Heywood, Decker, Rowley, Peele, Chapman, Ben Jonson, Beaumont, and Fletcher : *jacet oratio !* Ben Jonson's plays, entitled the *Fox*, and the *Alchymist*, are still esteemed.

Spenser was the favourite poet of the reign of Elizabeth. The author of *Macbeth*, and *Richard III.* was eclipsed by the dazzling rays of the " *Shepherd's Calendar*," and the " *Faerie Queene*." Did Montmorency, Biron, and Sully, who were by turns ambassadors from France to the courts of Elizabeth and James I., ever hear

of a strolling actor, who performed sometimes in his own plays, and sometimes in those of other authors? Did they ever pronounce the name of Shakspeare, so barbarous to French ears? Did they ever suspect that there was around him a glory which would outlive their honours, their pomp, their rank? Yet the mountebank player, the representative of Hamlet's Ghost, was the great phantom, the shade of the middle age, who rose upon the world like the evening star, just at a moment when the middle age had sunk among the dead; that extraordinary interval which Dante opened, and which Shakspeare closed.\*

Whitelocke, a contemporary of Milton, speaking in his "Historical Sketch" of the author of "Paradise Lost," designates him as "a certain blind man, named Milton, Latin Secretary to the Parliament." Moliere, the *player*, acted his own Pourceaugnac, as Shakspeare, the buffoon, personated his own Falstaff. The author of the *Tartuffe*, the comrade of poor Mondorge, changed his illustrious name of *Poquelin* for the humble name of *Molière*, that he might not disgrace his father, the *Upholsterer*.

\* The great dramatist himself spelt his name Shakspeare. The orthography Shakespeare has been, however, very generally adopted.



Avant qu'un peu de terre, obtenu par prière,  
 Pour jamais sous la tombe eût enfermé Molière,  
 Mille de ses beaux traits, aujourd'hui si vantés,  
 Furent des sots esprits à nos yeux rebutés.

Thus, the veiled travellers, who come from time to time, and seat themselves at our tables, are treated by us merely as common guests: we know not their immortal nature until the day of their disappearance. On quitting this world, they become transfigured, and say to us, as the messenger of heaven did to Tobias: "I am one of the seven, which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One."

These divinities, who are not recognised by mankind in their transitory passage through the world, are, nevertheless, recognizable to each other. Thus, Milton saw the glory of the Bard of Avon:

What needs my Shakspeare, for his honor'd bones,  
 The labour of an age in piled stones?  
 Or that his hallow'd reliques should be hid  
 Under a starry-pointing pyramid?

Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,  
 What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?  
 Thou, in our wonder and astonishment,  
 Hast built thyself a live-long monument.

\* \* \* \* \*

And, so sepulchred, in such pomp dost lie,  
 That Kings, for such a tomb, would wish to die.

Michael Angelo, surveying the fate and the genius of Dante, exclaims :

Pur fuss' io tal         \*             \*             \*  
 Per l'aspro esilio suo con sua virtute,  
 Darei del mundo il più felice stato.

“ Why have I not been such as he! . . . For his bitter exile, with his virtue, I would give all the enjoyments of the world.”

Tasso celebrated Camoens when the author of the Lusiad was yet almost unknown, and proclaimed his renown before his name was re-echoed by Fame, with her hundred tongues.

Vasco             \*             \*             \*             \*  
 \*         \*             \*             \*             \*             \*  
 \*         \*             \*             \*             buon Luigi

Tant 'oltre stende il glorioso volo.

Che i tuoi spalmati legni andar men lunge.

“ Vasco. . . . Camoens has taken such a glorious flight, that thy tarred ships have not been so far.”

Can any thing be more beautiful than this association of illustrious equals, revealing themselves one to another as it were by signs, exchanging salutations, and conversing together in a language intelligible to themselves alone?

But what could Milton have thought of the prediction of good fortune to the Stuarts in the terrible drama of the Prince of Denmark? The apologist of the condemnation of Charles I. was

well enabled to prove how greatly *his* Shakspeare was mistaken. He might have applied to England the words of Hamlet: *Or ere the shoes were old, with which she followed the poor king's body.* The prophecy has been re-trenched. The Stuarts have been banished from Hamlet, as they have disappeared from the world.



MY FORMER MISJUDGMENT OF SHAKSPEARE—MISTAKEN  
ADMIRERS OF THE POET.

I FORMERLY measured Shakspeare with the classic microscope. It is an excellent instrument for observing the ornaments of good or bad taste, the perfect or imperfect details ; but it is unfit for the observation of the whole, as the focus of the lens bears only on a single point, and is incapable of embracing the entire surface. Dante, now one of the objects of my highest admiration, appeared to me in the same diminished perspective. I wished to find an epopee according to rules, in a free epic poem, including the history of the ideas, the knowledge, the faith, the men, and the events of a whole epoch ; a monument similar to those cathedrals which bear the impress of the genius of past ages, and in which the elegance and truth of the details, equal the grandeur and majesty of the whole.

The classic school, which did not blend the lives of authors with their works, deprived itself of a powerful medium of appreciation. The banishment of Dante furnishes a key to his genius: when we follow the exile into the cloisters, where he *sought peace*; when we are present at the composition of his poems on the highways and in the various places to which he wandered; when we hear his last sigh breathed on a foreign land, do we not read with deeper interest the melancholy stanzas of the three destinies of man after death?

Let it be supposed that Homer never existed; that we read the lays of all Greece, instead of those of one of her sons; I can pardon the learned for this poetic heresy. Yet I should be very unwilling to lose any portion of the adventures of Homer. Yes; the poet must necessarily have played in his cradle with nine turtle-doves; his infantine prattle must have resembled the warbling of nine species of birds. Do you deny these incontestable facts? What then can you make of the cestus of Venus? What signify anachronisms? I hold that the life of the father of fable was related by Herodotus the father of history. Why should I go to Chios and Smyrna, were it not to salute the school and the river of Melesigenes,

in spite of Wolf, Wood, Ilgen, Dugaz-Montbel, and the rest of them? Of all the traditions relating to the Bard of the Odyssey, I reject none save that which makes the poet a Dutchman. Genius of Greece, Genius of Homer, of Hesiod, of Æschylus, of Sophocles, of Euripides, of Sappho, of Simonides, and of Alcæus, continue to deceive us! I believe firmly in thy fictions. What thou tellest me is as true as it is that I have seen thee seated on Mount Hymettus, amidst the humming of bees, beneath the porch of a convent of Greek monks. Thou hast become christian, but hast, nevertheless, retained thy golden lyre, and thine azure wings, on which were traced the ruins of Athens!

However, if we formerly stopped too far short of the romantic, we may now be fairly accused of having gone too far beyond it. But this is a change common to French genius, which leaps from white to black, like the knight in a game of chess. The worst is, that our present enthusiasm for Shakspeare is excited less by his beauties than by his blemishes.

We applaud in him what we should condemn in others.

Are Shakspeare's mistaken admirers charmed with the traits of passion in Romeo and Juliet?

No truly! Did you not hear Mercutio say, of Romeo that he is "without his roe, like a dried herring?"

Does not Peter say to the musicians: "I will carry no crotchets: I'll *re* you, I'll *fa* you: do you *note* me?"

Such passages as these are declared to be the wondrous beauties of Shakspeare's dialogue: pure transcripts from the book of nature! What simplicity! What truth! What an accurate picture of the contrasts existing in life! What an able approximation of the various ranks, manners, and phraseologies of society!

I sometimes amuse myself by imagining Shakspeare's return to the world, and his indignation at your tasteless worshippers. How would he despise the adoration rendered to puerilities at which he would be the first to blush, though they are not his faults, but the faults of his age! He would regard, as incapable of appreciating his beauties, those who are enraptured with his defects, and above all those who coolly copy those defects in the midst of modern manners.



VOLTAIRE'S OPINION OF SHAKSPEARE. OPINION OF  
ENGLISH CRITICS.

VOLTAIRE was the first who made Shakspeare known in France. The first judgment he pronounced on the great English dramatist was, like most of his first judgments, marked by moderation, taste, and impartiality. In 1730 he thus wrote to Lord Bolingbroke:—

“ With what pleasure have I witnessed in London the performance of your tragedy of Julius Cæsar, which for a hundred and fifty years has been the admiration of your countrymen.”

Again he says:—

“ Shakspeare created the English drama, his genius was powerful, fertile, natural, and sublime; but he had not a spark of good taste,

or the least knowledge of rules. I will make a bold assertion, but a true one : it is, that the merit of Shakspeare has ruined the English drama. There are so many beautiful scenes, so many grand and terrible passages, scattered through his monstrous farces, called *tragedies*, that their performance has always been attended with great success.”

Such were the first impressions which Shakspeare produced on Voltaire. But when it was attempted to set up that great genius as a model of perfection, when his writings were unblushingly pronounced to be superior to the master-pieces of the Greek and of the French drama,—then the author of *Merope* felt the danger. He saw that by exhibiting the beauties of Shakspeare, he had dazzled men who could not, like himself, separate the gold from the alloy. He was induced to retract ; and he assailed the idol to whom he had himself offered incense. But it was too late, and he vainly repented having *opened the door to mediocrity, deified the drunken savage, and placed the monster on the altar.*

Shall we go further in our infatuation than our neighbours themselves? In theory, the English are unreserved admirers of Shakspeare :

but in practice their zeal is much more circumspect. Why do they not act the plays of their deity in a perfect form? By what presumption do they venture to abridge, mutilate, alter, and transpose the scenes of Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, the merchant of Venice, Richard III, etc.? Why have these sacrileges been committed by the most enlightened critics of the three kingdoms? Dryden observes that Shakspeare's language is out of date, and conjointly with Davenant, he adapted his plays for performance. Shaftesbury declares that the style of the old bard is coarse and barbarous, that his expressions and his wit are alike antiquated. Pope remarks that Shakspeare wrote for the populace, without seeking to please persons of more refined taste: that his writings present to the critic materials at once the most agreeable and the most revolting. Tate appropriated to himself King Lear, which was then so completely forgotten that no one detected the plagiarism. Rowe, too, in his life of Shakspeare, utters many blasphemies. Sherlock has ventured to say that there is nothing middling in Shakspeare; that all he has written is either detestable or excellent; that, he never kept to or even conceived a plot; though he frequently wrote very good scenes. Lansdowne carried

his impiety so far as to re-write the *Merchant of Venice*. Let us be on our guard against innocent mistakes. When we are thrown into ecstasies at a scene in the *dénouement* of *Romeo and Juliet*, we imagine that we are burning with pure love for Shakspeare, whilst in reality our ardent homage is addressed to Garrick.

Johnson, the great admirer of Shakspeare, and the restorer of his glory, observes that, with all his beauties, he has faults, and faults which would obscure the merits of any other writer than himself; that his effusions of passion, when the situation calls them forth, are for the most part striking and energetic: but that, when he puts his invention and his faculties to the rack, the fruits of his labour are bombast, meanness, tediousness, and obscurity. Johnson is of opinion, that, in narration, Shakspeare affects a disproportionate pomp of diction. His plays, he admits, contain scenes of sustained and undeniable excellence, but he adds that there is not a single one of Shakspeare's dramas, which if performed as the productions of a living author would be heard to the end.

Can we be better judges of an English writer than the celebrated Johnson? Yet, if any French critic were to make such bold assertions, would he not run the risk of being stoned? Might

not the severe Aristarchus be right, though he suspected certain enthusiasts of caressing their own deformities under those of Shakspeare?

What I have said respecting the changes which have occurred in the written and spoken language of England, and of the two periods when the Norman and the Italian encroached upon the Anglo-Saxon idiom, will enable the reader to form an idea of the compositions of the British *Æschylus*. His plays present a mixture of the subjects and styles of the north and the south. Into the subjects, which he borrowed from Italy, Shakspeare infused the natural tone of feeling peculiar to the Scandinavian and Caledonian nations. In his subjects taken from the northern legends, he has introduced the affectation of style common to the transalpine countries. Passing from the Scottish ballad to the Italian tale, he had nothing he could call his own but his genius; yet, with that noble gift of Heaven, he might well be content.

THE FAULTS OF SHAKSPEARE ARE THE FAULTS  
OF HIS AGE.

THE LANGUAGE OF SHAKSPEARE AND DANTE.

IF it be unreasonable to hold up as worthy of imitation, in the works of Shakspeare, that which is stigmatised in other writers of the same epoch, it would likewise be unjust to attribute to the poet alone the faults of taste and diction common to the age in which he lived.

Thus we find a speaker of the House of Commons comparing Henry VIII to Solomon for justice and prudence ; to Samson for strength and courage ; and to Absalom for grace and beauty. Another orator in the same assembly declares to Queen Elizabeth that, among the greatest legislators, three females are included, viz : Queen Palestrina, before the Deluge ; Queen Ceres, after ; and Queen Mary, the mother of King Stilicus ; Queen Elizabeth was to

be the fourth. King James I, spoke in the tragedy style when he informed his parliament, that he was the husband, and Great Britain his lawful wife;—that he was the head, and she the body;—and that England and Scotland, being two kingdoms in one and the same island, he, a Christian Prince, could not be accused of committing the crime of bigamy.

The *fine style*, which prevailed about the middle of the sixteenth century, was merely a flimsy, pedantic canvas, embroidered with high-flown sentences, plays upon words, and Italian *concetti*. Elizabeth was capable of giving her poet college lessons; she spoke Latin, composed Greek epigrams, translated the tragedies of Sophocles and the orations of Demosthenes. At her gallant, formal, quintessential, and reforming court, it was the fashion to interlard English conversation with French words, and to articulate so as to leave the sound doubtful, for the purpose of producing an equivoque in the sense.

In France, the same affectation prevailed. Ronsard was in his way a sort of Shakspeare, not by his genius, not by his Greek neologism, but by the forced turn of his phraseology. The Memoirs of the learned Marguerite, or *Margot*, de Valois, though in other respects so charming are written in a metaphysical, sentimental

jargon, which but ill conceals very physical sensations. Half a century earlier, the sister of Francis I. had written tales, which have at least as much natural simplicity as those of Boccaccio.

The *Guisiade* of Pierre Mathieu, a classic tragedy with choruses, on a national subject, reproduces the phraseology of Shakspeare: for example d'Epernon exclaims :

Venez mes compagnons, monstres abominables,  
 Jetez sur Blois l'horreur de vos traits effroyables.  
 Prenez pour mains des crocs, pour yeux des dards de feu,  
 Pour voix un gros canon, des serpents pour cheveux ;  
 Changez Blois en enfer, apportez-y vos gênes,  
 Vos roues, vos gibets, vos feux, vos fouets, vos peines.

Coligni, in the tragedy which bears his name, is made to utter the following :

O mânes noircissants ès enfers impiteux !  
 O mes chers compagnons, hé que je suis honteux  
 Qu'un enfant ait bridé mon effroyable audace ;  
 Que me reste-t-il, chétif, pour ondoyer ma race,  
 Sinon que me cacher et du vilain licol,  
 De mes bourrelles mains hault estraindre mon col.

I may here offer a few remarks on two writers, who have often, and very improperly, been confounded together by critics of our own time, at once vague and systematic, who jumble



together indiscriminately ages, situations, talents, and recollections.

Shakspeare and Dante wrote under very dissimilar circumstances. The English dramatist found a language, not perfect it is true, but at least three-fourths formed, and which had already been employed by distinguished writers both in poetry and prose. This language had become a sort of barbarous and mannered dialect, grotesquely adorned and overcharged with foreign fashions. It may easily be imagined how much Shakspeare must have been annoyed when, in the midst of a vivid conception, he found himself obliged to introduce into his inspired language some affected foreign word. Conceive the colossus, thus obliged to force his feet into little Chinese slippers, struggling against impediments which he burst through like a lion breaking his chains.

Dante, who lived two centuries and a half before Shakspeare, entered upon a world in which he found nothing. The last remnants of the Roman society had expired, and had left behind a language, beautiful it is true, but of a dying beauty—a language unavailable for the purposes of common life, because it no longer expressed the character, the ideas, the manners, and the wants of the society which had newly sprung up. The

necessity of intelligible communication had given birth to a vulgar idiom, which was employed on both sides of the southern Alps, and on two declivities of the eastern Pyrenees. Dante adopted this bastard of Rome, whom the learned and the noble disdained to recognize. He found it wandering in the streets of Florence, fostered at hazard by a republican people, in plebeian and democratic rudeness. He communicated to the child of his choice his own manliness, his simplicity, his independence, his dignity, his melancholy, his holy sublimity, and his wild grace. Dante drew from nothing the interpreter of his talent ; he gave being to the language of his genius ; he himself constructed the lyre from which he drew forth his melodious strains, like those astronomers who invent instruments with which they measure the heavens. *Italian* and the *Divina Commedia* sprang at once from his brain. The illustrious exile simultaneously conferred on the human race a durable language and an immortal poem.

### MECHANISM OF THE ENGLISH STAGE IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

IN the dramatic performances of Shakspeare's time, the female characters were represented by young men ; and the actors were not distinguished from the spectators except by the plumes of feathers which adorned their hats, and the bows of ribbon which they wore in their shoes. There was no music between the acts. The place of performance was frequently the court-yard of an inn, and the windows which looked into this court-yard served for the boxes. On the representation of a tragedy in London, the place in which it was performed was hung with black, like the nave of a church at a funeral.

As to the means of illusion, some idea may be formed of them from the burlesque picture drawn by Shakspeare in the "Midsummer Night's Dream." A man, having his face smeared with plaster, is the wall which intervenes between Pyramus and Thisbe, and he spreads out

his fingers to represent the chinks in the wall through which the lovers converse. A lantern, a bush, and a dog, are employed to produce moonlight. In rude dramatic performances of this kind, the scene, without changing, alternately represented a flower-garden, a rock against which a ship was to strike, or a field of battle, where half a dozen miserable-looking soldiers would personate two armies. There is extant a curious inventory of the property of a company of English players; and in this document we find set down, a dragon, a wheel employed in the siege of London, a large horse with his legs, sundry limbs of Moors, four Turks' heads, and an iron mouth, which was probably employed in giving utterance to the sweetest and sublimest accents of the immortal poet. False skins were also employed for those characters who were flayed alive on the stage, like the prevaricating judge in Cambyses. Such a spectacle now-a-days would attract all Paris.

But, after all, correctness of scenic accessories and costume is far less essential to the illusion than is generally imagined. The genius of Racine gains nothing by the cut and form of a dress. In the masterpieces of Raphael, the back-grounds are neglected, and the costumes incorrect. The rage of Orestes or the prophecy of Joad recited

in a drawing-room by Talma, habited in his own dress, produced not less effect than when delivered by the great actor on the stage, in Grecian or Hebrew drapery. Iphigenia was attired like Madame de Sévigné, when Boileau addressed to his friend the following fine lines :

Jamais Iphigénie, en Aulide immolée  
N'a coûté tant de pleurs à la Grèce assemblée,  
Que dans l'heureux spectacle à nos yeux étalé  
En a fait sous son nom verser la Chanmélé.

Accuracy in the representation of inanimate objects is the spirit of the literature and the arts of our time. It denotes the decay of the higher class of poetry and of the genuine drama. We are content with minor beauties when we cannot attain great aims. Our stage represents to perfection the chair and its velvet coverings, but the actor is not equally successful in portraying the character who is seated in the chair. But, having once descended to these minute representations of material objects, it cannot be dispensed with, for the public taste becomes materialized and demands it.

In Shakspeare's time, the higher class of spectators or the *gentlemen* took their places on the stage, seating themselves either on the

boards, or on stools which they paid for. The pit was a dark and dusty hole, in which the audience stood crowded together. The spectators in the pit and those on the stage were like two hostile camps drawn up face to face. The pit saluted the *gentlemen* with hisses, threw mud at them, and addressed to them insulting outcries. The *gentlemen* returned these compliments by calling their assailants *stinkards* and brutes. The *stinkards* ate apples and drank ale; the gentlemen played at cards and smoked tobacco, which was then recently introduced. It was the fashion for the gentlemen to tear up the cards, as if they had lost some great stake, and then throw the fragments angrily on the stage, to laugh, speak loud, and turn their backs on the actors. In this manner were the tragedies of the great master received on their first production. John Bull threw apple-parings at the divinity at whose shrine he now offers adoration. Fortune, in her rigour to Shakspeare and Moliere, made them actors, and thus gave to the lowest of their countrymen the privilege of at once insulting the great men and their writings.

Shakspeare revived the dramatic art, Moliere brought it to perfection. Like two ancient philosophers, they divided between them the empire

of smiles and tears, and perhaps consoled themselves for the injustice of fate, the one by painting the absurdities, and the other the sorrows of mankind.

#### CHARACTER OF SHAKSPEARE'S GENIUS.

SHAKSPEARE then is still admirable on account of the obstacles which he had to contend with. Never was so rare a genius obliged to avail himself of a language so faulty. Luckily, Shakspeare wanted what is termed learning, and this deficiency enabled him to escape one of the contagions of his age. Popular ballads, extracts from the History of England, collected from "Lord Buckhurst's Mirrour for Magistrates," French novels by Belleforest, and versions of the poets and tale-writers of Italy, composed his whole stock of literary erudition.

Ben Jonson, his rival, his admirer, and his detractor, was on the other hand a scholar. The fifty-two commentators on Shakspeare have industriously sought to discover all the translations of Latin authors which might have ex-



isted in his time. The only dramatic productions which I find in the catalogue are a *Jocasta*, taken from the *Phœnissæ* of Euripides, the *Andria* and the *Eunuch* of Terence, the *Menechmes* of Plautus, and the tragedies of Seneca. It is doubtful whether Shakspeare had any acquaintance with these translations; for he did not borrow the subjects of his plays from the originals *translated into English*, but from some English imitations of those same originals. This may be seen by *Romeo and Juliet*, the story of which Shakspeare did not take either from Girolamo de la Corte, or from the novel of *Bandello*; but from a little English poem entitled “*The Tragical History of Romeo and Juliet.*” It is the same with *Hamlet*, the subject of which Shakspeare could not have taken immediately from *Saxo Grammaticus*.

The reformation, during the reign of Henry VIII., by banishing the *Miracles* and *Mysteries*, accelerated the revival of the drama beyond the circle of religious belief; and, had not Shakspeare found in Greek antiquity a stumbling-block, which he could not surmount, the classic style would have prevailed in English literature a century before its triumph in France.

In the opinion of Dr. Johnson, which may be

regarded as the opinion of the English in general, Shakspeare was more amply endowed with comic than with tragic genius. The great critic remarks, that in the most pathetic scenes the poet's humour gains possession of him; whilst in his comic scenes a serious thought never occurs. If we French can scarcely relish the *vis comica* of Falstaff, whilst we fully enter into the sorrow of Desdemona, it is because different nations have different modes of laughing and only one of weeping.

Tragic poets sometimes light upon the comic: but comic poets rarely rise to the tragic: this would imply that there is something more vast in the genius of Melpomene than in that of Thalia. He who can paint the suffering side of human nature can likewise represent the gay side; because he who can reach the greater can attain the less. Thus the painter who applies himself to humorous subjects lets the more exalted ones escape him, because the faculty of distinguishing small objects is almost always accompanied by the incapability of embracing great ones. There is but one comic poet who ranks on an equality with Sophocles and Corneille, and that is Molière. It is worthy of remark, that the comic humour of the *Tartuffe*

and the *Misanthrope*, by its extreme depth, and if I may so express myself, by its *melancholy*, approximates to the seriousness of tragedy.

There are two modes of exciting laughter; the one is to exhibit faults first, and then to relieve them by good qualities. This sort of comic humour sometimes leads to the pathetic. The other mode consists in first bestowing praise, and then covering the object praised with so much ridicule that we cannot help relinquishing the esteem we had conceived for noble talents or exalted virtues. This sort of comic humour is the blighting *nihil mirari*.

The predominant characteristics of the founder of the English drama are nationality, eloquence, and observations, ideas, and maxims derived from knowledge of the human heart, and applicable to the various conditions of man. There is another remarkable quality which pervades the writings of Shakspeare, and that is the life which pervades them throughout. Some one compared the genius of Racine to the Apollo Belvedere, and the genius of Shakspeare to the equestrian statue of Philip IV. in Notre Dame. "Be it so," replied Diderot; "but what would you think were the wooden statue to draw down his helmet, shake his gauntlets, brandish his sword, and prance about in the cathedral?" The

poet of Albion, endowed with creative power, animates even inanimate objects. The scenes, the stage, a branch of a tree, a blade of grass, the bones in a churchyard, all speak: under his magic touch there is nothing dead, not even death itself.

Shakspeare makes great use of contrasts: he loves to mingle diversions and acclamations of joy with funeral pomp and the wailings of grief. Thus, for example, the musicians summoned to the nuptials of Juliet, arrive just in time to attend her remains to the grave; and, indifferent to the grief which prevails in the house of mourning, they indulge in jests, and discourse of matters the most foreign to the catastrophe. Who does not recognize in this the reality of life? who does not feel all the bitterness of the picture, and who is there that has not witnessed similar scenes? These effects were not unknown to the Greeks. We find in Euripides those simple touches of nature which Shakspeare intermingles with his loftiest tragic sublimity. An example of this occurs in Phædra, where the princess has just expired, and the chorus know not whether they shall enter her apartment. In Alceste, Death and Apollo exchange pleasantries, Death wishes to seize Alceste while she is young, because he is not anxious to have a

wrinkled victim. These contrasts verge on the terrible; but then a single shade too strong or too faint in the expression renders them low or ridiculous.

SHAKSPEARE'S STYLE OF WRITING HAS CORRUPTED  
TASTE—WRITING IS AN ART.

SHAKSPEARE plays, at one and the same moment, the tragedy in the palace, and the comedy at the door. He does not paint a particular class of men ; he mingles, as they are mingled in real life, the sovereign and the slave, the patrician and the plebeian, the warrior and the peasant, the illustrious and the obscure. He makes no distinction between classes ! he does not separate the noble from the ignoble, the serious from the comic, the gay from the grave, laughter from tears, joy from grief, or good from evil. He sets in motion the whole of society, as he unfolds at full length the life of a man. The great poet knew that the incidents of a single day cannot present a picture of human existence, and that there is unity from the cradle to the tomb. He takes up a youthful head ; and

if he does not strike it off, he gives it you back whitened by age ; Time has invested him with his own power.

But this universality of Shakspeare's talent has, by the authority of example and the abuse of imitation, tended to corrupt dramatic literature, and founded the erroneous notion on which, unfortunately, the new school is established. If to attain the sublimity of tragic art it were only requisite to jumble together a succession of incongruous and disconnected scenes, to place the burlesque and the pathetic side by side, to bring the beggar in contact with the king, who might not reasonably hope to rival the greatest poets ? Any one who may take the trouble to retrace the incidents of one day of his life, his conversations with men of different conditions, the varied objects that have passed before his eyes, the ball, the funeral, the banquet of the rich, and the distress of the poor ; in short, if only this were wanting, any one who writes his journal from hour to hour will produce a drama in the style of the English poet.

Writing is an art. This art has various styles, and each style has its rules. The styles and rules are not arbitrary ; they have their origin in nature. Art has merely separated that which nature has blended ; and has selected the

finest points without departing from the resemblance of the model. Perfection does not destroy truth. Racine, in all the refinement of his *art*, is more *natural* than Shakspeare, just as the Apollo, in all his *divinity*, is more *human* in his form than an Egyptian colossus.

The privilege which a writer may take of saying and representing every thing, the bustle of the scene, and the multitude of characters, may produce an imposing effect; but after all there is little merit in it. Nothing is easier than to amuse and to excite interest by a tale; in this respect a child may possess as much skill as the ablest writer of fiction. Would it not have been easy for Racine to reduce to action those incidents which his good taste induced him to leave to description? Racine has retrenched from his tragedies all that writers of ordinary genius would have thrown into them. Otherwise, in Phædra, the wife of Theseus would have made amorous advances to Hippolytus on the stage; instead of the fine description of Theramenes, we should have had Franconi's horses, and a terrific wooden monster; in Britannicus, Nero would have offered violence to Junia on the stage; in Bajazet we should have seen the combat of the brother of the Sultan with the eunuchs, &c. The most



wretched melo-drama may draw forth more tears than the most sublime tragedy. Genuine tears are those which are drawn forth by beautiful poetry, which flow at the sound of the lyre of Orpheus ; they have their source in mingled admiration and grief. The ancients endowed even the Furies with personal beauty ; because there is moral beauty in remorse.

That love of the hideous which has seized us, that horror of the ideal, that passion for lame and hunchbacked heroes, that sympathy with things that are loathsome, trivial, and vulgar, result from a depravity of feeling, which we have not received from Nature, of which we talk so much. Even when we love that which is in a certain degree ugly, it is because we see in it a certain degree of beauty. We naturally prefer a beautiful woman to a plain one, a rose to a thistle, the bay of Naples to the plain of Montrouge, the Parthenon to a pig-sty. It is the same in things figurative and moral. Away then with that *animalized* and *materialized* world which would lead us, even in the effigy of the object, to prefer our likeness copied with all its defects, by a machine to our portrait painted by the pencil of Raphael.

Still I do not pretend to deny the forced changes which time and revolutions produce in

literary as well as in political opinion; but these changes do not justify the corruption of taste; they only enable us to scorn one of its causes. It is perfectly natural that changes of manners should vary the forms of our pleasures and our pains.

Internal silence prevailed during the absolute monarchy of the reign of Louis XIV and also during the drowsy listlessness of the reign of Louis XV. Wanting emotions within, our dramatic poets sought them from without. They borrowed catastrophes from Greece and Rome, to excite the sympathy of auditors, who were so unfortunate as to have among themselves only subjects of laughter. The French public were in those days so unaccustomed to tragic events that a writer could not venture to present even fictitious scenes of a very sanguinary nature. Horrors would have excited disgust, even had they been three thousand years old, and consecrated by the genius of Sophocles.

But now that the people having risen into importance, and play a part in the government, like the chorus in Greek tragedy; when real spectacles of terror have occupied us for the space of forty years, the impulse communicated to society has a tendency to communicate itself to the drama. The classic tragedy, with its unities

and its immoveable scenery, necessarily appears cold ; and from coldness to tedium there is but a step. By this we may explain, without defending it, the extravagant character of the modern drama, which is the fac-simile of every crime, and presents to the eye of the audience, scaffolds and executions, murders, rapes, and incests, the phantasmagoria of churchyards and haunted castles.

We have now neither actors to perform classic tragedy, nor spectators capable of judging and enjoying it. The regular, the true, and the beautiful, are neither known, felt, nor appreciated. Our taste is so corrupted by the indifference and the vanity of the age, that, if the charming society of the Lafayettes, the Sévignés, the Geoffrins, and the Philosophers, could be revived, it would appear to us insipid. Before and after civilization, when the taste for intellectual objects has either not arisen or has passed away, mankind seek the representation of material objects. Nations begin and end with gladiators and puppets ; children and old men are puerile and cruel.

#### STRIKING BEAUTIES OF SHAKSPEARE.

IF I were required to say which I consider the finest of the plays of Shakspeare, I should hesitate between Macbeth, Richard III, Romeo and Juliet, Othello, Julius Cæsar and Hamlet. I do not however, very highly esteem the much eulogised soliloquy ; I always ask myself how the philosophic Prince of Denmark could entertain the doubts which he expresses on the subject of a future state. After his conversation with the “ poor ghost ” of the King, his father, ought not his doubts to have been at an end ?

One of the most powerful dramatic scenes in existence is that of the three queens in Richard III. Margaret after retracing her own misfortunes to harden herself against the miseries of her rival, ends with these words :—

“ Thou did'st usurp my place, and dost thou not  
 Usurp the just proportion of my sorrow?  
 Farewell, York's wife—and Queen of sad mischance ”

This is tragedy : the sublimest point of tragedy.

I do not believe that any writer ever looked deeper into human nature than Shakspeare.—Take for example the following scene from Macbeth—

MACDUFF.

See, who comes here ?

MALCOLM.

My countryman ; but yet I know him not.

MACDUFF.

My ever gentle cousin, welcome hither.

MALCOLM.

I know him now—Good God, betimes remove  
 The means that make us strangers !

ROSSE.

Sir, Amen.

MACDUFF.

Stands Scotland where it did ?

ROSSE.

Alas, poor country,  
 Almost afraid to know itself ! It cannot  
 Be call'd our mother, but our grave ; where nothing,  
 But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile ;

Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air  
 Are made, not marked ; where violent sorrow seems  
 A modern ecstasy ; the dead man's knell  
 Is there scarce ask'd, for who ; and good men's lives  
 Expire before the flowers in their caps,  
 Dying, or ere they sicken.

MACDUFF.

O, relation  
 Too nice, and yet too true !

MALCOLM.

What is the newest grief ?

ROSSE.

Your castle is surprised ; your wife and babes  
 Savagely slaughtered.

MACDUFF.

My children too ?

ROSSE.

Wife, children, servants, all  
 That could be found.

MACDUFF.

And I must be from thence !  
 My wife killed too ?

ROSSE.

I have said.

MALCOLM.

Be comforted :  
 Let's make us med'cines of our great revenge  
 To cure this deadly grief.

MACDUFF.

He has no children!

This dialogue resembles that between Flavian and Curatius in *Corneille*. Flavian enters to announce to the lover of Camilla that he has been chosen to combat the Horatii.

CURIACE.

Albe de trois guerriers a-t-elle fait le choix ?

FLAVIAN.

Je viens pour vous l'apprendre.

CURIACE.

Hé bien ! qui sont les trois ?

FLAVIAN.

Vos deux frères et vous.

CURIACE.

Qui ?

FLAVIAN.

Vous et vos deux frères.

The interrogations of Macduff and Curiatius are beauties of the same order. But Macduff's exclamation : " He has no children !" is unparalleled.

The same hand which drew this picture has traced a charming scene in the farewell of Romeo and Juliet. Romeo has been condemned to

banishment, and, on the morning after his secret marriage with Juliet, he is warned by the approaching daylight that it is time to depart.

## JULIET.

Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day;  
It was the nightingale and not the lark  
That pierc'd the fearful hollow of thine ear;  
Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate tree:  
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

## ROMEO.

It was the lark, the herald of the morn,  
No nightingale: look, love, what envious streaks  
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east;  
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day  
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops;  
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

## JULIET.

Yon light is not day-light, I know it, I;  
It is some meteor that the sun exhales  
To be to thee this night a torch-bearer,  
And light thee on thy way to Mantua:  
Therefore stay yet, thou need'st not to be gone.

## ROMEO.

Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death;  
I am content, so thou wilt have it so;  
I'll say, yon grey is not the morning's eye,  
'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow;  
Nor that is not the lark, whose notes do beat  
The vaulty heaven so high above our heads:  
I have more care to stay than will to go;—  
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.—



How is't my soul ? Let's talk, it is not day.

JULIET.

It is, it is, hie hence, be gone, away !  
 It is the lark that sings so out of tune,  
 Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.  
 Some say the lark makes sweet division ;  
 This doth not so for she divideth us ;  
 Some say the lark and loathed toad change eyes ;  
 O, now, I would they had changed voices too !  
 Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,  
 Hunting thee hence with hunt's up to the day.  
 O, now be gone ; more light and light it grows.

This contrast of the charms of the dawning of morning and the parting endearments of the lovers, with the catastrophe which is about to follow, is very touching. The sentiment is more natural than that of the Greek tragedies and less pastoral than that of the Italian tragicomedies. I know of only one dramatic scene which bears any resemblance to that which I have just quoted from *Romeo and Juliet*. It occurs in an Indian drama. The resemblance, however, does not consist in the freshness of the imagery in the simplicity of the sorrowful farewell, and certainly not in the interest of the situation. *Sacontala*, when about to quit her paternal roof, feels herself drawn back by her veil,

SACONTALA.

Who thus seizes the folds of my veil ?

## OLD MAN.

It is the kid which thou hast so often fed with the grains of the synmaka. He will not quit his benefactress.

## SACONTALA.

Why dost thou weep, tender kid? I am forced to forsake our common home. When thou did'st lose thy mother, soon after thy birth, I took thee under my care. Return to thy manger, poor young kid, we must now part.

The farewell scene in *Romeo and Juliet* is very lightly touched by Bandello. It belongs wholly to Shakspeare. Bandello describes the parting of the lovers in the few following words :

“ A la fine cominciando l'aurora a voler uscire ; si bacciarono ; estretamente abbracciarono gli amanti, e pieni di lagrime e sospiri si dissero addio.”

“ At length the dawn beginning to appear, the lovers kissed ; they closely embraced one another, and full of tears and sighs bade each other adieu.”

SHAKSPEARE'S FEMALE CHARACTERS.

BRING together Lady Macbeth, Queen Margaret, Ophelia, Miranda, Cordelia, Jessica, Perdita, Imogen, and the versatility of the poet's genius must excite our wonder. There is a charming ideality in Shakspeare's youthful female characters. The blind King Lear says to his faithful Cordelia,

“ When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down  
And ask of thee forgiveness : so we'll live,  
And pray, and sing . . . . .”

WS and

Ophelia, fantastically decked with straw flowers, mistaking her brother for Hamlet, whom she loves, and who has killed her father, addresses him thus,

“ There’s rosemary, that’s for remembrance ; pray you, love, remember ; .....

“ — I would give you some violets ; but they withered all, when my father died.”

In Hamlet, that tragedy of maniacs, that *Royal Bedlam* in which every character is either crazy or criminal, in which feigned madness is added to real madness, and in which the grave itself furnishes the stage with the skull of a fool ; in that Odeon of shadows and spectres where we hear nothing but reveries, the challenge of sentinels, the screeching of the night-bird and the roaring of the sea, Gertrude thus relates the death of Ophelia who has drowned herself,

“ There is a willow grows askant the brook,  
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream ;  
Therewith fantastic garlands did she make  
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples  
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,  
But our cold maids do dead men s fingers call them :  
There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds  
Clambering to hang ; an envious sliver broke ;  
When down her weedy trophies and herself  
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,  
And mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up :  
Which time, she chaunted snatches of old tunes  
As one incapable of her own distress,  
Or like a creature native and indu’d

Unto that element ; but long it could not be,  
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,  
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay  
To muddy death."

The body of Ophelia is carried to the church-yard, and the guilty Queen, bending over the grave, exclaims :

" Sweets to the sweet, farewell !  
I hop'd thou should'st have been my Hamlet's wife ;  
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,  
And not have strew'd thy grave."

The effect of all this is like the spell of enchantment.

Othello, in the delirium of his jealousy thus addresses Desdemona as she sleeps :

" ..... O thou weed,  
Who art so lovely fair, and smell'st so sweet  
That the sense aches at thee—would thou  
Had'st ne'er been born !"

The Moor when about to smother his wife, kisses her and says :

" O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade  
Justice to break her sword.....  
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee  
And love thee after."

In the Winter's Tale we find the same poeti grace adapted to feelings of happiness. Perdita thus addresses Florizel :

“ Now, my fairest friend,  
 I would I had some flowers o' the spring, that might  
 Become your time of day ; and yours, and yours,  
 That wear upon your virgin branches yet  
 Your maidenhood's growing :—O Proserpina,  
 For the flowers now, that frightened, thou let'st fall  
 From Dis's waggon ! Daffodils,  
 That come before the swallow dares, and take  
 The winds of March with beauty ; violets dim,  
 But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,  
 Or Cythera's breath ; pale primroses,  
 That die unmarried, ere they can behold  
 Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady  
 Most incident to maids ; bold tulips, and  
 The crown imperial ; lilies of all kinds,  
 The flower-de-luce being one ! O these I lack,  
 To make you garlands of ; and, my sweet friend,  
 To strew him o'er and o'er.

To this Florizel replies :

“ When you speak, sweet,  
 I'd have you do it ever ; when you sing,  
 I'd have you buy and sell so ; to give alms ;  
 Pray so ; and, for the ordering your affairs,  
 To sing them too : when you do dance, I wish you  
 A wave o'er the sea, that you might ever do  
 Nothing, but that ; move still, still so, and own  
 No other function. . . . .”

In Cymbeline, Imogen being accused of infidelity to Poshumus, exclaims :

“ False to his bed ! What is it to be false ?  
To lie in watch there, and to think on him ?  
To weep 'twixt clock and clock ?”

When Arviragus enters the cave, bearing Imogen, as if dead, in his arms, Guiderius says :

“ O sweetest, fairest lily !  
My brother bears thee not the one half so well  
As when thou grew'st thyself.”

Belarius exclaims :

“ O melancholy !  
Whoever yet could sound thy bottom ? find  
The ooze, to show what coast thy sluggish crare  
Might easiliest harbour in !.....”

Imogen throws herself on the neck of Poshumus, when he is convinced of his unfounded jealousy, and he exclaims :

“ Hang there like fruit, my soul  
Till the tree die !”

Then Cymbeline, addressing his daughter says :

“ How now, my child !  
What mak'st thou me a dullard in this act ?  
Wilt thou not speak to me ?  
Your blessing, Sir,”

replies Imogen at his feet.

I have quoted the above passage, merely as examples of beauty of style, without reference to the merits of the plays from which they are taken. I have not attempted to paint the heart-moving madness of Ophelia, the resolute love of Juliet, the nature, the affection and the terror of Desdemona, when Othello awakens her and declares his intention of killing her, or the piety, tenderness and generosity which characterise Imogen: in all this the romantic takes place of the tragic, and the picture appeals more forcibly to the senses than to the soul.



#### CLASSIC MODELS.

FULL and complete justice being rendered to suavities of pencilling and harmony, I must say that the works of the romantic era gain much in being quoted by extracts. A few pages fertile in beauty are generally interspersed through a mass of barrenness. To read Shakspeare from beginning to end is to fulfil a pious but wearisome duty to departed genius. The cantos of Dante form a rhymed chronicle in which beauty of diction does not always compensate for dulness. The merit of the monuments of classic literature is of a contrary kind. It consists in the perfection of the whole and the just proportion of parts.

There is another truth which must likewise be acknowledged. All Shakspeare's young female

characters are formed on one model. They are all mere girls, and, setting apart the shades of difference between the characters of daughter, lover, and wife, they all resemble each other as closely as twin sisters; nay, have the same smile, the same look, the same tone of voice. If we could forget their names and close our eyes, we should not know which of them was speaking—their language is more elegiac than dramatic. These charming sketches are like the outlines traced by Raphael, when a figure of celestial beauty suggested itself to his genius: but Raphael converted the sketch into a picture, whilst Shakspeare contented himself with his first unfinished pencillings, and did not always take time to paint.

We must not compare the Ossianic shadows of the English stage—those victims so full of tenderness and fortitude, who allowed themselves to be sacrificed like courageous lambs—we must not compare the Delias of Tibullus, the Charicleas of Heliodorus with the heroines of the Greek and French drama, who of themselves sustain the whole weight of a tragedy. Happy situations, striking effects, and touches of beauty scattered here and there, are widely different from parts sustained from beginning to end with equal superiority, and strongly drawn

characters, occupying their proper places in the picture. The Desdemonas, Juliets, Ophelias, Perditas, Cordelias, Mirandas, are not like Antigone, Electra, Iphigenia Phædra, Andromache, Chimene, Roxana, Monimia, Berenice, or Esther, nor can they be compared even with Zaire or Amenaide. A few phrases of deep passion, more or less beautifully expressed in poetic prose, cannot be pronounced equal to the same sentiments clothed in the pure language of the Gods. Let us take for example, Iphigenia's appeal to her father :—

Peut-être assez d'honneurs environnaient ma vie,  
 Pour ne pas souhaiter qu'elle me fût ravie,  
 Ni qu'en me l'arrachant un sévère destin  
 Si près de ma naissance en eût marqué la fin.  
 Fille d'Agamemnon, c'est moi qui la première,  
 Seigneur, vous appelai de ce doux nom de père.

Hélas ! avec plaisir je me faisais conter  
 Tous les noms des pays que vous allez dompter ;  
 Et déjà d'Ilion présageant la conquête,  
 D'un triomphe si beau je préparais la fête.

And the beautiful lines delivered by Monimia :

Si tu m'aimais, Phœdime, il fallait me pleurer,  
 Quand d'un titre funeste on me vint honorer,  
 Et lorsque m'arrachant du doux sein de la Grèce  
 Dans ce climat barbare on traîna ta maîtresse.

Retourne maintenant chez les peuples heureux ;  
 Et si mon nom encor s'est conservé chez eux,  
 Dis-leur ce que tu vois, et de toute ma gloire,  
 Phœdime, conte-leur la malheureuse histoire.

Can the ballad of the Willow compete with this complaint, issuing from the *sweet bosom of Greece* ?

If we wish to compare the more violent conflicts of the soul with the love of Juliet and Desdemona, we may select the following passage in which Paulina replies to Polyeucte who advises her to return to Severus—

Que t'ai-je fait, cruel, pour être ainsi traitée,  
 Et pour me reprocher, au mépris de ma foi,  
 Un amour si puissant que j'ai vaincu pour toi ?

• • • • •  
 Souffre que de toi-même elle obtienne ta vie,  
 Pour vivre sous tes lois à jamais asservie.

Polyeucte is gone to death, *to glory*, and Paulina says to Felix

Mon époux, en mourant, m'a laissé ses lumières ;  
 Son sang, dont tes bourreaux viennent de me couvrir,  
 M'a dessillé les yeux, et me les vient d'ouvrir.  
 Je vois, je sais, je crois, je suis désabusée,  
 De ce bienheureux sang tu me vois baptisée ;  
 Je suis chrétienne ;

• • • • •

Can any thing be finer than this conflict of all the affections of human nature, in the midst of which the Deity intervenes, to create miraculously a new passion, religious enthusiasm in the heart of Paulina? On reading this we feel ourselves raised to a region loftier than the earth in which Desdemona and Juliet dwelt. Paulina's *Je suis chrétienne* is like a declaration of love in heaven!

Then again Chimene! But it would be requisite to quote the whole part to afford any idea of its beauty. Corneille compounded the characters of the Cid and Chimene of a union of honour, filial piety, and love.

J'aimais, j'étais aimée, et nos pères d'accord ;  
Et je vous en contais la première nouvelle  
Au malheureux moment que naissait leur querelle.

The passion, the excitement, and the dramatic interest kindle and increase from scene to scene to the famous line,

Sors vainqueur d'un combat dont Chimène est le prix !

which precedes that exclamation of exultation, courage, pride, and glory,

Paraissez, Navarrois, Maures et Castellans !

What are all Shakspeare's females in comparison with Esther ?

Est-ce toi, chère Elise ? O jour trois fois heureux !  
Que béni soit le Ciel qui te rend à mes vœux !  
Toi, qui, de Benjamin comme moi descendue,  
Fus de mes premiers ans la compagne assidue,  
Et qui, d'un même joug souffrant l'oppression  
M'aidais à soupirer les malheurs de Sion.

On m'élevait alors solitaire et cachée,  
Sous les yeux vigilans du sage Mardochée.

Du triste état des Juifs, jour et nuit agité,  
Il me tira du sein de mon obscurité,  
Et, sur mes faibles mains fondant leur délivrance,  
Il me fit d'un empire accepter l'espérance.

Cependant mon amour pour notre nation  
A rempli ce palais des filles de Sion,  
Jeunes et tendres fleurs, par le sort agitées,  
Sous un ciel étranger comme moi transplantées.

Aux pieds de l'Eternel je viens m'humilier,  
Et goûter le plaisir de me faire oublier.  
Mais à tous les Persans je cache leurs familles.  
Il faut les appeler. Venez, venez, mes filles,  
Compagnes autrefois de ma captivité,  
De l'antique Jacob jeune postérité.

If there are any Huns, Hottentots, Hurons,  
Goths, Vandals, or other barbarians, insensible

to the feminine modesty, the dignity, and the melody of this exquisite passage, may they be seventy times seven-fold delighted by the charms of their own native productions. "I thought," says Racine in his preface to *Esther*, "that I could fill up the whole of my dramatic action with such scenes as God himself has in a manner prepared." Racine justly thought so, for he alone possessed the harp of David consecrated to the scenes *prepared* by God.

Judging with an impartiality, the general character of foreign productions and our own (if indeed we are capable of judging foreign literary works, which I much doubt) it may be said that, though equal in power of thought, ours have the advantage of regularity and taste in composition. Genius creates, taste regulates. Taste is the good sense of genius; without taste genius is but a sublime madness: the sure touch which draws from the lyre the exact tone it ought to render is more rare than even the faculty which creates. Talent and genius, diversely diffused, latent and unrecognized, as Montesquieu says "frequently pass through us without unpacking," they exist in equal proportion in all ages, but in the course of those ages, it is only among certain natures, and at certain periods of time, that taste is developed in its

purity. Before this period arrives, and after its conclusion, all will be imperfect through deficiency or excess. Hence the reason why finished productions are so rare; for they must necessarily emanate from the happy union of taste and genius. But this rare concurrence, like the concurrence of certain stars, seems to require the revolution of ages for its consummation, and then its duration is but momentary.



### THE ERA OF SHAKSPEARE.

THE period of the appearance of a great genius should be well considered, to explain certain affinities of that genius, to show what it received from the past, gathered from the present, or left to the future. The extravagant imagination of the present age, which elevates every great name to the clouds, that morbid imagination which disdains reality, begot a Shakspeare after its own fashion. The son of the Stratford butcher is a giant, who has fallen from some Pelion upon Ossa in the midst of his barbarous countrymen, and by his seven-league strides left his cotemporaries far behind him. Nay, Shakspeare, we are told, is like Dante, a solitary comet which, having traversed the constellations of the ancient firmament, returns to the feet of the Deity, and says to him, like the thunder, "Here I am."

The extravagant and the romantic are not to be admitted into the domain of fact. Dante ap-

peared in what may justly be called an age of darkness. The compass had then scarcely enabled the mariner to steer through the well known waters of the Mediterranean. America and the passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope were yet undiscovered. The inventor of gunpowder had not changed the whole system of war, nor had the introduction of printing operated a complete metamorphosis in society, and the feudal system pressed with all the weight of its darkness upon enslaved Europe.

But when the mother of Shakspeare gave birth to her obscure son, there had already elapsed in the year 1564 two thirds of the famous age of human regeneration and reformation, of that age in which the principal discoveries of modern times were accomplished, the true system of the universe ascertained, the heavens and the earth explored, the sciences cultivated, and the fine arts carried to a pitch of perfection which they have never since attained. Great deeds and great men appeared in all parts. Families repaired to the woods of New England, to sow the seeds of a fertile independence ; provinces broke the yoke of their oppressors, and raised themselves to the rank of nations.

On the thrones of Europe, after Charles V, Francis I and Leo X, there were seated Sixtus V,

Elizabeth, Henry IV, Don Sebastian, and that Philip, who, though surnamed the Cruel, was certainly not a vulgar tyrant.

In the list of illustrious warriors were Don John of Austria, the Duke of Alva, Admirals Vincero and John Andrew Doria, the Prince of Orange, the two Guises, Coligny, Biron, Lesdiguières, Montluc, and La Noue.

Among the magistrates, legislators, ministers of state, there were l'Hôpital, Harlay, Du Moullins, Cujas, Sully, Olivarez, Cecil, and d'Ossat.

Among the prelates and sectarians, scholars, and authors, we find the names of Carlo Borromeo, St. Francis de Sales, Calvin, Theodore de Beza, Buchanan, Tycho-Brahe, Galileo, Bacon, Cardan, Kepler, Ramus, Scaliger, Stephanus, Manutius, Justus Lipsius, Vida, Baronius, Mariana, Amyot, Du Haillan, Montaigne, Bignon, Thomas d'Aubigny, Brantôme, Marot, Ronsard, and hundreds besides.

Among the names eminent in art were those of Titian, Paulo Veronese, Annibale Caracchi, Sansovino, Julio Romano, Domenichino, Palladio, Vignole, Jean Goujon, Guido, Poussin, Rubens, Vandyke, and Velasquez. It was Michael Angelo's fate to live till the year which gave birth to Shakspeare.

So far from Shakspeare being a leader in the

march of civilization, then emerging from the bosom of barbarism, he was the last-born child of the middle age, a barbarian falling into the ranks of advancing civilization, and as it were, drawing it back to the past. He was not a solitary star; he moved in concert with luminaries worthy of his firmament—Camoens, Tasso, Ercilla, Lopez de Vega, and Calderon, three epic and two tragic poets of the first rank. But we must examine all these topics in detail, and shall first direct our attention to the material condition of society at the period here referred to.

In the time of Shakspeare, if the cultivation of the mind was pushed farther on certain points than even at the present day, the physical condition of society was equally improved. Without adverting to Italy, where the palaces, themselves master-pieces of art, were internally adorned with other master works—Italy, enriched with the commerce of Florence, Genoa, and Venice, and clothed by her manufactures in silks, gold, and velvet—without going beyond the Alps in search of perfect civilization, we will confine ourselves to the country of the poet. We shall there find the great ameliorations which were due to the government of Elizabeth.

Erasmus informs us that under Henry VII and

Henry VIII it was difficult to breathe in the houses. Air and light were admitted to the rooms through extremely close lattices, glazing being reserved for the windows of castles and churches. Each story projected beyond the story below it, and thus the fronts of the houses inclining forward, the roofs nearly touched each other from the opposite sides, and the dark streets seemed as if covered by roofs. The greater part of the dwelling houses were without fire-places ; the floors of the rooms consisted of clay strewed with rushes or covered with a stratum of sand destined to absorb the excrements of the cats and dogs. Erasmus attributes the plagues, then frequent in England, to the want of cleanliness among the people.

In the houses of the rich, the furniture consisted of arras tapestry, long planks laid across trestles for dining tables, a cupboard, a chair, some benches, and a number of stools. The poorer sort of people slept upon hurdles, or bundles of straw, with a piece of sacking for a counterpane, and a log of wood for a bolster, and he who was lucky enough to possess a wool mattress and a pillow stuffed with bran was an object of envy to his neighbours. Harrison, repeating what he heard from the old people of his time, declares that in the reign of Elizabeth the

farmers possessed three or four feather beds, furnished with suitable bed clothes and silk hangings; that their tables were covered with white linen cloths, and that their cupboards were usually garnished with vessels of earthenware, a silver salt-cellar, a drinking cup, and a dozen spoons of the same metal.

The farmers of the present day in France, so proud of her civilization, have not yet attained an equal degree of comfort.

Shakspeare was reared under the patronage of this queen, who sent her sailors to the farthest extremity of the globe, in search of the produce of the cultivator. Sufficient tranquillity prevailed throughout England to allow the poet to tune his lyre in security, nor were there wanting either at home or abroad subjects suited to rouse the feelings or inspire the fancy.

At home, Elizabeth presented in her own person an historical character. Shakspeare had attained his twenty-third year when Mary Stuart was beheaded. The child of catholic parents, and probably himself a catholic, he had doubtless heard among his own community that Elizabeth had endeavoured to make Rolstone the instrument of seducing her fair captive, in order to disgrace her, and that, taking advantage of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, she had made an

attempt to deliver over the Queen of Scots to the vindictive feelings of the Scotch protestants. Who knows but curiosity might have led young William from Stratford to Fotheringay to witness the catastrophe? Who can say but he may have seen the bed, the chamber, the vaults hung with black, the block, the head of Mary, into which the executioner, by his first unskilful stroke of the axe, had driven a portion of the unfortunate victim's coif and grey hair? May not the eyes of Shakspeare have rested with interest and curiosity on the beautiful and mutilated corse?

