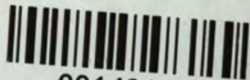
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THE LIFE

OF

HENRY FIELDING;

WITH NOTICES

OF

His Writings, his Times, and his Contemporaries.

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BY FREDERICK LAWRENCE,

OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

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"Mores hominum multorum vidit."
HORACE. *De Arte Poetica.*

LONDON:
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1855.

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CONTENTS.

PAGE

CHAPTER I.—Birth, Parentage, and Education. [1707—1727.] . . . 1

CHAPTER II.—First Comedy: "Love in Several Masques."—"The Temple Beau." [1728—1730.] 8

CHAPTER III.—"The Author's Farce."—"Hurlothrumbo."—Orator Henley.—Authorship in 1730. [1730.] 21

CHAPTER IV.—Dramatic Career continued.—"The Coffee-house Politician."—"Tom Thumb." [1730.] 32

CHAPTER V.—"The Modern Husband."—"Mock Doctor."—"The Miser." [1731—1733.] 41

CHAPTER VI.—Fielding at Bartholomew Fair.—Theatrical Disasters.—"The Intriguing Chambermaid."—"Don Quixote in England."—"The Universal Gallant." [1733—1735.] 50

CHAPTER VII.—Courtship and Marriage.—Country Life. [1735—1736.] 67

CHAPTER VIII.—The Great Mogul's Company.—"Pasquin" and "The Historical Register for 1736." [1736—1737.] 79

CHAPTER IX.—The Licensing Act, and dispersion of the Great Mogul's Company.—Fielding's admission as a Student of the Middle Temple. [1737.] 95

CHAPTER X.—Student Life.—"The Champion."—Cibber's "Apology." [1737—1740.] 109

CHAPTER XI.—Literary Notices in "The Champion."—Boyse.—Lillo.—Hogarth. [1740.] 124

CHAPTER XII.—Call to the Bar.—The Western Circuit in 1740.—Legal Experiences. [1740—1741.] 137

PAGE

CHAPTER XIII.—Richardson's "Pamela."—"Joseph Andrews." [1742.] 151

CHAPTER XIV.—Defence of the Duchess of Marlborough.—"Miss Lucy in Town."—"The Wedding Day."—Garrick and Fielding. [1742—1743.] 166

CHAPTER XV.—Fielding's "Miscellanies."—Poems.—Essays.—"Journey from this World to the Next."—"Jonathan Wild." [1743.] . . 181

CHAPTER XVI.—Death of Mrs. Fielding.—Preface to "David Simple," &c.—Rebellion of '45.—"The True Patriot." [1743—1745.] . . 193

CHAPTER XVII.—"The True Patriot."—End of the Rebellion.—Second Marriage. [1746.] 210

CHAPTER XVIII.—"The Jacobite Journal."—Personal Attacks on the Editor.—Fielding appointed a Justice of the Peace. [1747—1748.] . 221

CHAPTER XIX.—Fielding a Justice of the Peace.—Crime and Criminals in the Eighteenth Century. [1748—1749.] 232

CHAPTER XX.—"Tom Jones." [1749.] 250

CHAPTER XXI.—Justice Business.—Fielding's Private Life described by Walpole.—Treatise on Robberies.—Denunciation of Gin. [1749—1751.] 268

CHAPTER XXII.—"Amelia." [1751.] 290

CHAPTER XXIII.—"The Covent Garden Journal."—Attacks of Hill and Smollett. [1752.] 302

CHAPTER XXIV.—Justice Business.—Case of Elizabeth Canning. [1752—1753.] 315

CHAPTER XXV.—Last efforts in the Public Service—Voyage to Lisbon. [1753—1754.] 329

CHAPTER XXVI.—Voyage to Lisbon continued. Arrival there and Death. [1754.] 341

CHAPTER XXVII.—Posthumous publications.—Comment on Lord Bolingbroke's Essays.—"The Fathers." [1754—1778.] 359

APPENDIX 374

LIFE OF FIELDING.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH, PARENTAGE, AND EDUCATION.

[1707—1727.]

