

A LOVER TO HIS TAPER.

Translated from the Arabic of the Sheik Sa'fy
Eddin Alhillay, by the Rev. J. D. Carlyle.

YON wasting taper when I see,
I cry, "poor fool, our lot's the same,"
I bear a raging fire like thee,
Yet dread whate'er would quench the
flame,

Like thine, with tears this face o'erflows,
And bleach'd and wan these cheeks ap-
pear ;

Like thine, these eyes no slumbers close,
Like thine—a melting heart is there.

ODE OF KHOSROO.

From the Persian.

NIGHT spreads her balmy wings around,

Yet not for me her opiate dew ;
Prostrate, I kiss the hallow'd ground,
Which leads to rapture, love, and you

Day to the wretch, diffuses light...
Yet not for me his genial ray,
Despair survives the wretched night,
Black'ning with sighs and tears the day.

Nor pity moves that heart of stone,
Nor sighs, nor tears, their victim save,
Tears, which my earliest youth have known
And sighs which court a peaceful grave.

Scatter my dust, ye winds of death !
Bring peace to wretched Khosroo's
heart...

In vain, alas!...departed breath
Shall no kind balm to love impart.

LITERATURE, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

OBSERVATIONS ON LUCRETIUS.

Carmina sublimis tunc sunt peritura Lucreti
Exitio terras cum dabit una dies.

OVID.

When earth and heaven in mingled ruins
lie,

Shall thy bold song, sublime Lucretius, die.

LUCRETIUS chose a subject which comprehended an investigation of the principal phenomena of nature, and he has illustrated it with all the pomp and decoration of numbers. The explanation of the Epicurean system to which he was attached with all the enthusiasm of a poet, naturally led to an examination and refutation of every other: and hence his work presents us not only with a minute explanation of the theory of Epicurus, but an epitome of the most distinguished systems of ancient Physics.

It is really a matter of just curiosity to contemplate the labour and zeal with which he endeavours to establish his favourite hypothesis, even in particulars, whose glaring absurdity provokes a smile. Yet he who reads Lucretius for the first time will be surprised to find him possessed of so critical a knowledge of nature, and that even the great Newtonian hypothesis of gravitation, which he combats with his usual intrepidity, was well known in the days of Epicurus. Many of our greatest modern philosophers are indebted to his physical illustrations, and the leading principle of his system, the doctrine of atoms, may

still be found in the *Monad*s of Leibnitz, the *Molecules* of Bergman, and the *minima natura* of Newton himself.

Readers who have not dipped into the philosophical opinions of the ancients, may be startled at the bold impiety which pervades the "Nature of things." But let them recollect that the popular mythology of the Greeks and Romans, was all a tissue of folly and romance, which hardly any inquiring mind could adopt, and therefore it is not surprising that its rejection should lead to atheistical conclusions. The history of the *Dii Majores* furnishes a precedent and example for almost every crime; yet no one apprehends any danger from placing Ovid, and other writers who detail their history, in the hands of boys and children.

The work of Lucretius may be considered as a beautiful philosophical romance, in which some things are to be blamed, but many to be admired. He expatiates with force and elegance on the advantages of temperance, and the due government of the passions. He paints the miseries of ambition with sense and pathos, and shows that human happiness does not consist in the accumulation of wealth, the gratifications of luxury, or the acquisition of fame. The superstitions which he decries deserved his detestation, and if in conformity to the principles of his master, he adopted a belief in the eternity of matter, and denied the immortality of the soul, and the agency of a particular providence; his error

should be ascribed to the natural weakness of the human understanding. Such errors can have no influence in forming the opinions of modern inquirers. It did not require the learning of Polignac, or the labours of Blackmore, to refute his doctrines. With the sublime truth contained in the first verse of revelation, for the basis of his philosophy, every child may detect the absurdity, and expose the weakness of the Epicurean System.

An ingenious gentleman, who has honoured the present writer with his thoughts on this subject, has not less justly than elegantly remarked that "In Lucretius we have a striking example of the insufficiency of unassisted reason. In the wanderings of so great a mind, exploring its way through the creation, as in a labyrinth, and incapable of perceiving the presence of an omnipotent and eternal Nature, the necessity of revelation, finds an unanswerable proof. With the highest flame of genius, and most ardent desire for knowledge, how did the poet's highest attainments fall short, on the most important of all subjects, of those of the poorest christian peasant, who carries with him from the cradle, exalted ideas of the majesty of heaven, of the attributes of that Being who created and sustains the frame of nature by his almighty arm."

" Ere the radiant sun
 " Sprang from the east, or mid the vault
 of heaven,
 " The moon suspended her serener lamp;
 " Ere mountains, woods, or streams adorned
 the globe,
 " Or wisdom taught the sons of men her
 lore,
 " Then liv'd th' almighty ONE; then
 deep retired
 " In his unfathom'd essence view'd the
 forms,
 " The forms eternal of created things:
 " The radiant sun, the moon's nocturnal
 lamp,
 " The mountains, woods and streams, the
 rolling globe
 " And wisdom's mien celestial. From
 the first
 " Of days, on them his love divine he
 fix'd,
 " His admiration: till in time complete
 " What he admir'd and lov'd, his vital
 smile
 " Unfolded into being. Hence the breath
 " Of life informing each organic frame;
 " Hence the green earth and wild re-
 sounding waves;
 " Hence light and shade alternate:
 warmth and cold;

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" And clear autumnal skies, and vernal
 showers
 " And all the fair variety of things."

AKENSIDE.