Some time after, Elizabeth cast another head at the feet of Shakspeare. Mahomet II had an Icoglan decapitated for the purpose of giving a painter an idea of death. Strange compound of man and woman! Elizabeth seems, during the whole of her mysterious life, to have felt but one passion, and never to have known love. The last malady of this queen, say the Memoirs of her time, proceeded from a grief, the cause of which she ever kept a profound secret. She never evinced an inclination to have recourse to remedies, as if she had made up her mind long before to die, being weary of her life from some secret cause, which was said to be the death of the Earl of Essex.

The sixteenth century, the spring-time of modern civilization, flourished in England more prosperously than in other parts of the globe. It developed those sturdy generations of men, who already bore within them the seeds of liberty in the persons of Cromwell and Milton. Elizabeth dined to the sound of drums and trumpets, whilst her parliament was passing atrocious laws against the papists, and whilst the yoke of sanguinary oppression weighed down unhappy Ireland. The executions at Tyburn alternated with the gaities of the fashionable ball; the austerities of the puritans with the revels of Kenilworth; comedies with sermons; lampoons with hymns; literary disquisitions with philosophical discussions and sectarian controversies.

The spirit of adventure animated the nation, as at the period of the wars in Palestine. Protestant crusaders volunteered to combat the idolaters, that is to say, the catholics. They followed across the seas Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh, who, like Peter the Hermit, were friends of Christ but enemies of the Cross. Engaged in the cause of religious liberty, the English lent their aid to all who sought to shake off the yoke of tyranny; they shed their blood



beneath the white plume of Henry IV and the yellow flag of the Prince of Orange. Shakspeare witnessed all this, and he also was witness to those auspicious tempests, which cast the wrecks of the Spanish vessels upon the shores of his delivered country.

Abroad, the picture was not less favourable to poetic inspiration. In Scotland, there were the vices and ambition of Murray—the murder of Rizzio—Darnley, strangled and his body cast to the winds—Bothwell espousing Mary in the fortress of Dunbar, and afterwards becoming a fugitive and a pirate in Norway—Morton delivered up to the executioner.

The Low Countries presented all the miseries inseparable from a nation's emancipation: Cardinal de Granvelle, the Duke of Alva—the tragic deaths of the Count d'Egmont and the Count de Horn.

In Spain, besides the death of Don Carlos, we find Philip II erecting the sombre Escorial, multiplying his auto-da-fés, and saying to his physicians: “Are you afraid to take a few drops of blood from a man who has made it flow in rivers?”

In Italy, the history of the Cenci, renewing the ancient adventures of Veniec, Verona, Milan, Bologna, and Florence.

In Germany, Wallenstein's career had just commenced.

In France, the nearest country to the native land of Shakspeare, what were the stirring events of the time?

The tocsin of St. Bartholomew sounded when the author of Macbeth had attained his eighteenth year, and England was convulsed by the intelligence of that massacre; exaggerated accounts of it, (if exaggerated they could be) details calculated to inflame even the imaginations of children, were printed in London and Edinburgh, and sold in every town and village throughout the country. A great deal was said about the reception given by Elizabeth to the ambassador of Charles IX. "The silence of night reigned through the royal apartments. The ladies and courtiers were ranged in rows on each side, clothed in deep mourning; and when the ambassador passed through the midst of them, none made their obeisance, nor even turned upon him a civil look." Marlowe brought upon the stage his play entitled "The Massacre of Paris," and possibly Shakspeare may have made his debut in one of its characters.

The reign of Charles IX was succeeded by that of Henry III, so fertile in catastrophes;

Catherine de Medicis, the favourites, the day of the barricades, the assassination of the two Guises at Blois, the death of Henry III at St. Cloud, the agitations of the League, the murder of Henri IV, must have varied incessantly the emotions of a poet who beheld the long chain of events extending before him. The soldiers of Elizabeth, the Earl of Essex himself took part in our civil wars, and fought at Hâvre, Ivry, Rouen, and Amiens. Some veterans of the English army might have recounted at the fire-side of William Shakspeare the calamities they had witnessed in our fields of battle.

Thus it may be said that the very genius of the age wakened the genius of Shakspeare. The memorable dramas which were performing around him have furnished subjects on which the heritors of their art have exercised their skill: thus Charles IX, the Duke de Guise, Mary Stuart, Don Carlos, the Earl of Essex, were destined to inspire Schiller, Otway, Alfieri, Campistron, Thomas Corneille, Chénier, and Raynouard.

Shakspeare was born in the interval between the religious revolution which commenced under Henry VIII, and the political revolution which

was preparing to burst forth under Charles I. Both before and after him, there was nothing throughout England but scenes of bloodshed and horror.

In the reign of Edward VI, Somerset, the Protector of the kingdom and uncle of the young King, perished on the scaffold.

In the reign of Mary, there were the martyrs of Protestantism, the beheading of Lady Jane Grey, and Philip, the exterminator of protestants, landing in England, as if to review and devote to destruction the camp of the enemy.

With the reign of Elizabeth came the martyrs of catholicism. Elizabeth herself, anointed with the sacred oil in conformity with the Roman ritual, became the persecutrix of the faith which had placed the crown upon her head. Elizabeth! the daughter of that Anne Boleyn who caused the schism from the church of Rome, who was sacrificed after Thomas More, and who died half lunatic, praying, laughing, and contrasting the smallness of her neck with the breadth of the executioner's axe.

Shakspeare in his youth must frequently have encountered old monks, chased from their cloisters, who had seen Henry VIII, his reforms, his destructive hand laid upon their

monasteries, his court fools, his wives, his mistresses—and his executioners. When the poet died, Charles I was in his sixteenth year.

Thus Shakspeare might have laid one hand on the hoary heads menaced by the last but one of the Tudors, and the other on the auburn locks of the second of the Stuarts;—on that head which was painted by Vandyke and subsequently struck off by the Parliament party. Filling this position, contemplating these tragic objects, the great poet descended into the tomb. His life was employed in drawing his spectres and his blind kings, in depicting female sorrow and the punishment of ambition, so as to unite by analogous fictions the realities of the past with the realities of the future.

POETS AND OTHER WRITERS CONTEMPORARY WITH  
SHAKSPEARE.

JAMES I. reigned between the sword, which terrified him while yet unborn, and the axe, which slew, but could not terrify his son. His reign separated the scaffold of Fotheringay from that of Whitehall: a gloomy period, in which Bacon and Shakspeare were extinguished.

Those two illustrious contemporaries trod the same ground: I have already mentioned the foreigners who were their companions in glory. France, which was then behind-hand in letters, presents to us only Amyot, de Thou, Ronsard, and Montaigne, minds of humbler flight. Hardy and Garnier had scarcely begun to lisp the first accents of our Melpomene. Rabelais indeed had been dead but fifteen years when Shakspeare was born. The buffoon would have proved qualified to measure himself with the tragic dramatist.

The latter had already passed thirty-one years on earth, when the unfortunate Tasso and the heroic Ercilla left it, both dying in 1595. The English poet founded the theatre of his nation, whilst Lope de Vèga established that of Spain ; but Lope had a rival in Calderon. The author of the "*Meilleur Alcalde*" had embarked as a volunteer, in the invincible Armada, at the very time when the author of Falstaff was calming the inquietudes of the

" Fair vestal throned in the West."

The Castilian dramatist alludes to this famed Armada in his "*Fuerza lastimosa*." "The winds," he says, "destroyed the finest naval armament that was ever seen." Lope was coming, sword in hand, to assault Shakspeare on his own hearth, as the minstrels of William the Conqueror attacked the Scalds of Harold. Lope has treated religion as Shakspeare treated history. The characters of the first, chant on the stage the *Gloria Patri*, interspersed with songs. Those of the second, sing lively ballads, the *lazzi* of the grave-digger.

Cervantes, wounded at Lepanto, in 1570, a slave in Algiers, in 1575, ransomed in 1581, began in a prison his inimitable comic work, and dared not continue it till long afterwards, so

much was it misinterpreted. Cervantes died in the same year and the same month with Shakspeare. Two documents specify the wealth of these authors.

William Shakspeare, by his last testament, bequeathed to his wife his second best bed. He left two of his brother actors thirty-two shillings each, to buy rings. He constituted his eldest daughter, Susan, his residuary legatee, and made some little presents to his second, Judith, who signed a cross at the bottom of the papers, proving that she could not write.

Michael Cervantes acknowledged, by note, that he had received, as the dower of his wife, Catherine Salazor y Palacios, a spindle, an iron skillet, three spits, a shovel, a rasp, a brush, six bushels of meal, five pounds of wax, two little stools, a four-legged table, a woollen mattress, a copper candlestick, two quilts, two infant Jesuses, with their little clothes and shirts, forty-four hens and pullets, with one cock!

There is, now-a-days, no scribbler so mean but would exclaim against the injustice of mankind and their contempt of genius, if he were not gorged with pensions, a hundredth part of which would have been a fortune to Cervantes and to Shakspeare. In 1616, therefore, the



painter of Lear's fool, and the painter of Don Quixote, worthy fellow-travellers ! set out together for a better world.

Corneille had come to supply their place in the cosmopolite family of great minds, whose children are born among all nations ; as in Rome, Brutus was succeeded by Brutuses, and Scipio by Scipios.

The bard of the Cid, a boy of six years, he held the last days of the bard of Othello ; as Michael Angelo delivered up his palette, his chisel, his square, and his lute, to death, in the same year when Shakspeare, with the buskin on his feet, and the mask in his hand, entered on life ; as the dying poet of Lusitania hailed the first suns of the bard of Albion. While the young butcher of Stratford, armed with his knife, apostrophized before he slaughtered his victim sheep and heifers, Camoëns made the tomb of Inez, on the banks of the Tagus, echo with his swan-like melody.

“ For how many years may I yet celebrate ye, oh ! nymphs of the Tagus ? Fortune draws me on to wander through sorrows and perils ; sometimes o'er the sea, sometimes in the midst of combats, sometimes degraded by shameful indigence, with no asylum but a hospital. It

sufficeth not that I was devoted to so many woes ; it seems that grief must come even from those I sing. Poets, you can bestow glory ; behold its price ! My years decline ; soon will my summer and mine autumn pass away. Misfortune leads to the brink of dark repose, and of eternal sleep.”

And must the greatest geniuses, in all ages, and of all countries, have to repeat those last words of Camoëns ?

Milton, aged but eight years when Shakspeare died, rose, like a shade, beside that great man's tomb. Milton also complains of having fallen on evil days, and too late an age.

Unless an age too late, or cold  
Climate, or years damp, my intended wing  
Depress'd.

He felt this apprehension even at the moment when he was composing the ninth book of *Paradise Lost*, which includes the seduction of Eve, with the most pathetic scenes between her and Adam.

These divine spirits, predecessors or contemporaries of Shakspeare, have in their natures something which partakes of the beauty of their countries. Dante was an illustrious citizen and

valiant warrior. Tasso would have been well placed in the brilliant band who followed Renaud. Lope and Calderon bore arms. Ercilla was at once the Homer and the Achilles of his day. Cervantes and Camoens showed the glorious scars of courage and misfortune. The style of these soldier-poets has often the same elevation which marked their careers. To Shakspeare's lot fell a widely different one. He is impassioned in his works, but rarely noble; dignity is sometimes wanting in his style, as it was in his life.

### THE LIFE OF SHAKSPEARE.

AND what was that life? How much is known of it? Very little! He to whom it belonged concealed it, and cared but little either for his works or his days. If we study the private sentiments of Shakspeare in his pages, the painter of so many dark pictures would appear to have been a wayward man, referring every thing to his own existence; it is true that he found abundant occupation in so vast an inward life. The poet's father, probably a Catholic, once a justice of peace, and alderman of Stratford, became a woolstapler and a butcher. William, the eldest of ten children, worked at his father's trade. I have already said that he who held the dagger of Melpomene bled calves before he killed tyrants, and addressed pathetic harangues to the spectators of the unjust death dealt to these innocent beasts. Shakspeare, in his youth, attacked beneath an apple-tree, which still re-

mains celebrated, a party of tipplers of Bidford, and pelted them with ale jugs. At eighteen he married the daughter of a farmer, Anne Hathaway, his elder by seven years, by whom he had a girl, then twins, male and female. This fruitfulness neither steadied nor even much affected him. He so soon and so thoroughly forgot Mistress Anne, that he only remembered her in order to *interline* in his will the before-mentioned legacy of "his second best bed."

A poaching adventure drove him from his native town. Taken in the fact, in the park of Sir Thomas Lucy, he appeared before the offended party, on whom he revenged himself by placarding his door with a satirical ballad. The rancour of Shakspeare was lasting: for, from Sir Thomas Lucy he drew Justice Shallow, in the second part of Henry the Fourth, and overwhelmed him with the buffooneries of Falstaff. The displeasure of Sir Thomas having obliged Shakspeare to quit Stratford, he went to seek his fortune in London.

Poverty pursued him thither. Reduced to hold gentlemen's horses at the theatre doors, he disciplined a troop of intelligent servants, who took the name of Shakspeare's boys." From the doors of the theatres, gliding behind the scenes, he held the place of call-boy. Green,

his kinsman, an actor of Black Friars, thrust him from the wings to the stage, and from actor he rose to author. Criticisms and pamphlets were published against him, to which he made no reply. He acted the part of Friar Lawrence in *Romeo and Juliet*, and that of the Ghost of Hamlet, in an appalling manner. It is known that he tilted his wit against that of Ben Jonson, at the Syren Club, founded by Sir Walter Raleigh. Of the rest of his theatrical career we are ignorant; it is only marked by the master-pieces which dropped twice or thrice a year from his genius—“*bis pomis utilis arbor*—” and of which he took no care. He did not even affix his name to these performances, while he permitted that great name to be inserted in a catalogue of forgotten comedians (*entre-parleurs*, as such were then called, persons who spoke dialogue on the stage), in pieces still more completely forgotten. He did not give himself the trouble either to collect or to print his dramas. Posterity, which never came into his memory, exhumed them from their ancient repositories, as one digs up the remains of a statue of Phidias, from among the obscure images of Olympian *athletæ*.

Dante unceremoniously classed himself with the great poets:

Vidi quattro grand ombre a me venire,

Tasso spoke of his immortality as well as others. Shakspeare said nothing of his person, his family, his wife, his son, who died at the age of twelve years, his two daughters, his country, his works, his glory. Whether he was unconscious of his genius, or whetlier he disdained it, he appears not to have believed that it would be remembered. Hamlet says :

“ Oh heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? then there is hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year, but by'r Lady! he must build churches then, or else shall he suffer not thinking on!”

Shakspeare abruptly left the theatre at fifty, in the plenitude of his success and his genius. Without seeking extraordinary causes for this retreat, it is probable that the careless actor quitted the stage as soon as he had secured a small independence. The world persists in judging the character of a man by the nature of his talents, and the nature of his talents by the character of the man; but the man and his talents are sometimes very disproportioned to each other, without ceasing to be homogeneous. Which was the real self—Shakspeare the tragic

writer, or Shakspeare the joyous liver? Both are genuine and connected by the mysterious links of nature. Lord Southampton was Shakspeare's friend, yet it is not evident that he did anything considerable for him. Elizabeth and James I patronized the actor, and apparently despised him. On returning to his home he planted the first mulberry tree which had been seen in the neighbourhood of Stratford. He died at New Place, his country house, 1616, April 26. The anniversary of the same day which in 1554 had ushered him into the world dawned to lead him into the presence of his God. Buried beneath a flat stone in Stratford church, a statue of him was seated in a niche like that of a saint, painted in black and scarlet, repaired by the grandfather of Mrs. Siddons, re-daubed with plaster by Malone. Many years ago a crack was observed in his tomb. The surveying churchwarden discovered neither bones nor coffin. He perceived some dust, and it was considered something to have seen the dust of Shakspeare. The poet, in an epitaph, had forbidden any one to disturb his ashes; a friend of repose and obscurity, he seemed on his guard against the acclamations and glory of his future fame. Such then is the whole life and death of this immortal bard—a house in a hamlet, a mulberry tree, a lantern which the author-



actor used in Friar Lawrence, a rude village effigy, a half open tomb.

Castrell, a protestant minister, bought New Place. The morose churchman, wearied by the pilgrimages of this great man's votaries, cut down the mulberry tree, and subsequently razed the house to the ground, selling its materials. In 1740, some English ladies erected a marble monument to Shakspeare in Westminster Abbey. Thus did they honour the poet who so dearly loved women, and who in Cymbeline calls England "a swan's nest in a great pool."

Was Shakspeare lame, like Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, and Prayers, the daughters of Jupiter? The libels published against him while living accuse him not of a defect which would have been so apparent on the stage. The word lame is as applicable to a hand as to a foot; lame of one hand. Lame generally signifies imperfect, defective, and keeps the same sense in figurative language. But, whatever he might be, the boy of Stratford, so far from feeling ashamed of his infirmity, like Childe Harold, fears not to remind one of his mistresses of it, calling himself

Lame by fortune's dearest spite.

Shakspeare must have had many loves, if we

were to reckon one for each sonnet, in all a hundred and fifty four. Sir William Davenant boasted of being himself a son of the handsome hostess of the Crown, at Oxford, a friend of Shakspeare's.

The poet is severe enough upon himself in his little odes, and speaks disagreeable truths to the objects of his worship. He reproaches himself with something; does he sigh thus mysteriously over his morals, or complain of his inglorious life? It cannot be unravelled. In his CX sonnet he says:

My name received a brand.

In the XXXVI:

I may not evermore acknowledge thee  
Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame  
Nor thou with public kindness honour me,  
Unless thou take that honour from thy name.

Commentators have conjectured that Shakspeare thus did homage to Queen Elizabeth, or to Lord Southampton, symbolically transformed into a mistress. Nothing was more common in the fifteenth century than this mysticism of sentiment and this abuse of allegory. Hamlet speaks of Yorick as of a woman. When the grave-diggers find his head, he exclaims:

“ Alas poor Yorick ! I knew him, Horatio ; a fellow of infinite jest ; of most excellent fancy . . . Here hung those lips that I have kissed, I know not how oft.”

In the time of Shakspeare, the custom of kissing on the cheek was unknown. Hamlet speaks of Yorick as Margaret of Scotland did of Alain Chartier. Be this as it may, many sonnets are evidently addressed to women ; plays on words spoil these erotic effusions ; but their harmony has won for the author the epithet of “ honey-tongued.” Ever since the days of Catullus, bards have raved of a rose which should be plucked before its leaves fell. Shakspeare speaks more plainly, he bids his love renew her charms in a fair little daughter, who shall renew hers in another, and so forth—a sure method to make the rose, though plucked, never-fading.

The creator of Juliet and Desdemona grew old without ceasing to love. Was the unknown female to whom he addressed his charming verses proud or happy in being the object of Shakspeare’s sonnets. It may be doubted. Glory to an old man is like diamonds to an old woman, they may array, but they cannot embellish.

## CII.

My love is strengthened, though more weak in seeming ;  
 I love not less, though less the show appear ;  
 That love is merchandised, whose rich esteeming  
 The owner's tongue doth publish every where.  
 Our love was new, and then but in the spring,  
 When I was wont to greet it with my lays,  
 As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,  
 And stops her pipe in growth of riper days.  
 Not that the summer is less pleasant now  
 Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,  
 But that wild music burdens every bough,  
 And sweets grown common lose their dear delight,  
 Therefore, like her, I sometimes hold my tongue,  
 Because I would not dull you with my song.

## LXXIII.

That time of year thou mayest in me behold  
 When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
 Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
 Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.  
 In me thou see'st the twilight of such day  
 As, after sunset, fadeth in the west,  
 Which by and by black night doth take away,  
 Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.  
 In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire  
 As on the ashes of his youth doth lie,  
 As the death-bed whereon it must expire,  
 Consumed with that which it was nourished by.  
 This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong  
 To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

## LXXI.

No longer mourn for me when I am dead  
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell  
Give warning to the world that I am fled  
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell.  
Nay, if you read this line, remember not  
The hand that writ it; for I love you so,  
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,  
If thinking on me then should make you woe.  
Oh if (I say) you look upon this verse,  
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,  
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,  
But let your love e'en with my life decay;  
Lest the wise world should look into your moan,  
And mock you with me after I am gone.

There is more of poetry, imagination, and melancholy, in these verses than sensibility, passion, and depth. Shakspeare loved; but he believed no more in love than he believed in anything else. A woman to him is a bird, a zephyr, a flower, which charms and passes away. Owing to his carelessness or ignorance of fame, and to his profession, which excluded him from good company and kept him aloof from those conditions which he could not attain, he seems to have taken life as a fleeting unoccupied hour, a transient and agreeable leisure.

Poets love liberty and the muse more dearly than their mistresses. The pope offered to ab-

solve Petrarch from his vows, in order that he might marry Laura. The bard replied to his holiness's obliging proposition, "I have still too many sonnets to write."

Shakspeare, that great tragic spirit, drew his serious ideas from his scorn of himself and of the human race. He doubted every thing. "Perhaps" is a word which in his lines incessantly recurs. Montaigne, on the other side of the water repeated: *Peut-être. Que sais-je?* "Perhaps. What do I know?"

SHAKSPEARE ONE OF THE FIVE OR SIX GREAT MASTER SPIRITS.

To conclude: Shakspeare is among the five or six writers who have sufficed for the wants and the food of the mind. These parent geniuses seem to have born and suckled all the others. Homer fertilized antiquity. Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Horace, Virgil, were his sons. Dante, in like manner, fathers modern Italy, from Petrarch to Tasso. Rabelais created the literature of France; Montaigne, Lafontaine, Molière descend from him. England owes all to Shakspeare; even to our own days he has lent his language to Byron, his dialogue to Sir Walter Scott.

People often deny the authority of these supreme masters; they rebel against them, enumerate their defects, accuse them of tediousness, prolixity, absurdity, and bad taste, even while robbing them, and decking themselves in their spoils; but they struggle in vain beneath their yoke. Every thing is painted with their colours,

every where they stamp their impress. They invent names and words which have enriched the general vocabulary of nations. Their sayings, their phrases, have become proverbs, their fictitious characters real persons, who have heirs and lineage. They open horizons whence rush forth floods of light; they sow ideas, the germs of a thousand others; they furnish imagination, subject, styles, to all the arts. Their works are inexhaustible mines, or the very bowels of the human mind.

Such are geniuses of the first class. Their vastness, variety, abundance, and originality cause them to be received alone as laws, exemplars, moulds, types, of the various intellects, as there are five or six races of men, of which the others are but shades or branches. Let us beware of insulting the irregularities into which these powerful beings sometimes fall; let us not imitate the wicked Ham, nor laugh if we find one of them naked and asleep in the shade of the ark now landed on the mountains of Armenia, the sole and solitary navigator of the deep; let us respect the diluvian navigator who recommenced the creation, when the cataracts of heaven had ceased to pour. Pious sons, blessed of our sire, let us modestly cover him with our mantle!



Shakspeare during his life never thought of living after death. What now to him is my song of admiration? In admitting all suppositions, in reasoning on the truths or the errors with which the human mind is penetrated or imbued, what were to Shakspeare a renown whose echoes cannot reach him? If a christian, amidst eternal felicity, can he care for the nothingness of this world? If a deist, freed from the clouds of matter, clouds lost in the splendour of God, does he bestow one glance on the grain of sand that he has left? If an atheist?—he sleeps, without breathing or awaking, the sleep called death. Nothing then is more vain than glory beyond the tomb, at least unless it has kept friendship alive, unless it has been useful to virtue, serviceable to distress, and unless it be given us to enjoy in heaven the sense of one consoling generous, liberating idea, left by us upon earth!



PART THE THIRD.



## PART THE THIRD.

### LITERATURE UNDER THE FIRST TWO STUARTS AND DURING THE COMMONWEALTH.

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#### WHAT ENGLAND OWES TO THE STUARTS.

WITH the name of Stuart the idea of a long tragedy is conveyed to the mind. We ask ourselves, Ought not Shakspeare to have been born in their era? No! involved in revolutionary commotions, he would not have found leisure for the development of his varied genius. Perhaps even, becoming a political man, he would have produced nothing. Facts would have consumed his life.

Great Britain owes to the race of Stuart two things, inestimable for any nation:—strength and liberty. James I in bringing the Scottish

crown to England, united the people of the island into one body, and banished foreign war from the soil. The Scotch had continental alliances; almost every time that hostilities broke out between France and England, Scotland made a powerful diversion in favour of the former. If Scotland had not been united with England in 1706, the latter could not have sustained the long war of the Revolution.

As for English liberty, the Stuarts established by attacking it—Charles I. paid for it with his head, and James II. with his race.

JAMES I. BASILIKON DORON.

PERSONS, during the epoch in which they live take notice of mediocrity, because mediocrity is peevish, intriguing, envious, and because common things and common men, make up the generality of the world : but when the past is the question, nothing obliges us to resuscitate the vulgar herd, who, undeceived as to their own merits, by the sincerity of Death, would be astounded at revival, and incapable of standing upright. Some portraits remain on the old canvas of Time when the rest of the picture is effaced ; it is with such alone that we need occupy ourselves ; it is sufficient to name secondary individuals, pausing only at the great figures which, at long intervals, succeed great figures. Nevertheless, it is essential to mark, as we pass, the revolutions that have taken place in the nature or the form of the human mind. I say *essential*, to speak like the learned and people of consequence ; for, beyond religion and its virtues, which alone can bestow freedom, is there anything essential in this world ?

The first of the four Stuarts who ascended the English throne, has left works more esteemed than his memory. I will name them : one ought to mention such kings as could write on "The Apocalypse," "The True Law of Free Monarchies," and the royal gift "Basilikon Doron." If James I. had not taken such pains to establish *divine right*, and acquired the title of "His Sacred Majesty," there would perhaps have been no occasion to pass off his unfortunate son for the author of "Eikon Basilike." At any rate, the royal gift, "Basilikon Doron," deserves particular attention. It contains interesting historical matter, and exhibits James I. in a new light.

The royal gift or present, is dedicated to Henry, the eldest son of James. The King, in an Epistle to the young prince, first says to this purpose :

"I haue for the greater ease to your memorie and that ye may at the first cast vp any part that ye haue to do with, deuided this treatise in three parts. The first teacheth ye your dutie towards God as a Christian ; the next your dutie in your office as a King : and the third informeth you how to behaue yourselfe in indifferent things, which of themselues are neither right nor wrong, but according as they are



rightlie or wrong vsed ; and yet will serue to augment or empaire your fame & authoritie at the hands of your people.”

The King then addresses the reader ;—

“ Amongst the rest of my secret actions which haue (vnlooked for of me) come to publick knowledge, it hath so fared with my Βασιλικόν δῶρον, directed to my eldest sonne ; which I wrote for the exercise of my own ingene, & instruction of him, who is appointed by God (I hope) to sit on my throne after me. For the purpose & matter thereof being only fit for a King, as teaching him his office ; and the persons whome-for it was ordayned a King’s heire, whose secret counsellor and faithful admonisher it must bee ; I thought it no waies convenient nor comelie that it should to all be proclaimed, which to one onely appertained (& specially being a messenger between two so conjunct persons) or yet that the moule whereupon he should frame his future behauour, when he comes both unto the perfection of his yeeres & possession of his inheritance, should before the hand be made common to the people, the subjects of his future happie gouernment. And therefore, for the more sacred and close keeping of them, I onely permitted seauen of them to be printed, the Printer being first sworn

for secrecie : and these seauen I dispersed amongst some of my trustiest seruants to be kepted closelie by them, least in case by the iniquitie or wearing of time any of them might haue been lost, yet some of them might haue remained after me as witnesses to my sonne, both of the honest integritie of my heart, & of my fatherlie affection & naturall care towards him. But since, contrarie to my intention & expectation, as I haue alreadie said, this booke is now vented & set foorth to the publike view of the world, and consequently subject to every mans censure, as the current of his affections leades him ; I am now forced, as well for resisting the malice of the children of enuie, who like waspes, sucke venome out of euey wholesome hearbe ; as for the satisfaction of the godly honest sort in any thing that they may mistake therein, to publish and spred the true copies thereof.”

The first part of the work, “Duties of a Christian unto God,” includes some good but common-place notions. One can hardly find anything remarkable in this passage :

“ And as for conscience, which I haue called the conseruer of Religion, it is nothing but the light of knowledge that God hath planted in

man, which euer watching ouer all his actions as it beareth him a joyfull testimonie when he does right, so choppeth it him with a feeling that he hath done wrong when euer he committeth any sinne. And surely, although this conscience bee a great torture to the wicked, yet it is a great comfort to the godlie if wee will consider it rightly. For haue we not a great aduantage, that haue within our selues while wee liue heere a count booke and inuentarie of al the crimes that wee shall be accused of either at the houre of our death or the great day of judgment . . . . Aboue all those, my Sonne, labour to keep sound this conscience which many prattle of, but ouer few feel: especiallie be carefull to keepe it free from two diseases, wherewith it vseth to be infected; to wit Leapsie and Superstition: the former is the mother of Atheisme, the other of Heresies. By a leaprouse conscience I meane *cauterized conscience*, as Paul calleth it, being become senselesse of sinne, through sleeping in a carelesse securitie. . . . . And by superstition, I meane, when one restraines himselfe to any other rule in the seruice of God than is warranted by the word, the onelie true square of God's seruice.

“ Bvt as ye are clothed with two callings, so must ye be alike carefull for the discharge of

them both : that as yee are a good Christian, so ye may bee a good King, discharging your office in the points of justice & equitie : which in two sundrie waies ye must doe : the one in establishing and executing (which is the life of the law) good lawes among your people : the other by your behauour in your owne person & with your seruants, to teach your people by your example : for people are naturally inclined to counterfaite (like Apes) their Princes maners, according to the notable saying of Plato, expressed by the poet

“ . . . . . Componitur orbis  
Regis ad exemplum, nec sic inflectere sensus  
Humanos edicta valent, quàm vita regentis.”

James seems to have been a family prophet, while writing these paragraphs on the death of a good king and on that of a tyrant.

“ For the part of making & executing of lawes, consider first the true difference betwixt a lawfull good King & an usurping Tyrant, & ye shall the more easily vnderstand your dutie herein : for *contraria iuxta se posita magis elucescunt*. The one acknowledgeth himselfe ordained for his people, hauing received from God a burthen of government whereof he must bee count-

able ; the other thinketh his people ordained for him, a pray to his passions and inordinate appetites, as the fruites of his magnanimitie . . . . A good King (after a happie and famous Reigne) dieth in peace, lamented by his Subjects and admired by his neighbours, and leauing a reuerend renoune behinde him in earth, obtaineth the crowne of eternall felicitie in heauen. And although some of them (which falleth not verie rarely) may bee cut off by the reason of some vnnaturall subjects, yet liveth their fame after them, & some notable plague faileth neuer to ouere-take the committers in this life, besides their infamie to all posterities hereafter, where by the contrarie a Tyrantes miserable & infamous life armeth in end his owne subjects to become his bureaux ; and although that rebellion be euer vnlawfull on their part, yet is the world so wearied of him, that his fall is little meaned by the rest of his subjects, and but smyled at by his neighbours. And besides the infamous memorie he leaueth behinde him here, and the endles paine hee sustaineth hereafter, it oft falleth out that the committers not onely escape vnpunished, but farther, the fact will remaine as allowed by the law in diuers ages thereafter.

“ It is easie then for you (my Sonne) to make choyse of one of these two sortes of rules by

following the way of vertue to establish your standing; yea, in case ye fell in the high way, yet should it be with the honourable report and just regrate of all honest men.”

In treating of such crimes as ought not to be pardoned, James says to his son and heir :

“ Sen yee are the lawfull magistrate, suffer not both your Princes and your Parents to be dishonoured by any; especially sith the example also toucheth your selfe, in leauing thereby to your successors the measure of that which they shall mette out again to you in your like behalfe..... And as yee are come of as honourable Predecessoures as anie Prince liuing, repress the insolence of such as vnder pretence to taxe a vice in the person, seekes craftilie to staine the race, and to steale the affection of the people from their posteritie. For howe can they loue you, that hated them whom-of ye are come? Where-fore destroy men innocent young sucking Wolues and Foxes, but for the hatred they beare to their race? and why will a coult of a Courser of Naples giue a greater price in a market than an Asse-colt but for loue of the race? It is therefore a thing monstrous to see a man loue the childe, & hate the Parents :

as, on the other parte, the infaming & making odious of the parent is the readiest way to bring the sonne in contempt. And for conclusion of this point, I may also alledge my owne experience. For besides the judgements of God, that with my eyes I haue seene fall upon all them that were chief traitours to my parents, I may justly affirme, I neuer found yet a constant byding by me in all my straits by any that were of perfete age in my parentes dayes, but only by such as constantly bode by them. I meane specially by them that served the Queene my mother: for so that I discharge my conscience to you, my Sonne, in reuealing to you the trueth, I care not what any traitour or treason-allower thinke of it."

This energetic address gives us to understand that James had been calumniated when it was pretended that he was indifferent to the fate of his mother. The sentiments had the more merit as he was not King of England when he wrote them. In Scotland the enemies of Mary Stuart surrounded him, and Elizabeth, whose throne he expected, still lived.

The following paragraph gives an idea of the state of Scotland at that period.

"Heere nowe speaking of oppressours and of

justice, the people leadeth mee to speake of Hie-lande and Bordour oppressions. As for the Hie-lands, I shortly comprehend them all in two sortes of people: the one that dwelleth in our main land, that are barbarians for the most parte, and yet mixed with some shewe of ciuilitie: the other that dwelleth in the Iles, and are all vitterly barbarous, without any sort or shewe of ciuilitie. For the first sorte, put straitely to execution the lawes made already by mee against the Ouer-lords and the chiefs of their Clannes, and it will be no difficultie to danton them. As for the other sort, follow forth the course that I have intended, in planting colonies among them of answerable In-lande subiects, that within short time may reforme and ciuilize the best inclined among them: rooting out or transporting the barbarous and stubborn sort, and planting ciuility in their rooms.

“ But as for the Bourdours, because I knowe if yee enjoye not this whole Ile, according to God’s right and youre lineall discent, ye will neuer get leaue to brook this north and barrenest parte thereof, not your owne head whereon the crowne shoulde stande: I neede not in that case trouble you with them: for then they will bee the middest of the Ile, and so as easily ruled as any part thereof.



“ The reformation of religion in Scotland being extraordinarily wrought by God . . . . . and not proceeding from the Princes order, as it did in our neighbour country of England, as likewise in Denmarke and sundry partes of Germanie ; some fierie spirited men in the ministerie gotte such a guyding of the people at that time of confusion, as finding the gust of government sweete, they begouth to fantasie to themselues a Democraticke forme of gouernment : and hauing, (by the iniquitie of time) bin ouerwell baited vpon the wracke, first of my Grandmother, and next of my owne Mother, and after vsurping the liberty of the time in my long minoritie, settled themselues so fast vpon that imagined Democracie as they fed themselues with the hope to become *Tribuni plebis*. ”

What James I. here says of the Puritan faction explains the theory of divine right which he caused to be so lamentably upheld in the sequel. Having seen nothing but trouble and desolation, in consequence of the principle of the sovereignty of the people, he took refuge in his right divine, not feeling sufficiently secure in the principle of hereditary monarchy.

James treats of the nobility : he examines its qualities and its defects. The King's notion

relative to the great offices of state is very judicious. With regard to the working classes, James outsteps the ideas of his age; he wished to give and proclaim to them full liberty for intercourse with strangers, and foreign commerce.

Treating of the marriage of princes, James recommends purity of life to his son. Politic advice and striking truth are blended in these moral instructions.

“Have yee respect my sonne to the three speciall causes in youre mariage, which flowe from the first institution thereof, *et cætera omnia adjicientur vobis*. And therefore I would rather have you to marie one that were fully of youre owne religion; her ranke and other qualities being agree-able to your estate. For although that to my great regrate the number of any Princes of power, profesing our Religion, be but very small; and therefore this aduice seems to be the more strait and difficile, yet yee have deeplie to weigh and consider vpon these doubts: how yee and your wife can be of one flesh and keep vnitie betwixt you, being members of two opposite churches; disagreement in religion bringeth euer with disagreement in manners; and the dissention betwixt your Preachers and hers will

breede and foster a dissention among your subjects, taking their example from your familie; besides the peril of the euil education of your children. Neither pride you that yee will be able to frame and make her as yee please: that deceived *Solomon* the wisest king that euer was: the grace of Persuerance not beeing a flowre that groweth in our garden."

If Charles I. had followed the advice which James gave to Henry, he might have spared himself many misfortunes. For the rest, the horror with which the King of Scotland speaks of certain depravities, makes me believe that upon this point too he has been misjudged. One soldier-like word from our Henri IV, cannot constitute an historical authority; we must only take that word for a *Ventre-saint-gris*. The yielding one's self to favourites proves weakness, but does not necessarily imply corruption of heart. When men give themselves up to shameful vices, they conceal them; but they cannot with any degree of assurance, praise the opposite virtues. A veil of words would ill conceal a blushing brow.

The third part of Basilicon Doron, the deportment of Kings in common and indifferent matters, is amusing from its simplicity. James

instructs his son to be attentive to the graces and etiquettes of the table. Henry was forbidden to be either dainty or a glutton ; all his food was to be prepared “ without composition or sauces, which are more like medicines then meat. The eating of them was counted amongst the ancient Romans a filthie vice of delicacie.” Henry was “ speciallie to beware of drunkennesse, because it is one of those vices that increaseth with age,” and expires but with life.

“ In the forme of your meat-eating, be neither vnciuill, like a grosse Cynicke ; nor affectatlie mignarde, like a daintee dame ; but eat in a manlie, round, and honest fashion . . . Be also moderate in your sleepe . . . Take no heede to anie of your dreames : for that errour proceedeth of ignorance and is vnwoorthie of a Christian . . . Be also moderate in your raiment ; neither ouer superfluous, like a deboshed waister, nor yet ouer base, like a miserable wretch ; not artificiallie trimmed and decked like a Courtizane, nor ouersluggishly clothed like a country-clowne ; not ouer lightly like a Candie-souldier, or a vaine young Courtier, nor yet ouer grauelie like a Minister . . . Bnt speciallie eschewe to be effeminate in your cloathes, in perfuming, preening, or such like : and faile neuer in time

of warres to be gaillardest and brauest both in cloathes and countenance. And make not a foole of yourselfe in disguysing or wearing long haire or nailes, which are but excrements of nature."

With regard to games and exercises, James wishes his son to choose among them, but recommends running, leaping, wrestling, fencing, dauncing, and playing at the caitche or tennise, archery, paille maille, and such like other faire and pleasant field games. And the honourablest and most commendable games that yee can vse are on horsebacke; for it becometh a Prince best of any man to be a faire and good horseman. Vse therefore to ride and danton great and courageous horses: that I may say of you as *Philip* said of great *Alexander*, his sonne Μακεδονια ησε χωριε

James also sanctions hunting, but with hounds, which he thinks the noblest and most proper kind for a prince. On this point he refers his son to *Xenophon*—"an olde and famous writer, who had no minde of flattering you or me in this purpose."

"In your language be plaine, honest naturall, comelie, cleane, short, and sentencious; eschew-

ing both the extremities, as well in not vsing any rustical corrupt leide, as booke-language, and Pen and Inkhorne tearmes: and least of all mignard and effeminate termes. . . . If your engine spurre you to write any workes eyther in verse or prose, I cannot but allowe you to practise it: but take no longsome works in hande, for distracting you from your calling. If yee would write worthely, choose subjects worthie of you, that be not full of vanity but of vertue: eschewing obscurity, and delighting euer to be plaine and sensible. And if yee write in verse, remember that it is not the principal part of a poem to rime right and flowe well with many pretty wordes: but the chief commendation of a poeme is that when the verse shall bee shaken sundry in prose, it shall bee found so ritch in quicke inuentions and poeticke floures, and in faire and pertinent comparisons: as shall retain the lustre of a poeme, although in prose. And I would also aduise you to write in your own language: for there is nothing left to bee saide in Greeke and Latine already; and ynewe of poor schollers would match you in these languages; and besides that it best becommeth a King to purifie and make famous his own tongue, wherein he may goe before all his subjectes, as it setteth him well to doe in all honest and lawful things.”

These last counsels are curious. The authoring, who expressed himself so emphatically in Parliament, here evinces both taste and moderation. This work concludes with a grand prospect. James believes that, sooner or later, the union of Scotland and England will form one mighty empire.

I have expatiated the more largely on the Royal Gift, because it is almost unknown at the present day, or known only from one of those judgments composed for the use of those who read nothing, by those who have read nothing. Voltaire, who skimmed everything without giving himself time to study, has thrown on the world a multitude of those party opinions which are adopted by ignorance and insolence. If sometimes the author of the *Essai sur les Mœurs* judges aright, it is by guess. Thus from age to age, evident falsehoods are believed and repeated as articles of faith; they acquire in time a kind of truth and authenticity which nothing can destroy.

Henry, it is with pain that I write the name! Henry, to whom the Basilicon Doron is addressed, died at the age of eighteen; had he lived, Charles I. would not have reigned. The Revolutions of 1649 and of 1688 would not have taken place; our revolution would not

have had the same consequences ; without the precedent of Charles's sentence, the idea of sending Louis XVI. to the block would not have occurred to any one in France. The world would have been changed.

These reflections, which present themselves on occasion of every historical catastrophe, are vain. There is always a moment in the annals of nations in which, if such or such a thing had not happened, if such or such a man had been or had not been dead, if such or such a measure had been taken, or such or such a fault not committed, that which followed could not have happened. But God decrees that men should be born with dispositions suited to the events which they are to bring about. Louis XVI. had a hundred opportunities of escape ; he did not escape, simply because he was Louis XVI. It is childish then to lament accidents which produce what they are destined to produce. At each step in life, a thousand different distances, a thousand future chances, are opening on us, though we can see but one horizon, and rush forward to one futurity.



RALEIGH. COWLEY.

JAMES I. put to death the famous Sir Walter Raleigh, whose *Universal History* is still read for Sir Walter's own sake. If there are books which keep alive the names of the authors, there are authors whose names keep alive their books.

Cowley, in the order of poets, comes immediately after Shakspeare, though he was born later than Milton. A royalist in his opinions, he wrote for the theatres, and composed poems, satires, and elegies. He abounds in traits of wit. His versification is said to want harmony; his style, though often far-fetched, is nevertheless more natural, and more correct than that of his predecessors.

Cowley attacks us. From Surrey to Byron, there is scarcely an English author who has not insulted the name, the character and the genius of the French. With admirable impartiality and self-denial, we submit to this outrage; humbly confessing our inferiority, we celebrate, with

sound of trumpet, the excellence of all the authors across the channel, born or to be born, great or small, male or female !

In his poem on the Civil War, Cowley says :

It was not so when Edward proved his cause  
 By a sword stronger than the Salic laws,  
 .....when the French did fight  
 With women's hearts against the women's right.

Our King John, Charny, Ribeaumont, Beaumanoir, the thirty Bretons, Duguesclin, Clisson, and a hundred thousand others, had women's hearts !

Of all the men who have shed lustre on Great Britain, he who most attracts my regard is Lord Falkland. I have wished, a hundred times to have been this accomplished model of intelligence, generosity, and independence, and never to have appeared on earth in my own form or by my own name. Endowed with a three-fold genius for literature, arms and policy ; constant to the muses, even beneath the tent, and to liberty, in a palace ; devoted to an unfortunate monarch, without being blind to his faults, Falkland has left a memory in which melancholy blends with admiration. The verses which Cowley addressed to him, on his return from a military expedition, are noble and true. The

poet begins by enumerating the virtues and talent of his hero ; then adds :

Such is the man whom we require, the same  
 We lent the North untouched as in his fame ;  
 He is too good for war, and ought to be  
 As far from danger as from fear he's free.  
 Those men alone.....  
 Whose valour is the only art they know,  
 Were for sad war and bloody battles born.  
 Let them the state defend, and he adorn !

Fruitless wish ! Life, in the midst of his country's woes, became the lot of this friend to the muses. His grief betrayed itself in the carelessness of his attire. On the morning of the first battle of Naseby, his intention of dying was guessed by his change of habit ; he arrayed himself as if for a day of rejoicing, and asked for clean linen, saying with a smile, " I do not wish my body to be buried in soiled garments. I foresee great misfortunes, but I shall be out of them before the day is over." Placing himself in the front rank of Lord Byron's regiment, a ball, winged by that liberty which he adored, enfranchised him from the oaths of honour to which he was a slave.

There remain some speeches and verses by Falkland, Secretary of State to Charles I. : he aided Clarendon to revise the Royal Proclama-

tions, and Chillingworth in his *History of Protestantism*.

The Bible, partly translated in the reign of Henry VIII., was re-translated under James I. by forty seven scholars. This last translation is a masterpiece. The authors of that immense undertaking did for the English language what Luther did for the German, and the writers of Louis the Thirteenth's time for French. They established the language.

POLITICAL WRITINGS UNDER CHARLES I. AND  
CROMWELL.

To look for literature in times of commotion, is to ask shelter in the peaceful valleys which poets place on the sea-shore; but were we led by some good Genius to these retreats, other spirits would thrust us into the midst of the tempest and the waves. Politics ascend the tripod, transformed into a Sibyl. Pamphlets, libels and satirical poems abound; impregnated with hate, and written in the blood of factions. The civil wars of England gave birth to deplorable productions.

One of those fanatics whom Butler held up to ridicule, exclaims, in "An alarm to all Flesh," "Howle, howle, bawl and roar, ye lustful, cursing, swearing, drunken, lewd, superstitious, devilish, sensual, earthly inhabitants of the whole earth! Bow, bow, you most surly trees, and lofty oaks! ye tall cedars and low shrubs,

cry out aloud ! hear, hear, ye proud waves, and boisterous seas ! also, listen ye uncircumcised, stiff necked, and mad-raging bubbles, who even hate to be reformed.”

The poets equalled the orators.

Dear friend, *J. C.*, with true unfeigned love  
I thee salute . . . . .

. . . . . dear friend, a member jointly knit  
To all in Christ, in heavenly places sit,  
And there to friends no stranger would I be.

. . . . .  
For truly, friend, I dearly love, and own  
All travelling souls, who truly sigh and groan  
For the adoption which sets free from sin, &c. &c.

Cromwell scarcely rose above this style of eloquence, as we may judge by his obscure speeches and rambling letters. His poetry lay in facts and in his sword. He was a poet while gazing on Charles I. in his coffin. His muse was the female, who, by his own account, appeared to him in his childhood, and promised him royalty.

THE ABBÉ DE LAMENNAIS.

THE French Revolution has also produced writers who have beheld Liberty in Religion; but here our superiority is manifest. It is in the fields of the cross that the Abbé de Lamennais has acquired so tender an interest for human nature, for the poor and suffering industrious classes of society; it was in wandering with Christ upon the highways and beholding the little ones assembled at the feet of the Saviour of the world that he has found again the poetry of the Gospel. Might we not call the following picture a detached parable from the sermon on the Mount?

“ It was a wintry night ; the wind blew, the snow whitened the roofs ;

“ Beneath one of these roofs in a small room were seated at work a woman with silvery hair, and a young girl :

“ And from time to time, the old woman

warmed her wan hands at a little stove. A clay lamp lighted this poor abode, and one of the rays thereof died away on an image of the Virgin, hung against the wall.

“ And the young maid, raising her eyes, looked for a while in silence on the woman with silvery hair ; then she said ; Mother, you have not been always thus destitute.

“ And there was inexpressible sweetness and tenderness in her voice.

“ And the woman with silver hair replied : My child, God is our master ; whatsoever he doth is right.

“ Having said these words, she was silent for a short time, and then continued :

“ When I lost your father it was a grief which I thought without solace ; true you were left to me, yet then I could think only of one thing.

“ Since then I have thought that, had he lived to see us in this distress, his heart would have broken ; and I am satisfied that God has dealt kindly with him.

“ The maiden answered no, but bent her head, and a few tears, which she strove to hide, fell on the linen she held in her hands.

“ The mother added : God has been merciful unto him, and unto us also. What have we wanted while others want all things?



“ It is true, we must accustom ourselves to live on little, and that little earned by our labour; but doth not that little suffice? and were not all mankind from the beginning doomed to live by toil?

“ God in his bounty has given us each day our daily bread; and how many have it not! He hath given us a shelter; and how many know not where to lay their heads!

“ My child, he hath given me thee; of what then should I complain?

“ At these words the maid’s heart was much moved; she threw herself at the knees of her mother, took her hands, kissed them, and leant weeping on her parent’s breast.

“ And the mother, striving to raise her voice, said: My child, happiness is not in possessing but in hoping and loving much.

“ Our hope is not here below nor our love either, or if they be it is but for a time.

“ Next to God thou art all to me in this world; but this world vanisheth like a dream, and that is why my love raiseth itself with thee unto another world.

“ While I carried thee beneath my heart, I prayed one day, with great fervour, to the Virgin Mary; and she appeared to me in my sleep, and methought that, with a heavenly smile, she presented me with a child.

“ And I took the infant she gave me, and while I held it in my arms the Virgin Mother placed on its head a crown of white roses.

“ A few months afterwards thou wert born ; and that sweet vision was ever before mine eyes.

“ So saying, the woman with silvery hair trembled and pressed her daughter to her heart.

“ A little while afterwards, a holy man beheld two forms of light ascend towards heaven ; a host of angels accompanied them, and the air resounded with songs of joy.”

We live (as in the days of Comwell) in an age of reform ; if in his time, more morality and conviction was remarked in the public mind, in ours may be observed more urbanity and gentleness. Puritanical sentiments were very far from that harmony and that peace, which the religious philosophy of M. Ballanche introduces into christianity.

KILLING NO MURDER. LOCKE. HOBBS. DENHAM.  
HARINGTON. HARVEY. SIEYES. MIRABEAU.  
BENJAMIN CONSTANT. CARREL.

THE most celebrated pamphlet of this era was "Killing no Murder." Its author, the republican Colonel Titus, in an ironical dedication, entreated *His Highness*, Oliver Cromwell, to die for the happiness and deliverance of the English. After this publication the Protector was never seen to smile: he felt himself abandoned by the Revolutionary spirit to which he owed his greatness. The Revolution, which chose him as a guide, would not endure him as a master. The mission of Cromwell was fulfilled. His age and nation had no more need of him. Time pauses not to admire glory, but makes it useful, and passes on.

I have read (perhaps in Gui Patin) one curious fact, which I believe has not been previously remarked. The doctor observes that "Killing no Murder" was originally written in French, by a gentleman of Burgundy.

Here we have Locke as a poet. He wrote

very bad verses in honour of Cromwell. Waller had composed some very good ones.

The crouching flattery which survives the object of its adulation is but the excuse of an infirm conscience, exalting a master who is no more, to justify past admiration and servility. Cromwell betrayed that Liberty from which he sprang. If Success is to be regarded as Innocence, if, misleading even posterity, Success should become the accomplice of whomsoever has triumphed, where would be right and justice? where would sacrifices find their reward? Good and evil being but relative, all morality would be effaced from all human actions.

On the other hand, who would defend sacred independence and the cause of the weak against the strong, if courage, exposed to the vengeance and malice of the Present, were again exposed to the slanders and the baseness of the Future? Misfortune, bereft of voice, would lose even the organ of complaint, and those two great advocates of the oppressed, Probity and Genius.

Hobbes, a royalist, in his hatred of popular opinions, ran into an opposite extreme; he traced all things to force and necessity, reducing justice to one of the functions of power and not representing it as resulting from a moral sense. He did not perceive that democracy had as great a right as unity to set out from that same princi-

ple. Society which naturally tended towards the popular establishment did not retrograde with the system of Hobbes, notwithstanding the excesses of the English Revolution; it was only checked in its progress by Louis XIV, who barred its way by his glory. Hobbes inculcated scepticism, as did our philosophers of the eighteenth century, with an imperious tone of dogmatical haughtiness. He wished to be thought a firm believer in unbelief, and preached doubt like an Inquisitor. His style is energetic, and his Thucydides has been too much decried. This strong mind, (*esprit fort*) this free-thinker, was the weakest of men; he trembled at the thought of the tomb. Nature supported him to the age of ninety-two, and delivered him fainting into the arms of death, as a swooning convict is carried to the fatal block.

Sir John Denham is still slightly remembered for his descriptive poem of "Cooper's Hill." He was a royalist, and the agent in London of the correspondence between Charles the First and his Queen. Cowley held the same office in Paris: thus did the Muses render service to conjugal tenderness and misfortune.

Harington's "Oceana" is a repetition of Sir Thomas More's Utopia. Where is a perfect government to be found? In Utopia—*no where*—as the name implies.

Harvey described his great discovery of the circulation of the blood. No physician in Europe, having attained the age of forty, would adopt the doctrine of Harvey; he himself lost his practice in London, because he had discovered an important truth. Harvey was encouraged by Charles the First and remained faithful to him. Servetus, burnt in effigy by the catholics and in person by Calvin, had pointed out the circulation of the blood in the lungs. This age treated a man of genius as a vulgar heretic, whom another heretic conducted to the stake.

For the rest, as to the purely political English pamphlets, even when not infected by the theological jargon of the time, (which was a rare case) they remain at an immense distance behind our modern investigations. If we except Milton, no writer during the Revolution of 1649 can approach Sieyes, Mirabeau, Benjamin Constant, still less Carrel. This last, close, firm, able and logical writer, has in his manner something of the positive eloquence of facts; his deep and grave style may be compared with history recorded by monuments.

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ON THE  
SPIRIT OF THE TIMES,  
MEN, AND REVOLUTIONS.

BY  
THE VISCOUNT DE CHATEAUBRIAND

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AN  
HISTORICAL VIEW  
OF  
ENGLISH LITERATURE.

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MILTON.

HIS BIRTH. COLLEGE.

ABOVE a multitude of prose writers and poets during the stormy times of Charles I. and the Protector, towers the majestic form of Milton. Where are the contemporaries of that genius, the Cowleys, the Wallers, the Denhams, the Sucklings, the Marvels, the Crashaws, the Lovelaces, the Davenants, the Withers, the Habingtons, the Herberts, the Carews, the Stanleys? What French reader ever heard of any of these names, excepting two or three! The "Spirit of Christianity" has done justice to the "Paradise Lost." I had to retract some of my opinions respecting Shakspeare and Dante; but I have no reparation to make to him whose poem was the occasion of this work on English literature; I have therefore merely to

explain the motives of an admiration, which a closer examination of his master-piece served only to heighten. Being obliged to pause at beauties which I was striving to transfuse into our language, I learned to appreciate them better, at the same time that I despaired of rendering them with all the force with which I felt them.

Milton was no more ; he was unknown ; his genius, rising like a spirit from the tomb, came to inquire the cause of this ignorance. People gazed upon it in astonishment ; they asked if the author of twelve thousand forgotten verses was really immortal. The majestic and dazzling vision first made them cast down their eyes ; presently, they fell prostrate and adored it. They then set about inquiring who this secretary of Cromwell's, this pamphleteer champion of regicide, detested by some, despised by others, really was. Bayle commenced by searching after facts touching the person and look of Milton ; that look was bold, and not inferior in majesty to the look of a king.

A malediction rested on the respectable family of Milton, which had been stripped of its property during the civil wars of the Red and White Roses. Milton's father was a Protestant, his grandfather a Catholic : the latter disinherited his son. The curse of the grandfather, overleaping one generation, alighted on the head of the grandson.