"THE nobility of the Spensers," writes the historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, "has been illustrated and enriched by the trophies of Marlborough, but I exhort them to consider the 'Faëry Queene' the most precious jewel in their coronet. Our immortal Fielding was of the younger branch of the Earls of Denbigh, who drew their origin from the Counts of Hapsburgh, the lineal descendants of Eltrico, in the seventh century Duke of Alsace. Far different have been the fortunes of the English and German divisions of the family of Hapsburgh: the former, the knights and sheriffs of Leicestershire, have slowly risen to the dignity of a peerage; the latter, the emperors of Germany and kings of Spain, have threatened the liberties of the Old, and invaded the treasures of the New World. The successors of Charles V. may disdain their brethren in England; but the romance of 'Tom Jones'—that exquisite picture of humour and manners—will outlive the palace of the Escurial and the imperial Eagle of Austria." [1]

This gorgeous sketch of the antiquity of the Fielding family is not the mere creation of a luxuriant fancy. A manuscript genealogy is extant, which traces their descent

(1) Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works.

from Geoffrey, Count of Hapsburgh, who, being deprived of his possessions, and smarting under the oppression of his son Rodolph, Emperor of Germany—like many other chieftains in the days of knight-errantry—came to England, to offer his services to Henry III., who was then engaged in warfare with his revolted barons. Having settled in this country, he assumed the surname of Feilding, or Filding, as a memorial of his family pretensions to the dominion of Lauffenberg and Rinfilding. Count Geoffrey brought his valour to a good market, for his patron, King Henry, bestowed upon him divers rents and fees, of a considerable amount in the whole, for his support and maintenance. The descendants of the illustrious exile took an active part in most of the civil broils which have since vexed the realm of England. His great-grandson, Sir William Feilding, was a staunch adherent of the house of Lancaster during the war of the Roses, and fell at Tewkesbury. Sir Everard Feilding—who was Sir William's eldest son and successor—was sheriff of the counties of Warwick and Leicester, and commanded the army of Edward IV. at the battle of Stoke. At a later period, in the war between Charles I. and his Parliament, the Feildings also greatly signalised themselves. Sir William Feilding (who in 1620 had been created Baron and Viscount Feilding, and in 1622 Earl of Denbigh) fought stoutly for the royal prerogative, and fell, mortally wounded, on the 3rd of April, 1643, in a skirmish near Birmingham. His son Basil, who succeeded to his title and honours, also took an active part in this memorable struggle, but under a different banner. Civil strife, which divided the truest and staunchest friends, and pointed the swords of so many near and dear relatives against each other, arrayed the father and son upon opposite sides on the same battle-field. At Edgehill, the Earl of Denbigh fought under the royal standard, whilst his son Basil held a command in the parliament horse, and was stationed on the right wing of Essex's division, which broke

the king's left, and achieved the victory on that bloody day. Thus it chanced that the Feildings, whose English ancestor had sought these shores as a volunteer in our intestine broils, were, by a singular fatality, mixed up in the most important of those unnatural contests, in which English blood flowed on both sides.

George Fielding,[1] the second son of the first Earl of Denbigh, who was subsequently created Earl of Desmond, was a devoted royalist, like his father. This nobleman left behind him four sons, the youngest of whom was Dr. John Fielding, Canon of Salisbury, and Chaplain to William III., who married Bridget, daughter of Scipio Cockain, Esq., and was blessed with a numerous progeny. His youngest son, Edmund—the father of the novelist—entered the army, served with distinction under the Duke of Marlborough, and, about 1730, attained the rank of Lieutenant-General. General Fielding's first wife was the daughter of Sir Henry Gould, a judge of the King's Bench.[2] This lady bore him six children, two of whom were boys—the novelist, and his brother Edmund (who entered the navy, and died young)—and four girls, named respectively, Catherine, Ursula, Sarah (afterwards well-known in the world of letters as the authoress of "David Simple"), and Beatrice.

The county of Somerset has the honour of numbering amongst its worthies the greatest of English novelists. Henry Fielding was born at Sharpham Park, near Glastonbury, in that county, on the 22nd of April, 1707. His education commenced at home, under the care of one Mr. Oliver,

(1) In tracing the genealogy of the Fieldings it is observable that the name was originally spelt Feilding. The elder branch of the family have preserved up to this day the same orthography. It is related of the novelist, that being once in the company of the Earl of Denbigh, his lordship was pleased to observe that they were both of the same family, and asked the reason why they spelt their names differently. "I cannot tell, my lord," replied the wit, "unless it be that my branch of the family were the first that knew how to spell."

(2) She was also the aunt of another Sir Henry Gould, a judge of the Court of Common Pleas, mentioned hereafter.

the family chaplain. There is a tradition that this gentleman was the original of Parson Trulliber, in "Joseph Andrews;" and it is by no means improbable that the minute sketch of the parson's figure in that novel was intended for the pedagogue. "He (Trulliber) was indeed one of the largest men you should see, and could have acted the part of Sir John Falstaff without stuffing. Add to this, that the rotundity of his belly was considerably increased by the shortness of his stature, his shadow ascending very near as far in height when he lay on his back as when he stood on his legs. His voice was loud and hoarse, and his accent extremely broad. To complete the whole, he had a stateliness in his gait when he walked, not unlike that of a goose, only he stalked slower." If the Somersetshire pastor who directed little Harry Fielding's first studies was a man after this fashion, it may be readily imagined that his lessons afforded more amusement than edification to his pupil.

