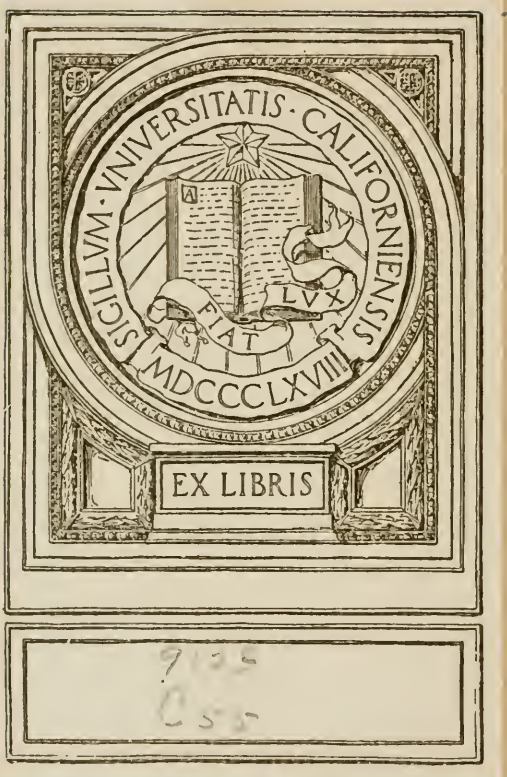
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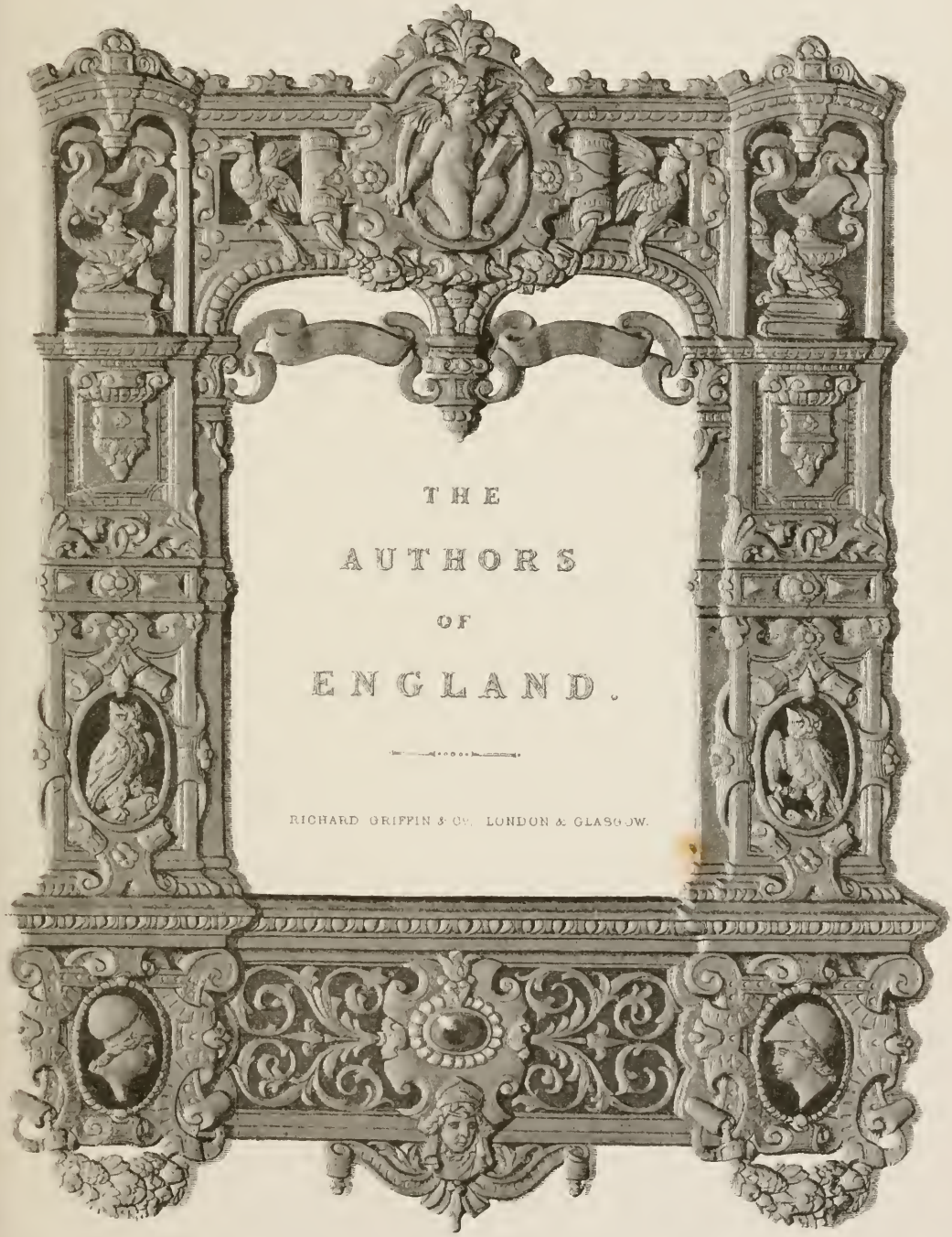

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

On submitting a new work to the public, a few words of introduction are naturally required of its Editor.

It is easy for me to speak of the splendid series of Portraits which form the principal feature of this volume. Few, I think, will be disposed to dispute the interest of their subjects: few (save those personally interested) will be inclined to deny the skill and beauty of their execution. And while as works of art, produced by a new and ingenious process, they must be valuable; they ought also to be welcome, as exhibiting the union of the artists of two countries, for the purpose of doing honour to literature.

I am requested to acknowledge with sincere thanks the kindness shown to the proprietor of this volume, by many of the distinguished persons whose portraits appear in it,—and the skill and assiduity of the English artists who have forwarded his views. It is intended that the work shall be continued, so as to include the portraits of all our modern authors of celebrity: it is needless to point out, that nothing in the shape of classification in the arrangement or selection of subjects has been attempted, or could, indeed, have been practicable.

I have now to speak of the less-important part of this work,—its letter-press: this is not easy. Without undue profession, however, I may say, that by few, among either critics or readers, could the responsibilities of the task with which I have been honoured be felt more earnestly than by myself. To avoid the language of flattery, on the one hand, and of presumption on the other, is not

easy; and the difficulty is increased when a writer, comparatively young and untried, has his contemporaries, and not his predecessors, for his subjects. In the following slight notices I lay no claim to any merit, save such as belongs to a genial and respectful sympathy with all—whatever be their political creed or poetical school—who have laboured well and honestly in the cause of literature. If this be recognized as a link connecting and giving a certain unity of purpose to the following sketches, I shall be abundantly satisfied, and feel that much kind confidence reposed in me, and much kind assistance bestowed upon me, have not been wholly given in vain.

H. F. C.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

Since the First Edition of this work made its appearance, the English public have had to deplore the loss of many of the distinguished men whose portraits it contains. Hence it has become necessary in this reprint to add a few lines to the memoirs of those Authors who were living at the date of the former publication. This has been done briefly, without modifying the text of the original work, and, as much as possible, in that spirit of genial and respectful sympathy which characterized its pages.

G. B.

London, September, 1861.

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FELICIA HEMANS.

THE

AUTHORS OF ENGLAND.

MRS. HEMANS.

Whether in recognition of the popularity which attended her poems in her own country and America (they are, as yet, too little known on the Continent), or in honour of the earnest and generous devotion to her heart, which was the moving principle of her life, Felicia Hemans claims a place of honour among the modern Authors of England.

She was born in Duke Street, Liverpool, on the 25th of September, 1794: her father, Mr. Browne, a merchant of that town, was related to the Sligo family. On her mother's side she could claim the ancestry of a noble and distinguished Venetian house, whose high name, Veniero, had been of late generations corrrupted into Wagner. Felicia Dorothea (the latter name was wholly dropped by her as she grew up) was the second daughter, and the fourth child of a family of three sons and as many daughters. From her earliest infancy she gave token of being possessed of many good gifts—of a temperament quick and affectionate, a memory singularly retentive, and an imagination which instinctively attached itself to and appropriated everything that was noble and beautiful. She had an ear for music—an eye for drawing: nor was personal loveliness wanting to her; her complexion was remarkable for its delicacy and brilliance—her hair for its profusion and golden hue. Who can wonder that, thus endowed, she should be the object of more than ordinary attachment and anticipation?

The derangement of Mr. Browne's affairs, which took place at a very early period of her life, was followed by the removal of his family from Liverpool to a retreat in North Wales—a circumstance likely, beyond all others, to develope the peculiar natural gifts with which she was endowed. She was thus entirely left under the care of her mother—herself an elegant and accomplished woman; and, at an age when other girls are for the most part forced through the mechanical routine of boarding-school training, she was educating herself, by becoming a diligent and passionate student of our old English poets—gathering up half a dozen languages, no one knew how; and, better still, unconsciously filling her mind with a

thousand sights, and sounds, and associations connected with the scenery among which her youth was spent. Her residence, Grwych, near Abergele, was a solitary house on the sea-shore. It was affecting, in the last hours of her life, to perceive with what tenderness and minute remembrance she spoke of this place, and of the vague, restless, yearnings, which had there passed through her mind: had she lived, she would have embodied these in a prose work, which was to be called "Recollections of a Poet's Childhood." Few better than herself could have traced back the bewildering unfolding of powers, the unconscious formation of habits, which, alien to, and apart from this world's wisdom, and prudence, too often mark their possessor—more especially if she belong to the gentler sex—for a life in which fame and sorrow have an equal share.

Another circumstance which tended to give its peculiar direction to her genius, was the engagement of both of her brothers in the Peninsular campaign. In her earliest volume of poems, published by subscription when she was only thirteen, we find little but sweet birth-day verses, fairy songs, and the like; but in the second, which followed shortly after, are to be discerned strong traces of the kindling of that chivalresque and romantic spirit which made "My Cid" one of her favourite heroes in after years, and a cross of the Legion of Honour, a trophy from a Spanish battle-field, an ornament proudly worn and reverently cherished. One of her early poems "England and Spain," was translated into Spanish; and though the volume in question bears the gentle title of "The Domestic Affections," it contains a large share of verses on warlike and heroic themes. The same instinct towards the picturesque made her early an enthusiastic admirer of works of art, particularly of sculpture. "Her first works," to quote the Memorials recently published, "are purely classical, or purely romantic; their poems may be compared to antique groups of sculpture, or the mailed monumental figures of the Middle Ages set in motion." Besides the two volumes here mentioned, there are a few other single and fugitive poems bearing this early date; they are, however, remarkable for little save for that smoothness of versification and selectness of language which she afterwards carried to such perfection.

It was when she was only eighteen, with a mind as full of the romance of youthful poetry as it was untutored in worldly experience, that Miss Browne married Captain Hemans, of the Fourth Regiment. The result might have been easily foreseen. After a few years spent together, in which each party, probably, became more and more alive to the mistake of such an union, than to the mutual concessions which might have rendered it as happy as fancy had promised, Captain Hemans went abroad, shortly before the birth of his fifth son. It would be fruitless to dwell upon the details of this separation, which, however, it must be added, contributed largely to give their peculiar colour and tendency to Mrs. Hemans' feelings and thoughts during the remainder of her career—to increase her disposition to dwell upon the sacrifices and regrets of life in preference to its more cheerful scenes. Many of her poems, indeed, are little more than so many varied utterances of the thought so beautifully put by Cooper into the mouth of one of his Indian characters, "Let not my child be a girl, for very sorrowful is the life of a woman." In all of them there breathes an aspiration towards that future state of spiritual existence, where

> there are none that die,
> And none that weep, and none that say "Farewell;"

—where the yearnings of human affection will be satisfied, the dreams of imagination fulfilled—which could hardly have been the pervading feeling of one who had enjoyed domestic happiness and protection, who had been wisely and kindly taught that a cheerful and healthy familiarity with the small duties and self-denials of common life, exalts

rather than enfeebles the poet—enlarges his sympathies, instead of, as some have morbidly complained, wearing them down and ultimately destroying them.

After the departure of her husband, Mrs. Hemans still continued to reside under her mother's roof, dividing her leisure between the study of all such authors as could minister to her peculiar tastes and desires, and her own compositions, which were numerous and progressively successful—each of them being less coldly classical, more individual than its predecessor. By degrees, too, she attached to herself a small circle of literary friends, among whom must be mentioned the names of Heber and Milman; and it must not be forgotten, that she was sought out in her retreat by Shelley, whom the fame of her talents and beauty had reached, and who addressed a singular series of letters to her. It was during these years that she successively published her prize poems, "Wallace," and "Dartmoor" (the latter gained its honour from the Royal Society of Literature in 1821), the "Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy," "Modern Greece," "Tales and Historic Scenes," and the "Sceptic." Besides these, many fragments of poems and plans of works never completed, remain to attest the eagerness with which her mind was busying itself in the reproduction of the thoughts and images of beauty, which she could not refrain from storing up. It was by the advice of Bishop Heber, who was then occasionally resident in St. Asaph, that she next engaged in a labour more arduous than any she had hitherto undertaken,—the composition of a tragedy. This, "The Vespers of Palermo," after the usual delays and difficulties, was brought forward at Covent Garden in the month of December, 1823, but with partial success. The story was somewhat impracticable for stage purposes; and the play was endangered, if not sacrificed, by the lady to whom the part of the heroine was entrusted. In many letters, written while she was enduring a suspense of two years' length with respect to the fate of her first drama, Mrs. Hemans showed a patience and good-humour which are not very common among authors in similar circumstances; and there is something very sweet and feminine in her manner of contriving to extract even comfort out of her disappointment. She says, in one letter, that she can hardly regret the failure of the tragedy, as it was the means of arousing a near and dear member of her family from the state of depression into which he had been plunged by a recent domestic bereavement.

"The Siege of Valencia" was published in the course of the year 1825. Independently of the power and passion displayed by its author in working out the fine chivalrous tale upon which this dramatic poem is founded, particularly in the management of its two female characters, Elmina and Ximena, the volume which contained it was attractive, as also including the glowing and picturesque "Songs of the Cid" and the "Voice of Spring." The latter must be pointed out as one of the first of those fanciful lyrics, which, in their form, at least, are peculiar to Mrs. Hemans; and which, yet more than her elaborate poems, contributed to gain for her a wide and genial reputation. The "Welsh Melodies" had already made her known as a song-writer; but it is from the appearing of the volume in question, and the "Lays of Many Lands," at first singly published in the "New Monthly Magazine," that her popularity is to be dated. She had already made friendship with many of her sister writers; the public now began to look to her as one of the most gifted of the number. Every periodical of any respectability (and that was the golden time of magazines and annuals) became eager to secure her services; and while "The Treasures of the Deep," and "The Cross in the Wilderness," and "The Sicilian Captive," made her beloved and admired in England, as one who had more than fulfilled the promise of her youth, her ballad of "The Pilgrim Fathers" had crossed the Atlantic, and made her name a household word in America. A school of imitators immediately

sprung up there; and of all the flatteries and offers of service which were showered and pressed upon her, none were more highly prized, because none were more genuine, than the warm-hearted and universal sympathy which her works excited on the other side of the Atlantic. A most liberal invitation indeed was sent to her, to induce her to take up her residence in America, for the purpose of conducting a periodical there. This, it is almost needless to add, she declined.

As belonging to the freshest, if not the most active period of her mind's life, must be mentioned the enthusiasm with which Mrs. Hemans threw herself upon the study of German. A thousand traces and reflections of the pursuit will be found in all her poems, published about this time. In her letters she speaks of it "as that rich and affectionate language in which I delight," and she is never wearied of again and again referring to the strength and comfort, and enlargement of her powers, which she found in making herself acquainted with its literature.

"The Forest Sanctuary," Mrs. Hemans' longest poem,—it has been said, her own favourite among her many works,—succeeded the "Siege of Valencia" after but a short interval. Perhaps in her estimate of its merits she was nearer the truth than authors are generally admitted to be. It is needless to remind the English reader that this tale turns upon the fortunes and mental struggles of those embracing the Protestant faith in the dark days of the Spanish Inquisition; its hero being a young nobleman, converted after witnessing the martyrdom of a priest and his two sisters—imprisoned for his heresy—afterwards escaping to the New World in company with his faithful and gentle wife; who, with a true woman's devotedness, shares his flight, though she shares not his faith; and dies of the struggle between her love and her conscience. The versification of this legend is varied and musical; some of the descriptions are written in "words that burn," and, themselves the offspring of strong emotion, must excite corresponding feelings in those who read.

The health of Mrs. Hemans, which self-neglect had already impaired, began to be seriously affected by the earnestness with which she threw all her whole soul into her pursuits. These, indeed, were only laid aside when sadder thoughts claimed entrance. She was too wholly absorbed in her art to be either happy or at ease in the world of general society. To the few friends who could take part in her fancies, and to whom she "could show all that was in her heart," she was a fascinating companion; no less fascinating in the play of a quaint and graceful humour, than in the eloquent utterance of the deeper thoughts which breathe through her verse. Among her chief intimates one must not be forgotten —herself a woman of extraordinary attainments and mental gifts. This was Miss Jewsbury, afterwards Mrs. Fletcher, who, unfortunately for the world of female literature, died young: her best works, from being chiefly scattered about in different periodicals, have never received anything beyond the notice or praise of the passing hour. With this lady Mrs. Hemans maintained a confidential and frequent correspondence. "In her private letters, as in her published works, she shows herself high-minded, affectionate, grateful, wayward in her self-neglect, delicate to fastidiousness in her tastes, in her religion fervent without intolerance, eager to acquire knowledge, as eager to impart it to others, earnestly devoted to her art, and, in that art, to the service of all things beautiful and holy."

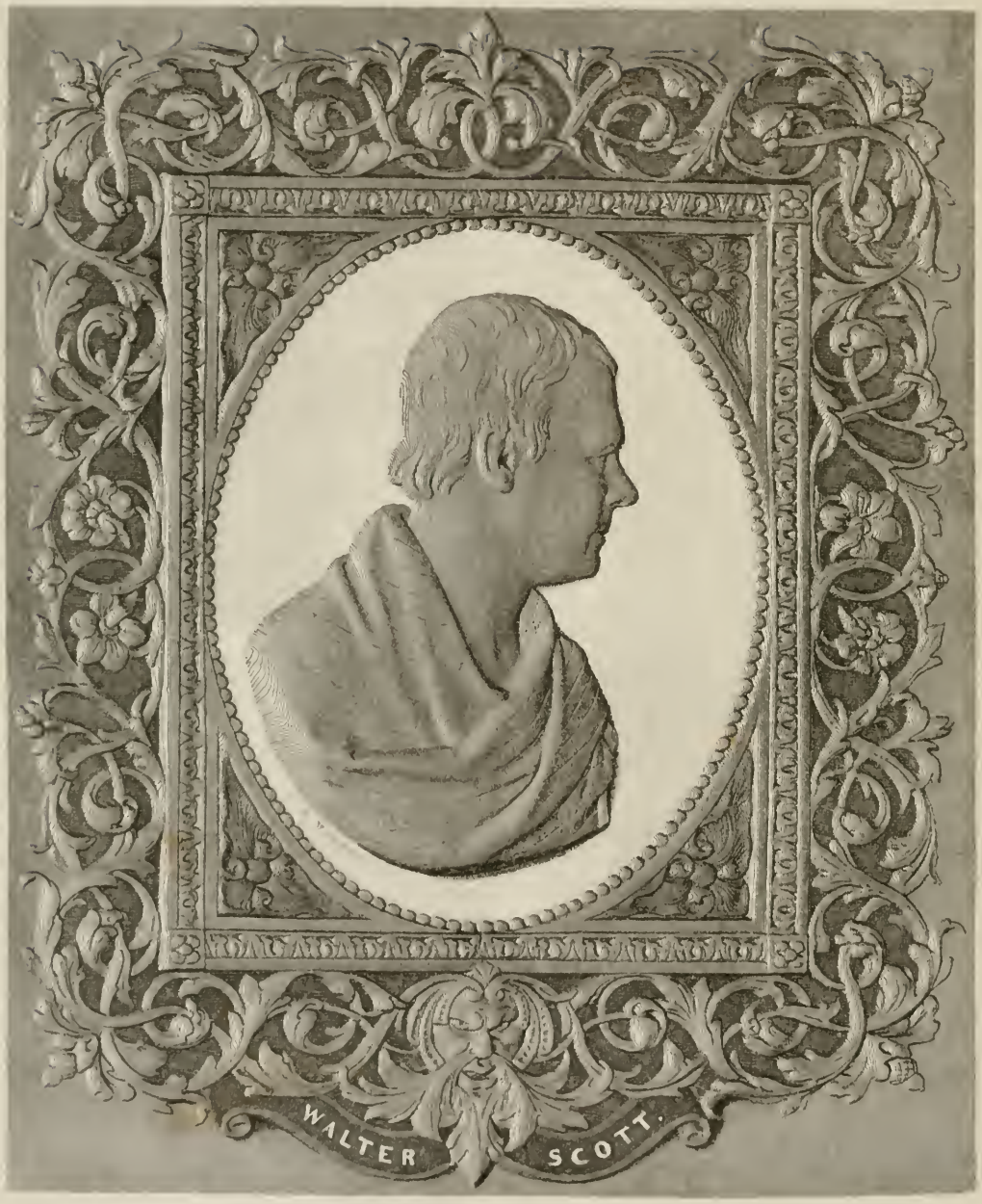
Such being the woman—and the woman and the poetess being one—the title of her next work, "Records of Woman," is an earnest of its success. It was, indeed, written from the fulness of her heart; and the execution of most of the sketches which it contains admirably seconds the emotions under the strong influence of which it was undertaken and completed. This has been the most popular of Mrs. Hemans' works. The last written of its poems were composed with the depressing prospect before her

of a dispersion of the home-circle wherein she had always found shelter, and leisure to pursue her engrossing calling undisturbed—which was to send her forth into the world, for the first time—alone, and as innocent of its ways and wisdom as a child.

In the summer of the year 1828, Mrs. Hemans removed from Rhyllon, in the neighbourhood of St. Asaph, to the village of Wavertree, about three miles distant from Liverpool. There, in a small house, "the third of a cluster or row close to a dusty road," she began to make her acquaintance with the practical duties of life and society. Her new residence was unfortunately chosen. She bore ill with a change from the retirement of the country, to the civilities and constraints of a neighbourhood as unintellectual as it was sociable. Here, too, the inconveniences of celebrity pressed on her most heavily—the constant calls and claims upon her attention, the flatteries written, spoken, and acted, which were intruded upon her, at once excited and annoyed her. In short, during the three years she passed at Wavertree, her mind was more restless, more subject to painful alternations of mood than at any previous or subsequent period; and her lyrics written during this time, though as delicately sweet as her other poems, dwell too exclusively upon the unquiet workings of a feverish and desponding spirit—utter too constantly the melancholy exclamation, "Alone! alone!" of the mysterious guest of St. Leon. While resident at Wavertree, however, she drew round her a small circle of attached friends, and it was in the course of the summers of 1830 and 1831 that she paid those visits to Sir Walter Scott and Mr. Wordsworth which are so delightfully described in her correspondence recently published. The last-named poet she regarded, of later years, almost in the light of a spiritual guide. The only work of any length written by her whilst at Wavertree was the "Spirit's Return," the principal poem in her next collection of Lyrics, the "Songs of the Affections." This was based upon too shadowy and spiritual a theme to become as generally popular as any of the "Records" had been: it contains, nevertheless, some of her loftiest thoughts and most dignified language. About this time, too, she began to take great pleasure in writing expressly for music. The Spanish songs she contributed to Colonel Hodges' "Peninsular Melodies" must not be forgotten; nor the many spirited or melancholy *canzoni* and ballads, which, associated with her sister's music, have been sung from one end of England to the other.

In the year 1831 Mrs. Hemans, being disappointed with Wavertree as a residence, and tempted by the superior advantages which the Irish metropolis afforded in the education of the three sons remaining under her care, removed to Dublin, in which city she continued to reside, with little intermission, till her decease. As heretofore, she shrunk from general society, and confined her intercourse to one or two intimate and attached friends; occupying her mind, more than her rapidly-waning health rendered prudent, in a thousand literary plans and schemes; each year a little happier than she had been the last, from an increase of calmness of spirit. It was only shortly before her death that a new feeling of the responsibilities of her art seemed to possess her, that, to use her own words, "having passed through the feverish, and somewhat *visionary* state of mind often connected with the passionate study of art in early life," she began to conceive herself "bound to higher and holier tasks,"—to meditate, in short, the application of her rich and various stores of thought and information to the service of the altar. Her wish was to enlarge the sphere of sacred poetry; and in pursuance of this object, the "Scenes and Hymns of Life" were written. These and her collected "National Lyrics and Songs for Music," and a charming little volume of "Hymns for Childhood," appeared in the course of the year 1834; and she was rapidly tracing out the plan of a further series of sacred poems, to be called the "Christian Temple," when her purpose was arrested by rapidly-increasing illness. She had been always liable to violent nervous affections, and in addition to these, in the autumn

of 1834, was attacked by the scarlet fever, from which, when but imperfectly recovered, an act of personal carelessness brought on a more lingering malady, the ague. Throughout the following winter her mind seemed, as it were, battling with disease; pouring out its last thoughts with a profusion and a fervour which gave no tokens of feebleness or decay. Her last lyric, "Despondency and Aspiration" (published among her "Poetical Remains"), is assuredly her best, whether in its aim, or its imagery, or its versification. She was affectionately tended by those who could do little more than witness her decay—the earlier part of the year 1835 being spent at Redesdale, a country seat belonging to the Archbishop of Dublin. The exertion consequent upon the appointment of her fourth son to a place in a government office increased her malady; in addition to which, serious dropsical symptoms manifested themselves: and after passing through the various stages of disease and decline, with a patience and a willingness to depart, and an unobtrusive but fervent piety, which were as soothing as they were beautiful to witness, she sunk to sleep on the evening of Saturday the 16th of May, to awaken in "the better land," of which she had so often sung with a yearning and prophetic fondness!


WALTER SCOTT.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

If in the case of any author of England the few illustrative words demanded from us could be reasonably dispensed with, it would be in Sir Walter Scott's. We should hardly set ourselves to write of the sun that it shines,—of rivers as flowing water; in like manner, when treating of one whose name and fame have filled the world as a household word, and that within the compass of our own memories—whose character offers us no difficulties to solve—whose life contained few mysteries to be unriddled—our task would be sufficiently performed were we to content ourselves with writing down the dates of

His birth—August 15th, 1771.
His marriage—Dec. 29th, 1796.
His death—Sept. 21st, 1832.

As if to make any biographical notice, any allusion to the life and progress of his authorship yet more superfluous,—after the delightful confessions given to the world in the Author of Waverley's own prefaces, and after the mass of panegyric and criticism put on paper by every witling who could hold a pen, and talked by every trifler capable of the exertion of reading a novel,—the public are now receiving an extended biography of the poet and romancer, at the hands of one who, from the connection of a long and affectionate intimacy, no less than the possession of taste and scholarship, seemed the person best fitted for the task.

And yet, on sitting down to fulfil a prescribed duty, it is impossible to avoid feeling with what a freshness of interest we enter upon Scott's life and writings, as though they were a virgin ground, where no feet have anticipated our own. This is the miracle most eminently wrought by Genius when it appears among men in company with the virtues so closely allied to it, but with which, according to the fashion too common among near relations, it shows such a constant tendency to quarrel; when it speaks not merely in a voice that charms every ear and touches every heart, but that charms with holy and lawful spells, and touches but to awaken noble and generous emotions. We are curious about Byron—we are strangely and mournfully interested in Shelley's fate, but we *love* Scott, and are as far from being weary of recalling the incidents of his life, of considering the strong healthy lineaments of his mind's features, as we are from wearying of dwelling upon the history—of recalling the well-known looks and gestures of some attached and valued friend, long since become a part of ourselves. Whether our children will consent to inherit the predilections of their fathers, or criticize and dismiss what we have loved and cherished, it is not easy to foresee. The age we have elsewhere ventured to characterize as being one whose spirit is change; but, to us, the author of "The Lay," and "Waverley," and "Ivanhoe," stands among the immortals, in the same mansion as Shakspeare,—though, indeed, on a lower throne!

The date of Sir Walter Scott's birth has already been recorded. The precious Abbotsford manuscript with which Mr. Lockhart opens his biography, furnishes us, from the poet's own hand, with an engaging sketch of his ancient and honourable parentage—of his warm-hearted grandfather, the most sanguine and imprudent of gentlemen farmers—of

his father (the Saunders Fairford of "Redgauntlet"), a shrewd and upright lawyer; though somewhat of a formalist in enforcing domestic discipline and in despising the ornaments of life, not wholly devoid of that sweetness and geniality of temperament which made his son so love-worthy, and which run likes a thread of sterling gold through every page and verse he wrote. Those fond of comparisons, who have been used to regard Scott and Byron side by side, or in opposition, while they remember that both were in infancy marked by the same natural blemish—the former the most seriously—cannot but also advert to the different influences which their lameness exercised over the destinies of the two boys, and contrast, with a sigh, the fortunes of Byron, foreshadowed in his mother's bitter taunts, with those of Scott, sent out while an infant to Sandy Knowe, to be strengthened by the free moorland air—to be nursed by ewe-milkers, and tended by the "Cow-Bailie." The germ of "Childe Harold" and "Cain" and "Don Juan" formed itself within the former during these years of infancy, not more surely and imperceptibly than the germ of "Guy Mannering" and "the Heart of Mid-Lothian" was generated at a similar period within the latter, who isstill talked of as "sweet-tempered bairn, gleg at the up take," and who, having been forgotten during a thunder-storm, among the heathery knolls, was found lying on his back, clappping his hands at the lightning, and crying "Bonny! bonny!" at every flash.