Milton's father settled in London, where he

became a scrivener or attorney, and married Sarah Caston, whose family was related to the Bradshaws and the Haughtons. By her he had a daughter, Anne, and two sons, John and Christopher. Christopher, the younger, was a royalist; became one of the barons of the Exchequer, and a judge of the Common Pleas under James II.; and died in obscurity, having been dismissed from his office shortly after or before the revolution of 1688. John, the elder, was a republican, and died unnoticed, like his brother; but a very different cause removed him from the public gaze. To him may be applied what he says of the holy hill in heaven, that it was not seen because it was obscured by excess of light.

Milton's father was fond of the arts. He composed an *In nomine* for forty parts, and some old airs by him are preserved in Wilby's collection. Apollo, dividing his gifts between the father and the son, had bestowed music on the one and poesy on the other.

Dividuumque deum genitorque puerque tenemus.

*Milto ad Patrem.*

Between us we receive,  
Father and son, the whole inspiring god\*.

\* This and the following poetical quotations from Milton's Latin and Italian poems, are borrowed from the version of Cowper.—*Translator.*

The father was probably born in France. His immortal son came into the world on the 9th of December, 1608, in Bread-street, in the city of London, at the sign of the Spread Eagle, an omen and an emblem. Shakspeare was still living. Milton received his first instruction at home, in the shade of the tomb of that great uncultivated genius. His domestic tutor was Thomas Young, who was compelled to quit his country on account of religious opinions; when his pupil was placed at St. Paul's school, under the care of Alexander Gill. His intense application to study brought on him, at an early age, violent pains in the head, and great weakness of sight—constitutional ailments, the germ of which he had received from his mother. At seventeen he was removed to Christ College, Cambridge, and placed under the care of the learned William Chapel, afterwards bishop of Cork and Ross, in Ireland. His handsome person gained him the appellation of “the Lady of Christ's College”—an appellation which he complacently calls to mind in one of his addresses to the University. He furnished evidence of his poetic talents in several Latin compositions and paraphrases of the Psalms in English. The hymn on the Nativity, in particular, is admirable for its rhythm and its unexpected effect.



" It was the winter wild,  
 While the heav'n-born child  
     All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies ;  
 Nature, in awe to him,  
 Had doft her gaudy trim,  
     With her great Master so to sympathise :  
 It was no season then for her  
 To wanton with the sun, her lusty paramour.

Only with speeches fair  
 She woos the gentle air,  
     To hide her guilty front with innocent show ;  
 And, on her naked shame,  
 Pollute with sinful blame,  
     The saintly veil of maiden white to throw.

\*            \*            •

No war or battle's sound  
 Was heard the world around :  
     The idle spear and shield were high up hung ;  
 The hooked chariot stood  
 Unstained with hostile blood,  
     The trumpet spake not to the armed throng,  
 And kings sat still with awful eye,  
 As if they surely knew their sov'reign Lord was by.

But peaceful was the night,  
 Wherein the Prince of Light  
     His reign of peace upon the earth began :  
 The winds, with wonder whist,  
 Smoothly the waters kist,  
     Whisp'ring new joys to the mild ocean,  
 Who now hath quite forgot to rave,  
 While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave.

The stars, with deep amaze,  
 Stand fixed in stedfast gaze,  
     Bending one way their precious influence ;

And will not take their flight,  
For all the morning light,  
Or Lucifer, that often warn'd them thence ;  
But in their glimmering orbs did glow,  
Until their Lord himself bespake and bid them go."

Having taken his degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1628, and Master in 1632, Milton left Cambridge, and refused, from a feeling of independence, to enter into the church, as he went to the University with the intention of doing. "Whoso taketh orders," said he, "must subscribe slave, and take an oath withal, which, unless he take with a conscience that can retch, he must straight perjure himself."

Some passages in his first Latin elegy, in which he appears to prefer the pleasures of London to the discomforts of Cambridge, furnished occasion for calumnies which were afterwards circulated concerning him; he was charged with having been *vomited* forth by the University after an inordinate and riotous youth: and it is asserted in pamphlets that he was obliged to go abroad and hide himself in Italy. Johnson is of opinion that Milton was "the last student in either University that suffered the public indignity of corporal punishment." In all this there is no truth whatever; nay, it is at variance with the dates of a life not less correct than religious.

MILTON AT HOME.—WORKS OF HIS YOUTH.

---

MILTON's father, having amassed a small fortune, had retired into the country, to Horton, near Colebrooke, in Buckinghamshire. Milton returned to him there, and spent five years absorbed in the study of the Greek and Latin authors. From time to time he made excursions to London, to purchase books, and to take lessons in mathematics, fencing, and music.

To a friend who reproached him for secluding himself from the world, he thus wrote:—

“Yet if you thinke that too much love of learning is in fault, and that I have given my selfe to dreame away my years in the arms of a studious retirement, like Endymion with the moon on Latmus hill; yet, consider that, if it were no more but this to overcome this, there is on the other side both ill more bewitchful to entice away, and natural years more swaying, and good more available to withdraw to that you wish me: as

first, all the fond hopes which forward youth and vanitie are fledge with ; none of which can sort with this Pluto's helmet, as Homer calls it, of obscurity, and would soon cause me to throw it off, if there were nothing else in't but an affected and fruitlesse curiosity of knowing. The love of learning, as it is the pursuit of something good, it would sooner follow the more excellent and supream good known and præsentèd, and soe be quickly diverted from the emptie and fantastic chase of shadows and notions to the solid good, flowing from due and tymely obedience to that command in the gossell, set out by the terrible seasing of him that hid the talent. . . . Yet, that you may see that I am something suspicious of myselfe, and doe take notice of a certain belatednesse in me, I am the bolder to send you some of my nightward thoughts, some while since, because they come in not altogether unfitly, made up in a Petrarchian stanza, which I told you of:—

“ How soon hath time, the subtle thief of youth,  
 Stol'n on his wing my three and twentieth year !  
 My hasting days fly on with full career,  
 But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.”

Between 1624 and 1638, he produced the “Arcades ;” “Comus, or the Masque;” “Lycidas,” in which he seems to prophesy the tragic end of

Archbishop Laud; "L'Allegro;" and "Il Penseroso," Latin "Elegies," and "Sylvæ."

Of "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," Johnson gives this lively analysis:—

"The *cheerful* man hears the lark in the morning; the *pensive* man hears the nightingale in the evening. The *cheerful* man sees the cock strut, and hears the horn and hounds echo in the wood; then walks, *not unseen*, to observe the glory of the rising sun, or listen to the singing milkmaid, and view the labours of the ploughman and the mower; then casts his eyes about him, over scenes of smiling plenty, and looks up to the distant tower, the residence of some fair inhabitant: thus he pursues rural gaiety through a day of labour or of play, and delights himself at night with the fanciful narratives of superstitious ignorance.

"The *pensive* man, at one time, walks *unseen* to muse at midnight; and at another hears the sullen curfew. If the weather drives him home, he sits in a room lighted only by *glowing embers*; or by a lonely lamp outwatches the north star, to discover the habitation of separate souls, and varies the shades of meditation by contemplating the magnificent or pathetic scenes of tragic and epic poetry. When the morning comes, a morning gloomy with rain and wind, he walks into the dark trackless woods, falls asleep by some murmuring

water, and with melancholy enthusiasm expects some dream of prognostication, or some music played by ærial performers.

“ Both Mirth and Melancholy are solitary, silent inhabitants of the breast, that neither receive nor transmit communication; no mention is therefore made of a philosophical friend or a pleasant companion. Seriousness does not arise from any participation of calamity, nor gaiety from the pleasures of the bottle.

“ The man of *cheerfulness*, having exhausted the country, tries what towered cities will afford, and mingles with scenes of splendour, gay assemblies, and nuptial festivities; but he mingles a mere spectator, as, when the learned comedies of Jonson or the wild dramas of Shakspeare are exhibited, he attends the theatre.

“ The *pensive* man never loses himself in crowds, but walks the cloister, or frequents the cathedral.

“ For the old age of *Cheerfulness*, Milton makes no provision; but *Melancholy* he conducts with great dignity to the close of life.

“ Through these two poems the images are properly selected and nicely distinguished, but the colours of the diction seem not sufficiently discriminated. His *Cheerfulness* is without levity, and his *Pensiveness* without asperity. I know not whether

the characters are kept sufficiently apart. No mirth can, indeed, be found in his melancholy; but I am afraid that I always meet with some melancholy in his mirth. They are two noble efforts of imagination."

Milton borrowed several images in his beautiful poems from Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy," printed in 1624.

## MILTON IN ITALY.

IN 1638 Milton obtained permission from his father to travel. Viscount Scudamore, ambassador of Charles I., received at Paris the future apologist of the murder of that King, and introduced him to Grotius. At Florence, Milton visited Galileo, then nearly blind, and half a prisoner of the Inquisition. In the "Paradise Lost" he makes frequent mention of the celestial messenger, *nuncius sidereus*, thus rendering to him the hospitality of great men. At Rome, he made acquaintance with Holstein, the librarian of the Vatican. At Cardinal Barberini's he was struck by the singing of Leonora Baroni, and addressed to her a poem, inspired by the spot where the voice of Horace had of old been heard.

Altera Torquatum cepit Leonora poetam,  
 Cujus ab insano cessit amore furens.  
 Ah ! miser ille tuo quantò felicius ævo  
 Perditus, et propter te, Leonora, foret !



Another Leonora once inspired  
 Tasso with fatal love to frenzy fired ;  
 But how much happier, lived he now, were he  
 Pierced with whatever pangs for love of thee !

Milton condescended to curb his genius in some Italian sonnets. It is amusing to see the magnificent bard of Satan disporting among the sweet numbers of Petrarch.

Canto, dal mio buon popol non inteso ;  
 E'l bel Tamigi cangio con bel Arno.  
 Amor lo volse . . . . .  
 Seppi ch' amor cosa mai volse indarno.

While thus . . . . . I essay  
 Thy praise in verse to British ears unknown,  
 And Thames exchange for Arno's fair domain ;  
 So Love has will'd . . . . .  
 And what he wills, he never wills in vain.

Milton became acquainted at Naples with Manso, Marquis of Villa; a veteran who enjoyed the double honour of being the friend of Tasso and the host of Milton, to whom he addressed a parody on Pope Gregory's distich :

Ut mens, forma, decor, facies, mos, si pietas sic,  
 Non Anglus, verùm hierclè, angelus ipse fores.

“ If thy piety were equal to thy understanding, figure, eloquence, beauty, and manners—verily

thou wouldst not be an Englishman, but an angel!"

Milton paid his debt of gratitude in a Latin poem full of energy and tenderness.

Well may we think, O dear to all above,  
 Thy birth distinguish'd by the smile of Jove,  
 And that Apollo shed his kindest pow'r,  
 And Maia's son, in that propitious hour ;  
 Since only minds so born can comprehend  
 A poet's worth, and yield that worth a friend.

O might so true a friend to me belong,  
 So skill'd to grace the votaries of song,  
 Should I recall hereafter into rhyme  
 The kings and heroes of my native clime,  
 Arthur the chief, who even now prepares  
 In subterraneous being future wars,  
 With all his martial knights to be restored  
 Each to his seat around the fed'ral board ;  
 And O ! if spirit fail me not, disperse  
 Our Saxon plunderers in triumphant verse.

The future bard of the innocent joys of Eden did not obtain the favour which he here implored. He had no friend, no defender of his fame, but posterity. The poet entreats Manso not to disdain an hyperborean Muse, gracefully adding,

*Nos etiam nostro modulantes flumine cygnos  
 Credimus obscuras noctis sensisse umbras.*

We too, where Thames, with its unsullied waves,  
 The tresses of the blue-haired ocean laves,  
 Hear oft by night, or slumbering seem to hear,  
 O'er his wide stream the swan's voice warbling clear.

Milton had formed the design of visiting Sicily and Greece. What a precursor of Byron! The troubles in his native country recalled him; but he did not return to England till he had seen Venice, that beauty of Italy, who still retains so many charms, though expiring on the margin of the waves.

## MILTON'S RETURN TO ENGLAND.

HIS OCCUPATIONS AND HIS FIRST CONTROVERSIAL WORKS

---

THE traveller, having returned to London, did not take an active part in the first movements of the revolution. On this subject Johnson says, "Let not our veneration for Milton forbid us to look with some degree of merriment on great promises and small performances, on the man who hastens home, because his countrymen are contending for their liberty, and, when he reaches the scene of action, vapours away his patriotism in a private boarding-school. This is the period of his life from which all his biographers seem inclined to shrink. They are unwilling that Milton should be degraded to a schoolmaster; but, since it cannot be denied that he taught boys, one finds out that he taught for nothing, and another, that his motive was only zeal for the propagation of learning and virtue: and all tell what they do not

know to be true, only to excuse an act which no wise man will consider as in itself disgraceful."

The satirical and prejudiced spirit of Johnson displays itself in this passage. The Doctor, who had never seen a revolution, was ignorant that in these great convulsions there are fields of battle everywhere, and that each man chooses that to which he is called by his inclination or his genius : Milton's sword would not have done for liberty what he effected with his pen. The Doctor, a stanch royalist, forgets also that all the royalists did not take up arms or ascend the scaffold like the Duke of Hamilton, Lord Holland, and Lord Capel ; that Lord Arundel, for example, a friend of the muses, like Milton, and to whom science is indebted for the Arundelian marbles at Oxford, left London at the commencement of the civil war, though at the time earl-marshal of England, and died peaceably at Padua. It is true, that his unfortunate nephew, William Howard, Lord Strafford, paid a tribute for him to misfortune, and it is but too well known by whom his blood was spilled.

For three years Milton attended to the education of his sister's two sons and some other boys of their age. He lived at first in St. Bride's churchyard, Fleet-street, and afterwards in a large house, with a garden, in Aldersgate-street. While

teaching the ancient languages, he improved himself in them; and he learned Hebrew, Chaldæan, and Syriac. In 1640, at the meeting of the Long Parliament, he made his debut as a polemical writer, and pleaded the cause of religious liberty against the Established Church. His work, addressed to a friend, was divided into two books, and entitled, "Of Reformation touching Church Discipline, and the Causes which have hitherto prevented it." He afterwards published three treatises, "Of Prelatical Episcopacy," "The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelacy," and "Apology for Smectymnuus." This name is composed of the initials of the five ministers who adopted it in their reply to Bishop Hall's "Humble Remonstrance," in defence of episcopacy. For readers of the present day, there is nothing of interest in these works, unless it be what Milton says in the "Reason of Church Government," concerning his intention of writing a poem in English.

"The thing which I had to say, and those intentions which have lived within me ever since I could conceive myself any thing worth to my country, I return to crave excuse that urgent reason hath pluckt from me by an abortive and fore-dated discovery; and the accomplishment of them lies not but in a power above man's to pro-

mise. Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader that for some few years yet I may go on, trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted, as being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth or the vapours of wine ; nor to be obtained by the invocations of Dame Memory and her seven daughters ; but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and send out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases." In another place, speaking of his travels in Italy, and the encomiums with which his writings were received there, he says, " I began to assent both to them and divers of my friends here at home, and not less to an inward prompting, which now grew daily upon me, that, by labour and intent study (which I take to be my portion in this life), joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to after-times, as they should not willingly let it die. These thoughts at once possessed me, and these other . . . . . to fix all the industry and art I could unite to the adorning of my native tongue ; . . . . . that, what the greatest and choicest wits of Athens, Rome, or modern Italy, and those Hebrews of old, did for their country, I, in my proportion, with this over and above of being a

Christian, might do for mine; not caring to be once named abroad, though perhaps I could attain to that, but content with these British islands as my world."

Milton did not make so good a market of his renown as Shakspeare. The latter delights us by the carelessness of his life: on the other hand, we love to see a genius yet unknown, foretelling his own fame, when after-times, confirming the prediction, reply,—“No! we have not let die that *something* which thou hast written.”

Unfortunately, Milton, carried away by the impetuosity of his temper in this religious dispute, treats with disdain the learned and venerable Archbishop Usher, to whom science is indebted for an admirable work on the History of Chronology.



## MILTON'S MARRIAGE.

AT the age of nineteen, Milton wrote his seventh Latin elegy, in which he says :—

It was the spring, and newly risen day  
 Peep'd o'er the hamlets on the first of May ;  
 I \* \* \* \* \* stray'd,  
 Careless, in city and suburban shade ;  
 And passing and re-passing, nymphs, that moved  
 With grace divine, beheld where'er I roved.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 But one I mark'd,—then peace forsook my breast—  
 One—O how far superior to the rest !

\* \* \* \* \*  
 A fever me of fierce desire  
 Now seized my soul, and I was all on fire ;  
 But she, the while, whom only I adore,  
 Was gone and vanished to appear no more.  
 In silent sadness I pursue my way ;

\* \* \* \* \*  
 Till Learning taught me in his shady bower  
 To quit Love's servile yoke and spurn his power.  
 Then, on a sudden, the fierce flame suppress,  
 A frost continual settled on my breast.

This frost, however, was not continual, or we should be obliged to suppose that he loved none of his three wives; for he was thrice married. But who was the maiden who had so suddenly vanished? Perhaps that celestial companion, who visited the British Homer at night, and dictated his tenderest verses. In an excellent portraiture of Milton, M. Pichot relates that this mysterious sylph was Leonora, the Italian. The author of the "Pilgrimage to Cambridge" has founded a pathetic historical tale on this idea. The Rev. Mr. Bowles and Bulwer have worked up the same fiction.

The Earl of Essex having taken Reading in 1643, Milton's father and mother, who had retired to that town, returned to London and took up their residence with the poet. Milton was then thirty-five years old. One day, he stole away from home wholly unattended. His absence lasted a month, at the expiration of which he returned a married man to that abode which he quitted a bachelor. He had married the eldest daughter of Richard Powell, a justice of the peace, of Forest Hill, near Shotover, in Oxfordshire. Powell had borrowed of Milton's father five hundred pounds, which he never repaid; but he considered that he should settle the account by giving his daughter to the son of his creditor. This match, contracted

as clandestinely as an illicit amour, was not less inconstant. Milton did not forsake his wife, like Shakspeare; it was his wife who forsook him. The family of Mary Powell were royalists; whether it was because Mary would not live with a republican, or for some other reason, she returned to her parents. She promised to come back at Michaelmas, but she did not keep her word. Milton wrote letter after letter, but received no reply; at length he despatched a messenger, who threw away his eloquence and his time. The deserted husband then resolved to repudiate his runaway spouse. In order to extend to other husbands that independence which he asserted for himself, his genius suggested to him to convert a question of personal susceptibility into a question of liberty, and he published his treatise on "The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce."

MILTON'S TREATISE ON DIVORCE.

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THIS treatise, "The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce restored, to the good of both sexes," is divided into two books. It opens with an address to the Long Parliament.

"If it were seriously asked, (and it would be no untimely question), renowned parliament, select assembly, who, of all teachers and masters that have ever taught, hath drawn the most disciples after him both in religion and in manners? it might be not untruly answered, Custom. Though virtue be commended for the most perswasive in her theory, and conscience, in the plain demonstration of the spirit, finds most evincing; yet, whether it be the secret of divine will, or the original blindness we are born in, so it happens for the most part, that custom still is silently received for the best instructor."

The writer then lays down several principles, which he does not prove as completely.

“Man is the occasion of his own miseries in most of those evils which he imputes to God’s inflicting. It is not God who forbade divorce, but the priest. The canon law is ignorant and unjust in providing for the right of the body in marriage, but nothing for the wrongs and grievances of the mind. Marriage is not a remedy of lust, but the fulfilling of conjugal love and helpfulness. God regards love and peace in the family, more than a compulsive performance of marriage, which is more broke by a grievous continence than by a needful divorce. Nothing more hinders and disturbs the whole life of a Christian, than a matrimony found to be incurably unfit. Adultery is not the greatest breach of matrimony; there may be other violations as great. To prohibit divorce sought for natural causes is against nature. Of marriage God is the author and the witness; yet hence will not follow any divine astriction, more than what is subordinate to the glory of God, and the main good of either party; for as the glory of God, and their esteemed fitness one for the other, was the motive which led them both at first to think without other revelation that God had joined them together; so, when it shall be found by their apparent unfitness, that their continuing to be man and wife is against the glory of God and their mutual happiness, it may

assure them that God never joined them, who hath revealed his gracious will not to set the ordinance above the man for whom it was ordained ; not to canonize marriage either as a tyranness or a goddess over the enfranchised life and soul of man. For wherein can God delight, wherein be worshipped, wherein be glorified, by the forcible continuing of an improper and ill-yoking couple? . . . . . Where can be the peace and love which must invite God to such a house? May it not be feared that the not divorcing of such a helpless disagreement will be the divorcing of God finally from such a place? . . . . . Who shall answer for the perishing of all those souls, perishing by stubborn expositions of particular and inferior precepts against the general and supreme rule of charity?

“Moses permitted divorce for hardness of heart. Christ neither did or could abrogate the law of divorce, but only reprieve the abuse thereof. St. Paul has commented on the words of Christ.—Christ gives no full comments or continued discourses, but speaks often monosyllables, like a master scattering the heavenly grain of his doctrine like pearls here and there, which requires a skilful and laborious gatherer. God the Son hath put all things under his own feet, but his commandments he hath left all under the feet of Charity.”

Milton does not here resolve any particular question. He enters not into the difficulties touching children and the division of property. His enlarged mind was adverse to the English spirit, which confines itself to the circle of practical society. Milton generalises ideas, applies them to society in its totality, to entire human nature: he preaches up the independence of the man under every circumstance whatever. And yet this zealous champion of divorce has divinely sung the sacredness and the delights of conjugal love:—

Hail wedded love, mysterious law, true source  
Of human offspring!

Paradise Lost, Book IV.

In accordance with his principles respecting divorce, Milton solicited the hand of the young and accomplished daughter of a Dr. Davies, but she felt no partiality for the great genius who paid his addresses to her. The poet's wife now be-thought herself of him: the Powell family, whose loyalty had cooled in proportion as the royal cause became less prosperous, wished for an accommodation. Milton having called upon a relative named Blackborough, the door of the room suddenly flew open; Mary threw herself in tears at the feet of her husband, and confessed her fault. Milton pardoned the offender. Posterity has pro-

fited by a connubial quarrel, for to this adventure we are indebted for that admirable scene between Adam and Eve in the 10th book of *Paradise Lost* :—

Soon his heart relented  
Tow'rd her, his life so late and sole delight,  
Now at his feet submissive in distress!

The issue of a romantic marriage, begun in mystery, renewed in tears, was three daughters, and two of these Antigones re-opened the pages of antiquity to their blind father.

After the triumph of the Parliament, Milton offered an asylum to his wife's family. Todd has discovered among the public records, papers which shew that Milton took possession of the remnant of his father-in-law's property at his death—property which became his by mortgage for money lent by the poet's father. Powell's widow might have claimed her dowry, but she durst not; “for,” said she, “Mr. Milton is a harsh and choleric man, and my daughter, whom he has married, would be undone if I were to prosecute my claim.”

The Presbyterians having attacked the work on Divorce, the irascible author separated himself from their sect and became their enemy.



SPEECH ON THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS.

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MILTON soon produced his "Areopagitica," the best English prose-work that he ever wrote. This term for the liberty of the press not being generally understood, he entitled his work "Speech for the Liberty of unlicensed Printing," addressed to the Parliament of England.

After remarking that a censorship is useless against bad books, since it does not prevent their circulation, the author proceeds:—

"As good almost kill a man as kill a good book. Who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself . . . . . A good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life . . . . . Revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole nations fare the worse.

"Lords and Commons of England! consider

what nation it is whereof ye are, and whereof ye are the governors . . . . . Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation, rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks : methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam ; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance ; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means.

“What should ye do then ? should ye suppress all this flowery crop of knowledge and new light sprung up, and yet springing daily in this city ? should ye set an oligarchy of twenty engrossers over it to bring a famine upon our minds again, when we shall know nothing but what is measured to us by their bushel ? . . . . . I could recount what I have seen and heard in other countries, where this kind of inquisition tyrannizes : where I have sat among their learned men (for that honour I had) and been counted happy to be born in such a place of philosophic freedom as they supposed England was ; while themselves did nothing but bemoan the servile condition into which learning amongst them was brought. There it was that I found and visited the famous Galileo, grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition, for thinking in

astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican inquisitors thought . . . . . Liberty is the nurse of all great wits ; this is that which hath rarefied and enlightened our spirits like the influence of heaven."

In this energetic language we recognise the author of "Paradise Lost." Milton is as great a writer in prose as in verse : revolutions have approximated him to us ; his political ideas make him a man of our own epoch. He complains in his verses that he came a century too late ; he might have complained in his prose that he had come a century too early. The hour of his resurrection is now arrived. I shall be proud to have lent a hand to draw Milton from his grave as a prose-writer ; Glory long since said to him as a poet, " Rise !" and he did arise, and never will he lie down again.

The liberty of the press ought to deem it a high honour to have for its patron the author of "Paradise Lost : " he was the first by whom it was fairly and formally claimed. With what pathetic art the poet calls to mind that he had beheld Galileo, bent with age and infirmities, ready to expire in the fetters of the censorship, for having dared to assert the motion of the earth ! This was an example congenial with the greatness of Milton. What would become of us now-a-days, if we were to hold such language !

## DEATH OF MILTON'S FATHER.

HISTORICAL EVENTS—TREATISE ON THE TENURE OF  
KINGS AND MAGISTRATES.

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IN 1645 Milton published a collection of the English and Latin poems of his youth. The songs were set to music by Henry Laws, who belonged to the chapel of Charles I.: the voice of the apologist was soon to penetrate to the coffin of the sovereign in the chapel of Windsor.

Milton's father died; the parents of the poet's wife returned to their own home, and his house, says Philips, once more became the temple of the muses. At this time Milton was on the point of being employed as adjutant-general of the troops under Sir William Waller, a general of the Presbyterian party, who has left us his memoirs.

When, in the month of April, 1647, Fairfax and Cromwell had made themselves masters of London, Milton, in order to pursue his studies

more quietly, gave up his large establishment in Barbican, and retired to a small house in High Holborn, near which I long resided. It may not be amiss here to repeat an observation which I made at the beginning of this work:—"A view of literature," I said, "apart from the history of nations, would produce a prodigious fallacy: to hear the successive poets calmly singing their loves and their sheep, you would figure to yourself the uninterrupted existence of the golden age on the earth. . . . . In every nation, even at the moment of the direst catastrophes and of the greatest events, there will always be a priest who prays, a poet who sings," &c.

We see Milton marry, engage in the study of languages, instruct boys, publish compositions in prose and verse, as if England were enjoying the most profound peace; and yet civil war was kindled, a thousand parties were tearing one another in pieces, and people walked amidst blood and ruins.

In 1644 the battles of Marstonmoor and Newbury were fought; and the head of the aged Archbishop Laud fell beneath the axe of the executioner. The years 1645 and 1646 beheld the battle of Naseby, the taking of Bristol, the defeat of Montrose, and the retreat of Charles I. to the Scotch army, who delivered up their sove-

reign to the English for the sum of four hundred thousand pounds.

The years 1647, 1648, and 1649, were still more tragic. They comprise within their fatal period the rising of the army, the seizure of the King by Joyce, the oppression of the Parliament by the soldiery, the second civil war, the escape of the King, his second apprehension, the violent sifting of the Parliament, the trial and death of Charles I.

Let the reader refer to these dates, and place under them successively the works of Milton which I am about to treat of. Milton was probably present as a spectator at the decapitation of his sovereign; he returned home perhaps to write some verses, or to arrange for boys a paragraph of his Latin grammar: "Genders are three; masculine, feminine, and neuter." The fate of empires and of men is of no more account than this in the movement by which societies are carried along.

In France, too, there were, in 1793, poets who sang of Thyrsis, one of the characters of the Masque, and who were no Miltons; people went to plays, the dramatis personæ of which were honest country folk; shepherds trod the stage, while tragedy ran about the streets. We know that the Terrorists were remarkably mild in their manners: these gentle swains were particularly

fond of little children. Fouquier Tinville and his man Sampson, who smelt of blood, amused themselves at night in the theatre, and wept at the delineation of innocent country life.

No sooner was Charles I. executed, than the Presbyterians raised the outcry of murder, and of the inviolability of the royal person; though these Girondins of England had powerfully contributed to the catastrophe, they did not at least vote, like the French Girondins, for the death of the prince whose fate they deplored. To answer their clamour, Milton wrote his "Tenure of Kings and Magistrates." He had no difficulty to demonstrate that those who were loudest in their lamentations for the fate of Charles were the very people who had brought him to the scaffold. It is the case in all revolutions, that the different parties try to top at certain limits at which they have fixed *right* and *justice*; but those who follow push them down and pass those marks, as, in a charge of cavalry, the last squadron tramples down the first, if it happens to stop.

Milton strives to prove that, in all ages and under all forms of government, it was legal to try a bad king, and to depose him or sentence him to death. "What can be more just and legal, if a subject, for certain crimes, be to forfeit by law from himself and posterity all his inheritance to

the king, than that a king, for crimes proportional should forfeit all his title and inheritance to the people? unless the people must be thought created all for him, he not for them, and they all in one body inferior to him single; which were a kind of treason against the dignity of mankind to affirm.

“ To say that kings are accountable to none but God is the overturning of all law and government. For, if they may refuse to give account, then all covenants made with them at coronation, all oaths are in vain and mere mockeries; all laws which they swear to keep made to no purpose.”

In these doctrines Milton went no further than Mariana, and he supported them by texts of Scripture: the English revolution, in this point the very reverse of ours, was essentially religious.



MILTON, LATIN SECRETARY TO THE COUNCIL  
OF STATE OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

THE "EICONOCLASTES."

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THE political writings of Milton at length recommended him to the notice of the heads of the government; he was called to office, and appointed Latin secretary to the council of state of the Commonwealth: when the latter was transformed into a Protectorate, Milton naturally became secretary for the same language to the Protector. No sooner had he entered upon his new functions, than he was ordered to answer the "Eikon Basilike," published in London after Charles's death, as the will of Louis XVI. was circulated in Paris after the death of the martyr king. A French translation of the "Eikon" appeared with this title: *Pourtraict de sa sacrée Majesté durant sa Solitude et ses Souffrances.*

Milton wittily entitled his answer to this *Pourtraict*, "Eiconoclastes," the Image-breaker. Whilst

sacrificing the monarch afresh, he declared that he "did not insult over fallen majesty," but the fact was that circumstances forced him to speak out, and he "preferred Queen Truth to King Charles."

The work is written with method and perspicuity; and the author seems not to have given the rein so freely to his imagination as in his other political treatises.

"To descant on the misfortunes of a person fallen from so high a dignity, who hath also paid his final debt both to nature and his faults, is neither of itself a thing commendable, nor the intention of this discourse. Neither was it fond ambition, nor the vanity to get a name, present or with posterity, by writing against a king. . . . . Kings, most commonly, though strong in legions, are but weak at arguments; as they who ever have accustomed from their cradle to use their will only as their right hand, their reason always as their left. . . . . Nevertheless, for their sakes who, through custom, simplicity, or want of better teaching, have not more seriously considered kings than in the gaudy name of majesty, and admire them and their doings as if they breathed not the same breath with other mortal men, I shall make no scruple to take up (for it seems to be the challenge both of him and all his party) to

take up this gauntlet, though the king's, in the behalf of liberty and the Commonwealth."

Milton, the more cruel to Charles I. in the "Eiconoclastes" for being the more cool, opposes to the "Eikon" this argument on the subject of Strafford's death.

The King, he says, "repents here of giving his consent, though most unwillingly, to the most seasonable and solemn piece of justice that had been done of many years in the land; but his sole conscience thought the contrary. . . . . The King was not satisfied in conscience to condemn him (Strafford) of high treason, and declared to both houses, 'that no fears or respects whatsoever should make him alter that resolution founded upon his conscience.' Either then his resolution was indeed not founded upon his conscience, or his conscience received better information, or else both his conscience and this his strong resolution struck sail, notwithstanding these glorious words, to his stronger fear; for, within a few days after, when the judges at a privy council, and four of his elected bishops, had picked the thorn out of his conscience, he was at length persuaded to sign the bill for Strafford's execution."

Milton calls the "Eikon" a "penitential book." "The simile," he says, "wherewith he begins, [the chapter upon his Retirement from Westmin-

ster,] I was about to have found fault with, as in a garb somewhat more poetical than for a statist; but meeting with many strains of like dress in other of his essays, and hearing him reported a more diligent reader of poets than of politicians, I began to think that the whole book might perhaps be intended a piece of poetry. The words are good; the fiction smooth and cleanly; there wanted only rhyme. . . . . He ascribes 'rudeness and barbarity, worse than the Indian,' to the English parliament; and 'all virtue' to his wife in strains that come almost to sonnetting."

Milton is satirical upon the reflections of the King at Holmby, and his testamentary letter to the Prince of Wales. On this subject he refers to the condemnation of several crowned heads, and pitilessly comes down to the execution of Mary Stuart, Charles's grandmother—a sneer without courage, for Charles slept at Windsor, and heard not what his enemy said to him.

“ ‘He had rather wear a crown of thorns with our Saviour.’ They who govern ill . . . . thorns they may find enow of their own gathering and their own twisting . . . . but to wear them as our Saviour wore them is not given to them that suffer by their own demerits.”

In spite of his republican intrepidity, the Image-breaker appears embarrassed when he arrives at

the last chapter of the "Eikon." This last chapter is entitled "Meditations on Death." What does Milton? He runs away from these meditations. "All other human things," says he, "are disputed, and will be variously thought of to the world's end; but this business of death is a plain case, and admits no controversy; in that centre all opinions meet."

Thus it is that Milton takes part in the glory of the regicide; the executioner made the blood of Charles I. spirt over him, as the officiating priest in the ancient sacrifices sprinkled the spectators with the blood of the victim.

Milton suspected that the "Eikon" was not by the King, and this conjecture was afterwards verified; the work is Dr. Gauden's. The "Eikon" contains a prayer copied *verbatim* from that of Pamela, in Sir Philip Sidney's "Arcadia." It was a fine subject of mockery for the republicans, and of confusion for the royalists, who had believed in the authenticity of the portraiture of their master. Subsequently, Henry Hills, Cromwell's printer, alleged that Milton and Bradshaw had prevailed upon Dugar, editor of the "Eikon" to insert Pamela's prayer, in order to counteract the effect of the book. There is nothing in Milton's character to authorise the belief that he would lend himself to such baseness. How should

he have known that the royal portrait was in the press? Why was it not stopped by the Parliamentarians, who knew of the existence of the manuscript? Acts of arbitrary violence were common enough among those free men, not knaveries: in the secret correspondence between the king and queen, which they intercepted and printed, they made no alteration. Interpolations, falsifications, suppressions, are base means, which the English revolution left for our's.

At any rate, Johnson believed that the text of the "Eikon Basilike" had been interpolated. "As faction," he says, "seldom leaves a man honest, however it might find him, Milton is suspected of having interpolated the book called 'Eikon Basilike,' which the council of state employed him to censure by inserting a prayer taken from Sidney's *Arcadia*, and imputing it to the King. . . . The papers which the King gave to Dr. Juxon on the scaffold the regicides took away, so that they were at least the publishers of this prayer; and Dr. Birch, who examined the question with great care, was inclined to think them the forgers."

For my part, after a close examination of the "Eikon Basilike," I have conceived a different kind of doubt respecting that work. I cannot persuade myself that it proceeded entirely from the pen of Dr. Gauden. That divine probably worked

up notes left by Charles I. The inmost feelings of the soul do not deceive : you cannot put yourself so completely in the place of a man as to reproduce the movements of the mind of that man in such or such a circumstance of his life. It seems to me, for example, that Charles I. alone could have written this series of thoughts :—

“ I see it a bad exchange to wound a man’s own conscience, thereby to salve state sores ; to calm the storms of popular discontents by stirring up a tempest in a man’s own bosom. [Charles here reproaches himself with Strafford’s death.]

“ Blesse me still with reason as a man, with religion as a Christian, and with constancy in justice as a king.

“ Thou needest no help, nor shall I, if I may have these ; if not to conquer, at least to suffer.

“ The events of all wars by the sword being very dubious, and of a civil war uncomfortable ; the end hardly recompensing, and late repairing, the mischief of the means,—since, therefore, both in conquering, and being conquered, I am still a sufferer, I beseech thee to give me a double portion of thy spirit.

“ Indeed they have left me but little of life, and only the husk and shell as it were.

“ If you never see my face again [this was

addressed to his son Charles], and God will have me buried in such a barbarous imprisonment and obscurity ; farewell.

“ A principal point of your honour will consist in your deferring all respect, love, and protection to your mother, my wife ; who hath many ways deserved well of me, and chiefly in this, that, having been a means to blesse me with so many hopefull children, (all which, with their mother, I recommend to your love and care), she hath been content, with incomparable magnanimity and patience, to suffer both for and with me and you.

“ When they have destroyed me, as I doubt not but my blood will cry aloud for vengeance to Heaven, so I beseech God not to poure out his wrath upon the generality of the people.

“ I had rather you should be Charles le Bon, then le Grand, good then great ; I hope God hath designed you to be both.

“ Your prerogative is best shewed in remitting rather than exacting the rigour of the laws ; there being nothing worse than legall tyrannie.

“ Let my memory ever with my name live in you.

“ Farewell till we meet, if not on earth, yet in heaven.

“ Happy times I hope attend you.”



DEFENCE OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE AGAINST  
SALMASIUS.

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SOON afterwards appeared that work of Milton's which gained him most renown in his life-time — his Defence of the English People against a tract by Salmasius in favour of the memory of Charles I. "Those attacks upon a king who is no more," justly and eloquently observes M. Villemain, "those insults beyond the scaffold, had something abject and ferocious, which the enthusiastic mind of Milton was so dazzled, by false zeal as not to perceive."

"*Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*" is written in elegant and classic Latin prose; but Milton appears here merely as a translator of his own thoughts conceived in English, and he thus loses his national originality. All these master-pieces of modern Latinity would excite a smile in the scholars of Rome, if they were to rise from their graves.

Milton first tells Salmasius, that he Salmasius, knows nothing of Latin: he asks how he could write *persona regia*? Milton affected to carry back in pure Latin the term *persona* to the classic signification, a mask, though Salmasius had in his favour the authority of Varro and Juvenal; but, suddenly rising, he adds:—"Thy expression, Salmasius, is more just than thou imaginist; a tyrant is in reality the mask of a king."

This quarrel about Latin is a common quarrel among scholars; every proficient in Greek and Latin asserts that his neighbour knows not a word of those languages.

"Thou beginnest thy work, Salmasius, with these words:—Horrid news has lately struck our ear! a parricide has been consummated in England! But the horrid news must have a sword much longer than St. Peter's, and thy ears must be of astonishing length, for this news cannot strike any but those of an ass . . . . . O mercenary advocate! couldst thou not address the defence of Charles the father, according to thee the best of defunct kings, to Charles the son, the most needy of all living kings, without charging thy work to this scurvy king? Though thou art a scoundrel thou wouldst not make thyself ridiculous, and call thy work *Defence of the King*; for having *sold* thy work, it is no longer *thine*: it belongs to thy

king, who has paid too dearly for it at the rate of one hundred jacobuses, a large sum for that pauper monarch !”

Did not Milton receive from his masters one thousand pounds sterling for his answer to Salmasius?—that is more than one hundred jacobuses. Happily the whole of the defence is not in this tone.

“ I am about to treat of important and not common matters : I shall tell how a very potent king, after trampling on the laws of the nation, and giving a shock to religion, ruled according to his will and pleasure, and was at length vanquished on the field of battle by his subjects, who had undergone a long servitude under this king. I shall tell how he was put in prison ; how, as he could not give in his words or actions any hope of obtaining from him a better line of conduct, he was finally condemned to death by the supreme council of the kingdom, and beheaded before the very gate of his palace. I shall tell by virtue of what right, and by what laws peculiar to this country, this sentence was pronounced ; and I shall easily defend my worthy and valiant countrymen against domestic and foreign calumnies . . . . .

“ Nature and the laws would be in danger, if slavery spoke and liberty were mute ; if tyrants could find men ready to plead their cause, while those who had conquered could not meet with an

advocate. A deplorable thing indeed, if reason, the gift of God, with which man is endowed, did not furnish more arguments for the conservation and deliverance of men, than for their oppression and ruin !”

The author then proceeds to direct answers. Salmasius asserts that there had been kings, tyrants, assassinated in their palaces, or slain in popular commotions ; but that there was no instance of one having been brought to the scaffold. Milton asks whether it is better to put a prince to death by violence and without trial, than to carry him before a tribunal, where he is not condemned until, like any other citizen, he has been heard in his defence.

Salmasius contends that the law of nature is imprinted in the hearts of men : Milton replies that the right of succession is not a right of nature, that no man is king by the law of nature. He mentions on this occasion all the kings that have been tried, and especially in England. “ In an ancient manuscript,” says he, “ called *Modus tenendi parlamenta*, we read :—‘ If the king dissolves the parliament before the business for which the council has been summoned is dispatched, he renders himself guilty of perjury, and shall be held to have violated his coronation oath’ . . . Whose fault was it if Charles was condemned ? Did he

not take up arms against his subjects? Did he not cause one hundred and fifty-four thousand Protestants in the single province of Ulster, in Ireland, to be slaughtered?"

Hobbes asserts that in the "Defence of the English People" the style is as excellent as the arguments are wretched. Voltaire observed that Salmasius attacks like a pedant, and that Milton replies like a wild beast. "No man," says Johnson, "forgets his original trade; the rights of nations and of kings sink into questions of grammar, if grammarians discuss them."

The "Defence" was translated from the Latin into all the languages of Europe: the name of the English translator is Washington.

The ambassadors of the foreign powers in London were lavish in their compliments to Milton on his *admirable* work,—so delighted are kings with king-killing! Philaras, a native of Athens, and ambassador from the duke of Parma to the king of France, wrote commendations without end to the apologist of the condemnation of Charles I. We have seen ambassadors crawling in Paris at the feet of Bonaparte's secretaries. To say nothing of individuals, diplomatic bodies, which are no longer congenial with the system of new society, frequently serve only to annoy the cabinets

to which they are accredited, and to feed their employers with illusions.

Milton shook with a mighty hand all the ideas agitated in our own age. These ideas slept for one hundred and fifty years, and did not awake until 1789. Might it not be supposed that the political works of the poet were written in our times, on subjects which we see discussed every morning in the public papers!

Salmasius boasted that he had caused Milton to lose his sight, and Milton that he had killed Salmasius. A reply to the latter did not appear till after his death. He there calls Milton *prostitute, fanatical thief, abortion, bleur-eyed, purblind, lost man, cheat, debauchee, audacious villain, infernal spirit, infamous impostor*; and declares that he should like to see him tortured, and expire in melted pitch, or in boiling oil. Salmasius does not overlook some Latin verses, in which Milton has blundered in the quantity. In all probability, the wrath of the scholar proceeded less from his horror of regicide than from the lame jokes of Milton upon the Latin of the *Defensio Regia*.

## SECOND DEFENCE.

MILTON replied perhaps with still more violence to the pamphlet of Peter Du Moulin's, canon of Canterbury, published by the Rev. Alexander More, "Cry of the Royal Blood to Heaven against the English Regicides." The royalists thought to rouse foreign princes, by calling Cromwell regicide and usurper; they were mistaken: sovereigns are extremely accommodating in regard to usurpations; they feel horror for liberty alone.

*Defensio secunda* is more interesting for us than the *first*. In this second treatise, Milton passes from the defence of principles to the defence of men. He relates the history of his life, and repels the charges alleged against him. He draws this magnificent picture of the place of his pleading:—

"I seem to overlook, as from the top of a hill, a great extent of sea and land. Spectators crowd around: their unknown faces betray thoughts

similar to my own. Here, Germans, whose masculine spirit disdains servitude; there, French, with a living and generous impetuosity in behalf of liberty; on one side, the composure and valour of the Spaniard; on the other, the reserve and the circumspect magnanimity of the Italian. All the lovers of independence and virtue, the valiant and the sage, in whatever place they may be, are for me. Some favour me in secret, some approve me openly; others welcome me with applause and congratulations; others, again, who had long withstood all conviction, at length yield themselves captive to the force of truth. Surrounded by this multitude, I now imagine that, from the pillars of Hercules to the extremities of the earth, I behold all nations recovering the liberty from which they had been so long exiled; I fancy that I see my countrymen conveying to other lands a plant of superior quality and of nobler growth than that which Triptolemus carried with him from region to region: they are sowing the benefits of civilisation and freedom among cities, kingdoms, and nations. Perhaps I shall not unknown approach this concourse; perhaps I shall be loved by it, when it is told that I am the man who engages in single combat with the proud champion of despotism."

Is not this what is now termed *revolutionary*



*propagandism* eloquently proclaimed? Milton alone had these ideas; we find no traces of them in the revolutionists of his time. His fiction has been realised: England has spread her principles and the forms of her government over the whole world.

In the discussion of his subject, the author of *Defensio secunda* sketches several historical portraits.

#### BRADSHAW.

“John Bradshaw, whose name Liberty herself recommends to everlasting remembrance, is descended, as every one knows, from a noble family. Appointed by Parliament to preside at the King’s trial, he hesitated not to undertake that office, though full of danger. He united to the knowledge of law, a generous mind, an elevated soul, and irreproachable integrity of morals. He performed his duty with such gravity, firmness, and presence of mind, as to authorise the belief that God, as of old in his admirable providence, had destined him, from the beginning of time, to conduct that trial.”

Behold what party-spirit can make of a man! Bradshaw was a lawyer, wordy enough, but of moderate abilities.

## FAIRFAX.

“ It would be unjust to pass over in silence Fairfax, who joins the greatest courage to the greatest modesty and the utmost holiness of life, and who is an object of the favour of God and nature. These praises are thy just due, though thou art at present withdrawn from the world, as was Scipio of old at Linternum. Thou hast vanquished not only the enemy, but ambition, but glory, which have overcome so many illustrious mortals. The purity of thy virtues, the splendour of thy actions, consecrate the sweet repose which thou enjoyest, and which constitutes the desired recompense of the labours of men. Such was the repose which the heroes of antiquity possessed after a life of glory : the poets, at a loss for ideas and expressions capable of describing the peace of those warriors, said that they were received into heaven and admitted to the banquets of the gods. But, be the causes of thy retirement what they may, whether health, which I take to be the principal one, or any other motive, I am convinced that nothing could have induced thee to abandon the service of thy country, hadst thou not known that in thy successor freedom would find a protector, and England a refuge and a pillar of glory.”

The efforts of Milton are obvious : he calls up the poetry of history to mask the real cause of the retirement of Fairfax—the trial of Charles I. Every body knows the farce which Cromwell caused to be acted about this honest but weak man.

## CROMWELL.

Milton first speaks of the gentle birth of the Protector : birth plays an important part in the republican ideas of the poet, himself a gentleman.

“ It would be impossible for me to enumerate all the towns that he has taken, all the battles that he has won. The whole surface of the British empire has been the scene of his exploits, the theatre of his triumphs. . . . . To thee our country owes its liberties ; thou couldst not bear a title more useful and more august than that of author, guardian, preserver, of our freedom. Not only hast thou eclipsed the actions of all our kings, but those also which are recorded of our fabulous heroes. Reflect often on the dear pledge which the land of thy birth hath committed to thy care : liberty, which she formerly hoped to obtain from the flower of talents and virtues, she now expects from thee ; she flatters herself that she shall obtain it from thee alone. Honour the high

expectation, the only hope, which thy country now rests on thee. Respect the sight and the sufferings of so many brave men, who, under thy banner, have so bravely fought for freedom; respect the shades of those who perished in that struggle; respect the opinions and the hopes formed of us by foreign nations, which promise themselves such great things from our liberty so gloriously acquired, the loss of which, should it untimely perish like an abortion, would plunge this country into the lowest depths of disgrace; finally, respect thyself; and, having encountered every hardship and every danger for the acquisition of this liberty, let it not be violated by thyself, or impaired in the smallest degree by others. Thou canst not thyself be free, unless we are free too; for it is the ordinance of Nature that the man who invades the liberty of others must first lose his own."

Milton could have written history as well as Livy and Thucydides. Johnson refers only to the praise bestowed on the Protector by the poet, in order to convict the republican of inconsistency: the admirable passage just quoted shows what formed the counterpoise to those praises. In the days of Bonaparte's omnipotence, who durst have told him that he had obtained supreme power solely to protect liberty? Yet Milton had done

better, if he had imitated some stanch democrats, who kept aloof from Cromwell and always considered him as a tyrant; but Milton was no democrat.

On these works, now almost completely forgotten, was founded the reputation of this great writer during his lifetime—a sad reputation, which embittered his days, and which was uncheered by the imperishable renown awarded to his memory since his death. Every thing that springs from party violence and the passions of the moment dies like them and with them.

The reactions of the Restoration in England were much more vehement than the reactions of the Restoration in France, because convictions were deeper, and characters more decided. The return of the Bourbons has not stifled the reputations of the republic or the empire, as the return of the Stuarts stifled the renown of Milton. It is, however, but right to remark that, as the poet wrote most of his disquisitions in Latin, they remained inaccessible to the multitude.

## LIBERATION OF GREECE.

As he had demanded the liberty of the press, so the English Homer performed a filial duty in advocating the emancipation of Greece. Camoens had previously exclaimed: "And we leave Greece in slavery!" Milton wrote to Philaras that "he should delight to see the army and fleet of England engaged in delivering Greece, the native land of eloquence, from Ottoman tyranny:"—*ad liberandam ab Ottomanico tyranno Græciam eloquentiæ patriam.*

Had this wish been fulfilled, the finest monument of antiquity would still exist. It was not till 1682 that the Venetians caused the explosion which blew up part of the temple of Minerva; Cromwell would have preserved the Parthenon, the ruins only of which were rifled by Lord Elgin. Here again Milton had one of those ideas which belong to the present generation, and which has produced its fruit in our own days.

The translator of Milton will take leave to pay him the homage of a few lines which paved the way to the deliverance of Greece.

“The question is, whether Sparta and Athens shall be resuscitated, or whether they shall continue for ever buried in their dust. Woe to the age which can be a passive spectator of an heroic struggle; which conceives that it can, without danger, as without penetration into the future, suffer a nation to be immolated! This error, or rather this crime, would be visited sooner or later by the severest punishment.

“Narrow and detestable minds, which conceive precisely because an injustice is consummated that it has no baneful consequence, are the pest of states. What was the first reproach addressed from abroad in 1789, to the monarchical government of France? It was that it had winked at the partition of Poland. This partition, by breaking down the barrier that separated the North and the East from the South and the West of Europe, opened the way for the armies which alternately occupied Vienna and Berlin, Moscow and Paris.

“An immoral Policy applauds herself for a transient success: she fancies herself clever, skilful, subtle; she listens with ironical disdain to the voice of conscience and the counsels of integrity.

But, whilst she proceeds and deems herself triumphant, she feels herself suddenly detained by the veils in which she has wrapped herself: she turns her head, and finds herself face to face with an avenging revolution, which has silently followed her. You will not grasp the suppliant hand of Greece? Well then, her dying hand will mark you with a bloody stain, that future times may recognise and punish you\*."

In the Chamber of Peers I carried an amendment to prevent the victims transported from the Morea from being any longer sold in Egypt under the French flag.

"Considered with reference to the affairs of the world," I said, "my amendment is free from every, even the slightest, inconvenience. The generic term which I employ applies to no particular nation. I have thrown over the Greek the mantle of the slave, that he may not be recognised, and that the signs of his wretchedness may render at least his person inviolable to the charity of the Christian.

"I read yesterday a letter from a boy of fifteen, dated from the ramparts of Missolonghi. 'My dear comrade,' he wrote, in his simple manner, to

\* Preface to the Author's "Travels in Greece, Palestine," &c. in the edition of his "Complete Works," 1826.



one of his young associates in Zante, ‘ I have been wounded three times, but my companions and myself are sufficiently recovered to be able to resume our musquets. If we had provisions, we should defy an enemy thrice as numerous. Ibrahim is beneath our walls: he has sent us proposals and threats: we scorn both. Ibrahim has French officers with him. What have we done to the French to be thus treated?’

“ Gentlemen, shall this youth be taken, and carried by Christians to the slave-market of Alexandria? If he shall still have occasion to ask what he has done to the French, let our amendment step in to satisfy the inquiry of his despair, the cry of his wretchedness, that we may have it in our power to reply, ‘ No, it is not the flag of St. Louis that protects your slavery; much rather would it cover your noble wounds.’

“ Peers of France, Ministers of the most Christian King, if we cannot assist unhappy Greece by our arms, let us at least separate ourselves by our laws from the crimes which are committed there: let us set a noble example, which will perhaps pave the way in Europe to a policy more elevated, more humane, more conformable to religion, and more worthy of an enlightened age; and it is to you, gentlemen, to France, that the

honour of having originated this noble measure will be due\*.”

The battle of Navarino completed the fulfilment of Milton's wish.

\* Speech in the Chamber of Peers, March 13, 1826, in reply to the Keeper of the Seals.

MILTON'S BLINDNESS.—HIS DESPATCHES.

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HUME was, I believe, the first who noticed Whitelocke's expression relative to Milton in his office of secretary to the council of state. "One Milton, a blind man, employed to translate into Latin a treaty between Sweden and England." "These forms of expression," adds the historian, "are amusing to posterity, who consider how obscure Whitelocke himself, though lord-keeper and ambassador, and indeed a man of great abilities and merits, has become in comparison of Milton."

An ambassador having complained to Cromwell of the delay of a diplomatic answer, the Protector replied: "The secretary has not yet prepared it, because, being blind, he proceeds slowly." "What!" rejoined the ambassador, "have ye not been able to find in all England any but a blind man capable of writing Latin properly?" Cromwell, from an instinct of glory, discovered the latent glory of Milton, and bound the renown of the hero to that

of the poet. Cromwell having Milton for secretary is a remarkable trait in the history of the world.

Milton wrote the eight well-known lines, which Cromwell sent with his portrait to Christina of Sweden, concluding with the verse:—

*Nec sunt hi vultus regibus usque truces.\**

The notes of the cabinet of St. James's had been hitherto written in French; Milton drew them up in Latin, and wished to make that the universal language of diplomacy: in this design he failed. The French has generally recovered the ascendancy, on account of its clearness; but the national pride of the cabinet of London now causes its official correspondence to be carried on in English, which renders it perplexed, as I know from experience.

Cromwell died. Death is fond of glory. The shackles which the Protector had imposed upon opinion were broken. If it be possible to kill

\* Cowper gives the following version of those lines:—

“ Christina, maiden of heroic mien,  
 Star of the North, of northern stars the queen,  
 Behold what wrinkles I have earned, and how  
 The iron casque still chafes my veteran brow,  
 While following Fate's dark footsteps, I fulfil  
 The dictates of a hardy people's will.  
 But, softened in thy sight, my looks appear  
 Not to all queens or kings alike severe.”

TRANSLATOR.

liberty for a few days she revives. Christ burst the chains of death, in spite of the Roman guard which kept watch at his sepulchre. The nominal accession of Richard to his father's power was communicated to the foreign sovereigns. In the collection of Milton's letters are found those which he addressed to the court of France. Such despatches are a monument, from the nature of the facts, and from the nature of the persons. The author of "Paradise Lost" thus writes, in the name of Cromwell's son, to Louis XIV. and Cardinal Mazarine.

“ RICHARD, Protector of the Commonwealth of England, &c. to the Most Serene and Potent Prince, LEWIS, King of France.