As soon as the boy was considered well-grounded in his "rudiments," he was dispatched to Eton. Here he was a general favourite. Lively, clever, and agreeable, never was there a youth better qualified to seize the advantage (in the eyes of ambitious parents the greatest that a public school affords) of forming "splendid friendships." Among his contemporaries were several Etonians, who united uncommon intellectual endowments to the substantial advantage of high station and powerful connexions. There was George Lyttleton, afterwards distinguished as a poet, orator, and political leader, then a weak and sickly boy, with a taste for rhyming and miscellaneous reading, and whose "exercises" (it is said by Johnson,) "were recommended as models to his schoolfellows." Lyttleton was about the same age as Fielding; they were much together; and their school friendship ripened into an attachment of life-long duration. There was William Pitt—afterwards the renowned "Cornet Pitt," the great Commoner, and world-famous Earl of Chatham—also an invalid, and frequently

confined to his "Dame's parlour" with attacks of hereditary gout, but nevertheless a hearty, headstrong lad, who was long remembered at Eton for the severe flogging he once underwent for "breaking bounds." There was also Henry Fox, his illustrious and often successful rival, whose classical lore (acquired at this period) in after life astonished those who had known the idleness and dissipation of his early manhood. Sir Charles Hanbury Williams (celebrated as the wittiest of political squib-writers) and Mr. Winnington were likewise schoolfellows of the novelist, and both retained for him through life a sincere regard. With such associates the study of classical literature was to Fielding a pleasant pastime; and before he had attained his sixteenth year his proficiency in Greek and Latin was considered to reflect credit on the school.

If Eton had reason to be proud of Fielding, Fielding had no less cause to cherish an affectionate attachment to her "antique towers." His school-days were crowded with incidents, upon which, in his maturer years, he often looked back with pleasure and satisfaction. When Pitt was shaking the senate with the thunders of his eloquence, and whilst Fox was exhibiting his gladiatorial skill in debate, how often did the imagination of their gifted schoolfellow revert to the time when they wandered together arm-in-arm over the green playing-fields by the margin of the Thames, unravelling the difficulties of their daily task, and sharing unreservedly their boyish confidences! These pleasant reminiscences were not unaccompanied by a lively recollection of the severe discipline which then prevailed in all our public schools. "And thou, O learning," says the novelist—in the splendid invocation with which he commences the thirteenth book of Tom Jones—" (for without thy assistance nothing pure, nothing correct, can genius produce,) do thou guide my pen. Thee, in thy favourite fields, where the limpid, gently-rolling Thames washes thy Etonian banks, in early youth I have

worshipped. To thee, *at thy birchen altar, with true Spartan devotion, I have sacrificed my blood.*" Lucky, indeed, was the wight who in those days escaped personal chastisement at the hands of his pedagogue. A belief in the efficacy of corporeal punishment was then deeply rooted in the mind of the schoolmaster; and a sanguinary revenge was often taken for a false quantity or a bad exercise.[1]

From Eton the future novelist was transferred to the then famous University of Leyden, in order that he might perfect himself in the study of the civil law before keeping his terms for the Bar. About thirty years later, be it remembered, another distinguished Englishman and English novelist—Oliver Goldsmith—was also a student at Leyden. Let English travellers when they visit this fine, quaint old city remember this.[2]

Whilst at Leyden, Fielding kept up his character as a diligent student. As soon as he arrived there, he became the pupil of the most learned civilian in the university, whose lectures he attended for about two years. At the expiration of that period supplies from home began to fail: remittances grew "small by degrees and beautifully less," until at length they ceased altogether. The young student had then no choice but to return to England. Accordingly, home he returned, slenderly furnished indeed for the battle of life, but doomed to commence the contest without delay. Fresh from the dull, tranquil, and stately Dutch university, he plunged into the ocean of London life, and was soon carried away by the stream. Scarcely twenty years old, with a vigorous constitution, as yet uninjured by dissipation,

(1) The inseparable alliance which was held to exist between scholarship and the birch, it will be remembered, is celebrated in the "Dunciad:"—

> "Proceed, great days! till learning fly the shore,
> Till birch shall blush with noble blood no more,
> Till Thames see Eton's sons for ever play,
> Till Westminster's whole year be holiday."

(2) John Evelyn, the author of "Sylva," was also for some time a student at Leyden.

a remarkable capacity for labour and bodily endurance, a fine wit, and lively disposition, he found himself his own master, with the town and all its pleasures and distinctions before him. Thus situated, the bent of his inclinations and the force of circumstances hurried him into authorship; and he naturally preferred the liveliest and most exciting branch of an author's trade—that of writing for the stage.