But if we compare the circumstances of the boyhoods of Byron and Scott, that we may not fail of the example supplied to us by the diligent, benevolent life of the latter *as a man*, we are bound also to compare their natural gifts, lest we lose hold of that charity which makes us compassionate, while we point out the wanderings and heart-struggles of the former. *His* genius, the strength of which was essentially the strength of passion, was therefore certain early to force its way to the surface; Scott's, whose mission was to appeal to the gentler sympathies of persons of every age and class, required to be ripened,—to be fed by accumulation ere it *flowed abroad*, rather than burst forth. Though he was remarkable for his quickness as a child, and though the usual number of ready answers, and capricious indications of talent, are recorded of him during his school days,—though he early gave evidence of possessing an amazing memory, as well as tastes indisputably poetical, though he early began to hoard relics, and to collect and recast ballads and faery tales, there was little,—thanks to the equability of his temperament, and the unaffected liveliness of his disposition,—to stamp him with the dangerous gift of admitted pre-eminence among the well-born and well-educated young men with whom he consorted upon entering the legal profession, which he did on the 17th of May, 1786. He was not one of those fantastic and exacting beings, in whom their sensations must be excited by inequality in companionship or licentiousness in adventure,—who must love or loathe, and be "cradled into poetry through wrong," if not of other persons' contriving, of their own. Gifted with a light heart, and a remarkable unconsciousness of his own powers (for he writes of himself as "not blessed with the talents of Burns or Chatterton, and happily exempted from the influence of their violent passions, exasperated by the struggle of feelings which rose up against the decrees of fortune"), Scott took the world as he found it, equally contented, it seems, whether he rode about in Liddersdale—Dandie Dinmont's country—by the side of his friend Shortreed, "*makin himsel*" all the while, or whether he sat cracking jokes, or eating oysters in the Covenant Close, among his clever mates of the Outer House. Something, too, of the excellent and cheerful common sense which distinguishes Scott among his contemporaries, throughout the whole of his literary career, may be ascribed to the influence of his father's example, which *must* have often made itself felt, even when it was not confessed. It was at *his* instance that Walter Scott devoted himself to the studies of the law,—it was to *his* prudence that he owed an exemption as a very young man from those extreme trials of fortune, which, while they so often sting Genius into a feverish

activity, drive its impatient possessor into that moral recklessness so fatal to its own happiness,—so injurious to society, as holding up to its notice error far easier to pity than to blame.

It needs not here once again to dwell upon the various preparations through which Walter Scott's mind passed, to detail the cautious and progressive steps by which he entered authorship as a translator—a few German ballads, and the "Goetz von Berlichingen," being the object of his first essay—and as a gatherer of the Minstrelsy of the Border. We have indicated the dispositions and the circumstances which conspired in an extraordinary degree to give his natural genius its fairest play: and the particulars of his romance readings,—of his antiquarian tastes, how they grew,—of the judicious female relations and friends (Mrs. Scott, of Harden, and Miss Cranstoun, afterwards Countess Purgstall) who encouraged him to go on and prosper in original composition,—of his Highland and Lowland forays, in the course of which he learned to know by heart the picturesque scenery of his own land,—are already too well known to the world to require repetition. For a like reason, having already given the date of his marriage with Miss Charpentier, we need not allude to its sequel, including their subsequent residences at Lasswade, Ashestiel, and Abbotsford, except it be for the sake of the beautiful trait recorded by Mr. Lockhart of the poet, who, after he had become a great man, and a renowned author, could not refrain from turning aside from the straight road, when upon a journey, to look at the unpretending cottage, which had been his first country shelter during the years of his married life: and to point out to his friend, Mr. Morritt, the arch of willows above the gate, which, at the time of its construction, he declared himself to have viewed with as large a share of complacency and admiration as he had afterwards to bestow on the romantic splendours of Abbotsford.

Here, then, however strongly tempted to advert to the personal history of the subsequent years of Scott's life,—to dwell upon the hospitality extended by him to guests distinguished and obscure, when his appointment to the Sheriffship of Selkirkshire, and the signal success of his first poems "the Lay," and "Marmion," and "the Lady of the Lake," for a while made his purse full, yet not so full as his heart was open—upon the literary friendships which were the necessary consequence of his fast-growing celebrity, and which were maintained with an enviable and self-postponing courtesy never to be forgotten; upon the diligence, vigilance, and activity which he threw into his pursuits, thereby converting the precarious vicissitudes of literature into professional certainties—however much tempted, for example's sake, to dwell upon each or any of these points, they must of necessity be passed by. A bald enumeration, or little more, of the numerous and widely-varied compositions, which Scott continued to present to the public, from the time when "the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border" was published to the days of "Count Robert of Paris" will, of itself, overgrow the space yet left us.

The first of the works, by which, as Scott himself says, he "laid his claim to be considered as an original writer," "the Lay of the Last Minstrel"—began, he tells us, to please the young Countess of Buccleuch, and wrought out in a measure suggested by the "Christabel" of Coleridge—made its appearance in the year 1805. The public had been, in some measure, prepared for an outbreak of the spirit of old Romance in this its wildest form, by the publication of the Border Minstrelsy, and the ballads which Scott had contributed to the Miscellany collected by Monk Lewis; and yet more by the treasury of quaint legendary lore, annexed in the notes of the first-mentioned work, and told with that *gusto* which distinguishes the poet from the antiquarian. But "the Lay" must have a thousand-fold exceeded whatever expectations had been excited. Here and there, indeed, a critic might be found protesting against the supernatural machinery introduced, or

counting on his fingers the syllables of its wild but musical verses, or recommending Mr. Scott to bestow time, pains, and talents on an epic. What mattered their exceptions? "The public," as Allan Cunningham pleasantly says, in speaking of "the Lady of the Lake," "took up the matter for themselves, regardless of the admonitions of the learned, and the cautions of the critics." Scott had touched the right chord; and he who could do so, not only once, but twice, and even a third time—who could make fair Melrose and Loch Katrine and the Trosachs a Mecca to pilgrims from every corner of Europe, and place Flodden Field before us, peopling it with all the life and motion of the olden struggle, might well afford "to hear, and to see, and to say nothing." But as he was temperate in the estimate of his own powers, so also was Scott eminently candid in listening to counsel and in considering his relations with the public. Whilst he was conscious that elaborate polish and formal construction, and constant reference to a calculated purpose, were impossible to him, and therefore bestowed less labour in change and correction than some thought seemly, no author was ever more rationally awake to every fluctuation in the pulse of public favour,—or more respectfully unwilling to reserve the regard of his audience, by exhibiting those fantastic tricks, by which others have endeavoured, with a short-sighted tyranny, to extort a blind homage from their admirers. No one ever enjoyed fame more honestly than Scott; but when he found that "Rokeby," and "the Lord of the Isles," and his other minor poems "Don Roderick," and "Harold the Dauntless," and "the Bridal of Triermain," were each, in its degree, less successful than his first rhymed romances, he gave up his celebrity as easily as he had acquired it—without vexation or envy. Let us see in what unaffected language he discusses the decline of his popularity. "The manner or style," he says, "which, by its novelty, attracted the public in an unusual degree, had now, after having been so long before them, begun to lose its charms. For this there was no remedy: the harmony became tiresome and ordinary, and both the original inventor and his invention must have fallen into contempt, if he had not found out another road to public favour." * * * * "Besides all this" (Scott has been speaking of the most of his imitators) "a mighty and unexpected rival was advancing on the stage—a rival not in poetical powers only, but in attracting popularity, in which the present writer had preceded better men than himself." The reader will see that Byron is here meant, who, after a little vatilation of no great promise, now appeared as a serious candidate in the first canto of "Childe Harold."

The same excellent judgment and hopefulness of spirit, so evident in the foregoing passage—which being applied to regulate a genius, versatile as it was rich, produced such a splendid result of fame—may be traced throughout the whole of Scott's literary career. They helped him pleasantly through the heavy labours of editorship, with which he proceeded steadily during all the period when his creative powers were the busiest at work. The new editions of Dryden and Swift, of the "Somers' Tracts," and the "Sadler Papers," were tasks long and heavy enough for the lifetime of an ordinary literary man: they were disposed of by Scott, with no more apparent fatigue than if they had been ephemeral and unimportant works. He found time, too, to lend a most efficient hand to the critical organ of his party, then just established—the "Quarterly Review"—to say nothing of the completion of many other and lighter literary undertakings, and of the private counsel and assistance bestowed by him upon his less eminent brethren.

It was at the turning point of Scott's literary career, when he was passing out of fashion as a poet, and ere he had won his spurs as a romancer, that he took up his residence at Abbotsford. In establishing himself upon his new purchase, and beautifying it, all his healthy natural tastes were called into play. Here he indulged his picturesque fancy by *planting and building* a romance which he has somewhere or other playfully characterized

as the one of his works of which he was proudest. By the manner in which he distributed his time, he was enabled to close at noon the literary day, which was begun when the rest of the world are in bed, and thus to provide himself with ample leisure to superintend his young plantations, or to direct, *vivâ voce*, how and where this carved stone, or the other morsel of ancient sculpture, was to be embedded in the walls of his new building,—or to receive and enjoy the society of the myriad of strangers of every rank, and class, and station, who poured across the border, all naturally most eager to gaze upon the master spirit of Scotland. Hence it was, that upon the completion and publication of "Waverley" (in 1814), a work, be it remembered, which had been laid aside for some half-dozen years, at the instigation of cautious advisers,—though there were many who recognized in a moment the "True Prince" through his disguise, as certainly as if he had presented himself before them in his own costume;—though Miss Edgeworth (no mean authority) attacked him at once with her "*Aut Scotus aut Diabolus;*" a large number of matter-of-fact persons refused to believe the evidence of their senses, and pronounced unhesitatingly that the Novel *could not* be Scott's; every nook and corner of whose literary leisure was known to be crowded with assigned occupations. Another company, again, formed of those who will always be wiser than their neighbours, and "could speak an they would," chose to represent themselves as partakers in the mystery, and to throw out something more than hints of ladies in the Highlands, of officers in Canada and the West Indies, to whom the parentage of "the illustrious stranger" and his followers was to be ascribed.

It is amusing now, to look back at the absurdities vented concerning the Waverley Novels on their first appearing; it is curious to reflect how completely the sensation they excited is a thing of past times. We doubt, whether any work or works, even as original in their manner as they were, and addressing as large a class as they did, could in the present days, when enthusiasm is gone to sleep, and one event is jostled out of sight by another ere it has had time to produce any impression, excite a similar sensation. Well might Scott, after a six weeks' absence from home, and seclusion from the world of rumours, be surprised and pleased at the success which had already attended his new essay. Well might he gird himself up, strong in the consciousness of his immense resources, to produce another, and another, and another—a "Guy Mannering," a "Rob Roy," an "Old Mortality," a "Bride of Lammermoor," and an "Ivanhoe:" in each and all of these scattering about hints and inventions, and incidental characters, which of themselves, if fully wrought out, were enough to have made the fortune of any novelist! And here, having been led by accident to the remark, we cannot but insist upon Scott's fertility as one of his most remarkable characteristics—the more strongly because it has been less emphatically dwelt upon, than, in its proportion, it deserved. Almost every figure in his works, even if sketched but as an accessary, is a character, whose untold exploits and endurances we can work out for ourselves. Do we not see Mrs. Flockheart, the warm-hearted Scotch landlady, as clearly as Fergus and Flora, or as the pedantic and courteous old Baron of Bradwardine, and the faithful Evan Dhu Maccombich? And are not Martha Trapbois, and the scarlet-hosed Gillian, whose coquettish desire to attract the male sex, was stronger than age and poverty, as familiar to us as gentle King Jamie, or the constable of Chester, the more prominent figures in each romance? Our examples have been purposely selected at random, and from the later as well as the earlier novels, to show that his affluence of creative power did not forsake Scott till the last. He would himself speak of it with an almost disparaging candour, pleading in excuse for the inartificial structure of many of his plots, the impossibility of restraining himself from finishing to a disproportionate importance his secondary characters, whose forms, often determined by accident in the first instance, chanced to please him, and, in the end, seduced him from the principal personage of his story.

Hitherto the world had only looked upon Scott as sailing upon the stream of good fortune; as winning golden opinions from all classes of men, and wearing in his heart the blessed consciousness that, beyond all his contemporaries, he had ministered to the healthy enjoyment of his countrymen. The freedom of his works, not merely from thoughts, but from words that are exceptionable, considering their vast extent, and the rapidity with which they were composed, is extraordinary; a thing which should never be lost sight of. And his fame, as it deserved to be, was fed by love and not curiosity. Who was there in all Great Britain that did not feel when he was made a Baronet that the title had fallen on the head which would do it honour; and yet what was his Baronetcy to the affection (the word is not too strong) with which he was regarded by all classes, from the highest to the lowest? The anecdote of the Scots Grey opening a way for him down Abingdon Street, on the day of the Coronation; of the fishmonger toiling up from the City to Regent's Park, rather than *he* should be disappointed, are more than merely amusing, if they are read as evidences of the empire which the gifted *may* exercise over their fellow-men. On the other hand, we might string together a thousand traits of beneficence and consideration on the part of Scott as *a man*, which are no less worthy of remembrance. We might speak of the largeness of his sympathies, which remained unspoiled to the last. The author who could come forward so calmly and yet so nobly, to stem the tide of obloquy setting in with such unjust vehemence against Byron, could also in Paris remember the little tastes and fancies of all his retainers and servants, and "the bonnie Mull" which the Laird brought home for the old quarryman, remains as striking a testimony to the amiability of his spirit, as his generous and eloquent defence of the author of "Fare thee well."

But the tapestry was now to be turned; the great change to be made known which shadowed the later years of Scott's life. We can hardly call this misfortune, which called forth in so eminent a degree all that was noble in his nature. "Sir Walter Scott," said Mr. Cunningham, "owing to the failure of commercial speculations in which he was a partner, became responsible for the payment of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds; he refused to become a bankrupt, considering, like the elder Osbaldistone of his own immortal pages, commercial honour as dear as any other honour, and undertook within the compass of ten years to pay capital and interest of the enormous sum. At that time he was hale and vigorous, and capable of wondrous exertions; he gave up his house in Edinburgh, now less necessary to him, on account of the death of Lady Scott, and singling out various objects of interest, proceeded to retrieve his broken fortunes with a spirit at once calm and unsubdued. The bankruptcy of his booksellers rendered longer concealment of the Waverley Novels impossible." Accordingly, at the annual dinner of the Edinburgh Theatrical Fund, on the 24th of February, 1827, after thirteen years of such conjuration as the world, we suspect, will not presently see again;—"the wand was broken and the rod buried;" and the Great Unknown (to use his own simile) was driven to the perilous experiment of laying by his harlequin's mask, and endeavouring to maintain his power over his audience in his own unassisted person.

There is still less occasion to speak one by one of the works which he spurred himself to execute during the last five years of his life, than of the productions of his easier days. If the children of his decline were not so vigorous as those of his ripe manhood, they had still features which assured the world of their parentage. Those who had talked of Scott writing himself out, when the "Antiquary" appeared, might well feel rebuked when they read his "Highland Widow," or traced the hand of the master as strongly in Harry Wynd, and Conochar, as in Meg Merrilies, and Edie Ochiltree. Even in the last but one of his novels, "Anne of Geierstein," a work written when the body had begun to yield to the unremitting exertion of mind, there are to be found a few pages (Rudolph Donner-

hugel's Fairy Tale) thrown in by accident, worth the whole three volumes written by many a renowned romancer in his prime. And it must be remarked that till the very last, whether in the tales above mentioned, or in the "Tales of a Grandfather" that *king* of child's books, or in the "Life of Napoleon," or in the "History of Scotland" (a task-work); nay, even in the prefaces of the new edition of the Waverley Novels, when the poet came before the public with his heart in his hand, not one trace of a depressed or discontented spirit is to be found. The thewes and sinews might indeed wear out in the honourable struggle, but the master-mind continued to be calm and hopeful, till disease laid its freezing hand there also.

We cannot dwell upon the last days of Scott's life,—upon the illness by which he was stricken early in the year 1831, or his melancholy voyage to the South, through whose beauties and wonders he dragged himself feebly, with the dull eye of a dying man. The change was tried too late; the scenes which would, some five years earlier, have inspired him with a thousand fresh and lovely ideas, and the air and sunshine, which would have poured a new life into his veins, now but bewildered him, or restored him only to a fitful and sickly consciousness. He seems, even while at Naples and Rome, to have been haunted with a longing to be at rest once more among his own people; and the longing *was* granted, though only in letter; for when he reached Abbotsford, in July, 1832, after his second and fatal seizure while upon the Rhine, he was only permitted for a few days, and feebly, to recognize the woods he had planted, and the friends and kinsmen he loved best. The date of his death has already been given. He was buried at Dryburgh Abbey, on Wednesday, the 25th of September. "The hills were covered, and the villages filled with mourners; he was borne from the hearse by his own domestics, and laid in the grave by the hands of his children."

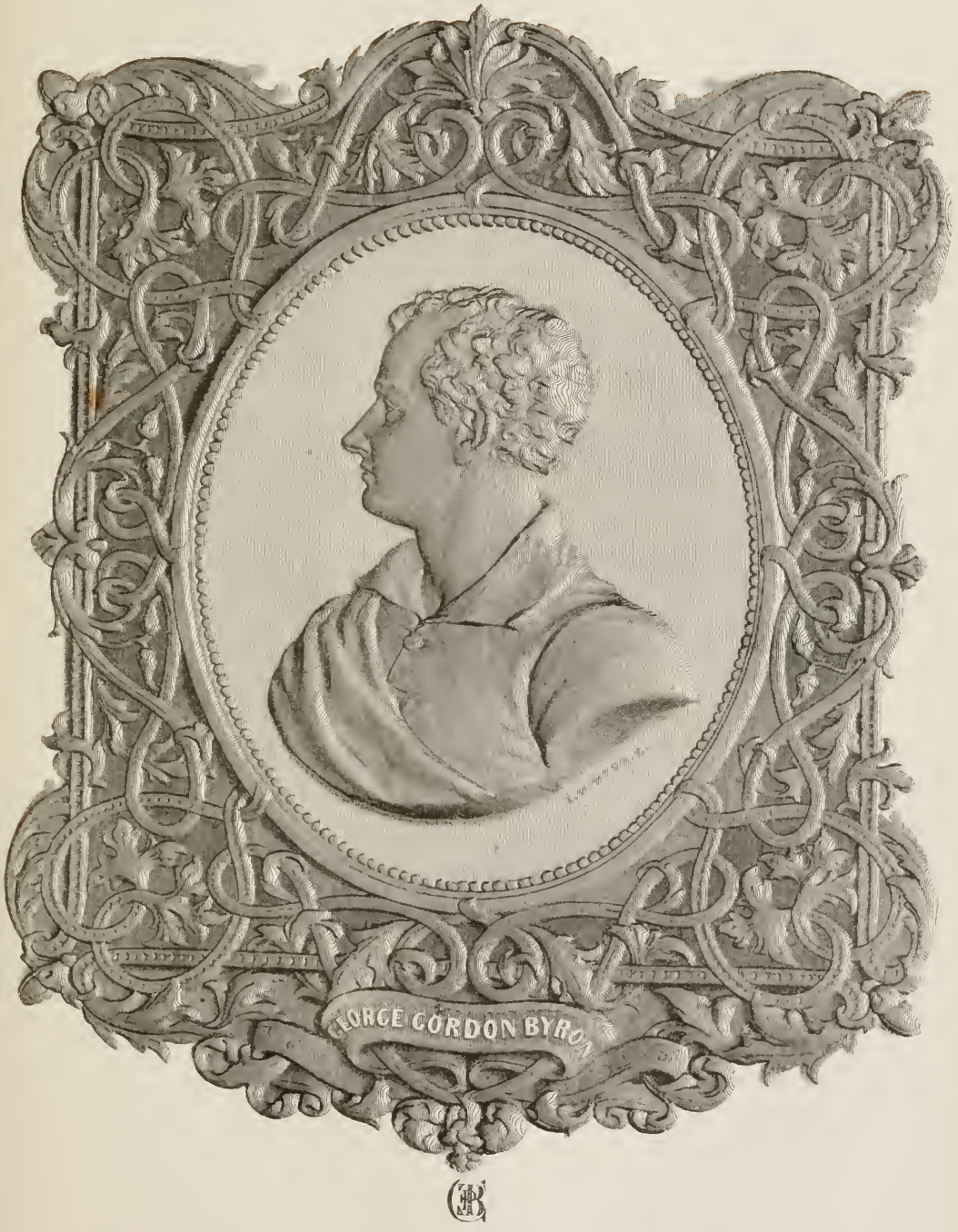
LORD BYRON.

Since the time when, after the neglect of many years, all Europe began to write and to inquire concerning Shakespeare,—to examine his many-coloured works, and to collect the notices of his personal history, so scantily bequeathed to us, criticism and curiosity have found no subject so engaging as the life and writings of Lord Byron. It is strange to look back and remember under how many aspects he has already been represented to us;—by a choir of enthusiastic admirers extolled above all modern poets; by a small but resolute body of dissenters all but denied the right to bear the poet's honoured title: followed out of England by popular opprobrium as an incarnation of evil—an outlaw without the pale of humanity; and sought out in his exile by not a few *homages of the heart,** precious enough to outbuy the most universal mob popularity. There is enough in these vicissitudes of reputation and fortune, and the series of poems which so brilliantly illustrate them, to make it more than probable, that so long as our literature shall endure, the poems and career of Byron will remain to be an object of interest and speculation.

But some will say that we have fallen upon days whose very essence is change and transiency; that, with the olden time so fruitful of contrasts, when the lonely student amassed his store of learning, and the poet girt himself for his altar-service in the midst of an uninstructed and superstitious multitude, has also passed away that Spirit of reverence, which hung, as it were, an ever-burning lamp before the effigies of the great ones of the Past. They will tell us that periods of haste and preparation, when the frame of society is hourly receiving shocks—and none can foresee how, when destroyed, it is to be reconstructed,—can only produce those whose names, however distinguished, are but as the plume of some renowned chief, for one hour borne hither and thither through the smoke and tumult of the battle-field—and the next struck down, soiled, forgotten in the hurry of the struggle. If these be right—if our present is, indeed, never to become *a past,* then should the name and the works of Byron, as the poet of his time, be raised to a higher

* "*Ravenna, July 5th,* 1821. I have had a curious letter to-day from a girl in England (I never saw her), who says she is given over of a decline, but could not go out of the world without thanking me for the delight which my poesy for several years, &c., &c., &c. It is signed simply N. N. A., and has not a word of cant or preachment in it, on *any* opinions. She merely says that she is dying, and that as I had contributed so highly to her existing pleasure, she thought she might *say* so, begging me to burn her letter, which, by the way I *cannot* do, as I look upon such a letter, in such circumstances, as better than a diploma from Gottingen. I had once a letter from Drontheim, in *Norway* (but not from a dying woman), in verse, on the same score of gratulation. These are the things which make one at times believe one's self a poet. * * * * * In the same month I received an invitation into Holstein, from a Mr. Jacobsen (I think of Hamburgh). * * * * * It was odd enough to receive an invitation to pass the *Summer* in *Holstein*, while in *Italy*, from people whom I never knew. The letter was addressed to Venice. Mr. Jacobsen talked to me of 'the wild roses growing in the Holstein Summer.' * * * * * What a strange thing is life and man! Were I to present myself at the door of the house where my daughter now is, the door would be shut in my face, unless (as is not impossible) I had knocked down the porter; and if I had gone in that year (and perhaps now) to Drontheim (the furthest town in Norway), or into Holstein, I should have been received, with open arms, into a mansion of strangers and foreigners attached to me by no tie but that of mind and humour." * * * *

Lord Byron's Letters and Journals, Moore's Life.


GEORGE GORDON BYRON

eminence among us; for whereas some have wrought for posterity, and some *for antiquity*,* he was, beyond all his compeers, admirable in catching and uttering the spirit of a period, when Poetry was to walk the earth as a Mephistopheles—as a tempter, not a teacher; for who shall say that the destinies which bind her to the human race may not, at times of necessity, subject her to wear the sullied wings and the seared front of a fallen angel?

There are some objects whose features, however sublime, being few, can still be reduced, with some show of clearness, within a small space. One of Michael Angelo's Sybils, for instance, might be diminished to a scale on which it would be impossible to represent a banquet-scene by Veronese. The life and genius of Byron belong to the number of subjects which *cannot* be set locket-fashion. It would be impossible, within our narrow bounds, to compress the rich material furnished by Moore's life,—to extract the few traits of reality from Mr. Hunt's distorted yet lively caricature,—to harmonize sketches so widely differing as those furnished by Mr. Dallas, Lady Blessington, good Dr. Kennedy, and Mr. Parry; and yet this should be done, if a new portrait were to have any distinguishable character of its own, and still bear a resemblance to its original. Perhaps the wisest course for us is to avail ourselves of the only satisfactory clue which has been given to the progress of Byron's mind in connection with his fascinating personal history, and, guided by it, briefly to advert to the leading events of the different periods into which his life divides itself. This clue, we think, is to be found in the prefatory paragraphs to Shelley's "Julian and Maddalo," where Lord Byron, under the name of the latter, is thus described:—

"He is a person of the most consummate energies, and capable, if he would direct his energies to such an end, of becoming the redeemer of his degraded country. But it is his weakness to be proud. He derives, from a comparison of his own extraordinary mind with the dwarfish intellects which surround him, an intense apprehension of the nothingness of human life. His passions and his powers are incomparably greater than those of other men, *and instead of the latter having been employed in curbing the former, they have mutually lent each other strength.* His ambition preys upon itself for want of other objects which it can consider worthy of exertion. I say that Maddalo is proud, because I can find no other word to express the impatient and concentrated feelings that consume him; *but it is on his own hopes and affections only that he seems to trample.*" * * * Thus far Shelley.

Beginning with the day of Byron's birth, which took place in Holles Street, London, on the 22nd of January, 1788, it is remarkable to observe how strangely nature and circumstance combined to make his passions

"Grow with his growth, and strengthen with his strength."

As an infant, he was remarkable for his "silent rages," though all around him have also remembered in him "a mixture of affectionate sweetness and playfulness, by which it was impossible not to be attached; and which rendered him then, as in later years, easily managed by those who loved and understood him sufficiently to be at once gentle and firm enough for the task." But the influences under which his early years were passed, were those least likely to call forth the better parts of his nature, and, by strengthening them, to enable him to become his own guide and moderator. His mother was a woman of violent temper—without refinement; without self-command: impove-

* When my sonnet was rejected, I exclaimed "Damn the age, *I will write for* Antiquity!"—Charles Lamb's Letters.

rished by her husband's extravagances, compelled by evil treatment to part from him, yet driven to distraction by the news of his death. It was owing to her false delicacy, at the time of her *accouchement*, that Byron was lame for life; it was owing to her coarse bitterness, that he was led, while yet a child, to regret his lameness as a curse—a Cain's mark. One day, stung by the consciousness of their narrow circumstances, she would vent her wretchedness of heart upon her son, and on the next, feed a spirit no less haughty and quick, though finer, than her own, with tales of his ancestry, not a few of which were as darkly fascinating as any romance. Byron was, indeed, sent by her to school; but, at least during their residence at Aberdeen, his masters appear to have been wholly incompetent to manage a boy who was "always more ready to give a blow than to take one," and more anxious to distinguish himself by prowess in all sports and exercises, than by advancement in learning, and who further manifested the precocity of his passions, at the age of eight years, by seriously (he tells us) falling in love with a little girl, Mary Duff. While he was busily making his court, her lesser sister sat by "*playing with the doll.*"

It was in the year 1798, that the death of the last intermediate heir to Newstead placed Byron in possession of a title and an estate. The self-consciousness already implanted in him by a morbid sense of personal deformity, and the strange passion just mentioned, was now to be increased by a further change in his position—a change, though sudden, not unforeseen; for his mother, we are told, had always cherished a strong persuasion "that he was not only to be a lord, but a great man also." But his lot was made up of contrasts; his new possessions descended to him encumbered with the heavy drawbacks of debt and disorder. He was to be a lord, the possessor of fair and ancient domains, without the means of adequately maintaining his dignity. Here was a new influence, perhaps the strongest to disturb and embitter, to which a boy's mind can be subjected; and yet this was to gain an ascendancy over him, in addition to, not in place of, those already pointed out. The torments to which he was subjected under the hands of the Nottingham quack, Lavender, and the discipline he underwent when subsequently placed under Dr. Glennie's care—and, yet more, the dreadful taunts of his mother, forbade him to forget that he was

> "not made like other creatures,
> To share their sports or pleasures;—"

while his childish love-fancies were revived by his second passion for his cousin Margaret Parker, the remembrance of which, be it noted, called forth the earliest display of his poetical powers; for it was upon her death that his first verses were written, unless we are to count his doggrel denunciation against the "curst old lady," who "lived at Swan Green," among the poems of his boyhood.

The next step in the development of Byron's mind was made by his removal to Harrow. We must, in alluding to this, dwell upon the earnestness of his school friendships, which, to use his own words, "with him were always *passions.*" No one can forget the numerous illustrative passages which give so much life and heart to Byron's letters; his deep-felt sorrow at the death of his *protégé*, Eddlestone, the chorister; his resolution to make a collection of the portraits of his school and college-mates before he went abroad; and his burst of indignation at the lukewarm friend who refused to pass a parting hour with him, because he was engaged to go upon a shopping expedition. This earnestness of Byron, alas! tended only to make the experiences of time and change, the losses and disappointment which every one *must* prove, doubly dreary and blanking; and we find him, accordingly, early possessed with, or at least *professing* the

conviction that an evil fate was to attend all his hopes and friendships. This conviction was seriously riveted upon his mind, by the irrevocable termination of his first real attachment. Who has not by heart the story of his unrequited love to Miss Chaworth, the sequel to "those six short summer weeks spent in her company?"—who, that has ever dreamed or felt, has not, with "thoughts that lie too deep for tears," hung over that most sadly impressive of all confessions, "The Dream," a poem which has connected the antique and mouldering hall of Annesley with far tenderer and more melancholy associations than the far-famed Paraclete or the rocks of Meillerie!

Thus proud, poor, passionate—instinct with genius, of which, as yet, he felt rather than had proved himself to be possessed, Byron was removed to Trinity College, Cambridge, in October, 1805. Though he subsequently wrote of this change, as one which made him heavy-hearted, "to feel that he was no longer a boy," the five following years were not the least happy, nor, though thriftlessly wasted, the most unprofitable ones of his life; for, in spite of the confession just quoted, we cannot but feel that till Byron went abroad, he enjoyed, and erred from, that tumultuous superabundance of animal spirits, which is either wasted out or reasoned into subjection before the period of manhood may be rightly said to commence. He read (not studied) with a boyish eagerness; with a boyish enthusiasm drew round him a circle of lively companions, to whom the whim of the moment was their only law; spending his vacations among the sociable and sensible inhabitants of Southwell, where his mother was then residing, a fine, or frank-spoken, or petulant drawing-room hero, as the mood seized him; or revelling in the Fives Court and club-house life of London; and writing of its delights and dissipations with the paraded indifference of one with whom it was no new thing "to hear the chimes at midnight." That, in the course of a youth so spent, Byron's genius was not wholly driven out, is, in itself, a proof of the more than ordinary measure in which it had been vouchsafed to him. He seems at first to have tried his hand at verse-making, without any peculiar vigour of purpose or interest, as the "Hours of Idleness," which appeared in 1807, abundantly testify; for though we now read them by the light of his after-glories, we can but discern in them the germ of future greatness, by permitting our imagination to quicken our eyes; and must admit that there was nothing to excite attention to them, on their first appearance, beyond the title of their author. This it was, at least, which attracted the notice and awakened the spleen of the "Edinburgh Review."