“ Most Serene and Potent King, our Friend and Confederate,—So soon as our most serene father, Oliver, Protector of the Commonwealth of England, by the will of God so ordaining, departed this life upon the third of September, we, being lawfully declared his successor in the supreme magistracy, though in the extremity of tears and sadness, could do no less than, with the first opportunity, by these our letters, make known a matter of this concernment to your Majesty, by whom, as you have been a most cordial friend to our father and this Republic, we are confident the mournful and

unexpected tidings will be as sorrowfully received. Our business now is to request your Majesty, that you would have such an opinion of us, as of one who has determined nothing more religiously and constantly than to observe the friendship and confederacy contracted between your Majesty and our renowned father, and with the same zeal and goodwill to confirm and establish the leagues by him concluded, and to carry on the same counsels and interests with your Majesty. To which intent it is our pleasure that our ambassador residing at your court be empowered by the same commission as formerly; and that you will give the same credit to what he transacts in our name as if it had been done by ourselves. In the mean time we wish your Majesty all prosperity.

“ From our Court at Whitehall,  
“ Sept. 5, 1658.”

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“ To the Most Eminent Lord, Cardinal Mazarine.

“ Tho' nothing could fall out more bitter and grievous to us than to write the mournful news of our most serene and most renowned father's death; nevertheless, in regard we cannot be ignorant of the high esteem which he had for your eminency, and the great value which you had for

him ; nor have any reason to doubt but that your eminency, upon whose care the prosperity of France depends, will no less bewail the loss of your constant friend and most united confederate ; we thought it of great moment, by these our letters, to make known this accident so deeply to be lamented, as well to your eminency as to the king ; and to assure your eminency, which is but reason, that we shall most religiously observe all those things which our father, of most serene memory, was bound by the league to see confirmed and ratified : and shall make it our business that, in the midst of your mourning for a friend so faithful and flourishing in all virtuous applause, there may be nothing wanting to preserve the faith of our confederacy. For the conservation of which, on your part also, to the good of both nations, may God Almighty long preserve your eminency.

“ Westminster, Sept. 1658.”

Milton is here a great historian of the history of France and England ! It is curious to see Richard make, like one who had long been heir to the three crowns, his preparations for reigning. Milton wrote, in the name of a man invested with power for a few hours, to a young sovereign, who was destined to lead his great-grandson, by uncontrolled monarchy, to the scaffold of the first Charles.

This scaffold at Whitehall was converted into a throne, when royal blood had dyed it crimson, and the Protector seated himself upon it. France, under the grandson of Henry IV., was about to rise as much as England was doomed to sink under Charles II. and his brother. Glory must always be somewhere: when she flew from the head of Cromwell, she settled on that of Louis XIV.

Louis XIV. wore mourning for a regicide, and it was the bard who sang the deeds of Satan, the republican apologist of the death of Charles I. the enemy of kings and of Catholics, who acquainted the absolute monarch, the author of the revocation of the edict of Nantes, with the death of Oliver, the Protector.

What here appears to be contrast is harmony; high reputations mingle, like children of the same family. Between all truly great characters there is an affinity: two persons of similar sentiments, but of unequal minds, have a stronger antipathy to one another, than two men of superior minds, though adverse in opinions and conduct.



## RICHARD CROMWELL.

MILTON'S OPINIONS CONCERNING THE COMMONWEALTH,  
TITHES, AND PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

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WHILE Milton was, in Richard's name, reminding the sovereigns and their ministers of the tender love and the profound admiration which they felt for the judge of a king, factions began to revive in England. Governments which depend on the existence of a single man fall with that man; the effect ceases with the cause. The old republican party in the army roused itself: the officers whom Cromwell had displaced united together. Lambert put himself at the head of the *good old cause*. Threatened by the officers, Richard had the weakness to dissolve the House of Commons; the House of Lords was a cipher.

Aristocratic assemblies reign gloriously, when they are invested, *de jure* or *de facto*, with the supreme power: they offer the strongest guarantees to liberty, order, and property; but, in mixed

governments, they lose a great part of their value, and are contemptible whenever a great political crisis arrives. Never have they averted such a crisis. Weak against the king, they prevent not despotism ; weak against the people, they obviate not anarchy. Ever liable to be broken up in popular commotions, they purchase their existence only at the price of their perjuries and their slavery. Did the House of Lords save Charles I. ? Did it save Richard Cromwell, to whom it took the oath of allegiance ? Did it save James II. ? Will it save in our days the Princes of Hanover ? Will it save itself ? These aristocratic counterpoises, as they are called, only serve to embarrass the balance, and will sooner or later be thrown out of the scale. An ancient and wealthy aristocracy, accustomed to public speaking and public business, has but one way of retaining power when it is slipping out of its grasp ; that is, to pass over gradually to democracy, and to place itself insensibly at its head, unless it deems that it is strong enough to play at the game of civil war—a terrible game !

Soon after the dissolution of the House of Commons, Richard abdicated : he was crushed by the renown of Oliver. Detesting the military yoke, he had not strength to shake it off ; without any conviction, he cared for nothing ; he suffered

his guards to rob him of his dinner, and England to go all alone; he took away two large trunks full of those addresses and congratulations customary with all servile men in honour of all men in power. In these addresses he was told that God had given him the supreme authority for the *happiness* of the three kingdoms. "What have you in those trunks?" said some one to him. "The *happiness* of the English nation," he replied, with a laugh.

The council of officers was called the Rump. The Rump immediately attacked the military authority which had restored it to life. Lambert, as usual, beset the Commons. The Parliament being dissolved, the people, in token of rejoicing, made bonfires in the public streets of heaps of the rumps of various animals. Monck appeared, and every thing indicated the Restoration.

What did Milton during this social decomposition? Seeing liberty compelled to fall back, still dreaming of the Commonwealth, forgetting that there are moments when the pen is of no avail, he published a pamphlet on "The Ready and Easy Way to establish a free Commonwealth." In rapid survey, he reviews what the English had done to abolish monarchy:—

"For this extolled and magnified nation," he says, "regardless both of honour won and deliver-

ances vouchsafed from Heaven, to fall back, or rather to creep back, so poorly, as it seems the multitude would, to their once abjured and detested thralldom of kingship . . . . . to throw away and forsake, or rather to betray a just and noble cause . . . . . and by thus relapsing to verify all the bitter predictions of our triumphing enemies, who will now think they wisely discerned and justly censured both us and all our actions as rash, rebellious, hypocritical, and impious; not only argues a strange degenerate contagion suddenly spread among us, fitted and prepared for new slavery, but will render us a scorn and derision to all our neighbours . . . . . Besides this, if we return to kingship, and soon repent (as undoubtedly we shall, when we begin to find the old encroachments coming on by little and little upon our consciences), we may be forced perhaps to fight over again all that we have fought, and spend over again all that we have spent, but are never like to attain thus far as we are now advanced to the recovery of our freedom, never to have it in our possession as we now have it, never to be vouchsafed hereafter the like mercies and signal assistances from heaven in our cause, if by our ungrateful backsliding we make these fruitless; flying now to regal concessions from his divine condescensions and gracious answers to our once

importuning prayers against the tyranny which we then groaned under; making vain and viler than dirt the blood of so many thousand faithful and valiant Englishmen, who left us in this liberty, bought with their lives; losing by a strange after-game of folly all the battles we had won. . . . . A king must be adored like a demi-god, with a dissolute and haughty court about him, of vast expense and luxury, masks and revels, to the debauching of our prime gentry, both male and female . . . . . to the multiplying of a servile crew, not of servants only, but of nobility and gentry, bred up then to the hopes, not of public, but of court offices, to be stewards, chamberlains, ushers, grooms . . . . . and the lower their minds debased with court opinions, contrary to all virtue and reformation, the haughtier will be their pride and profusion."

The penetrating mind of Milton gave him a glimpse of futurity: he foresaw the long contest which the people would have to maintain in order to re-conquer what they were about to lose: nay, it was not till these last days that England has recovered the ground which this great poet-politician defended inch by inch, And that king, "with a dissolute and haughty court about him," whom the author of "Paradise Lost" so accurately delineated beforehand, was ready to land at Dover.

Some months before the appearance of this work he had published two treatises,—the first “On Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Cases,” and the second on the “Means of removing Hirelings out of the Church,” in which he investigates the subject of the tithes, dues, and revenues of the Church; and expresses his doubts whether the ministers of the establishment can be maintained by the power of the law.

His opinion on parliamentary reform deserves to be quoted.

“If we give a right to all to elect any body, it will not be wisdom and authority, but turbulence and gluttony, that will soon raise the vilest miscreants of our taverns and sinks of debauchery, of our towns and villages, to the rank and dignity of senator. Who would entrust the affairs of the Commonwealth to persons whom no man would entrust with his own private affairs. Who would like to see the treasure of the State committed to the care of those who have squandered their own fortune in disgraceful prodigality? Ought they to have the charge of the people’s purse who would soon convert it into their own purse? Are they qualified to be the legislators of a whole nation who know not what is law or reason, just or unjust, straight or crooked, lawful or unlawful; those who think that all power consists in outrage, all

dignity in insolence ; who neglect no means to gratify the corruption of their friends, or the keenness of their resentments ; who disperse their kindred and their creatures over the country to levy the taxes, and to confiscate property ?—men the most base and degraded, who buy themselves what they pretend to put up to sale, whence they amass exorbitant wealth diverted from the public coffers. They plunder the country, and emerge in a moment from poverty and rags into a state of affluence and splendour. Who could endure such scoundrels of servants, such vicegerents of their masters ? Who could conceive that the leaders of robbers should be fitted to preserve liberty ? Who could suppose that he had become a hair's breadth more free for such a race of functionaries—they might amount to five hundred, elected after this fashion by the shires and boroughs — when, among those who ought to be the true guardians of liberty, there are so many who know neither how to use nor how to enjoy that liberty, and who comprehend neither the principles nor the merits of that right \*.”

Nothing stronger has ever been urged against par-

\* After a careful search through Milton's prose works, the Translator has been unable to discover this passage, and he has been, in consequence, obliged to give it diluted by a double translation, instead of quoting the nervous original language of the great author.—TRANSLATOR.

liamentary reform. Cromwell had tried this reform, and was soon obliged to dissolve the Parliament, which was the result of an extension of the right of election. But what was true in Milton's time is not equally true now-a-days. The disproportion between the landed proprietors and popular classes is not so great. The progress of education and civilisation has begun to render the electors of the middle class better qualified to judge of interests which, formerly, they did not comprehend. The England of the present age has been able, though not without peril, to confer rights on a class of citizens, who in the seventeenth century would have overturned the State if the House of Commons had been opened to them.

Thus all the questions, both general and particular, agitated at the present day among the nations of the continent and in the English Parliament, were discussed and resolved by Milton, in the same spirit in which the present age is resolving them; nay, he even created the modern constitutional language; the terms *functionaries*, *decrees*, *motions*, &c. are his. What then was that genius, capable of creating at once a new world and a new language in politics and poesy!



## THE RESTORATION.

MILTON ARRESTED, AND SET AT LIBERTY—THE POET'S  
FIDELITY TO CROMWELL.

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MILTON had the mortification of seeing the son of Charles I. restored to the throne; not that the poet's firm heart was dismayed, but his chimeras of Republican Liberty vanished; every chimera thus dispelled gives pain, and leaves a void. Charles II., in his Declaration of Breda, announced a general pardon, leaving it for the Commons to except unworthy objects. The instances of sanguinary vengeance which occurred under the Stuarts and the House of Hanover cannot be imputed to the Crown; they were the work of the houses of Parliament. Bodies of men are more implacable than individuals, because they include more passions, and are less responsible.

At the return of Charles II., Milton retired from his situation as Latin Secretary, and left his home in Petty France, where, for eight years, he had received such homage. He withdrew to the

house of a friend, in Bartholomew Close, near West Smithfield. Proceedings were commenced against the "Defence of the English People," and the "Eiconoclastes." On the 27th of June, 1660, Parliament ordered that the author of those works should be arrested. At first he could not be found; but a few months afterwards he was in the hands of the Sergeant at Arms. He was, however, soon released. In December of the same year, he had the boldness to address this terrible Parliament, who fancied that it had treated him generously in not bringing him to the block. He exclaimed against the exorbitant fees demanded by the Sergeant, and thought himself more outraged by the privation of liberty than he would have been by the loss of life.

The Journals of the House of Commons contain two entries relative to this subject. The first, dated Saturday, December 15th, 1660, records the Resolution of the House, that Mr. Milton, then in the custody of the Sergeant at Arms, be liberated, on paying the fees.

The other, dated Monday, December 17th, 1660, states that, a complaint having been made that the Sergeant at Arms has demanded excessive fees, for the detention of Mr. Milton, the House resolved, that he be referred to the Committee of Privileges, for the investigation of this affair.

Davenant saved Milton—an honourable episode

in the History of the Muses, on which I formerly scribbled some execrable doggrel. Cunningham gives another version of the poet's deliverance. He pretends that Milton gave himself out for dead, and that his obsequies were celebrated. Charles II. would have applauded the artifice of a man who escaped death by feigning it. The character of the author of the "Defence," as well as the records of history, forbid us to believe this anecdote. Milton was forgotten, in the retreat where he had buried himself; and to that oblivion we owe "Paradise Lost." If Cromwell had lived ten years longer, as M. Mosneron observes, his Secretary would never have been thought of. The rejoicings for the Restoration over, the illuminations extinguished, next came its punishments. Charles had charged his Commons with all responsibility of that nature, and they were not sparing of violent re-actions. Cromwell was disinterred, and his body hung, as if they hoisted the flag of his glory on the posts of a gibbet. History has preserved in her archives the receipt of the mason who was ordered to break open the tomb of the Protector, and who received the sum of fifteen shillings for his pains.

"May the 4th, 1661, recd. then in full of the worshipful Sergeant Norforke, fiveteen shillings, for taking up the corpes of Cromwell, Ierton, and Brassaw. "Rec. by me, John Lewis."

Milton alone remained faithful to the memory of Cromwell. While minor authors, vile, perjured, bought by restored power, insulted the ashes of a great man at whose feet they had grovelled, Milton gave him an asylum in his genius, as in an inviolable temple.

Milton might have been reinstated in office. His third wife (for he espoused two after the death of Mary Powell) beseeching him to accept his former place as Secretary, he replied, "You are a woman, and would like to keep your carriage; but I will die an honest man."

Remaining a Republican, he wrapped himself in his principles, with his Muse and his poverty. He said to those who reproached him with having served a tyrant, "He delivered us from kings." Milton affirmed that he had only fought for the cause of God and of his country.

One day, walking in St. James's Park, he suddenly heard repeated near him, "The king! the king!" "Let us withdraw," he said to his guide, "I never loved kings." Charles II. accosted the blind man. "Thus, Sir, has Heaven punished you for having conspired against my father." "Sire," he replied, "if the ills that afflict us in this world be the chastisements for our faults, your father must have been very guilty."

## NEW WORKS OF MILTON.

HIS LATIN DICTIONARY—HIS MUSCOVY—HIS HISTORY OF  
ENGLAND.

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THE season most favourable to the inspirations of Milton was autumn, as being most congenial with the melancholy gravity of his thoughts. He says, however, somewhere, that he revives in spring. He believed that he was visited, at night, by a heavenly female. He had three daughters by Mary Powell; one of them, Deborah, read to him Isaiah in Hebrew, Homer in Greek, and Ovid in Latin, without understanding any of these languages. This anecdote is disputed by Johnson. That Milton was as great a scholar as a poet we see by his writing in Latin as fluently as in English; he composed Greek verses, witness some of his minor pieces. It was from the original text of the Prophets that he derived their fire. The lyre of Tasso was not unknown to him. He spoke nearly all the living languages of Europe.

Antonio Francini, a Florentine, expresses himself with regard to Milton, as if the Poet of Albion, while journeying through Italy, had been in the full enjoyment of his fame.

“Another Babel would for him confuse tongues in vain; for, England! besides thy most noble idiom, he is master of Spanish, French, Tuscan, Greek, and Latin.”

Milton, towards the end of the Protectorate, began seriously to compose “Paradise Lost;” and, at the same time, with this work of the Muses, he laboured on History, Logic, and Grammar. He collected, in three folio volumes, materials for a new *Thesaurus Linguae Latinæ*, which was used by the Editors of the “Cambridge Dictionary,” printed in 1693. We have a Latin Grammar of his, for children. Bossuet wrote a Catechism for the little boys at Meaux. The author of “Paradise Lost” was engrossed by the subject of his poem. Even in the “Tractate on Education,” addressed to Hartlib, in 1650, he says, “The end of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents, by regaining to know God aright.” These works, which would have done honour to a Ducange, or to a Benedictine of the congregation of St. Maur, fatigued not the genius of Milton; they did not even suffice it. Like Leibnitz, he embraced History in his researches. His “Moscova”

is an amusing abridgment, from the little details which it gives, in the nature of Travels:—

“The north parts of this country are so barren, that the inhabitants fetch their corn a thousand miles, and so cold in winter, that the very sap of their wood-fuel burning on the fire freezes at the brand's end where it drops. The mariners which were left on ship-board in the first English voyage thither, in going up only from the cabins to the hatches, had their breath so congealed by the cold, that they fell down as it were stifled.

“Moscow hath a fair castle, four-square, upon a hill, two miles about, with brick walls very high, and some say eighteen foot thick, sixteen gates, and as many bulwarks. In the castle are kept the chief markets, and in winter on the river, being then firm ice. This river Moscua on the south-west side incloses the castle, wherein are nine fair churches, with round gilded towers, and the emperor's palace, which neither within nor without is equal for state to the king's houses in England, but rather like our buildings of old fashion, small windows, some of glass, some with latices or iron bars.”

This was the Kremlin, whence the fortune of Bonaparte took flight.

The “History of England,” by Milton, consists of six books. It comes down no lower than the

battle of Hastings. The heptarchy, whatever Hume may say, is very clearly depicted. The style of this work is manly, simple; and it is interspersed with reflections, nearly always relating to the time in which the historian wrote. The third book opens with a description of the state of society in Great Britain, at the period when the Romans left the island. He compares this state with that of England when she found herself deserted by rightful power, during the reign of Charles I. At the end of the fifth book, Milton deduces the causes which threw the Anglo-Saxons under the Norman yoke; he asks if the same causes of corruption may not again reduce his countrymen under the yoke of superstition and tyranny.

The imagination of the poet disdains not the fabulous origins of the Britons; he devotes many pages to the reigns of those monarchs of romance, who ruled England from Brutus, the great grandson of Æneas, to Cassibelaunus. In his way he meets with King Leir or Lear.

“Leir, who next reigned, had only three daughters, and no male issue; governed laudably, and built *Caer-Leir*, now *Leicestre*, on the bank of the *Sora*. But, at last, failing through age, he determines to bestow his daughters, and so among them to divide his kingdom. Yet first, to try which of them loved him best (a trial that might



have made him, had he known as wisely how to try, as he seem'd to know how much the trying behoov'd him), he resolves a simple resolution, to ask them solemnly in order; and which of them should profess largest, her to belev. Gonorill the eldest, apprehending too well her father's weakness, makes answer, invoking heav'n, *that she loved him above her soul*. Therefore, quoth the old man, overjoyed, since thou so honour'st my declin'd age, to thee and the husband whom thou shalt choose I give the third part of my realm. So fair a speeding, for a few words soon uttered, was to Regan, the second, ample instruction what to say. She on the same demand spares no protesting, and the gods must witness, that otherwise to express her thoughts she knew not, but that she loved him *above all creatures*; and so receives an equal reward with her sister. But Cordeilla, the youngest, though hitherto best beloved, and now before her eyes the rich and present hire of a little easie soothing, the danger also, and the loss likely to betide plain dealing, yet moves not from the solid purpose of a sincere and vertuous answer. *Father*, saith she, *my love towards you is as my duty bids,—what can a father seek, what can a child promise more? They who pretend beyond this flatter.*

“ When the old man, sorry to hear this, and

wishing her to recall those words, persisted asking, with a loiall sadness at her father's infirmity, but something on the sudden, harsh, and glancing rather at her sisters than speaking her own mind, Two waies only, saith she, I have to answer what you require mee; the former, your command is, I should recant; accept then this other which is left me; look how much you *have*, so much is your *value*, and so much I love you. Then, hear thou, quoth Leir, now all in passion, what thy ingratitude hath gained thee: because thou hast not reverenc'd thy aged father equall to thy sisters—part in my kingdom, or what else is mine, reck'n to have *none*. And without delay gives in marriage his other daughters; Gonorill to Maglaunus Duke of Albania, Regan to Herminus Duke of Cornwall, with them in present half his kingdom; the rest to follow at his death.

“ In the mean while, Fame was not sparing to divulge the wisdom and other graces of Cordeilla, insomuch that Aganippus, a great king in Gaul (however he came by his Greek name) seeks her to wife, and, nothing alter'd at the loss of her dowry, receaves her gladly in such manner as she was sent. After this, King Leir, more and more drooping with years, became an easy prey to his daughters and thir husbands; who now by daily encroachments had seis'd the whole kingdom into thir hands,

and the old king is put to sojourn with his eldest daughter, attended only by three-score knights. But they, in a short while grudg'd at, as too numerous and disorderly for continual guests, are reduced to thirty. Not brooking that affront, the old king betakes him to his second daughter; but, there also discord soon arising between the servants of differing masters in one family five only are suffered to attend him. Then back again he returns to the other; hoping that she his eldest could not but have more pity on his gray hairs; but she now refuses to admitt him, unless he be content with one only of his followers. At last, the remembrance of his youngest, Cordeilla, comes to his thoughts, and now, acknowledging how true her words had bin, tho' with little hope from whom he had so injured, be it but to pay her the last recompence she can have from him, his confession of her wise forewarning, that so perhaps his misery, the proof and experiment of her wisdom, might something soften her, he takes his journey into France. Now might be seen a difference between the silent or downright-spok'n affection of som children to thir parents, and the talkative obsequiousness of others; while the hope of inheritance over-acts them, and on the tongue's end enlarges their duty. Cordeilla, out of meer love, without the suspicion of expected reward, at the

message only of her father in distress, pours forth true filial tears. And, not enduring either that her own or any other eye should see him in such forlorn condition as his messenger declared, discreetly appoints one of her trusted servants, first to convey him privately toward some good sea town, there to array him, bathe him, cherish him, furnish him with such attendance and state as beseem'd his dignity. That then, as from his first landing, he might send word of his arrival to her husband Aganippus. Which don with all mature and requisite contrivance, Cordeilla, with the king her husband, and all the barony of his realm, who then first had news of his passing the sea, goe out to meet him; and, after all honourable and joyfull entertainment, Aganippus, as to his wives father and his royall guest, surrenders him during his abode there the power and disposal of his whole dominion; permitting his wife Cordeilla to go with an army, and set her father upon his throne. Wherein her piety so prospered, as that she vanquishd her impious sisters with those dukes, and Leir again, as saith the story, three years obtained the crown. To whom, dying, Cordeilla with all regal solemnities gave burial in the town of Leicestre. And, then, as right heir succeeding, and her husband dead, rul'd the land five years in peace. Untill Marganus and Cuen-

dagius, her two sisters' sons, not bearing that a kingdom should be governed by a woman, in the unseasonablest time to raise that quarrel against a woman so worthy, make war against her, depose her, and imprison her; of which impatient, now long unexercised to suffer, she there, as is related, kills herself\*."

It would be impossible to preserve the charm of the original in a translation. The narrator renders his style as antique as those of the chronicles whence he draws the recital. I had need reproduce the story of King Lear in the language of Froissart. Milton delighted to wrestle with Shakspeare, as Jacob with the angel.

\* The History of Britain, that part especially now called England. From the first traditional beginning continued to the Norman Conquest. Collected out of the ancientest and best authours thereof, by John Milton. London: printed by J. M. for James Allestry, at the Rose and Crown, in St. Paul's Church Yard, M.D.C.L.X.X.

## THE POETICAL WORKS OF MILTON.

### PLOT OF PARADISE LOST.

THIS was not all. The poetical compositions of Milton were as gigantic as his prose studies. They were not the fantastic visions of fruitful mediocrity, whose verses flow as easily as its words; whether he quitted the lyre for the pen, or the pen for the lyre, Milton, always, in some way, augmented the harvest of posterity. One would think that he had resolved, like certain fathers of the Church, to turn the whole Bible into tragedies. The poet's manuscripts are preserved in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge. Among these papers are to be found the titles of thirty-six tragedies, to be taken from the History of England, from Vortigern to Edward the Confessor; and forty-eight to be founded on Holy Writ.

Some notes, beginnings of speeches, songs, and characters, are frequently added to these titles. Among the sacred subjects chosen by Milton, I

remarked that of Athaliah. Milton could not have surpassed Racine; but it would have been curious to see how this manly genius would have conducted the action which has produced the master-piece of our stage.

Could the republican poet have given kings warnings more noble and severe than did our royalist?

Reared far from courts, alas! thou knowest not  
 The poisoning charms of royal dignity;  
 Know'st not the spells of arbitrary power,  
 Or the enchanting voice of parasites.  
 Soon they will tell thee that the holiest laws,  
 Made to control the rabble, bow to kings;  
 That will alone should be the monarch's curb;  
 That he should sacrifice what'er would thwart  
 His sovereign majesty; that toil and tears  
 Must be the people's lot; that he must rule them  
 With iron sceptre; for, if not oppress'd  
 Sooner or later they become oppressors.

Milton had also formed the design of translating Homer.

Here are two plans for *Paradise Lost*, as a tragedy, as they exist in the poet's hand-writing, among the manuscripts of Trinity College.

#### THE PERSONS.

MICHAEL.

CHORUS OF ANGELS

HEAVENLY LOVE.

LUCIFER.

ADAM } with the Serpent.  
EVE }

CONSCIENCE.

DEATH.

LABOUR.

SICKNESS.

DISCONTENT.

IGNORANCE.

FAITH.

HOPE.

CHARITY.

} Mutes.

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THE PERSONS.

MOSES.

DIVINE JUSTICE, WISDOM, HEAVENLY LOVE.

THE EVENING STAR, HESPERUS.

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

LUCIFER.

ADAM.

EVE.

CONSCIENCE.

LABOUR.

SICKNESS.

DISCONTENT.

IGNORANCE.

FEAR.

DEATH.

FAITH.

HOPE.

CHARITY.

} Mutes.



## PARADISE LOST.

## THE PERSONS.

MOSES *προλογίζει*, recounting how he assumed his true body; that it corrupts not, because it is with God in the mount; declares the like of Enoch and Eliah; besides the purity of the place, that certain pure winds, dews, and clouds, preserve it from corruption; whence exhorts to the sight of God; tells they cannot see Adam in the state of innocence, by reason of their sin.

JUSTICE

MERCY

WISDOM

} debating what should become of man, if he fall.

CHORUS OF ANGELS, singing a hymn of the Creation.

## ACT II.

HEAVENLY LOVE.

EVENING STAR.

CHORUS, sing the marriage-song, and describe Paradise.

## ACT III.

LUCIFER contriving Adam's ruin.

CHORUS, fears for Adam, &amp; relates Lucifer's rebellion &amp; fall.

## ACT IV.

ADAM

EVE

} fallen.

CONSCIENCE cites them to God's examination.

CHORUS bewails and tells the good Adam has lost.

## ACT V.

ADAM and EVE driven out of Paradise.

. . . presented by an Angel with  
 LABOUR, GRIEF, HATRED, ENVY,  
 WAR, FAMINE, PESTILENCE, SICK-  
 NESS, DISCONTENT, IGNORANCE, } Mutes.  
 FEAR, DEATH.

To whom he gives their names, likewise  
 WINTER, HEAT, TEMPEST, &c.

TRUTH }  
 HOPE } comfort and instruct him.  
 CHARITY }

CHORUS briefly concludes.

Such was Milton's first design, in which most of the supernatural personages of Paradise Lost are replaced by allegorical ones. Lucifer, in the tragedy, projects the ruin of Adam, as Satan contrives it in the poem; but all the great scenes in hell are suppressed, as well as those in Heaven; here are not displayed the councils, held in the Abyss; we hear not the oracles of the Father, the speeches of the Son on the Sacred Mountain. The Drama could not have admitted these developments as the Epopee. The Chorus relates the rebellion and fall of Lucifer; but it is evident that this could only have been done in a very brief way; not in a long recital, like that of Raphael. In the tragedy, Heavenly Love and the Evening Star sing the nuptial song; in the

poem, the bard himself does so. One may regret the song of the Star, and imagine its beauty. But Milton could do nothing without evincing genius. Witness this remarkable point thrown into a simple note. The angel presents to Adam after his fall all the calamities of earth, from Toil to Death. Adam, the sinner, names *them*, as, in his days of innocence, he had given names to the *innocent* animals of the Creation. This sublime Allegory is not to be found in "Paradise Lost."

FURTHER PARTICULARS CONCERNING  
MILTON.

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THE bard of Eden said that a poet "ought to be himself a true poem;" that is, a model of the best and most honourable qualities.

Milton rose at four in the morning during summer, and at five in the winter. He wore almost invariably a dress of coarse grey cloth; studied till noon, dined frugally, walked with a guide, and, in the evening, sung, accompanying himself on some instrument. He understood harmony, and had a fine voice. He for a long time addicted himself to the practice of fencing. To judge by *Paradise Lost*, he must have been passionately fond of music and the perfume of flowers. He supped off five or six olives and a little water, retired to rest at nine, and composed at night, in bed. When he had made some verses, he rung, and dictated to his wife or daughters. On sunny

days he sat on a bench at his door; he lived in Artillery Walk, leading to Bunhill Fields.

From without, insults were heaped on this the sick and forsaken lion. These lines were addressed to him, headed "Upon John Milton's not suffering for his Traitorous Book, when the Tryers were executed, 1660:"

"That thou escap'dst that vengeance which o'ertook,  
Milton, thy regicides, and thy own book,  
Was clemency in Charles beyond compare,  
And yet thy doom doth prove more grievous far:  
Old, sickly, poor, stark-blind, thou writ'st for bread;  
So, for to live, thou'dst call Salmasius from the dead."

They reproached him with his age, his ugliness, his small stature, and applied to him this verse of Virgil:

"Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen  
ademptum,"

observing that the word *ingens* was the only one which did *not* apply to his person. He had the simplicity to reply (*Defensio Auctoris*) that he was poor because he had never enriched himself; that he was neither large nor small; that at no age had he been considered ugly; that in youth, with a sword by his side, he had never feared the bravest.

In fact, he had been very handsome, and was so even in his age. The portrait of Adam is his own. His hair was admirable, his eyes of extraordinary clearness; no defect could be perceived in them; it would have been impossible to guess that he was blind. If we were not aware what party rage can do, could we believe that it would make it a crime for a man to be blind. But let us thank this abominable hate, we owe to it some exquisite lines. Milton first replies that he lost his sight in the defence of Liberty, then adds these passages, full of sublimity and tenderness.

“In the night that surrounds me, the light of the divine presence shines the more brightly for me. God beholds me with greater tenderness and compassion, because I can see nought but Him. The divine law ought not only to shield me from injury, but to render me more sacred; not on account of the loss of sight, but because I am under the shadow of the divine wings, which seem to produce this darkness in me. To this I attribute the affectionate assiduities of my friends, their soothing attentions, their kind visits, and their respectful behaviour.”

We see to what shifts he was reduced in writing by a passage in one of his Letters to Peter Heimbach.

“That virtue of mine which you call my poli-

tical virtue, and which I would rather you had called devotion to my country—patriotism, enchanting me with her captivating name, almost, if I may so say, expatriated me. In finishing my letter, let me beg of you this favour, that, if you find some parts incorrectly written, you will impute the fault to the boy who writes for me; he is utterly ignorant of Latin, and I am obliged wretchedly enough to spell every word I dictate.”

The miseries of Milton were still more aggravated by domestic griefs. I have already said that he lost his first wife, Mary Powell; she died in child-birth, as, after a year's marriage, did his second, Catherine Woodcock, of Hackney. His third, Elizabeth Minshull, survived him, and had used him well. He appears not to have been beloved; his daughters, who play such poetical parts in his Life, deceived him, and secretly sold his books. He complains of this. Unfortunately, his character seems to have had the inflexibility of his genius. Johnson has said, with precision and truth, that Milton believed woman made only for obedience, and man for *rebellion*.

THE PUBLICATION OF PARADISE LOST.

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MILTON approached his fifty-ninth year, when, in 1667, he thought of publishing "Paradise Lost."

He had shewn the manuscript, then divided into ten books, to Ellwood, a quaker, who has left to English literature the "Sacred History," and "the Davideid." The manuscript of "Paradise Lost" was not in the hand-writing of the author. Milton had not the means of paying a copyist. Some of his friends took turns to write from his dictation. The censor refused his imprimatur to this second Galileo, this discoverer of new stars. He cavilled with every line; above all, high treason appeared springing from the magnificent passage, in which the obscuring of Satan's glory is compared to an eclipse, which

— with fear of change  
Perplexes monarchs.

But how could Dr. Tomkyns help perceiving allu-



sions to the manners of the restored dynasty, so pointed in the lines that form part of this fine invocation to conjugal love,—

—— Not in the bought smile  
Of harlots, loveless, joyless, unendeared,  
Casual fruition ; nor in court amours,  
Mix'd dance, or wanton mask, or midnight ball,  
Or serenate, which the starv'd lover sings  
To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain.

Milton still more clearly depicts the court of Charles (in that of Bacchus) whose courtiers he represents as ready to tear him piece-meal, as the Bacchantes did Orpheus, on the hills of Thrace.

But drive far off the barbarous dissonance  
Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race  
Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard,  
In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears  
To rapture, till the savage clamour drown'd  
Both harp and voice ; nor could the muse defend  
Her son.

It is probable that the ingenious servility of the censor saved "Paradise Lost." Tomkyns dared not recognise the king and his friends in a portrait, the strong resemblance of which struck every eye.

The intimidated booksellers were not eager to possess the manuscript of a poor author, almost unknown as a poet, suspected and unpopular as a prose-writer. At last he found one bolder than

the rest, who tremblingly ventured to publish this dangerous work. The contract of sale, and the manuscript, soiled by the printer, are preserved.

In Milton's agreement with Samuel Simmons, for the copy of "Paradise Lost," dated 27th April, 1667; it was agreed that John Milton, gentleman, should give up to Samuel Simmons, printer, as his property for ever, for the sum of five pounds sterling, to him, Milton, present payment, all the impressions, copies, and manuscripts of a poem, entitled "Paradise Lost," or by what other title or name the said poem might be called. A singular clause, by which it may be seen that Milton, even when his poem was completed and sold, still hesitated as to the title he would give it. Samuel Simmons engaged, in consideration of possessing "Paradise Lost," to pay a further sum of five pounds sterling, at the end of the first impression, when he should have sold 1,300 copies of the work. He moreover pledged himself to pay, to John Milton, or his heirs, at the end of a second edition, likewise after the sale of 1,300 copies, a third sum of five pounds sterling. Subjoined to this agreement are three receipts. One dated 26th April, 1669, signed John Milton, who acknowledges having received the first two sums mentioned; the other, signed Elizabeth Milton, widow, December

21st, 1680, who acknowledges having received eight pounds sterling, on giving up all claim on the edition of "Paradise Lost," in 12 books. Finally, there is a third receipt, or what may be called letters patent, by Elizabeth Milton, April 29th, 1681, in which she renounces for ever all claim against Samuel Simmons, all demands that could be made from the beginning of the world unto the day of these presents. "Done in the thirty-third year of the reign of our sovereign lord Charles, by the grace of God, king of England, Scotland, Ireland, and France, defender of the faith."

Thus, Milton received ten pounds sterling for yielding his rights to "Paradise Lost," and his widow eight\*.

\* This statement is erroneous. Milton's agreement with Simmons entitled the author to a conditional payment of fifteen pounds beyond the first five pounds. Of this sum five pounds were to be paid after the sale of 1,300 copies of the first edition, and five pounds in the same manner both on the second and third. Milton himself received the second payment of five pounds. The second edition appeared in the year of his death, and the third four years afterwards. The sums payable on these must have been paid to his widow, who in 1680—that is to say, two years after the publication of the third edition—sold all her claim on the work to Simmons for eight pounds; "so that," says Hayley, "twenty-eight pounds, at different times in the course of thirteen years, is the whole pecuniary reward which this great performance produced to the poet and his widow."—TRANSLATOR.

The last receipts of his widow are dated in the thirty-third year of Charles the Second's reign; that is to say, the Revolution of 1649 never occurred; Cromwell never reigned; and Milton, Secretary to the Commonwealth and the Protector, did not write, during the Commonwealth and the Protectorate, the immortal poem sold for ten pounds, paid in the space of two years; and it was Milton's widow who could sign to all this! What matters it? It was no more in the power of Charles the Second to efface the times whose date Cromwell and Milton had established, than of Louis XVIII. to erase from his reign that of Napoleon.

## SAMSON AGONISTES. PARADISE REGAINED.

NEW LOGIC. TRUE RELIGION. DEATH OF MILTON.

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THROUGHOUT the life of the poet, "Paradise Lost" remained buried in the shop of the adventurous bookseller. In 1667, at the height of Louis XIV.'s glory, *Andromache* made its appearance on our stage. Was John Milton then known in France? Yes, perhaps, by some few lawyers as a rascally scribbler, whose diatribes had been duly burned by the executioners of Paris and Toulouse.

Milton survived the publication of his poem seven years, but did not witness its success. Johnson, who has denied him all he can deny, will not even leave him the bitter pleasure of believing himself mistaken, or thinking that he had wasted his life, that an indifferent or jealous age disdained his genius. The doctor pretends that "Paradise Lost" met with actual success during the life of its

author, "Fancy," he says, "can hardly forbear to conjecture with what temper Milton surveyed the silent progress of his work, and marked his reputation stealing its way in a kind of subterraneous current through fear and silence. I cannot but conceive him calm and confident, little disappointed, not at all dejected, relying on his own merit with steady consciousness, and waiting without impatience the vicissitudes of opinion and the impartiality of a future generation."

This supposition is contrary to important facts. We shall see by his "Samson," if Milton thought himself appreciated by his contemporaries.

Milton had that strength of mind which surmounts misfortune, and tears itself from all day-dreams. Having thrown all his genius on the world in his poem, he continued his labours, as if he had given nothing to mankind, as if "Paradise Lost" was a forgotten pamphlet, about which he need care no more. He published successively "Samson," "Paradise Regained," his "New Logic," and a "Treatise on True Religion."

"Paradise Regained" is tedious, though calm and beautiful; but the tragedy of "Samson" breathes all the energy and simplicity of the antique. The poet himself is depicted in the person of the Israelite, blind, a prisoner, and unfortunate. A noble way of revenging himself on his age. At

the feast of Dagon, Samson obtains leave to breathe awhile, at the door of his prison, in Gaza; there he laments his miseries.

I seek

This unfrequented place, to find some ease,  
Ease to the body some, none to the mind,  
From restless thoughts, that, like a deadly swarm  
Of hornets armed, no sooner found alone  
But rush upon me, thronging, and present  
Times past, what once I was, and what am now.

\* \* \* \* \*

O loss of sight, of thee I most complain,  
Blind among enemies. O worse than chains,  
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age.

\* \* \* \* \*

Inferior to the vilest now become  
Of man or worm; the vilest here excel me.  
They creep, yet see, I dark in light exposed.  
Oh dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,  
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse,  
Without all hope of day!

\* \* \* \* \*

Since life so necessary is to life,  
And almost life itself, if it be true  
That light is in the soul—

\* \* why was the sight

To such a tender ball as th' eye confined?  
So obvious, and so easy to be quenched?  
When had I not been thus exiled from light,  
As in a land of darkness  
But made hereby obnoxious more  
To all the miseries of life,  
Life in captivity,  
Among inhuman foes.

It is believed that in the last lines he alludes to the execution of the second Sir Henry Vane.

Samson, brought to the feast of Gaza for the amusement of his guests, prays to God to restore his strength, and drags down the pillars of the banquet-hall, expiring amid the noble ruins beneath which he crushes the Philistines, as Milton, in death buried his enemies in his glory.

Milton, in his last days, was forced to sell his library. He drew near his end. Dr. Wright, going to see him, found him confined to the first floor of his small house, in a very small room, to which the visiter ascended by a staircase, carpeted, extempore, with green baize\*, to deaden the noise of footsteps, and to procure silence for the man who was advancing towards everlasting silence. The author of "Paradise Lost," attired in a black doublet, reclined in an elbow-chair. His head was uncovered, its silver locks fell on his shoulders, his blind but fine dark eyes sparkled amidst the paleness of his countenance.

On the 10th of November, 1674, that God who had discoursed with him by night came to fetch him; and reunited him in Eden with the angels,

\* This is evidently a mistake of the author's. The English biographers of Milton relate, on the testimony of Antony Wood, that he was found sitting in a small chamber, *hung with rusty green*.—TRANSLATOR.



amid whom he had lived, and whom he knew by their names, their offices, and their beauty.

Milton expired so gently that no one perceived the moment when, at the age of sixty-six years (within one month), he rendered back to God one of the mightiest spirits that ever animated human clay. This temporal life, though neither long nor short, served as a foundation for life eternal. The great man had dragged on a sufficient number of days on earth to feel their weariness; but not sufficient to exhaust his genius, which remained entire, even to his latest breath. Bossuet, like Milton, was fifty-nine when he composed the master-piece of his eloquence; with what youthful fire does he speak of his grey hair! Thus the author of "Paradise Lost" complains of being frozen by age, while depicting the love of Adam and Eve. The Bishop of Meaux pronounced the funeral oration of the Queen of England in 1669, the same year that Milton gave his receipt for the second five pounds paid for his poem. These incomparable geniuses, who both, in opposite parties, drew portraits of Cromwell, had perhaps never heard each other's names. The eagles which are seen by all the world live apart and lonely on their mountains.

Milton died just half way between the two revolutions; fourteen years after the Restoration of Charles II., and fourteen years before the coming

of William III. He was buried beside his father in the choir of St. Giles's church. Long afterwards, the curious went to see a little stone, the inscription on which was no longer visible; that stone covered the abandoned ashes of Milton; it is not known whether the name of the author of "Paradise Lost" had been marked on it; if so, it was effaced.

The poet's family was soon plunged into obscurity. Thirty years had elapsed after Milton's death, when Deborah, seeing, for the first time, a portrait of the poet, then become celebrated, exclaimed, "Oh, my father! my dear father!"

Deborah had married Abraham Clarke, a Spitalfields weaver. She died, aged seventy-two, in the month of August, 1727. One of his granddaughters married Thomas Foster, also a weaver. Reduced to penury, a critic proposed a subscription in her favour; he said,—“This proposal ought to be well received, as it is made by me. I may be regarded as the Zoilus of the English Homer.” Zoilus, however, had not the gratification of supporting the grandchild of Homer, by means of the abuse which he had lavished on the father of biblical epic poetry. The English theatre became the guardian of the orphan. The "Mask of Comus" was performed for her benefit, and Johnson, though otherwise so severe on Milton, wrote the prologue to it.

Deborah was known to Professor Ward, and to Richardson, to whom we are indebted for a life of Milton. Addison also patronised and obtained fifty guineas for her, from Queen Caroline.

A son of Deborah's, Caleb Clarke, went to India, in the beginning of the eighteenth century. We learn from Sir James Mackintosh that this grandson of Milton's was parish clerk at Madras. Caleb had three children, by his wife Mary: Abraham, Mary (who died in 1706), and Isaac. Abraham, great-grandson of Milton, married in September, 1725, Anna Clarke, and had by her a daughter, Mary, whose birth was registered at Madras, April 2nd, 1727. There disappears all trace of Milton's family. We know not what became of Abraham and Isaac, who did not die at Madras, and whose deaths, to this day, have not been found on the Registers of Calcutta or Bombay. If they had returned to England they could not have escaped the admirers and biographers of Milton. They are lost in the vast regions of India, in the cradle of the world sung by their ancestor. Perhaps some unconscious drops of his free blood now animate the breast of a slave; perhaps they flow in the veins of a priest of Buddha, or in those of some Indian shepherd, who, retired under the shade of a fig tree,

Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds  
At loop-holes, cut through thickest shade.

PARADISE LOST, B. IX.

Nothing is more natural than the curiosity which leads us to inquire after the families of illustrious men. That of Bonaparte has not perished, for he left behind him the kings and queens made by his sword. I have elsewhere endeavoured to trace what has become of Cromwell's descendants; his name is inseparably united in glory with that of Milton. "It is possible," I have said, in 'The Four Stuarts,' "that a lineal heir of Oliver Cromwell's by Henry, may now be an unknown Irish peasant, perhaps a catholic, living on potatoes, among the turf bogs of Ulster; attacking Orangemen by night, and combating the atrocious laws of the Protector. It is even possible that an unknown descendant of Cromwell's may have been a Franklin or a Washington in America."

## ON THE IMPERFECTIONS OF PARADISE LOST.

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THE Earl of Dorset, going to make some purchase in the shop of Milton's publisher, chanced to lay his hand on "Paradise Lost;" the bookseller humbly begged his lordship to read it, and procure him purchasers. The Earl took, perused, and lent it to Dryden, who returned it with these words:—"This man will cut us all out, and the ancients too."

Nevertheless, the fame of "Paradise Lost" spread but slowly; the frivolous and corrupt manners of the day, the aversion felt for the religious sects, whose violence had engendered incredulity, opposed the success of a poem so austere in its subject, style, and ideas. Neither the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Rochester, nor Sir William Temple, make any mention of Milton. But, in 1688, a folio edition of "Paradise Lost," under the patronage of Lord Somers, attracted some notice. One would almost say that the glory of the enemy

of the Stuarts, suppressed by them, awaited the year of their fall to blaze forth. If Milton had lived, like his brother, till the epoch of the Revolution, 1688, would he have found favour with the new government? I doubt it. They had but changed their king. The old regicide Ludlow, who hastened from Lausanne, found himself as much a stranger under William the Third, as he would have been under James the Second. The man of another time, he returned to die in his solitude.

By degrees, editions of "Paradise Lost" were multiplied. Addison devoted to it eighteen papers in "The Spectator." By this time people could not erect altars enough for their divinity. Among the objects of public worship, Milton took his place beside Shakspeare.

Some opposing voices would nevertheless be heard—no great reputation ever arose undisputed. It was asserted that Milton had imitated Mosenius, Ramsay, Vida, Sannazarius, Romæus, Fletcher, Staphorst, Taubman, Andreini, Quintianus, Malapert, Fox; they might have added to this list Saint-Avitus, Dubartas, and Tasso. Saint-Avitus has some very lovely scenes in Eden. It is probable that Milton, while at Naples, in company with Manso, had read the '*Sette giornale del mondo creato*,' by Tasso. The poet of Jeru-

salem makes Eve spring from the side of Adam, while God shed a peaceful sleep upon the weary limbs of our first sire.

Tasso softens the scriptural image, and, in his fair creations, woman is only the first dream of man.

What has all this to do with the glory of Milton? Did these pretended originals open their work with Satan's awakening in Hell? had they traversed Chaos, with the rebel angel? discerned the creation from the threshold of the empyreum? apostrophised the sun? contemplated the bliss of man in his primitive innocence, or guessed the dignified love of Eve and Adam? Whether it be that by translating Milton the habit of intimate association has accustomed me to his faults, whether it be that, enfranchising criticism, I judge the poet by the ideas which he must have had, I am no longer displeased with things that formerly shocked me. The meeting with artillery in heaven now seems to me to spring from a very natural idea. Milton made Satan invent whatever is most mischievous among men. He often reverted to these inventions, on occasion of the gunpowder plot. He has five Latin pieces "*in prodicionem bombardicam; in inventorem bombardæ.*" The sneers of the demons imitate those of Homer's heroes. I am pleased to see the Iliad shine through Paradise Lost.

The demons, changed into serpents, who hiss at their chief, when he has just boasted of having in the shape of a serpent ruined the human race, are caprices, but expressed with the astonishing felicity of a superabundant fancy. In the criticisms on this passage, authors either did not or would not see the explanation which the poet himself gives of that metamorphosis; it is quite conformable with the subject of the work and the most popular traditions of Christianity. It is the last appearance of Satan. The Prince of Darkness, a superb intelligence, at the commencement of the poem, before the fall of man, becomes, in the end, after that fall, a hideous reptile; instead of the archangel ruined, yet still shining like a sun eclipsed, you now see him only in the form of the *Old Serpent, the Dragon of the Pit*.

It were less unjust to tax Milton with some instances of bad taste. “No fear lest dinner cool,” for example.

I would also have suppressed the lines in which Adam tells Eve that she was

but a rib,

Crooked by nature       \*       \*       \*

\*       \*       \*       from me drawn,

Well, if thrown out as supernumerary.

Unfortunately, too, this blot has fallen on a dramatic passage of the most finished beauty.



The poet, also, makes rather an ill use of his erudition ; but, after all, it is better to have too much learning than too little. Milton drew more beauties from his knowledge than Shakspeare did from his ignorance. Is it not astonishing that, amid the false natural philosophy of his time, he announced *attraction*, afterwards demonstrated by Newton? Kepler, Boullian, and Hook, it is true, had opened the road to that discovery, and Milton might have been aware of what they termed *tractory power*. In antiquity, Aristarchus made the sun the centre of the universe.

Both lights and shades are sometimes wanting in the poet's pictures ; one might guess that their painter could not see, as one recognises the musical performance of a blind man by the indefiniteness of certain notes. The descriptions in "Paradise Lost" have about them something gentle, soft, misty, ideal, like the dreams of memory. The setting suns of Milton accord with his own time of life, his darkened lids, and his approach to the tomb ; they have a tone of melancholy nowhere else to be found. You need ask him but to depict a night in Eden—he says,

the wakeful nightingale,  
She all night long her amorous descant sang ;  
Silence was pleased.

Five or six lines, soaring above all common-places, are sufficient for him to present a religious spectacle of morning:—

Now, when as sacred light began to dawn,  
 In Eden, on the humid flowers, that breath'd  
 Their morning incense, when all things that breathe  
 From th' Earth's great altar send up silent praise  
 To the Creator, and his nostrils fill  
 With grateful smell.

You might fancy that you were reading one of the Psalms. "Praise God all the earth. Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

In short, if the poet sometimes betrays fatigue, if the lyre drops from his wearied hand, he rests, and I rest along with him. I should like the fine passages of the Cid and the Horatii connected by harmonious and laboured elegance. The simple parts of Corneille are but paths to the magnificent ones, that nevertheless delight me.

THE PLAN OF PARADISE LOST.

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WHAT can I say of "Paradise Lost" that has not been said already? A thousand times have its sublime traits been cited; its conversations, its combats, the fall of its angels, and that Hell which

——— would have fled  
 Affrighted, but strict Fate had cast too deep  
 Her dark foundations.

I shall chiefly dwell, therefore, upon the general composition of the work, to point out the art with which the whole is conducted.

Satan awakes in the midst of the fiery lake, (and what a waking!) He calls together the council of the punished legions, reminds his companions of their failure and disobedience, of an ancient oracle which foretold the birth of a new world, the creation of a new race, formed with a design to fill the places of the fallen angels. Dreadful idea! It is in hell that the name of man is first pronounced.

Satan proposes to seek this unknown world, to destroy or to corrupt it. He departs, explores hell, encounters Sin and Death; he induces Sin to open the portals of the abyss, traverses Chaos, discovers the creation, descends from the sun, and arrives on earth; sees our first parents in Eden; is moved by their beauty, their innocence, and, by his remorseful tenderness, gives an ineffable idea of their nature and their happiness. God beholds Satan from heaven, and predicts the weakness of man, his utter ruin, unless some one presents himself to be his surety, and die for him. The heavenly choir stand mute with amazement. In the silence of heaven, the Son alone replies, and offers himself as a sacrifice. The victim is accepted, and man redeemed, even before he falls.

The Almighty sends Raphael to warn our first parents of their enemy's arrival and intent. The celestial messenger relates to Adam the revolt of the angels, which took place at the moment when the Father, from the summit of the holy hill, proclaims that he has begotten the Son, and endowed him with full power. The pride and jealousy of Satan, inflamed by this declaration, excite him to the combat; vanquished with his legions, he is thrown into hell. Milton had no data for assigning a motive for Satan's rebellion; he was obliged to draw every thing from his own genius. Thus, with the art of a great master, he makes

known what had befallen before the opening of the poem. Raphael then relates to Adam the work of the Six Days. Adam, in his turn, describes his own creation. The angel returns to heaven. Eve suffers herself to be tempted, tastes the forbidden fruit, and involves Adam in her fall.

In the tenth book all the personages re-appear: they are about to meet their fate. In the eleventh and twelfth books, Adam sees the results of his faults, in all that is to happen till the Incarnation of Christ. The Son must sacrifice himself to ransom man. The Son is one of the characters of the poem. By means of a vision, he remains the last and alone on the stage, in order to fulfil, in the soliloquy of the Cross, the definitive action. *Consummatum est.*

Such is the work in its simplicity; the incidents and the narrations spring the one from the other. We travel through hell, chaos, heaven, earth, eternity, and time, amid blasphemies and hymns, tortures and delights; we rove through these immensities with ease, unconsciously, insensible of moving; we think not of the efforts it must have cost to bear us thus high, on eagle's wings, or to create such a universe.

The observation touching the last appearance of the Son, shows, contrary to the opinion of certain critics, that Milton would have been wrong in

suppressing the last two books. These books, considered, I know not why, as the weakest part of the poem, are, in my opinion, quite as beautiful as the others; nay, they have a human interest which the earlier ones possess not. From the greatest of poets, as he was, the author becomes the greatest of historians, without ceasing to be a poet. Michael informs our first parents that they must quit Paradise. Eve weeps; grieved at leaving her garden, she says,

Oh, flowers!

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

My early visitation, and my last  
At even, which I bred up with tender hand,  
From the first opening bud, and gave ye names.

A charming trait of character, which has been supposed to be the idea of a modern German poet, but is only one of the beauties with which the works of Milton abound. Adam, too, complains, but it is that he must abandon the scenes where God had deigned to honour him with his presence. He says,

Here I would frequent

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

\*            \*            \*            and to my sons relate  
On this mount He appeared, under this tree  
Stood visible, among these pines his voice  
I heard, here with him at this fountain talked.

This idea of God, with which man is impressed throughout the "Paradise Lost," is one of extraordinary sublimity. Eve, in waking to life, is occupied but with her own beauty, and sees God in Man. Adam, as soon as he is created, guessing that he could not have made himself, instantly seeks and calls upon his Maker.

Eve remains sleeping at the foot of the hill. Michael, from its summit, shows Adam, in a vision, his whole race. Thus the Bible is unfolded. First comes the story of Cain and Abel. When Adam sees Abel fall, he exclaims to the Angel,

— Oh Teacher!

\* \* \* \* \*

But have I now seen death? is this the way  
I must return to native dust?

Observe that, in the Scriptures, nothing is said of Adam after his fall; silence spreads over the nine hundred and thirty years between his sin and his death. It would seem that the human race, his hapless posterity, durst not speak of him. Even Saint Paul names him not among the Patriarchs who lived by faith. The Apostle commences his list with Abel. Adam passes for the chief of the dead, because in him all mankind died; and yet for nine centuries he saw his sons travelling towards the grave, of which he was the inventor, and which he had opened for them.

After the murder of Abel, the Angel shows Adam a "lazar house," and every different form of death ; this picture is full of power, in the style of Tintoretto. The poet says,

— Adam could not but weep,  
Tho' not of woman born.

A pathetic reflection, inspired by that passage in Job,

"Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble."