Before he left Leyden, he had tried his hand at dramatic composition, and had written a portion of a comedy called "Don Quixote in England." As soon as he set foot in the metropolis, a few attendances at the theatre of course stimulated his dramatic taste. Besides, as may be readily imagined, he could not support the character of a fine gentleman, or indeed subsist at all, without the assistance of his wits. He used to say, in after life, that at the commencement of his career his choice lay between being a hackney-writer or a hackney-coachman. His father had, indeed, agreed to make him an allowance of £200 a year; but this allowance, the son said, "anybody might pay who would." No one *did* pay it, and the General never troubled himself about it. The truth is, the veteran had contracted a second marriage with a lady who bore the pretty maiden name of Eleanor Blanchfield; and with a young family growing up around him, and a taste for profuse hospitality, he was utterly unable to contribute anything towards the maintenance of the clever youth who had just commenced in London the life of a man of wit and fashion. With every inclination, he had not the power to support him, and this the son knew full well. When, therefore, default was made in the payment of the promised allowance, it did not diminish his filial tenderness, or cause him to indulge in useless repinings. Thenceforth he knew that he must rely upon his own exertions; and having resolved to make his way by dramatic authorship, after a few months' residence in London, his facile pen produced, with little effort, a comedy, to which he gave the title of "Love in several Masques."

CHAPTER II.

FIRST COMEDY: "LOVE IN SEVERAL MASQUES."—"THE TEMPLE BEAU."

[1728—1730.]

When Fielding made his appearance as a dramatist, the comedy of artificial life had degenerated into a representation of the world's worst habits, thoughts, and sentiments. In the course of the preceding half-century, Wycherley, Congreve, Farquhar, and Vanbrugh, had exhausted all the arts which could render profligacy seductive or amusing; and their productions still kept possession of the stage, and influenced the prevailing taste. The lively play of an unbridled wit, a succession of disreputable intrigues, and a contempt for every moral and social obligation, were amongst the necessary ingredients of this species of entertainment; and with these stimulants dramatic authors had long deluged the town. At such a period, the young comic dramatist could not expect to achieve very high things. The ordinary incidents of fashionable profligacy, and the popular phrases of gallantry, were well-nigh "used up." Though, in order to secure the approbation of the higher circles, the manager was constrained to set before them a dainty dish of immorality, it was a dish without novelty or piquancy. Persons of quality who attended the play expected of course to see the marriage-tie turned into a jest; but that jest, though it might have been considered a good one at first, had become rather stale. The coarse obscenity of the comedies of the Restoration was, indeed, no longer tolerated in all its grossness; yet the tone of dramatic morality was little, if at all, improved. The theatres were still shunned by pure-minded women and prudent men,

and the success of a comedy depended, in a great degree, on the audacity with which it outraged the sanctity of domestic ties and moral obligations.

Fielding's first effort had the disadvantage of succeeding one of the best productions of this era. The "Provoked Husband," commenced by Vanbrugh and finished by Cibber (one of the few comedies of that period which can be still read or listened to by decent people), had been just produced with great success, having accomplished "a run" of twenty-eight nights. This success is said to have been principally owing to the acting of Mrs. Oldfield. In the part of Lady Townley, this clever and charming actress carried the town by storm. It is related by Macklin that she appeared to *rush* upon the stage in the full consciousness of beauty, youth, and talent; and when Wilks, the actor who performed the part of Lord Townley, uttered in the first scene the word "prodigious," the audience instinctively seized on the opportunity of applying the expression by shouts of approbation to the accomplished actress. Although during her performance of Lady Townley, Mrs. Oldfield contracted an indisposition, brought on by fatigue and excitement, she consented to personate one of the principal characters in young Fielding's comedy, and thus ensured it a moderate success.[1]

(1) Mrs. Oldfield was the daughter of an officer in the army, who leaving her entirely unprovided for, she was brought up by an aunt, who kept the Mitre Tavern, in St. James's Street. It was here that Farquhar, the dramatist, overheard her one day reading some passages behind the bar from "The Scornful Lady" of Beaumont and Fletcher. He was struck with her graceful elocution, and through his commendation, joined to that of Vanbrugh, she obtained an engagement at Drury Lane, at 15*s*. a week. Ultimately she succeeded the famous Mrs. Verbruggen as the leading comic actress of the theatre. Her wit and cleverness procured her admission to every society. Notwithstanding some stains upon her character, she was received at Court, and a *bon-mot* of hers, addressed to the Princess of Wales, is much celebrated. The princess observed to her one day that it was reported that she and General Churchill were married: "So it is said, your royal highness," replied the actress, "but we have not owned it yet." In his preface to the "Provoked Husband," Colley Cibber writes of her thus:—"She was in stature just rising to that height when the graceful can only begin to show itself; of a lively aspect, and a command