The most flippant or malevolent of critics is rarely without his use to the really gifted, whether as exciting in opposition the energies of the latter, or as laying bare faults which self-love and flattering friends are too apt to hide. But few of the stale pleasantries ever vented by wanton or malicious judges, ever produced effects so disproportionate as the sarcasms contained in that far-famed article. It is difficult in these days of critical abusiveness and trickery, to sympathize with the indignation excited in the young and noble poet by a cause so unworthy. There was something mock-heroic in his rage, and in the deliberation with which he distilled his resentment, for so many months, ere he poured it forth —a stream of concentrated bile—on the astonished and recoiling herd of poets and their patrons. But if his passion appeared causelessly violent in the eyes of others, it was to himself righteous and cogent as a motive. Had the criticism in question never appeared, Byron might have trifled on as a poetaster for some half a dozen years longer, might have turned his energy into other channels more suited to his rank and fortunes. As it was, having once spoken, it was *impossible* for him henceforward to be silent: the fountain being once unsealed, was not to be closed again. The "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" startled the town in the month of March, 1809; and in the same month Byron took his seat in the House of Lords, a lonely and unwelcomed stranger; and at Midsummer,

wearied, if not worn out by self-indulgence, excited by the sensation his satire had created, and harassed by his entangled fortunes, set forth on his travels.

The second of the three periods into which Byron's life divides itself was illustrated by the appearing of the two first cantos of "Childe Harold," "the Bride of Abydos," "the Giaour," "the Corsair," "Parisina," and "the Siege of Corinth," besides a host of minor poems. During these years his passions and his powers had proceeded rapidly in their simultaneous course. As the first grew more diseasedly active—more habitual and less impulsive—the second, in proportion, became stronger. In his journey through Turkey and Greece he had looked upon Nature in her fairest forms, but with a spirit already distempered, indisposed to be healed by the ministration of her

> "soft influences,
> Her sunny hues, fair forms, and breathing sweets,
> Her melodies of woods, and winds, and waters!"

He had mixed with men but as an actor—not an observer. And every day which had enlarged his treasury of poetical imagery, had also added a line to that lesson of disappointment, which even those least disposed to gloom and sadness *must* get by heart ere they know the world. Hence it was that in place of a common traveller's journal, the two first cantos of "Childe Harold" found themselves on paper: for that Byron regarded this poem as little more than a private record of passing emotions, is proved by the small estimation in which he held it, compared with his "Hints from Horace," and his indifference to its publication. But, inasmuch as, even in diaries and journals, the imaginative are prone to dramatize and to exaggerate their real sensations, we cannot but think that Byron, in the two first cantos of "Childe Harold," in some measure anticipated that dreary satiety and bitterness of spirit, whose real coming gave birth to "Manfred," and "Cain," and "Don Juan." The tales, too, which followed, so delicious in the flow and fire of their verse, are more romantic in their sadness—less poignantly individual than the works which were produced after his second and final departure from England.

But the life which Byron led in the years while his fame was young, was sure to urge him fast towards the springs of extremest bitterness. He awoke one morning, and found himself famous—seated on the throne which Scott had filled with so artless and generous a manliness; beset with almost delirious admiration; circled in society by those whom a *comparison of his own mind with the dwarfish intellects which surrounded him,* bade him scorn and despise, even while they crouched at his bidding, and he drunk in the sweet breath of their flatteries. His personal beauty, his rank, the rumours of his adventures in foreign lands, enhanced the fascinations of his new and seducing genius, and, for a while, opened to him opportunities for indulgence and triumph, of which he availed himself with all the recklessness of his uncurbed nature: while each new intrigue, each new adventure, added to the heap of distrust and sarcasm which was silently accumulating in his mind—widened, imperceptibly, the gulf between himself and his fellow-men, of whom, in their strength, and purity, and self-denial, he knew nothing. But he was too much of a poet to dwindle down into a mere creature of the London world; and hence, was always startling his companions by some outbreak beyond the bounds of their curiously-framed code of morals, or some flash of his generosity and affection as sudden as it was unfashionable. For a time these eccentricities were tolerated, nay, cherished as charming: but the sequel was inevitable. Iconoclasm *must* always succeed to idol-worship.

A few short feverish years were soon spent, when, satiated with praise and popularity, weary of running the round of loves where love was not, Byron began to admit that some

remedy was necessary for his disordered fortunes and jaded spirits. A female friend, more sanguine than judicious, recommended marriage; and the poet, faithless alike of the efficacy of any prescription, had no objection to try the nostrum recommended. Such, with, perhaps, one lurking grain of fancy and curiosity in the back ground, generated by the contrast between the lady upon whom the lot fell and his more brilliant female friends, appears to have been the plain history of his proposal to Miss Milbanke. In an evil hour this was accepted, and the two were married on the 2nd of January, 1815. For a month or two Byron seems to have tried to play at domestic happiness, as if this could be put on at a moment's warning, like the blue coat in which he had resolved that he would not go through the ceremony! The lady, too, had reckoned without her host, who united her fortunes to his in the hopes of that serenity and mutual confidence which attend nuptials less distinguished; but she may have been dazzled, if not by the brightness of his fame, by the smaller, but yet more delusive, glimmer of the fancy that *she*

"—knew the charm to make him meek and tame."

It required but a few months of increased despondency and fitfulness on the part of the husband,—on the part of the wife of silent and unreproachful patience,—of executions at home, and the Drury Lane Committee abroad, to break the knot so inauspiciously tied. But absolutely nothing is still known of the real causes which led to the final separation;—to Lady Byron's departure at a time when her lord's fortunes were at their lowest,—and to her unbroken resolution of thenceforth uttering no word which should confirm or absolve him from charges which were flung upon his name with all the violence of execration; for the public had become weary of being dragged at the poet's chariot wheels wherever he pleased. Some had begun to awaken from the intoxication into which he had charmed them, and they now chose in turn to compel and to sentence. Those too, in private, who had ministered most largely to his follies and licences, if not by participation, by the indirect stimulus of surprise, or faint remonstrance, now shrunk back from him, as if he had brought, rather than imbibed, a pestilence among them. His position was precisely calculated to call forth all his energies; he stood on it as upon a vantage ground; his pride rising to his assistance, and supporting him in the face of the storm, as strongly as if he had been stainless—the sinned against and not the sinning:—and forbidding him for an instant to own that his

"hopes sapp'd, name blighted, life's life lied away"

were the inevitable retribution which all must suffer, who not only err, but also revel in error. He had made the world fear as much as love him—the false sympathy which his works had excited, could not but be followed by reaction. But there was something wonderful, almost admirable, in the manner in which the man called the poet to his aid, and wrung unwilling homage from his detractors, even when their cry was loudest, by appeals breathing a pathos, a passion, a deep wretchedness, which few could resist, even while perceiving that the very publicity with which they were uttered, proved them to be in some wise artificial and imaginative. He then left England, with the step and look of one unjustly persecuted, to return to it no more!

The poems which belong to the third period of Byron's life, and are included between the 25th of April, 1816, when he left England, and the month of July, 1823, when he withdrew from Italy to Greece, illustrate, yet more vividly than their predecessors, the truth of Shelley's character of the poet, who had now reached the summit of his powers—for he was more undividedly under the dominion of his passions than at any earlier period. "The

silent rages" of his infancy, then only occasionally excited, had eaten into his heart, and coloured its every thought; the desires of his youth had ceased to furnish delight, but had woven a chain round him too strong to be laid aside. The sense of persecution and injustice on the part of his countrymen, the constant wish to maintain his poetical empire, *in spite* of their disapprobation and reproach,—more than all, the impassive silence of her from whom he had so lately parted, furnished him with an untiring spring of energy, and implanted in him the resolved purpose of piling

——— "on human heads the mountain of his curse."

And though there were moments when, raised above, or charmed out of, himself by the contemplation of Nature, or by the associations of by-gone days, he could paint other feelings or features than his own, this spirit—how feverish and false in its strength!—may be traced through all Byron's subsequent poems; whether he muses with Childe Harold on

"the place of sculls,
The grave of France, the deadly Waterloo,"

or stands "in Venice on the bridge of sighs," or closes his pilgrimage, mocking at man's nothingness, by the side of the "deep and dark blue ocean;" whether he kindles with the wrongs of Marino Faliero—or gives a speech to the doubts and discontent of the first murderer, or with Anah and Aholibamah, and their seraph lovers, beholds the approach of overwhelming doom and destruction—there is a leaven of negation and bitterness, far more pervading than runs through the works of the poet's youth. At times, as in "Manfred," a withering voice of misery, piercing enough to stir the ashes of the dead, will have way—at times, as in "Sardanapalus," the poet would argue the question between passion and reason, and prove the philosophy of the former to be the best. But it is remarkable to observe throughout his course of passion, apparently so spontaneous and inevitable, how stedfastly the eyes of the exile were fixed on England—how, when he most seemed to scorn them, he was most eager in keeping alive his name in the hearts of his countrymen: whether he girt himself for controversy with Mr. Bowles in defence of "the little nightingale of Twickenham," or whether he met Mr. Southey's criticisms with philippics no less severely unjust—or whether, in an hour of defiance, he steeped himself in the licences of his Venetian career—orgies of which it was necessary he should partake, ere his mind could become capable of conceiving and executing his last and greatest work, the "Don Juan"—ere he could learn to regard every affection which ennobles, every desire which debases our nature, with equal indifference—ere, out of habit, rather than purpose, he could trifle, with equal levity, with the nobleness and the uncleanness of the human heart, and holding up each in turn with a master's hand to the gaze of mankind, turn round and exclaim,—not sadly but laughingly,—"All is vanity!"

From these last excesses, too late, however, to call him back in his poetical career, Byron was redeemed by his connection with Madame Guiccioli. We can trace its influence in his works; in the "more love" which he found it necessary to infuse into his "Sardanapalus," in the decent veil which he consented to throw over the latter cantos of "Don Juan." It is questionable whether he could have been reclaimed to the use of his poetical powers at the expense of his passions, by a sincere and *holy* affection: this was not of the number—the chain, whether real or imagined, which bound him to England, was not yet broken: and while "the stranger" did suit and service, *par amours*, to the "lady of the land," his mind was still vexed by yearnings half-wistful, half self-reproachful, towards "Ada, sole daughter of his house and heart;" and the silence of her for the sake of whose handwriting he could treasure up a common household book, was a counter-influence as strong as, if not stronger

than, the blue eyes and the flowing hair of the enchantress of Ravenna. For ourselves we cannot imagine that the mind, the child of whose maturity was "Don Juan," could either proceed further or retrace its steps: and we find that during its progress Byron began to speak of poetry as not being his real vocation; and that his latest productions, the "Island," and the "Deformed Transformed," (excepting in the latter the splendid Chorus of Spirits above the walls of Rome,) exhibit something of the feebleness, if not the decrepitude of the children of decay and old age. While he still continued weaving the many-coloured web of "Don Juan," other thoughts began to possess him. The same better angel as suggested to him the creation of Aurora Raby in its last Canto, and as wakened him, by a touch of natural feeling, to engage in that exquisite description of the home of his fathers, over which he lingers like a lover, possessed him also with a scarcely understood wish to retrieve himself—called into action the love of liberty which had always been a predominating trait in his character, and turned to good account that capricious avarice whose growth he had encouraged in his eagerness to prove a new sensation. He conversed with Carbonari, and befriended the persecuted and unpopular; entered into correspondence with the Greek Committee, and placed himself and his fortune at their service. The day of his poetry we think was done: but a better day was commencing—of his exertions as a man in the cause of truth and freedom. This was, alas! cut short, as in the grey of the morning, by his melancholy death, of a weary heart, and a shattered constitution, which took place at Missolonghi on the 19th of April, 1824.

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

It happens but seldom that the fruits of scholarship and learning are widely spread and graciously accepted among the general public *at first hand;* inasmuch as it requires no small measure of the poet's fine taste, genial sympathy, and enchantments of style to select from among the fruit of the student's and antiquarian's researches, what shall interest the many; or to present such matter, when selected, in a form which shall be striking or admirable. And few of the sons of genius have possessed the inclination or attained to the self-discipline of maturing their powers and widening their circle of knowledge, by diligent and arduous study. As an instance of this rare union of poet and scholar Dr. Southey stands pre-eminent among his contemporaries. Few have laboured in the cause of literature more ceaselessly or with greater earnestness: few have laboured so well. He will as surely be remembered in future days as *the* biographer of the period just past, as Sir Walter Scott will be known for its prime minister of Fiction!

Dr. Southey was born on the 12th of August, 1774, in Wine Street, Bristol. That he feels an honest pride in having raised himself by his talents to his present position, some of his writings testify: but with what a manly and affectionate simplicity he looks back to the days of his infancy, and speaks of his origin, may be seen in the following fragment of a letter addressed to Doctor Adam Clarke. "Twelve months ago," says he, "I passed three days at Bristol, where I had not been for twenty years before. I went into my father's shop, and requested leave to go into his house, and into the room where my cradle had been rocked. I went also to Bedminster, where my mother was born, and where, in her mother's house, the happiest days of my childhood had been passed, and requested leave to go in. The house had been re-modelled, and the gardens laid out in the manner of these times. I recognized nothing as it had been, except a few trees which my uncles and my grandfather had planted."*

A great part of Dr. Southey's childhood was passed at Bath, under the care of his mother's half-sister. When about six years of age, he was sent to school, being in the first instance placed with Mr. Foote, a Baptist minister; subsequently at a boarding-school at Corston, near Newton, St. Loo, kept by a Mr. Flower; thence, to his great comfort, after a year's residence, brought home again, and handed over to the tuition of Mr. William Williams, a Welchman, from whom little scholarship was to be got; from him transferred

* The rest of the letter is so thoroughly characteristic, that we cannot forbear adding it in a note.

"At my good old friend, Joseph Cottle's, I saw an excellent likeness of Charles Fox, his sitting for which I well remember. It ought to be preserved as the remarkable countenance of a very amiable and remarkable man. I have profiles of himself and his wife, and of the parrot of which they were both so fond; the human likenesses taken by Cottle, and reduced by a pentagraph; the bird sportively cut by him on the same evening. I have also a drawing of the bridge at Almaraz, over the Tagus, made by Fox, from a sketch which I brought from the spot: and I have his card as bookseller at Falmouth. Upon the feeling which induces one to preserve such things, what a superstructure have superstition and knavery erected!"

ROBERT SOUTHEY

to the care of a private tutor; and, lastly, removed by his uncle, Mr. Hill, to Westminster, in the spring of 1788. To this list of the places in which he received his education may be added a brief notice of Dr. Southey's early studies out of school, extracted from a delightful letter recently published in the Autobiography of Sir Egerton Brydges.

"From very early boyhood, when I first read the 'Arcadia,' in Mrs. Stanley's modernization of it, Sydney took possession of my imagination. Not that I liked the book the better, just in proportion as she had worsened it, for his own language would have presented nothing strange or difficult to me who had read Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, as soon as I could understand enough of them to follow the story of their plays. * * * Spenser afterwards increased my veneration for Sydney, and Penshurst, when I first saw it (in 1791), was the holiest ground I had ever visited."

Late in the year 1792, Dr. Southey entered Baliol College, Oxford, where he remained during the following twelvemonth, and part of the year 1794: but his peculiar opinions, which at that time in politics were fiercely Jacobinical, and in religion more than tended towards Socinianism, made his entrance of the Church of England as a minister impossible; and for this he had been designed. His academic career was accordingly closed by him; "the world was now all before him where to choose." In the winter of 1794, he put forth his first poems; a small volume published in conjunction with Mr. Robert Lovell, under the names of Moschus and Bion. Mr. Lovell, it will be remembered, sharing the enthusiastic liberalism of his friend, was one of the band who, being resolved to emancipate themselves from the intolerable and corrupted institutions of a worn-out country "nodding to its fall," in the boyish fullness and folly of zeal without judgment, originated the short-lived Pantisocracy scheme. It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that Mr. Coleridge was another of those embarked in the enterprise, so often have the plan in question and the names of those concerned in it been revived from the dust, and brought forward as an engine of party annoyance for the confusion of those whose opinions (following the law of the pendulum) have since become as conservative as they were then democratic. Dr. Southey shall himself speak of the spirit and purpose which actuated him during this period, and which were uttered in his first published poems.

"In my youth," says he, writing to Mr. William Smith, "when my stock of knowledge consisted of such an acquaintance with Greek and Roman history as is acquired in the course of a scholastic education, when my heart was full of poetry and romance, and Lucan and Akenside were at my tongue's end, I fell into the political opinions which the French Revolution was then scattering throughout Europe; and, following those opinions with ardour wherever they led, I soon perceived that inequalities of rank were a light evil compared to the inequalities of property, and those more fearful distinctions which the want of moral and intellectual culture occasions between man and man. At that time and with those opinions or rather feelings (for their root was in the heart and not in the understanding), I wrote 'Wat Tyler,' as one who was impatient of all the oppressions that are done under the sun. The subject was injudiciously chosen, and it was treated as might be expected by a youth of twenty, in such times, who regarded only one side of the question. * * * Were I now to dramatize the same story there would be much to add, but little to alter. * * * I should write as a man, not as a stripling; with the same heart and the same desires, but with a ripened understanding and competent stores of knowledge." Dr. Southey further thus characterizes his own minor poems of the same date, as expressing "an enthusiastic love of liberty, a detestation of tyranny wherever it exists and in whatever form, an ardent abhorrence of all wicked ambition, and a sympathy, not less ardent, with all those who were engaged in war for the defence of their country, and in a righteous cause; feelings just as well as generous, in themselves." His antagonists (in

his early days his partizans), he adds, "might have perceived also frequent indications, that in the opinion of the youthful writer a far happier system of society was possible than any under which mankind are at present existing, or have ever existed since the patriarchal ages, and no equivocal aspirations after such a stage." * * * "From building castles in the air," continues Dr. Southey in a subsequent paragraph, "to framing commonwealths, was an easy transition; and in the hope of accomplishing this I forsook the course of life for which I had been designed, and the prospects of advancement which, I may say without presumption, were within my reach. My purpose was to retire with a few friends into the wilds of America, and there lay the foundations of a community upon what we believed to be the political system of Christianity. It matters not in what manner this vision was dissolved." To this passage there need only be added, in taking leave of the subject, that the complete change which Dr. Southey's opinions have undergone, between the publication of "Joan of Arc" and the "Vision of Judgment," has not influenced in the least his manner of expression. The same fervour of temperament which made him contemplate an exchange of the banks of the Isis for those of the Susquehannah, has always guided his pen, whether in answering Lord Byron's bitter verse with bitterer prose,—whether in fighting for Church and State with visor up or visor down. He is, as he was then, too thoroughly in earnest to be deliberate and smooth, or always even courteous in his antagonism. Let this fact be allowed its full weight, as an evidence of sincerity, by those who, themselves one-sided, regard all changes of opinion as being of necessity corrupt, and leading to corruption.

To return from this necessary digression to the few further notices of Dr. Southey's life permitted to us:—in November, 1795, the Pantisocracy scheme having been abandoned for want of funds, the poet married Miss Fricker, the sister of the lady with whom Coleridge united himself. In the winter of the same year, while its author was on his way to Lisbon, through Madrid, was published his "Joan of Arc." In the following summer he returned to Bristol; in the subsequent year he removed to London, and entered Gray's Inn:—paying a second visit to Portugal in the year 1800, for the recovery of his health. In the year 1801 Dr. Southey returned to England; and a biographical notice before us, gives it as the date of his also going to Ireland, as private secretary to Mr. Foster. In the year 1802, however, he was again at Bristol; and upon the death of his first child, being urged to visit Mr. Coleridge, who was then residing in the Lake country, he set up his rest at Keswick, where he has since continued to reside, producing, with little intermission, that varied and extensive series of works, an enumeration of which must be presently attempted,—year by year adding to his friendships among the worthy and the gifted, and collecting a library, "more ample perhaps," to quote his own words, "than was ever before possessed by one whose sole estate was in his inkstand." To the above notices, it may be added, that upon the death of Pye, in the year 1813, Dr. Southey was promoted to the vacant Laureateship, which had been first so honourably declined by Scott, and that in the year 1821 he received his Doctor's degree. We happen to know, too, that a seat in Parliament, and a Baronetcy, have been both, at different times, offered to his acceptance, and both of them declined.

We have now to count up the poems of Dr. Southey, in addition to those already mentioned, and the "Annual Anthology," of which he was editor and principal contributor. The first of these is the "Thalaba" (published 1803); then follow a volume of Metrical Tales (in 1804)—"Madoc," (1805)—"The Curse of Kehama," (1810)—"Carmen Triumphale," as the Laureate Odes (1814)—"Roderick, the Last of the Goths" (1814), and subsequently, the "Vision of Judgment," above mentioned—a difficult subject, and made more difficult by its writer having attempted to naturalize a classical measure, the

English language lending itself most unwillingly to the process. The list of Dr. Southey's poems is, we believe, completed by the mention of "All for Love," and the "Pilgrim of Compostella," published not many years since;—of his fugitive and minor pieces it would be vain to attempt a list.

Though the opinion has been already ventured, that the name of the Laureate will live principally in connection with his prose works, the distinct and high excellences of his poems are not to be passed over. Though in few and feeble words, we must point to the simplicity and feeling of his domestic pieces; there is a plain, searching, but not vulgar truth in his eclogues, which places them by the side of Crabbe's most forcible and finished cabinet pictures,—a quaintness, a credulity, and a humour in his ballads, especially in those of witchcraft and monkery, which belong to one steeped in the spirit of ancient tradition. Again, in his more elaborate works, how rich is their diction, and how superior in its richness to the cumbrous and false pomp of some of his predecessors, who have attempted the epic,—of some of his contemporaries, who have tried to make the supernatural and the mythological impressive, by smothering their fancies in a confusion of "purple and gold language." But it must be remarked, that this *moderation* and stateliness of manner, this chasteness of imagination, even where it colours most gorgeously and soars highest—this *brocade* flow of the draperies worn by his muse, which arrange themselves in broad and ample, rather than easy and pliant folds,—characteristics superinduced, perhaps, by the fusion in his mind of the riches of many literatures—give a certain heaviness to his epics as well as to his more fancifully imagined legends. He is impressive and dignified;—though often tender, rarely, if ever, passionate.

The same characteristics may be traced as pervading, though more lightly, many of Dr. Southey's prose writings: but in these they are felt to be a beauty rather than a blemish. The works in question are so voluminous and varied in subject, that a mere enumeration of each would occupy the space which must be allotted to an attempt to characterize them generally. Dr. Southey's range embraces history, biography, essays critical, antiquarian, and philosophical, to say nothing of his many labours as a translator and an editor. In all of these he is entitled to respect; in many he has attained to high excellence. His writings, on the whole, may be said to gratify and instruct, rather than command the reader. Their tone is equable in the main, the effect being sought rather in the abundant variety of the matter, which a ripe learning enables him to bestow on the illustration of his subject, than in bold transitions, or views startlingly original. His eloquence (and he is eloquent when the theme demands it) is stately and copious rather than rapid; the utterance of feelings habitually cherished, and not the offspring of sudden impulse. On polemical questions in politics and theology he is, indeed, sufficiently vehement; but these form an exception to the prevailing character of his writings. At other times they display a continual vein of generous and amiable feeling,—of reflection, alternately quaint, ingenious, or dignified; a reverence for whatever is august in the literature, traditions, or institutions of ancient times; and a familiar acquaintance, beyond all contemporary attainment, with the whole compass of letters. While he is engaged in the calm pursuits of literary speculation, in commemorating deceased excellence, in tracing the legends of other times, or in displaying any worthy and elevated theme, he wins the affections of his reader, whom he alternately amuses or excites. And on turning from this class of works to those in which he appears as a party writer, the pain with which we observe the totally different character they present, is increased by the regard we have already learned to entertain. This is a subject upon which, as

admirers of the author, we do not willingly dwell; but truth requires that it should be distinctly noticed.

Of all Dr. Southey's works, his biographies stand the foremost. He has enriched our literature in a department where it was the poorest, with two works, at least, which have already become classical—the Lives, namely, of Nelson and Wesley; to which may be added his latest work, the biography of Cowper. In these he leaves the reader nothing to desire. His narrative is clear, and enhanced with details interesting and nicely proportioned; the prominence of the main subject is well preserved, and the style warms into eloquence, or flows on in unaffected ease, as the matter in hand may require. He is especially happy in description and in the art of engaging the reader's sympathies on behalf of his subject; his reflections are gracefully introduced and apposite, and he is never flat or overstrained. Indeed a combination of practised skill, genial feeling, and thorough preparation renders Dr. Southey's biographies the most delightful of his works, and equal, if not superior, to any other in our literature.

Of his historical works, "The History of Brazil" is, we believe, its author's own favourite; and it is excellent for the earnest and engaging manner in which it is written, and for the tokens it displays of learned research in a field rarely trodden. Though its subject is not one of general interest, and the work, therefore, is one more likely to be occasionally consulted than eagerly read, there are episodes and individual passages to which we may return again and again for the mere pleasure of the moment. "The History of the Peninsular War" must be classed among Dr. Southey's polemical works, in spite of its style, and eloquence, and many scattered passages of exceeding beauty.

Passing the "Colloquies of Sir Thomas More," in which their author is exhibited under all his various aspects—a work largely sown with passages of a most thoughtful and placid beauty—passing, too, his "Omniana," in which delightful collection of scattered thoughts and subjects for thought, he was assisted by his friend Coleridge, we must not omit to notice, however briefly, Dr. Southey's attempts (born, perhaps, of his two Peninsular journeys) to introduce to modern readers the romantic traditions of Spain and the chivalrous prose epics of a former age. His prose paraphrases of the poems of the Cid, and of the renowned Amadis, and Palmerin of England, will be always precious and delightful to those who have an ear for the accents of old, while their illustrations contain a treasury of valuable matter for the curious; and it is impossible to praise too highly the success with which the author has caught and transfused into his own language the very spirit of these magnificent fables. We are bound, too, to insist upon the valuable service he has rendered in his "Book of the Church," and other of his essays, in pointing to the much-neglected riches of our elder divines, whom he has frequented with affectionate reverence. And we are indebted to the peculiar temper of his mind, which seems most powerfully attracted by all that has the prescription of antiquity, for many other treasures, which he has disinterred from the dust to which they have been too carelessly relinquished. It is impossible here to do justice to the translations and revivals of other authors, or to the various literary and critical essays which have proceeded from the same source. It must not, however, be forgotten, that the "Quarterly Review" was long indebted for many of its most prominent articles to Dr. Southey, and it may be added, that his pen, while it is copious beyond all precedence, is never careless.

More, much more, could be added; we could descant, and not unprofitably, upon the excellences of Dr. Southey's style, in which he combines the raciness of our ancient mother English with the polish of later refinement and scholarship; but ere the present notice be closed, we are bound to advert with just regard to the manner in which its subject has worn the title of a professed man of letters. Whatever be the feeling

with respect to certain opinions and tendencies, all must contemplate with sincere respect the tenor of a life wholly devoted to genial study and constant literary exertion, the aim and end of which has been mainly the production of such works as should take their permanent station in the higher walks of literature. We love him, too, for the sympathy he has shown towards struggling poets—towards the early called and the uneducated; witness his "Life of Kirke White," and not a few other notices and prefaces, which he has generously affixed to the works of others infinitely less worthy of public favour. If some of those who have been brought forward under the protection of his name may not possess genius enough to have merited such protection, and we are led to smile at the unequal association, our smile is of kindliness and not of sarcasm. The condition on which Benevolence and Charity walk the earth, is that they be occasionally led astray.

[Reluctantly do we raise the curtain upon the last scene in the life of Southey. Even while the preceding lines were being written, the shadows of evening had begun to close around the poet. Southey was through life a laborious scholar. Despite his great powers of invention, it had become his habit to build all the creations of his genius upon a foundation of recondite learning. Instead of pouring the precious ore of wisdom and poetry, as he might have done, spontaneously from his own rich fancy, he sought with harassing toil for precious thoughts buried in the musty and forgotten pages of monkish divines, of old Dutch jurists, and Spanish chroniclers. In such places he certainly did discover gems; but gems which could only be recognized as such when placed in the setting of the English poet, and worked into shape by the *labor limæ*. But it was not for a poet, over whom old age was creeping, to continue this life of solitary labour. The works of Southey became fewer, they lacked the lustre of former days, and they necessarily proved unsuccessful. He had never pandered to popular tastes. A *laudator temporis acti*, he had at all times denounced the utilitarian spirit of his age, and waged a hopeless strife with that surging tide of progress, into which a writer must plunge if he means to live by authorship. His mode of writing and his opinions entailed upon him a perpetual struggle with poverty. When Sir Robert Peel made Southey the offer of a baronetcy, referred to in the preceding memoir, he supposed that the Laureate, like many of his contemporaries, had made a fortune by literature. When the true state of the case was explained, a correspondence ensued between the poet and the statesman, which is alike honourable to both. It resulted in a pension of £300 a year, in lieu of the baronetcy. This augmentation of income relieved many pressing cares, and Southey, looking forward to an old age of leisure and affluence, married a second time, the alliance being contracted with Miss Bowles, an accomplished authoress, who had long been one of his dearest friends. Domestic comfort seemed in store for him. But alas! how illusory are all human hopes! the change had come too late, the stout worker had toiled beyond his strength. The gnawing cares of poverty, the fatigue of solitary study, had undermined his health, and he fell a prey to disease more terrible than death. His bright eye was quenched, his frame shrank, his old flow of spirits dried up, his memory became confused, he lost all power of connecting his ideas, and at last he sank into a state of painless imbecility—never interrupted, during four long years, by one lucid glance into the past. Well it was that he was spared the pain! At length, with the spring of 1843, death came, with relief from the thraldom of disease.

Southey was buried in the church of Crossthwaite, where a recumbent statue, one of the masterpieces of a celebrated sculptor, fittingly records the admiration of the judicious few for a great scholar, who, already recognized as one of the truest and purest spirits of his age, will yet take a loftier place than has hitherto been conceded him among the prose writers and thinkers of England, when the passions he evoked shall have subsided, and the popular creeds, against which he fought so manfully, shall have died away.]

THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.