The history of the Giants of the mountain, who seduce the females of the plain, is marvellously told. The Deluge offers another vast scene. In this eleventh book, Milton imitates Dante in the form of speech—"Master," used in the dialogue. Dante would have invited Milton as a brother to enter with him the group of great poets.

The twelfth book is no longer a vision, but a narrative. The Tower of Babel, the call of Abraham, the advent of Christ, his incarnation, his resurrection, are replete with beauties of every kind. This book concludes with the banishment of Adam and Eve, and with lines so sad, that every body knows them by heart.

In these last two books, the poet's melancholy is increased ; he seems more than ever to feel the



weight of misfortune and age. He attributes to Michael these words:—

So mayst thou live, till like ripe fruit thou drop  
Into thy mother's lap, or be with ease  
Gathered, not harshly pluck'd, for death mature :  
This is old age ; but then thou must outlive  
Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty, which will change  
To withered, weak, and grey ; thy senses, then,  
Obtuse, all taste of pleasure must forego  
To what thou hast ; and fōr the air of youth,  
Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will reign  
A melancholy damp of cold and dry  
To weigh thy spirits down, and last consume  
The balm of life.

A commentator, speaking of Milton's genius, in these two last books of "Paradise Lost," says, "It is the same ocean, but at the ebb of tide ; the same sun, but at the moment of its setting."

Be it so. The sea appears most lovely to my eye when it permits me to wander over its deserted strand, while it retreats towards the horizon with the setting sun.

CHARACTERS OF THE PERSONS IN  
PARADISE LOST.

---

ADAM AND EVE.

MILTON has given, in the first Man and Woman, the original type of their sons and daughters upon earth.

— In their looks divine  
The image of their glorious Maker shone,  
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure ;  
(Severe, but in true filial freedom plac'd,)  
Whence true authority in men ; though both  
Not equal, as their sex not equal seem'd ;  
For contemplation he and valour form'd ;  
For softness she and sweet attractive grace ;  
He for God only, she for God in him :  
His fair large front and eye sublime declar'd  
Absolute rule ; and hyacinthine locks  
Round from his parted forelock manly hung  
Clust'ring, but not beneath his shoulders broad :  
She as a veil down to the slender waist  
Her unadorned golden tresses wore  
Dishevel'd, but in wanton ringlets wav'd,

As the vine curls her tendrils, which imply'd  
 Subjection, but requir'd with gentle sway,  
 And by her yielded, by him best receiv'd,  
 Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,  
 And sweet reluctant amorous delay.

\* \* \* \* \*

So pass'd they naked on, nor shunn'd the sight  
 Of God or angel, for they thought no ill ;  
 So hand in hand they pass'd, the loveliest pair  
 That ever since in love's embraces met ;  
 Adam the goodliest man of men since born  
 His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve.

Adam, simple and sublime, instructed by Heaven, and drawing his experience from God, has but one weakness, and it is evident that this weakness will be his ruin. After having recounted his own creation to Raphael, and his conversations with God on solitude, he describes his transports at the first sight of his fair companion :

—— Methought I saw, ——

Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the shape  
 Still glorious before whom awake I stood ;  
 Who, stooping, opened my left side, and took  
 From thence a rib, with cordial spirits warm,  
 And life-blood streaming fresh ; wide was the wound,  
 But suddenly with flesh filled up and heal'd :  
 The rib he form'd and fashion'd with his hands ;  
 Under his forming hands a creature grew  
 Man-like, but different sex, so lovely fair,  
 That what seem'd fair in all the world, seem'd now  
 Mean, or in her summ'd up, in her contain'd  
 And in her looks, which from that time infused

Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before.  
 And into all things from her air inspired  
 The spirit of love and amorous delight.  
 She disappear'd, and left me dark ; I wak'd  
 To find her, or for ever to deplore  
 Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure :  
 When out of hope, behold her, not far off,  
 Such as I saw her in my dream, adorn'd  
 With what all earth or heaven could bestow  
 To make her amiable : on she came,  
 Led by her heavenly Maker, tho' unseen,  
 And guided by his voice, not uninform'd  
 Of nuptial sanctity and marriage rites.  
 Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,  
 In ev'ry gesture dignity and love.  
 I, overjoyed, could not forbear aloud :

‘ This turn hath made amends ; thou hast fulfill'd  
 Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,  
 Giver of all things fair, but fairest this  
 Of all thy gifts, nor enviest. I now see  
 Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself  
 Before me ; Woman is her name, of Man  
 Extracted ; for this cause he shall forego  
 Father and mother, and to his wife adhere ;  
 And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul.’  
 She heard me thus ; and, though divinely brought,  
 Yet innocence and virgin modesty,  
 Her virtue and the conscience of her worth,  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \* to say all,  
 Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought,  
 Wrought in her so, that, seeing me, she turned ;  
 I followed her ; she what was honour'd knew,  
 And with obsequious majesty approv'd  
 My pleaded reason. To the nuptial bower  
 I led her blushing like the morn : all heaven,

And happy constellations on that hour  
 Shed their selected influence ; the earth  
 Gave sign of gratulation, and each hill ;  
 Joyous the birds ; fresh gales and gentle airs  
 Whisper'd it to the woods, and from their wings  
 Flung rose, flung odours from the spicy shrub,  
 Disporting till the amorous bird of night  
 Sung spousal, and bid haste the evening star  
 On his hill top, to light the bridal lamp.

Thus have I told thee all my state, and brought  
 My story to the sum of earthly bliss  
 Which I enjoy, and must confess to find  
 In all things else delight indeed, but such  
 As us'd, or not, works in the mind no change,  
 Nor vehement desire ;—

— but here,  
 Far otherwise, transported I behold,  
 Transported touch ; here passion first I felt,  
 Commotion strange, in all enjoyments else  
 Superior and unmoved, here only weak  
 Against the charm of Beauty's powerful glance.  
 Or nature fail'd in me, or left some part  
 Not proof enough such object to sustain ;  
 Or, from my side subducting, took perhaps  
 More than enough ; at least on her bestow'd  
 Too much of ornament——

—— When I approach  
 Her loveliness, so absolute she seems,  
 And in herself complete, so well to know  
 Her own, that what she wills to do or say  
 Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best ;  
 All higher knowledge in her presence falls  
 Degraded. Wisdom in discourse with her  
 Loses, discountenanc'd, and like Folly shows ;  
 Authority and Reason on her wait,  
 As one intended first not after made

Occasionally ; and, to consummate all,  
Greatness of mind, and nobleness their seat  
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe  
About her, as a guard angelic plac'd.

Who ever wrote like this ? What poet ever spoke such language ? How miserable seem all modern compositions beside these strong and magnificent conceptions ! Milton takes care to keep Eve aloof, while Adam betrays his weakness to Raphael ; but the inquisitive woman, concealed among the foliage, hears enough for her own ruin.

There is an inexpressible charm about Eve ; she unites innocence with loveliness, but she is capricious, presuming, vain of her beauty ; she insists on going alone to her morning tasks, in spite of the entreaties of Adam ; she is offended with the fears he betrays, and believes herself capable of resisting the Prince of Darkness. Her weak husband yields ; he sadly follows her with his eyes as she disappears among the trees. Eve has no sooner arrived at the Tree of Knowledge than she is beguiled, in spite of the warnings of Adam and of Heaven, in spite of the images presented to her in a dream, which had nevertheless alarmed her, and in which the Father of Lies had said to her what the serpent repeats. The praise of her beauty intoxicates her ; she falls.

The stupor of Adam, his resolution to partake of the forbidden fruit, that he may die with Eve,

the despair of both, their reproaches, his forgiveness, the reconciliation; Eve's proposal either to destroy herself or to deny herself posterity—all is in the highest strain of pathos. Eve, moreover, reminds one of Shakspeare's females; she has an air so extremely youthful; her simplicity is almost child-like; it furnishes an excuse for a seduction which is effected with such facility.

The style of these scenes could have belonged to no one but Milton. The delicious lines in which Eve gives an account of her first waking after her creation, are well known. In the same book, the fourth, she also says to our first Father:

Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,  
 With charms of earliest birds: pleasant the sun,  
 When first on this delightful land he spreads  
 His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,  
 Glist'ning with dew; fragrant the fertile earth  
 After soft show'rs; and sweet the coming on  
 Of grateful evening mild; then silent night  
 With this her solemn bird, and this fair moon,  
 And these, the gems of heaven, her starry train.  
 But neither breath of morn when she ascends  
 With charm of earliest birds, nor rising sun  
 On this delightful land, nor herb, fruit, flower,  
 Glist'ning with dew, nor fragrance after showers,  
 Nor grateful evening mild, nor silent night,  
 With this her solemn bird, nor walk by moon,  
 Or glittering star-light, without thee is sweet.

Before they enter the nuptial bower, Adam pauses, and veils his expected felicity in this chaste and pious aspiration:

This delicious place  
 For us too large, where thy abundance wants  
 Partakers, and uncropt falls to the ground.  
 But thou hast promised from us two a race  
 To fill this earth, who shall with us extol  
 Thy goodness infinite both when we wake  
 And when we seek as now thy gift of sleep.

Adam wakes before Eve in the morning,

He, on his side  
 Leaning half rais'd, with looks of cordial love,  
 Hung over her enamour'd, and beheld  
 Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,  
 Shot forth peculiar graces ; then with voice  
 Mild, as when Zephyrus or Flora breathes,  
 Her hand soft touching whisper'd thus : Awake  
 My fairest, my espous'd, my latest found,  
 Heaven's last best gift, my ever new delight,  
 Awake ; the morning shines, and the fresh field  
 Calls us ; we lose the prime.

When Raphael beholds Eve, he addresses her  
 with this angelic salutation :

Hail, mother of mankind, whose fruitful womb  
 Shall fill the world more numerous with thy sons  
 Than with these various fruits the trees of God  
 Have heap'd this table.

Thus every thing is sanctified by religious sentiment in the hymns of this poet. These gracious pictures of blessedness are the more dramatic because they are witnessed by Satan. He learns from the very lips of the happy pair their own secret and his power to ruin them. The felicity of Adam and Eve alarms us for them ; every instant of their bliss makes us tremble, since it



must be followed by the perdition of the human race. The Prince of Hell exclaims :

Oh gentle pair, ye little think how nigh  
 Your change approaches, when all these delights  
 Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe ;  
 More woe the more your taste is now of joy ;  
 Happy, but for so happy ill secur'd  
 Long to continue,  
 ——— yet no purpos'd foe  
 To you, whom I could pity thus forlorn,  
 Though I unpitied. ———

If the art of the poet is any where displayed, it is in the description of our first parents' love after the fall. The poet employs his former colours, but their effect is no longer the same. Eve is not now the wife, but the mistress. The virgin bride of Eden's bower has entered that of Paphos; voluptuousness has superseded love, and blandishments chaste caresses. And how has the poet effected this metamorphosis? He has banished from his description but a single word—innocence. The pair come forth sated, drowsy from the inebriation of the forbidden fruit; we see that they have begotten Cain. They discover with shame the pale traces of pleasure in their countenances; they perceive that they are naked, and resort to the fig tree. Man has fallen. The globe is deranged upon its axis, the seasons changed, and Death first sets foot on the earth.

### THE FATHER AND THE SON.

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THE character of the Almighty Father is obscurely traced. In this we must admire the author's reserve. He feared to put mortal words into the lips of an imperishable being; therefore gives Jehovah none that are not sanctioned by Holy Writ, and by the commentaries of the first-rate minds in Christendom in succeeding ages: every thing turns on the most abstract questions of Grace, Free Will, Eternal Prescience. The Almighty increases in majesty amidst the theological philosophy, in which the hand of respect and mystery keeps him concealed. We shall see that Milton, in the confusion of his systems, formed no very distinct idea of the one God.

But the character of the Son is a work the perfections of which have not been sufficiently remarked. In Christ is the nature of man; man

may therefore the better comprehend Christ, and, as in Christ there is also the divine nature, it is through man that Milton raised himself to the real knowledge of this union of God and man. The tenderness of the Son is ineffable, and never-failing. In the third book he offers himself as an expiatory victim; even before man has fallen he says to the Father:—

Behold me then ; me for him, life for life,  
 I offer ; on me let thine anger fall ;  
 Account me man ; I for his sake will leave  
 Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee  
 Freely put off, and for him lastly die  
 Well pleas'd ; on me let death wreak all his rage.  
 His words here ended, but his meek aspect  
 Silent yet spake, and breathed immortal love  
 To mortal man.

In the tenth book the Father sends the Son to judge the guilty pair ; he replies—

I go to judge  
 On earth these thy transgressors ; but thou knowst,  
 Whoever judg'd, the worst on me must light,  
 When time shall be, for so I undertook  
 Before thee ; and, not repenting, this obtain  
 Of right, that I may mitigate their doom,  
 On me derived.

The Son refuses all ' attendance,' all ' train,  
 where none

Are to behold the judgment but the judg'd,  
Those two.

He descends to the garden, "from wrath more cool" than its evening breeze. His voice, far from being terrible, is "by soft winds brought to their ears." They hide themselves; he calls, "Where art thou Adam?" The man hesitates, but comes, "and with him Eve, more loth," and,

Adam faltering long, thus answer'd brief:  
I heard thee in the garden, and of thy voice  
Afraid, being naked, hid myself. To whom  
The gracious Judge, without revile, repli'd,  
My voice thou oft hast heard, and hast not fear'd,  
But still rejoiced: how is it now become  
So dreadful to thee? That thou art naked, who  
Hath told thee?

\* \* \* \* \*

So judg'd he man, both Judge and Saviour sent.

———— Then pitying how they stood  
Before him naked to the air, that now  
Must suffer change, disdain'd not to begin  
Thenceforth the form of servant to assume.  
As when he wash'd his servants' feet, so now,  
As father of his family, he clad  
Their nakedness with skins of beasts.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nor he their outward only ———

———— but inward nakedness, much more  
Opprobrious, with his robe of righteousness  
Arraying, covered from his Father's sight.  
To him with swift ascent he up returned.

At the conclusion of the same book, the tenth, Eve and Adam, reconciled and penitent, offer their prayers to God, from the place where he hath placed them. Their orisons ascend to heaven; the Great Intercessor presents them to the Father,

clad

With incense where the golden altar fum'd.

\* \* \* \*

See, Father, what first fruits on earth are sprung  
From thy implanted grace in man, these sighs  
And pray'rs, which ———

————— I thy priest before thee bring.

\* \* \* \*

Unskilful with what words to pray, let me  
Interpret for him, me his advocate  
And propitiation, all his works on me,  
Good or not good, ingraft; my merit those  
Shall perfect, and for these my death shall pay.

The beauty of the poetry here equals that of the sentiment. In the twelfth book, Milton, quitting the loftiness of the Bible, descends to the gentle meekness of the Gospel, to depict the mystery of redemption. Michael says to Adam.

Thy punishment

He shall endure, by coming in the flesh  
To a reproachful life and cursed death;

\* \* \* \*

For this he shall live hated, be blasphemed,  
Seiz'd on by force, judg'd, and to death condemn'd,  
A shameful and accurs'd, nail'd to the cross,

By his own nation, slain for bringing life,  
But to the cross he nails thy enemies.

Milton's genius is softened by the rays of Christianity. As he displayed events preceding Time, he leaves you in that time into which he has introduced you at the fall of man. His own mind passes over this intermediate world, which it disdains, and hastens to announce the destruction of that Time to whom he gives the wings of hours, to proclaim the renewal of all things, the union of the end and of the beginning, in the bosom of God.

## MILTON'S ANGELS.

AMONG the angels there are great varieties of character. Uriel, Raphael, Michael, have each peculiar traits which distinguish them from one another. Raphael is the friend of man. The portrait which the poet draws of him is replete with modesty and grace.

Sent by God to our first parents, on arriving in Eden, he

Shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance filled  
The circuit wide.

Adam thus calls his partner :

Haste hither Eve, and worth thy sight behold,  
Eastward among those trees, what glorious shape  
Comes this way moving ; seems another morn  
Ris'n on mid-noon.

Raphael accosts Adam, as, in Scriptural history, the angels demanded hospitality of the Patriarchs, or, in Pagan annals, gods sat at the table of Baucis and Philemon. Raphael salutes our first mother—

On whom the angel *Hail*  
Bestow'd, the holy salutation used  
Long after to blest Mary, second Eve.

He then relates, as I have said, what has passed in heaven, the fall of the rebel angels and the creation of the world; he satisfies the curiosity of the father of men; and blushes

Celestial rosy red, love's proper hue,

when Adam ventures to question him on the loves of spirits. When he returns to heaven, Adam says:

Go, heavenly guest, ——

——— thou to mankind

Be good and friendly still, and oft return!

Michael, chief of the heavenly warriors, is sent in his turn, but to banish the guilty pair from Paradise.

Not in his shape celestial, but as man  
Clad to meet man: over his lucid arms  
While military vest of purple flow'd;  
His starry helm unbuckled show'd him prime  
In manhood, where youth ended; by his side,  
As in a glist'ring zodiac, hung the sword,  
Satan's dire dread, and in his hand the spear.

Adam, perceiving him from afar, says to Eve:

——— Majesty

Invests his coming; yet not terrible  
That I should fear, not sociably mild  
As Raphael.

The poet is familiar with all these angels, and makes you live with them. The faithful one in the Satanic host is energetic. I shall presently quote his discourse. Even the cherubim who in



their night-watch surprise Satan at the ear of Eve are correctly drawn. Satan insultingly cries :

Know ye not me? ye knew me once, no mate  
 For you, there sitting where ye durst not soar;  
 Not to know me argues yourselves unknown,  
 The lowest of your throng.  
 To whom thus Zephon, answ'ring scorn with scorn:  
 Think not, revolted spirit, thy shape the same  
 Or undiminish'd brightness to be known,  
 As when thou stoodst in heaven upright and pure.  
 Thy glory then, when thou no more wast good,  
 Departed from thee.

Thy fear, said Zephon bold,  
 Will save us trial what the least can do  
 Single against the wicked, and thence weak.

When Satan transforms himself into a spirit of light, the poet spreads over him all the harmonies of his art.

Under a coronet his flowing hair  
 In curls on either cheek play'd; wings he wore  
 Of many-colour'd plumes, sprinkled with gold;  
 His habit, fit for speed, succinct, and held  
 Before his decent steps a silver wand.

All these spirits, in their infinite variety and beauty, appear before us as if painted by Michael Angelo or Raphael; or rather we see that Milton habited and represented them after the pictures of those great masters. He has transferred them from the canvass to poetry, and, by the aid of his lyre, given language to the lips which painting had left mute.

MILTON'S DEMONS AND ALLEGORICAL  
PERSONAGES.

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IT were useless to repeat what every one knows respecting the spirits of darkness, as Milton has produced them. Satan is acknowledged to be an incomparable creation.

Louis Racine makes this remark in speaking of Satan's four soliloquies : " On what occasions does the spirit of rage, the king of evil, utter reflections which may be called wise? First, when contemplating the beauty of the sun ; secondly, in contemplating the beauty of the earth ; thirdly, in contemplating the beauty of two beings, who in peaceful converse assure each other of their mutual love ; fourthly, in contemplating one of these creatures alone, among trees, cultivating flowers, the image of innocence and tranquillity. All that is good and fair at first excites his admiration ; this awakens remorse, by the remembrance of what he has lost, and the results of his remorse only harden him the more in crime. The

king of evil by degrees becomes worthy of his new empire. Eve gathering flowers appears to him happy; her serenity is the pleasure of innocence; he hastens to destroy what he admires, because he is the destroyer of all happiness. In these four soliloquies Milton has preserved the same character for Satan, without copying himself. Satan is not the hero of his poem, but the master-piece of his poetry."

Milton has almost given to Satan sensations of love for Eve. The fallen angel is jealous, at viewing the caresses of the wedded pair. Eve fascinating for a moment the rival of the Almighty, the chief of hell, the king of hate, leaves in the imagination an incomprehensible impression of the beauty of the woman.

The allegorical personages of "Paradise Lost," are Chaos, Death, and Sin. Such is the fire of the poet that he has made the two latter real and formidable persons. Nothing is more wondrous than the instinct of Sin, when, from the threshold of hell, between the flames of Tartarus and the ocean of Chaos, this phantom guesses that her father and her son have conquered the world. Death too, says to his mother Sin :

——— Such a scent I draw  
Of carnage, prey innumerable, and taste  
The savour of death from all things that there live.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

So scented the grim feature, and upturn'd  
 His nostrils wide into the murky air,  
 Sagacious of his quarry from so far.

Sin, as I observed in the "*Genie de Christianisme*," is of the feminine gender in English, and Death masculine. Racine wishing to save his language from this confusion of sexes, gave Sin the Greek name of Até, and Death that of Ades. I have not enslaved myself to his scruples. Against Louis Racine I have the authority of Jean Racine.

Le Mort est le seul dieu que j'osais implorer.

Death is the only God I dared implore.

It appears to me that readers accustomed beforehand to this picture will easily reconcile themselves to this change of genders, making Death masculine, and Sin feminine, in spite of our articles.

Voltaire, while in London, was one day criticising this celebrated allegory; Young, who heard him, made this distich impromptu:

You are so witty, profligate, and thin,  
 At once we think you *Milton's Death and Sin!*

It now but remains for me to speak of one other character in *Paradise Lost*, I mean that of Milton himself.

## MILTON IN "PARADISE LOST."

THE republican is conspicuous in every verse of "*Paradise Lost*:" the speeches of Satan breathe a hatred of subjection. Milton, however, who, although an enthusiast of liberty, had nevertheless served Cromwell, reveals the kind of republic which accorded with his ideas: it is not a republic of equality, a plebeian republic; he desired an aristocratic republic, in which gradations of rank are admitted. Satan says:—

—— "if not equal all, yet free,  
Equally free; for orders and degrees  
Jar not with liberty, but well consist.  
Who can in reason then, or right, assume  
Monarchy over such as live by right  
His equals, if in power or splendour less,  
In freedom equal? or can introduce  
Law and edict on us, who without law  
Err not? much less for this to be our Lord,  
And look for adoration, to the abuse  
Of those imperial titles, which assert  
Our being ordained to govern, not to serve."

*Paradise Lost*, Book V.

If there could remain any doubt on this subject, Milton, in his tract entitled "The Ready and Easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth," speaks a language calculated to dispel all uncertainty; he therein avows that the republic should be governed *by a grand or general perpetual council*; he rejects the *popular remedy* adopted to check the ambition of this permanent council, as the people would plunge headlong into a *licentious and unbridled democracy*. Milton, the proud republican, had a coat of arms: he bore on a field sable, an eagle argent, double-headed gules, beak and legs sable. An eagle was, for the poet at least, a speaking escutcheon. The Americans have escutcheons of a more feudal character than those of the knights of the fourteenth century; such fancies are altogether harmless.

The speeches which constitute the greater part of "Paradise Lost," have acquired new interest since we have had a representative government. The poet has introduced into his work the political forms of the government of his native land. Satan convokes in hell a real parliament; he divides it into two chambers; Tartarus rejoices in a chamber of peers. Eloquence is one of the essential qualities of the author's talent; the speeches delivered by his personages are frequently models of

skill and energy. Abdiel, when parting from the rebel angels, addresses Satan in these words :—

“ O alienate from God, O spirit accurs'd,  
 Forsaken of all good ! I see thy fall  
 Determined, and thy hapless crew involv'd  
 In this perfidious fraud, contagion spread  
 Both of thy crime and punishment : henceforth  
 No more be troubled how to quit the yoke  
 Of God's Messiah ; those indulgent laws  
 Will not be now vouchsaf'd ; other decrees  
 Against thee are gone forth without recall ;  
 That golden sceptre, which thou didst reject,  
 Is now an iron rod to bruise and break  
 Thy disobedience. Well thou didst advise ;  
 Yet not for thy advice and threats I fly  
 These wicked tents devoted, lest the wrath  
 Impendent, raging into sudden flame,  
 Distinguish not : for soon expect to feel  
 His thunder on thy head, devouring fire.  
 Then who created thee lamenting learn,  
 When who can uncreate thee thou shalt know.”

There is, in the poem, something which at first sight appears unaccountable : the infernal republic attempts to overthrow the celestial monarchy ; Milton, though his sentiments are wholly republican, invariably ascribes justice and victory to the Almighty ! The reason of this is that the poet was swayed by his religious opinions. In accordance with the Independents, he desired a theocratic republic, a hierarchical liberty, subject only to the

dominion of Heaven; he had represented Cromwell as the lieutenant-general of God and the protector of the republic:—

Cromwell, our chief of men, who, through a cloud  
 Not of war only, but detractions rude,  
 Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,  
 To peace and truth thy glorious way hast plough'd,  
 And on the neck of crowned fortune proud  
 Hast rear'd God's trophies, and his works pursued,  
 While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots'imbrued,  
 And Dunbar field resounds thy praises loud,  
 And Worcester's laureat wreath. Yet much remains  
 To conquer still; peace hath her victories  
 No less renown'd than war: new foes arise  
 Threat'ning to bind our souls with secular chains:  
 Help us to save free conscience from the paw  
 Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw.

Satan and his angels were pictured to Milton's imagination by the proud Presbyterians, who refused to submit to the *Saints*, Milton's own faction, of which he hailed the inspired Cromwell as the godly leader.

We discern in Milton a man of troubled spirit; still under the influence of revolutionary scenes and passions, he stood erect after the downfall of the revolution which had fled to him for shelter, and palpitated in his bosom. But the earnestness of that revolution overpowers him; religious gravity forms the counterpoise to his political agitations. Stunned, however, at the overthrow of



his fondest illusions, at the dissipation of his dreams of liberty, he knows not which way to turn, but remains in a state of perplexity, even respecting religious truth.

An attentive perusal of "Paradise Lost" fixes on the mind the impression that Milton fluctuated between a variety of systems. In the very opening of his poem, he avows himself a Socinian by the celebrated expression "one greater man;" he is silent respecting the Holy Ghost, never names the Trinity, nowhere states the Son to be equal to the Father. The Son is not begotten of all eternity; the poet even places his creation after that of the angels. Milton is, if anything, an Arian; he does not admit what is properly called the *creation*, but supposes a pre-existing matter, co-eternal with the spirit. The particular creation of the universe is no more, in his opinion, than the arrangement of a little corner of chaos, which is ever threatening to return to its previous state of confusion. All the known philosophical theories of the poet have more or less taken root amongst his beliefs; at one time, Plato with the exemplars of ideas, or Pythagoras with the harmony of the spheres; at another, Epicurus, or Lucretius, with his materialism, as when he exhibits to view the half-formed animals issuing from the earth. He

is a fatalist when making the rebel angel say of himself and his companions :—

“ We know no time when we were not as now ;  
 Know none before us, self-begot, self-rais'd  
 By our own quick'ning power, when fatal course  
 Had circled his full orb.”

Milton is, moreover, a pantheist or Spinozist, but his pantheism is of an extraordinary kind.

The poet first appears to admit of the known pantheism, a medley of matter and mind ; but, if man had not sinned, Adam would have gradually extricated himself from matter, and acquired the nature of angels. Adam falls into sin. With a view to redeem the spiritual part of man, the Son of God, who is all spirit, assumes a material substance, descends upon earth, dies, and re-ascends into heaven, after passing through matter. Christ thus becomes the vehicle by means of which matter, brought into contact with intelligence, becomes spiritualised. At length, the due time having elapsed, matter or the material world is at an end, and merges into the other principle. “ The Son,” says Milton, “ shall be absorbed in the bosom of the Father, with the rest of the creatures \* ; God shall be all in all.” This is a spiritual pantheism, succeeding the pantheism of the two principles.

\* This I cannot find in Milton.—TRANSLATOR.

Thus our soul will be absorbed in the source of spirituality. What is that sea of intelligence, a single drop of which, contained within matter, is sufficiently powerful to comprehend the motion of the spheres and to investigate the nature of God? What is the Infinite? What! still worlds after worlds! Imagination is bewildered in its endeavours to penetrate those abysses, and Milton is wrecked in the attempt. Nevertheless, amidst this chaos of principles, the poet remains biblical and a Christian; he rehearses the fall and the redemption. A Puritan at first, then an Independent and an Anabaptist, he becomes a *saint*, a quietist, and an enthusiast; it is at length but a voice that sings the praises of the Almighty. Milton had forsaken the house of God; he no longer gave any external signs of religion; in "Paradise Lost" he declares that prayer is the only worship acceptable to God.

This poem, which opens in hell, and, passing over the earth, terminates in heaven, exhibits only two human beings in the vast wilderness of the new creation; the rest are the supernatural inhabitants of the abyss of endless felicity, or of the gulf of everlasting misery. Well, then, the poet has dared to penetrate this solitude, where he presents himself as the child of Adam, a deputy of the human race, fallen through disobedience.

He there appears as the hierophant, the prophet, commissioned to learn the history of man's fall, and to sing it on the harp devoted to the penances of David. He is so full of genius, holiness, and grandeur, that his noble head is not misplaced near that of our first parent, in the presence of God and of his angels. Issuing forth from the abyss of darkness, he hails that holy light which is denied to his eyes.

Hail, holy light, offspring of heaven first-born,  
 Or of the Eternal co-eternal beam,  
 May I express thee unblam'd? since God is light,  
 And never but in unapproach'd light  
 Dwelt from eternity, dwelt there in thee,  
 Bright effluence of bright essence increate!  
 Or hear'st thou rather, pure ethereal stream,  
 Whose fountain who shall tell? Before the sun,  
 Before the heavens, thou wert, and, at the voice  
 Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest  
 The rising world of waters, dark and deep,  
 Won from the void and formless infinite.  
 Thee I revisit now with bolder wing,  
 Escap'd the Stygian pool \* \* \*  
 And feel thy sovran, vital lamp; but thou  
 Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain  
 To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;  
 So thick a drop serene hath quench'd their orbs,  
 Or dim suffusion veil'd. Yet not the more  
 Cease I to wander where the muses haunt  
 Clear spring or shady grove \* \* \*

\* nor sometimes forget

Those other two equall'd with me in fate.  
 So were I equall'd with them in renown,  
 Blind Thamyris, and blind Mæonides,

And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old ;  
 There feed on thoughts, that voluntary move  
 Harmonious numbers ; as the wakeful bird  
 Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid  
 Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year  
 Seasons return ; but not to me returns  
 Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,  
 Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,  
 Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine ;  
 But clouds instead, and ever-during dark  
 Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men  
 Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair  
 Presented with a universal blank  
 Of Nature's works, to me expung'd and ras'd,  
 And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.  
 So much the rather thou, celestial light,  
 Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers  
 Irradiate ; there plant eyes, all mist from thence  
 Purge and disperse ; that I may see and tell  
 Of things invisible to mortal sight."

Elsewhere he exclaims in not less pathetic strains :

" If answerable style I can obtain  
 Of my celestial patroness, who deigns  
 Her nightly visitation unimplor'd,  
 \* \* \* \* \* higher argument  
 Remains ; sufficient of itself to raise  
 That name, unless an age too late, or cold  
 Climate, or years, damp my intended wing  
 Depress'd."

How lofty must have been the intelligence of  
 Milton, which could sustain this intercourse face  
 to face with God, and the wonderful beings he has

created! No man ever displayed a more sober and at the same time a more delicate genius. "It was," says Hume, "during a state of poverty, blindness, disgrace, danger, and old age, that Milton composed his wonderful poem, which not only surpassed all the performances of his cotemporaries, but all the compositions which had flowed from his pen during the vigour of his age and the height of his prosperity." We actually distinguish in this poem, through the ardour of youthful years, the maturity of age and the gravity of misfortune; this imparts to "Paradise Lost" an extraordinary fascination of old age and youth, of restlessness and peace, of sadness and joy, of reason and love.

PART THE FOURTH.



LITERATURE UNDER THE LAST TWO STUARTS.





## COMPARISON

BETWEEN THE MEN AND EVENTS OF THE ENGLISH AND  
OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTIONS.

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WERE we, on quitting Milton, to hasten, without any transition, to the writers who flourished under the last two Stuarts, we should fall from a greater height than the angels of "Paradise Lost," who were hurled from heaven to an immeasurable depth. We have, however, to take a retrospect of the revolution from which the poet had emerged, and to compare it with our own revolution: by bestowing some further consideration on the age of Milton, we shall insensibly descend to the reigns of Charles and of James. We feel riveted, as it were, to those days of 1649, remarkable for their affinity with our own time; we shall see, by the comparison of men and events, that our revolutionary days maintain over those of the English republic and Protectorship a signal, though too often a fatal, superiority.

The French revolution was surpassed in litera-

ture by the English revolution ; from the republic, the empire, the restoration, nothing has emanated which can bear comparison with the author of "Paradise Lost;" in other respects, in all but a moral and religious point of view, our revolution has far outstripped that of our neighbours.

When the Revolution of 1649 was brought about, the intercourse between nations had not reached the point which it has attained at the present day ; the ideas, the events, of every country, were not conveyed over the whole world by the multiplicity of roads, the rapidity of couriers, the extension of commerce and industry, the publications of the periodical press. The revolution of Great Britain did not set Europe in a blaze ; confined within an island, it did not carry its arms and its principles to the extremities of Europe ; it did not preach liberty and the rights of man, as Mahomet preached the Koran and despotism, sword in hand ; it was neither called upon to repel a foreign invasion, nor to defend itself against a system of terror ; the religious and social state was not what it is at the present day.

In fact, the actors in that revolution never came up to the mark of those of the French revolution, measured as the latter was upon a much larger scale, and carried on by a nation much more closely connected with the general destinies of the

world. Is it to Ludlow or Hampden that we can compare Mirabeau? His superiors in a moral point of view, they were greatly inferior to him in genius\*.

Connected by the excesses and accidents of his life with the most remarkable events, and with the existence of felons, ravishers, and adventurers, Mirabeau, the tribune of aristocracy, the deputy of democracy, partook of the characters of Gracchus and Don Juan, of Catiline and Guzman d'Alfarache, of Cardinal de Richelieu and Cardinal de Retz, of the profligate of the regency and the savage of the revolution; there moreover flowed in his veins the blood of the Mirabeaus; an exiled Florentine family, which retained somewhat of those armed palaces and those great factions illustrated by Dante; a French naturalised family, in which the republican spirit of Italy during the middle age, and the feudal spirit of our own middle age, were found combined in a succession of extraordinary men.

The ugliness of Mirabeau, laid upon a ground of beauty, for which his race was distinguished, produced an image of one of the powerful figures in the *Last Judgment* of Michael Angelo, the

\* What follows, as far as, and including the parallel between Bonaparte and Cromwell, is a condensed extract from my Memoirs.

compatriot of Arrighetti. The marks left by the small-pox on the orator's face rather bore the appearance of scars occasioned by fire. Nature seemed to have moulded his head for empire or the gibbet, to have shaped his arms for the purpose of curbing a nation or carrying off a woman. When he shook his mane, with his eyes fixed upon the mob, he suddenly checked their progress; when he raised his foot and showed his claws, they ran furiously. Amidst the most frightful riot of a sitting, I have seen him in the tribune, dark, hideous, and motionless: he reminded me of the Chaos of Milton, impassible and shapeless—the centre of his own confusion.

Twice did I meet Mirabeau at an entertainment: on one occasion at the house of Voltaire's niece, the Marchioness de Villette; on another, at the Palais Royal, with deputies of the opposition, with whom Chapelain had made me acquainted. Chapelain was conveyed to the scaffold on the same tumbrel with M. de Malesherbes and my own brother.

Our discussion after dinner turned upon the subject of Mirabeau's enemies; I happened to be next to him; and, with the timidity of a young man, unknown to all, had not uttered a word. He looked me full in the face with his eyes of wickedness and genius, and, laying his broad hand

upon my shoulder, said, " They will never forgive me my superiority." Methinks I still feel the impression of that hand, as if Satan had touched me with his fiery claw\*.

Too soon for his own sake, too late for that of the court, Mirabeau sold himself to the latter, and the court bought him over. He hazarded the stake of his fame for the prospect of a pension and an embassy; Cromwell was at the point of exchanging his future prospects for a title and the Order of the Garter. Notwithstanding his pride, he did not set a sufficient value upon himself; the superabundance of money and of places has since raised the price of men's consciences.

Death released Mirabeau from his promises, and rescued him from dangers which he would probably have been unable to overcome: his life would have demonstrated his incapacity for good; by his death he was left in the height of his power for evil.

\* Mirabeau boasted of having a handsome hand; I have nothing to say against his notion; but I was very slender, and he extremely large, and his hand fairly covered my shoulder.

CLUBS.

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ENGLAND had her factions and even her parties; what, however, were the *meetings* of the saints, of the puritans, of the levellers, of the agitators, compared with the clubs of our revolution? I have said elsewhere, in the *Génie du Christianisme*, that Milton had placed in his Hell an image of the perverseness to which he had been a witness: what sort of a picture would he have drawn, had he seen what I saw in Paris during the summer of 1792, when, returning from America, I passed through France in fulfilment of my destinies?

The King's flight, on the 21st of June, 1791, caused the revolution to take a prodigious stride. Brought back to Paris on the 25th of the same month, he was then dethroned for the first time, since the National Assembly declared that the decrees should have the force of laws, without

requiring the royal sanction or acceptance. A high court of justice was established at Orleans, and outstripped the revolutionary tribunal. At that very period, Madame Roland was clamorous for the Queen's head, little dreaming how soon her own would be called for by the revolution. The riotous assembly of the Champ de Mars had taken place, in opposition to the decree which suspended the King from his functions, instead of bringing him to trial. The acceptance of the constitution, on the 14th of September, failed to restore tranquillity. The decree of the 29th September, for the regulation of popular societies, only had the effect of increasing their violence; this was the last act of the Constituent Assembly: it separated on the following day, bequeathing to France an endless revolution.

The Legislative Assembly, installed on the 1st of October, 1791, rolled in the vortex which was to swallow up the living and the dead. Disturbances embued the departments in blood; at Caen, the people were glutted with massacres, and feasted upon the heart of M. de Belzunce. The King set his *вето* to the decree against emigrants, and the public agitation was increased by this lawful act. Petion had become mayor of Paris. On the 1st of January, 1792, the deputies passed decrees of accusation against the emigrant princes;

on the 2nd, they fixed upon the preceding day, the 1st of January, for the commencement of the IVth year of liberty. The red caps were displayed in the streets of Paris towards the 13th of February, and the municipality ordered the manufacturing of pikes. On the 1st of March appeared the manifesto of the emigrants. Austria was arming. The treaty of Pilnitz, and the convention between the Emperor and the King of Prussia, were publicly known. Paris was divided into sections more or less hostile to each other. On the 20th of March, 1792, the Legislative Assembly adopted the sepulchral machine, without which the sentences of the Tribunal of Terror could not have been carried into effect; it was first tried upon the dead, that it might learn its business from them. We may consider this instrument in the light of an executioner, since many persons, well pleased with its services, made donations of money for its support. \*

Roland the minister, or rather his astonishing wife, had been called to the king's council. War was declared, on the 20th of April, against the king of Hungary and Bohemia. Marat published *L'Ami du Peuple*, notwithstanding the decree levelled at his head. The royal German regiment

\* Moniteur, No. 198.



and that of Berchini deserted. Isnard declaimed against court perfidy. Gensonné and Brissot denounced the Austrian committee. An insurrection broke out under the pretext afforded by the king's guard, which was disbanded on the 28th of May; the assembly formed itself into permanent sittings. On the 20th of June, the palace of the Tuileries was stormed by the mob of the faubourgs St. Antoine and St. Marceau, assuming as their motive the refusal of Louis XVI to sanction the proscription of the clergy; the king's life was placed in jeopardy; the country was decreed to be in danger. M. de la Fayette was burnt in effigy. The confederates of the second federation were approaching; the Marseillais, summoned by Danton, were in full march; they entered Paris on the 30th of July, and were quartered by Petion at the Cordeliers'.

Beside the National Assembly, two concurrent assemblies had arisen; the one of the Jacobins, the other of the Cordeliers, at that time the most formidable, as it sent members to the famous commune of Paris, and furnished it with means of action.

The club of the Cordeliers was established in the monastery of that name, the church of which had been built during the reign of St. Louis, in 1259, by means of a fine raised in atonement for

a murder \* ; it became, in 1590, the haunt of the most celebrated Leaguers. The pictures, the sculptured or painted images, the veils, the curtains, of the convent of the Cordeliers had been forcibly removed in 1792 ; the dismantled church presented to the eye a mere skeleton of its former self. In its apsis, where the wind and rain were admitted through its unglazed windows, carpenters' benches served as a seat for the president, when the meeting was held in the church. On these benches were laid the red caps which were worn by each speaker, before he ascended the tribune. This tribune consisted of four small rafters crossing one another in the form of an X, and having a plank laid upon them like a scaffold. Behind the president were seen, along with a statue of Liberty, the pretended instruments of torture of the former court of justice ; all which instruments were replaced by a single one, the engine of blood, as complicated machines make way for the hydraulic ram. The club of the *refined* Jacobins borrowed from the Cordeliers some of these arrangements.

United for purposes of destruction, the speakers could not agree either as to the choice of leaders or the means to be employed. They called each other vagabonds, swindlers, thieves, murderers, amidst the discordant sounds of whis-

\* It was burnt in 1580.

bles, and the howlings of their various groups of devils. Metaphors were drawn from the materials of murders, borrowed from the filthiest objects, from the laystall and the dunghill ; or from places devoted to the prostitution of both sexes, Descriptions were illustrated by gestures ; every thing was called by its proper name, with brutal impudence, amidst an obscene and impious parade of oaths and blasphemies. To destroy and beget, to kill and procreate, these words exclusively formed the savage cant which stunned our ears. The speakers, with shrill or thundering voices, were disturbed by others besides their opponents ; the small dark owls of the cloister without monks, and of the steeple without bells, fluttered about the broken windows, in search of prey, and interrupted the speeches. They were at first called to order by the ringing of the powerless bell ; but as they kept up their shrieks, muskets were fired to silence them ; they fell panting, wounded, and prophetic, in the midst of this pandemonium. Broken down timber-work, tottering benches, scattered seats, fragments of saints, rolled and driven against the walls, were used as steps by the bespattered, dusty, drunken, sweating spectators, with torn jackets, bare arms crossed, or shouldered pikes.

## DANTON.

The representatives at the Cordeliers were controlled and frequently presided over by Danton ; a Hun, of Gothic size, with flat nose, broad nostrils, and pitted face ; the like of this man could not easily have been moulded out of the materials of the English revolution ; not even by a combination of Bradshaw, president of the commission which sat in judgment upon Charles I ; Ireton, the renowned son-in-law of Cromwell ; Axtell, the great destroyer in Ireland ; Scott, who desired that his tomb should bear the inscription, “ Here lies Thomas Scott, who condemned the late king to death ; ” Harrison, who said to his judges—“ Several amongst you, my judges, took an active part with me in the events which have occurred in England ; that which has been done was so done by order of Parliament, at that time the supreme law.”

In the shell of this church, as in the skeleton of ages, Danton organised the attack of the 10th of August, and the massacres of September ; the author of the circular addressed to the commune, he

invited all free men to re-enact in the departments the enormities perpetrated at the Carmelites' and at the Abbaye. Did not, however, Sixtus V. assimilate, in respect to the salvation of mankind, the self-sacrifice of Jacques Clement to the mystery of the incarnation, just as Marat was compared to the Saviour of the world? Did not Charles IX. write to the governors of the provinces, directing them to imitate the massacres of St. Bartholomew, as Danton ordered the patriots to copy the massacres of September? The Jacobins are plagiarists; they were equally so when they immolated Louis XVI. in imitation of Charles I. Crimes having been found mixed up with the social movement of the close of the last century, the impression has incorrectly fixed itself upon some minds that the grandeur of the revolution was the result of those crimes, which were but its frightful and unprofitable excesses; the convulsion alone of a lofty nature in its throes has excited admiration

At the period when the play-things of children were little guillotines for birds; when the dead were removed to the burying-ground by a man in a red cap\*; when the cry was "Hurrah for hell! hurrah for death;" when the joyous revels of

\* Resolution of the General Council of the Commune, 27 Brumaire, 39.

blood, of steel, and of rage were celebrated ; when annihilation was toasted ; the last banquet, the last witticism of woe, could not fail to come in due turn.

Danton was caught in his own trap ; brought before the tribunal, his own work, it availed him nothing to throw bread-balls at his judges, to answer with courage and dignity, to create hesitation in the revolutionary court, to intimidate and endanger the Convention, to argue logically respecting atrocities in which the very power of his enemies had originated.

Nothing remained for him but to show himself as insensible to his own death as he had been to that of others ; to rear his proud head above the suspended sword. From the theatre of terror, where his feet stuck in the clotted blood of the preceding day, after casting a look of contempt at the crowd, he said to the executioner : “ Thou wilt show my head to the people ; it deserves to be seen by them.” Danton’s head remained in the executioner’s hands, whilst the acephalous shade went to mingle with the decapitated shades of his victims : this was likewise equality.

THE PEOPLE OF BOTH NATIONS AT THE  
REVOLUTIONARY EPOCH.

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ROYALIST PEASANTRY OF ENGLAND.

ARRAYED behind the Hampdens and Iretons, the English people possessed not the strength of that people who kept pace with the Mirabeaus and Dantons; a people who so nobly did its duty on the frontier, and drove foreign nations back to their own hearths; at the moment when they indulged the hope of sitting down by our fire-sides, and of quaffing the wine of our trellises, they quenched their own fires with their blood. Collectively taken, the people partakes of a poetic character; an animated author or actor in the performance in which it, either of its own free will, or reluctantly, plays a part, its very excesses are less the instinct of innate cruelty than the delirium of a crowd intoxicated with sights, especially those of a tragic character. This is so true that, in all scenes of

popular horror, something superfluous is always imparted to the picture and to emotion.

England had her civil wars: do they bear any resemblance to those of our western provinces? On those very occasions when our people were tearing each other to pieces, they were still wonderful in its excesses. But let us first consider the English peasant.

The cause of Charles I. and of his son produced many bold defenders among the rural population. The name of Pendrill, the farmer, and of his five brothers, is honourably recorded in the pages of history.

There is a little book entitled "Boscobel, or the History of his Sacred Majestie's most miraculous Preservation after the Battle of Worcester," in which is recorded the fidelity of the Pendrills. Charles II. having left Worcester at six in the evening of the 3rd of September, 1651, after the loss of the battle, arrived at four in the morning at White Ladies, a house belonging to Mr. Gifford, a recusant, in whose service the Pendrills lived. This house is distant about 29 miles from Worcester, and still retains the ancient name of White Ladies, from its having formerly been a monastery of Cistercian nuns, whose habit was of that colour.

"His Majesty had been advised to rub his



hands on the back of the chimney, and with these his face for a disguise, and some person had disorderly cut off his locks of hair: his majesty having put off his blue riband, buff coat, and other princely ornaments, and distributed the gold he had in his pocket among his servants, put on a noggen coarse shirt, which was borrowed of Edw. Marten, who served in the house, and Rich. Penderel's green suit and leather doublet, but had not time to be so exactly disguised as he was afterwards.

“Rich. Penderel conducted the king out at a back dore, and carried him into an adjacent wood belonging to Boscobel, call'd Spring Coppice. By the time Rich. Penderil had convey'd him into the obscurest part of it, it was about sun-rising on Thursday morning; and the heavens wept bitterly at these calamities; insomuch as the thickest tree in the wood was not able to keep his majesty dry, nor was there any thing for him to sit on. Wherefore Rich. went to Francis Yates house (a trusty neighbour, who married his wife's sister), where he borrowed a blanket, which he folded and laid under a tree for his majesty to sit on.

“At the same time Rich. spoke to the good-wife Yates, to provide some victuals, and bring it into the wood at a place he appointed her. She

presently made ready a mess of milk and some butter and eggs, and brought them to his majesty in the wood ; who, being a little surpriz'd to see the woman (no good concealer of a secret) said cheerfully to her : ‘ Good woman, can you be faithful to a distressed cavalier ? ’ She answered, ‘ Yes, Sir ; I will die rather than discover you : ’ with which answer his majesty was well satisfied.

“ On Thursday night his majesty resolved to go from those parts into Wales, and to take Richard Penderel with him for his guide ; but before they began their journey, his majesty went into Richard’s house at Hobbal Grange. Here his majesty had time and means better to complete his disguise ; his name was agreed to be Will. Jones, and his arms a wood-bill . . . . .

“ At Evelin mill, Richard, thinking the miller had pursued them, quitted the usual way in some haste, and led his majesty over a little brook, which they were forced to wade through. Here his majesty (as he afterwards pleasantly observed) was in some danger of losing his guide, but that the rusling of Richard’s calves-skin breeches was the best direction his majesty had to follow him in that dark night.”

All the passes of the Severn being guarded Penderel resolved to proceed to Boscobel House, where his brother William lived. Here the wife

of the latter “ made his majesty a posset of thin milk and small beer, and got ready some water to wash his feet, not onely extreme dirty, but much galled with travail. Colonel Carlis [who had also escaped from Worcester and rejoined the king at Boscobel] pull’d off his majestie’s shoos, which were full of gravel, and stockens which were very wet, and there being no other shoos in the house that would fit his majesty, the good-wife put some hot embers in those to dry them, whilst his majesties feet were washing and his stockens shifted.”

I now take up another historian. I once had a friend in common with M. de Fontanes; I know not whether, in the silence of his tomb, he would be beholden to me for revealing the pure and generous career which he concealed from the public gaze. His only productions were a few articles, without his signature, which appeared in various newspapers; amongst these was an essay on *Boscobel*. Be it permitted to friendship to quote some short fragments from this essay: they will raise the regret of all men of feeling at the loss of real merit; they are the only vestige of the steps imprinted by solitary and unknown talent on the shore of life during the progress of its career.

“ Carless,” says Mr. Joubert, “ was one of the most distinguished leaders of the king’s army; he

had fought to the last extremity at the battle of Worcester. Finding that all was lost, he had boldly placed himself, with the Earl of Clive and James Hamilton, at one of the gates of the conquered city, to arrest the victors, and check the pursuit of the vanquished. He maintained his post, which was of his own selection, until he hoped that his master had found time to escape, and was beyond the reach of danger: then, alone, he effected his retreat, and was proceeding to seek an asylum at his own habitation, not knowing the fate of Charles, or whether he should ever behold him again, when chance presented him to his view.

“ Their delight at the unexpected meeting may readily be imagined. Then it was that they dwelt in that celebrated oak, which was ever after held in such admiration, and which, when pointed out to the traveller, was called *The King's Palace*. This oak was of such dimensions, and so loaded with branches, that it would have held twenty men on its top. Exhausted with fatigue, Charles needed repose; he dared not indulge in it on the tree, or quit it without danger of being discovered: suspended as it were over an abyss, and concealed among the branches, the slightest slumber might have hurled him to the ground. Careless was strong; he undertook to keep watch. The King

placed himself in his arms, leant on his breast, and, supported by his valiant hands, fell asleep in the air.

“ How affecting was the sight ! A prince in the bloom and vigour of youth, reduced by somnolency to the weakness of childhood, giving way in drowsiness, with all the facility of that age, quietly sleeping, amidst so many dangers, in the arms of an austere man, of a vigilant warrior, watching over his king of one-and-twenty with all the anxiety of a mother ! Thus places, trees, and forests, have their destiny as well as men.

“ Charles soon quitted Boscobel. One day, in the parlour of an inn, as he took off his hat to the lady of the house who happened to pass by, the butler attentively fixed and recognised him. This man drew him aside, begged him to go down to the cellar with him, and there, filling a cup with wine, drank success to the king. ‘ I know who you are,’ he then said, bending his knee to the ground, ‘ and shall be true to you unto death.’ ”

The friend I have lost has thus recalled to my mind those forgotten scenes : he is gone to join those men of former days.

Does not the reader picture to himself in this narrative an episode of our wars in the western provinces during the revolution ? Fidelity seems to be one of the virtues peculiar to the old Chris-

tian religion : the Pendrills adhered to the faith of their forefathers ; they had a hiding-place where the priest said his mass ; their Protestant king found in it a sacred asylum at the foot of the old Catholic altar. To complete the resemblance, the Countess of Derby, who so valiantly defended the Isle of Man, and was the last person in the three kingdoms who submitted to the Commonwealth, was of the family of La Tremouille ; the Prince of Talmont was one of the last victims of Vendean wars.

## PORTRAIT OF A VENDEAN.

BE it as it may with regard to the wood-cutters of Boscobel, near the now-fallen *royal oak*, is the character of the Pendrills that of the Vendean peasants?

Whilst residing in London in 1798, I once met at the residence of the chargé d'affaires of the French princes, a crowd of dealers in counter-revolutions. There stood in the corner a man, who appeared to be from thirty to thirty-five years of age, unnoticed by all, and whose whole attention was fixed upon an engraving of the death of General Wolfe. Struck with his appearance, I inquired who he was. One of my neighbours replied, "He is nobody—a Vendean peasant; the bearer of a letter from his chiefs."

This man, who was nobody, had witnessed the death of Cathelineau, the first general of La Vendée, and a peasant like himself; of Bonchamp, in whom Bayard seemed to have revived; of Les-

cure, armed with a hair-cloth, which was not proof against a ball; of Elbée, shot in an arm-chair, his wounds preventing him from encountering death standing; of La Rochejaquelin, whose dead body was ordered by the patriots to be *verified*, with a view to tranquillise the Convention in the midst of its victories over Europe. This man, who was nobody, had assisted at the two hundred captures and re-captures of towns, villages, and redoubts; at the seven hundred partial actions and the seventeen general engagements; he had taken part in the struggles against three hundred thousand regulars, and six or seven hundred thousand forced levies and national guards; had helped to carry off five hundred pieces of cannon, and a hundred and fifty thousand muskets; had forced his way through the *infernal columns*, companies of incendiaries headed by conventionalists; had found himself in the midst of the ocean of fire, which thrice rolled its waves over the woods of La Vendée; lastly, he had witnessed the destruction of three hundred thousand Hercules of the plough, companions of his labours, and had seen a hundred square leagues of country converted into a wilderness of ashes.

The two Frances met on this soil which they had thus levelled. Whatever remained of old blood and of recollections in the France of the Crusades struggled against the new blood and the



hopes put forth by revolutionary France. The victor was sensible of the dignity of the conquered : Thurot, the general of the republicans, declared that "history would assign to the Vendéans the first rank amongst military populations." Another general wrote to Merlin of Thionville : "Troops that have defeated Frenchmen such as these may well hope to conquer all other nations." The legions of Probus said as much, in their songs, respecting our forefathers. The battles of La Vendée were called by Bonaparte " Battles of Giants."

I was the only one of the crowd in the apartments who looked with admiration and respect upon the representative of those boors of old, who, whilst breaking the yoke of their lords, repelled, under Charles V., the invasion of foreigners ; I fancied I beheld in him an inhabitant of those communes which, aided by the petty provincial nobility, in the days of Charles VII., re-conquered, furrow by furrow, inch by inch, the territory of France. He had that air of indifference which marks the savage ; his eye was grey and inflexible as an iron rod ; his lower lip trembled under his clenched teeth ; his hair fell from his head like snakes, benumbed, but ready to rear themselves ; his arms, hanging by his side, gave a nervous shock to enormous fists slashed with sabre cuts ; he might have been taken for a sawyer. His physi-

ognoomy expressed a plebeian rustic nature, brought by a moral force into the service of interests and ideas at variance with that nature ; the unaffected fidelity of the vassal, the simple faith of the Christian, were blended in him with rude plebeian independence, accustomed to value itself, and to revenge its own wrongs. His sense of liberty seemed to spring from the consciousness of the strength of his arm and of the intrepidity of his heart. He was as silent as a lion, scratched himself like a lion, yawned like a lion, stretched on his side like a wearied lion, and appeared to dream of blood and forests ; his intelligence was akin to that of death. What men were the French of those days, be their party what it might, and what a race have we become at the present day ! But the republicans had their principle in them, in the very midst of them, whereas the principle of the Royalists was out of France. The Vendean sent deputations to the emigrants ; the giants sent to solicit leaders from the pigmies. The rustic messenger I was contemplating had taken the revolution by the throat ; he had exclaimed,—“Come in ; pass behind me ; it will not hurt you ; it shall not stir ; I have a strong hold of it.” No one was willing to pass ; Jacques Bonhomme then released the revolution from his gripe, and Charette shivered his sword.