"Love in several Masques" was first acted in the month of February, 1728,[1] when the author had not attained his twenty-first year. This was certainly a very early period of life for the production of even a passable comedy:—a species of composition which would seem to require on the part of the author considerable knowledge of the world, and familiarity with its colloquial phraseology. Yet it is worthy of remark that Fielding's is not the only instance in which the hardihood of youth has been displayed by a precocious dalliance with the comic muse. Congreve must have been but a beardless boy when he wrote "The Old Bachelor;" for that comedy was first acted in 1693, when he was twenty-one years of age; and, in his defence against the attacks of Collier, he asserts that "it was written, as several know, some years before it was acted!" Wycherley, according to his own account, wrote his comedy of "Love in a Wood" at nineteen, and "The Plain Dealer" at twenty-five; although critical sagacity has seen reason to doubt the perfect accuracy of the statement.[2] Farquhar's first comedy, also, was written and acted before he was twenty years old, and his last ("The Recruiting Officer") before he was thirty.

Fielding keenly felt the disadvantageous circumstances under which he made his first bow to the public. The production of a new comedy was in itself a bold adventure

in her mien that, like the principal figure in the finest paintings, first seizes and longest delights the eye of the spectator. Her voice was sweet, strong, piercing, and melodious; her pronunciation voluble, distinct, and musical; and her emphasis always placed where the spirit of the sense demanded it."

(1) Until the 24th year of the reign of George II. the Julian or Old Style prevailed in England, under which system the legal year commenced on the 25th of March. Fielding's first comedy is thus generally said to have been produced in 1727.

(2) See Macaulay's "Essay on the Comic Dramatists of the Restoration." After speaking of the disadvantages under which his first comedy was produced, Fielding adds, in the preface: "These were difficulties which seemed rather to require the superior force of a Wycherley, or Congreve, than of a raw and inexperienced pen; for I believe I may boast that none ever appeared so early on the stage."

for so young an author; but the experiment became still more hazardous when it succeeded the last and ablest work of a veteran dramatist. In his prologue, the following graceful allusion is made to this circumstance:—

> "As when a Raphael's masterpiece has been
> By the astonished judge with rapture seen,
> Should some young artist next his picture show,
> He speaks his colours faint, his fancy low;
> Though it some beauties has, it needs must fall,
> Compared with that which has excelled in all."

In style and sentiment the comedy of "Love in several Masques" was obviously modelled on the productions of Congreve. But Fielding lacked the judgment and brilliancy of that distinguished wit; whilst he possessed little skill in the construction and development of his fable, to compensate for any defects in the dialogue. His *dramatis personæ* were for the most part without individuality, and his scenes thrown off without art, order, or method. Still, with all its defects, the first work of Henry Fielding is not without characteristic excellences, and a brief specimen of its nervous dialogue may not be unacceptable. The second act opens with a dialogue between the gay widow, Lady Matchless, and her bosom friend Vermilia; in which her satirical ladyship thus describes the horde of suitors who crowd her drawing-room:—

Vermilia. You have opportunities enough of revenge, and objects enough to execute it upon; for, I think, you have as many slaves in your assemblies as the French king in his galleys.

Lady Matchless. Why, really, I sometimes look on my drawing-room as a little parliament of fools, to which every different body sends its representatives. Beaux of all sorts. The courtly lord, who addresses me with a formal, well-bred dissimulation. The airy Sir Plume, who always walks in the minuet step, and converses in *recitativo.*

Vermilia. And is a Narcissus in everything but beauty.

Lady Matchless. Then the robust warrior, who proceeds by way of storm or siege. The lawyer, who attacks me, as he would a jury, with a cringe, and a lie at the tip of his tongue. The cit, who would

cheat me by way of bargain and sale. And your settling country esquire, who would put my life into half his estate, provided I would put his whole family's into all mine.

Vermilia. There is a more dangerous, tho' a more ridiculous fool than any of these, and that is a fine gentleman, who becomes the disguise of a lover worse than any you have named.