Our neighbours on the French side of the Channel have been used to plume themselves something immoderately upon their supremacy in that branch of authorship which sends forth sparkling thoughts, sage experiences, characteristic anecdotes, in the *deshabille* of letters, or memorials, or journals; or, if they be wrought up into more substantial forms, still presents them graced with such wit and pleasantry as belong to the world of society, rather than to the world of books. To confine ourselves to the better half of creation,—if our brethren (rivals no more) possess their Sévignés, Du Deffands, De Staäls, is not ours the shrewd, sparkling Montagu, the beloved and satirized of Pope,—equally graphic in her chronicles of court intrigues and of modes of attire;—equally pleasant, whether she set herself to describe the rebellious peeresses trying to force an entrance into the House of Lords, or to discuss Turkish cymars and girdles, and "the famous balm of Mecca," with the inquisitive and foolish Lady Rich? Had we not Lady Suffolk and Lady Hervey, whose names, as some one or other has fantastically said, "are casketed in the amber pages of Horace the inimitable"? And coming down to later days,—when Literature began to organize coteries for the women as well as clubs for the men,—had we not the lively Thrale, as sweet-tempered as she was lively, witness her delicious "O the dear good man!" her sharpest recorded reply to the tyrannical rudeness of Johnson? And had we not a second Montagu, less brilliant, indeed, than *the* Wortley, and Miss More,—Garrick's "*Nine*," and Walpole's "holy Hannah,"—and the Lady of Lichfield, Anna Seward, each and all of whom could sometimes "come out of their fine language," and come down from their stilts, and write and talk with a winning and easy sprightliness? And had we not Miss Burney, in society the shyest of the shy, but on paper bold enough to hit off the humours of the Brangtons and the *fadaises* of Lovel, or with a pen yet finer and freer, to describe in her artless letters to Daddy Crisp, the peculiarities of the remarkable men and women by whom she was surrounded? The list, here carelessly strung together, is sufficiently distinguished; and were we but to lengthen it by the names of contemporaries, and descant upon the thought embellished by fancy—upon the grace, lively "*sans tachant d'etre vif*," which gives, as it were, much of its elegance and perfume to our modern English literature, we could make it sparkle yet brighter. We must, however, be contented with singling out one from among many; and that one shall be the Countess of Blessington.

In the mention of one, happily for us, yet living, too circumstantial an enumeration of Nature's fairy gifts,—especially when these have been already celebrated by the choicest artists and most distinguished writers of the day—would become an indiscreet and superfluous personality. Thus, too, a few words may suffice to tell that Lady Blessington is of Irish origin, being the eldest daughter of Edmund Power, Esq., late of Curragheen, county Waterford; that, before she had completed her fifteenth year, she was married to St. Leger Farmer, Esq., a captain in the 47th Regiment; that in the year 1817, she became a widow, and, on the 16th of February in the following year, contracted a second marriage with

RICHARD GRIFFIN & Co LONDON & GLASGOW

Charles John Gardiner, Earl of Blessington. After passing the first years of their married life in London, and drawing round them a brilliant circle of the most distinguished statesmen, poets, and wits of the day, Lord and Lady Blessington made an extended tour on the Continent, which included a six years' residence in Italy, here again attracting to their table all who were distinguished and gifted, whether strangers or residents. It would be impossible not to particularize among these Lord Byron, to a daily intercourse with whom at Genoa we owe the "Conversations,"—the last picture of the poet which has been given to the world, and assuredly not the least true. In the year 1828, on their return from Italy, Lord and Lady Blessington took up their residence in Paris, in the splendid Hotel of Maréchal Ney, Rue de Bourdon. In the May of the following year Lady Blessington became a second time a widow, and after a melancholy sojourn in the French metropolis, returned to London, where she has since continued to reside, the grace and ornament of the literary world.

With this second London residence, Lady Blessington entered the career of authorship by publishing the "Conversations with Lord Byron." These have been rapidly succeeded by "The Repealers," the "Two Friends," "The Confessions of an Elderly Gentleman," (a book in which the *finesse* and polish of Marmontel are closely approached,) "The Victims of Society," besides a host of elegant and simple verses, contributed to the more ephemeral illustrated publications edited by her. In the pages of this series of works no small similarity may be traced between the peculiar fortunes and talents of their writer and those of the gifted women mentioned awhile since, with whose names hers will be associated in future days. Like Lady Mary Wortley Montague she enjoyed such opportunities of studying continental society as are only attained under the passport of rank, and wealth, and beauty: —witness the vivid and humorous picture of life as it was in the Faubourg Saint Germain in the "Two Friends." Like the ladies commemorated by Walpole, she has lived in intimate acquaintance with the leading political men of her day. But the spirit of the times has changed—and whereas the Herveys and Suffolks were intriguers, dabblers in appointments and places, and never "drank their tea without a stratagem," our Countess of the nineteenth century confines her politics to paper, and writes "The Repealers." Again, like Mrs. Piozzi, Lady Blessington has recorded her experiences of the most distinguished man of her time; but, whereas the friend of Johnson has left us little more than a lively record of personal habits and peremptory sayings; of appetites and antipathies—the friend of Byron has given us a thoughtful and delicate analysis of character; a character, be it remembered, the reading of whose riddle was a task of no ordinary difficulty. With respect to the members of the *blue* sisterhood, Lady Blessington, too, has thrown off her *jeux d'esprit*, her tales of society, with enough (be it whispered) of epigram, and anecdote, and thought stored up for future days, to entitle her to challenge the most renowned upon her own ground.

In characterizing Lady Blessington's published works, however, it must be observed, that they display little—*too* little, perhaps, of the authoress in their construction; that they ought to be regarded as the intimations, rather than the finished productions of a mind as full of earnest and original thought as of gay and graceful pleasantry. Her works—in opposition to the prevailing fashion and fault of the day—are *underwritten*. A life spent in society, indeed, in which the stimulus is varied with the talent and capacity of each new companion, and the success is immediate and unquestioned, is, perhaps, hardly compatible with the mechanical development of literary powers: and it is not wonderful if one who publishes brilliant things and thoughts by the score to every passing visitor, whose

"words are all peculiar as the Fairy's who spoke pearls,"

should find her pen too slow, and her stores of language hardly copious enough to enable

her to do full justice to the workings of her mind and the creatures of her fancy,—should fall short in some of the mysteries of the craft, the tricks of imagery and sentiment, by which, indeed, stale thoughts are too often bedizened so as to pass for fresh, and stolen goods disguised and circulated as original manufactures. In each novel, however, that she has published, Lady Blessington has shown an increase of mastery over the means of producing effect. Her last work, the "Victims of Society," combines a fearless and searching picture of the manners of certain higher circles, (manners, be it remarked, so false and corrupt, as hardly to be worth the painting,) with a story of adventure and retribution of great interest and originality: the slight and not unpleasing formality given to the opening of the tale by the epistolary form in which it is told, heightening the effect of the fearful scenes at its close. Her style is always graceful in its total absence of affectation—she excels, too, in the constructiveness, which we have sometimes fancied was peculiar to her sex,—in the power of weaving a plot. It is needless further to dwell upon the characteristics of works which have appeared so recently, and travelled so widely, as the "Conversations" and novels of Lady Blessington.

[A few words will suffice in tracing to its close the career of this brilliant and accomplished woman. For many years Seamore Place and Gore House, where she successively resided, disputed the palm with Holland House as the resort of all the residents in the English metropolis, most highly distinguished for wit and for learning. Admission to the *côterie* of Lady Blessington was an honour keenly coveted as a mark of distinction by those who took the foremost place in the world of fashion. Hard it was for a dowager countess, with a jointure from heavily-burdened Irish estates, to meet the expenses which her hospitality entailed. As the circle of her enthusiastic admirers extended, and *literati* and men of fashion thronged her *salons*, she endeavoured to increase her income by literary toil. Her works succeeded each other in rapid succession. In 1839 she published one of her most pleasant books, the "Idler in Italy," which was followed by the "Idler in France," and other productions of a similar but more desultory character. She then edited Heath's "Book of Beauty," the "Keepsake," and an annual entitled "Gems of Beauty." But her efforts were unavailing. She found it impossible to meet her liabilities, and when the Irish famine of 1848 so diminished the rents of the Blessington estates as to deprive her of her jointure, she was obliged to give up her house at Kensington, to sell off her costly pictures and furniture, and to retire broken-hearted to Paris. There she died on the 4th of June, 1849, regretted by all who could appreciate her wit and accomplishments, and sympathize with sorrows and misfortunes which no prudence or forethought on her part could have altogether averted.]

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, author of "The Ancient Mariner," and the translator of "Wallenstein," was born on the 20th of October, 1772, at Ottery St. Mary in Devonshire: the eleventh and youngest child of the Rev. John Coleridge, Vicar of that parish. His father having procured a presentation to Christ's Hospital for him, he was placed there in 1782, in the same year with his friend Charles Lamb, who was three years younger than himself. Here, under the care of the Rev. James Bowyer, head master of the grammar-school, he was early distinguished for the scholarship, and, it may be added, for those peculiarities of mind and personal habits that marked his after career. Mr. Bowyer, we are told in Mr. Coleridge's interesting and singular *Biographia Literaria*, was not only a zealous and clear-sighted guide for him to the riches of the Greek and Roman poets, but a searching and sarcastic critic of the metrical school exercises in which his pupil gave his first tokens of possessing original genius. Thus it happened that young Coleridge's taste was cultivated and rendered fastidious before his powers were at all developed: and, apart from the peculiar physical organization which throughout after life operated on his mind as a burden and a hindrance in the work of production and accomplishment, this very circumstance of his education, at first sight seeming so advantageous, may have contributed to indispose him to attempt any continuous effort, or to complete it if attempted.

Other studies, which even then exercised over him a master influence, were not less unfavourable to his yielding wholly to poetical impulses. "At a very premature age," says he, "even before my fifteenth year, I had bewildered myself in metaphysics, and in theological controversy. History, and particular facts, lost all interest in my mind. * * In my friendless wanderings on our *leave days* (for I was an orphan, and had scarcely any connections in London), highly was I delighted if any passenger, especially if dressed in black, would enter into conversation with me, for I soon found the means of directing it to my favourite subjects—

> "'Of providence, fore-knowledge, will and fate—
> Fixed fate, free-will, fore-knowledge absolute.'"

From the perplexities of these momentous topics, so disproportionate with his mental strength at that period, the boy metaphysician was, for a time, diverted, by his making friendship with the sonnets of the Rev. Mr. Bowles. So ardently did he adopt these, that, his funds not warranting purchases, "he made," he tells us, "within less than a year and a half, no less than forty transcriptions, as the best presents I could offer to those who had in any way won my regard." The freshness of their imagery, the healthy simplicity of their language, not only enchanted their enthusiastic admirer, but invited him to attempt something of his own, which should possess similar excellences.

It was not, however, till the year 1794, that he ventured into print. In the interim his fortunes had undergone strange vicissitudes. He had remained at Christ's Hospital till he was nineteen, when having as grecian, or captain of the school, won an exhibition to the university, he entered Jesus College, Cambridge, on the 7th of September, 1791. But the discipline of a college was no less uncongenial, whether to the *man* or to his mind, than they subsequently proved to the gentle-hearted Shelley. From his cradle to his grave Mr. Coleridge was marked by singularity of habits, amounting to the most entire non-conformity

with the ways and calculations of men. In the common relations of life he was undecided, and inconsiderate,—loving better to sit still and discuss some knotty point, than to rise up and act. The same languor of spirit, which prevented him from ever advancing his worldly fortunes, and which, ere long, took the form of bodily disease,—the same perverseness which made him, when travelling to solicit subscriptions for a periodical (the "Watchman") which he was about to establish, choose for the subject of an harangue, in the house of one whose patronage in his undertaking he was seeking, the *unprofitableness and unlawfulness of all periodicals*,—rendered him desultory and capricious in his college studies, allowed him to fall into pecuniary difficulties, and finally contributed to his quitting college without having taken his degree. Like some others of his friends, too, he had disqualified himself for a university career, by having caught the Jacobinical spirit of the time, as "Robespierre," a hastily-produced drama, which he wrote in conjunction with his friend Southey—as that tremendous philippic, "Fire, Famine, and Slaughter," sufficiently attest. The history of mind would contain few more curious chapters than that which should trace the changes in opinion of these young authors, who entered the world together so fiercely resolved to stand or fall under the banner of liberty and equality!

On leaving Cambridge Mr. Coleridge was exposed to the severest privations, and after a few days of distress and perplexity in London, took the desperate step of enlisting himself as a private soldier, in the 15th Regiment, Elliot's Light Dragoons, under the assumed name of "Comberback," with the view of retrieving his fortunes. But he was as unapt and unready in all bodily exercises, as he was rich in recondite learning. Though orderly and obedient, he could not rub down his horse; and being detected by his commanding officer, Captain Ogle, as the scrawler of a Latin quotation upon the wall of the stables at Reading, where the regiment was quartered, the circumstance led to his discharge. It may be added, on the authority, and in the words of the Rev. W. L. Bowles, that "by far the most correct, sublime, chaste, and beautiful of his poems, 'Religious Musings,' was written *non inter sylvas Academi*, but in the tap-room at Reading."

The date of Mr. Coleridge's first publication, which took place shortly after this period, has been given. The work was favourably received by a few, and cried down only by such superficial and overweening critics as welcomed Mr. Wordsworth's first poetical essays with a *fatal* "This will never do!" In the winter of 1794–5, having joined the Pantisocratians (to whom fuller allusion is made elsewhere), we find him lecturing at Bristol on the French Revolution, but without much method or regularity,—and it was eminently characteristic of the *man* (who must always be considered separately from the poet and the metaphysician), that he rushed into the scheme without any worldly substance, and even considered himself as furthering its purposes by his early marriage with Miss Fricker, which took place in the same year.

The scheme of Pantisocracy was soon found but a broken reed to lean upon, and the poet, having settled himself at Nether Stowey—where many of his most delicious verses were written,—was obliged to endeavour to make his literary talents available for his maintenance. A periodical, devoted to the utterance of liberal opinions, was planned, "by sundry philanthropists and anti-polemists." This was the "Watchman," whose ill success might be augured from the anecdote mentioned awhile since; and having lingered through its short and sickly life, no one will wonder at finding it presently used as waste paper for the lighting of fires in its editor's cottage. Mr. Coleridge also eked out his means, at this time, by contributing occasional poems to a morning paper.

In the year 1797 his volume of poetry went to a second edition, and, at Sheridan's request, he wrote his beautiful tragedy of "Remorse," which, however, was not performed till the year 1813, and then with but moderate success. About this time Mr. Wordsworth was resident at Nether Stowey; with this gentleman Mr. Coleridge contracted a close and

affectionate intimacy. Each of the two was anxious to do his part in what they conceived might prove the revival of true poetry, and between them the "Lyrical Ballads" were planned. In the execution of this joint work, Mr. Coleridge was "to direct his endeavours to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest, and a resemblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination, that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith." In fulfilment of this intention the "Ancient Mariner" (that marvel among modern legends), the "Genevieve,"—in itself the most exquisite of love-tales, and yet but thrown off as the introduction to a story of mystery never completed;—and the first part of "Christabel" were written. The second part of this fragment, whose fate it has been to be first more scorned, next more quoted, lastly more admired, than most contemporary poems, was not added till after its author's return from Germany. It was while Mr. Coleridge was residing at Nether Stowey, that he occasionally officiated as an Unitarian Minister at Taunton; and he might probably have been promoted to the regular charge of a congregation at Shrewsbury, had not the liberality of his friends, the Mr. Wedgwoods, offered him the alternative of the means wherewith he might proceed to Germany, and complete his studies according to his own plan. The latter he was sure to accept. Mr. Hazlitt has left a delightful record among his literary remains,—of Mr. Coleridge's trial sermon at Shrewsbury, and of his fascinating powers of eloquence and conversation; this is followed by a no less interesting picture of the poet's manner of life at Nether Stowey. Had it been possible, these should have been quoted here, together with Mr. Coleridge's own anecdote from the "Biographia," telling how he was dogged by a government spy for many weeks together, while he was wandering among the Quantock hills, and dreaming of one of the thousand works, of which

"His eyes made pictures, when they were shut,"

but which his hand never executed,—a contemplative and descriptive poem, to be called "The Brook."

It was on the 16th of September, 1798, that Mr. Coleridge set sail for Hamburgh, from Yarmouth. The details of this voyage, of his interview with Klopstock, of his subsequent residences at Ratzeburg and Gottingen, are journalized in his own delightful letters: it is enough for us to say, that he returned to his own country in 1801, imbued with the best spirit of German literature; his researches into its philosophy having wrought for him the somewhat unforeseen result of a change from the Unitarian to the Trinitarian belief. That he continued a staunch disciple of the latter faith for the remainder of his days, his prose works and his will afford ample evidence.

On his return to England, Mr. Coleridge took up his residence at Keswick, in the neighbourhood of his friends Wordsworth and Southey; there he translated Schiller's "Wallenstein," which was published immediately; and though, for its wonderful spirit and fidelity, —the latter not a dry closeness of words, but a rendering of thoughts by thoughts,—it was, on its appearing, felt to be a remarkable work—unique in our language, and raising the translator to an equality with his original author—it was long and strangely neglected, a second edition not being called for till the year 1828. *Now*, could we call up "the old man eloquent," as Sir Walter Scott threatened might be done, to compel him to complete the half-told legend of "Christabel," we should be tempted (could only one wish be granted) to demand of him a version of the untranslatable "Faust," secure that in his hands that wonderful drama would be as admirably naturalized into our literature, as the master-work of "Schiller."

Shortly after his return from Germany, Mr. Coleridge joined himself as a literary and

political contributor to the "Morning Post," stipulating in the first instance, "that the paper should be conducted on certain fixed principles, these being anti-ministerial, and with greater earnestness and zeal, both anti-jacobin and anti-gallican." He laments over the time and talent expended in this compulsory toil, which would have been easily discharged, nor felt burdensome, by any one more happily constituted, or self-trained for diligent effort. And, in afterwards speaking of literature as a profession, he would, like too many beside him, do reason and justice wrong, by describing its drudgery in gloomier colours than are used with reference to the uninteresting labour necessary to every other profession. But his mind was always teeming and pregnant, rather than active; and it was enchained in a feeble body, to the wants of which, perhaps, self-indulgence had given too much mastery. Mr. Coleridge could move others by his inspired conversation, by a few words crowded into the margin of a book, or let drop in conversation; he could clear up a dark point in literature, or illustrate a principle in philosophy, or open an avenue for his disciples to advance along in the pursuit of truth; but to *work* himself, save in a fragmentary manner, he seems to have been positively unable. We find him in 1804, at Malta, appointed as Secretary to Sir Alexander Ball;—with a superior whom he loved, as may be seen by the elaborate and grave panegyric he has left in "The Friend,"—and a liberal salary. But he was incapable of performing the duties of office even under such favourable circumstances; and after a ramble through Italy and Rome, he returned to England, again to prove the precariousness of the life of those whose sole dependence is upon thoughts which they cannot, or will not, take the labour and patience to work out in a complete and available form.

In writing Mr. Coleridge's life, this feature of his character should be fully displayed and dwelt upon: even in this brief sketch it claims a distinct mention, though with reverence and sympathy. On his return to England we find him lecturing on poetry and the fine arts, at the Royal Institution, in the year 1808: next sojourning at Grasmere, where he planned and published "The Friend," a periodical which was dropped at the twenty-eighth number. Nor is this wonderful: there was a want of variety in the topics embraced in this miscellany; and the metaphysical and philosophical subjects on which its contriver delighted principally to dwell, were grave and involved; nor by their manner of treatment likely to be rendered acceptable to a public large enough to support a periodical, had he been regular enough to have continued it. "The tendency of his mind," writes one who understood him well, "to speculations of the most remote and subtle character, led him into regions where to follow was no easy flight. To read his philosophical discourses is a mental exercise which few are now willing to undertake; and it is not surprising that many will describe him as vague, intricate, and rhapsodical. For those, however, who study his writings as they deserve and demand, they are highly suggestive, and full of no common instruction, as excursions of a mind which in compass and elevation had certainly no peer among his English contemporaries. Of the peculiar character of his philosophy, as applied to various branches of knowledge, whether in ethics, criticism, history, or metaphysical science, it would be impossible to afford even the most imperfect sketch in this place. He may be said to have finally adopted an eclectic system of his own, strongly tinctured with the academic doctrines, and enriched with ideas gathered from the eminent German teachers of philosophy, to which he added a certain devout mysticism resting upon revealed religion. In the utterance of his tenets, circumstance no less than choice directed him to the dogmatic method; which, indeed, to be fixed in the conviction of certain positive and supreme truths, he must in any case naturally have followed. * * * His age was chiefly devoted to the verbal exposition of his scheme of a Christian philosophy, in which his mind had found a calm and satisfied refuge: his 'Aids to Reflection' can but be considered as prelusions to the longer discourse, the '*Magnum Opus*,' in which he meant to unfold his system in all its fulness."

The above passage, as containing in some wise a general character of the prose works of this extraordinary man, has been permitted to break the fragile thread of our biographical notice. But there is little more to be told. After living for a short time at Grasmere, he came again to London, and finally set up his rest at Highgate, in the house of Mr. and Mrs. Gilman. With these faithful friends he continued to sojourn during the remainder of his life. In 1816 (to complete the list of his works) "Christabel" was published; then followed his "Lay Sermons;" next, in 1817, his *Biographia Literaria*, the anecdotical part of which, in its want of method and connection, is as eminently typical of the man, as its introduced digressions are of the philosopher. Besides these, we must mention a volume of poems entitled "Sybilline Leaves," containing the "Genevieve," the "Hymn in the Valley of Chamouni" (that noblest of modern sacred odes), and "Zapolya," a drama imitating in its form the peerless "Winter's Tale" of Shakspeare, which, though full of beauty, is, like the "Remorse," at once too delicate in its language and imagery, and too devoid of one master-interest, to be successful before our vitiated stage audiences. It might be the consciousness of his failure, as much as the conviction of the viciousness of the nascent school of poetry and fiction, that embittered his critique upon Maturin's "Bertram," appended to the "Biographia,"—a piece of savage labour thrown away. "Zapolya" was never represented. The list of Mr. Coleridge's works published in his lifetime, will, we believe, be completed by a small volume published in 1830, "On the Constitution of the Church and State," bearing on the Catholic Question.

There is no space here for an analysis of Mr. Coleridge's poems: among which, to increase the impossibility of such an essay, there will be found a singular variety and difference of manner. In some he is devout and enthusiastic, soaring to the most august themes, with a steadiness of wing and loftiness of harmony peculiar to himself; in others, tender and quaint, dallying among dainty images and conceits; and in his later verses, wrapping up thoughts in a garb enigmatical and fantastic, after the manner of some of our elder writers. In his ballads, again, he has caught the true spirit of the supernatural beyond all his compeers; his mind *broods* over the mysterious tale he is about to unfold, and his words fall from him unconsciously, each verse, as it were, intimating a portent. In all he shows himself to be perhaps the greatest modern master of versification: his poetry has a music deeper than that of chime and cadence, the thoughts and images, not merely the words and the measures, succeed each other in a rare harmony, besides being clothed in language of a select and unborrowed richness.

For the last many years of his life Mr. Coleridge lived pleasantly among his friends, at one time deriving a small pension from the Royal bounty,—dreaming of a thousand mighty works to be achieved, committing the seeds of these, in the shape of notes and criticisms, to the fly-leaves and margins of such books as fell in his way; and haranguing with a magical eloquence to those whom he drew round him to "love and learn." He established, it has been happily said, in excuse for the literary unproductiveness of his later years, a *Normal School* of philosophy for those who should in turn disseminate his well-beloved doctrines to a wider circle of pupils. Few, even among the uninitiated, left his presence without being a thought the richer; few books passed from under his hands without being graced by some golden sentence of illustration or criticism. The latter are daily coming to light; such as have been given to the world are precious evidences of the largeness of his mind, of the extent of his accomplishments, and the keenness of his perception. As a master and teacher among us, whose mind, dwelling apart from busy life, was devoted to the study and oral diffusion of what was lofty, and noble, and worthy, we ought to love his memory —though we may not forget that there is warning as well as authority associated with his name.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

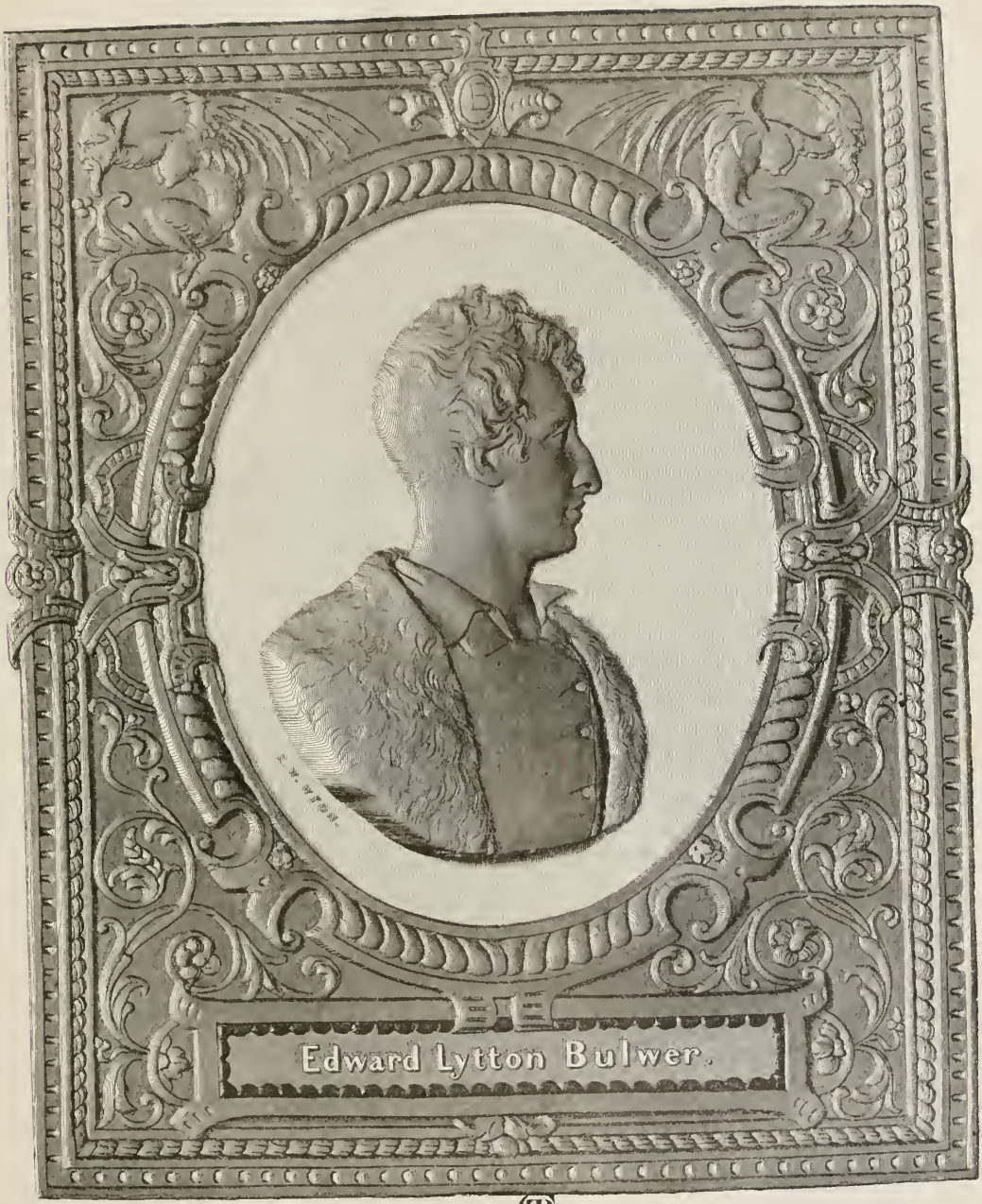
SIR ED. GEO. EARLE LYTTON BULWER-LYTTON,

BARONET.

We have hitherto confined ourselves to the dead, or to such among our living authors as have gained their fame—"come, seen, and conquered," and who, no new triumphs being expected from them, may be said already in some wise to belong to the past. We are now to speak of a writer of to-day, who, though he has already "won his spurs," has not half won his renown; and who, by the eagerness of his aspiration, no less than the versatility of his powers, bids fair to gain a fame far more precious and enduring than the present popularity, wide and brilliant as it is, which his writings enjoy. The reader must be already prepared for the name of Edward Lytton Bulwer.

This gentleman is the third and youngest son of General Bulwer, of Heydon Hall, in the county of Norfolk, by Elizabeth, daughter and sole heiress of Henry Warburton Lytton, Esq., of Knebworth Park, Herts. The registers of our English nobility and gentry will tell those curious in pedigrees, with how many ancient and noble houses these families are connected; but it must suffice us to record the fact, that Mr. Bulwer's maternal grandfather was a remarkable scholar, the intimate friend of Sir William Jones, the best Hebraist of his time; and in further confirmation of those who believe all intellectual superiority to be derived from the mother, we may add, that the daughter of this gentleman inherited a turn for elegant literature, and that Mr. Bulwer, deprived of his father at an early age, wrote his first verses, when five or six years old, for her pleasure; some of these being imitations of Percy's ballads, which was a favourite book of his infancy. We can but enlarge this scanty notice, by pointing to the author's own charming and heart-felt picture of one residence of his boyhood, in "Knebworth," one of the papers collected in the "Student."

Mr. Bulwer was placed at several private schools (never, we believe, at a public one), subsequently under two private tutors, and his education completed, as far as routine studies are concerned, at Cambridge. But a mind so eager and so thoroughly awake learns to the last hour of its life, and throws itself with equal interest upon the objects and personages encountered in its daily career, as upon the great minds of the world speaking in books. While Mr. Bulwer was at Cambridge, where he produced his prize poem on Sculpture, he occupied the long vacation by wandering over a large part of England and Scotland on foot; and it is more than probable that the humours and adventures of such a journey, and those gathered and experienced during a subsequent ramble through France on horseback, first gave rise to the idea of his presenting himself to the public as a novelist, a painter of many-coloured life as it is. But his first literary efforts were in verse. We may mention "Weeds and Wild Flowers," a collection of fugitive poems, bearing the date of 1826. To these, taking a memoir in the "New Monthly Magazine" as our authority, succeeded "O'Neil



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the Rebel" (1827). In this year, too, "Falkland" was published anonymously, a dreary and striking tale of crime and sorrow, containing the germ of many after-creations. This work cost its author more trouble than any of his novels, and is the least known among them. Such are the chances of literature! In the year 1828 "Pelham" made its appearance, and the busy career of authorship was commenced in good earnest. To estimate its fruits rightly, it should be borne in mind, that they are not the only offspring of their writer's youth; that the practical duties of manhood and citizenship have not been sacrificed to the studies and fancies they record. Mr. Bulwer has acted, as well as thought and written: he has taken his part in society as a Member of Parliament, at first for St. Ives, and, when that borough lost a member, for the ancient city of Lincoln. It must not be forgotten how worthily he has linked his literary and parliamentary career, by bringing in the bill for the protection of dramatic copyright, the forerunner of the present more extensive effort to insure to the author the just reward of his labours, by which, in like manner, Mr. Serjeant Talfourd is distinguishing himself as a member of the Republic of Letters, and a legislator for its benefit.