## CROMWELL—BONAPARTE.

RESCUED from a rustic grasp, the revolution fell into warlike hands: Bonaparte pounced upon and chained it down.

I have already compared the stature of that extraordinary man with that of Washington; it remains to be seen whether we have found in the Protector of England the equal to Napoleon.

Cromwell partook of the characters of priest, tyrant, and great man; his genius compensated his country for the loss of liberty. He had too much energy to succeed in creating any other power than his own; he ruined the institutions which he found or attempted to establish, just as Michael Angelo broke the marble under his chisel.

If the conqueror of the Irish and Scotch had been transferred to the stage of Napoleon, would he have been the conqueror of the Austrians, the Prussians, and the Russians? Unlike Bonaparte,

Cromwell did not create institutions, did not leave a code and an administration which still govern France and a great part of Europe. Napoleon reacted with an overstrained force; but he had an excuse in the necessity of crushing anarchy; his vigorous arm plunged his sword with too violent a thrust, and so that, passing through Anarchy, it pierced Liberty, who was behind her.

Vanquished nations have called Napoleon a scourge; the scourges of God retain something of the eternity and the majesty of the wrath from which they emanate: *Ossa arida . . . . dabo vobis spiritum, et viveris*—"Dry bones . . . I will breathe upon you, and ye shall live." Bonaparte gave manifestations of this breath or this strength during the whole period of his career. Born in an island, and ending his days in another island, placed on the limits of three continents, thrown in the midst of those seas where Camoëns seemed to prognosticate his coming when he made it the abode of the Spirit of Storms, Bonaparte could not stir upon his rock without our being apprised of it by the concussion which he created; a step of the new Adamastor at the furthest pole was heard and felt at ours. Had Napoleon escaped from his gaolers and fled to the United States, his looks fixed upon the ocean would have sufficed to disturb the natives of the Old World. His mere presence

on the American shore of the Atlantic would have compelled Europe to encamp on the opposite shore.

When Napoleon for the second time quitted France, it was asserted that he ought to have buried himself under the ruins of his last battle. Lord Byron, in his satirical ode against Napoleon, says :

To die a prince—or live a slave,  
Thy choice is most ignobly brave.

This was an incorrect estimate of the hope still kindling in a soul accustomed to dominion and thirsting after the future. Lord Byron imagined that the dictator of kings had abdicated his fame with his sword, that he was about to die away in utter oblivion ; Lord Byron should have known that the destiny of Napoleon was a Muse, like all other great destinies ; this Muse knew how to change an abortive catastrophe into a sudden turn of fortune which would have revived and imparted fresh youth to its hero. The solitude of Napoleon, in his exile and in his tomb, has thrown another kind of spell over a brilliant memory. Alexander did not die in sight of Greece ; he disappeared amid the pomp of distant Babylon : Bonaparte did not close his eyes in the presence of France ; he passed away in the gorgeous horizons of the torrid zone. The man who had shown himself in such powerful reality vanished like a dream ; his life, which belonged to history, co-operated in the

poetry of his death. He now sleeps for ever, like a hermit or a paria, beneath a willow, in a narrow valley surrounded by steep rocks, at the extremity of a lonely path. The depth of the silence which presses upon him can only be compared to the vastness of that tumult which had surrounded him. Nations are absent; their throng has retired. The bird of the tropics, harnessed to the car of the sun, as Buffon magnificently expresses it, speeding his flight downwards from the planet of light, rests alone for a moment over ashes, the weight of which has shaken the equilibrium of the globe.

Bonaparte crossed the ocean, to repair to his final exile, regardless of that beautiful sky which delighted Columbus, Vasco de Gama, and Camoëns; stretched upon the ship's stern, he perceived not that unknown constellations were sparkling over his head; his powerful glance for the first time encountered their rays. What to him were stars which he had never seen from his bivouacs, and which had never shone over his empire? Nevertheless, not one of them has failed to fulfil its destiny; one-half of the firmament spread its light over his cradle; the other half was reserved to illuminate his tomb.

## LOVELACE.

MY DETENTION AT THE PREFECTURE OF THE POLICE.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

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REVERTING from these political incidents to the subject of literature, and resuming it at the commencement of the restoration of Charles II. under which we have recorded the death of Milton, an observation at once suggests itself.

In the contest carried on between royalty and the people, the republican principle had Milton for its poet; the monarchical principle, Lovelace for its bard: from these may be deduced the consequence of the relative energy of both principles.

Confined in the Gate-house at Westminster, under an order from the Commons, Lovelace composed the elegant and loyal song, which was long a favourite with the *Cavaliers*.

## TO ALTHEA, FROM PRISON.

WHEN Love with unconfined wings  
Hovers within my gates,  
And my divine Althea brings  
To whisper at the grates :  
When I lye tangled in her haire,  
And fetter'd to her eye ;  
The gods that wanton in the aire  
Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round  
With no allaying Thames,  
Our carelesse heads with roses bound,  
Our hearts with loyall flames ;  
When thirsty grieffe in wine we steepe,  
When healths and draughts go free,  
Fishes that tipple in the deepe  
Know no such libertie.

When (like committed linnets) I  
With shriller throat shall sing  
The sweetness, mercy, majesty,  
And glories of my King :  
When I shall voyce aloud, how good  
He is, how great should be,  
Inlarged winds that curle the flood  
Know no such liberty.

Stone walls doe not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage ;  
Mindes innocent and quiet take  
That for an hermitage ;  
If I have freedom in my love,  
And in my soule am free ;  
Angels alone, that soar above,  
Injoy such liberty.



Noble and generous sentiments ! nevertheless they did not rescue Lovelace from oblivion, whilst the apologist of the murder of Charles I. has taken his stand by the side of Homer. In the first place, Lovelace was not gifted with the genius of Milton ; again, he belonged, by his very nature, to ideas no longer current. Fidelity must ever command admiration ; modern generations, however, are at a loss to account for such devotedness in an individual, for a virtue so confined within the limits of a particular system or attachment ; they feel not the appeals of honour, whether they be insensible to that honour which is indispensable for the current apprehension of its dictates, or that they exclusively sympathise with humanity in its general acceptation,—a course, however, calculated to justify any base action. Montrose, as it is said by Cardinal de Retz, was not one of Plutarch's characters : he was one of those men, the relics of an age which expires at the dawn of a new age ; their ancient virtues are as lofty as their new ones, but they are unprolific ; planted in an exhausted soil, they are no longer fertilised by the national manners.

Gifted with the most fascinating manners, Colonel Richard Lovelace, whose name was perhaps borrowed by Richardson, in remembrance of his elegance, died neglected in obscurity and want.

Without being young and handsome, like Colonel Lovelace, I have been, like him, incarcerated. The governments which ruled France from 1800 to 1830 had exercised some forbearance towards a votary of the Muses; Bonaparte, whom I had fiercely attacked in the *Mercure*, was at first prompted to despatch me; he raised his sword, but he struck not.

A generous and liberal administration, exclusively composed of literary men, of poets, writers, editors of newspapers, has proved less ceremonious towards an old comrade.

My kennel, somewhat longer than it was broad, was seven or eight feet high. The stained and bare wainscot was covered with the poetry and prose scrawled upon it by my predecessors. A pallet with soiled sheets occupied three parts of my habitation; a board supported by two trestles, placed against the wall at an elevation of two feet above the bed, served the purpose of a press for the linen, boots, and shoes of the prisoner. A chair, a table, and a small cask, as a disgusting convenience, formed the remainder of the furniture. A grated window opened at a considerable height; I was forced to mount upon the table in order to breathe fresh air, and to enjoy the light of heaven. I could only distinguish, through the bars of my felon's cage, a gloomy narrow court,

and dark buildings, round which the bats kept fluttering. I heard the clank of keys and chains, the noise of the *sergens de ville* and spies, the pacing of soldiers, the ground of arms, the shrieks, the laughter, the obscene licentious songs of the prisoners, my neighbours, the howlings of Benoit, condemned to death as the murderer of his mother, and of his obscene friend. I could distinguish these words of Benoit, amidst his confused exclamations of fear and repentance: "Alas! my mother! my poor mother!" I beheld the wrong side of society, the sons of humanity, the hideous machinery which sets in motion this world, so smiling to look at in front, when the curtain is raised.

The genius of my former greatness and of my *glory*, represented by a life of thirty years, did not make its appearance before me; but my Muse of former days, poor and humble as she was, came all radiant to embrace me through my window; she was delighted with my abode, and full of inspiration; she found me again as she had seen me in London, in the days of my poverty, when the first dreams of René were floating in my mind. What were we, the solitary of Pindus and I, about to produce together? A song, in the style of Lovelace. Upon whom? Upon a king? Assuredly not! The voice of a prisoner would have

been of bad omen : it is only from the foot of our altars that hymns should be addressed to misfortune. None, moreover, but a poet of great renown can be listened to when he sings :

O toi, de ma pitié profonde  
 Reçois l'hommage solennel,  
 Humble objet des regards du monde,  
 Privé du regard paternel !  
 Puissest-tu, né dans la souffrance,  
 Et de ta mère et de la France  
 Consoler la longue douleur \* !

My song was not therefore of a crown fallen from an innocent brow ; I was content with celebrating a different crown—a white one too, laid on the coffin of a young maiden †.

Tu dors, pauvre Elisa, si légère d'années !  
 Tu ne sens plus du jour le poids et la chaleur :  
 Vous avez achevé vos fraîches matinées,  
 Jeune fille et jeune fleur.

The prefect of police, with whose behaviour I have every reason to be satisfied, offered me a more suitable asylum, as soon as he was made acquainted with the agreeable abode which the friends of the liberty of the press had considerably assigned to me for having availed myself of that liberty. The window of my new dwelling opened upon a cheerful garden. It was not enlivened by the

\* V. Hugo, *Odes et Ballades*. † Elisa Trisel.

warbling of Lovelace's linnet; but it abounded in frisky, light, chirping, bold, quarrelsome sparrows; they are found every where, in the country, in town, on the balustrades of a mansion, along the gutters of a prison; they perch quite as cheerfully upon the instrument of death as upon a rose-bush. What matter the sufferings of earth to those who can fly away further."

My song will not be more lasting than that of Lovelace. The Jacobites have left nothing to England but the anthem *God save the King*. The origin of this air is not uninteresting: it is ascribed to Lulli; the young maids, in the choruses to *Esther*, delighted, at St. Cyr, the ears and the pride of the great monarch by the strains of the *Domine, salvum fac regem*. The attendants of James carried to their country the majestic invocation; they addressed it to the god of armies, when they marched to battle in defence of their banished sovereign. Struck with the beauty of this loyal song, the English of William's faction appropriated it to themselves. It became an appendage to the usurpation and to the sovereignty of the people, who are ignorant at this day that they are singing a foreign air, the hymn of the Stuarts, the canticle of divine right and of legitimacy. How long will England yet implore the Ruler of the world to *save the king*? Reckon

the revolutions heaped up in a dozen notes, which, have outlived these revolutions!

The *Domine salvum* of the Catholic rite is, likewise, an admirable song: it was sung in Greek in the tenth century, when the hippodrome was graced with the emperor's presence. From the pageant it was transferred to the church: another era that has passed away.

## PROSE.

TILLOTSON—TEMPLE—BURNET—CLARENDON—ALGERNON  
SIDNEY.

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WITH the reign of Charles II. a revolution took place in the taste and manners of English writers. Forsaking the national traditions, they began to borrow from French literature some of its regularity and character. The wandering life of Charles had given him a preference for foreign manners; Madame Henriette, the king's sister, the Duchess of Portsmouth, his mistress, St. Evremond, and the Chevalier de Grammont, both living in London in a state of banishment, urged with all their might the restored Stuarts to an imitation of the court of Louis XIV.; poetry lost by this external movement, which, however, proved advantageous to prose. Without soaring to the height of eloquence, Tillotson refined the language of the pulpit. Sir William Temple was the

D'Ossat of England ; but in the views and the style of his *Observations*, his *Miscellaneous Works* and his *Memoirs*, he is far inferior to our diplomatist. Philosophy boasts of Locke ; literature, properly so called, of Hamilton, a model of gracefulness and elegance ; of Shaftesbury, the pupil of Locke, and the son of a dissolute father. Voltaire extols Shaftesbury as an enemy of the Christian religion. This author's works have been collected under the title of *Characteristics of Men*. The ideas of the *Characteristics*, besides being lamely expressed, have become common-place by the lapse of time.

Burnet wrote the History of the English Reformation in a partial, caustic, but interesting manner : his greatest honour consists in having been refuted by Bossuet. Burnet was a blunderer and a factious man, of a spirit akin to that of the Frondeurs : neither the revolutionary candour of Whitelocke, nor the republican enthusiasm of Ludlow, is to be found in his memoirs.

The name of Clarendon revives the double recollection of kingly and popular ingratitude. The *History of the Rebellion* is a work in which the indications of talent disappear under the impress of virtue. Some portraits are vividly coloured ; but the character of these portraits is easy of imitation ; it is within the reach of the



commonest minds; Clarendon himself is reflected in his pictures; his image is portrayed in every page.

Algernon Sidney created the language of politics; his *Discourses upon Government* have grown obsolete: Sidney's is but a great name, and by no means a great reputation. The tragical death of the son of the Earl of Leicester is the ostensible event which gave body to principles which are still vague in the wavering opposition of the Whigs. Dalrymple, and after him M. Mazure, have furnished evidence of the inconsistencies of Sidney; he had the misfortune to receive money from France. In the unskilful game played by Louis XIV., this monarch fancied that he was only fettering Charles, whilst he was overthrowing James; the corruption of this policy carried within itself its own punishment; integrity, in Bacon, did not keep pace with science; in Sidney, disinterestedness did not keep pace with energy. God preserve us from exulting over the meannesses from which the loftiest natures are not altogether exempt! Heaven never endows us with virtues or talents, without coupling them with infirmities; they are expiations offered to vice, to folly, and to envy. The weaknesses of a superior mind are those black victims, *nigræ pecudes*, which Antiquity sacrificed to the infernal gods,

and yet they never suffer themselves to be appeased.

The revolution of 1688 arose from the scaffold of Sidney, with the steam of the blood of the holocaust ! This bloody dew is now falling, and the England of 1688 is disappearing.

## POETRY.

DRYDEN—PRIOR—WALLER—BUCKINGHAM—ROSCOMMON—  
ROCHESTER—SHAFTESBURY, &c.

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IT may seem paradoxical to assert that English poetry suffered from the inroad of French taste, at the very moment when Dryden appeared upon the stage; but every language which divests itself of its originality, to addict itself to imitation, spoils, even whilst it improves, itself. Shakspeare and Milton remained purely English; how far have they not left Dryden behind them!

The spirit of the revolution of 1649 was derived from religious enthusiasm and moral austerity; the restoration of 1660 was that of indifference and libertinism. “You are the worst subject in my kingdom,” said Charles II. to Shaftesbury; “Very true, Sire,” was his reply; “your Majesty is not a subject.”

These re-actions are unavoidable: the moroseness

of the close of the reign of Louis XIV. was followed by the corruption of the Regency. When the Reign of Terror ceased, the most barefaced immorality was at its height; in sight of the still warm and palpitating corpses of parents, whose heads were clasped in the arms or rolling at the feet of their children, these children indulged in the amusement of balls and dancing.

Dryden corrected and gave a finish to English poetry, in imitation of all civilised languages, which have called art to the aid of nature, and subjected the latter to rules. Pope thus characterises the merit of Dryden:

Dryden taught to join  
The varying verse, the full resounding line,  
The long majestic march, and energy divine.

This opinion proves that we are no longer in the unfettered days of the author of *Macbeth*, but that we have reached Boileau's academic age.

Dryden is himself the founder of criticism among his fellow-countrymen; his dialogues and dramatic poetry are still read. He laboured during thirty years for the stage, without attaining the nature and vividness of Shakspeare, or the pathos of Otway. "Dryden who was, in other respects, a great genius," says Voltaire, "makes his enamoured heroes speak a language of rheto-

rical hyperboles, or of indecency, both equally opposed to genuine tenderness."

Shirley, Davenant, Otway, Congreve, Farquhar, Cibber, Steele, Colman, Foote, Rowe, Addison, Moore, Aaron Hill, Sheridan, Coleridge, &c., exhibit the succession of English dramatic poets up to the present day. Tobin, Joanna Baillie, and a few others, have attempted to revive the old style and the old theatrical forms.

As for Dryden, the man, he was an unhappy creature; Prior, a young partisan of the house of Orange, attacked the old poet, who had turned Catholic, and remained true to his old masters. Assisted by his friends, the Duke of Buckingham composed the charming comedy of *The Rehearsal*. This piece assailed the author of *Don Sebastian*, and the ode of *Alexander's Feast*. Buckingham was proud of having injured Dryden's reputation. Can it then be so great a satisfaction to mortify genius, and rob it of a share of the glory it has acquired, at the cost of such labours, mortifications, and sacrifices?

Waller, Buckingham, Roscommon, Rochester, Shaftesbury, and a few other licentious and satirical poets, were not the first literary characters of their day, but they gave the tone to the literature in fashion during the reign of Charles II. The son of Charles I. was one of those frivolous, witty,

careless, selfish men, devoid of all sincere attachments, of all inward convictions; who not unfrequently take their place between two historical periods, to close the one as it were, and to commence the other; one of those princes, whose reign serves as a transition to important changes in the institutions, manners, and ideas of nations; one of those princes expressly created to fill up the voids which frequently in the political order disjoin cause from effect. Exhumations and executions opened a reign which executions were destined to close. Twenty-two years of libertinism were passed beneath gibbets; they were the last years of joy, after the Stuart fashion, and resemble funereal orgies.

Disowned under James I., embued with blood under Charles I., disgraced under Charles II., assailed under James II., liberty had nevertheless been preserved under constitutional forms; by these forms it was transmitted to the nation, which continued to fertilise the native soil after the expulsion of the Stuarts. These princes never could forgive the sufferings brought upon them by the English people; the people never could forget the attempts made by these princes to strip them of their rights; there existed on both sides too many causes of resentment and of offence. All mutual confidence was destroyed; each party silently

watched the other for some years. These generations that had suffered together, alike exhausted, agreed to end their days together; but the rising generations, which felt not this lassitude, and harboured no enmity, had no need to enter into such compromises of misfortune; they claimed the fruits of the blood and tears of their fathers: it became necessary to bid farewell to the things of the past.

The above-named writers possessed all the qualifications requisite for shining in the bivouac of a night's halt, between the popular reign of Cromwell and the reign of the Parliaments of William and his successors. The servile House of Commons now existed only to destroy the asserters of liberty, who had formerly constituted its strength; the monarchy, on the other hand, suffered its most devoted servants to perish. The people and the king appeared mutually to abandon each other, to make way for the aristocracy; the scaffold of Charles I. separated them for ever.

BUTLER.—NEGLECTED WRITERS.

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BUTLER stands in the first line, as a deposing witness in the trial of ingratitude instituted against the memory of Charles II. : Charles knew by heart the verses of *Hudibras*, a political Don Quixote. This satire, so replete with sallies against the actors in the revolution, delighted a court distinguished by the licentiousness of Rochester and the graceful manner of Grammont ; ridicule was a species of revenge adapted to courtiers.

Those who are placed at a distance from events, who have not lived in the midst of factions and of factious men, are only struck by the serious or the painful side of occurrences ; such is not the case with an actor or a spectator compromised in scenes of blood.

Tacitus, whom nature had formed a poet, might have written the satires of Petronius, had he sat in Nero's senate ; he portrayed the tyranny of that



prince because he lived after his time ; Butler, endowed with a penetrating mind, might have written the history of Charles I., had he been born in Queen Anne's reign ; he contented himself with throwing *Hudibras* into rhyme, because he had seen the actors in Cromwell's revolution ; he had seen them, though always talking of independence, holding out their hands to every chain, and, after putting the father to death, submitting to the yoke of the son.

Nevertheless, the subject of Butler's poem, a poem in which the eldest son of the Duke of Buckingham lent his assistance, is less felicitous than that of the satire *Ménippée*. It was allowable to laugh at the League in spite of its horrors ; the railleries of which it was the object had a chance of duration, because the League was not a revolution ; it was no more than a sedition, from which no advantage accrued to mankind. The men of that protracted sedition, L'Hôpital alone excepted, were only individually great ; their course was not marked by any political idea, or principle, or institution, useful to society. The League assassinated Henry III., who exceeded it in devotion, and it combated Henry IV., who conquered and bought it off. It disappeared, without leaving any traces of its passage ; its only echo was the Fronde,

a wretched broil, which merged in the absolute power of Louis XIV.

But the commotions in England, in 1649, were of a far more serious nature; the question was not of a duel between ambitious princes; the struggle was between the people and the king, between the commonwealth and the monarchy: the sovereign was tried in solemn form and put to death; the popular chief who brought him to the block and succeeded him, was no less a one than Cromwell: *there was found a man.*

The dictâtorship over the people, personified in a tribune, lasted nine years; it bore away absolute monarchy in its retreat, and deposited in the industry of England the germ of her power, *the Navigation Act.* The rebound of the revolution of 1649 produced the revolution of 1688, a result of prodigious importance.

These are the reasons why we no longer laugh at the railleries of *Hudibras*, as we do at the jests of the *Ménippée*. The consequences of the troubles in the reign of Charles I. are still felt over the world; the atrocities of St. Bartholomew, the enormities arising from the profligacy of Henry III., and the ambition of the Guises, have only left a horror of the memory of those atrocities and excesses. Could an author, who

should attempt to compose a burlesque poem upon the revolution of 1789 succeed in enlivening the Reign of Terror or in lessening Bonaparte? The parodies which remain are furnished only by events that have passed away; they resemble the masks moulded on the face of a dead man which has since crumbled to dust, or on that of a satyr whose bust is no longer to be found.

A catalogue has been drawn up of the royalists who suffered in the cause of Charles I.; extensive as it is, Charles II. further augmented it. Waller, a cowardly conspirator under the Commonwealth, a fawning poet of the successful usurpation, obtained every favour from restored legitimacy, whilst Butler was dying of hunger. Crowns have their impurities as well as red caps.

A fatal destiny pursues the muses: Valeriano Bolzani composed a treatise, "*De Litteratorum Infelicitate*;" D'Israeli has published "*The Calamities of Authors*:" they are far from having exhausted the subject.

In the mere list of English poets whom I have named, we find the following:

James, King of Scotland, eighteen years a prisoner, and at last assassinated; Rivers, Surrey, and Thomas More, suffering on the scaffold; Lovelace and Butler, dying of want.

Clarendon, banished by Charles II., died at Rouen. The defence of the virtuous magistrate, whose writings, in conjunction with those of Falkland, had secured the triumph of the royal cause, was condemned to be burnt by the common hangman.

Milton, half proscribed, descended in utter blindness to the tomb.

Dryden, towards the close of his life, was compelled to sell his talents piece-meal, to support existence. "Little cause have I," said he, "to bless my stars for being born an Englishman; it is quite enough for one century that it should have neglected a Cowley, and seen Butler starved to death."

Otway, at a later period, choked himself in voraciously swallowing the morsel of bread thrown to him to relieve his hunger.

What were not the sufferings of Savage, composing at street corners, writing his verses on scraps of paper picked out of the kennel, expiring in a prison, and leaving his corpse to the pity of a gaoler, who defrayed the expense of his interment!

Chatterton, after being many days without food, destroyed himself by poison.

In the cloisters of the cathedral of Worcester,

the stranger's notice is attracted by a sepulchral slab, without date, without a prayer, without a symbol; its only inscription is the word "*Miserimus.*" Could this unknown, this nameless "*Miserrimus,*" have been any other than a man of genius?

## END OF THE STUARTS.

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AFTER the death of his brother, James II. ventured to attempt, in behalf of the Romish church, what his father had failed to accomplish in behalf of Episcopacy. He fancied that he could bring about a change in the religion of the state, as easily as Henry VIII. had done before him; but the English nation was no longer the nation of the Tudors; and if James had distributed among his subjects all the property of the church of England, he would not have made a single proselyte to the Catholic religion. His greatest error was that of having sworn, when he ascended the throne, what he had no intention to keep: rulers have not always been saved by the observance of oaths; a departure from them has frequently brought about their ruin.

James, naturally a cruel man, found an executioner ready at his command; Jefferies had commenced his misdeeds towards the close of the reign

of Charles II. at the trial which brought Russell and Sidney to the scaffold. This man, who after Monmouth's attempt caused upwards of two hundred and fifty persons to be executed in the west of England, was not devoid of some sense of justice : a virtue which fails to attract notice in a good man shines conspicuously in a wicked man.

Holland had long been the focus of the intrigues of the various English parties ; the emissaries of these parties were then under the protection of Mary, James's eldest daughter, and consort of the Prince of Orange, a man for whom we feel no admiration, and who, nevertheless, did admirable things. James, though often warned by Louis XIV., disregarded all advice ; William's fleet put to sea, and he landed with thirteen thousand men at Broxholme, in Torbay.

To his great astonishment, he found nobody there ; he waited ten days in vain. What was James doing during these ten days ? Nothing. He had an army of twenty thousand men, which would at first have fought under his banners ; but he remained irresolute. Sunderland, his minister, betrayed him ; he was abandoned by Prince George of Denmark, his son-in-law, and by Anne his favourite daughter, in the same manner as his daughter Mary, and William, his other son-in-law, had turned against him. Solitude began to spread

around the monarch who had separated himself from the national opinion. James asked advice of the Earl of Bedford, the father of Lord Russell, beheaded during the preceding reign at the instigation of James. "I had once a son," replied the old man, "who might have afforded you assistance."

James fled, and landed at Ambletuse, on the 2nd of January, 1689; baneful guest that he was, he taught exile to those hearths the altar of which he clasped. Where are the ashes of Louis XIV? Where are his descendants?

For the rest, what matters it? Lord Russell, embracing his lady for the last time, said to her, "This flesh you now feel will in a few hours be stiff in death." What space is filled in the world and in this page by the generations of which I have been treating? On my return to France, in 1800, I was travelling one night in the diligence; the vehicle made a slight jerk, which we scarcely felt: it had run over a drunken peasant stretched across the road: we had crushed out a human life, and the wheel had only been raised a few lines from the ground. The Franks, our forefathers, slaughtered the Romans taken by surprise, in the midst of a feast held at Metz; within the last quarter of a century our soldiers have waltzed at the convent of Alcobaça with the skeleton of Ines de Castro; sorrows and pleasures,



crimes and follies, ye are separated by a lapse of fourteen centuries, and ye are all as completely past, the one as the other! The eternity which has just commenced is as ancient as the eternity that dates from the first death, the murder of Abel. Men, nevertheless, during their ephemeral appearance on this globe, persuade themselves that they leave some trace behind them. No doubt, every fly has its shadow.

The four Stuarts passed away in the space of eighty-four years; the six last Bourbons who have worn, or were entitled to wear, the crown, reckoning from the death of Louis XV., have disappeared in the space of fifty-four years.

In both kingdoms a monarch has perished on the scaffold; and two restorations have taken place, and have been followed by the banishment of the legitimate sovereigns; it is nevertheless true, that Europe, or rather the world, so far from having reached the end of revolutions, is only at the commencement of them.



PART THE FIFTH.



LITERATURE UNDER THE HOUSE OF  
HANOVER.



COMPLETION AND PERFECTION OF THE  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

DEATH OF LANGUAGES.

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ON quitting the Stuarts, we enter upon the state of repose of a hundred and forty years which succeeded the fall of those princes, and left the Muses at leisure to purify their language under the shelter of liberty.

I have spoken, in the beginning of this essay, of the origin of the English language; the successive changes in it may have been noticed in our rapid progress through ages. Let us now, that I am approaching the conclusion of my labour, consider what degree of perfection that language had attained, and how, after having been the idiom of the *conteors*, *fableors*, and *harpeors*, it became the idiom of the Popes, the Addisons, the Swifts, the Grays, the Fieldings, the Walter Scotts, and the Byrons.

The old English language appears to me to have been softer than the modern English; in the

former the *th* terminates a multitude of words, and the third person singular of the indicative present. The *th* borrowed from the East was not pronounced (though introduced into the Greek alphabet with the  $\chi$  chi, the  $\kappa$  kappa, the  $\omega$  omega) till about the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, at the period when Alcibiades turned the brains of the Athenians by the graceful difficulty with which he expressed certain letters of his language. The *th* was a compound letter, which the soft Ionian dialect seemed to supply in aid of the elegant pupil of Pericles. The modern Greek has retained the use of  $\theta$  the theta.

The *th* of old English, at the end of a word, could only be the *soft* *th*, such as it is pronounced in *mouth*, *sooth*, *teeth*, and not the *rough* *th*, at the beginning of a word, as in *thunder*, *throbbing*, *thousand*.

Letters, in old English, were frequently doubled. The *e* which abounds and contends with the *th* for the end of words, was the mute *e* retained from the French. It contributed to soften the too sharp sound. The proof that these letters were not etymological but euphonic is that the orthography varied in every county, and almost in every village, according to the ear, which is the echo of the accent. The very words varied in a radius of a few leagues.

According as the pronunciation and form of the English language underwent a change, and as it lost its sobriety, it enriched itself with the tributes of time. The genius of a language is composed of the religion, political institutions, character, manners, and customs of a people. If this people extends its conquests to a distance, it derives an increase of ideas and of sentiments from the countries with which it comes into contact. Let us first consider what a language may gather from the duration and diversity of the national laws.

It was laid down, as a principle, in England, that a law is never abolished: thus it happened that the history of the past was present to the mind amidst new events, as an ever-living grandmother in the midst of her numerous children and grandchildren. At the commencement of the present century, an Englishman threw down the gauntlet in full court, and challenged his adversary to the ordeal of battle.

The English common law governs the whole of England.

In the Isle of Man, *the constitutions* of the ancient kings of that state are still adhered to.

In Jersey and Guernsey, the statutes of Rollo are in full force.

The lawsuits of the Indians and Moguls are tried by appeal in the court of King's Bench held

in London, and they are decided in conformity with the articles of the Puranas and of the Koran.

In the Ionian islands, the Justinian code mingles with the decisions of the Admiralty Court.

In Canada, the ordinances of the kings of France flourish, as in the days of St. Louis.

The Isle of France is governed by the Code Napoleon; the Anglo-Spanish colonies are swayed by the Castilian and Aragonese laws; the Cape of Good Hope, by the Dutch law.

Politics, manufactures, commerce, have blended the technical expressions of their dictionaries with those of the general dictionary.

The Houses of Parliament supply to the common fund the speeches of Strafford, the Vanes, Bolingbroke, Walpole, the two Pitts, Burke, Fox, Sheridan, Canning, and Brougham.

The vocabulary is augmented in social economy, by the researches of Adam Smith, Malthus, Thornton, Ricardo, and Macculloch.

The service of the English possessions in the four quarters of the globe has naturally increased the number of travellers; what a fresh source for the importation of ideas and images! In 1600, one hundred and one London merchants collected a sum of 800,000 francs; and, behold! the Bacchuses and Alexanders, who became the masters and conquerors of India!



The English had Samaritan, Arabic, Syriac grammars and dictionaries almost before they had Greek and Latin dictionaries; they thus commenced with the study of the dead and living languages of Asia; they yielded to the instinct of their genius, which inclined them to the pomp of images and the independence of rules. Wilkins, Colebroke, Carey\*, Marsden, Morrison, Lockhart, Gladwin, Lumsden, Gilchrist, Hadley, William Jones, have bestowed their attention on the Sanscrit, the vulgar Bengalee, the Malay language, the Persian, the Chinese, and the common language of Hindostan. Thus, with laws which never die, and with colonies placed at the four quarters of the compass, the English language alike embraces time and space.

We formerly possessed boundless regions beyond sea; they offered a refuge to the excess of our population, a market for our commerce, a career for our sciences, a means of keeping up our navy: we are compelled, at the present day, to immure our convicts in unwholesome prisons, for want of a corner of the globe to serve as a receptacle for those wretched beings; we are excluded from the new universe, where mankind is beginning afresh.

\* There is another Carey, a poet and musician, to whom the English incorrectly ascribe the tune of *God save the King*.

The English, Spanish, and Portuguese languages, form in Africa, Asia, the Oceanic islands, the islands of the South Sea, and the continents of both Americas, the medium for conveying the sentiments of many millions of men; whilst, disinherited from the conquests of our genius, we scarcely hear the language of Colbert and of Louis XIV. spoken any where but in a few districts of Louisiana and Canada, and in the dominion of strangers; there it remains as a record of our reverses of fortune and of the errors of our policy.

But, if the language of Milton and of Shakspeare derive positive advantages from this diffusion of power, it is exposed to attacks from that quarter. When confined to its native soil, it possessed a more individual, more original, more energetic character; on the banks of the Ganges and the St. Lawrence, at the Cape of Good Hope, at Port Jackson in New Holland, at the island of Malta in the Mediteranean, at the island of Trinidad in the Gulf of Mexico, it takes up expressions which corrupt it. Pickering has collected the words used in the United States: from his work we may see how rapidly a language changes under a foreign sky, from the necessity of furnishing expressions for a new culture, for an industry and arts peculiar to the soil, for habits generated by the climate, for laws and manners which constitute a different society.

If such an investigation could prove interesting, I would here follow the history of English words; I would show by what authors they were introduced, and how they have lost or changed their acceptation by departing from their primitive sense. I would treat of compound words, of negative words, in opposition to positive words, in which our language is too deficient, of words that are both substantives and verbs: *silence* for example signifies at once silence and to make silent, or to silence. But such researches, which would be extremely curious, were our language the object of them, (as it may be seen in the learned *Tableau* of M. Chasles\*) would, in reference to a foreign language, be wearisome or unintelligible to the French reader.

It is only before languages have attained their highest polish that they follow the movement of civilisation: when they have once arrived at that point, they stand still for some time, then go down hill, and become corrupted. It is to be feared that superior talents will henceforth have but a discordant or cracked instrument to give forth their harmonies. A language may, it is true, acquire new expressions with the gradual advance of knowledge; but it cannot change its syntax without

\* "Tableau de la Marche et des Progrès des Langues et de la Littérature Françaises," &c.

changing its genius. A happy barbarism remains in a language without disfiguring it; solecisms never gain a footing in it without destroying it. We may have a Tertullian, a Statius, a Silius Italicus, a Claudian; but shall we again have Bossuets, Corneilles, Racines, Voltaires? In a young language, authors have expressions and images which charm like the first beam of morning; in a language completely formed they are brilliant with beauties of every kind; in an aged language, the simplicities of style are but reminiscences, the sublimities of thought but the produce of an arrangement of words, sought with labour and contrasted with effort.

## EFFECT OF CRITICISM ON LANGUAGES.

CRITICISM IN FRANCE. OUR VANITIES. DEATH OF  
LANGUAGES.

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CRITICISM, at first so useful, has become in London, from its abundance and its diversity, another source of deterioration in the monuments of the English language, by perplexing people's ideas as to the expressions, turns, and words, which they ought to reject, and such as it is right to employ. How can an author discover the truth among so many different opinions, pronounced upon the same work by the Monthly Review, the Critical Review, the Quarterly Review, the Edinburgh Review, the British Review, the Eclectic Review, the Retrospective Review, the Foreign Review, the Foreign Quarterly Review, the Literary Gazette, the London Museum, the Monthly Censor, the Monthly Magazine, the New Monthly Magazine, the Edinburgh Magazine, the Literary Magazine, the London Magazine, Blackwood's

Magazine, the Brighton Magazine, the Annual Register, the Classical Journal, the Quarterly Journal, the Edinburgh Philosophical Journal, the Monthly Repertory \*? It would be easy to add a hundred other titles to this motley list, to which might, moreover, be added the literary articles in the daily newspapers.

In France we are not so rich, and our present judgments are less severe. It is possible that literature may appear a puerile occupation to the political and positive age which is commencing among us. If this is really the case, it must be obvious that a writer has very little temptation to create himself a host of enemies, for the satisfaction of upholding the genuine principles of art and taste, in a career in which there is no longer either glory or honour to be acquired.

One critic has of late years ventured to exercise a rigorous censorship: what outcries has he not occasioned! What, then, would the writers of the present day have said, if they had been treated as we were formerly treated? May I be permitted to mention myself as an instance? I had a host of clever men against me: when *Atala* appeared, the classic army, headed by the Abbé Morellet,

\* Persons acquainted with English literature need not be told that many of the periodicals enumerated here are no longer in existence.—TRANSLATOR.

rushed upon my Florida maiden. The "Genie du Christianisme" roused the whole Voltairian world: it drew upon me admonitions from the most distinguished members of the French Academy. M. Ginguené, examining my work two months after its publication, is apprehensive that his criticism comes too late, the "Genie du Christianisme" being already forgotten. The very clever M. Hoffmann lashed the "Martyrs" in five or six articles of the *Journal de l'Empire*, then taken from its proprietors, which journal thus proclaimed my speedy end in the vast circle traced by the sword of Napoleon. And what did we—we poor aspirants to renown? Did we think that the whole world was shaken to its foundation? Had we recourse to charcoal or the pistol to rid ourselves of our own lives or of the censor? Full of our own merits, did we obstinately and proudly persist in our faults, determined to conquer the age, and to make it pass under the yoke of our follies? Alas! no: more humble, because we cannot boast the unrivalled talents which now-a-days run the streets, we sought in the first place to justify, and in the next to correct, ourselves. If we had been attacked in too unjust a manner, the tears of the Muses bathed and healed our wounds: in short, we were persuaded that criticism has never killed what ought to live, and still

more that it never imparted life to what ought to die.

Expect not now-a-days so modest and so silly a condescension from our writers. Vanity has exalted itself into frenzy: pride is the disease of the time: we no longer blush to confess our own merits and to proclaim all the gifts which bountiful Nature has bestowed upon us. Hear us speak of ourselves: we have the kindness to take upon ourselves all the expense of the praises which people were preparing to give us; we charitably enlighten the reader respecting our merits; we teach him to relish our beauties; we soothe his enthusiasm; we seek his admiration at the bottom of his heart; we spare his delicacy the task of discovering it to us himself.

Every one of us, in his conscience and most sincerely, believes himself to be the man of our age; the man who has opened a new career; the man who has eclipsed the past; the man in whose presence all reputations dwindle to nothing; the man who will survive and alone survive; the man of posterity, the man of the renovation of things, the man of the future. Happy the day that witnessed our birth! Happy the society that bore us in its womb! Amidst the effusions of our pride, the good folks run the risk of being stifled; they are almost obliged to arm themselves with vanity



in self-defence against that of the passenger ; as in a pot-house we are forced to smoke ourselves to repel the fumes of our neighbour's pipe.

To be just, however, we must admit that, if the criticism of detail has lost its power, from the want of acknowledged rules, from the revolt of hardened self-love, historical and general criticism has made considerable advances. I am not aware that at any period there was to be found in any country an assemblage of men so learned, so distinguished, as those who at this day grace the public chairs in France.

What will be the fate of the English language? That which is the fate of all languages. About the year 1400, a Prussian poet, at a banquet given by the grand-master of the Teutonic order, sang in old Prussian the heroic achievements of the ancient warriors of the country : nobody understood him, and one hundred empty walnuts were given to him by way of reward. At the present day, the Low Breton, the Basque, and the Welsh, are dying off from hut to hut, in proportion as the herdsmen and labourers die away. In the English county of Cornwall, the native language became extinct about the year 1676. A fisherman said to some travellers, " I know but four or five persons who speak British, and they are old people, like myself, of between sixty and eighty."

Tribes which once inhabited the banks of the Oronoko no longer exist. Nothing is left of their language but a dozen words uttered in the tops of the trees by parrots, which have regained their liberty. Agrippina's thrush chattered Greek words on the balustrades of Latin palaces. Such will be sooner or later the fate of our modern jargons: some starling of New Place will whistle from the top of an apple-tree verses of Shakspeare's, unintelligible to the passenger; some raven, escaped from the cage of the last Franco-Gaulish *curé*, will say from the ruinous steeple of a forsaken cathedral to the foreigners, our successors: "Listen to the accents of a voice that was known to you; ye will put an end to all this talk."

Be, then, a Shakspeare or a Bossuet, that, as a last result, your master-piece may in the memory of a bird survive your language and the remembrance of you among men.

THERE WILL BE NO MORE UNIVERSAL  
LITERARY REPUTATIONS,

AND FOR WHAT REASON.

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THE multiplicity and the diversity of modern languages ought to induce men tortured with the thirst of living to ask themselves this sad question: Can there now be in literature universal reputations such as those which have come down to us from antiquity?

In the ancient civilised world two languages predominated; two nations passed judgment, alone and without appeal, on the monuments of their genius. Victorious over the Greeks, Rome paid the same respect to the works of the intelligence of the vanquished as Alexander and Athens had done. The fame of Homer and Virgil was religiously transmitted to us by the monks, the priests, and the clergy, the teachers of the Barbarians in the ecclesiastical schools, the monasteries, the seminaries, and the universities. An hereditary admi-

ration descended to us from race to race, in virtue of the lessons of a professorship, the chair of which, vacant for fourteen centuries past, has incessantly confirmed the same judgment.

This is no longer the case in the modern civilised world, in which five languages now flourish : each of these five languages possesses master-pieces, which are not acknowledged as such in the countries where the four other languages are spoken. In this there is nothing surprising.

In living literature no person is a competent judge but of works written in his own language. In vain you imagine yourself to be complete master of a foreign idiom ; you lack the nurse's milk, as well as the first words that she teaches you at the breast and in your swaddling clothes : certain accents belong exclusively to the country. The English and the Germans have the most absurd notions of our writers ; they adore what we despise ; they despise what we adore : they understand neither Racine nor La Fontaine, nor even Molière completely. It is laughable to know which are our great writers in London, Vienna, Berlin, Petersburg, Munich, Leipzig, Göttingen, Cologne ; to know what people there read with enthusiasm, and what they do not read. I have expressed my opinion concerning a number of English writers : it is very possible that I may be mistaken, that my

admiration and my censure may be equally misplaced, that my conclusions may appear impertinent and ridiculous on the other side of the Channel.

When the merit of an author consists especially in his style, a foreigner never can properly comprehend that merit. The more talent is innate, individual, national, the more its mysteries escape the understanding which is not, if I may use the expression, *compatriot* with that talent. We admire upon parole the Greeks and the Romans; our admiration comes to us from tradition, and the Greeks and the Romans are not there to laugh at the judgments of us, Barbarians. Which of us can conceive any idea of the harmony of the prose of Demosthenes and Cicero, of the cadence of the verse of Alcæus and Horace, such as they were seized by a Greek and Latin ear! It is asserted that real beauties are of all times, of all countries: the beauties of sentiment and thought assuredly are; the beauties of style are not. Style is not, like thought, cosmopolite; it has a native land, a sky, a sun, of its own.

The nations of the North, writing all languages, have no style in those languages. The various vocabularies which encumber the memory render the perceptions confused: when the idea occurs to you, you know not in what veil to wrap it, what

idiom to employ in order to express it best. Had you known only your own language, and the Greek and Latin glossaries from which it is derived, this idea would have presented itself to you clothed in its natural form: your brain not having *thought* it at once in different languages, it would not have been a multiplex abortion, the undigested produce of simultaneous conceptions; it would have had that character of unity and simplicity, that type of paternity and race, without which works of the understanding are but nebulous masses, resembling everything and nothing. The way to be a bad writer is to whistle to the echo of memory, like a parrot, several dialects: a polyglot mind charms scarcely any but the deaf and dumb. It is very well, very useful, to study, to read, the living languages, when you devote yourself to literature, extremely dangerous to speak them, but most dangerous of all to write them.

Thus henceforward there will arise no more of those colossal reputations, whose greatness is alike acknowledged by nations and ages. In respect to the moderns, therefore, the reader must take in a limited sense what I have said above of those mother-geniuses, which seem to have brought forth and suckled all the others: this remains true as to the *fact*; not as to a *universal reputation*. In Vienna, in Petersburg, in Berlin, in London, in

Lisbon, in Madrid, in Rome, in Paris, we shall never have, of a German, an English, a Portuguese, a Spanish, an Italian, a French poet, one and the same idea that we form of Virgil and Homer. We modern great men count upon filling the world with our renown, but, do what we may, it will scarcely pass the limits where our language expires. Is not then the time of supreme dominations past? Are not all aristocracies finished? Do not the useless efforts that have recently been made to discover new forms, to find out new numbers, a new cesura, to refresh the colour, to make young the turn, the word, the idea, in order to make old the phrase, to return to the natural and the popular, seem to prove that we have travelled all round the circle! Instead of advancing, we have retrograded; without perceiving that we were returning to the first lispings of the tongue, to the nursery tales, to the infancy of the art. To maintain that there is no art, that there is no ideal, that we ought not to select, but to paint everything; that the deformed is as fine in its way as the beautiful — is merely a *jeu d'esprit* in these, a depravity of taste in those, a sophism of indolence in some, of impotence in others.

OTHER CAUSES WHICH TEND TO DESTROY  
UNIVERSAL REPUTATION.

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LASTLY, besides that division of languages which is hostile to universal reputations among the moderns, another cause is labouring to destroy them: liberty, the spirit of levelling and incredulity, hatred of superiority, anarchy of ideas, democracy, in short, has penetrated into literature as well as into the rest of society. Now these things, favouring the passion of self-love and the feeling of envy, act in the sphere of letters with double force. We no longer acknowledge masters and authorities; we no longer admit rules; we no longer adopt ready-made opinions; free examination is received at Parnassus, as it is in politics and religion, as a consequence of the progress of the age. Every one judges, and thinks that he has a right to judge, according to his capacity, his taste, his system, his hatred, or his love. Hence a host of immortals, celebrated in their own street, en-



closed by the circle of their own school and of their own friends, but who are unknown or hissed in the next district.

Truth formerly had great difficulty to spread itself; it lacked a vehicle; the daily and free press was not then in existence; the literati formed a separate world; their estimate of each other was scarcely known to the public. Now, that assailing or admiring journals sound the charge or victory, a person must be very unlucky not to know during his life-time his precise value. With these contradictory sentences, if our glory commences sooner, it also finishes sooner; in the morning an eagle, at night a bittern.

Such is human nature, particularly in France: if we possess any talents, we take the greatest pains to depreciate them. After raising them to the pinnacle, we roll them in the mud; we then recover our former position, and then degrade ourselves afresh. Who has not for a few years past seen opinions change twenty times concerning the same name? Is there then at present any thing certain and true upon earth? We know not what to believe: we hesitate about every thing, we doubt every thing; the strongest convictions in the morning are extinguished before night. We cannot endure reputations; all admiration seems to be a robbery of us; our vanities take umbrage

at the least success, and if it lasts any time, they are on the rack. We are right glad, at the bottom of our hearts, when a man of merit happens to die; it is one rival the fewer: the provoking noise made about him prevented our hearing that of the fools and the croaking concert of mediocrities. We hasten to pack up the celebrated defunct in two or three newspaper articles; we then cease to mention him; we never more open his works; we solder up his fame in his books as we do his body in his coffin, despatching the whole to eternity through the medium of time and death.

Now-a-days, every thing grows old in a few hours: a reputation fades, a work passes away in a moment. Poetry has the same fate as music: its voice, fresh at dawn, is harsh at sunset. Every one writes; nobody reads seriously. A name uttered three times annoys one. Where are those illustrious men, who on awaking one morning, a few years since, declared that nothing had existed before them; that they had discovered unknown heavens and an unknown earth; that they had determined by their genius to cover with contempt the pretended master-pieces till then so stupidly admired? Those who styled themselves *Young France* in 1830, where are they? Behold, here come the great men of 1835, who look upon these elders of 1830 as writers of merit in their day,

but now worn out, superannuated, obsolete. The sucklings will soon get into the arms of their nurse: they will laugh at the octogenarians of sixteen, at those ten thousand poets, at those fifty thousand prose writers, who are now covering themselves with glory and melancholy, in every nook and corner of France. If by chance you do not perceive that such writers exist, they leave no means untried to attract the public notice. Another chimera! Even their last sigh passes unheard. What causes this delirium and these ravages? The absence of that counterpoise to human follies—Religion.

At the period in which we live, each lustrum is equivalent to a century; society dies and is renewed every ten years. Farewell then to all long *universally* acknowledged glory. Whoever writes in the hope of a name sacrifices his life to the most silly as to the most vain of chimeras. Bonaparte will be the last marked existence of this ancient world which is passing away: nothing will again rise above the dead level of societies, the greatness of the individual will henceforth be merged in the greatness of the species.

Youth is all that is most beautiful and most generous; I feel myself powerfully drawn towards it, as to the source of my ancient life; I wish it success and prosperity: for this reason

I make a point of not flattering it. In the false tracks in which it is straying, it will find as a final result nought but disappointment and disgust. I know that at the present day it lacks a career to pursue, that it is struggling amidst an obscure society; hence those brilliant coruscations of talent, which suddenly break through the darkness, and expire: but long and laborious studies, prosecuted in solitude and silence, would well employ the time, and would be more worth than a multitude of verses too rapidly composed, too soon forgotten.

I cannot conclude this chapter without being assailed by remorse and doubts — remorse, for having ventured to assert that Dante, Shakspeare, Tasso, Camoens, Schiller, Milton, Racine, Bossuet, Corneille, and some others, cannot live *universally* like Virgil and Homer; doubts for having thought that the time for *universal* individualities is past.

Why should I strive to deprive man of the feeling of infinity, without which he would accomplish nothing, and never reach the height that he is capable of attaining! If I find not in myself the faculty of existing, why should not my neighbours find it in themselves? Has not a little dissatisfaction with my own nature caused me to judge in too absolute a manner of the possible faculties of others? Well then, let us restore every

thing to its first state : let us give back to the talents born or to be born the hope of a glorious perpetuity, which some writers of the present day, male and female, may justly cherish : let them advance then to *universal* fame ; I shall be delighted. Left behind on the road, I shall not complain, and above all, I shall have nothing to regret :

Si post fata venit gloria, non propero.

## WILLIAM AND MARY. QUEEN ANNE.

CLASSIC SCHOOL.

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THE invasion of French taste, begun in the reign of Charles II., was completed under William and Queen Anne. The great aristocracy, which was raising itself up, assumed the noble and imposing character of the great monarchy, its neighbour and its rival. English literature, till then almost unknown in France, crossed the Strait. Addison saw Boileau in 1701, and presented him with a copy of his Latin poems. Voltaire, obliged to seek refuge in England, on account of his quarrel with the Chevalier de Rohan-Chabot, dedicated the "Henriade" to Queen Anne, and spoiled his genius by the philosophic ideas of Collins, Chubb, Tindal, Wolston, Toland, and Bolingbroke. He made us acquainted with Shakspeare, Milton, Dryden, Shaftesbury, Swift, and exhibited them to France as men of a new species, discovered by him

in a new world. Racine the younger translated "Paradise Lost," and Rollin took notice of that poem in his "Traité des Etudes."

On the accession of William III. to the British crown, the writers of London and Paris enlisted themselves in the quarrel of princes and warriors. Boileau celebrated the *Passage of the Rhine*; Prior replies that the sovereign of Parnassus employs the nine muses to sing that *Louis has not passed the Rhine*—which was the truth. Philips translated Corneille's "Pompée," and Roscommon wrote the prologue to it. Addison celebrated the victories of Marlborough, and paid homage to "Athalie;" Pope published his "Essay on Criticism," for which "L'Art Poétique" furnished the model. He gives nearly the same rules as Horace and Boileau, but all at once, recollecting his dignity, he proudly exclaims:

"But we, brave Britons, foreign laws despise."

The French poet's "L'Art Poétique," was translated; Dryden revised the text, and merely substituted the names of English writers in place of those of French writers. He renders the "hâtez-vous lentement," *gently make haste*.

"The Rape of the Lock" was suggested by "Le Lutrin," and the "Dunciad" is an imitation of the Satires by the friend of Racine. Butler translated one of these satires.

The literary age of Queen Anne is a last reflection of the age of Louis XIV. And as if the great king had been destined to encounter William incessantly and to make conquests, when he could no longer invade England with his men at arms, he penetrated into it with his men of letters: the genius of Albion, which our soldiers could not subdue, yielded to our poets.



## PERIODICAL LITERATURE.

ADDISON. POPE. SWIFT. STEELE.

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ANOTHER revolution, the consequences of which have been and still continue to be incalculable, now took place. The periodical press, at once political and literary, was established on the banks of the Thames. Steele wrote, on whig principles, the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, the *Mentor*, the *Englishman*, the *Lover*, the *Reader*, the *Town-talk*, the *Chit-chat*, the *Plebeian*; he attacked the *Examiner*, written by Swift, in the tory spirit. Addison, Congreve, Walsh, Arbuthnot, Gay, Pope, King, ranged themselves according to their respective opinions, under the banners of Swift and Steele.

Jonathan Swift, born in Ireland, on the 30th of November, 1667, has been most inappropriately called by Voltaire the English Rabelais. Voltaire relished only the impieties of Rabelais, and his humour, when it is good; but the deep satire on

society and man, the lofty philosophy, the grand style of the *curé* of Meudon, escaped his notice, as he saw only the weak side of Christianity, and had no idea of the intellectual and moral revolution effected in mankind by the Gospel.

The "Tale of a Tub," in which the Pope, Luther, and Calvin are attacked, and "Gulliver," in which social institutions are stigmatised, exhibit but faint copies of "Gargantua." The ages in which the two writers lived produce, moreover, a wide difference between them: Rabelais began his language; Swift finished his. It is not certain, however, that the "Tale of a Tub" is Swift's, or that it was written entirely by him; Swift amused himself by manufacturing verses of twenty, thirty, and sixty feet. Velly, the historian, has translated the satire on the peace of Utrecht, entitled "John Bull."

William III., who did so many things, taught Swift the art of growing asparagus in the Dutch manner. Jonathan fell in love with Stella, took her to his deanery of St. Patrick, and at the end of sixteen years, when he was at the end of his passion, he married her. Esther van Homrigh conceived an affection for Swift, though he was old, ugly, and disgusting: when she learned that he was absolutely married to Stella, who had become quite indifferent to him, she died; Stella

soon followed Esther. The hard-hearted man, who caused the death of these two beautiful young women, was not able, like the truly great poets, to bestow on them a second life.

Steele, a countryman of Swift's, became his rival in politics. Having obtained a seat in the House of Commons, he was expelled from it as the author of seditious libels. On the creation of twelve peers, during the administration of Oxford and Bolingbroke, he addressed a cutting letter to Sir Miles Wharton, on the making of peers for particular occasions. Steele did not enrich himself by his connexion with the great corrupter Walpole: relinquishing his pamphlets, he turned his attention to mechanical literature, and invented a machine for conveying salmon fresh to London.