Lady Matchless. O, ay; a man of sense acts a lover just as a Dutchman would a harlequin. He stumbles at every straw we throw in his way, which a fop would skip over with ease.[1]

The manner of Congreve is closely imitated in Fielding's first comedy, which abounds in "the reciprocation of conceits, or clash of wit,"[2] rendered fashionable by that brilliant writer. As for humour, the genial, hearty humour which pervaded the later productions of his pen, few traces of it are to be found in this early effort. There is, indeed, rather an amusing portrait of an ignorant, arrogant country squire—Sir Positive Trap; one of the never-to-be-forgotten Western tribe, who boasts of having "a nobler coat of arms than the Grand Mogul," and who "hopes to see the

(1) The heartless and languid tone of the comedies of this period everywhere reminds us of a profligate town-life from which all sentiment was banished. In their conduct with respect to love-matters, the manners of the fine gentlemen and ladies of the days of George I. and II. were cleverly contrasted with those of the preceding epochs by Goldsmith, in his Life of Beau Nash:—"As Nestor was a man of three ages, so Nash sometimes humorously called himself a beau of three generations. He had seen flaxen bobs succeeded by majors, which in their turn gave way to negligents, which were at last totally routed by bags and ramilies. The manner in which gentlemen managed their amours in these different ages of fashion was not more [less?] different than their perriwigs. The lover in the reign of King Charles was solemn, majestic, and formal. He visited his mistress in state; languished for her favour, kneeled when he toasted his goddess, walked with solemnity, performed the most trifling things with decorum, and even took snuff with a flourish. The beau of the latter part of Queen Anne's reign was disgusted with so much formality; he was pert, smart, and lively; his *billets-doux* were written in quite a different style from that of his antiquated predecessor; he was ever laughing at his own ridiculous situation; till at last he persuaded the lady to become as ridiculous as himself. The beau of the third age, in which Nash died, was still more extraordinary than either; his whole secret in intrigue consisted in perfect indifference. The only way to make love now, I have heard Nash say, was to take no manner of notice of the lady; which method was found the surest way to secure her affections."—*Goldsmith's Life of Beau Nash* (Works, vol. iv., 1854).

(2) Johnson's Life of Congreve.

time when a man may carry his daughters to market with the same lawful authority as any other of his cattle." The union of pride and ignorance in this fellow is thus divertingly exhibited:—

Lady Matchless. O fie, Sir Positive, you are too severe on his lordship.

Sir Positive. He is a lord, then! and what of that? an old English baronet is above a lord: a title of yesterday! an innovation! Who were lords, I wonder, in the time of Sir Julius Cæsar? and it is plain he was a baronet, by his being called by his Christian name.

Vermilia. Christen'd name! I apprehend that Cæsar lived before the time of Christianity.

Sir Positive. And what then, madam? he might be a baronet without being a Christian, I hope. But I don't suppose our antiquity will recommend us to you—for women love upstarts, by the right hand of the Traps![1]

It is worthy of remark that the young author, in the prologue to his first comedy (with an amusing air of self-satisfaction), takes credit to himself for the moral tendency of his scenes. But in this respect they were not certainly above the level of the age. In spite of his promise—

"Nought shall offend the fair one's ears to-day,
Which she might blush to hear or blush to say,"—

his drama was by no means deficient in the indecencies which were then considered to give a zest to humour. The truth is, that Fielding could not *afford* to be dull; and decorum was in that age considered synonymous with dulness. Had his play been less *piquant* and more moral, he might have wanted occupation for some years to come. As it was, he acquired the marketable reputation of a wit, without, in all probability, offending the delicacy of the "fair ones" who honoured his comedy with their countenance.

When published, "Love in several Masques" was dedicated by the young author to his kinswoman and patroness, Lady Mary Wortley Montague—"that brilliant star of fashion, whose accurate judgment," says Fielding, "has

(1) Act iii., scene 7.

long been the glory of her sex, and the wonder of ours." Lady Mary thought highly of her kinsman. At a subsequent period, when the results of his chequered life had afforded her a better opportunity of estimating his abilities, she thus discourses of him and his writings:—"Since I was born, no original has appeared except Congreve and Fielding, who would, I believe, have approached nearer to his (Congreve's) excellences, if not forced by necessity to publish without correction, and throw many productions into the world, he would have thrown into the fire, if meat could have been got without money, or money without scribbling."[1]

Fielding had now fairly embraced the profession of dramatic authorship. The reception of his first effort inspired him with sanguine hopes of future fame and emolument in this arena; whilst the society of the green-room had a fascination for him, which even a less lively and social spirit might have been unable to resist. In the preface to "Love in several Masques," he acknowledges the "civil and kind behaviour" of Wilks and Cibber *previous* to the representation of that comedy, from which it may be inferred that he had managed to ingratiate himself at this early period with the magnates of the playhouse. These celebrated actors were then at the head of their profession. In the difficult character of the stage-gentleman Wilks was considered unapproachable. He was an extremely industrious and painstaking performer, being always most perfect in his parts; so much so, indeed, that Cibber (who cordially disliked him) doubted whether "in forty years he five times even changed or misplaced an *article* in any one of them."[2] Unfortunately (in spite of

(1) Letter of Lady Montague, written in 1754.