Let us now glance at the series of works which have flowed in almost unprecedented rapidity from Mr. Bulwer's pen, since he made his appearance in the lists of authorship, ready, it may be added, to touch the shields of antagonists with the *sharp* end of his spear. We begin with "Pelham," as the first work which awakened the public to perceive that a new spirit of power was abroad in the world. This novel appeared at an unlucky moment, in the full summer of fashionable novels and of trade-puffery, when another added to the list of stories of modern society (each of which was recommended with as importunate a grandiloquence as its forerunner) was, however eloquent, exposed to the chance of being merely skimmed by the indiscriminate frequenters of circulating libraries, —and then dying forgotten. And for a short time after its appearance "Pelham" seemed likely to share the common lot. But genius, like murder, "will out," and it began to be whispered that these "Adventures of a Gentleman" contained shrewd thought as well as lively painting—that their satire was not the frothy impertinence of one careless alike of aim or means, so that he can make the world laugh. The book passed from the hands of the thoughtless into those of the thinker; it came to be sharply canvassed, and, of course, liberally abused. There was an intolerable air of superiority in the hero, which critics chose to extend to his creator, and, according to their usual justice, the identification being once made, the cry "Anathema" was raised by a hundred voices. But more of this presently.

"Pelham" was succeeded by "The Disowned," a more hastily written work, with more romance and less worldly wisdom than its predecessor, and, as a whole, less uniformly sustained, though containing many scenes and episodes, brimful of the poetry and passion which gush from the young writer, with a force and freshness he can never know at that after-period when experience takes the place of impulse. The next tale was "Devereux" (of these three first novels our own favourite); then came "Paul Clifford," a clever extravagance, written, we cannot but think, on a forced and false theory; but in its darker scenes,—for instance, the interview between the judge and the prisoner, the haughty self-avenged father, and his neglected son,—giving evidence on the part of its author of an increasing mastery over the most terrible passions, the strongest and most secret workings of the mind, which was to be brought to perfection in his next novel, "Eugene Aram." This work, meditated for two years before it was written, Mr. Bulwer did well to regard as his best,—as the offering which he had a right to lay at the feet of Scott. The subject was difficult—to any one not possessed of a master-mind, impracticable; and its difficulty for the uses of the romancer was increased by its catastrophe being already

familiar to the public. And yet so admirably was it handled, so intimately were our sympathies stirred for the lonely student, in whom the love of knowledge was by circumstances perverted into the instigator of a terrible crime, to be atoned for by a life of concealed agony and a death of ignominy, that some worthy souls raised the cry of "a false moral" against the author, as if there were danger and poison in threading the mazes of the human mind—the maze often the most entangled in the mind of the finest structure!

Of the "Siamese Twins," a serio-comic poem, published before "Eugene Aram," we need only speak as evidencing the eagerness with which its author has tried to make every field his own, sometimes without sufficiently weighing the worth or practicability of his subject. There was a pause, then, in the Novelist's labours; and Mr. Bulwer next appeared before the public as the Editor of the "New Monthly Magazine." If he was not wholly successful in gathering together a body of contributors with one pervading aim and purpose (such as alone can make any periodical effective), he was earnest and various in the articles furnished by himself—now breaking out into some bitter and indignant political essay, the like whereof had never before startled the calm pages of the "New Monthly;"—now turning his hand to criticism, which, if not always just, was always new and interesting, full of rich and original thought; now mingling the philosophical and the fantastic in tale or apologue, or enforcing some truth with the polished humour of Marmontel; and in a series of papers, "The Conversations of an Ambitious Student," giving utterance to those lofty, and calm, and chastened contemplations, in which the mind, year by year, increasingly delights to fold itself, and thus, by rising above the things of earth, to prepare itself for the slackening, by age and decay, of the cords which bind us here below. The choicest of these essays have been since published in a collected form, and will be found in "The Student."

All this time (while, also, be it remembered, Mr. Bulwer was zealously fulfilling his parliamentary duties), he was at work upon his "England and the English"—that too clever and caustic anatomy of our national character, which John Bull will not soon forget and forgive, and which may in some wise reasonably excite his ill-humour, inasmuch as it dwells too largely upon foibles and short-comings, without sufficiently indicating the charities and the virtues which grow up side by side with them. But it is a book which has done good—which must do good—which must compel us into thinking less complacently of our loudly-trumpeted perfections—into extending our sympathies towards "our born enemies" (so ran the style of foreigners some thirty years since), which must dispose us, if not from love, out of very shame, to look abroad, and see what there may be good, and great, and worthy of imitation, in the institutions of our neighbours. Scarcely had this essay run the gauntlet of abuse and popularity, when, the rod being laid down and the wand taken up again, the "Pilgrims of the Rhine" made their appearance;—a *capriccio* in which the poet, with the freest-winged imagination, sports between elfin frolics and human sorrows, and carries us at his will from the airy revels, "where too much May dew was drunk out of buttercups," to the chamber of the dying girl, with her impenetrable father, and her eager, passionate lover. This romance, perhaps because it appeared before the world with the disadvantage of splendid illustrations, perhaps because we are grown too hard and too real to be willing to follow fancy in her flights, quick and bright as the sunbeams, has never been valued as it deserved to be in England. Abroad it is to be found in numbers sufficient almost to bridge the "blue and castled" river on which its scene is laid.

His next work again showed Mr. Bulwer in a new light,—as a romancer of ancient days. This was "The Last Days of Pompeii," the fruit of a hasty Italian journey, and, with the yet nobler work which followed, "Rienzi," it has established Mr. Bulwer firmly in the highest rank of our novelists. The tale was not one of mere glow and gorgeousness—of the banquets and the triumphs, the festivals and the processions of old times. So strong

a human interest, so vivid a display of character, was thrown into the restored ruins of the "Silent City," that while reading we felt as if mingling in its crowds, as if we knew Nydia, the blind flower-girl, and Lydon, the stalwart, true-hearted gladiator; as if we heard the high-pitched voice of the woman, who cared for nothing but that "there should be one man for the lion, and another for the tiger," and whose rhyme about "the merry show" mingles like an omen with the small cloud arising from the sea, with the scarcely felt trembling of the earthquake which announces to the city that—

"Fate hangs like a shadow o'er her feasts."

Nothing is neglected, nothing hurried, in the working up of this magnificent tale, which fascinates us with as breathless an interest as if the end of the story were not proclaimed in its title. But "Rienzi," the last novel of the author, has yet a higher merit. The strength of the "Pompeii" lies in the management of incident, illustrated by beautiful and breathing characters; the strength of "Rienzi" lies in the mastery of character; that complete mastery, which, in portraying a hero, dares to show the flaws and blemishes which mingle with his noblest efforts enough of what is small, and unworthy, and personal, to prevent his wielding omnipotence over the destinies of an inferior race, and which can still enchain our sympathy for him to the last. Never was the rise and progress of a revolution more admirably chronicled; never the balance more evenly held between a righteous cause and unrighteous means;—and this by fresh, vivid dialogue, and in scenes that thrill us with their interest. The characters, too, are bolder and brighter than in any previous work. We need hardly instance Rienzi's high-hearted and haughty wife, and the Provençal Knight, with his tender, romantic, Troubadour spirit breaking out from under his warrior's suit of mail, and the crew of corrupt Roman nobles, and the citizens with Cecco del Vecchio, the sturdy and selfish smith, at their head. What other fictions Mr. Bulwer, with the busy fertility of genius, may be preparing for our delight we do not know; he will find it hard to produce a work higher in conception, or more exquisite in its artistic treatment, than "Rienzi."

A further proof of the versatility and aspiration which we have noted as eminently characteristic of Mr. Bulwer, was given by him early in the present year, in the production of the play of "The Duchess de la Vallière," at Covent Garden. The failure of this drama (as indiscreetly attacked, as it has been indiscreetly overpraised) may be ascribed to many causes: the story was one in which it was difficult to enlist the sympathies of an English audience, still too narrow and national; it was therefore denounced as immoral by those who never lifted up their voices to whisper an objection against "Jane Shore" or "The Orphan." And, as if to destroy the chance of its success, the actors, one and all (with the glorious exception of Mr. Macready), seemed to have studied how pathos might be exaggerated into rant, and lively dialogue degraded into burlesque. The Duke de Lauzun was presented as a Polonius,—La Marquise de Montespan . . . . . but we are not going to write harsh things of a woman. The stage arrangements, too, were worthy of the acting. But, making every allowance for these disadvantages in representation, "La Vallière" must be owned to be unequally written; the concentration eminently required for the stage—and which may be attained without assuming the quips and quaintnesses of a bygone day—was wanting to its dialogue, especially in the portions which connected its striking situations with its great speeches. Most unjust, however, was it to pronounce a work which would have made a reputation for a young writer, unworthy of Mr. Bulwer; as if it were possible that a dramatist could start to life full-fledged, and as if we were not to look for inexperience and feebleness in the second and third essay of one who, however gifted with vigorous con-

ception and rich imagery, must still, from position, lack that scenic experience in which most of our successful writers of plays have been educated, if not cradled. A novelist may study his art at home; and be it remembered, too, that he is judged more fairly, because more deliberately, than the dramatist, who, while he *must* study his effects on the boards, is also wholly subject to the caprice of an audience, whom a tyrant a trifle too tyrannical, or a lover burning where he should only be warm, an ill-fancied dress, or a clumsily-changed scene, may doom in a moment without warning or appeal. One disappointment, however, may be the herald of twenty successes: it is with the author as with the actor; and who can tell how far the hisses of an ill-mannered Liverpool audience may have contributed to the after triumphs of England's Tragic Muse on the boards at Covent Garden? But there is little encouragement now on the part of either audience, or of actors, for a generous and gifted spirit to enter a second time the arena of the Drama, when his own desire for experiment is once laid.

It is almost needless to remind the reader, so recently has "Athens" been published, that the circle of Mr. Bulwer's labours has embraced history also. This last, his most elaborate work, still only partly completed, was planned when he was at college, and has been wrought upon at intervals for five years. Thus patiently must those labour who would have their labours endure. The result in the present instance is well worth the time and thought bestowed. The author has turned the full strength of a mind at once shrewd, enthusiastic, and daring, upon his subject, and embellished it with all the graces of a style ornamented without excess. He has produced a work (to quote one far better able to decide upon its value than the writer) "which, if it be completed as it has been begun, will, by its effect in correcting prejudices which have been most sedulously fostered, and diffusing true notions on one of the most interesting of all parts of the world's history, entitle its author to no humble meed of praise."

We have been somewhat more minute in our enumeration than may seem necessary when speaking of works which are read wherever the English language penetrates, which wall the booksellers' shops in Germany and America; but our reason for such minuteness will be found in our conviction, that, in spite of this honour due rendered to him by the world (not the one country) of readers, Mr. Bulwer has hardly received fair treatment from the hands of his critics, that he has been, for the most part, either insolently flouted, or analyzed with a caution and severity scarcely less invidious. One reason of this may be, that he appeals to the world under a twofold guise. He won his first fame when he was little more than a boy, at an age when passion is usually presumed to be the ruling inspiration; and yet there was the thought, the worldly wisdom, the sarcasm of maturity, even in his first work. One half of the world, calling itself critical, could understand Pelham's finery, but not discern his philosophy; the other half refused to listen to the latter because it came from one who presented himself before them chained, and ringed, and essenced, and who would break off in some subtle digression, to "sigh like a furnace," under the window of the Cynthia of the minute, or to discuss the fashions of the toilette and the table. This mixture of the old man and the boy, of wisdom and petulance, of expanded benevolence and lively coxcombry, of sound reason and overmastering passion, was a puzzle to our literary censors, always slow to admit an excellence which obliges them to quit their old formulas; the author was passed over as not deep enough, by those who did not perceive that in the presence of thought in one so young, there was bright promise, —or he was stigmatized as exaggerated, because he gave free range to passion and fancy, and sometimes to that earnest egotism, that desire to confess and be absolved, which it is so difficult for one of an ardent and overflowing spirit to repress. We will not add to what has been said an inquiry into the motives which may have stayed the pens of some of his

critics, which may have dipped others in gall, lest we should cease from it with the saddening conviction, that there have been few epochs of English literature wherein criticism has been more largely a system of puppet-work, more deeply steeped in personality, than during late years. Mr. Bulwer may regard the fame he has already won with the proud satisfaction that he owes it not to the crowd of interpreters who stand between the man of genius and the public, and, like the *claqueurs* of the French stage, sell themselves to him who bids the highest. He has, we sincerely hope, a long and still brightening career before him.

[The hopes expressed in the preceding notice have not been disappointed. Her Majesty, on the occasion of her coronation, conferred upon him a baronetcy. Not many years afterwards he re-entered Parliament as member for the county of Herts, accepting in 1858, under the Government of Lord Derby, the office of Secretary of State for the Colonies. In the midst of his arduous parliamentary duties he found time to write "The Caxton Family," "My Novel," and "What will he do with it?"—a series of works sufficient of themselves to place him among the greatest writers of English fiction. "To be at the head of the novelists of England," says an eloquent writer in the "London Review," "is a proud station. Fitting the age in which they lived and the manners that surrounded them, Richardson and Fielding held sovereign sway, and Smollett was great in his line, and Scott, indeed, was the wizard of the North. And we can speak of living writers whose fame will go down to posterity as the delight and honour of the present day; but when we glance at the extraordinary extent and diversity of the productions of a Bulwer, and reflect on the fact that they are but emanations floated, as it were, from amidst labours and duties of the most onerous nature, we are lost in astonishment. And the more, as nowhere is mediocrity or superficiality to be discovered. Bulwer is far removed from the herd *Faciant næ intelligendo ut nihil intelligant;* he is sterling throughout, and never can be misunderstood, because he knows what he means, and how to communicate it most intelligibly. His style is always plain, strong, nervous,—when requisite, eloquent, pathetic, passionate. The English language could not furnish quotations more admirable than many we could point out in these Caxton novels."]

LADY MORGAN.

A FRENCH writer has pleasantly said, that for the portraiture of a woman, the pen should be made of a peacock's feather, and the ink dyed with the dust from a butterfly's wings. But he has drawn out only half an inventory of requisites, when the brighter spirits among "the sex" are concerned. To take the subject before us, for instance, for the decorating and the finishing of its resemblance, the gay but fragile commodities aforesaid would, indeed, be most acceptable; but the artist must first have brought to his task a keen eye, a firm hand, and an implement vigorous and sharp-pointed enough to trace in bold lines and strongly-marked features.

The literary position of Lady Morgan is as singular as her works are original;—the offspring of a peculiar mind, developed under peculiar circumstances. It is no holiday feat for a woman, self-educated, to have won by her own unassisted hand, in defiance of the ceaseless outpouring of malice and evil report, an European reputation,—not the sickly and ephemeral fame of a coterie. And there are few of the sex who, granting them the possession of fervour and power to achieve as much, could stand upon such an eminence so gained, without a change passing over them,—without their writings more largely showing a mind soured by its struggle, or fantastic in the self-conceit of its prowess,—or without their

> "Wearing a swashing and martial outside,
> As many other mannish cowards have."

But, whereas the mind of Lady Morgan has been richly and largely developed, it has undergone little change in its aims, none in its temperament, during the course of its career through shade and shine. In "The Princess," as well as in her earliest novels,—a series of works lying between the two, which in extent has been rarely equalled by any English authoress,—we may trace the same enthusiasm, the same buoyancy of aspiration, the same fearless devotion to liberal principles, the same nationality of character, wherein pathos and humour have each a part. And if, in her later essays, the authoress of "Italy" and "The O'Briens" ranges more boldly between the grave and the gay, the philosophical and the frivolous, "predestination and slea silk," than in the romances of her girlish days, when "she wrote as well as she could, and got the hard words out of Johnson's Dictionary," it is only the inevitable consequence of that experience which comes with time and knowledge, and which teaches us that truth is none the less authoritative, and deep feeling all the more impressive, for being exhibited as they exist, largely mixed up and alternated with *la bagatelle*.

Touching, as we do, but slightly upon the private history of such of our English authors as, being yet alive, have not become the property of the biographer, a few words will sufficiently tell that Lady Morgan's parentage almost insured to her the heritage of talent which has placed her where she now stands. Her father, Mr. Owenson (the "real ould" name is Mac Owen), was an actor of great excellence in his particular walk—in Cumberland's opinion, *the* "Irish fine gentleman" *par excellence*—and not merely thus distinguished in

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his own profession, but the author, we are told, "of some of the best Irish songs extant;" enthusiastic in the legendary and musical antiquarianism of his country, and, for the sake of these accomplishments, a popular guest in society. It was he, too, who cherished and brought forward the "Irish Chatterton," as Dermody, the poet, has been so flatteringly styled; and that his daughter inherited much of her peculiar talent from him, she herself has been foremost to own in her dedication to the "Lay of the Irish Harp."

The history of Lady Morgan's authorship may be gleaned from her own writings. In these we learn, that she began to publish when little more than a child, impatient to give vent to her genius (to the very young always a disturbing possession), and yet more delighted by its exercise to assist those dearest to her, than eager to advance herself. Her first essays were poetical:—a little shabby volume lies before us, picked up at a book-stall, its verses brimful of pleasant thoughts and warm affections, clothed in that gay but borrowed language, in which the very young always "lisp their numbers." She afterwards published "The Lay of the Irish Harp," and a selection of twelve Irish melodies, with music. The latter suggested the idea of the larger and more popular work subsequently undertaken by Mr. Moore and Sir John Stevenson. The curious in ballads will be glad to hear, that "Kate Kearney," to this day a prime favourite with melodists, was written and adapted to the air by Miss Owenson. We have purposely mentioned these, her only metrical efforts, in conjunction. The composition of verse was early abandoned by her for prose, in which she felt that her strength lay, and that her success was to be gained.

Miss Owenson's early novels, "St. Clair," "The Novice of St. Dominick," "The Wild Irish Girl," "Patriotic Sketches," "Ida," and "The Missionary,"—though they may be said to belong to a past dynasty of fiction, when the story was all in all, and the manner of telling it but little heeded; when tears to any measure could be drawn by tenderly-wrought love-scenes, and heroines and heroes were absolved from the necessity of possessing the individualities of human character, so but they "protested enough," and acted up to their protestations,—have still something of their own which distinguishes them among their contemporaries. Their scenery, their passion, their enthusiasm, is eminently national; and, being dashed off with all the fervour and self-confidence of youth, it is not wonderful that they speedily made their way to distinguished success. "The Wild Irish Girl" was at once received, both in Dublin and London, into those aristocratic circles whose greatest honour it is to open their doors to genius: alas! that so often they welcome it with the childish and fantastic courtesies of lion-worship! A thousand sketches and remembrances of the time when Miss Owenson made her *début* at Lady Cork's rout, "in the identical frock and flower in which, not many days before, she had danced a jig on an earthen floor with an O'Rouke Prince of Brefney in the County of Leitrim;" a thousand notices, too, of the delightful friendships and homages which followed the transmission of what she calls "her *petit bout* of reputation" from England to France, will be found collected in that pleasantest of all modern collections of *Ana*, the shrewd and sparkling "Book of the Boudoir."

"O'Donnel," the novel which comes next in order to those just enumerated, is of a far higher order of merit. Its authoress there began to record the fruits of her observation, as well as the thick-coming dreams of her fancy, to relieve sentiment with banter,—in short, having seen and thought, to *dare* more than in any former tale. A few among her after sketches excel in vividness, in the farce of melancholy reality, her picture of the restless, whimsical English fashionables, introduced in tawdry array, as a foil to her melancholy, high-minded hero. "O'Donnel" has been followed at intervals by "Florence Macarthy," "The O'Briens and the O'Flaherties," and, lastly, "The Princess," a tale devoted to the

workings of the recent Belgian revolution. In each of these there is progress to be traced in mind, as well as in hand (to use the painter's word). The strong national enthusiasm of childhood, at once somewhat indiscriminate in its warmth, and limited in its scope, will be seen to have ended in fearless and decided political partisanship, in the espousing of ultra-liberal doctrines, abroad as well as at home. But let us quote Lady Morgan's own words from the preface to the last edition of "O'Donnel." "After all, however," says she, "if I became that reviled but now very fashionable personage, a female politician, it was much in the same way as the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* spoke prose without knowing it; a circumstance, perhaps, not uncommon with Irish writers. * * * For myself, at least, born and dwelling in Ireland, amidst my countrymen and their sufferings, I saw and I described, I felt and I pleaded; and if a political bias was ultimately taken, it originated in the natural condition of things, and not in 'malice aforethought' of the writer." In each successive novel, too, the characters will be found more and more boldly contrasted, the scenes prepared and arranged with finer artifice. If we cannot but note the strong family likeness which exists between all their plots, through every one of which a brilliant and devoted woman flits in masquerade, now to win a lover, now to save a friend, now to make a proselyte, we must also insist upon the living nature of many of their *dramatis personæ*, especially the broadly-comic ones, instancing The Crawleys ("Florence Macarthy") and Lieutenant O'Mealy ("The O'Briens"), and Laurence Fegan and Sir Ignatius Dogherty ("The Princess"),—and upon the thousand indications scattered here and there with apparent artlessness, but real design, which prove, that though their writer loves to float upon the surface of life and society, she can, at will, dive into their depths, and bring up truths new and valuable.

Our remark applies with a yet closer pertinence to the next works, which we shall group together, "France" and "Italy," the result of Lady Morgan's continental travels undertaken shortly after her marriage (the latter, it will be remembered, praised by Lord Byron as a fearless and excellent work), and with them "France in 1830," and "The Life and Times of Salvator Rosa." These are deservedly installed upon the shelves of our libraries, in spite of the gross and unmannered abuse so long showered upon them; no insignificant proof, by the way, that Lady Morgan's antagonists could not confound her travels with those ephemeral and unidea'd guide-books and tours, which are permitted to pass away with the hour and be forgotten. And they deserve this standard position, not merely for the liveliness, and colour, and poetry of their descriptions, but for the speculation they contain, which, granted that it be often perverse, often illiberal in its liberalism, is always sincere and earnest. The second "France," however, must be read with an allowance for its writer's predisposition to take up arms against that spirit of romanticism which has replaced the literature of Voltaire and Beaumarchais with another more convulsed, more inflated, more exaggerated, but still, we cannot but trust, more instinct with the spirit of faith and poetry. To ourselves, the "Salvator Rosa" is the most delightful of Lady Morgan's books; it was written, she tells us, under the influence of Rossini's music, and it reads like a strain by that gorgeous master of southern melody;—a fine whole, all glow, and colour, and enthusiasm.

In addition to these works, we have yet to mention one or two of less pretension. "Absenteeism" (a single volume), "The Book of the Boudoir," already quoted, besides many happy contributions to the more select periodicals; and the "Dramatic Scenes from Real Life," so gaily characterized by their writer, as "a thing that may be read running or dancing, like a puff on a dead-wall, or a sentiment on a French fan," a thing, be it added, far less unsubstantial than these words imply. It is understood that Lady Morgan is preparing yet another work for publication, upon a subject so often touched upon

in her previous writings, as to prove that she has studied it long and earnestly—the influence and position of women.

And here our scanty notice of this brilliant woman must end, after our having added, that, whether grave or gay, devoted to politics or the arts, her writings are but fair and unflattering reflections of herself. Ere we conclude, however, we must once again advert to the fate they have encountered, to their reception, not by the public of Europe, but by the critical few. And we do this to record our protest against the dishonest and personal acrimony with which for some twenty years they have been indiscriminately attacked, and attacked by those, too, whose registered attachment to ancient institutions and principles, ought, we think, for consistency's sake, to have enjoined upon them at least a slight degree of courtesy and forbearance towards a writer of the gentler sex. If to have endured "the pitiless pelting storm" of vituperation and misconstruction, in fighting the hard fight of unpopular against popular opinions; if, in short, to be zealous and consistent in the support of an adopted creed, is a thing worthy of recognition, then never did honour fall upon a fitter object than the recent pension, granted, at the instance of a Liberal minister, to the authoress of "Italy."

[Since these lines were written Lady Morgan must also, sad to say, be numbered among those who were. No sorrow or misfortune seems to have darkened the last years of her life. Removing from Dublin to London in 1839, she published in the following year "Woman and her Master," a work in which she reviews, with that acute and sprightly tone peculiar to her, the position of the fair sex in all ages of the world's history. It was followed by a more thoughtful book on France, free from the occasional rhapsody of her novels, yet marked by their freshness of feeling and their elaborate and ornate language. "France" was succeeded by "Italy," a similar work—best known as containing a statement which gave rise to a controversy with Cardinal Wiseman. Lady Morgan asserted in her work that "the chair of St. Peter, at Rome, when examined during Bonaparte's campaign in Italy, was found to bear the Arabic legend, 'There is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet,'" a fact leading to the inevitable conclusion that the alleged relic had been brought to Italy in the time of the Crusades. Cardinal Wiseman contradicted this statement. Lady Morgan replied in a spirited pamphlet: she stated that she had the facts from Dinon and Champollion, the *savans* themselves who had deciphered the inscription,—men whose honour could not be called in question; and as she herself could no more be doubted, the whole burden of proof was thrown upon her assailant. The pamphlet called forth by this controversy was Lady Morgan's last effort. Receiving a pension from Government, in recognition of her literary eminence, she spent the last years of her life in England, and died in the spring of 1859.]

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

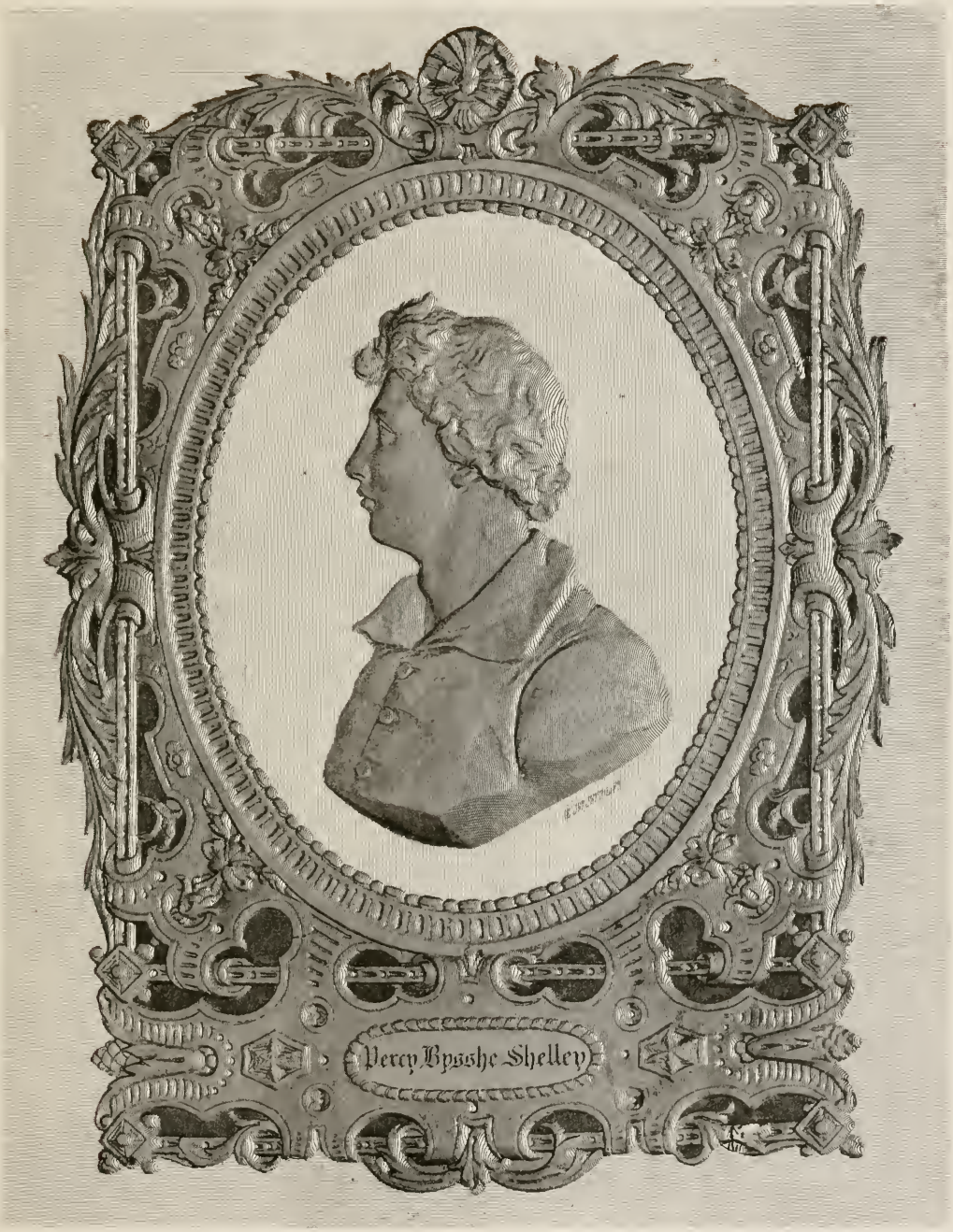
It is a delicate, no less than a difficult task, to write the life of a dreamer and a doubter; if the biographer feels a biographer's sympathy with his subject, he runs the risk of being himself disregarded as a visionary, a questioner of sound and wholesome matters of faith. If, on the other hand, he cannot leave the beaten track of reason and belief, if he cannot deal indulgently with the wanderings and struggles of a mind at once strong and weak, liberal and credulous, he is unfit for his task, and stands in the position of a common horseman passing judgment upon the winged steed Pegasus. The difficulties adverted to have not been unfelt, even in meditating the brief sketch which accompanies our portrait of the child-like, melancholy features of Percy Bysshe Shelley.

He was born at Field Place, in the county of Sussex, on the 4th of August, 1792, the son of Sir Timothy Shelley, Bart., of Castle Goring, in the same county. Till he reached the age of seven or eight years, Captain Medwin tells us that "he was brought up in retirement with his sisters, receiving the same education as they, whence he never showed the least taste for the amusements of boys." He was then sent to school at Sion House, Brentford, where he remained for some years—years to him of exquisite misery. We are told that his feminine education subjected him to much persecution and ridicule, in that roughest of republics, a boys' play-ground. It may be, too, that some slight kindling of that peculiar and unworldly spirit, which afterwards burned within him with so consuming a fire, manifested itself even in this ungenial region; for that his mind began early to work we have proof in those lines of confession so often quoted:

"I do remember well the hour which burst
My spirit's sleep—a fresh May dawn it was,
When I walked forth upon the glittering grass,
And wept, I knew not why, until there rose,
From the near school-room, voices, that, alas!
Were but one echo from a world of woes—
The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.
And then I clasp'd my hands, and look'd around;—
But none was near to mock my streaming eyes,
Which pour'd their warm drops on the sunny ground.
So without shame I spoke—'I will be wise,
And just, and free, and mild—if in me lies
Such power, for I grow weary to behold
The selfish and the strong still tyrannize
Without reproach or check.' I then controll'd
My tears—my heart grew calm, and I was meek and bold.