Of the merit of Lucretius as a poet, there is but one opinion. Authors of the first eminence since the days of Cicero till the present time, have been adding laurels to his chaplet. Wharton, a critic of superior discernment, says that "he has more fire, spirit, and energy, more of the *vivida vis animi*, than any of the Roman poets, not excepting Virgil himself." But as general criticism seldom leaves any lasting impression, it may be useful to mark some of its distinguishing excellencies, and quote those passages in which he excels.

The opening of the first book, though it presents us with a picture of Venus with her lover Mars, which, in the opinion of the above-mentioned critic, is beautiful to the last degree, and more glowing than any picture painted by Titian, exhibits a glaring proof of the discordance which prevailed between the feelings of the poet, and the sentiments of the philosopher. He strenuously contends that the Gods take no concern whatever in human affairs, and yet commences his work with an impassioned address to Venus. *Æneadum genitrix, &c.*

As few of our readers may have an opportunity of consulting the original, Drummond's Translation is given:

Parent of Rome, propitious Queen of
 Love,
 Delight of men below and gods above;
 Who pour'st abroad thy life-diffusing soul,
 To all that lies beneath the whirling pole;
 The buoyant ocean owns thy genial powers,
 And earth enriched with fruits, and deck-
 ed with flowers,
 From thy fond smile the living tribes arise
 And view, rejoiced, the orb that gilds the
 skies.
 Goddess benign! before thy radiant form
 Flee the chill vapour, and the wint'ry
 storm;
 For thee the earth her fragrant breast per-
 fumes,
 Unfolds her flowers, and opens all her
 blooms;
 Relenting ocean, by thy potent wiles,
 Smooths his rough brow, and clothes his
 face in smiles,
 While all the heavens, suffused with clear-
 er light,
 In placid glory shine serenely bright.
 The critics with more good nature than
 they can in general boast, have endeavoured
 to clear the poet from the charge of in-

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consistency, by contending that the address to Venus, is only a bold personification of the generative principle which pervades all nature. Having described the influence of love on the animal creation, he comes to the glowing picture," admired by Wharton:

Do thou, the while, bid war's dire labours cease,
 And lull the earth and seas in tranquil peace;
 For thou, alone with peace can'st man delight,
 Thou only soothe the dreadful God of fight.
 Oft the fierce power, by mighty love oppress'd,
 Love's wound eternal bleeding in his breast,
 Hung on thy bosom, round thee fondly twined,
 And close by thine, his taper neck reclin'd;
 Supinely laid, and panting in thine arms,
 Feeds his wild eyes, insatiate on thy charms,
 'Till all his spirit, thrilled with sweet desire,
 Hangs on thy lips, that glow with mutual fire.
 Now gentle Goddess! now thy influence prove,
 Seize the soft moment of dissolving love;
 Pour in his ear, thy soul-subduing voice,
 Implore for peace, and bid thy Rome rejoice.

As the extension of these observations might encroach too much on the limits of a Magazine, the subject shall be resumed in some future number.

C.

CRITICISM ON OVID.

Consiliis, non curribus utere nostris.

OVID is one of those writers whose fate seems to be, never to be praised, nor blamed in moderation; yet we may say of him, that there is scarcely an author, whose claims may be more easily settled. A rich elegance of expression, with an exuberance of fancy, seems his prominent characteristic. In that kind of musing sentiment, in the indulgence of which the speaker may be supposed as reclined, *lentus in umbra*, and entertaining his excursive fancy with amusing combinations, weaving fantastic garlands of many coloured thought, his merits are of the most conspicuous kind. To these productions of his fancy, it may, however, be justly objected, that quaint and ostentatious contrasts in his words and thoughts, bring with them the idea of labour and constraint; they

consequently do not seem to occur naturally; hence, and because of their frequent recurrence, they must become tiresome, and Ovid cease to appear the poet of nature.

Thus, speaking generally, the merits and demerits of this author may be easily fixed: yet we must be impartial, and, while we acknowledge his merits, acknowledge, also, that they are of an inferior kind. The process of the mind in forming an estimate of him, in some measure proves this. While we are inexperienced, and open to the seductions of novelty, he carries off all our applause; but when we have attained to some knowledge of the human mind, and are qualified to judge what is pathetic, what sublime, that is, when the mind has been matured by experience, and our feelings duly analyzed, we learn to *put down* into its proper class what was raised too high through the fervour of youthful admiration. But while we judge thus, we must not place him lower than he deserves; there are some, who can see no fault in their favourite author; who, while they find in Homer, more than Homer ever wrote, blind themselves to the actual merits of those they dislike. It is to be regretted, that men of this description are to be found among our leading critics; for as their opinions are received with deference, their errors procure reception, and young minds may, from them imbibe false principles of judgment. It may, perhaps be objected, that errors of judgment in matters of mere criticism cannot be very dangerous. In answer to this, it may be replied, that just criticism implies sound reasoning, and consequently, that there can be no false principle admitted into its process without the danger of, more or less, clouding the judgment, and that a false principle may find admission unsuspected through an unimportant medium. On some future occasion, I purpose submitting to the public a few thoughts in proof of this; at present, the assertion seems to me reasonable enough to obtain credit.

Hurd has obtained, in the judgment of some, an unmerited degree of applause in the literary world: it is certain that he is dashing and dogmatical in the sentences, he pronounces. The passage, prefixed to this, is an instance, and is also a proof, that we should duly weigh what any, the most respectable critic, will pronounce.

The bishop, in his annotations on Horace, most decisively condemns Ovid for what he terms an unbecoming application of one verb to two words, in different