Steele has been deservedly commended for having cleansed the drama of those obscenities with which the writers of the time of Charles II. had infected it: this was so much the more meritorious in the author of the "Conscious Lovers," inasmuch as his own manners were far from regular. Meanwhile, his contemporary, Gay, the fabulist, brought upon the stage his "Beggars' Opera," the hero of which is a robber and the heroine a prostitute. The "Beggars' Opera," is the original of our melo-dramas of the present day.

TRANSITION FROM CLASSIC LITERATURE  
TO DIDACTIC, DESCRIPTIVE, AND  
SENTIMENTAL LITERATURE.

POEMS OF DIFFERENT WRITERS.

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ENGLISH classic literature, which resembled ours as nearly as the difference of national manners would permit, degenerated rapidly, and passed from the Classic to the Spirit of the eighteenth century. We then became in our turn imitators: we fell to work to copy our neighbours, with an eagerness which still seizes us by fits. Here the subject is so well known and so completely exhausted, that it would be tiresome to proceed in chronological order, and to repeat what every body is acquainted with.

Moral, technical, didactic, descriptive poetry includes the names of Gay, Young, Akenside, Goldsmith, Gray, Bloomfield, Glover, Thomson, &c.; the novel boasts of Richardson and Fielding;

history of Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon, who have been followed by Smollett and Lingard.

Besides all these poets, there were read in their day "The Art of Preserving Health," by Armstrong, "The Chase," by Somerville, "The Actor," by Lloyd, "The Art of Poetry," by Roscommon, "The Art of Poetry," by Francis, "The Art of Politics," by Bramston, "The Art of Cookery," by King.

"The Art of Politics" possesses spirit. The exordium of these different poems is imitated from the opening of the *Ars Poetica* of Horace. Bramston compares a man at once Whig and Tory to a human figure with

" — a lady's bosom and a tail of cod."

Delacourt in his "Prospect of Poetry" aimed at that imitative technical harmony, which has since been cultivated in France by M. Piis.

RRs jar untuneful o'er the quiv'ring tongue,  
And serpent S with hissings spoils the song.

Akenside's "Pleasures of Imagination," is deficient in imagination; and Stillingfleet's poem on "Conversation," could only have been composed among a people who knew not how to converse.

I ought further to mention "The Shipwreck," by Falconer; "The Traveller," and "The De-

serted Village," by Goldsmith ; " The Creation," by Blackmore, and " The Judgment of Hercules," by Shenstone.

Let me also name Dyer and Denham. " The Poet's Complaint," by the unfortunate Otway, is worth reading, as is also " The Wanderer," by the still more unfortunate Savage, who has there painted in a striking manner the fury of Suicide :

A fiend in evil moments ever nigh  
 Death in her hand and frenzy in her eye !  
 Her eye all red and sunk ! a robe she wore  
 With life's calamities all broider'd o'er.

\* \* \* \* \*

She muses o'er her woe-embroider'd vest  
 And self-abhorrence heightens in her breast.  
 To shun her care the force of sleep she tries,  
 Still wakes her mind, though slumbers doze her eyes.  
 She dreams, starts, rises, stalks from place to place  
 With restless, thoughtful, interrupted pace,  
 Now eyes the sun and curses ev'ry ray,  
 Now the green ground where colour fades away.  
 Dim spectres dance ! Again her eye she rears ;  
 Then from the blood-shot ball wipes purpled tears ;  
 Then presses hard her brow, with mischief fraught,  
 Her brow half bursts with agony of thought ;  
 From me, she cries, pale wretch, thy comfort claim,  
 Born of Despair, and Suicide my name !

## YOUNG.

YOUNG has founded a bad school, and was not himself a good master. He owed part of his early reputation to the picture presented in the opening of his "Night Thoughts." A minister of the Most High, an aged father, who has lost his only daughter, awakes in the middle of the night to mourn upon graves; with Death, Time, and Eternity, he associates the only great thing that man has within himself—grief. This is a striking picture.

But draw nearer; when the imagination, roused by the exordium of the poet, has already created a world of sorrows and of reveries, you find nothing of what you have been promised. You find a man racking his brains for tender and melancholy ideas, and who arrives only at a morose philosophy. Young, whom the phantom of the world pursues, even among the tombs, betrays, in his declamations on death, merely a disappointed ambition: he takes his peevishness for melan-

choly. There is nothing natural in his tenderness, nothing ideal in his grief: it is always a heavy hand moving slowly over the lyre.

Young strove to give to his meditations the character of sorrow: that character is derived from three sources—the scenes of nature, the crowd of recollections, the thoughts of religion.

As for the scenes of nature, Young has endeavoured to make them subservient to his complaints: he apostrophises the moon, he addresses the stars, and the reader remains unmoved. I cannot tell where lies that melancholy which a poet draws forth from pictures of nature: it is hidden in deserts; it is the Echo of fable, pining away with grief, and dwelling invisible upon the mountains.

Such of our good writers as were acquainted with the charm of reverie have surpassed the English divine. Chaulieu has, like Horace, mingled the thoughts of death with the illusions of life.

Grotte, d'où sort ce clair ruisseau,  
De mousse et de fleurs tapissé,  
N'entretiens jamais ma pensée  
Que du murmure de ton eau.

\* \* \* \*

Muses, qui dans ce lieu champêtre  
Avec soin me fîtes nourrir;  
Beaux arbres, qui m'avez vu naître,  
Bientôt vous me verrez mourir.



The most pensive page of Young's is not to be compared with this page of Rousseau's :

“ When evening approached, I descended from the heights of the island, and loved to sit down on the margin of the lake, in some sequestered spot : there, the noise of the waves and the agitation of the water, engaging my senses and driving from my soul all other agitation, plunged it into a delicious reverie, in which night frequently stole upon me without my being aware of it. The flux and reflux of this water, its continuous noise, but swelling at intervals, striking incessantly my ear and my eye, supplied the place of those inward movements which reverie extinguished within me, and sufficed to make me feel with pleasure my existence, without taking the trouble to think. From time to time, there arose some faint and brief reflection on the instability of the things of this world, an image of which was presented to me by the surface of the waters ; but these slight impressions were presently effaced in the uniformity of the continuous movement which rocked me, and which, without any active concurrence of my soul, did not fail to attach me to such a degree, that, when called at the hour and by the signal agreed upon, I could not tear myself from it without great reluctance.”

Young has not turned to good account the reveries which such scenes inspire, because his genius was deficient in tenderness.

As for the recollections of misfortune, they are numerous in this poet, but without truth, like the rest. They have nothing of these strains of Gilbert's, expiring in the flower of his age in an hospital, and forsaken by his friends:—

Au banquet de la vie, infortuné convive,  
 J'apparus un jour, et je meurs !  
 Je meurs, et sur ma tombe où lentement j'arrive,  
 Nul ne viendra verser des pleurs.

Adieu, champs fortunés, adieu, douce verdure,  
 Adieu, riant asyle des bois ;  
 Ciel, pavillon de l'homme, admirable nature,  
 Adieu, pour la dernière fois !

Ah ! puissent voir long-temps votre beauté sacrée,  
 Tant d'amis sourds à mes adieux !  
 Qu'ils meurent pleins de jours, que leur mort soit pleurée,  
 Qu'un ami leur ferme les yeux !

Young declaims in several places against solitude: the tone of his heart, therefore, was neither that of the priest nor that of the poet. The saints sought food for their meditations in the desert, and Parnassus also is a solitary hill. Bourdaloue entreated the chief of his order to permit him to retire from the world. "I feel," he wrote, "that my body is declining and hastening to its end. I

have finished my course, and would to God that I could add, I have been faithful! . . . . Let me be permitted to devote the remnant of my life entirely to God, and to myself . . . . There, forgetting all the things of this world, I shall pass in the presence of God all the years of my life in the bitterness of my soul." If Bossuet, living amidst the pomp of Versailles, has, nevertheless, diffused over his works a holy and majestic melancholy, it is because he had found in religion a complete solitude.

Moreover, in this descriptive elegiac class of compositions, our age has surpassed that which preceded it. It is not, as formerly, vague descriptions, but precise observations that harmonise with the feelings, that charm by their truth, and, as it were, leave a sort of plaintiveness in the soul.

It is the nature of man to regret what he has lost, to dwell amidst recollections, to seek to be alone, as he approaches the grave. Images borrowed from nature have a thousand resemblances to our fortunes: this man passes on in silence, like a gushing spring; that makes a noise in his course, like a torrent; the other precipitates his life, like a cataract; it affrights, and disappears.

Young mourns then over the ashes of Narcissa, without affecting the reader. A mother was

blind ; the circumstance that her daughter was at the point of death had been concealed from her : she was not aware of her misfortune till she embraced her child, and found upon her maternal lips the sacred oil with which the priest had touched the virgin brow. Here is a subject which moves the heart more than all the "Night Thoughts" of the father of Narcissa.

GRAY. THOMSON. DELILLE. FONTANES.

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FROM the author of the "Night Thoughts" I pass to the bard of the rustic dead. Gray found on his lyre a series of accords and inspirations unknown to antiquity. With him commences that school of melancholy poets, which has transformed itself in our day into the school of despairing poets. The first line of Gray's celebrated "Elegy in a Country Church-yard," is almost a literal translation of the last line of these delicious terzets of Dante's:—

Era già l'ora che volge'l disio  
 A' naviganti e'ntenerisce il cuore  
 Lo di ch' han detto a dolce amici addio.

E che lo nuovo peregrin d'amore  
 Punge, se ode squilla di lontana  
 Che paja l'giorno pianger si muore.

Gray says,

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day.

I too have in my time imitated the "Elegy in a Country Church-yard;" indeed, who has not?

Eh que sont les honneurs? l'enfant de la victoire,  
Le paisible mortel qui conduit un troupeau,  
Meurent également; et les pas de la gloire,  
Comme ceux du plaisir, ne mènent qu'au tombeau.

\* \* \* \* \*

Peut-être ici la mort enchaîne en son empire  
De rustiques Newton de la terre ignorés,  
D'illustres inconnus dont les talens sacrés  
Eussent charmer les dieux sur le luth qui respire :

Ainsi brille la perle au fond des vastes mers ;  
Ainsi meurent aux champs des roses passagères  
Qu'on ne voit point rougir, et qui, loin des bergères,  
D'inutiles parfums embaument les deserts.

Gray's example proves that a writer may indulge in reverie without ceasing to be noble and natural, and without despising harmony.

His "Ode on a Distant View of Eton College" is worthy, in some of the stanzas, of the "Elegy in a Country Church-yard."

Ah happy hills! ah pleasing shade!  
Ah fields belov'd in vain!  
Where once my careless childhood stray'd,  
A stranger yet to pain!  
I feel the gales that from you blow  
A momentary bliss bestow;

As, waving fresh their gladsome wing,  
 My weary soul they seem to soothe  
 And redolent of joy and youth  
 To breathe a second spring.

Say, father Thames, for thou hast seen  
 Full many a sprightly race,  
 Disporting on thy margent green,  
 The paths of pleasure trace ;  
 Who foremost now delight to cleave,  
 With pliant arms, thy glassy wave ?  
 The captive linnet which enthrall ?  
 What idle progeny succeed  
 To chase the rolling circle's speed,  
 Or urge the flying ball ?

\* \* \* \* \*  
 Alas, regardless of their doom  
 The little victims play !  
 No sense have they of ills to come,  
 No care beyond to-day.

Who has not felt the sentiments and the regrets expressed here with all the sweetness of the Muse ? Who has not been affected at the remembrances of the sports, the studies, the loves, of his early years ! But can we recal them to life ? The pleasures of youth re-produced by memory are ruins viewed by torch-light.

Gray was ambitious to be thought gentleman-like ; he could not bear to hear any one talk of his poetry, of which he was ashamed. He prided himself on being deeply versed in history, and so he really was ; he turned his attention also to the

natural sciences, and had pretensions to chemistry; as Sir Humphrey Davy lately aspired, but with reason, to poetical renown. Where are the gentlemanlikeness, the history, and the chemistry of Gray? He lives only in a melancholy smile of those Muses whom he despised.

Thomson has expressed, like Gray, but in a different manner, his regrets for the days of childhood.

Welcome, kindred glooms!

Congenial horrors, hail! With frequent foot,  
Pleas'd have I, in my cheerful morn of life,  
When, nurs'd by careless solitude, I liv'd,  
And sung of nature with unceasing joy,  
Pleas'd have I wander'd through your rough domain,  
Trode the pure virgin snows, myself as pure.

As the English had their Thomson, so we have our St. Lambert and our Delille. The masterpiece of the latter is his version of the Georgics—with the exception perhaps of some of his sentimental poems—but it is as if you were reading Racine translated into the language of Louis XV. There are pictures of Raphael's copied by Mignard; such are the pictures of Virgil imitated by the Abbé Delille.

His "Jardins" is a charming work. A bolder style is observable in some of the cantos of his translation of "Paradise Lost." Be this as it may, the technical school, placed between the Classic



school of the seventeenth and the Romantic school of the nineteenth century, is finished : its studied boldnesses, its labours to ennoble things that are not worth the trouble, to imitate sounds and objects which it is useless to imitate, have given to the Technical school but a factitious life, that has passed away with the factitious manners from which it sprang. This school, without lacking the natural, lacks nature : occupied with puerile arrangements of words, it is neither sufficiently original as a new school, nor sufficiently pure as an ancient school. The Abbé Delille was the poet of modern mansions, as the troubadour was the poet of the ancient castles : the verses of the one, the ballads of the other, make you feel the difference between aristocracy in the vigour of age and aristocracy in decrepitude : the Abbé describes readings and games at chess in the halls where the troubadour sang of the crusades and of tournaments.

The prose and the verse of M. de Fontanes are like one another, and possess a merit of the same nature. His thoughts and his images have a melancholy unknown to the age of Louis XIV., which was acquainted only with the austere and holy sadness of religious eloquence. This melancholy is found to pervade the works of the author of "Le Jour des Morts," as the impress of the period in which he lived : it shows that he was born since

Rousseau, not immediately after Fénélon. If the works of M. de Fontanes were reduced to two small volumes, one of prose, the other poetry, it would be the most elegant funeral monument that could be erected over the grave of the Clássic school.

Among the posthumous Odes of M. de Fontanes, there is one on the anniversary of his birth; it possesses the charm of the "Jour des Morts," with a more penetrating and more individual sentiment. I recollect only these two stanzas:—

La vieillesse déjà vient avec ses souffrances.  
 Que m'offre l'avenir? De courtes esperances.  
 Que m'offre le passé? Des fautes, des régrêts.  
 Tel est le sort de l'homme; il s'instruit avec l'âge:  
     Mais que sert d'être sage,  
     Quand le terme est si près?

Le passé, le present, l'avenir, tout m'afflige;  
 La vie à son déclin est pour moi sans prestige;  
 Dans le miroir du temps elle perd ses appas.  
 Plaisirs! allez chercher l'amour et la jeunesse;  
     Laissez-moi ma tristesse,  
     Et ne l'insultez pas!

If anything in the world ought to have excited antipathy in M. de Fontanes, it was my way of writing. In me commenced, with the school called Romantic, a revolution in French literature: yet my friend, instead of being disgusted at my barbarism, was a passionate admirer of it. I certainly did observe astonishment in his countenance

when I read to him fragments from the *Natchez*, *Atala*, and *Réné*; he could not make those productions square with the common rules of criticism; but he felt that he was entering a new world; he beheld a new nature; he understood a language which he did not speak. He gave me excellent advice; to him I am indebted for whatever correctness there is in my style; he taught me to regard the ear; he prevented me from falling into the extravagance of invention and the roughness of execution of my disciples, if, however, I have any disciples.

The 18th of Fructidor drove M. de Fontanes to London. We frequently took walks into the country: we stopped beneath some of those large elm-trees which are scattered over the fields. Reclining against the trunk of one of these elms, my friend gave me an account of his former visit to England before the revolution; he recited the lines which he had then addressed to two young ladies, who had grown old beneath the towers of Westminster Abbey—towers which he found standing just as he left them, whilst at their foot were buried the illusions and the hours of youth. We dined at some solitary tavern at Chelsea, on the Thames, talking of Shakspeare and of Milton, who,

au pied de Westminster,  
Et devinait Cromwell et rêvait Lucifer\*.

\* "Les Conversations," by Sainte Beuve.

Milton and Shakspeare had seen what my friend and I saw : they had sat like us on the margin of that river, to us the foreign river of Babylon, to them the nourishing river of their country. We returned at night to London by the glimmering rays of the stars, which were lost one after another in the fog of the city. We regained our dwelling guided by uncertain lights which scarcely showed us the way, amidst the coal smoke reddening around every lamp. Thus passes the life of the poet:

RE-ACTION.—LITERARY TRANSFORMATION.—  
HISTORIANS.

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WHEN we became enthusiastic imitators of our neighbours, when every thing was English in France—dress, dogs, horses, gardens, books—the English, from their instinctive hatred of us, became anti-French; the more we strove to approach them the more they kept aloof from us. Exposed to the public derision on their stage, there was to be seen in all John Bull's parodies a meagre Frenchman, in an apple-green taffeta suit, his hat under his arm, with spindle-shanks, long queue, and the air of a famished dancing-master or hair-dresser; he suffered his nose to be pulled, and he ate frogs. An Englishman on our stage was always a lord or a captain, a hero of sentiment and generosity. The re-action in London extended to the entire literature; the French school was attacked. Sometimes striving to re-produce the past, at others attempting unknown routes, our neighbours, proceeding from

innovation to innovation, arrived at the modern English school.

When, in 1792, I took refuge in England, I found it necessary to reform most of the opinions which I had borrowed from the criticisms of Voltaire, Diderot, La Harpe, and Fontanes.

As for the historians, Hume was reputed a Tory Jacobite writer, heavy and *retrograde*; he was accused, as well as Gibbon, of having overloaded the English language with Gallicisms; his continuator Smollett, of whig and *progressive* principles, was preferred to him. Gibbon was just dead; he passed for a rhetorician: a philosopher during his life, having become a Christian at his death, he was as such charged and convicted of being a weak man; Hallam and Lingard had not yet appeared.

People still talked of Robertson, because he was dry; one cannot say of the reading of his history what M. Lerminier says of the reading of the history of Herodotus at the Olympic Games: "Greece trembled and Thucydides wept." The learned Scottish divine would have tried in vain to match that speech which Thucydides puts into the lips of the Plataeans, pleading their cause before the Lacedaemonians, who condemned them to death because they had continued faithful to the Athenians.

“Turn your eyes to the graves of your fathers slaughtered by the Medes, and buried in our furrows; to them we every year pay public honours, as to our old companions in arms. Pausanias buried them there, conceiving that he was depositing them in hospitable earth. If ye take away our lives; if ye make the field of Plataea a field of Thebes; will it not be abandoning your kindred in an enemy’s country and leaving them among their murderers? Will you not be enslaving the soil on which the Greeks conquered their freedom? Will you not be abolishing the ancient sacrifices of the founders of these temples? We become supplicants to the ashes of your ancestors; we implore those dead that we may not be enslaved to the Thebans. We will remind you of the day when the most glorious deeds shed a lustre over us, and we conclude this address—a necessary and terrible conclusion, for it may perhaps be but to die that we shall cease to speak.”

Have we amidst our fields graves where we every year perform libations? Have we temples which remind us of memorable deeds? The Grecian history is a poem, Latin history a picture, modern history a chronicle.

## LITERARY TRANSFORMATION.

(CONTINUED.)

PHILOSOPHERS—POETS—POLITICAL ECONOMISTS.

FROM 1792 to 1800, I seldom heard Locke mentioned in England: his system, it was said, had become obsolete, and he was regarded as weak in *ideology*. With respect to Newton, as a writer, they would not have him upon earth, and sent him off to heaven, which was perfectly just.

Il vint ; il revela le principe suprême,  
Constant, universel, un comme Dieu lui-même :  
L'univers se taisait ; il dit—*Attraction !*  
Ce mot, c'était le mot de la création \*.

As for the poets, the "Elegant Extracts" afforded an asylum to a few pieces of Dryden's. People could not forgive the rhymed verses of Pope, though they went to see his house at Twickenham, and cut pieces from the weeping willow which he planted, but which has died away like his fame.

\* Contemplation. A mon père. J. J. Ampère.



Blair? A tiresome critic, in the French style: he was placed far below Johnson.

The old Spectator? To the garret.

Philosophic literature? Confined to the classes at Edinburgh.

The works of the English political writers possess little general interest. General questions are there seldom touched upon; those works scarcely ever discuss any but truths peculiar to the constitution of the British islands.

The productions of the economists are less circumscribed. The calculations respecting the wealth of nations, the influence of colonies, the movement of generations, the employment of capital, the balance of trade and agriculture, apply in part to the different European societies.

However, at the period of which I am treating, Burke had overstepped the circle of national political individuality. By declaring against the French Revolution, he hurried his country into that long series of hostilities which terminated on the field of Waterloo. Cut off from the rest of the world for twenty-two years, England defended her constitution against the ideas which are at this day overpowering it, and dragging it to the common fate of ancient civilisation.

THE STAGE.—MRS. SIDDONS.—THE PIT.

INVASION OF GERMAN LITERATURE.

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IT was nevertheless ungrateful thus to slight the Classics. People had gone back to Shakspeare and Milton. Well—the writers of the age of Queen Anne had restored to the light those two poets, who waited fifty years in limbo for the moment of their entrance into glory. Dryden, Pope, and Addison were the promoters of the apotheosis. Thus Voltaire has contributed to the illustration of the great men of the reign of Louis XIV.: that versatile, prying, inquisitive genius, possessing abundance of fame, lent a little to his neighbour, on condition that it should be repaid to him with heavy interest.

During the eight years of my emigration in London, I saw Shakspeare rule the stage; Rowe, Congreve, Otway, scarcely made their appearance upon it. That sublime and unequal painter of the passions scarcely suffered any other to place

himself beside him. Mrs. Siddons, in the part of Lady Macbeth, performed with extraordinary grandeur: the scene where she walks in her sleep thrilled the spectator with horror. Talma alone was on a level with that actress; but his talent possessed somewhat of the Greek correctness, which was not to be found in that of Mrs. Siddons.

In 1822, being invited to a party at Lord Lansdowne's, his lordship introduced me to an austere-looking lady of seventy-three. She was dressed in crape, wore a black veil like a diadem over her white hair, and looked like an abdicated queen. She addressed me in a solemn tone and three mutilated sentences of the "Génie du Christianisme;" she then said with not less solemnity, "I am Mrs. Siddons." Had she said, "I am Lady Macbeth," I should have believed her. One needs but live to meet with the wrecks of one age cast by the waves of Time on the shore of another age.

The English pit was, in my days of exile, noisy and coarse. Sailors drank beer in the pit, ate oranges, apostrophised the boxes. I happened one evening to be next to a sailor who had come into the house drunk. He asked me where he was. I told him in Covent Garden. "A pretty garden, indeed!" he exclaimed, seized like Homer's gods with inextinguishable laughter. But John Bull,

in his brutality, was a better judge of the beauties of Shakspeare than those dandies of the present day, who prefer the plays of Kotzebue and of our Boulevards, translated into English, to the scenes of Richard III. and Hamlet.

German literature has invaded English literature, as formerly Italian literature, and afterwards French literature, made an irruption into the native land of Milton. Walter Scott commenced his literary career with a translation of Göthe's "Götz of Berlichingen." Kotzebue's dramas then profaned the stage of Shakspeare: a different choice might have been made, since there were Göthe, and Schiller, and Lessing. Some Scottish poets have done better to imitate in their courage and in their mountains, those martial strains of new Germany with which St. Marc Girardin has made us acquainted, as Ampère has initiated us in the Edda, the Sagas, and the Nibelungen Lied.

The following piece was written by Körner on Rauch's bust of Queen Louisa of Prussia:

Thou sleep'st so soft—still, life's fair visions over,  
 Each tranquil feature breathes once more in seeming,  
 Thy clear mild eyes, just closed in peaceful dreaming,  
 With scarcely folded wings light slumbers cover;  
 Thus slumber on till thy land's sons, redeeming  
 God's favour, gladly give life to recover  
 Their freedom—when upon each bright hill hover

The beacons: and their rusted swords are gleaming  
Through night and death deep the Land's hosts are  
driven,

Thus, through hard fight alone the boon is given  
That our sons freemen live in earth and heaven!  
When thy land calls on thee just vengeance taking;  
Rise, German Wife! when Freedom's morn is breaking—  
For the good cause a guardian angel waking!\*

\* From "The Lyre and Sword," being translations of  
Körner's Poems, by W. B. Chorley.—TRANSLATOR.

## LITERARY TRANSFORMATION.

(CONTINUED.)

POLITICAL ELOQUENCE. FOX. BURKE. PITT.

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POLITICAL eloquence may be considered as constituting part of British Literature. I have had opportunities of forming my opinion upon it at two very different periods of my life.\*

The England of 1688 was, about the end of the last century, at the apogee of its glory. As a poor emigrant in London from 1792 to 1800, I listened to the speeches of the Pitts, the Foxes, the Sheridans, the Wilberforces, the Grenvilles, the Whitbreads, the Lauderdale, the Erskines: as a magnificent ambassador in 1822, I cannot express how I was struck when, instead of the great speakers whom I had formerly admired, I saw those who had been their seconds at the time of my first visit, the scholars, rise instead of the

\* All that follows, as far as the chapter entitled "Travels," is extracted from my Memoirs.

masters. Britain fares no better than the rest ; *general* ideas have penetrated into that *particular* society and are leading it. But the enlightened aristocracy, placed at the head of that country for the last one hundred and forty years, will have exhibited to the world one of the most powerful societies that ever did honour to mankind since the Roman Patriciate. The last successes of the British crown on the continent have hastened its fall ; victorious England, as well as Bonaparte vanquished, lost her empire at Waterloo.

In 1791 I was present at the memorable sitting of the House of Commons, when Burke renounced his political connection with Fox. The question related to the French revolution, which Burke attacked, and Fox defended. Never did the two speakers, who had till then been friends, display such eloquence. The whole house was affected, and tears trickled down Fox's cheeks when Burke concluded his reply in these words :—

“The right honourable gentleman, in the speech which he has just made, has treated me in every sentence with uncommon harshness. He has brought down the whole strength and heavy artillery of his judgment, eloquence, and abilities upon me, to crush me at once by a censure upon my whole life, conduct, and opinions. Notwithstanding this great and serious, though on my part

unmerited, attack and attempt to crush me, I will not be dismayed. I am not yet afraid to state my sentiments in this house or any where else, and I will tell all the world that the constitution is in danger. It certainly is an indiscretion at any period, but especially at my time of life, to provoke enemies, or to give my friends occasion to desert me; yet, if my firm and steady adherence to the British constitution places me in such a dilemma, I will risk all; and, as public duty and public prudence teach me, with my last words exclaim, ‘Fly from the French constitution!’”

Mr. Fox here whispered “that there was no loss of friends.”

“Yes,” exclaimed Burke, “there is a loss of friends: I know the price of my conduct. I have done my duty at the price of my friend. Our friendship is at an end. Before I sit down, let me earnestly warn the two right honourable gentlemen who are the great rivals in this house, whether they hereafter move in the political hemisphere as two flaming meteors, or walk together like brothers hand in hand, to preserve and cherish the British constitution, to guard against innovation, and to save it from the danger of those new theories.”

Pitt, Fox, and Burke are no more, and the English constitution has felt the influence of the



*new theories.* You should have seen the gravity of the parliamentary debates at that period ; you should have heard the speakers, whose prophetic voices seemed to announce a speedy revolution ; in order to form some idea of the scene to which I have just adverted. Liberty restricted within the limits of order seemed to be struggling at Westminster under the influence of that anarchical liberty which was declaiming at the still bloody tribune of the Convention.

Pitt, tall and slender, had an air at once melancholy and sarcastic. His delivery was cold, his intonation monotonous, his action scarcely perceptible ; at the same time the lucidity and the fluency of his thoughts, the logic of his arguments, suddenly irradiated with flashes of eloquence, rendered his talent something above the ordinary line.

I frequently saw Pitt walking across St. James's Park, from his own house to the palace. On his part, George III. arrived from Windsor, after drinking beer out of a pewter pot with the farmers of the neighbourhood ; he drove through the mean courts of his mean habitation in a grey chariot, followed by a few of the Horse Guards. This was the master of the kings of Europe, as five or six merchants of the City are the masters of India. Pitt, dressed in black, with a steel-hilted sword by his side, hat under his arm, ascended, taking two

or three steps at a time. In his passage he only met with three or four emigrants who had nothing to do : casting on us a disdainful look, he turned up his nose and his pale face, and passed on.

At home, this great financier kept no sort of order; he had no regular hours for his meals or for sleep. Over head and ears in debt, he paid nobody, and never could take the trouble to cast up a bill. A valet de chambre managed his house. Ill dressed, without pleasure, without passion, greedy of power, he despised honours, and would not be any thing more than William Pitt.

In the month of June, 1822, Lord Liverpool took me to dine at his country-house. As we crossed Putney Heath, he showed me the small house where the son of Lord Chatham, the statesman who had had Europe in his pay, and distributed with his own hand all the treasures of the world, died in poverty.

## CHANGE IN ENGLISH MANNERS.

GENTLEMEN-FARMERS. CLERGY. FASHIONABLE WORLD.  
 GEORGE III.

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SEPARATED from the Continent by a long war, the English retained their manners and their national character till the end of the last century. All was not yet machine in the working classes,—folly in the upper classes. On the same pavements where you now meet squalid figures, and men in frock coats, you were passed by young girls in white tippets, straw hats tied under the chin with a riband, with a basket on the arm in which was fruit or a book; all kept their eyes cast down, all blushed when one looked at them. Frock coats, without any other, were so unusual in London, in 1793, that a woman, deploring with tears the death of Louis XVI., said to me, “But my dear sir, is it true that the poor King was dressed in a frock coat when they cut off his head?”

The gentlemen-farmers had not yet sold their patrimony to take up their residence in London; they still formed in the House of Commons that independent fraction which, transferring their support from the opposition to the ministerial side, upheld the ideas of order and propriety. They hunted the fox, and shot pheasants in autumn, ate fat goose at Michaelmas, greeted the sirloin with shouts of "Roast beef for ever!" complained of the present, extolled the past, cursed Pitt and the war, which doubled the price of port wine, and went to bed drunk, to begin the same life again on the following day. They felt quite sure that the glory of Great Britain would not perish so long as "God save the King" was sung, the rotten boroughs maintained, the game-laws enforced, and hares and partridges could be sold by stealth at market, by the names of lions and ostriches.

The English clergy were learned, hospitable, and generous; they had received the French clergy with a charity truly christian. The University of Oxford had a New Testament, according to the Romish reading, printed at its expense, with these words:—*For the use of the Catholic Clergy, exiled for religion*, and distributed it gratuitously among the refugees.

As for high English society, I, an insignificant exile, saw but the outside of it. At the King's levees, or those of the Princess of Wales, ladies

passed along seated aside in sedan-chairs, their hoops protruding at the door of the chair, like the fore part of an altar; they themselves looked, upon these altars up to their waists, like madonnas or pagodas. These fair ladies were the daughters of those mothers whom the Duc de Guines and the Duke de Lauzun had adored; and these daughters were, in 1822, the mothers and grandmothers of little girls who danced at my house, in short petticoats, to the sound of Collinet's flute. It is eleven years since that time; eleven years added to the skirt of a dress must have made the steps none the lighter. And each of these little girls has now perhaps eleven little girls, the eldest eleven years old, and almost ready to be married—rapid generations of flowers!

George III. survived Mr. Pitt, but he had lost both reason and sight. Every session, at the opening of Parliament, the ministers read to the silent and affected chambers the bulletin of the King's health. The blind monarch was seen wandering about like King Lear in his palaces, groping with his hands the walls of the apartments of Windsor Castle, or seated at the piano, playing with his white hair, a sonata of Handel's or the favourite air of Shakspeare—a worthy end of Old England!\*

\* The extracts from the Memoirs are broken off here.

## TRAVELS.

CAPTAIN ROSS. JACQUEMONT. LAMARTINE.

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TRAVELS!—delightful word!—it reminds me of my whole life. The Americans are pleased to consider me as the bard of their ancient forests; and Abou Gosh, the Arab, still remembers my excursion in the mountains of Judea. I opened the door of the East to Lord Byron, and to the travellers who have since me visited the Cephisus, the Jordan, and the Nile—a numerous posterity, whom I have sent to Egypt as Jacob sent thither his sons. My old and young friends have enlarged the narrow path left by my passage. M. Michaud, the last pilgrim of his Crusades, has beheld the holy sepulchre; M. Lenormant has explored the tombs of Thebes, to preserve for us the language of Champollion; he has seen that liberty reviving amidst the ruins of Greece which I there saw expiring under the turban, intoxicated with fanaticism, opium, and women. My footsteps in every

country have been effaced by other footsteps: it is only in the dust of Carthage that they have remained solitary, like the vestiges of a son of the desert on the snows of Canada. Even in the savannahs of Atala, the herbage has given place to cultivated crops; three high-roads now lead to the Natchez, and if Chactas were still living, he might be a deputy to the congress at Washington. Nay, more—I have received a Cherokee pamphlet, in which those savages compliment me in English as an “ eminent writer and conductor of the public press.”

Voyages and travels ought to be included in English Literature. Many changes have taken place in the manner of writing them, from the time of Raleigh, Hudson, Baffin, Shaw, Anson, Chandler, to the latest explorers of land and sea. It would require a volume to notice the voyages of Captains Cook and Vancouver, the thousand and one tours in India, the discoveries of Mungo Park, Laing, Clapperton, and the brothers Lander, and those of Captains Parry, Franklin, and Ross. Were I to allow my fondness for voyages and travels to run away with me, I should never get away from Timbuctoo, the banks of the Niger, or the valleys of the Himalaya. Nevertheless, that I may not omit this great branch of English literature, I shall quote a few passages from the last

journal of Captain Ross. I am particularly interested in that arctic world, the discovery of which was one of the day-dreams of my youth.

Captain Ross, having left England in 1829, for the purpose of seeking a north-west passage, penetrated Lancaster Strait, and to Prince Regent's Inlet. Stopped by the ice in the gulf to which he has given the name of Boothia, he remained four years blocked up on the west coast of that gulf. Being obliged to forsake his ship, the *Victory*, he turned back over the surface of a frozen ocean, in quest of Baffin's Bay, where he had the good fortune to fall in with the *Isabella* whaler, which took him on board. By an extraordinary concurrence of circumstances, the *Isabella* was the same vessel in which Captain Ross had performed his first voyage in 1818.

During the four years of his detention among the ice, the Captain discovered the magnetic pole, and the western polar sea, separated from the eastern sea merely by a very narrow isthmus. Let us now turn to the sufferings of the voyagers, and the kind of desolate poetry of those regions. The Captain gives this description of hyperborean nature:—

“ Is there any one that loves the sight of ice and snow: I imagine now that I always doubted this; I am quite sure of it at present. It deforms



all landscape, destroys all 'keeping,' by confounding distances, and with that proportions, and with that too, more and worse than all else, the harmony of colouring; giving us a motley patchwork of black and white, in place of those sweet gradations and combinations of colour which Nature produces in her summer mood, even amid the most deformed and harsh of landscapes.

“ These are the objections to a snow landscape, which even the experience of a day may furnish; how much more when, for more than half a year, all the element above head is snow, when the gale is a gale of snow, the fog a fog of snow, when the sun shines but to glitter on the snow, which is, yet does not fall, when the breath of the mouth is snow, when snow settles on the hair, the dress, the eyelashes, when snow falls around us and fills our chambers, our beds, our dishes, should we open a door, should the external air get access to our pene-tralia; when the crystal stream in which we must quench our thirst is a kettle of snow with a lamp of oil; when our sofas are of snow and our houses of snow: when snow was our decks, snow our awnings, snow our observatories, snow our larders, snow our salt; and when all the other uses of snow should be of no avail, our coffins and our graves were to be graves and coffins of snow!

“ Is not this more than enough of snow to suf-

fice for admiration? Is it not worse that, during ten months in a year, the ground is snow, and ice, and slush; that, during the whole year, its tormenting, chilling, odious presence is ever before the eye? Who more than I has admired the glaciers of the extreme north? who more has loved to contemplate the icebergs sailing from the Pole before the tide and the gale, floating along the ocean, through calm and through storm, like castles, and towers, and mountains, gorgeous in colouring and magnificent, if often capricious in form? And have I, too, not sought amid the crashing and the splitting and the thundering roarings of a sea of moving mountains for the sublime, and felt that Nature could do no more? In all this there has been beauty, horror, danger, every thing that could excite: they would have excited a poet even to the verge of madness. But to see, to have seen, ice and snow, to have felt snow and ice for ever, and nothing for ever but snow and ice, during all the months of a year; to have seen and felt but uninterrupted and unceasing ice and snow during all the months of four years—this it is that has made the sight of those most chilling and wearisome objects an evil which is still in our recollection, as if the remembrance would never cease.”

Commander Ross, the captain's nephew, set out on an excursion to a horde of Esquimaux. In the

course of his narrative, he says, "The guides were now completely at fault, as they could not see twenty yards before them, from the thick drifting of the snow-storm; so that we were obliged to give up all further attempts for the present and to consent to their building a snow hut.

"This was completed in half an hour; and certainly never did we feel better pleased with this kind of architecture, which in so very short a time produced for us a dwelling affording shelter at least as perfect as we could have obtained within the best house of stone. It was, indeed, barely large enough to hold our party of four; but, in the wretched plight that we now were, even a worse accommodation than this would have been most acceptable. Our clothes were so penetrated by the fine snow-dust, and frozen so hard, that we could not take them off for a long time, and not till the warmth of our bodies had begun to soften them. We also suffered exceedingly from thirst; so that while the Esquimaux were busied with the arrangements of their building, we were employed in melting snow by the aid of a spirit lamp. The quantity which we thus produced in a short time was sufficient for the whole party; while the delight of our guides was only equalled by their surprise; since with them the same operation is the work of

three or four hours, performed as it is in stone vessels over their open oil lamps.

There was, however, an attendant evil, owing chiefly to the exceeding smallness of our hut. Its walls naturally melted also; and so fast that our dresses became soon wetted to such a degree, that we were compelled to take them off, and get into the fur bags. Here at length we could keep out this enemy, and in those we slept.”

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“It blew so hard a gale from the north during the whole day, that we were unable to leave the hut . . . . The wind without howled round our walls of snow, and the drift which it brought sounded against them with a hissing noise, which I was glad to forget in the talk that rendered it for a time inaudible.”

The moment when Commander Ross discovers the Western Ocean is remarkable:—

“The party which I had thus quitted for a short time had announced their arrival on the shores of the Western Sea by three cheers: it was to me, as well as to them, and still more indeed to the leader than to his followers, a moment of interest, well deserving the usual hail of seamen; for it was the ocean that we had pursued, the object of our hopes and exertions; the free space which, as we once had hoped, was to have carried us round the Ame-

rican continent, which ought to have given us the triumph for which we and all our predecessors had laboured so long and so hard. It would have done all this had not Nature forbidden; it might have done all this had our chain of lakes been an inlet; had this valley formed a free communication between the eastern and western seas; but we had at least ascertained the impossibility. The desired sea was at our feet; we were soon to be travelling along its surface; and in our final disappointment, we had at least the consolation of having removed all doubts and quenched all anxiety—of feeling that where God had said No, it was for man to submit, and to be thankful for what had been granted. It was a solemn moment, never to be forgotten; and never was the cheering of a seaman so impressive, breaking as it did on the stillness of the night, amid this dreary waste of ice and snow, where there was not an object to remind us of life, and not a sound seemed ever to have been heard.

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“ How extremely unwilling I was to return at all from this point, with the main object of the expedition almost, it may be said, within our reach, may well be imagined; but others must be in the same situation before they can conceive the intensity of this regret and the severity of this disappointment. Our distance from Cape Turnagain

was now not greater than the space which we had already travelled ; as many more spare days at our command would have enabled us to do all that was remaining to return triumphant to the Victory, and to carry to England a truly worthy fruit of our long and hard labours. But these days were not in our power.

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“ We now, therefore, unfurled our flag for the usual ceremony, and took possession of what we saw as far as the distant point, while that on which we stood was named Victory Point, being the *ne plus ultra* of our labour. . . . .

“ On Victory Point we erected a cairn of stones six feet high, and we enclosed in it a canister, containing a brief account of the proceedings of the expedition since its departure from England. Such has been the custom, and to that it was our business to conform ; though I must say that we did not entertain the most remote hope, that our little history would ever meet a European's eyes, even had it escaped the accident of falling into the hands of the Esquimaux. Yet we should have gone about our work with something like hope, if not confidence, had we then known that we were reputed as lost men, if even still alive, and that our ancient and tried friend, Captain Back, was about to seek for us, and to restore us once more

to society and home. And if it is not impossible that the course of his present investigations from Cape Turnagain eastward may lead him to this very spot, that he may find the record and proof of our own turnagain, we have known what it is for the wanderer in these solitudes to alight upon such traces of friends and of home, and can almost envy him the imagined happiness; while we shall rejoice to hear that he has done that in which we failed, and perhaps not less than if we had ourselves succeeded in completing the long pursued and perilous work."

The love of country expressed amidst these unparalleled sufferings, and in these dreary regions; those names, consigned to a monument of snow, and which shall never be found again; that unknown glory, reposing under a few stones, and from the depths of everlasting solitude addressing a posterity that shall never exist; those written words, which shall never speak in those mute deserts, or which shall expire amidst the crash of ice broken by a tempest which no ear shall hear—all these things considered together astound me. But, the first emotion over, we find, as a last result, that death is at the end of everything: the life and the memory of man are lost on every shore in the silence and the frost of the grave.

Behold the unfortunate Jacquemont expiring, far away from France, surrounded by all the populations of Hindostan: is his voice less affecting than that of those sailors calling to mind their country in the hyperborean solitudes? Lying on his back, because he was too weak to sit up, he wrote with a pencil, on the 1st of December, 1832, this note to his brother:—

“ My end, if it is that which is approaching, is gentle and easy. If thou wert here, seated on my bed-side, with our father and Frederick, my heart would be wrung, and I should not wait the approach of death with this resignation and this serenity. Take comfort; comfort our father; comfort one another, my friends.

“ But I am exhausted by this effort to write. I must bid you farewell, farewell! Oh! how your poor Victor loves you!—For the last time, farewell!”

The modern travellers of France may compete in their delineations with the pictures presented by English travellers. In their descriptions of India you will find nothing so brilliant as the subjoined passage of M. de Lamartine. The reader will be glad to quit that land without trees, that snow-sand marked with the tracks of foxes and bears, those frost-bound huts lighted by what Captain



Ross calls "the southern twilight," to warm himself beneath pines on the sands trodden by camels, amidst caravans, in the sunshine of Syria.

"About half a league from the town, towards the west, the Emir Fakardin has planted a forest of pines on a sandy plateau which spreads itself between the sea and the plain of Baghdad, a handsome Arab village at the foot of the Lebanon. The Emir, I was told, planted this magnificent forest as a rampart against the invasion of the immense hills of red sand, which rise a little further on, and which threatened to overwhelm Beyroot and its rich plantations. The forest has become superb: the trunks of the trees are from sixty to eighty feet high, and perfectly straight; and they touch one another with their wide-spreading heads, which cover an immense space with their shadow. Paths of sand wind among the trunks of the pines, and afford the softest surface for the horses' feet. The rest of the ground is a light downy green-sward interspersed with flowers of the brightest red. The bulbs of the wild hyacinths are so large as not to be crushed when trodden upon by the horses. Through the colonnades formed by the trunks of these pines, you see, on the one hand, the white and reddish sand-hills that intercept the view of the sea, on the other the plain of Baghdad and the course of the river in that plain, and a

corner of the gulf, resembling a small lake, so completely is it enclosed by the horizon of the land, and the twelve or fifteen Arab villages scattered over the last slopes of the Lebanon, and lastly the groups of the Lebanon itself, which form a curtain to that scene. The light is so bright and the air so clear, that you distinguish, at the distance of several leagues, the forms of the cedars or of the carob-trees on the mountains, or the huge eagles swimming without moving their wings in the ocean of ether. This pine-wood is certainly the most magnificent of all the scenes that I ever beheld in my life. The sky, the mountains, the snow, the blue horizon of the sea, the red and funereal horizon of the desert of sand; the meanders of the river; the solitary heads of the cypresses; the bunches of palm-trees scattered over the country; the graceful appearance of the cottages covered with orange-trees and with vines drooping from the roofs; the austere look of the lofty Maronite monasteries, throwing broad patches of shade or large jets of light on the perpendicular sides of the Lebanon; the caravans of camels, laden with merchandise from Damascus, passing in silence between the trunks of the trees; troops of indigent Jews mounted on asses, holding two children in each arm; women shrouded in white veils, on horseback, marching to the sound of the

fife and tambourine, surrounded by a crowd of children, dressed in red stuff bordered with gold, and dancing before their horses; a few mounted Arabs, running the dgerid around us upon steeds whose manes literally sweep the ground; groups of Turks, seated before a coffee-house constructed of boughs, smoking their pipes or saying their prayers; a little further off, the desert hills of endless sand, tinged with gold by the rays of the evening sun, and from which the wind raises clouds of scorching dust; lastly, the dull roaring of the sea, mingling with the musical sound of the wind in the heads of the pines, and the notes of thousands of unknown birds—all these together present to the eye and the mind of the spectator a combination the most sublime, the most delightful, and at the same time the most melancholy, that ever intoxicated my soul. It is the scene of my dreams, to which I shall not fail to revert every day."

The reader will be of the same mind with the poet: he too will be sure to revert to this scene.

NOVELS. SAD TRUTHS ARISING FROM LONG  
CORRESPONDENCES. EPISTOLARY  
STYLE.

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NOVELS were still, at the end of the last century, comprehended in the general proscription. Richardson slept forgotten: his countrymen found in his style traces of the inferior society in which he had lived. Fielding maintained his ground well. Sterne, the aspirant to originality, was out of date. "The Vicar of Wakefield" was still read.

If Richardson's style is not good—and of this we foreigners are no judges—he will not live, for it is only by style that a writer lives. In vain we revolt against this truth: the best-written work, adorned with portraits of the most striking resemblance, possessing a thousand other recommendations, falls still-born, if deficient in style. Style, of which there are a thousand kinds, is not to be acquired; it is the gift of Heaven, it is a natural

talent. But if Richardson has been forsaken only for certain vulgar expressions unendurable by elegant society, he may revive; the revolution which is taking place, by lowering the aristocracy and raising the middling classes, will render less perceptible, or remove altogether, the traces of lowly habits and of an inferior language.

Novels in letters, considering the narrow space within which the action and the characters are confined, lack that local interest and that philosophic truth, which are attached to the perusal of real correspondence. Take, for instance, the works of Voltaire: read the first letter, addressed in 1715, to the Marquise de Mimeure, and the last note, addressed on the 26th of May, 1778, four days before the death of the writer, to Count de Lally Tollendal; reflect on all that passed during that interval of sixty-three years.

Observe that long procession of the dead: Chauvieu, Cideville, Thiriot, Algarotti, Genonville, Helvetius; of the other sex, the Princess of Bayreuth, the Marechale de Villars, the Marquise de Pompadour, the Comtesse de Fontaine, the Marquise du Chatelet, Madame Denis, and those creatures of pleasure who pass through life laughing, the Lecouvreurs, the Luberts, the Gaussins, the Salles, the Carmargos; Terpsichores, "with steps measured by the Graces," as the poet says,

and whose light ashes are at this day trodden by the aërial feet of a Taglioni.

When you peruse a correspondence for any length of time, you turn the page, and the name upon one side is no longer found on the other. A new Genonville, a new Du Chatelet appear, and twenty letters forward they vanish in their turn: friendships succeed friendships, loves follow loves.

The illustrious veteran, as he advances in years, ceases to be connected, except by glory, with the rising generations; he still addresses them from the desert of Ferney, but he has nothing more than his voice among them. What a distance between the lines to the only son of Louis XIV.,

Noble sang du plus grand de rois,  
Son amour et notre esperance,—

and the stanzas to Madame du Deffant,

Eh quoi! vous êtes étonnée,  
Qu' au bout de quatre-vingts hivers,  
Ma muse faible et surannée  
Puisse encor fredonner des vers !

Quelque fois un peu de verdure  
Rit sous le glaçons de nos champs,  
Elle console la nature,  
Mais elle sèche en peu de temps.

The King of Prussia, the Empress of Russia, all

the great, all the celebrated, of the earth, receive on their knees, as though it were a diploma of immortality, a few words from the writer, who saw Louis XIV. expire, Louis XV. and his age pass away, Louis XVI. born and reigning, and who, placed between the great king and the martyr king, is himself alone the whole history of France during his time.

But a private correspondence between two persons who have loved each other presents, perhaps, something still more sad, for it is no longer *men*, but *the man*, that one sees.

At first the letters are long, lively, frequent. The day is not sufficient for them. The writer commences at sunset: he pens a few words by moonlight, charging the chaste, silent, discreet luminary to cover with its modesty a thousand wishes. The lovers parted at dawn; they await its first rays to write what they had forgotten to say during the hours of rapture. A thousand vows cover the paper, on which are reflected the roses of Aurora; a thousand kisses are deposited on the burning words, which seem to emanate from the first look of the sun. Not an idea, an image, a reverie, an incident, an uneasiness, but has its letter.

Some morning or other, something scarcely perceptible fixes itself upon the beauty of this passion,

like the first wrinkle on the brow of an adored female. The breath and the perfume of love expire in those pages of youth, as a breeze languishes at evening among the flowers: we perceive it, but will not confess it to ourselves. The letters become shorter and less frequent; they are filled with news, with descriptions, with extraneous matters: some are delayed, but we are less uneasy; certain of loving, and being beloved, the parties are become reasonable; they have ceased to grumble, they submit to absence. Vows are still interchanged; they are still the same words; but they are dead words,—the soul is wanting. The “I love you” is now but an expression of habit, an obligatory phrase, the “I have the honour to be” of an ordinary epistle. By-and-by the manner becomes cold or angry. The post-day is no longer awaited with impatience; it is dreaded; it becomes a fatigue to write. We blush at the thought of the follies that we have committed to paper; how glad we should be to get back our letters, and to throw them into the fire! How has this come to pass? Is it a new attachment that is commencing, or an old attachment that is ending? No matter: it is love that is expiring before the object loved.

Success to novels in letters and without letters, in which the affections are destroyed only by



violence, and are never impaired by that secret operation which is incessantly going on in human nature—the slow fever of time, which produces disgust and lassitude, which dispels all illusion and all enchantment; which undermines our passions, blights our loves, and changes our hearts, as it changes our hair and our years.

There is, however, an exception to this infirmity of human things: it sometimes happens that in an energetic soul love lasts long enough to transform itself into passionate friendship, to become a duty, to assume the qualities of virtue; it then loses its natural frailty and lives in its immortal principles. Richardson has wonderfully delineated a passion of this kind in the character of Clementine.

For the rest, setting aside the fictitious letters of novels, and considering only the epistolary language, the English have nothing comparable with the letters of Madame de Sevigné. The letters of Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, Bolingbroke, Lady Mary Wortley Montague, and, lastly, those of Junius, which are supposed to be by Sir Philip Francis, are works, not letters: they are all more or less like the letters of the younger Pliny and of Voiture. For my own part, I should prefer to them a few letters of the unfortunate Lord Russel, of Lady Russel, of Miss Anne Seward, and the little that we know of the letters of Lord Byron.

MODERN NOVELS.

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FROM *Clarissa* and *Tom Jones* have sprung the two principal branches of the family of the modern English Novels—the novels containing family pictures and domestic dramas; and the novels composed of adventures and delineations of general society. After Richardson's time the manners of the west end of the town made an irruption into the domain of fiction: novels were filled with castles and country-seats, lords and ladies, adventures at watering-places, horse-races, balls, at the opera, at Ranelagh, with a chit-chat, a tittle-tattle, that knew no end. Presently, the scene was transferred to Italy; the lovers crossed the Alps, amidst tremendous perils and mental agonies that would have drawn tears from lions. The jargon of high life was adopted: hence the fashion of certain words, the affectation of a certain language, of a certain pronunciation, changing in the upper class of English society almost with every session

of parliament. A simple reader is quite astounded to find that he is ignorant of English which he fancied that he understood half-a-year ago. In 1822, at the time of my embassy to London, the fashionable was expected to exhibit at the first glance an unhappy and unhealthy man; to have an air of negligence about his person, long nails, a beard neither entire nor shaven, but as if grown for a moment unawares, and forgotten during the preoccupations of wretchedness; hair in disorder; a sublime, wild, wicked eye; lips compressed in disdain of human nature; a Byronian heart, overwhelmed with weariness and disgust of life.

The dandy of the present day must have a conquering, frivolous, insolent look. He must pay particular attention to his toilet, wear moustaches or a beard trimmed into a circle like Queen Elizabeth's ruff, or like the radiant disk of the sun. He shows the proud independence of his character by keeping his hat on his head, by lolling upon sofas, by thrusting his boots into the faces of the ladies seated in admiration upon chairs before him. He rides with a cane, which he carries like a taper, regardless of the horse, which he bestrides as it were by accident. His health must be perfect, and he must always have five or six felicities upon his hands. Some radical dandies who have advanced the furthest towards the future have a pipe.

But, no doubt, all this has changed, even during the time that I have taken to describe it.

Among the thousands of novels which have inundated England for half a century past, few have maintained their ground. The works of Anne Radcliffe form a distinct species. Those of Mrs. Barbauld, Miss Edgeworth, and Miss Burney, have, it is said, many chances of living.

“The laws,” says Montaigne, “ought to lay restraints upon unqualified and useless writers, as it does upon vagrants and idlers. Myself and a hundred others ought to be banished from the hands of our people. Scribbling seems to be a certain symptom of a distracted age. When did we write so much as since we have been in trouble? When did the Romans as at the time of their ruin?”

I have scarcely made mention of the English women who have formerly shone, or who still shine in literature, because, in pursuing my plan, I should have been drawn into comparisons which I do not choose to make. Madame de Staël is the queen of her epoch, and her works have remained.

Some French women, even at the present day, are distinguished by extraordinary merit as writers: one of them has opened a route in which she will not be much followed, and by which she will certainly not travel to posterity. Women, when they

possess genius, mix with it secrets which constitute part of the charm of their talent, and which cannot be separated from it : now, no one has a right to penetrate into those mysteries of the woman and the muse. Lastly, talent frequently changes its object and nature ; one must have patience and wait, in order to admire it in its different forms. Several have been seduced and run away with, as it were, by their youthful years : brought back to the maternal home by the breaking of the spell, they have added to their lyre the grave or plaintive chord on which religion or misfortune is expressed.

WALTER SCOTT.—THE JEWESS.

BUT these different schools of sedentary novelists, novelists travelling in coachés or chaises, novelists of lake and mountain, novelists of cities and drawing-rooms, have all merged in the new school of Walter Scott, just as poetry has rushed into the track of Lord Byron.

The illustrious painter of Scotland seems to me to have created a false class ; he has, in my opinion, confounded history and romance : the novelist has set about writing historical romances, and the historian romantic histories. I speak on this subject with some vexation, because I, who have described, loved, sung, extolled so much the old Christian temples, am dying of spleen from hearing them so constantly depreciated : there was left me as a last illusion, a cathedral ; it has been taken from me by storm.

When an author enjoys a general reputation in his own country ; when that reputation is sus-

tained for a great number of years; nobody, and least of all a foreigner, has a right to question the titles of this reputation; they are established on the most solid foundations—the true genius of the language, the national instinct, and the consent of public opinion.