And from that hour did I, with earnest thought,
Heap knowledge from forbidden mines of lore."

* * * * *



RICHARD BENTLEY & SON, LONDON

While at school, Shelley's progress in learning appears to have been wayward and unsatisfactory; he was already, however, reading, thinking, analyzing for himself,—devouring such books as he adopted, and embracing such opinions as were congenial to him, with the prejudice of a young lover. In one place we read of his translating Pliny's Natural History, pausing and puzzling his tutor over its books of astronomy; in another, of the eagerness with which he threw himself upon the study of German literature, feeding with its mysticism and marvels, that mind whose tendency it was "implicitly to believe every assertion, so that it was improbable and incredible;" as a recreation, indulging his propensity for chemical experiment, by setting trees on fire with a burning-glass; as a duty, organizing a conspiracy against the hateful system of fagging. Every line of these school-records makes us earnestly lament that one gifted with a mind so active, so noble, but withal so incomplete as his, should have been early in life denied the guidance of some friend or relation strong enough calmly and kindly to entertain his doubts without aversion, and sufficiently wise to teach him the true name of the key to their solution, which he carried to his grave without knowing it—who would have smiled at his eccentricities rather than reproved them, being aware that all such as were of any importance to his real happiness and usefulness, *must* of necessity fall away, as his mind became balanced by time and experience.

Shelley was one of those impatient geniuses who rush early before the world. Captain Medwin tells us, that at the unripe age of fifteen he wrote part of a poem, called the "Wandering Jew," published not many years since in "Fraser's Magazine," and shortly afterwards printed his wholly lost novels, "Zastrozzi" and "The Rosicrucian;" the former was composed under the fervent influence of his first love, the lady being his cousin, whom, like the "Mary" of Byron's youth, he had the misery of seeing wedded to another.

From school, Shelley was removed to Oxford at an early age,—another unlucky circumstance in his destiny. Without any superior mind at hand, upon which he might anchor his own;—ceaselessly stirred by doubts which the spirit of the times wherein he lived was peculiarly tended to awaken—times, be it remembered, which had called forth the masterly essays of Godwin, and had sent forth in life three of our afterwards most orthodox poets as the promoters of a scheme of Pantisocracy;—eccentric and unworldly in his habits—gifted with a purity of mind which made him "offended, and indeed more indignant than would appear to be consistent with the singular mildness of his nature, at a coarse or awkward jest, especially if it were immodest or uncleanly"—animated with a passion for truth (forgetful that, even in Truth's holy cause, passion is excess)—it is not to be wondered that the whole structure and routine of university life was felt by him to be an absurdity, a mockery, an oppression—that something of a martyr's feelings began to possess him, confirming him in his secluded habits and unpopular speculations, and leading him resolutely to despise that very world he was so enthusiastically bent upon reforming.

Of Shelley's residence at Oxford, the hand of an intimate friend has given some most interesting particulars. Nothing could have been less orderly or more harmless than his habits—nothing more utterly at variance with his inclinations and feelings, than the severe but limited course of study, and round of scarcely-veiled licence, which, between them, divide college life. In his studies he was unmethodical, irregular, but most earnest. "He rejected with marvellous impatience," writes his friend, "every mathematical disciple that was offered;—the method of demonstration had no charms for him, and when the discoveries of modern analysts were presented, he was immediately distracted, and fell off into endless musings." It may be noted, as illustrative of his peculiar mind, that, devoted as he was to the ancient literature and language of Greece, he manifested not merely an

indifference, but a hostile aversion to the study of the Oriental tongues; that, eager as he was in the pursuit of chemistry, he despised a science of no distant kindred, the science of botany; that he who, on a future day, drew inspiration from the architectural splendours of ruined Rome (the "Prometheus Unbound," he tells us, being "chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla"), should have no eye for the stately and picturesque buildings which make Oxford stand alone among the English cities. Yet we are expressly told that such was the case. "Out of the four-and-twenty hours he frequently read sixteen," the place of his study being often indicated by a circle of crumbs upon the carpet; for his reasonings and researches had already led him to believe that, whereas crime comes of evil, evil comes of bodily disease, and bodily disease is fostered by a sanguinary and unnatural diet; and he had begun rigorously to suit his practice to the theory, which he shortly afterwards recommended to the world in a singular note to that strange poem, "Queen Mab."

All this time Shelley's mind was working with unhealthy activity; he was writing anonymous letters to provoke discussion on the momentous questions with which it was occupied, or to inoculate others with his daring and unpopular opinions. He still found his chief recreation in the performance of chemical experiments, though we are told that he was so unskilful a manipulator, that he more than once narrowly escaped poisoning himself or setting his rooms on fire. His college friend adds, "that he possessed a singular taste for perilous recreations, and a thoughtlessness in pursuit of them, that rendered his existence from one day to another miraculous." The Reviewer who deduced his possession of a large organ of destructiveness from his experiments with the burning-glass, would have found corroborative proof in the trait that he chose to equip himself for his long country rambles with "pistols and good store of powder and ball." No less astounding and significant to such severe judges must be the frolics in which he indulged. What could be expected from a youth of sixteen who could hardly pass by a pond or piece of running water without loitering near it:—amusing himself by the childish pastime of throwing stones in it, or sailing paper boats, to manufacture which, when all other material was exhausted, he would even avail himself of the fly-leaves of his books, his darling pocket companions? It is true that in some of these rambles we find traces of the sweet charity of his nature: in one place we read of his feeding a vagrant's child with milk procured from a neighbouring farm-house; in another, how he reasoned gravely with a donkey-boy upon cruelty to animals; then, again, we stumble upon some curious outbreak of whim and eccentricity—as when, having been equipped in an admirable new coat, the skirts of which were torn off in forcing his way through a thicket, he insisted upon displaying them on a hedge, and leaving them there "a spectacle," he said, "for men and gods;"—as when, on meeting with a poor woman with a baby in her arms, he suddenly snatched the latter, asking, in the piercing tones of his shrill and high-pitched voice, whether the child could communicate anything concerning a state of pre-existence. And how characteristic is the trait of his reasoning himself out of a fit of choler by an attempt to define anger! how quaintly engaging the home-picture of him lying asleep on the rug before the fire, exposing his little round head to the full force of the unscreened blaze, and seeming to rejoice in the heat!

The above passages have been dwelt upon, perhaps, disproportionately, but they are valuable as illustrating the thoughts and opinions which so long and sadly alienated him from his fellow-men. It will be divined, too, from them, that Shelley's residence at Oxford could hardly be crowned by the usual termination of a scholar's career. No one will be surprised at that outbreak of his republican spirit, which led him to put forth a volume of fierce and fiery rhymes, under the title of "Margaret Nicholson's

Remains" (she, it will be recollected, being the maniac who attempted the assassination of George the Third), or at the subsequent avowal of his scepticism manifested in the publication of a syllabus from Hume's essays, and his challenge of the constituted authorities to discuss its truths in a public controversy, which led to his expulsion from Oxford at the age of seventeen; and this expulsion to a disunion from his own family. Thus, while yet a boy, did he deliberately cast away all the worldly advantages which he might have enjoyed; deliberately break the ties of use and custom, and, deeming himself a missionary and a reformer, throw himself upon life, with little hope or support, save such as he found in the earnestness and endurance of his own spirit. The words with which he describes Lionel in "Rosalind and Helen," are exactly applicable to himself:—

"Men wonder'd, and some sneer'd to see
One sow what he could never reap:
For he is rich, they said, and young,
And might drink from the depths of luxury;
If he seeks fame, fame never crown'd
The champion of a trampled creed:
If he seeks power, power is enthroned
'Mid ancient rights and wrongs, to feed
Which hungry wolves with praise and spoil,
Those who would sit near power must toil;
And such, there sitting, all may see.
What seeks he? All that others seek
He casts away, like a vile weed
Which the sea casts unreturningly."

From Oxford, Shelley made his way up to London. The strange irregular life which he led in the metropolis tended still further to subject him to reproof and misconstruction. His mistaken enthusiasm in the cause to which his future prospects had been sacrificed hurried him presently into the commission of an act more daringly overt than the one which had provoked his expulsion from the University,—the publication of "Queen Mab." As some mitigation of the offence justly given by its undisguised atheism (so strangely compounded of bitterness and gentleness) and the wild code of morals promulgated in its notes, it should be remembered that this poem was printed only for private circulation, being brought under the notice of the general public by a piratical bookseller, and that in subsequent years its author spoke of its publication with regret. Strangely characteristic of the audacious simplicity of the poet's character is the anecdote, if a true one, that he sent a copy of his confession of faith and code of morals to each one of the bench of bishops.

About this time Shelley's first marriage took place: the lady being yet younger than himself, a Miss Harriet Westbrooke. This connection was more than distasteful to his family, who now utterly cast him off, and as long as it lasted his life was one of misery, and restlessness, and privation. The details of his residence in England and Wales—the many anecdotes of his inconsiderate generosity, amounting to munificence, which prove that his disordered fortunes and shattered health neither soured his temper nor shut up his heart—cannot be included within our present limits. It must be mentioned, however, that about this period he made the acquaintance of Leigh Hunt (whom he was afterwards to befriend so signally) and of Lord Byron: the latter during a flight to the Continent; for, finding the union into which he had precipitated himself, or, as some have it, been inveigled, a yoke no longer to be borne, he had separated from his

wife, and endeavoured to find distraction and relief from his anxieties in a foreign tour. During the comfortless years of his first married life, he had breathed out his doubts and discontents in a few poems, which were published but to be disregarded or anathematized. The preface to "Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude," dated December, 1815, contains a remarkable and saddening confession; for all Shelley's poems and prefaces may be read as confessions.

"The poem entitled 'Alastor' may be considered as allegorical of one of the most interesting situations of the human mind. It represents a youth of uncorrupted feelings and adventurous genius led forth by an imagination inflamed and purified by all that is excellent and majestic, to the contemplation of the universe. He drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge, and is still insatiate. The magnificence and beauty of the external world sinks profoundly into the frame of his conceptions, and affords to their modifications a variety not to be exhausted. So long as it is possible for his desires to point towards objects thus infinite and unmeasured, he is joyous, and tranquil, and self-possessed. But the period arrives when these objects cease to suffice. His mind is at length suddenly awakened, and thirsts for intercourse with an intelligence similar to itself. He images to himself the being whom he loves conversant with speculations of the sublimest and most perfect natures, the vision in which he embodies his own imaginations unites all of wonderful, wise, or beautiful, which the poet, the philosopher, or the lover could depicture. The intellectual faculties, the imagination, the functions of sense, have their respective requisitions on the sympathy of corresponding powers in other human beings. The poet is represented as uniting all these requisitions, and attaching them to a single image. He seeks in vain for a prototype of his conception. Blasted by his disappointments, he descends to an untimely grave." . . . .

During the interval which elapsed between the publication of "Alastor" and "The Revolt of Islam," Shelley's fortunes had undergone dark vicissitudes. His first marriage had been closed by the melancholy death of his wife, which took place in the year 1817, and was followed by a chancery decree, depriving the poet of the guardianship of his children on the plea of immorality and atheism. These events produced their natural consequences of bitter self-condemnation: unfortunately, however, there was sufficient palpable injustice and harshness in Lord Eldon's sentence, to furnish *a wrong* to a spirit so sensitive and questioning; and with this wrong, an opiate of self-excuse strong enough to lull those upbraidings of conscience which might otherwise have ended in a clearer and more relying faith in a Supreme Being. The wound, too, was in some measure healed by Shelley's second marriage with Miss Godwin. For a short time after this he resided at Great Marlow in Buckinghamshire, occupying six months of his retirement in the composition of the "Revolt of Islam." In its exquisite dedicatory address to his wife, and in the whole tone of its colouring and imagery, there is evidently an increase of hope and calmness on the part of the poet. He still, however, shows himself unalterably vowed to the services of his boyhood—to the preaching of a religion of Love and Intellectual Beauty, whose spirit should be peace and liberty, and brotherly kindness—he still is filled to overflowing with the vision of a world where should neither be sensual passion, nor hate, nor bigotry; all its inhabitants being equally divine in their strength and purity.—How different this from the negative scepticism of the mocker, who pulls down without the power or the wish to build up again! Parts of this long allegory are of a surpassing beauty—instinct with music and perfume, glistening with imagery of inexhaustible variety: as a whole, however, it is wearying from its want of the life and breath of humanity, and it requires more than a single effort to induce us to follow the fortunes of Laon and Cythna to their close. "The Revolt of Islam" was written in friendly rivalry of Keats, who was writing his

"Endymion" at the same time, and with whom Shelley had recently made a friendship, too soon, alas! to be closed with that lament for his early death, which may be called the "Lycidas" of our own day.

It was early in the year 1818, that Shelley quitted England never to return to it, taking up his residence in different parts of the Continent, and pouring forth in rapid succession that splendid series of poems which entitle him to one of the highest thrones among our modern sons of song; though they will always, from their manner yet more than their mind, remain the delight of the few rather than of the many. We may trace the poet's wanderings in his works, beginning with the exquisite "Lines written among the Euganean Hills" (October, 1818), the Eclogue, "Rosalind and Helen," a dreary tale of oppression and agony, and the gentler and sadder "Stanzas written in Dejection," wherein

> ———"despair itself is mild,
> Even as the winds and waters are,"

bear the date of Naples, December, 1818. The "Cenci," unquestionably the most powerful of modern tragedies (the only work which we dare, at a distance, compare with Shakspeare's "Lear," and which, by its power, and passion, and concentration, makes us mourn its author as the lost hope of modern tragedy), is dated from Rome in the following May: so also is "Julian and Maddalo," that poem (published in 1820) so deeply interesting as containing the portraits of its author and Lord Byron, independently of its gloomy and forcible picture of an evening landscape, with that one grim object on its horizon,—

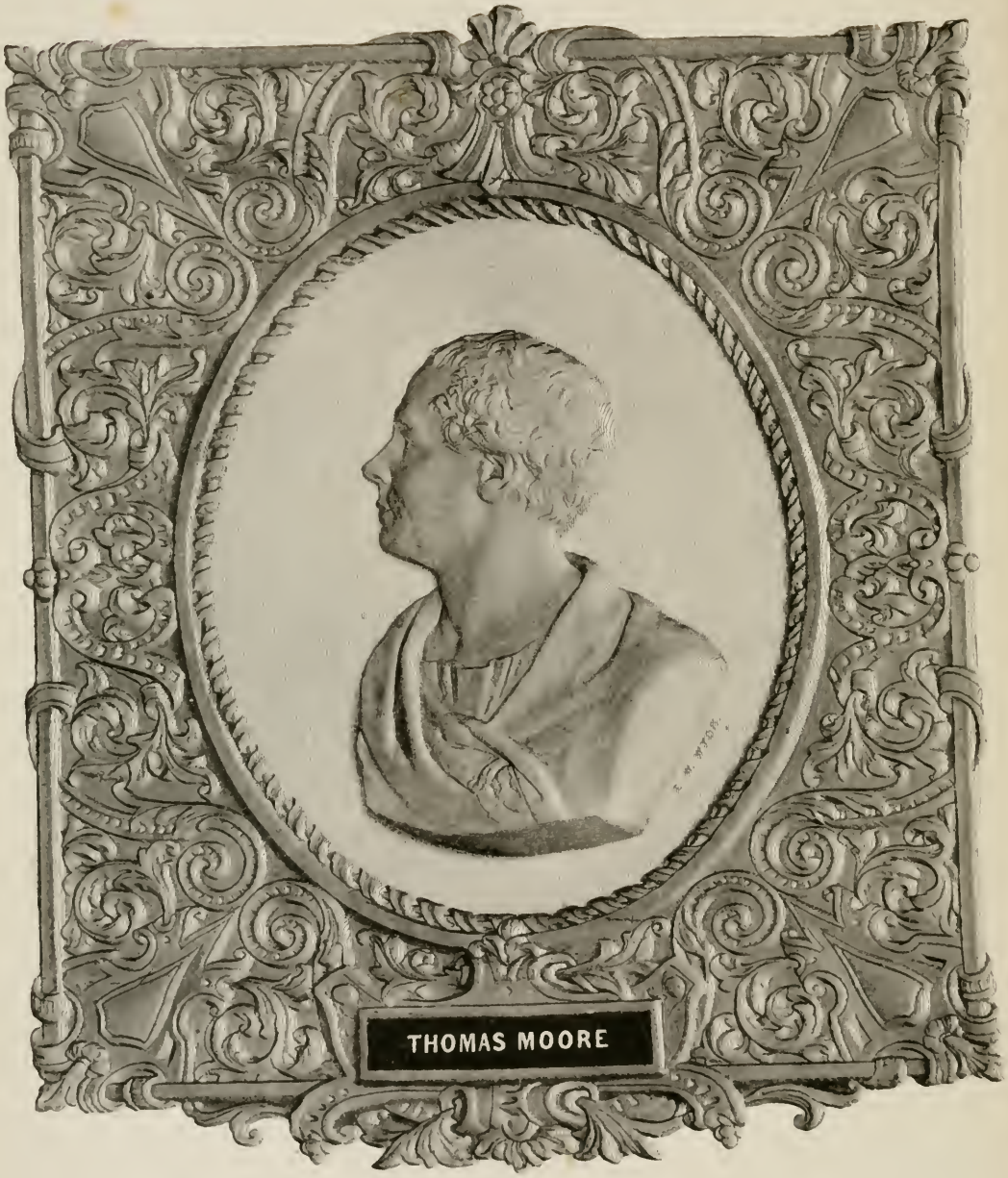
> "A windowless, deform'd, and dreary pile,
> And on the top an open tower, where hung
> A bell which in the radiance sway'd and swung
> In strong and black relief—'What we behold
> Shall be the madhouse, and its belfry-tower,'
> Said Maddalo, 'and even at this hour
> Those who may cross the water hear that bell
> Which calls the maniacs, each one from his cell,
> To vespers.'" . . . . .

The "Ode to the West Wind," of all Shelley's Lyrics the most individual and passionate (we write, not forgetting the odes to "Naples" and "Liberty," and the ode to the "Skylark," in which, like the bird, its poet seems to sing "at heaven's gate"), "was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno near Florence, on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours from which pour down the autumnal rains;"—the birth-place of the "Prometheus Unbound," which was completed in six weeks, has already been mentioned. The winter of 1821 was spent in and near Pisa, where again Shelley for some months enjoyed the society of Lord Byron, with that peculiar zest which is not tasted by those whose popularity or the easiness of their requisitions makes them the sought and the seekers of many friends. Between the two poets the "Liberal" was planned, and the consequent invitation of Mr. Hunt to Italy. This ill-considered publication, it will be remembered, had but a short and disastrous life. In the course of this winter, too, the "Adonais" was written, Mr. Keats having recently died at Rome under very painful and depressing circumstances. That elegy, like the Requiem of Mozart, might almost be accepted as prophetic of its singer's own untimely fate.

We are now near the close of Shelley's career; for it would be superfluous to dwell upon the well-known details of the melancholy shipwreck of the 8th of July, in which he

perished, and of the singular and painful obsequies which attended his remains. Our scanty sketch cannot be better brought to an end than by a passage from the eloquent preface to his Posthumous Poems, which were edited and published shortly after his decease by Mrs. Shelley:—

"When he made his home under the Pisan Hills, their roofless recesses harboured him as he composed 'The Witch of Atlas,' 'Adonais,' and 'Hellas.' In the wild but beautiful bay of Spezia the winds and waves which he loved became his playmates. His days were chiefly spent on the water; the management of his boat, its alterations and improvements, were his principal occupation. At night, when the unclouded moon shone on the calm sea, he often went alone in his little shallop to the rocky caves that bordered it, and, sitting beneath their shelter, wrote 'The Triumph of Life,' the last of his productions. The beauty and strangeness of this lonely place, the refined pleasure which he felt in the companionship of a few selected friends, our entire sequestration from the rest of the world, all contributed to render the period of his life one of continued enjoyment. I am convinced that the two months we passed there were the happiest we had ever known: his health even rapidly improved, and he was never better than when I last saw him, full of spirits and joy, embark for Leghorn, that he might there welcome Leigh Hunt to Italy . . . . . He spent a week at Pisa, employed in kind offices towards his friend, and enjoying with keen delight the renewal of their intercourse. He then embarked with Mr. Williams, the chosen and beloved sharer of his pleasures and of his fate, to return to us. We waited for them in vain; the sea, by its restless moaning, seemed to desire to inform us of what we would not learn:—but a veil may well be drawn over such misery . . . . . The truth at last was known—a truth that made our loved and lovely Italy appear a tomb, its sky a pall. Every heart echoed the deep lament; and my only consolation was in the praise and earnest love that each voice bestowed and each countenance demonstrated for him we had lost—not, I fondly hope, for ever; for his unearthly and elevated nature is a pledge of the continuation of his being, though in an altered form. Rome received his ashes; they are deposited beneath its weed-grown wall, and the 'world's sole monument' is enriched with his remains."



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THOMAS MOORE.

THERE are some writers who bear the same relation to those giants of literature whose mighty works have moved the world's mind onward, that the gorgeous, artificial, fascinating opera bears to the great and genuine drama. First and foremost among these stands Thomas Moore: nor let it be counted as disrespect or disparagement, that we venture to assign him such a position. It is well that, in the assembly of the poets, there should be one who, though at times he breaks out like Tyrtæus into stirring hymns of truth and liberty, should sing for the most part in the smooth measures and rich but choice language of the court-minstrel:—it is well that there should be one who, in the harsh controversy of conflicting opinions, should bear his part with sparkling wit for his weapon, rather than impassioned eloquence. In pointing to Mr. Moore as the perfection of the man of the world and the man of letters combined, we refer not only to the excellence of his works, in which the refinement of the saloon and the scholarship of the closet are so gracefully blended, but to that steadiness of principle and purpose on the part of their writer, which place him so far above those who, tempted by the possession of popular talents, devote themselves, unhonoured mercenaries, to no worthier object than the amusement or service of the most munificent patron—or the most liberal flatterer.

Mr. Moore was born in Dublin, on the 28th of May, 1780; the only son of Mr. Garret Moore, a respectable tradesman of that city. His early education was superintended by Mr. Samuel Whyte, who had also been Sheridan's preceptor, and to whom he pays an honourable tribute in his biography of that brilliant man. At the age of fourteen he was entered as a student of Trinity College; and here, we are told, he made himself as remarkable for the eloquence wherewith he supported the peculiar opinions,—which, throughout his life, he has never ceased to speak, and write, and sing,—as for his classical attainments. He was loved, too, as being the best of boon companions, in a circle where social qualities are eminently valued. At the close of the year 1799, he entered himself as a member of the Inner Temple, and, in the year following, gained the surname which will, perhaps, be graven on his tomb, by the publication of his translation of Anacreon's Odes; this was dedicated to George the Fourth, then Prince of Wales. His first essay, meditated, we are told by him, even in his schoolboy days, gave a sure token of the path which the poet would choose; an evidence, that in fulfilling his vocation as love-singer, he would be rather sentimental and voluptuous than romantic; but in a subsequent volume of poems, published in 1801, under the assumed name of Little, we find him even yet more of a sensualist and less of a *beau Troubadour* (that is, chivalrous as well as enamoured) than might have been suspected from such an outset. But upon this work it is needless further to dwell.

Mr. Moore's next essays—to follow a tolerably accurate list of his works—were political: being two poems, "Corruption" and "Intolerance," in which he shows himself as warm a patriot as he had before shown himself a warm votary of pleasure. "A Candid Appeal to Public Confidence," another work devoted to the topics of the hour, bears the date of

1803; and it may have been about this time, or yet earlier, if we are to judge from two pleasant lines by Croker, that he essayed dramatic composition, the piece being "The Gipsy Prince," which met with only a partial success. In the autumn of 1803, Mr. Moore was appointed Registrar to the Admiralty at Bermuda, and proceeded thither; but after a short residence, finding the place and the drudgery of office intolerable to him, he decided on fulfilling its duties by deputy; and, paying a flying visit to America on his way homeward, returned to England late in the year 1804. In 1806 he published his "Odes and Epistles," suggested by this ramble, a series of travelling sketches and personal poems, which established him in public estimation as one of the most skilful of modern writers, possessed of a rich treasure of natural fancy and gathered allusion, and weaving them into exquisitely-modulated verse, with an art which almost, if not altogether, fulfils the highest condition of excellence, namely, that of concealing itself.

In the year 1807, Mr. Moore presented himself to the public as the author of the "Irish Melodies." By these his name will be known, so long as there are voices to sing and hearts to feel. Few have ever applied themselves to any task so richly qualified as he was. He possessed not merely the mechanical power over language and rhythm, the musical ear, and, we may add, the musical knowledge, so eminently requisite for a song-writer, but he entered thoroughly into the spirit of the national music which he had undertaken to "marry with rhyme," and could, with enviable versatility,

"call up the sunshine, or bring down the showers,"

by a strain careless or melancholy as the air under his hands *(and in his heart)* demanded. If it must be admitted that some of his songs, in the elegance of their *tournure*, and the sentiment verging towards conceit which they embody, are too mannered, too artificial, for the music wherewith they are mated, there are as many which, for their truth and intimate appropriateness of feeling and character, can never again be dissevered from the airs to which they have been joined. It is fortunate that to mention instances cannot by any possibility be required of us, otherwise this sketch would never come to a close.

While on the fascinating subject of song-writing, it may not be amiss to advert to the other verses for music which Mr. Moore has poured forth, with a fertility almost unexampled—a fertility, too, which, though it may lead at times to self-imitation, has never to be pleaded in excuse for carelessness or puerility. We may enumerate the "National Melodies," a charming series, to which Mr. Bishop, as adapter of the airs selected, has done fullest justice,—the "Sacred Melodies," whose devotional fervour takes, perhaps, too much of the form of earthly passion,—the "Evenings in Greece," and the "Summer Fête," where the songs are strung together on a connecting thread of verse, slight indeed, but always golden: to say nothing of other later collections, and a countless variety of single songs, and duets, and glees. In many of these Mr. Moore, besides being their poet, appears as musical composer also, with happy effect. Some of his melodies (we must particularize "the Song of the Olden Time") are most original and expressive: and those who remember what were the best-approved ditties some forty years since, the "Sweet Kittys," and "Buy my Posies," of our fathers, transported from the Rotunda of Vauxhall to do duty in "my lady's chamber," cannot but feel how deeply we are indebted to Mr. Moore for the delicious words and graceful music introduced by him in happy exchange for such mean and vulgar compositions.

In the year 1811, Mr. Moore made his second dramatic essay in an opera, "M.P., or the Blue Stocking." This was produced at the Lyceum, then under Mr. Arnold's management, with but questionable success. During the six subsequent years he was principally occupied with the publication of songs and political *jeux d'esprit*, the doings of the Regent

and his household furnishing him abundant matter for his wit. Many of his sharpest-pointed sallies (they are all as fine as poignant) appeared in the "Times" newspaper, with which he was understood to have formed a regular connection. The "Twopenny Post-bag" was published in 1813. During these years, too, he mixed largely in the fashionable and brilliant society of the metropolis, of which such lively and tantalizing glimpses are to be found in the correspondence of his friend and contemporary, Lord Byron. The poet of "Childe Harold," and of the "Melodies," assumed the matrimonial yoke about the same period, but with far different results of happiness.

It might have been thought that Mr. Moore's popularity was at its height before "Lalla Rookh" made its appearance; but the enormous sum given for it by its publishers was an earnest that that Oriental Tale of Tales was to be spread abroad yet more widely, to be read and got by heart with even a warmer enthusiasm than its author's shorter metrical essays: and the event justified their anticipations. "Lalla Rookh" is precisely the poem which was certain to work an immediate and universal enchantment upon the English public, such as it was in the year 1817;—a public athirst for verse, and which had not yet disenthralled itself from the empire of the passionate school, to follow in lessened numbers, and with a calmer but more intense affection, the footsteps of those who may be said to have "gone out into the wilderness" for meditation and prayer. The stories it contains excited a strong interest, the music of the verse in which they were poured out was of a seducing and luxurious harmony, and all the gorgeous and picturesque shows of the East, among which the fancy has loved to revel ever since the days when the "Thousand and One Nights" was a favourite cradle-book, were scattered through the poet's pages with a rich and graceful profusion. Even now, though we read it with the cooled enthusiasm which comes of time and change, though we feel that it never reaches the point where poetry, in right of thought, and feeling, and imagery, become sublime and *immortal*, we are still carried away, as we read, by its glowing numbers and rich descriptions, till we can forget that there is enjoyment of a loftier and purer order to be derived from "tuneful and well-measured song."

The poet's next work, "The Fudge Family," one of those brilliant trifles in right of which he stands alone and unrivalled, owed its birth to a passing visit to Paris, whose humours, and the humours of its visitors, the sight-seeing English, were as yet comparatively unexhausted. Very recently Mr. Moore, in his "Fudge Family in England," has reproduced the actors who figured in that piquant satire; but Miss Biddy, in the full flow of her Gallo-mania, cannot but be felt to be far more lively and spirited than the lady who has become controversial and anti-Popish (though a touch of her old spirit breaks out in her alternate discussions of becoming millinery and Gospel ministry), while brother Bob—gouty, a *gourmand*, a thick-and-thin supporter of the bench of Bishops, seems to us but vapid and spiritless when compared with the pompous inanity of his father,—the flower of the Fudges!

Passing by a host of brilliant *pièces d'occasion* (of the compositions for music we have already spoken collectively), we come to Mr. Moore's second and last long poem, "The Loves of the Angels," which was published in 1823. The appearance of this was hastened, its author tells us, by the announcement of Lord Byron's "Heaven and Earth," which was understood to be founded on the same passage of Holy Writ. Mr. Moore came to his task well prepared, by an intimate acquaintance with the traditions of the ancient church (the fruits whereof were to be afterwards displayed, not happily for their author's fame, in "The Travels of an Irish Gentleman"); but, making little use of these, the subject of the intercourse between the sons of God

and the daughters of men, became in his hands nothing more exalted than a series of love-stories, told in that honeyed verse so peculiarly his own. The "Loves of the Angels" must be felt to occupy a very secondary position among its author's writings; he speaks of it, indeed, in his preface, as having been originally but an episode in a work of greater consequence, which was forestalled, and its completion prevented by the announcement of Lord Byron's drama.