(2) Wilks's kindness to poor George Farquhar (the dramatist), and the protection he afforded his helpless family, are worthy of commemoration. After his friend's death, Wilks found amongst his papers this pathetic note:—"Dear Bob, I have not anything to leave thee to perpetuate my memory but two helpless girls; look upon them sometimes, and think of him that was, to the last moment of his life, thine, George Farquhar." In the spirit of genuine friendship, the

many amiable and lovable qualities), his temper was not of the best; and tradition states that when age and fretfulness had impaired his constitution, a greater contrast could not be imagined than between Wilks *on* and Wilks *off* the stage. In the one case, from force of habit or the power of genius, he was all gaiety and sprightliness; in the other, he presented the picture of a feeble, tottering old man, oppressed with infirmities, and scarcely able to hobble to a hackney-coach.[1]

Of Colley Cibber it is sufficient here to state that he was not merely a popular actor, but one of the most remarkable men of his age. His professional cleverness was so great that it can be described as only falling short of genius; and as a dramatist, his admirable judgment made up for his deficiencies in the art of composition, so that few writers of comedy have achieved greater temporary triumphs. With all his talents, however, it was his fate to earn the hearty contempt of most of his contemporaries whose good opinion was worth having, and in the fulness of his fame his self-sufficiency and arrogance exposed him to all the shafts of satire.

The same year in which Fielding presented to the public his first comedy, he published a very indifferent poem, called "The Masquerade; inscribed to C——t H—d—g—r, by Lemuel Gulliver, Poet Laureate to the King of Lilliput."[2] In this satire, the young author

actor held sacred his friend's bequest, educated "the helpless girls" at his own cost, and procured a marriage-portion for each of them by benefit nights.

Wilks was not merely a *stage*-gentleman. His ancestors were persons of "condition," in Worcestershire; and his grandfather raised and equipped a troop of horse for Charles I. The family, like many others of that time, appears to have been ruined by its loyalty: but young Wilks was liberally educated, and was appointed at an early age to a government situation. He gave up this for the stage; forming his style, it is said, upon that of Mountford, as Booth is reported to have copied Betterton.

(1) Macklin's Memoirs. London, 1804.

(2) This poem was afterwards published with "The Grub Street Opera" (1731), but is said to have been originally printed in 1728.

coarsely ridiculed the most fashionable amusement of the day, which had been brought into vogue by the notorious Count Heidegger, Master of the Revels to the licentious Court of George II., and Director of the Italian Opera. This profligate adventurer amassed and squandered a large fortune in England. He was a native of Switzerland; and it is related of him that being once asked what European was distinguished for the greatest ingenuity, he unhesitatingly replied a Swiss:—"for that he was of Switzerland, came to England without a farthing, and had there found means to get £5000 a year, and *spend* it, which no Englishman ever did or could do in Switzerland."[1]

Heidegger's personal ugliness was most remarkable; and he had wit and good sense enough to make it a subject of pleasantry. "He was the first," it is said, "to joke upon his own ugliness; and he once laid a wager with the Earl of Chesterfield that, within a certain given time, his lordship would not be able to produce so hideous a face in all London. After strict search a woman was found, whose features were at first thought uglier than Heidegger's; but upon clapping her headdress upon himself, he was universally allowed to have won the wager."[2] When on another occasion an aristocratic tailor, named Jolly,—not remarkable for his handsome features,—presented his bill (no doubt a very long one) to a noble duke, he was met by the passionate exclamation:—"Curse your ugly face, I'll never pay you till you bring me an uglier fellow than yourself!" The tailor bowed, retired, and wrote immediately to Heidegger, telling him "that his grace wished to see him on particular business the next morning." The count attended in obedience to this summons, and found Jolly there before him, who by this ingenious device obtained his cash, and raised a hearty laugh at Heidegger's expense, in which the count joined with the utmost gusto and good humour.

(1) Dibdin's History of the Stage, vol. iv. (2) Ibid.

Though it was not the fashion at this period to foster and encourage native talent, yet it so happened that in 1728 even the attractions of the foreign opera were thrown into the shade by a genuine English production. This was "The Beggar's Opera," perhaps the most popular theatrical performance ever produced on the English stage, and which was first acted, at the theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, in the season of 1727—28. Its success not only put money into the pockets of an author, and inspirited a despairing manager,—"making Rich gay, and Gay rich,"—but also attracted the town from every other place of amusement. During its run it completely absorbed the attention of the play-going public; ladies had the songs printed on their fans; the actors in it obtained increased salaries; and the original Polly Peachum (Miss Fenton) who had been engaged by the manager at fifteen shillings per week (which was afterwards raised to the munificent sum of thirty shillings), suddenly became the toast of the town, captivated the heart of a silly peer, and was ultimately converted into the Duchess of Bolton.[1] At such a time Fielding found it, in all probability, very difficult to obtain a hearing for a second comedy. He availed himself, however, of the only chance open to him, and in January, 1730, produced his play of "The Temple Beau," at Goodman's Fields; where a theatre had just been erected by Odell, "which," says Dibdin, "was attacked by the citizens, and preached against by the clergy, under the