I refuse, therefore, to sit in judgment on any English author, whose merit does not appear to me to reach that degree of superiority which it has in the eyes of his countrymen. If, in Walter Scott, I am frequently obliged to skip the interminable conversations; if I do not always meet with that select nature, that perfection of scenery, that originality, those thoughts, those traits, which I find in Manzoni and several of our modern novelists; it is my own fault. But one of the great merits of Walter Scott, in my opinion, is, that he may be put into the hands of every body. It requires much greater efforts of talent to interest whilst keeping within due bounds, than to please by overleaping them; it is not so easy to regulate the heart as to derange it.

Burke restricted the politics of England to the past; Walter Scott drove back the English to the middle ages: all that was written, manufactured, built, was Gothic: books, furniture, houses, churches, mansions. But the barons of the Magna Charta are now-a-days the fashionables of Bond

Street; a frivolous race, which is still encamped in the antique manorial halls, till the arrival of the two great modern barons, Equality and Liberty, who are preparing to dislodge them.

Walter Scott does not mould, like Richardson, upon the internal type of man: he likes rather to display the exterior of his personages. His fantasies possess a peculiar charm—witness the portrait of the Jewess in “Ivanhoe.”

“Her form was exquisitely symmetrical, and was shown to advantage by a sort of eastern dress which she wore, according to the fashion of the females of her nation. Her turban of yellow silk suited well with the darkness of her complexion. The brilliancy of her eyes, the superb arch of her eyebrows, her well formed aquiline nose, her teeth as white as pearl, and the profusion of her sable tresses, which, each arranged in its own little spiral of twisted curls, fell down upon as much of a lovely neck and bosom as a simarre of the richest Persian silk, exhibiting flowers in their natural colours, embossed upon a purple ground, permitted to be visible—all these constituted a combination of loveliness, which yielded not to the loveliest of the maidens who surrounded her. It is true that, of the golden and pearl-studded clasps which closed her vest from the throat to the waist, the three uppermost were left unfastened on account of the



heat, which something enlarged the prospect to which we allude. A diamond necklace, with pendants of inestimable value, were by this means also made more conspicuous. The feather of an ostrich, fastened in her turban by an agraffe set with brilliants, was another distinction of the beautiful Jewess, and gave her the look of the very bride of the Canticles."

Fontanes, that friend whose loss I shall never cease to regret, asked me one day why the women of the Jewish race are handsomer than the men. I gave him a reason at once poetical and Christian. The Jewesses, I replied, have escaped the curse which has alighted upon their fathers, their husbands, and their sons. Not a Jewess was to be seen among the crowd of priests and the rabble who insulted the Son of Man, scourged him, crowned him with thorns, and subjected him to ignominy and the agony of the cross. The women of Judea believed in the Saviour; they loved, they followed him; they assisted him with their substance, they soothed him under afflictions. A woman at Bethany poured on his head the precious ointment which she kept in a vase of alabaster; the sinner anointed his feet with a perfumed oil, and wiped them with her hair. Christ, on his part, extended his grace and mercy to the Jewesses; he raised from the dead the son of the widow of

Nain, and Martha's brother, Lazarus; he cured Simon's mother-in-law and the woman who touched the hem of his garment; to the Samaritan woman he was a spring of living water, and a compassionate judge to the woman taken in adultery. The daughters of Jerusalem wept over him; the holy women accompanied him to Calvary, brought balm and spices, and sought him weeping at the sepulchre. "Woman, why weepest thou?" His first appearance after his resurrection was to Magdalen. She did not recognise him; but he said to her, "Mary!" At the sound of that voice, Magdalen's eyes were opened, and she answered, "Master!" The reflection of some beautiful ray must have rested on the brow of the Jewesses.

Fontanes appeared satisfied with these reasons, which cannot fail to be conclusive for the *learned sisters*.

THE LAKE SCHOOL—POETS AMONG THE  
WORKING CLASSES.

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AT the same time that the novel was passing to the *romantic* state, poetry was undergoing a similar transformation. Cowper forsook the French school, for the purpose of reviving the national school. Burns commenced the same revolution in Scotland. After them came the restorers of ballads: Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Wilson, Moore, Crabbe, Morgan, Rogers, Hogg, have brought down this species of poetry to the present day. Campbell's "Pleasures of Hope," Moore's "Lalla Rookh," Rogers's "Pleasures of Memory," have obtained extraordinary success. Several of these poets belong to what is called "the Lake School," because they resided near the Lakes of Cumberland and Westmorland, and sometimes sang their beauties.

Campbell, Moore, Rogers, Wordsworth, Southey, Hunt, Knowles, Lord Holland, are still living for

the honour of English literature : but one ought to be English born in order to appreciate the full merit of particular kinds of compositions, though it is apparent enough to the countrymen of the authors. I know not if it would be possible to translate well into French the "Melodies" of Thomas Moore, the bard of Erin. Apply this remark to those short pieces of poetry of divers denominations, which charm the mind and the ear of an Englishman, an Irishman, a Scotchman. Burns, the lyric, whose death has been sung by Campbell, and the sailor's songster, are sons of the British soil ; they could not live in their energy and their grace under any other sun. We pretend to understand Anacreon and Catullus : I am persuaded that the Attic delicacy and the Roman urbanity escape us.

England has from time to time beheld poets spring up among the working classes. Bloomfield, who was bred a shoemaker, is the author of "The Farmer's Boy;" a poem, the language of which is extremely scientific. At the present day, it is a blacksmith who shines. Vulcan was the son of Jupiter. Hogg, who is just dead, the first poet of Scotland after Burns, was a farmer.

We have also our Muses among the lower classes. I shall say nothing of the fair Cordière and Clemence of Bourges, because, in spite of their talents and their names, they were wealthy. Mas-

ter Adam, cabinet-maker of Nevers, might be aptly placed against the English shoemaker. At this moment, J. C. Jouvenot, a working locksmith, has just published two volumes of poems, comedies and tragedies. Reboul, baker of Nismes, has addressed to a mother these stanzas of poetic and touching inspiration :—

L'ANGE ET L'ENFANT.

Un ange au radieux visage,  
 Penché sur le bord d'un berceau,  
 Semblait contempler son image  
 Comme dans l'onde d'un ruisseau.

“ Charmant enfant qui me ressemble,  
 Disait-il, oh ! viens avec moi :  
 Viens, nous serons heureux ensemble  
 La terre est indigne de toi.

“ Là, jamais entière allégresse ;  
 L'ame y souffre de ses plaisirs  
 Les cris de joie ont leur tristesse  
 Les voluptés ont leurs soupirs.

“ Eh ! quoi ! les chagrins, les alarmes,  
 Viendraient troubler ce front si pur,  
 Et par l'amertume des larmes,  
 Se terniraient ces yeux d'azur !

“ Non, non, dans les champs de l'espace  
 Avec moi tu vas t'envoler ;  
 La Providence te fait grâce  
 Des jours que tu devais couler.”

Et, secouant ses blanches ailes,  
 L'ange à ces mots a pris l'essor  
 Vers les demeures éternelles . . . . .  
 Pauvre mère, ton fils est mort.

If M. Reboul has taken a wife from among the daughters of Ceres, and she should become his Muse, France will have her Fornarina.

Here are some lines by a clerk in the post-office at Poligny :—

ELEGIE AUX MANES DE MARIE GRAND.

Son aurore était belle ; elle était à cet âge  
 Où l'aimable langueur qui pâlit le visage  
 Donne aux yeux tant de charme et parle à tant de cœurs !  
 Elle était à cet âge où l'on verse des pleurs.  
 O pleurs délicieux ! . . . Sa paupière arrosée,  
 Payait à la nature une douce rosée,  
 Déjà dans ses yeux bleus on voyait chaque jour  
 Eclorre, puis mourir, un beau rayon d'amour.

\* \* \* \* \*

Elle était \* \* \* \* \*  
 Tendre comme l'agneau qui bêle à la colline,  
 Quand son dos caressant vers la brebis s'incline.  
 Hélas ! tant de vertus ne devraient point finir,  
 Pourquoi n'en reste-t-il, hélas ! qu'un souvenir ?

\* \* \* \* \*

Elle tendit les bras, et nos cœurs s'enlacèrent ;  
 Nos soupirs confondus ensemble s'étouffèrent !  
 Cette heure si cruelle était pour nous des jours :  
 Cette heure vit encore, et je pleure toujours.

THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE.—KNOX.

---

I HAVE just named Hogg, the last cottage-poet of the three kingdoms: I shall now say a few words concerning the last Muse of the British palaces, to show how everything dies in this age of death. The princess Charlotte of England has sung the beauties of Claremont, by applying to them these lines of an eminent poet:—

To Claremont's terrac'd heights and Esher's groves,  
 Where, in the sweetest solitude, embrac'd  
 By the soft windings of the silent Mole,  
 From courts and cities Charlotte finds repose:  
 Enchanting vale! beyond whate'er the muse  
 Has of Achaia or Hesperia sung.  
 O vale of bliss! O softly swelling hills!  
 On which the power of cultivation lies,  
 And joys to see the wonders of its toil.

When one sees this queen presumptive, so young and so happy, thus musing in the groves of Esher, we have reason to believe that she would have descended to the grave with less pain from the throne of Elizabeth than from the terraces of Claremont. I had seen that princess, when a child, in the arms

of her mother; I did not find her, in 1822, at Windsor with her father. These depredations, which death is incessantly committing among us, nevertheless surprise us: but who knows whether it was not out of mercy that Providence so soon withdrew from the world the daughter of George IV.? What apparent felicity attended Marie Antoinette when she came to Versailles to place upon her head the fairest crown in the world! Overwhelmed a few years later with outrages of every kind, she found not a voice in France to say, Peace to her sorrows! The august victim was sung only in foreign lands by fugitives or by strangers. Delille demanded expiations from his faithful lyre; Alfieri composed the admirable Sonnet, "Regina sempre;" Knox mourned the captivity of the widowed queen and martyr.

If thy breast soft pity knows,  
 O! drop a tear with me:  
 Feel for th' unexampled woes  
 Of widow'd royalty.

Fallen, fallen from a throne!  
 Lo! beauty, grandeur, pow'r;  
 Hark! 'tis a queen's, a mother's moan;  
 From yonder dismal tow'r.

I hear her say, or seem to say,  
 "Ye who listen to my story,  
 Learn how transient beauty's day,  
 How unstable human glory!"



## SONGS.

LORD DORSET.—BERANGER.

THE song, as ancient in England as it is in the kingdom of St. Louis, has assumed all sorts of forms: it changes to a hymn for religion; it remains a song for the thousand trifles and the thousand incidents of life, gay or grave. Lord Dorset's song, written at sea during the first Dutch war, in 1665, the night before an engagement, is an elegant composition.

To all you ladies now at land  
 We men at sea indite;  
 But first would have you understand  
 How hard it is to write;  
 The Muses now, and Neptune too,  
 We must implore to write to you,  
 With a fa la, la la, la la.

For though the Muses should prove kind,  
 And fill our empty brain;  
 Yet if rough Neptune rouse the wind  
 To wave the azure main,  
 Our paper, pen, and ink, and we,  
 Roll up and down our ships at sea,  
 With a fa la, la la, la la.

Then if we write not by each post,  
 Think not we are unkind ;  
 Nor yet conclude our ships are lost  
 By Dutchmen or by wind ;  
 Our tears we'll send a speedier way,  
 The tide shall bring them twice a day,  
 With a fa la, la la, la la.

The King, with wonder and surprise,  
 Will swear the seas grow bold,  
 Because the tides will higher rise  
 Than e'er they did of old :  
 But let him know it is our tears  
 Bring floods of grief to Whitehall Stairs,  
 With a fa la, la la, la la.

Should foggy Opdam chance to know  
 Our sad and dismal story,  
 The Dutch would scorn so weak a foe,  
 And quit their fort at Gorée :  
 For what resistance can they find  
 From men who've left their hearts behind ?  
 With a fa la, la la, la la.

Let wind and weather do its worst,  
 Be you to us but kind,  
 Let Dutchmen vapour, Spaniards curse,  
 No sorrow we shall find :  
 'Tis then no matter how things go,  
 Or who's our friend or who's our foe.  
 With a fa la, la la, la la.

To pass our tedious hours away,  
 We throw a merry main ;

Or else at serious ombre play ;  
But why should we in vain  
Each other's ruin thus pursue ?  
We were undone when we left you.  
With a fa la, la la, la la.

But now our fears tempestuous grow,  
And cast our hopes away ;  
Whilst you, regardless of our woe,  
Sit careless at a play :  
Perhaps permit some happier man  
To kiss your hand or flirt your fan.  
With a fa la, la la, la la.

When any mournful tune you hear,  
That dies in every note,  
As if it sigh'd with each man's care  
For being so remote :  
Think then how often love we've made  
To you, when all those tunes were play'd.  
With a fa la, la la, la la.

In justice you cannot refuse  
To think of our distress ;  
When we for hopes of honour lose  
Our certain happiness ;  
All those designs are but to prove  
Ourselves more worthy of your love.  
With a fa la, la la, la la.

And now we've told you all our loves,  
And likewise all our fears,  
In hopes this declaration moves  
Some pity for our tears ;  
Let's hear of no inconstancy—  
We have too much of that at sea.  
With a fa la, la la, la la.

This is the French song of the eighteenth century.

A very pretty little song, "The Pigeon," represents a young female sending a message to her lover; it begins thus:

Why tarries my love,  
 Why tarries my love,  
 Why tarries my love from me?  
 Come hither my dove,  
 I'll write to my love,  
 And send him a letter by thee.

"God save the King," Thomson's "Rule Britannia," and Burns's ballad "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled," must remain in their native language. The "Twa Dogs," and the "Cotter's Saturday Night," by Burns, are particularly admired. He wrote several drinking songs; some of them describe village scenes. All these pieces, though full of humour, have not the elegance of the songs of Desaugiers.

But if Thibaut, Count of Champagne, surpassed all the English Thibauts of the thirteenth century, Beranger in the nineteenth leaves far behind him all the Berangers of Great Britain. Art detracts nothing from success with the multitude, when it is united with genuine talent. Beranger's songs, composed with as much care as Racine bestowed on his verses, and which are wrought, as it were

by a magnifying glass, have descended to the lower classes of society : the common people have learned them by heart, as scholars learn the speech of Theramenes. As La Fontaine rises to the highest style in fable, so does Beranger in song. The popularity attached to pieces written on particular occasions, to witty pasquinades, will pass away, but superior beauties will remain. You perceive in the works of Beranger, beneath a surface of gaiety, a substratum of melancholy, which belongs to whatever is sincere and permanent in the human mind. Stanzas such as these will belong to every future France, and will be repeated in every age.

Vous vieillirez, ô ma belle maitresse ;  
 Vous vieillirez, et je ne serai plus.  
 Pour moi les temps semble, dans sa vitesse,  
 Compter deux fois les jours que j'ai perdus.  
 Survivez-moi ; mais que l'âge pénible  
 Vous trouve encore fidèle à mes leçons ;  
 Et bonne vieille, au coin d'un feu paisible,  
 De votre ami répétez les chansons.

Lorsque les yeux chercheront sous vos rides  
 Les traits charmans qui m'auront inspiré,  
 Des doux récits les jeunes gens avides  
 Diront : Quel fut cet ami tant pleuré ?  
 De mon amour, peignez s'il est possible,  
 L'ardeur, l'ivresse, et même les soupçons ;  
 Et bonne vieille, au coin d'un feu paisible,  
 De votre ami répétez les chansons.

On vous dira : Savait-il être aimable ?  
 Et sans rougir vous direz : Je l'aimais.  
 D'un trait méchant se montra-t-il capable ?  
 Avec orgueil vous répondrez : Jamais.  
 Ah ! dites bien qu'amoureux et sensible  
 D'un luth joyeux il attendrit les sons ;  
 Et bonne vieille, au coin d'un feu paisible,  
 De votre ami répétez les chansons.

Objet chéri, quand mon renom futile  
 De vos vieux ans charmera les douleurs,  
 A mon portrait quand votre main débile  
 Chaque printemps suspendra quelques fleurs,  
 Levez les yeux vers ce monde invisible  
 Où pour toujours nous nous réunissons ;  
 Et bonne vieille, au coin d'un feu paisible,  
 De votre ami répétez les chansons.

On leaving Dieppe, the road leading to Paris ascends rather rapidly ; on the right, at the top of the hill, is seen the wall of a cemetery : along this wall there is a rope-walk. One evening last summer I was sauntering upon this road : two ropemakers going backward, abreast, and balancing themselves first on one leg, then on the other, were singing together in a low tone. I listened ; they were at this stanza of the "Vieux Caporal" :—

Qui là-bas sanglote et regarde ?  
 Eh ! c'est la veuve du tambour.  
 En Russie, à l'arrière-garde,  
 J'ai porté son fils nuit et jour.  
 Comme le père, enfant et femme,  
 Sans moi restaient sous les frimas,  
 Elle va prier pour mon ame.

Conscrits, au pas.

Ne pleurez pas.

Ne pleurez pas.

Marchez au pas.

Au pas, au pas, au pas, au pas!

These men pronounced the chorus : *Conscrits, au pas. Ne pleurez pas . . . Marchez au pas, au pas, au pas*, in a tone so manly, and so pathetic, that tears started into my eyes. Marking the step themselves, as they drew out their hemp, they seemed to be spinning the last moment of the *Vieux Caporal*. Who had taught them this ballad? Assuredly not literature, not criticism, not taught admiration, all that is subservient to reputation, and renown, but a genuine accent from some quarter or other had reached their humble minds. I cannot express all that there was in this glory peculiar to Beranger, in this glory thus solitarily revealed by two sailors, singing at sun-set, in sight of the sea, the death of a soldier.

BEATTIE.  

---

BURNS, Mason, Cowper, died during my emigration to London, before and in 1800; they concluded the century: I began the new one. Darwin and Beattie died two years after my return from exile.

Beattie had announced the new era of the lyre. "The Minstrel, or the Progress of Genius," delineates the first effects of the Muse on a young bard, who is yet a stranger to the spirit by which he is tormented. Sometimes the future poet seats himself on the margin of the sea during a storm; sometimes he quits the village sports to listen alone and at a distance to the sound of the bagpipe. The poem is written in the Spenserian stanza.

The rolls of fame I will not now explore;  
Nor need I here describe in learned lay,  
How forth the minstrel fared in days of yore,  
Right glad of heart, though homely in array;  
His waving locks and beard all hoary grey:



While from his bending shoulder decent hung  
 His harp—the sole companion of his way,  
 Which to the whistling wind responsive rung :  
 And ever as he went some merry lay he sung.

The wight whose tale these artless lines unfold,  
 Was all the offspring of an humble pair.

\* \* \* \*

There lived in Gothic days, as legends tell,  
 A shepherd-swain, a man of low degree ;  
 Whose sires, perchance, in Fairyland might dwell.  
 Sicilian groves or vales of Arcady ;  
 But he, I ween, was of the north countrie ;  
 A nation famed for song and beauty's charms ;  
 Zealous, yet modest ; innocent, though free ;  
 Patient of toil, serene amidst alarms ;  
 Inflexible in faith, invincible in arms.

\* \* \* \*

——— Poor Edwin was no vulgar boy,  
 Deep thought oft seem'd to fix his infant eye,  
 Dainties he heeded not, nor gaud, nor toy,  
 Save one short pipe of rudest minstrelsy :  
 Silent when glad ; affectionate, though shy ;  
 And now his look was most demurely sad ;  
 And now he laughed aloud, yet none knew why.  
 The neighbours stared and sigh'd, yet bless'd the lad ;  
 Some deem'd him wond'rous wise, and some believ'd him mad.

But why should I his childish feats display ?  
 Concourse and noise and toil he ever fled ;  
 Nor cared to mingle in the clamorous fray  
 Of squabbling imps ; but to the forest sped ;  
 Or roam'd at large the lonely mountain's head ;  
 Or where the maze of some bewilder'd stream  
 To deep untrodden groves his footsteps led,  
 There would he wander wild, till Phœbus' beam,  
 Shot from the western cliff, released the weary team.

Lo! where the stripling, rapt in wonder, roves  
 Beneath the precipice o'erhung with pine;  
 And sees on high, amidst th' encircling groves,  
 From cliff to cliff the foaming torrents shine:—  
 While waters, woods, and winds in concert join  
 And Echo swells the chorus to the skies.

\* \* \* \*

And oft he traced the uplands to survey,  
 When o'er the sky advanced the kindling dawn,  
 The crimson cloud, blue main, and mountain grey,  
 And lake, dim-gleaming on the smoky lawn:  
 Far to the west the long long vale withdrawn,  
 Where twilight loves to linger for a while.

\* \* \* \*

And oft the craggy cliff he loved to climb,  
 When all in mist the world below was lost:  
 What dreadful pleasure! there to stand sublime,  
 Like shipwreck'd mariner on desert coast,  
 And view th' enormous waste of vapour, tost  
 In billows, lengthening to th' horizon round,  
 Now coop'd in gulfs, with mountains now emboss'd!  
 And hear the voice of song and mirth rebound,  
 Flocks, herds, and waterfalls, along the hoar profound!

See in the rear of the warm summer shower  
 The visionary boy for shelter fly;  
 For now the storm of summer rain is o'er  
 And cool, and fresh, and fragrant, is the sky.  
 And lo! in the dark east, expanded high,  
 The rainbow brightens to the setting sun!  
 Fond fool! that deem'st the streaming glory nigh:  
 How vain the chase thine ardour has begun!  
 'Tis fled afar, ere half thy purposed race be run.

When the long-sounding curfew from afar  
 Loaded with loud lament the lonely gale,  
 Young Edwin, lighted by the evening star,  
 Lingered and listening, wander'd down the vale.  
 There would he dream of graves and corpses pale;

And ghosts that to the charnel-dungeon throng,  
 And drag a length of clanking chain and wail,  
 Till silenced by the owl's terrific song,  
 Or blast that shrieks by fits the shuddering aisles along

Or when the setting moon in crimson dyed  
 Hung o'er the dark and melancholy deep,  
 To haunted stream, remote from man, he hied,  
 Where fays of yore their revels wont to keep,  
 And there let Fancy rove at large, till sleep  
 A vision brought to his entranced sight.

\* \* \* \*

The dream is fled . . . . .  
 Even now his eyes with smiles of rapture glow,  
 As on he wanders through the scenes of morn,  
 Where the fresh flowers in living lustre blow,  
 Where thousand pearls the dewy lawns adorn,  
 A thousand notes of joy in every breeze are borne.

But who the melodies of morn can tell?  
 The wild brook babbling down the mountain side ;  
 The lowing herd ; the sheepfold's simple bell ;  
 The pipe of early shepherd dim descried  
 In the lone valley ; echoing far and wide  
 The clamorous horn along the cliffs above ;  
 The hollow murmur of the ocean tide ;  
 The hum of bees, the linnet's lay of love,  
 And the full choir that wakes the universal grove.

The cottage curs at early pilgrim bark ;  
 Crown'd with her pail the tripping milkmaid sings ;  
 The whistling ploughman stalks afield, and, hark !  
 Down the rough slope the ponderous waggon rings ;  
 Through rustling corn the hare astonish'd springs ;  
 Slow tolls the village clock the drowsy hour ;  
 The partridge bursts away on whirring wings :  
 Deep mourns the turtle in sequester'd bower,  
 And shrill lark carols clear from her aerial tower.

\*                    \*                    \*                    \*

Responsive to the sprightly pipe, when all  
 In sprightly dance the village youth were join'd,  
 Edwin, of melody aye held in thrall,  
 From the rude gambol far remote reclined,  
 Sooth'd with the soft notes warbling in the wind.  
 Ah then all jollity seem'd noise and folly  
 To the pure soul by Fancy's fire refined,  
 Ah what is mirth but turbulence unholy  
 When with the charm compared of heav'nly melancholy!

\*                    \*                    \*                    \*

Song was his favourite and first pursuit.  
 The wild harp rang to his advent'rous hand,  
 And languish'd to his breath the plaintive flute.  
 His infant muse, though artless, was not mute :  
 Of elegance as yet he took no care ;  
 For this of time and culture is the fruit ;  
 And Edwin gain'd at last this fruit so rare :  
 As in some future verse I purpose to declare.

The quotation is long, but it is important for the history of poetry. Beattie has gone through the entire series of reveries and melancholy ideas of which a hundred other poets have fancied themselves the discoverers. Beattie proposed to continue his poem: he did in fact write a second canto. Edwin hears one evening a solemn voice rising from the bottom of a valley; it is that of a hermit, who, having experienced the illusions of the world, has buried himself in this retirement, to indulge in pious meditation and to sing the wonderful works of the Creator. This hermit instructs the young *minstrel*, and reveals to him the secret

of his genius. The idea is a happy one, but the execution is not equally felicitous. The concluding stanzas of the new canto are devoted to the memory of a friend. Beattie was destined to shed tears; the death of his son broke his paternal heart: like Ossian, after the death of his Oscar, he hung his harp upon the branches of an oak. Perhaps Beattie's son was the young *minstrel* whom his father had sung, and whose footsteps he no longer perceived upon the hill. —

## LORD BYRON.

## THE ELM OF HARROW\*.

---

IN the earliest compositions of Lord Byron, we meet with striking imitations of the "Minstrel." At the period of my exile in England, Lord Byron was at the school of Harrow, a village about ten miles from London. He was a boy; I was young, and as unknown as he. I was destined to precede him in the career of letters, and to remain in it after him. He had been brought up on the heaths of Scotland, on the sea-shore, as I had been on the heaths of Brittany on the sea-shore. He was at first fond of the Bible and Ossian, as I was fond of them. He sang in Newstead Abbey the recol-

\* All that follows, to the conclusion, is extracted from my Memoirs. I have merely abridged some passages which relate to myself, as I cannot say in my lifetime all that I shall say in my grave. It is a most convenient thing to be dead, in order to talk without restraint.

lections of childhood, as I sang them in the castle of Combourg.

When I roved, a young highlander, o'er the dark heath,  
 And climb'd thy steep summit, O Morven ! of snow ;  
 To gaze on the torrent that thunder'd beneath,  
 Or the mist of the tempest, that gather'd below ;

\* \* \* \* \*

I arose with the dawn, with my dog as my guide,  
 From mountain to mountain I bounded along,  
 I breasted the billows of Dee's rushing tide,  
 And heard at a distance the Highlander's song :  
 At eve, on my heath-covered couch of repose,  
 No dreams, save of Mary, were spread to my view,  
 And warm to the skies my devotions arose,  
 For the first of my prayers was a blessing on you.

I left my bleak home and my visions are gone,  
 The mountains are vanish'd, my youth is no more ;  
 As the last of my race I must wither alone,  
 And delight but in days I have witness'd before ;  
 Ah ! splendour has raised but embitter'd my lot,  
 More dear were the scenes that my infancy knew.

\* \* \* \* \*

Adieu, then, ye hills, where my childhood was bred,  
 Thou sweet flowing Dee, to thy waters adieu !  
 No home in the forest shall shelter my head,  
 Ah, Mary ! what home could be mine without you !”

In my long solitary rambles in the neighbourhood of London, I several times passed through the village of Harrow, without knowing what a genius it contained. I have sat in the churchyard, at the foot of the elm, beneath which, in 1807,

when I was returning from Palestine, Byron wrote these verses :—

Spot of my youth ! whose hoary branches sigh,  
 Swept by the breeze that fans thy cloudless sky ;  
 Where now alone I muse, who oft have trod  
 With those I loved thy soft and verdant sod ;  
 With those who, scatter'd far, perchance deplore,  
 Like me, the happy scenes they knew before ;  
 Oh ! as I trace again thy winding hill,  
 Mine eyes admire, my heart adores thee still.  
 Thou drooping elm, beneath whose boughs I lay  
 And frequent mused the twilight hours away ;  
 Where, as they once were wont, my limbs recline,  
 But, ah ! without the thoughts which then were mine.

\* \* \* \* \*

When fate shall chill, at length, the fever'd breast,  
 And calm its cares and passions into rest ;  
 Oft have I thought 'twould soothe my dying hour,  
 If aught may soothe, when life resigns her power ;  
 To know some humbler grave, some narrow cell,  
 Would hide my bosom where it loved to dwell.  
 With this fond dream methinks 'twere sweet to die,  
 As here it linger'd, here my heart might lie,  
 Here might I sleep where all my hopes arose,  
 Scene of my youth and couch of my repose :  
 For ever stretch'd beneath this mantling shade,  
 Press'd by the turf where once my childhood play'd,  
 Wrapt by the soil that veils the spot I loved,  
 Mix'd with the earth o'er which my footsteps moved ;  
 Bless'd by the tongues that charm'd my youthful ear,  
 Mourn'd by the few my soul acknowledged here ;  
 Deplored by those, in early days allied,  
 And unremember'd by the world beside.



And I will say: Hail ancient elm of dreams, at the foot of which Byron, as a boy, indulged the caprices of his age, at the time when I was pondering on René in thy shade, in that same shade to which the poet subsequently repaired in his turn, to ponder on Childe Harold! Byron demanded of the cemetery which witnessed the sports of his early life an unknown grave: a fruitless prayer, which glory has not granted.

## THE TWO NEW LITERARY SCHOOLS.

### SOME RESEMBLANCES OF DESTINY.

SOME interest will, perhaps, be felt on remarking in future—if I am destined to have any future—the coincidence presented by the two leaders of the new French and English schools, having one and the same fund of ideas, and destinies, if not manners, nearly similar: the one a peer of England, the other a peer of France; both travellers in the East, at no great distance of time from each other, but who never met. The only difference is that the life of the English poet was not mixed up with such great events as mine.

Lord Byron went to visit after me the ruins of Greece: in “Childe Harold” he seems to embellish with his own colours the descriptions of my “Travels.” At the commencement of my pilgrimage, I introduced the farewell of Sire de Joinville to his castle: Byron, in like manner, bids adieu to his Gothic habitation.

In the “Martyrs” Eudorus sets out from Mes-

senia to proceed to Rome. "Our voyage," he says, "was long. We saw all those promontories marked by temples or tombs. . . . . We crossed the gulf of Megara. Before us was Ægina, on the right the Piræus, on the left Corinth. Those cities, of old so flourishing, exhibited only heaps of ruins. The very sailors appeared to be moved by this sight. The crowd collected upon the deck kept silence: each fixed his eyes stedfastly on those ruins; each perhaps drew from them in secret a consolation in his misfortunes, by reflecting how trifling are our own afflictions compared with those calamities which befall whole nations, and which had stretched before our eyes the corpses of those cities . . . . . My young companions had never heard of any other metamorphoses than those of Jupiter, and could not account for the ruins before their eyes: I, for my part, had already seated myself with the prophet on the ruins of desolate cities, and Babylon taught me what had happened to Corinth."

Now turn to the fourth canto of Lord Byron's "Childe Harold:"

As my bark did skim  
 The bright blue waters with a fanning wind,  
 Came Megara before me, and behind  
 Ægina lay, Piræus on the right,  
 And Corinth on the left. I lay reclined  
 Along the prow, and saw all these unite  
 In ruin.       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

The Roman saw these tombs in his own age,  
 These sepulchres of cities, which excite  
 Sad wonder, and this yet surviving page  
 The moral lesson bears, drawn from such pilgrimage.

Here the English poet, as well as the French prose-writer, falls short of the letter of Sulpicius to Cicero ; but so complete a coincidence is singularly glorious for me, since I preceded the immortal bard on the shore where the same reflections occurred to both, and where we have commemorated the same ruins.

I have likewise the honour of agreeing with Lord Byron in the description of Rome. The "Martyrs," and my "Letter on the Campagna of Rome," claim for me the inestimable advantage of having anticipated the inspirations of a great genius. M. de Béranger, our immortal song-writer, has inserted in the last volume of his "Chansons" a note, too flattering to me to be quoted entire. In adverting to the impulse which, according to him, I have given to French poetry, he says: "The influence of the author of the 'Génie du Christianisme' has been equally felt abroad, and it would, perhaps, be but just to acknowledge that the bard of Childe Harold belongs to the family of René\*."

\* In an excellent article (*Biographie Univers. Suppl.*) on Lord Byron, M. Villemain has repeated the remark of M. de

If it be true that “Réné” had some influence upon the character of the single person brought forward under different names by the author of *Childe Harold*, *Conrad*, *Lara*, *Manfred*, the *Giaour*; if it so happened that Lord Byron has made me live with his life; could he have had the weakness never to mention me? Am I, then, one of those fathers whom one denies when one has arrived at power? Is it possible that I can have been wholly unknown to Lord Byron, though he quotes almost all the French authors, his contemporaries? Could it be that he never heard of me, though the English journals, like the French, rang for twenty years around him with the controversy on my works, and though the “*New Times*” drew a comparison between the author of the “*Genie du Christianisme*” and the author of “*Childe Harold*?”

There is no nature, how highly favoured soever it may be, but has its susceptibilities, its distrusts; one is anxious to retain the sceptre; one has a

Beranger. I hope I shall be forgiven for quoting here the words which concern myself. I seek an excuse for what I here say in these pages extracted from my *Memoirs*: the reader will please to reckon for nothing praise bestowed through the indulgence of talent. “Some incomparable pages of ‘Réné,’ had, it is true, exhausted this poetic character. I know not whether Byron imitated or renewed them by his genius.”

dread of sharing it; one is irritated by comparisons. Thus another superior talent has avoided my name in a work on *literature*. Thank God! though estimating myself at my proper value, I have never laid claim to empire; as I believe in nothing but religious truth, of which liberty is a form, I have no more faith in myself than in any thing else here below. But I have never felt any necessity to keep silence when I have admired; hence it is that I proclaim my enthusiasm for Madame de Stael and for Lord Byron.

For the rest, a document would decide the question, were I in possession of one. On the appearance of "Atala," I received a letter from Cambridge, signed "G. Gordon, Lord Byron." Lord Byron, at the age of fifteen, was a star that had not yet risen: thousands of letters of censure or congratulation overwhelmed me; twenty secretaries would not have been sufficient to keep pace with this immense correspondence; I was compelled therefore to throw into the fire three-fourths of these letters, and to select only such as it was most incumbent on me to return thanks for or to defend myself against. I have some recollection, however, that I answered Lord Byron; but it is also possible that the note of the Cambridge student shared the general fate. In this case, my forced unpoliteness may have been construed into an

affront by an irascible mind, and he may have punished my silence by his own. How deeply have I since regretted the loss of the glorious lines of the early youth of a great poet!

What I have just said concerning the affinities of imagination and destiny between the chronicler of "Réné" and the bard of "Childe Harold," takes not a single hair from the head of its immortal author. Compared with the Muse of the Dee, furnished with lyre and wings, what is my pedestrian and luteless Muse? Lord Byron will live, whether as a child of his age, like me, he has expressed, like me, and like Göethe before us both, passion and wretchedness; and whether my peregrinations and the poop-lantern of my Gallic bark have pointed out the track to the vessel of Albion upon unexplored seas.

Besides, may not two minds of similar nature have similar conceptions without laying themselves open to the charge of having servilely trodden in the same steps? It is allowable to avail ourselves of ideas and images expressed in a foreign language, for the purpose of enriching our own with them: this has been done in all ages and at all times. Have I myself not had forerunners? I hesitate not to acknowledge that, in my early youth, "Ossian," "Werther," the "Reveries du Promeneur Solitaire," the "Studies of Nature."

may have allied themselves with my ideas; but I have never dissembled, never concealed, any portion of the pleasure imparted by the works in which I delighted. What is more delicious than admiration? In heaven it is love, affection exalted into adoration: we feel penetrated with gratitude to the Deity, who extends the bases of our faculties, who opens new views to our souls, who bestows on us a felicity so great, so pure, without any mixture of fear or of envy.



SCHOOL OF LORD BYRON.

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LORD Byron has left a deplorable school. I dare say he would be as displeased with the Childe Harolds to whom he has given birth, as I am with the Rénés that have sprung up around me. The *general* sentiments which compose the groundwork of human nature, paternal and maternal affection, filial piety, friendship, love, are inexhaustible; they will always impart new inspirations to the talent capable of developing them but the *particular* manners of feeling, the *individualities* of mind and character, cannot extend and multiply themselves in grand and numerous pictures. The little undiscovered corners of the human heart are a narrow field; in this field there is nothing left to glean after the hand that reaped the first harvest. A disease of the soul is not a permanent and natural state; we cannot reproduce it, make a *literature* of it, avail ourselves of it as of a passion incessantly modified at the

pleasure of the various artists who mould it and change its form.

The life of Lord Byron has been the object of many investigations and calumnies. The young have taken certain magic words in earnest; the women have felt disposed to allow themselves to be seduced with dread, by this *monster*, to comfort this unhappy Satan. Who knows? he had perhaps not found the woman whom he sought—a woman beautiful enough, a heart vast as his own. Byron, according to the phantasmagoric opinion, is the Old Serpent, that seducer and corrupter, because he perceived the incurable corruption of the human race; he is a fatal and suffering genius, placed between the mysteries of matter and intelligence, who sees not a word in the enigma of the universe, who considers life as a horrible irony without cause, as a perverse smile of the Evil One: he is the eldest son of Despair, who despises and denies; who, having within him an incurable sore, revenges himself by leading all that approach him to misery through pleasure; a man who has not passed through the age of innocence, who never had the advantage of being rejected and cursed of God; a man who, having sprung a reprobate from the bosom of nature, is the damned of nothingness. Such is the Byron of heated imaginations.

Any person who is destined to live will not go down to future generations such as he really was; at some distance from him, his epopee commences; his person is idealised; he is transfigured; a power, vices, and virtues, which he never had, are attributed to him; the incidents of his life are garbled, they are wrested, they are wrought into a system. Biographers repeat these falsehoods; painters fix their inventions upon canvass, and posterity adopts the phantom. Very silly must he be who believes in history. History is a mere fallacy: as it is coloured and fashioned by a great writer, such it remains. Were we to discover memoirs, proving to demonstration that Tacitus has told egregious falsehoods in his account of the virtues of Agricola and the vices of Tiberius, Agricola and Tiberius would still remain what Tacitus has made them.

Two distinct persons are to be found in Lord Byron—the man of *nature* and the man of *system*. The poet, perceiving what part the public made him perform, accepted it, and began to curse the world, which had at first only been the subject of his reveries: this transition is obvious in the chronological order of his works. As for the character of his *genius*, so far from having the extent which is attributed to it, it is, on the contrary, very limited. His poetic and impassioned

thought is but a moan, a plaint, an imprecation ; in this quality, it is admirable : we must not ask the lyre what it thinks, but what it sings.

Lord Byron has abundance of wit, and extremely diversified wit, but of a kind that agitates and has a baneful influence. He has read Voltaire, and he frequently imitates him. In following the great English poet step by step, we are forced to acknowledge that he aims at effect, that he rarely loses sight of himself, that he is almost always in attitude ; that he looks at himself with complacency ; but the affectation of eccentricity, singularity, originality, belongs to the English character in general. If, however, Lord Byron has atoned for his genius by certain foibles, futurity will not concern itself about such paltry matters, or rather it will know nothing about them ; the poet will hide the man, and will interpose talent between the man and future generations : through this divine veil posterity will discern nothing but the god.

Lord Byron has formed an epoch ; he will leave behind him a trace so deep that it cannot be erased. The accident which made him lame, and increased his wildness, ought not to have given him any concern, since it did not prevent his being loved. Unfortunately, the poet did not always place his affections high enough, and suffered too lowly attachments to entwine themselves around him.

We cannot but pity Rousseau and Byron for having offered at altars unworthy of their sacrifices; perhaps, covetous of time, every minute of which belonged to the world, they were desirous only of pleasure, charging their talent to transform it into passion and glory. Melancholy, jealousy, the pangs of love, were for their lyres; for themselves voluptuous enjoyment and its sleep beneath light hands: they sought reverie, unhappiness, tears, despair, in solitude, winds, darkness, storms, forests, seas, and composed from them for their readers the torments of Childe Harold and St. Preux upon the bosom of La Padoana and del Can de la Madona.

Be this as it may, in the moment of their intoxication, the illusion of love was complete; for the rest, they were perfectly aware that they held Inconstancy herself in their arms; that she would fly away with the dawn. She did not deceive them with a false semblance of fidelity; she did not impose on herself the task of following them, weary of their tenderness or her own. To sum up all, Jean Jacques and Lord Byron were both unfortunate men; this was the condition of their genius: the first poisoned himself; the second, weary of his excesses, and feeling the need of esteem, returned to the shores of that Greece where his Muse and Death rendered him in turn such good service.

LORD BYRON AT THE LIDO.

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I PRECEDED Lord Byron in life; he has preceded me in death. He was called before his turn: my number had the start of his, and yet his came out first. The world might have lost me without being aware of my disappearance, and without regretting me.

All that I have seen pass, or all that has passed, around me since I have existed cannot be told. How many graves have opened and closed before my eyes! A hundred times, in sunshine or in rain, on the brink of an open grave, into which they were letting down a coffin with ropes, have I heard the creaking of those ropes, have I heard the first shovelful of earth falling on that coffin, and at every fresh shovelful the hollow sound becoming duller and more dull. The mould, as it filled the grave, made eternal silence ascend by degrees to its surface.

It is not yet two years since, one day at dawn, I

was strolling upon the Lido, where Lord Byron had so often strolled. It was but a faint and unsmiling Aurora that issued from the sea; the transformation of darkness into light, with its wonderful changes, its stars extinguished one by one in the gold and the roses of morning, did not take place. Four or five barks were coasting close along the shore; a large ship was just disappearing on the horizon. The wet beach was dotted with groups of sea-gulls; some of them were flying heavily above the receding waves. The ebb tide had left the traces of its concentric arcs on the shore; the sand, garlanded with sea-weed, was wrinkled by every wave, like a brow over which Time has passed his hand. The retiring water attached its white festoons to the abandoned beach.

The waves which I meet with have been everywhere my faithful companions: like young girls holding each other by the hand in a round dance, they encircled me at my birth. I saluted these rockers of my cradle. I walked along the margin of the billows, listening to their noise, doleful, familiar, and grateful to my ear. I frequently paused to contemplate the immensity of the sea; a mast, a cloud, were sufficient to awaken my recollections.

I had formerly crossed this sea. In front of the Lido a storm overtook me. I said to myself, in

the midst of this tempest, that I had confronted others, but that, when I traversed the ocean, I was young, and that then dangers were pleasures to me. I considered myself, therefore, as very old when I sailed from the harbour of Trieste for Greece and Syria. Beneath what a heap of days am I then buried !

Lord Byron galloped along this solitary shore. What were his thoughts and his strains, his fears and his hopes ? Did he raise his voice to confide to the storm the inspirations of his genius ? Was it amidst the murmur of those waves that he found these melancholy accents —

If my fame should be, as my fortunes are,  
Of hasty growth, and dull oblivion bar  
My name from out the temple where the dead  
Are honour'd by the nations—let it be !

Byron was sensible that his fortunes were “of hasty growth ;” in his moments of doubt respecting his glory, as he did not believe in any other immortality, he had no joy left him but annihilation. His disgust would have been less bitter, his flight here below less barren, had he changed his course : at the end of his exhausted passions, some generous effort would have enabled him to attain a new existence. We are unbelieving because we stop at the surface of the matter : dig deep enough, you will find heaven.



I had already returned from the forests of America, when, in the neighbourhood of London, beneath the elm of Childe Harold, then a boy, I planned the disappointments, disgusts, and sorrows of *Réné*. I had seen the first traces of Byron's footsteps in the paths of Harrow Hill; I met with the last prints of them at one of the stations of his pilgrimage; no, I sought those prints in vain. Raised by the hurricane, the sand has covered the tracks of the steed left without a rider. "Fisherman of Malamoco, hast thou ever heard of Lord Byron?"—"Have I? he rode here almost every day."—"Know'st thou whither he is gone?"

It was a stormy day: on the point of perishing between Malta and the Sirtes, I enclosed in an empty bottle a paper on which I wrote these words: "F. A. de Chateaubriand, shipwrecked on the island of Lampedosa, the 26th of December, 1806, on his return from the Holy Land." A frail bottle, a few lines, tossing over a bottomless abyss, were all that suited my fortune and my memory. The currents would perhaps have propelled my vagrant epitaph to the Lido, to the very spot which Byron had marked for his grave, as the waves of time have cast my wandering life upon that shore.

O Venice! when I beheld thee for the first

time, thou wert under the dominion of the great man who was thy oppressor and mine. An island awaited his grave; an island is thine. Ye both sleep immortal in your St. Helenas. O Venice! our destinies have been alike: my dreams pass away as fast as thy palaces crumble into ruin. The hours of my spring are become black, like the arabesques which decorate the summit of thy buildings. But thou perishest, unknown to thyself; as for me, I am aware of my ruin. Thy delicious sky, the bright waves that wash thee, have found me, in these last days, as sensible to thy charms as ever I was. To no purpose I grow old. The energy of my nature has concentrated itself at the bottom of my heart; years have succeeded only in driving away my outward youth, in making it seek refuge in my bosom. But what to me are the breezes of the Lido, so dear to the poet of the Daughter of Ravenna? The wind which blows on a half-despoiled head does not come from any lucky shore\*.

\* Here end the quotations from the Memoirs.

## CONCLUSION.

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FOR the rest, the little squabble that I have had in my Posthumous Memoirs with the greatest poet that England has produced since Milton, only proves one thing—the high value which I should have attached to the most trifling memorial of his Muse. Now, readers, does it not seem to you that we are finishing a rapid excursion among ruins, like that which I formerly made upon the ruins of Athens, Jerusalem, Memphis, and Carthage? In passing from one renown to another, and seeing them all engulfed in their turn, is not a feeling of sadness excited within you?

Look behind you; ask what has become of those brilliant and tumultuous times, in which flourished Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, Shakspeare and Milton, Cromwell and William III., Pitt and Burke. All this is past. Superiority and mediocrity, hate and love, felicity and wretchedness, oppressor and oppressed, executioner and victim, kings and peo-

ple, all sleep in the same silence, and in the same dust; and yet, what is it that has engaged our attention? The most living part of human nature, the genius which remains scarcely as the shadow of the old times among us, but no longer lives for itself - nay, knows not if it ever existed.

How often, in this picture of ten centuries, has England been destroyed before our eyes! Through how many revolutions have we not passed to reach the brink of a still greater, still deeper, revolution, which will envelop posterity! I have seen that famous British parliament in all its power: what will become of it? I have seen England in its ancient manners and its ancient prosperity: every where the solitary church with its tower, Gray's country church-yard, narrow gravelled roads, valleys filled with cattle, commons dotted with sheep, parks, mansions, towns, few extensive woods, few birds, the sea-breeze. These were not those fields of Andalusia, where I found old Christians and young loves amid the ruins of the voluptuous palaces of the Moors, among aloes and palm trees; this was not the Campagna of Rome, the irresistible charm of which was incessantly recurring to me; those waves and that sun were not the same that bathe and light the promontory on which Plato taught his disciples, that Sunium on which I heard the chirp of the grasshopper inquiring in vain of Mi-

nerva for the abode of the priests of her temple ; but, at any rate, such as it was, this England, surrounded by her shipping, covered by her flocks, and professing the worship of her great men, was charming.

Now, her valleys are darkened by the smoke of forges and manufactories ; her highways are turned into rail-roads : and, on these roads, instead of meeting Milton and Shakspeare, you encounter itinerant steam-engines. Already those nurseries of science, where flourished the palms of glory, Oxford and Cambridge, which will soon be despoiled, are assuming a deserted look : their colleges and their Gothic chapels, half forsaken, pain the eye ; in their dusty cloisters, beside sepulchral stones of the middle ages, repose forgotten the marble annals of those tribes of Greece that no longer exist—ruins the keepers of ruins.

Society, such as it is at present, will not continue to exist. As instruction descends to the lower classes, these will discover the secret cancer which has been corroding social order ever since the beginning of the world ; a complaint which is the cause of all popular discontents and commotions. The too great inequality of conditions and fortunes has been able to uphold itself so long as it was hidden on the one hand by ignorance, on the other by the factitious organisation of the City ;

but no sooner is this inequality generally perceived, than a mortal blow is given to it.

Enforce again, if you can, the aristocratic fictions. Strive to persuade the poor man, when he has learned to read—the poor man, who is daily prompted by the press, from time to time, from village to village—strive to persuade this poor man, possessing the same knowledge and understanding as yourself, that he ought to submit to all privations, whilst such-a-one, his neighbour, possesses, without labour, a thousand times as much he needs—your efforts will be useless. Expect not of the multitude virtues that are beyond nature.

The material development of society will advance the development of mind. When steam communication shall be brought to perfection, when, jointly with the telegraph and rail-roads, it shall have annihilated distance, not merchandise alone, but ideas also, will travel from one extremity of the globe to the other with the rapidity of lightning. When the fiscal and commercial barriers between different states shall be abolished, as they already are between the provinces of one and the same state; when *wages*, which is but a prolonged *slavery*, shall have emancipated themselves with the assistance of the equality established between the producer and the consumer; when the different

countries, adopting each other's manners, forsaking national prejudices, the old ideas of supremacy or conquest, shall tend to a unity of nations; by what means will you make society turn back to worn-out principles? Bonaparte himself could not do this: equality and liberty, to which he opposed the unyielding bar of his genius, have resumed their course, and borne down his works; the world of force which he created is gone; his institutions are decaying; nay, his very race has become extinct with his son. The light which he kindled was but a meteor; of Napoleon there remains and will remain nothing but his memory.

From thee, Napoleon,  
God, rising in his might, will snatch thy people:  
His wrath will follow to thy narrow grave\*.

There was but a single monarchy in Europe—the French monarchy: all the others were its daughters; all of them are going with their mother. Kings have hitherto, unknown to themselves, lived behind that monarchy a thousand years old, under the protection of a race incorporated, as it were, with ages. When the blast of the revolution had thrown down that race, Bonaparte came; he upheld the princes tottering upon thrones by him demolished and raised again.

\* “Napoleon,” by Edgar Quinet.

Bonaparte gone, the remaining monarchs live cowering in the ruins of the Napoleonic Coliseum, like the hermits to whom the traveller doles out alms in the Coliseum at Rome; but soon these ruins themselves will fail them.

Legitimacy might have continued to lead the world for more than another century to a transformation gradually accomplished, without shock and without catastrophe: more than a century was still necessary to complete under paternal guardianship the free education of nations. Against faults which might easily have been repaired, passions, which did not at first see that every thing might be arranged, and that the world might still be indebted to legitimacy for an immense and a last benefit, have resorted to arms. Instead of descending by a gentle and easy slope, we must, therefore, continue to pursue ways intersected by chasms and quagmires. What are halts of a few months or a few years for a nation launched at random into a boundless space? What mind possessing any discernment could take these intervals of rest for a definitive repose? Is a casual bait a permanent feast? Has the traveller who sits down by the road-side to refresh himself reached his journey's end? Any power, overthrown, not by accident, but by time, by a change gradually effected in convictions or ideas, is never re-established; in



vain you would strive to raise it under another name, to regenerate it under a new form: it cannot re-adjust its dislocated limbs in the dust in which it lies, an object of insult or of derision. Of the divinity which people had forged for themselves, before which they had bent the knee, nothing is left but ironical miseries. When the Christians broke in pieces the gods of Egypt, they saw rats run forth from the heads of the idols. All things pass away. Not an infant now issues from the womb of his mother but is an enemy to the old society.

But when shall we arrive at that which is destined to remain? When will society, heretofore composed of concentric aggregations and families, from the hearth of the labourer to the hearth of the king, be re-composed upon an unknown system, a system more approximated to nature, according to ideas and by the aid of means which are not yet in existence? God knows. Who can calculate the resistance of the passions, the friction of vanities, the perturbations, the accidents, of history? The breaking out of a war, the appearance at the head of the state of an able or a stupid man, the slightest event, may beat back, suspend, or accelerate, the march of nations. More than once death will paralyse races full of fire, and throw silence over events on the point of accom-

plishment, as a little snow falling in the night puts a stop to the noise of a great city.

Want of energy at the period in which we live; the nullity or degradation of characters too frequently strangers to honour and devoted to interest; indifference towards good and evil, vice and virtue; the worship of guilt; the carelessness or apathy with which we look upon events that of old would have convulsed the world; the privation of those conditions of life which seem necessary to social order—all these things may authorise the belief that the *denouement* is approaching, that the curtain is about to rise, and another performance to begin: no such thing. Other men have not hidden themselves behind the present men; that which strikes our eyes is not an exception, it is the common state of manners, ideas, and passions; it is the great and universal disease of a world which is at the point of dissolution. Were every thing changed to-morrow, with the proclamation of other principles, we should see nothing but what we now see—reveries in some, frenzies in others, equally impotent, equally barren.

Let some independent men step aside to allow the torrent of miseries to flow off—alas! they will have passed away before these! Let young generations, filled with illusions, confront the impure flood of baseness, let them proceed with head bent

forward to a pure future which they hope to seize, but which incessantly eludes their grasp: finding in their devotedness the reward of their sacrifice, having proceeded from chimera to chimera, and arrived on the brink of the grave, they will bequeath the weight of disappointed years to other mistaken generations, which will carry them to the nearest tombs, and so on successively.

A future there will be, a mighty future, free in all the plenitude of evangelical equality; but it is still far, very far beyond any visible horizon: it will not be attained but by that untiring Hope, incorruptible by misfortune, whose wings grow and enlarge in proportion as everything seems to deceive it; by that hope stronger and longer than time, and which the Christian alone possesses. Before mankind arrive at the goal, before they attain the unity of nations, natural democracy, they will have to pass through the social decomposition; a time of anarchy, perhaps of blood, certainly of infirmities. This decomposition is begun; it is not ready to produce from its germs, not yet sufficiently fermented, the new world.

MILTON.  

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BY way of conclusion, let us return to the primary object of this work, and again descend to the humble rank of translator. When a man has seen, like me, Washington and Bonaparte ; upon a level with them, but in another order of power, Pitt and Mirabeau ; among the high revolutionists, Robespierre and Danton ; among the plebeian masses, the common man marching to the exterminations of the frontiers, the Vendean peasant shutting himself up with his blazing crops, what more remains to be seen behind the great tomb of St. Helena ?

Why have I survived the age and the men to whom I belonged by the date of the hour at which my mother inflicted life upon me ? Why have I not disappeared with my contemporaries, the last remnants of an exhausted race ? Why am I left alone to seek their bones amid the darkness and dust of a crumbled world ? I had everything to gain by not dragging on a longer existence upon the earth. I should not have been obliged to

begin and afterwards to suspend my posthumous acts of justice, to write this book, in order to preserve my independence as a man.

When, at the beginning of my life, England afforded me an asylum, I translated some of Milton's verses, to supply the wants of the exile: now, having returned to my country, drawing nigh to the end of my career, I again have recourse to the poet of Eden. The author of "Paradise Lost" was not, however, richer than I am. Seated among his daughters, deprived of the light of heaven, but illumined by the torch of his genius, he dictated his verses to them. I have no daughters; I can contemplate the luminary of day, but I cannot say to it, of myself, like the blind British bard,—

How glorious once above thy sphere!

Milton served Cromwell; I have combated Napoleon: he attacked kings; I have defended them: he hoped nothing from their pardon; I have not reckoned upon their gratitude. Now that in both our countries monarchy is declining towards its end, Milton and I have no more political questions to squabble about. I shall seat myself at the table of my host; he will have nourished me young and old. It is nobler, it is safer, to have recourse to glory than to power.

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