With this work we conclude our notice, slight as it is, of Mr. Moore's metrical compositions. Blank verse, as far as we are aware, he has never attempted. But besides being author of the poems specified, and a thousand more, which limited space renders it impossible to enumerate, he has presented himself to the public as a voluminous writer of prose, having entered the domain of fiction in the "Epicurean"—of biography, in the Lives of Sheridan, and Lord Byron, and Lord Edward Fitzgerald—of political and religious controversy, in the "Memoirs of Captain Rock," and "The Travels of an Irish Gentleman"—and of history, in the recent volumes on Ireland, contributed to Dr. Lardner's Cyclopædia. None of these works, in right of their execution, can rank as high as Mr. Moore's poems. The "Epicurean" contains elaborate descriptions, in which the antique knowledge mentioned a while since is turned carefully to account; and the contrast between the gorgeous mysteries of Egyptian idolatry and the simple, heart-influencing faith of the Christians, is happily sustained: but the book, save to very young readers, is a cloying one. In the "Life of Sheridan" the biographer had a subject of no ordinary impracticability; to write the adventures of a wit, is the next difficult task to painting a rainbow; and there is no small danger of such a work, if confided to one who bears in character and temperament a certain similarity with his subject, coming from the hands of the latter overcharged and over-laboured. Such, at least, seems the case with the "Life of Sheridan." Again, in the Byron Memoirs, the author's difficulties were a hundred-fold greater. Having incurred suspicion and misconstruction from the sacrifice of the autobiography committed to his care by his friend, he placed himself in the position of one who knows more than he will or ought to tell, and has still to justify and maintain his reader's interest in a character which, by its inconsistencies, is placed upon the list of eccentric prodigies, with whom the general world can have little consistent sympathy. But, apart from all this inherent difficulty, there were small defences and subtle distinctions attempted, which were felt to be useless to the subject of the biography, and unworthy of his biographer; there was everywhere visible the disposition, born of personal affection, to tamper with the faults of "the wandering Childe"—whereas, it would have been wiser, with a judicious daring, to have stated them without apology, drawing out and dwelling upon those brilliant lights which so largely redeemed the tremendous shadows of Byron's character. In Lord Edward Fitzgerald Mr. Moore had his simplest subject; and the work is, accordingly, his best; and it is written throughout with heart and feeling, without either the effort at brilliancy, or the uneasy constraint and misgiving, discernible in the other two biographies. We feel in every page that the author loved his task, and that the tale of the fortunes of the amiable and highly-gifted and ill-starred young nobleman, who was wrecked in the convulsions of a disastrous and terrible time, could not have been better confided than to him who sang in the war-song of "Brien the Brave,"

> "Forget not our wounded companions who stood
> In the day of distress by our side;
> While the moss of the valley grew red with their blood
> They stirr'd not, but conquer'd and died!"

Little more remains to be said, unless we were to record traits of character and details of private life,—to rake up the old story of the duel with Mr. Jeffrey, and the challenge to Lord Byron, which led to a fast friendship; unless we could call up the ghosts of banquets at Holland House, and call back the thousand bright flashes with which his wit "has brightened the claret" of the social board;—the thousand charming songs (for the poet and composer is a singer too,) with which he has held the fair and the courtly in mute attention. We may add, however, that Mr. Moore was some years ago placed on the pension list; a fit place for one who has never falsified his principles, by word or by silence, and who has passed through trying vicissitudes of fortune, with his honour unstained and unquestioned.

[Subsequently to the date of the preceding memoirs, few incidents vary the life of Thomas Moore. Handsomely provided for, by a pension secured for him by his political friends, he lived quietly in his cottage near Devizes in Wiltshire, his greatest literary effort being the republication, in 1841, of his collected works. His four children preceded him to the grave. Their premature loss threw a gloom around his hearth which could not be spirited away by the kindness and attention of high-born friends. Like many authors who overtask their invention and fancy, and at the same time devote themselves to laborious research, Moore sank in his old age into a state of almost helpless idiocy. Lingering for three years in this melancholy condition, he died on the 25th of February, 1852, and was interred at Bromham near his Wiltshire cottage. His memoirs, letters, and correspondence have since been published by his friend and executor Lord John Russell. They have shed a new light on his career and character, and brought prominently into view all those sociable and loveable qualities which endeared the great Irish song-writer to so many friends.]

CHARLES LAMB.

Of all our modern writers who have lived and laboured during a period each successive event of which has tended to foster a cosmopolitan spirit, Charles Lamb (or rather call him Elia) is, perhaps, the most indefeasibly and genuinely English. The racy, golden humour of his works, has, as yet, been sparingly tasted on the Continent; but shall we wonder at this neglect, we, who have so lately begun to sympathise with the feelings and fantasies of Jean Paul Richter, who are still so far from regarding with a catholic and tolerant spirit the literature of *la jeune France*, in spite of all its extravagances, so full of vitality and character? Was not this delicious essayist, this clear-sighted and benevolent critic, compelled by neglect endured among his own countrymen to exclaim, "Damn the age! I will write for antiquity!" and has not the general public only begun rightly to appreciate and love him, since the day when—his earnest, and whimsical, and heart-engaging tasks laid by—

"Home he has gone, and ta'en his wages?"

It was the compensating good fortune of Elia, however, to be surrounded throughout his career by a circle of discriminating and gifted friends. From the Reminiscences* already published by one of these, a kindred spirit, whether in richness of imagination or sweetness of heart, we shall principally draw our present notice.

"Charles Lamb," says the writer referred to, "was born about the year 1774. His family were settled in Lincolnshire, as we learn by his reference to the family name in a pretty sonnet.

"'Perhaps some shepherd on Lincolnian plains,
In manners guileless as his own sweet flocks,
Received thee first, amid the merry mocks
And arch allusions of his fellow-swains.'

In 1782, being then about eight years of age, he was sent to Christ's Hospital, and remained there till 1789. He has left us his 'Recollections' of this place in two charming papers. These are evidently works of love; yet, being written with sincerity as well as regard, they communicate to the reader a veneration for the ancient school. One wishes, whilst reading them, to muse under the mouldering cloisters of the old Grey Friars, to gaze on the large pictures of Lely and Verrio, to hold colloquy with the 'Grecians;' and, above all, there springs up within us a liking, a sympathy (something between pity and admiration) for the Blue-coat boy, toiling for College honours, or wandering homeless through the London streets; a result, perhaps, of more moment to the author, than that of upholding the reputation of his favourite school. In his second paper, on this subject, and where he apostrophizes some of his contemporaries, the following passage has just met our

*A series of papers which appeared in the *Athenæum* of 1835, which are understood to have been written by Mr. Proctor, better known to the public as Barry Cornwall.

eyes. 'Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the day-spring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee,—the dark pillar not yet turned—Samuel Taylor Coleridge, logician, metaphysician, and bard!' It it thus that he invoked the most famous of his school companions; one whom he always held in close friendship, and who died—how short a time!—before him.

"It was not long after he quitted Christ's Hospital that he obtained the situation of clerk in the India House. Here he remained for many years, rising gradually from a small salary to a comfortable yearly stipend; until in 1825, or thereabouts, he was pensioned off liberally (with 'two-thirds of my accustomed salary,' he says) by the Directors. During this period he dwelt in various places, sometimes in London, sometimes in the suburbs. He had (among other residences) chambers in the Temple, lodgings in Russell Street, Covent Garden, a house at Islington, on the border of the New River, lodgings at Dalston (or Shacklewell), at Enfield Chase, and finally at Edmonton, where he died of erysipelas, on Saturday the 27th of December 1834, in the sixty-first year of his age."

"Mr. Lamb," (we are still literally following his friend Barry Cornwall,) "had one brother whom he lost many years before his death, and one sister; but he had no other, certainly no other near relations. His brother, Mr. John Lamb, of the South Sea House, was considerably his senior. 'You were figuring in the career of manhood,' he says, addressing his brother,

"'When I was yet a little peevish boy.'

The reader may remember that it was this brother (otherwise James Elia) who, upon seeing some Eton boys at play, gave vent to his forebodings in that memorable sentence, 'What a pity to think that these fine ingenious lads in a few years will be all changed into frivolous members of Parliament.' His sister, between whom and our friend there existed a long, deep, and untiring affection, and who is worthy in every respect to have been the sister of such a man, survives him. They lived together (being both single), read together, thought together, and crowned the natural tie that linked them to each other with the truest friendship. He has written down her qualities, some of them, at least, in a pleasant essay—she is the *Bridget Elia* of 'Mackery End.' And she is the person, also, to whom one of his early sonnets is addressed, in which he reproaches himself for some little inequality of temper towards her,—

"'If from my lips some angry accents fell,
Peevish complaint, or harsh reproof unkind,
'Twas but the error of a sickly mind.'

"'Thou didst ever show to me' (he proceeds) 'kindest affection;

"'Weeping my sorrows with me, *who repay*
But ill the mighty debt of love I owe,
Mary, to thee, my sister and my friend!'"

There is a strange, tender wish in reference to Miss Lamb (who was ten years older than himself) in the paper entitled "Mackery End." "I wish," says he, "that I could throw into a heap the remainder of our joint existences, that we might share them in equal division; but that is impossible!" These few notices of his family cannot so well be closed, as by reminding the reader of that beautiful passage in the paper "Old China" (one of the last essays of Elia), in which his faithful household companion, under the show of complaining that increased riches have taken away from them the pleasure of self-denial and anticipation, is represented as indulging herself in looking back over the years of narrow circumstances, through which they had toiled in loving companionship;—reminding

Elia of the precious folio edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, whose purchase had cost them many days of anxious doubt and deliberation, and had extended the date of a threadbare corbeau suit for some weeks; of those hearty by-gone playgoings to see the battle of Hexham and the Surrender of Calais, and Bannister and Mrs. Bland in the Children in the Wood,—when, says she, "we squeezed out our shillings a-piece to sit three or four times in a season in the one-shilling gallery, where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me, and more strongly I felt obligation to you for having brought me; and the pleasure was the better for a little shame; and when the curtain drew up, what cared we for our place in the house, or what mattered it where we were sitting, when our thoughts were with Rosalind in Arden, or with Viola at the Court of Illyria?"

It has been pleasantly and truly observed, that some live for the uses of the romancer,—some for the gossip of the anecdote-monger. Charles Lamb belonged to the latter number. Being all his life, as much from choice as necessity, an inhabitant of London, or its immediate neighbourhood, and the possessor of *humours* that kept proportion with, and sharpened his intellectual powers, he was sure to draw round him all the choice spirits of his time with whom he had aught in common. He speaks most characteristically, though in somewhat an imaginative fashion, of his own tastes and habits in society, in his preface to the last "Essays of Elia."

"My late friend was in many respects a singular character. Those who did not like him, hated him; and some who once liked him, afterwards became his bitterest haters. The truth is, he gave himself too little concern what he uttered and in whose presence. He observed neither time nor place, and would e'en out with what came uppermost. With the severe religionist he would pass for a Freethinker; while the other faction set him down for a bigot, or persuaded themselves that he belied his sentiments. Few understood him; and I am not certain that at all times he understood himself. He too much affected that dangerous figure—irony. He sowed doubtful speeches, and reaped plain, unequivocal hatred. He would interrupt the gravest discussion with some light jest; and yet, perhaps, not quite irrelevant in ears that could understand him. Your long and much talkers hated him. The informal habit of his mind, joined to an inveterate impediment of speech, forbade him to be an orator: and he seemed determined that no one else should play that part when he was present. He was *petit* and ordinary in his person and appearance.* I have seen him sometimes in what is called good company, but where he has been a stranger, sit silent, and be suspected for an odd fellow; till, some unlucky occasion provoking it, he would stutter out some senseless pun (not altogether senseless, perhaps, if rightly taken), which has stamped his character for the evening."

Let us complete this unflattering, yet withal engaging *personal* sketch, by a picture of Elia among his intimates, drawn by his friend's hand; the scene being his lodgings in Russell Street, Covent Garden. "On certain evenings (Thursdays) one might reckon upon encountering at his rooms from six to a dozen unaffected people, including two or three men of letters. A game at whist and a cold supper, followed by a cheerful glass (glasses!) and 'good talk,' were the standing dishes on these occasions. If you came late you encountered the perfume of 'The Great Plant.' The pipe hid in smoke (the violet among its leaves)—a squadron of tumblers, fuming with various odours, and a score of quick

* Not so precisely. Wordsworth writes of him, as

"The wrapt one of the God-like forehead,"

and Barry Cornwall as, "a little spare man in black, with a countenance pregnant with expression, deep lines in his forehead, quick, luminous, restless eyes, and a smile as sweet as ever threw sunshine upon a human face."

intellectual glances saluted you. Here you might see Godwin, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, Coleridge (though rarely), Mr. Robinson, Serjeant Talfourd (his friend till death), Mr. Ayrton, Mr. Alsager, Mr. Manning,—sometimes Miss Kelly or Liston,—Admiral Burney, Charles Lloyd, Mr. Alsop, and various others; and if Wordsworth was in town, you might stumble upon him also. Our friend's brother, John Lamb, was occasionally there; and his sister, his excellent sister, invariably presided. Questions of all kinds, with the exception of existing politics, were started, and fairly argued here: metaphysics and theology—poetry and the drama—and characters of all sorts. Lord Chatham and the fives's-player Cavanagh; Lord Foppington and the Lord St. Albans; Jack Bannister and Dickey Suett, were brought forward and separately discussed. Nothing came amiss that was good."

Among the thousand delightful anecdotes of bright things said and strange things done by these merry men of Cockaigne, whether at such jovial town meetings, or when some one among them, venturesome in his philanthropy, strayed out to visit Elia in his suburban abode, it is impossible to trust ourselves: and there is no need that we should, so recently have they been collected and laid before the world, by his highly-gifted and amiable executor, Mr. Serjeant Talfourd. To no more fitting hands could the task have been entrusted. We must now leave the man Elia, and say and steal a word or two concerning his works. Of these the following list includes the principal in prose and verse: "Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets," 1808; "The Works of Charles Lamb" (in two volumes), 1818; "Elia," 1823; "The Last Essays of Elia," 1833; "The Adventures of Ulysses and Tales from Shakspeare;" besides which he made a second gleaning from the old English dramatists, under the name of "The Garrick Papers" (published in Hone's "Every-Day Book"), and collected his later poems in a little volume, "Album Verses," which also contains "The Wife's Trial," a short drama, founded upon Crabbe's admirable tale of "The Confidante:" this had previously been published in "Blackwood's Magazine."

Of Lamb's poetry little could be said likely to recommend it to those who love it not already. He, with whom "the thrice noble, chaste, and virtuous, but again somewhat fantastical and original-brained generous Margaret Newcastle," was "a dear favourite,"—who was steeped to the heart's core in the spirit of Burton and Fuller, Jeremy Taylor, and Sir Thomas Browne,—and who, besides sympathizing with Haywood, Ben Jonson, and Ford, and Massinger, could only sympathize with Donne, and Quarles, and Cowley,—it was natural that such an one should in his own poetical efforts cast himself back among "the rare and curious ancients," not only in spirit, but in letter also;—should not merely emulate their originality and freshness of thought, but also clothe his thoughts in the quaint costume of their obsolete phraseology: and it is not wonderful if his verses have obtained nothing more than the limited popularity they deserved.

A far different fate awaits his essays—the lucubrations of the incomparable Elia. They were written, says Barry Cornwall, "in his famous days. All that had been done before that time had met with comparative neglect: his rights as a critic were not recognized; his pretensions as a poet had been disputed; his wit, his fine observations, his consummate pathos, had been shown in vain. He was in a fair way of cursing the age, when Mr. John Scott, then editor of the 'London Magazine,' applied to him for support. His tasks at the India House, which occupied without wearying him, had left him ripe and vigorous for any mischief. He wanted excitement; and he was not unwilling, probably, to show the world what sort of man they had neglected. He was already the magician of a small circle; but he wished to enlarge it. The quick and sincere laugh of his hearers (that best and true echo of a jest), the judicious praises of highly-gifted friends, and 'the god within him,' prompted him to write. He wrote, and the 'Essays of Elia' were the result."

Like his poems these excellent and peculiar writings are imbued with the spirit of our

older times: filled too,—filled to overflowing with the sympathies of the writer's heart and the crotchets of his brain. Many of them, too, are not merely exclusively English—but townish—belonging to London—Hogarth's and Handel's, and Pope's London—the London of coffee-houses and theatres, of the South Sea House and the bookstalls of Holborn—the same city as that whose fascinations held Johnson in such powerful thrall. They are, in short, whimsically, breathingly, kindly individual; and should (may our wishes be prophetic!) be always numbered amongst our selectest classics, were it only for the sake of the clear and nervous English in which they are written.

But Charles Lamb has, perhaps, a yet stronger claim to our notice as a critic. To speak somewhat hastily, the chance words which fell from his pen concerning our ancient writers, are worth to us quires of disquisition and analysis which other hands have elaborated; better reasoned and wrought out, it may be, but less intimately felt. Almost the last paragraph which he published—a few lines of Table Talk given to the *Athenæum* in 1834,—contains an analysis of the close of Lear, short as a tomb-stone inscription, but entire, deep-thoughted, and sufficing. Once again, and for the last time, to borrow his friend's eulogy,—"He had wit—human pathos (in a high degree)—a delicate apprehension—a deep and curious vein of thought—a searching and, as it were, an *attractive* critical faculty, bringing out the beauties of an author (seldom his defects) as the sun brings forth or reproduces a flower. It has been said of him that in criticism he was 'a discoverer like Vasco Nunez or Magellan:' and assuredly it was he who first brought the world acquainted with the wonders of the old dramatists of England. . . . . No one will love the old English writers again as he did. Others may have a leaning towards them—a respect—an admiration—a sort of *young* man's love, but the true relishing is over; the close, familiar friendship is dissolved. He who went back into dim antiquity, and sought them out, and proclaimed their worth to the world—abandoning the gaudy rhetoric of popular authors for their sake, is now translated into the shadowy regions of the friends he worshipped. He who was once separated from them by a hundred lustres, hath surmounted that great interval of time and space, and is now—THEIR CONTEMPORARY!"

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MARY RUSSELL MITFORD.

THERE are few names which fall with a pleasanter sound upon the ears of those who adopt authors as friends, in recognition of the moral purity and geniality of feeling as much as of the original talent displayed in their works, than the name of Mary Russell Mitford. Happy thoughts and fresh images rise up when it is spoken, and yet we are a trifle too apt to think of it only as connected with all that is lovely in the rural scenery, and characteristic in the rural society of Southern England, and to forget that it also appertains to a dramatist of no common power, who has wrought in a period when—if the theatres be deserted, and the popular-acted drama have degenerated into melodrame, burletta, and farce—the plays published exhibit far more signs of strength and promise than were shown by those produced in the palmy days of Garrick, or the yet more glorious after-summer of the Kembles.

It was at Christmas time, in the year 1789, that Miss Mitford was born, her birthplace being the little town of Alresford, Hampshire. She is descended, on the father's side, from an ancient family in Northumberland, not remotely connected with nobility; and there is a quaint rhyme current in the north country, which promises the name a long duration:

> "Midford was Midford when Morpeth was nane,
> Midford shall be Midford when Morpeth is gane;
> So long as the sun sets or the moon runs her round,
> A Midford in Midford shall always be found."

Her mother was the only daughter of Dr. Russell, of Ashe, in Hampshire; this lady was a singularly good classical scholar; and it would have been strange, if under such auspices, the education of her daughter had not been liberally planned and carefully completed. How delightfully Miss Mitford has chronicled her school pleasures and school feelings, during the years between the ages of ten and fifteen, passed by her at a London boarding school of high repute, no one who has read "Our Village" can have forgotten. By her own showing she was as shy as she was clever, after a somewhat original fashion—a keen lover of poetry and plays. And shortly after she left school, she showed the next evidence of talent, the possession of creative as well as appreciative power, by publishing a volume of miscellaneous poems, which were favourably received; for in those days poetry was read. This was shortly followed by a metrical tale, in Scott's manner, founded on the story of the discovery of the mutineers of the "Bounty," a subject afterwards taken up by Lord Byron in "The Island;" and this second essay ("Christine, the Maid of the South Seas") by a series of narrative poems on the female character. These works, now all but forgotten, were, at the time of their appearing, successful; but their young writer was herself dissatisfied with them; conscious, perhaps, that they were little more than imitations, and forgetting that it is by imitation that genius has almost always in the first instance

manifested itself. She withdrew herself from composition—read much, though without any decided aim or object, and would never (*she thinks*) have attempted authorship again, had not those vicissitudes of fortune, which try the metal of the sufferer no less searchingly than the sincerity of his friends, compelled her to come forth from her retreat, and honourably to exercise the talents with which she had been so largely gifted. It would be raising the veil too high to dwell upon the sequel; upon the rich reward of love, and respect, and consideration, which have repaid so zealous and unselfish a devotion of time and talent as Miss Mitford's life has shown. We have but to speak of the good which has come out of evil, in the shape of her writings.

Miss Mitford's principal efforts have been a series of tragedies, heralded by a volume of dramatic scenes, which received favourable notice from Coleridge. "The Two Foscari" —"Julian"—"Rienzi"—"Charles the First," have been all represented, and all well received—the third with signal success. Besides these may be mentioned two other tragedies, still in manuscript, "Inez de Castro" and "Otto of Wittelsbach," Miss Mitford's last, finest work. In all these plays there is strong vigorous writing,—masculine in the free unshackled use of language, but wholly womanly in its purity from coarseness or license, and in the intermixture of those incidental touches of softest feeling and finest observation, which are peculiar to the gentler sex. A rich air of the south breathes over "Rienzi;" and in the "Charles," though the character of Cromwell will be felt to *vibrate,* it is, on the whole, conceived with a just and acute discernment of its real and false greatness—of the thousand contradictions which, in reality, make the son of the Huntingdon brewer a character too difficult and mighty, for any one beneath a Shakspeare to exhibit. As also in Joanna Baillie's fine tragedies, the poetry of these plays is singularly fresh and unconventional; equally clear of Elizabethan quaintness and of the modern Della-cruscanisms, which, as some hold, indicate an exhausted and artificial state of society, in which the drama—the hearty, bold, natural drama—has no existence. At all events, it is now too much the fashion that everything which is written for the stage shall be forgotten so soon as the actors employed in it have "fretted their hour;" were it otherwise, we should not have need to dwell, even thus briefly, upon the distinctive merits of Miss Mitford's tragedies.

In leaving them, however, we cannot but point attention to the happy choice of their subjects, and in doing this, may venture a remark or two which will lead us on to the works by which Miss Mitford is the most widely known—her sketches of country life and scenery. Among the characteristics which eminently distinguish female authorship, it has often struck us, that there is none more certain and striking than an instinctive quickness of discovery and happiness in working out available subjects and fresh veins of fancy. At least, if we travel through the domains of lighter literature during the last fifty years, we shall find enough to prove our assertion. We shall find the supernatural romance growing into eminence under the hands of Anne Radcliffe—the national tale introduced to the public by Miss Edgeworth and Lady Morgan—the historical novel by Miss Lee and the Miss Porters—the story of domestic life, with common-place persons for its actors, brought to its last perfection by Miss Austen. We shall find "Kenilworth" anticipated by the "Recess" (a tale strangely forgotten), and "Werner," owing not only its origin, but its very dialogue, to "Kruitzner"—and the stories of "Foscari" and Rienzi," ere they fell into the hands of Byron and Bulwer, fixed upon with a happy boldness by the authoress under notice. But the claims of Miss Mitford to swell the list of *inventors,* rest upon yet firmer ground; they rest upon those exquisite sketches, by which—their scenery all, and their characters half real—she has created a school of writing, homely but not vulgar, familiar but not breeding contempt (in this point alone *not* resembling the highly-finished

pictures of the Dutch school), wherein the small events and the simple characters of rural life are made interesting by the truth and sprightliness with which they are represented.

Every one now knows "Our Village," and every one knows that the nooks and corners, the haunts and the copses, so delightfully described in its pages, will be found in the immediate neighbourhood of Reading, and more especially around "Three Mile Cross," a cluster of cottages on the Basingstoke road, in one of which our authoress has now resided for many years. But so little were the peculiar and original excellence of her descriptions understood, in the first instance, that, after having gone the round of rejection through the more important periodicals, they at last saw the light in no worthier publication than the "Lady's Magazine." But the series of rural pictures grew—and the venture of collecting them into a separate volume was tried. The public began to relish the style so fresh yet so finished, to enjoy the delicate humour and the simple pathos of the tales; and the end was, that the popularity of these sketches somewhat outgrew that of the works of loftier order proceeding from the same pen—that young writers, English and American, began to imitate so artless and charming a manner of narration; and that an obscure Berkshire hamlet, by the magic of talent and kindly feeling, was converted into a place of resort and interest for not a few of the finest spirits of the age.

It should, perhaps, be owned, in speaking of these village sketches, that their writer *enamels* too brightly—not the hedge-rows and the meadow-streams, the orchards and the cottage gardens, for who could exceed Nature?—but the figures which people the scene; that her country boys and village girls are too refined, too constantly turned "to favour and to prettiness." But this flattery only shows to us the health and benevolence of mind belonging to the writer; nor would it be just to count it as a fault, unless we also were to denounce Crabbe as an unfaithful painter of English life and scenery, because, with a tendency diametrically opposite, he lingers like a lover in the workhouse and the hovel, and dwells rather upon decay, and meanness, and misery, than the prosperity, and charity, and comfort with which their gloom is so largely chequered. He may be called the Caravaggio, Miss Mitford the Claude of village life in England; and the truth lies between them. Both, however, are remarkable for the purity and selectness of their language; both paint with words, in a manner as faithful as it is significant. Crabbe should be reserved for those bright moments when the too-buoyant spirits require a chastener, a memento of the "days of darkness," Miss Mitford resorted to in hours of depression and misgiving, when any book bearing an olive-branch to tell us that there is fair weather abroad is a blessed visitant.

After publishing five volumes of these charming sketches, a wider field for the same descriptive powers was found in a small market-town, its peculiarities, and its inhabitants, —and "Belford Regis" was written. But the family likeness between this work and "Our Village" is so strong as to spare us the necessity of dwelling upon its features. Since its publication, besides many other fugitive pieces, Miss Mitford has completed her last tragedy the "Otto." And now our record may be closed, as it is not permitted to us to dwell upon the private pleasures and cares of an uneventful life, spent for the most part "in a labourer's cottage, with a Duchess's flower-garden." We should mention, however, the recent addition of Miss Mitford's name to the pension-list, as one among many gratifying proofs, that literature is increasingly becoming an object of care and protection to our statesmen, and in this much-stigmatized world, talent and self-sacrifice do not always pass on their way unsympathized with or unrecognized.

[Subsequently to the date of the preceding narrative, no incident occurred to break the even tenor of Miss Mitford's life. When the long nights of winter set in she busied

herself with authorship, and with returning summer she tended her shrubs and flowers. Living within a convenient distance of Windsor Castle, her garden became a place of pilgrimage to some of the most august personages in Europe. Many were the honours heaped upon her, just as she reached the bourne dividing middle life from old age—a bourne, alas! which she was not destined to cross. In the autumn of 1855 she was seized with a severe illness, and in the following January she breathed her last, in her humble cottage, deeply lamented by all whom she had honoured with her intimacy.]


THOMAS CAMPBELL

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

In one of Sir Walter Scott's fresh and charming prefaces, he points to the writings of glorious John Dryden, as illustrating a remark upon the general voluminousness of popular authors. Were we disposed, for contradiction's sake, to advance an observation of diametrically opposite tendency, we should find a strong corroborative example in the poems of Thomas Campbell, which, being included within the narrow compass of a single volume, still number among them some of the most precious and sterling gems of English song.

Thomas Campbell was born at Glasgow, on the 27th of July, 1777; the youngest of ten children. Mr. Alexander Campbell, his father, the youngest son of Campbell of Kernan in Argyleshire, a Highland laird, was a retired merchant, who had traded largely with America in his time. Our poet can be hardly said to have his authorship by inheritance, though the eldest of his paternal uncles, Mr. Robert Campbell, having been induced by embarrassed circumstances to go up to London, in the hope of retrieving his fortunes, had been engaged in the literature of political partizanship (if, indeed, it deserves so to be named) under the auspices of Sir Robert Walpole: and among many others of his works, a life of his "far awa cousin," John, Duke of Argyle, may be specified: but the fall of his patron involving him also in ruin, he died in London, it is to be feared, in very narrow circumstances. Mr. Alexander Campbell was himself an intelligent man, an intimate friend of Professor Reid, at whose hands Thomas received his name: and though the latter, as the youngest son, the child of advanced age (being born when Mr. Campbell was 67), was perhaps the favourite of the flock, and as such received the best education—others of the family were distinguished for their intellectual superiority, and the poet speaks and writes with particular affection and respect of his eldest brother, Mr. Archibald Campbell, who died some years ago at Richmond in Virginia.

Thomas Campbell was sent, when thirteen, to Glasgow College. He remained there for six sessions, going successively through the classes of Latin, Greek, Logic, Natural and Moral Philosophy. He writes thus unaffectedly of his University achievements. "In some of the classes," says he, "I was idle, and bore off no prize at all, and being obliged by my circumstances to give elementary instruction to students still younger than myself, my powers of attention were often exhausted in teaching when I ought to have been learning. Nevertheless, I was not undistinguished at college; when but thirteen I gained a bursary after a hard and fair competition, before the whole Faculty, in construing and writing Latin, where I was pitted against a student twice my age." Nor must it be forgotten, in speaking of his college career, that Professor Young, in awarding to Thomas Campbell a prize for the best translation of the *Clouds* of Aristophanes, pronounced it to be the first exercise which had been ever given in by any student belonging to the University.

The law lectures of Professor Millar, to whose high merits Mr. Campbell has repeatedly and warmly testified, had the effect of interesting him deeply in the study of jurisprudence; and had well nigh quenched the "divine ardour" within him, or turned it into sterner channels. During a twelvemonth's seclusion in the Highlands, which followed the close of his University career, he buried himself deeply in the abstractions of moral science, earnestly desiring to make law his profession. But this was not to be. Two poems composed during this, his nineteenth year, and still retained in some editions of his works—The Elegy on Miss Broderic, and the Dirge of Wallace—remain to show that Nature will have way, in spite of opposing circumstances. The law project was, of necessity, abandoned, and our poet removed from Argyleshire to Edinburgh. Who is there but knows by heart his hauntingly beautiful "lines on revisiting" that scene of his retirement? In Edinburgh he maintained himself by private tuition; for a time being but little known, but gradually drawing round him some of the then choice spirits of Modern Athens—James Grahame and Francis Jeffrey among their number: and in the year 1799 introducing himself more widely to the world by the publication of "The Pleasures of Hope."

This poem calls for no analysis at our hands. What musician would expend himself in dissecting melodies which have become street music;—what critic would not feel it superfluous, to descant upon a work which has been said and sung from Johnny Groat's house to the Land's End, which has been taught in school-books, and wrought on samplers—become one of the cottager's scanty library, as well as taken its place upon more aristocratic shelves, as a British classic; and whose crowning excellence lies in its equal freedom from mannerism or obscurity on the one hand, or familiarity and baldness of diction on the other? The appearance of so admirable a work, led, as was inevitable, to its author's society being eagerly sought by the most distinguished among every class and profession. Though his reward was rather in celebrity than in adequate profit, Campbell was enabled by the publication and success of his poem to "put money in his purse," and to indulge his desire of seeing foreign parts.

Crossing over from Leith to Hamburgh, he proceeded into the interior of Germany. The war between France and Austria was at that time raging; and he made two attempts to cross the district where it was carried on; once in his way toward Vienna being stopped at Landshut, from the walls of which town he witnessed an engagement between the French and Imperial armies; and retiring thence to Ratisbon, which narrowly escaped bombardment,—a second time only relinquishing his design of passing over into Italy, *viâ* the Tyrol, on finding it impossible to proceed. In the spring of 1801 he returned to Hamburgh, and was there thrown among some of the banished leaders of the Irish Rebellion, a chance, which, joined with his fearless wanderings in the midst of encountering armies, being laid hold upon, by a spy, subjected him to some momentary suspicion on the part of the government authorities on his return to Scotland. But it was worth while to be suspected, for the sake of an association which had suggested a poem so exquisite as the "Exile of Erin;" and this was written at Hamburgh. Thirty years afterwards the poet was again suspected—this second time not of disaffection, but of reaping where he had not sown: an impudent claim to the authorship of this song being advanced by the editor of an Irish newspaper on the part of one George Nugent, who had died many years before, and was known as having written poetry. Strange to say, Mr. Campbell found a temporary difficulty in bringing forward that indisputable proof of its paternity—which might, indeed, have been required by law, but by neither equity nor common sense.

It was at Hamburgh, too, that "Ye Mariners of England" was called from the poet

(already registered as a disloyal subject in the pages of the book of *espionage*) by the prospect of a Danish war. How nobly—availing himself of the measure and burden of a popular song,—he poured forth that pride and that confidence which is the fit heritage of those who feel themselves masters of the seas, and which then were stirring every heart to noble deeds as with the voice of a trumpet, no Englishman can have forgotten—God forbid that any Englishman *should* ever forget! Though the years to come, we trust, will be years of the ploughshare and the reaping-hook, rather than of the sword and the spear,—till we wholly lose our nationality in a citizenship of the world, this lofty lyric will never cease to warm us: and even should such a golden millenium of universal toleration and prosperity ever arrive, it must still be reverently treasured by our children's children as a piece of old armour or a faded banner—a proud memorial that in the times when *were* "wars and fightings," we knew how to hold our own *sans peur et sans reproche!*

After a sojourn of some weeks at Hamburgh, Mr. Campbell took his passage for Leith: but the vessel being chased by a Danish privateer, was driven into Yarmouth; and the poet, so near London, could not resist the temptations it held out. After a short stay in the metropolis, he returned to Edinburgh, where he was subjected to the ridiculous examination to which his Hamburgh residence had furnished occasion, and where during his subsequent residence of a twelvemonth he wrote "Lochiel" and some other of his poems. But the attractions of London were so pleasantly remembered that he was again drawn thither in the year 1803, with the intention of making it his home. In the autumn of the same year he married his second cousin, Miss Matilda Sinclair, a lady endowed with every good gift save those of fortune. A series of vicissitudes of circumstance on the part of Mr. Campbell's family, added to the usual responsibilities of a love-marriage, compelled him for some subsequent years to coin his talent as diligently as he could; to become a literary labourer for the market. We are told of a History of England (most probably a continuation to Hume and Smollett's work) executed by him during this period; and of a large variety of anonymous labours for the periodical and daily press. But it is impossible to specify works which their author has no desire to reclaim from oblivion: and it is painful to dwell upon a time of ceaseless anxiety, and compelled task-work, and seriously-impaired health. Enough to say, that during this period he was introduced, among other new friends and connections, to Charles Fox; at whose instance, in recognition of his literary successes, he afterwards was placed on the pension list.

In the year 1809, however, brighter days began to dawn. Mr. Campbell's health was re-established; he wrote his "Battle of the Baltic" (perhaps the most spirited of his lyrics), "Lord Ullin's Daughter," and "Gertrude of Wyoming." They were published in the same year, with a success which has rather increased than diminished, many editions having been rapidly called for, to one of which a new interest was given by the addition of "O'Connor's Child." To point out the characteristics in right of which these poems stand alone among the works of the present day,—to parallel the shorter (and stronger) compositions with the odes of Gray, and the longer works, wherein there is room for description and episodical incident and digressions, with the musical and true-hearted compositions of Goldsmith, never cold where their author is the calmest,—would lead us too far astray. The "Gertrude," the most popular of the series at the time of its appearing, is, perhaps, the least likely to live: whereas, owing to their happy exemption from conceit and mannerism, to the simplicity and strength of their language, and the perfect finish of their versification, we cannot picture to ourselves any possible state of English literature in which the shorter odes, and songs, and ballads, can be rejected as antique and obsolete, or be forgotten as having contained merely words, which are ephemeral, in place of thoughts, which are immortal things.

Shortly after the publication of this volume, Mr. Campbell was invited to deliver a course of lectures on poetry at the Royal Institution. So highly were these esteemed, that their author was immediately engaged by Mr. Murray, of Albemarle Street, to undertake his selections from criticisms upon the British Poets. This work involved more research and labour than would seem at first sight requisite, especially in the portions referring to remote periods, when much of that antiquarian knowledge is required for elucidation and illustration, which sits stiffly upon the poetical critic, and which, therefore, should be felt rather than seen in his writings. While this work was in preparation, the author took advantage of the treaty of Paris, to visit the French metropolis. He has given us, in his "Life of Mrs. Siddons," the transcript of his impressions on beholding some of the treasures of art in the Louvre, which he chanced to visit in company with that distinguished lady.

Each subsequent year, about this time, was marked for the poet by a further turn of the wheel on its golden side—his fame had spread far and wide, and his fortunes were reinstated by the successful issue of his literary exertions, and a liberal legacy bequeathed to him by a kinsman. We can only mention with a passing word his delivering a course of lectures on poetry at Liverpool, in the winter of the year 1818; and his second visit to Germany, during which he applied himself assiduously and somewhat whimsically to the study of Hebrew, and was inspired, by the rich and picturesque scenery of the Rhine, to write some of his best minor poems, "The brave Roland" among the number. On his return to England, in 1820, he accepted the editorship of the "New Monthly Magazine," which he retained for ten years. These were, perhaps, the brightest periods of his life. He enriched the periodical under his care with some of his finest works; he drew around him the first spirits of the day. It was during this time, in the year 1824, that "Theodric" was published, the last long poem Mr. Campbell has given to the world—a work less vivid and attractive than its predecessors, from the choice of its subject (which is of a domestic nature), and therefore less prized by the public. During this period, too, he occupied himself in projecting the London University; and while busy with this liberal and extensive plan of furnishing additional collegiate education for the youth of England, he received from his own *Alma Mater* the highest honours she can bestow; being elected Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow. In this election Mr. Canning had been nominated as the opposing candidate; and it must not be forgotten that so eminently did Mr. Campbell, in his official capacity, engage the respect and good-will of the students of his native university, that they elected him, at the conclusion of two years,—the usual period of office,—for a third and additional year.

In 1830, having previously suffered a severe domestic bereavement in the death of Mrs. Campbell, the poet closed his labours as editor of the "New Monthly Magazine." Since then he has been less stationary than formerly—now, living for a year at St. Leonard's, Hastings, during which time he gave his name and occasional contributions to the "Metropolitan Magazine," then just established—now, lending his heart, and hand, and purse, with untiring energy, to the assistance of the refugees whom the Polish insurrection and its consequences have thrown upon the sympathy of the English public—now, finishing the "Life of Mrs. Siddons," which he had undertaken at her own express wish—now, rambling across the Continent to Algiers, finding there abundant store of new and gay subjects for his pen, as his lively letters, recently published, sufficiently testify. Mr. Campbell, we are told, is at present preparing a splendid illustrated edition of his poems: is it vain to wish that he would add to their number, in place of polishing and decorating those already written, and already known and beloved, wherever poetry is heard? That these are dark days for English song we know; but rarely has the example of one who pours forth

noble thoughts in rich and chaste language, unshackled by any theory, undisfigured by any conceit in his mode of delivery, been more urgently required for the imitation and warning of rising aspirants, than at the present moment, when Genius, instead of taking up the lyre and studying its lofty modes, for the expression of her divinely-prompted imaginings, is far too apt to content herself with the fantastic and pleasant, but childish chime of the coral and bells!

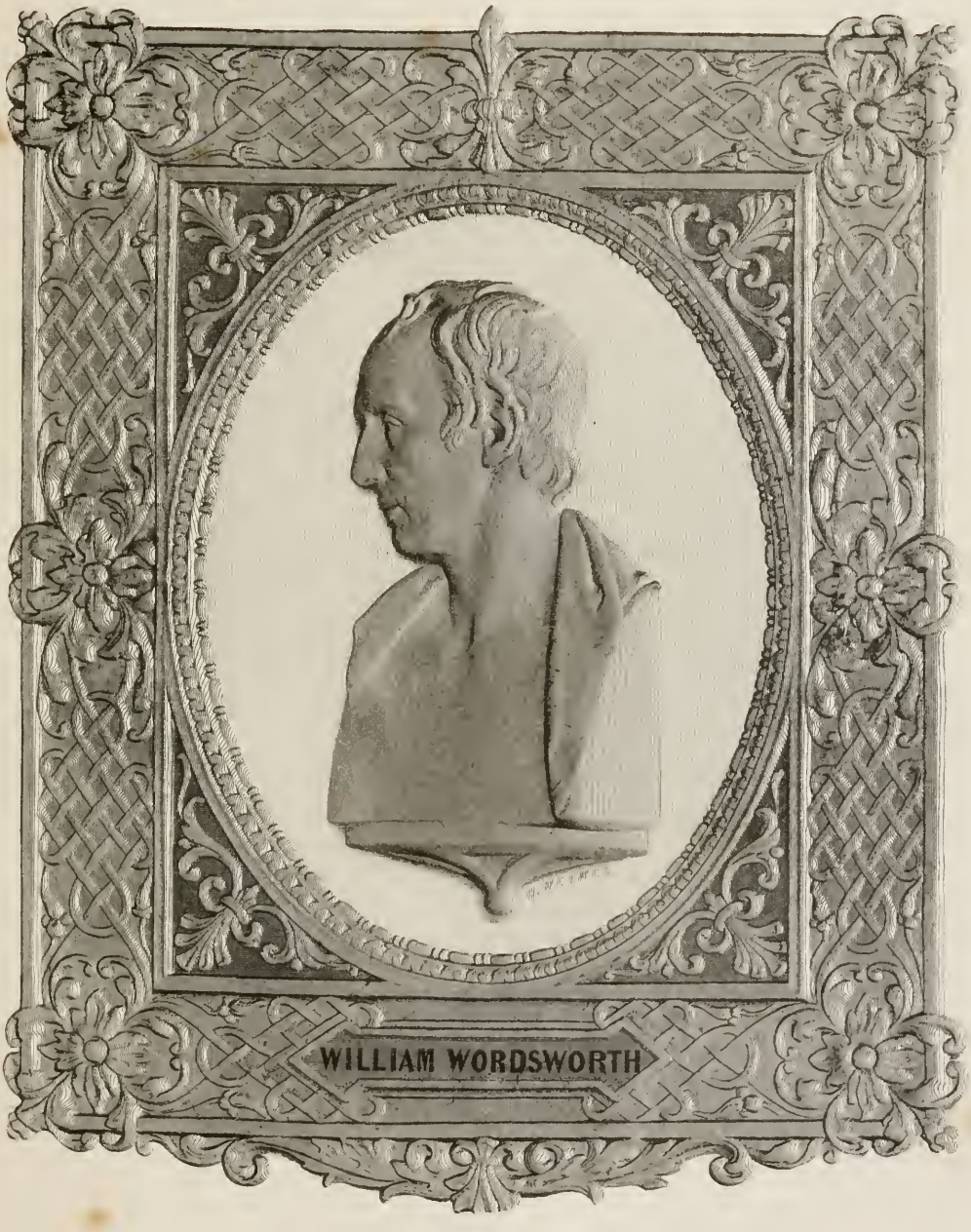
[The preceding memoir leaves Mr. Campbell at the zenith of his reputation. His Lives of "Petrarch" and "Frederick the Great," and his "Pilgrim of Glencoe," whatever merit they may possess, cannot be said to add a fresh laurel to the brow of the poet. Anacreon only wrote a few lines, but these lines, it has well been said, will float for ever on the abyss of time. So it was with Campbell: his poems, brief as they are, will live with the English language, and never can be associated with the productions of his latter life; thrown hastily from his pen, not for fame, but for bread. Sad it is that a man of so much genius should not have found it possible to bestow upon these writings of his maturer years, the care and elaboration necessary to work them into shapes of enduring beauty. In 1843, Mr. Campbell, for the benefit of his shattered health, took up his abode at Boulogne,—and at this place he died in the following year, watched over in his last moments by an affectionate niece, and by friends who tenderly loved him for his private worth. The last years of his life were embittered by pecuniary embarrassment and domestic sorrows—they were embittered, moreover, by the harsh and ungenerous words of political foes, who touched the self-love of the poet to the quick, by ignoring alike his upright and generous qualities as a citizen, and his transcendent merits as a writer of verse. Little could the unhappy object of their calumnies have anticipated the national tribute bestowed upon his memory, when the Prime Minister of England, Sir Robert Peel, standing on one side of his bier, and the Chief of his family, the Duke of Argyle, on the other, his remains were entered near those of Addison, with pomp and reverence, in the Poets' Corner, of Westminster Abbey.]

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

The history of party spirit as pervading the world of literature, could not be better illustrated than by a retrospect of the fate which the poetry of Mr. Wordsworth has proved. The days *were*, when, among the million, his name was a word of reproach and derision; when the few who ventured to admire his works, to point to their spirit, as that true and heaven-descended light, which should survive and finally overcome the coarser fires by which it was for a moment out-glared, were silenced as dreamers by a sneer, and triumphantly put to confusion by strange words quoted from the lips of their own oracle. But "the whirligig of Time brings about his revenges." It is now the fashion to decry the popular poets of the last twenty years, as if it were just or possible that all the darker and sterner passions of humanity should be denied a voice and an echo—and not merely to extol, beyond all his predecessors, the apostle of contemplation, "who has worshipped nature in the stillness of the woods"—but to speak of him as the one only true prophet, whose rod has swallowed up all the rods of the false magicians. And hence our younger poets, fixing their reverential eyes upon him, as the regenerator of our literature, are something too apt to endeavour to strain their thoughts into his mould—to walk exclusively in the paths he hath chosen, to substitute, in short, in the place of a faith, earnest but reasonable, and permitting reservations and differences, an idol-worship, extreme and trenching upon superstition! Why should this be? "What," to quote one of the most eloquent and *catholic* of modern critics,* "should hinder the same mind from being elevated by delight in the study of one and all of the great masters? Nor is admiration of all inconsistent with preference of one, according to the mysterious constitution of each individual soul, which, though the senses are nearly the same in all men, gives a different shape and seeming to all objects, so that the same rose is a different rose to every pair of eyes in the world, and so also is the rainbow. At the bottom of many such prejudices and bigotries lies pride. By exclusive worship, men imagine they elevate the character of its object, and likewise their own, or rather their own reputation. There is an idol!—you think it mean; but we tell you it is magnificent! and that what you think clay and iron, is gold and ivory. Were you as wise as we, you, too, would fall down and worship it as we do, in spirit and in truth. Converts are made, and the sect, as it is enlarged, becomes more and more intolerant of any other faith and any other good works."

After these few words of preface, not wholly uncalled for, let us speak with all love and reverence, of one of the most remarkable men of modern Europe. So retired has been his life, and so sedulously withdrawn from the observation and the gossip of the anecdote-mongers, that the notices of Mr. Wordsworth permitted to us may be comprised in a very brief space; they consist merely of a few widely-scattered dates. He was born at Cocker-

* Professor Wilson.



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mouth, in Cumberland, on the 7th of April, 1770. When he was eight years of age he was sent to the grammar-school of Hawkshead, in Lancashire, with his brother, afterwards Dr. Christopher Wordsworth. Here, under the care of Mr. Taylor, then head-master, he became a good classical scholar; but he prophetically distinguished himself for his English composition, and a copy of verses on a vacation procured him high praise. How early the prevailing bent of his mind began to show itself, may be gathered from the anecdote, that "before the morning hour of repairing to school, he has been overheard repeating beautiful passages from Thomson's 'Seasons,' as he walked alone." "Having laid in a good store of grammar-learning," continues the notice to which we are indebted, "Mr. Wordsworth was removed in October, 1787, to the University of Cambridge, and entered at St. John's. During the long vacations, he indulged himself with travelling: one of his pedestrian excursions upon the Continent, in which he was accompanied by a college associate, was commemorated in a series of 'Descriptive Sketches, in Verse,' which were given to the public in 1793; in the same year also he published 'An Evening Walk,' a metrical epistle from the Lakes, addressed to a young lady."

"The child is father of the man," and the man of contemplation rather than the man of action or passion, had been predicated by the boy who loved, when

"creeping like snail, unwillingly to school,"

to murmur to himself some favourite passage from the "Seasons." In strict consistency with these early indications, we find Mr. Wordsworth, after leaving college—not applying himself, with a young man's ambition, to the needful drudgery of professional life, but wandering over England, making, in his wanderings, that minute and intimate acquaintance with nature, which, on a future day, was to furnish him with such a treasury of description, and allusion, and simile. Ere long, however, we find the poet bringing himself to an anchor in the hamlet of Alfoxden, Somersetshire: here, enjoying the society of Coleridge, and sharing his political opinions; for Mr. Wordsworth, like his other brethren of the Lakes, entered into life a zealous and immoderate upholder of the French revolutionists. The same enthusiasm for the cause of reform—for the substitution of nature and freedom in place of artifice and tyranny, as made him partaker in certain fierce poems of the hour, long since forgotten or disavowed, made him also, in the fulness of youthful confidence, meditate an experiment, the result of which was to be a new poetical system, and build up a theory which he was prepared to advocate with a martyr-like endurance. Thus it was that the "Lyrical Ballads" were planned. How the poet fell away from his political opinions, professing at the same time to abide with unshaken pertinacity by his poetical creed, his subsequent life and writings sufficiently demonstrate. The "Lyrical Ballads" made their appearance in the year 1798, including, it will be remembered, a few compositions by Mr. Coleridge. On their reception, in which discriminating admiration bore no reasonable proportion with virulent mockery and abuse, it is needless to dwell. In the same year Mr. Wordsworth visited Germany; in 1800 settled in Westmoreland: and finally established himself at Rydal Mount; a sweeter or more peaceful hermitage was never dreamed of or attained to by poet. In the year 1803, he married Miss Mary Hutchinson, of Penrith. Of the five children resulting from this union, two sons and a daughter (the joy of his fireside) are still living. His being nominated, about this time, to the office of distributor of stamps for the counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland by his friend Lord Lonsdale, placed him in easy circumstances, thereby rendering him happily independent in his poetical career of the praise and profit of the hour. Without indiscreet personality, it may be added, that "the daily beauty of his life," as a father, a friend, and a neighbour, has

not been flattered in his poems. We know that the constant allusion to domestic companionship and affection, such as we find in his memorials of different tours at home and abroad, or in the "Poems on the Naming of Places,"—or such as are linked with innumerable references to the natural beauty by which he has lived surrounded,—or such as make his picture of the three graces in the "Triad" one of the most fascinating portraits of woman ever executed—we know that these are the habitual and involuntary reflections of habits and sympathies which have been too sparingly allowed to shed their gracious influence upon the lives of the sons of song.

The list of Mr. Wordsworth's works must now be completed. First come his "Miscellaneous Poems." It must be noted that the first edition of these, published in 1807, was reviewed by Lord Byron in the "Monthly Literary Recreations," in the flat critical common-place of the day—that the second edition, which appeared in 1815, was accompanied by that prefatory essay, containing his poetical confession of faith, so judiciously and kindly dissected and illustrated by Mr. Coleridge in his "Biographia." In 1809 he published an earnest political pamphlet, "concerning the relations of Great Britain, Spain, and Portugal." By this time he, too, had undergone that change from Jacobinism to Toryism, which was shared by his brother-poets and neighbours of the Lake country. This change of opinion, in addition to the peculiarities of style and subject enforced upon him by his theory, in the prosecution of his literary career, and the quiet self-consciousness with which these were advanced, furnished a favourite handle of attack to wits, and critics, and rival poets for many a long year. It is curious, now that the heat of the controversy has subsided, to observe the subtlety and acrimony with which this attack was carried on: to read, for instance, with what an ingenuity of paradox and sincerity of partisanship Hazlitt, in his "Political Essays," contrives to reconcile the unpopularity of the poet with the worldliness of the politician; and then to remark, that it has been reserved for these days, in which, as some say, we are inevitably verging towards anarchy and unbelief, to place the Bard of Rydal even higher than most of his predecessors!

It appears that Mr. Wordsworth had been for some years meditating, and diligently employed in preparing, a philosophical and descriptive poem, to be entitled "The Recluse," "having for its principal object," says the writer, "the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement." Of this work it will be remembered that "The Excursion" (first published in 1814,) forms but a third, and is to be considered as an episodical or intermediate part; and the author adds in his preface, that "his minor pieces, which have been long before the public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive reader to have such connexion with the main work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses ordinarily included in those edifices." To this fancy he has adhered throughout his life, as may be seen by the thoughtful and systematic arrangement of his poems, in the complete edition recently published.

"The White Doe of Rylstone" bears the date of 1815. A fairer opportunity for comparison could hardly be afforded, than by placing its dedication at the side of Shelley's introductory lines to the "Revolt of Islam,"—each being addressed to the poet's "Mary," each containing a confession of faith, as well as of personal affection. Nor can we, in reading this poem, forbear to remark, how characteristically, as, indeed, in every line he has written, its author has thrown the serene light of his own spirit, over a story of broil, and conflict, and adventure. Scott would have plunged heart and soul into "The Rising of the North," and told the tale with the zeal and breathlessness of an eye-witness and an actor. Mr. Wordsworth reviews the scene from above and at a distance; and the solitary and faithful animal that haunts the graves of the Nortons, comes, we cannot but think,

closer to his sympathies, than either the rash father and his eight staunch sons, or the one, who from conscience, keeps himself aloof from the fray, and from duty shares the fate of his family. At least the loveliest part of the legend of Rylstone lies in its prologue, and in the moonlight scene at the opening of the Fourth Canto. In such descriptive passages as these Mr. Wordsworth is unrivalled.

"The Thanksgiving Ode," with other poems, appeared in the following year. In 1819, their author gave the world a new proof that "the ancient spirit was not dead" in him: that he still clung to his theory of deeming the lowliest themes worthy subjects for verse, by the publication of "Peter Bell" and the "Waggoner," which were dedicated to Southey and Lamb, as works by which their author set some store; he expressly tells us, indeed, that they had been laid by many years for such reconsideration and polish as might fit them to hold a permanent place among the poems of England.

The announcement of the first of these led to one of the most successful and whimsical literary pleasantries ever executed. A lively young London genius, ripe for mischief, and aware that the title of the promised ballad was, at best, unpromising, anticipated the poem, by publishing a false "Peter Bell," in which the peculiarities which he felt to be an excrescence upon rather than a part of Mr. Wordsworth's genius, were caricatured most unmercifully. The appearance of this counterfeit gave occasion to some earnest and characteristic letters from Mr. Coleridge to its publishers, in which the former accounts for the egotism to be implied from the choice of such unpalatable subjects, by pointing to the obstinacy engendered by the persecution and satire to which the poet had been so long exposed, and which he (Coleridge) had been among the first to denounce. There is reason in the explanation;—but still,—when we see the richest powers of description (see the opening of the "Waggoner," a Claude-like companion to the night-piece recently mentioned) and imagination the most affluent, and thought

"That sometimes lies too deep for tears,"

lavished upon stories, as incapable in the excess of their native homeliness of bearing such rich clothing, as a peasant would be to become a suit of cloth of gold,—the dispassionate reader cannot but feel that the excuse was eminently required. "The Waggoner" was shown off as a foil against some of those Sonnets, in which the poet, more worthily employed, alternately treats the most majestic and delicate themes with such a calm and consummate mastery of his art, as has never been reached since Milton strung "the small lute" to "his dear espoused saint," or to denounce the massacre of the faithful in Piedmont.

The space to which this entire notice must be confined could be well devoted to an examination of the excellence displayed by Mr. Wordsworth, in his exquisite and gem-like class of composition. Conciseness without formality, thought never tending towards conceit, art concealing itself in the perfection of language and versification—these are only a few of the distinguishing features of his sonnets, whether we turn to the series on "Duddon River" (published in 1820), in which was executed a plan not dissimilar to that merely sketched by Mr. Coleridge in his meditated poem of the "Brook,"—or to the "Sonnets of Liberty,"—or to the "Ecclesiastical Sketches," or to the "Memorials of a Tour on the Continent" (published in 1822), or to the specimens included in the poet's last volume given to the world in 1835. But it must be borne in mind, that though pre-eminent in these cabinet compositions, in which he is strictly fettered, his success in other freer modes of verse, will neither be found to have been cramped or tamed thereby; wit-

ness his noble lyrics, among which the "Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle," and his "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality," and his "Ode on the Power of Sound," must be mentioned. Whether in pastoral or in elegy, whether he take up the common and seducing ballad metre, or, throwing himself loose of rhyme, pour forth his thoughts in the most resonant and variously-cadenced of modern blank verse, he is always fluent, rarely feeble, in his versification.

Besides his poems, we must mention Mr. Wordsworth's prose description of the "Lakes," published in 1820. If the choice of his residence gave occasion to an epithet applied with an unmeaning and indiscriminate contempt to all such as did not pamper the taste of the hour in which they wrote, it has also given one of their greatest charms to the poems of Mr. Wordsworth. How completely his whole soul is imbued with the spirit of mountain scenery this little prose volume testifies yet more abundantly than his verses;—a mere guide-book in form and pretension, but filled with such a series of written pictures as bring the crags, and the holms, and the waters of the north before the eye in the fulness of their beauty—a book acting like a spell upon the fevered inhabitant of a town, who, as he reads, see (like the Susan of the Poet's own ballad)—

> "A mountain ascending, a vision of trees,
> Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
> And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside."

It is rumoured, that besides what has been published, Mr. Wordsworth has yet large manuscript stores in his possession; among them a tragedy, of which tantalizing glimpses, and no more, have been permitted to appear. Severally to anatomize his works, to descant upon his theory and the manner in which his genius has risen superior to its self-imposed trammels, is here impossible; but we must point out his distinctive excellences, and to do this we shall quote the summary drawn up with as much acuteness as verbal felicity by Mr. Coleridge in his essay in the "Biographia," already referred to. "*First,* An austere purity of language both grammatically and logically: in short, a perfect appropriateness of the words to the meaning. *Secondly,* A correspondent weight and sanity of the thoughts and sentiments won, not from books,—but from the poet's own meditations. They are *fresh,* and have the dew upon them. * * * Even throughout his smaller poems, there is not one which is not rendered valuable by some just and original reflection. *Thirdly,* The sinewy strength and originality of single lines and paragraphs; the frequent *curiosa felicitas* of his diction. *Fourthly,* The perfect truth of nature in his images and descriptions, as taken immediately from nature, and proving a long and genial intimacy with the very spirit which gives a physiognomic expression to all the works of nature. *Fifthly,* A meditative pathos, an union of deep and subtle thought with sensibility: a sympathy with man as man; the sympathy, indeed, of a contemplator, rather than a fellow-sufferer and co-mate (*spectator, haud particeps*), but of a contemplator, from whose view no difference of rank conceals the sameness of the nature; no injuries of wind or weather, or toil, or even of ignorance, wholly disguise the human face divine." "Last and pre-eminently," concludes Mr. Coleridge, "I challenge for this poet the gift of imagination, in the highest and strictest sense of the word. In the play of *fancy,* Wordsworth, to my feelings, is always graceful, and sometimes recondite. The *likeness* is occasionally too strange, or demands too peculiar a point of view, or is such as appears the creature of pre-determined research, rather than spontaneous presentation. Indeed, his fancy seldom displays itself, as mere and unmodified fancy. But in imaginative power he stands nearest of all modern

writers to Shakspeare and Milton; and yet in a mind perfectly unborrowed, and his own. To employ his own words, which are at once an instance and an illustration, he does indeed, to all thoughts and to all objects,—

> '——— add the gleam,
> The light that never was on sea or land,
> The consecration, and the poet's dream!'"

With a name worthier than his who has so largely influenced the literature of his country, and with a purifying, rather than a corrupting influence, we could not close this first series of the "Authors of England."

[The old age of Wordsworth affords a pleasing contrast to that of Southey. No longer judged as a writer by standards, whereby it was impossible to mete the subtle spirit of his poetry, and no longer eclipsed by the fame of Scott and Byron; he stood forth in the latter part of his life confessedly the greatest poet of his age. Honours gathered around him. From Oxford, in 1839, he received the title of Doctor of Laws. From the government of Sir Robert Peel he received still more substantial tokens of regard. Not only was he allowed to transfer his office of distributor of stamps to his second son, but he at the same time received for himself one of the few and scanty pensions awarded in this country to literary merit. On the death of Southey, he was appointed Laureate. On this occasion he came to London, where his handsome and dignified appearance, the promptitude of his repartees, and the mingled shrewdness and geniality of his conversation, left an impression not to be effaced on those who met him,—and gained for him a respectful homage from the best and noblest in British society, which might have been denied to him in his mere capacity of author. But amid these tributes to his genius and worth, shadows crossed his path. His sole surviving daughter, Dora, married Mr. Edward Quillinan, a learned and accomplished scholar. Never robust in health, she did not long enjoy her married life: after visiting southern Europe she sunk into premature decline, and died in 1847. It was a grief never to be effaced from the heart of her father. He did not long survive the pang which smote him. In the eightieth year of his age, he died peacefully, the name of his cherished daughter being the last word he spoke, and a few days afterwards he was buried beside the children he had loved so well, in the quiet church-yard of Grasmere. In few men have a kind and gentle heart, the generous instincts, the lovely sensibility, and the bright wit of the poet been so happily blended as in William Wordsworth, with good sense and prudence, with wisdom, and an unswerving love of truth.]

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