(1) See the notes to the "Dunciad," &c. "The wives and daughters of those who had turned up their eyes at the immoralities of the Italians, had the *favourite airs* of 'The Beggar's Opera' printed on their fans. . . . And that the accomplishments of Miss Polly Peachum and Miss Lucy Lockit might not remain unknown to the little masters and misses in the nursery, this moral drama was played to an audience in Lincoln's-Inn Theatre by children, and a smart pair of fetters were fitted to the little legs of a mannikin Captain Macheath. . . . At this juvenile exhibition, the manager sent a book of the songs across the stage by a *flying* Cupid to Frederick, Prince of Wales, who was seated in the stage-box."—*Wine and Walnuts*, by Ephraim Hardcastle, vol. i. p. 53 (note).

idea that it would be productive of mischief so near to the seat of commerce.[1]

The plot of this piece is one which has been more than once made use of by English dramatists. A credulous father in the country believes that his son is studying law in the Temple, when that son is in fact only qualifying himself to act with effect the part of a profligate fine gentleman. At length the doting parent arrives in London, and visits his son's chambers; where, after a time, he sees sufficient to convince him that his hopeful boy is more of a rake than a lawyer. Then ensues some ingenious plotting; and the following scene, in which Pincet (the servant of the Temple Beau), by the assumption of a legal character and a pompous display of legal phraseology, manages to frighten the old country gentleman, who has searched his son's chambers and broken open his drawers (as he is induced to believe by *mistake*), is somewhat amusing, —though partaking more of the character of farce than comedy.

Pincet. I believe, Sir Harry, I have not the honour of being known to you. My name is Ratsbane—Counsellor Ratsbane, of the Inner Temple. I have had, sir, according to the orders of your son, a conference with Mr. Counsellor Starchum, who is for the plaintiff, and have come to a conclusion thereon.

Sir Harry Wilding. Oh, have you? I am your humble servant, dear sir; and if it lies in my power to oblige you in return——

Pincet. Oh, dear sir, no obligation: we only do our duty. Our case will be this: first a warrant will be issued, on which we are taken up; then we shall be indicted; after which we are convicted (that no doubt we shall on such a strength of proof); immediate sentence is awarded against us, and then execution regularly follows.

Sir Harry. Execution, sir! what execution?

Wilding (the Temple Beau). Oh, my unfortunate father! Hanging, sir!

Pincet. Ay, ay, hanging; hanging is the regular course of law, and no way to be averted. But as to our conveyance to the place of execution, that I believe we shall be favoured in. The sheriff is to

(1) History of the Stage, vol. iv.

render us there; but whether in a coach or a cart, I fancy a small sum may turn that scale.

Sir Harry. Coach or cart! . . . . why, son—why, sir, is there no way left?

Pincet. None. We shall be convicted of felony, and then hanging follows of course.

Wilding. It is true—so says Cook against Littleton.

Sir Harry. But, sir—dear sir, I am as innocent——

Pincet. Sir, the law proceeds by evidence; my brother Starchum indeed offered that upon a bond of £5000 he would make up the affair: but I thought it much too extravagant a demand, and so I told him flatly—we would be hanged.[1]

Sir Harry. Then you told a damned lie!—for if twice that sum will save us we will not.

Pincet. How, sir! are you willing to give that money?

Sir Harry. No, sir, I am not willing; but I am much less willing to be hanged.

Wilding. But do you think, Mr. Counsellor, you could not prevail for four thousand?

Pincet. That truly we cannot reply to till a conference be first had.

Sir Harry. Ay, or four hundred.

Pincet. Four hundred! Why, it would cost more the other way, if you were hanged anything decently. Look you, sir, Mr. Starchum is at the Crown and Rolls just by: if you please we will go thither, and I assure you to make the best bargain I can.

"The Temple Beau" had but a short run; for the theatre in which it was acted soon closed.[2] In point of wit and cleverness it is by no means a contemptible production; but its scenes furnish evidence of that fatal facility which is generally so ruinous to the young author. "With a careless and hasty pencil" (to use the expression of one of his critics), Fielding satisfied himself with sketching

(1) The ridiculous style of legal oratory which Fielding ridicules has survived his time. It is still by no means an uncommon thing to hear a learned gentleman identifying himself with his client after the same fashion. We ourselves have heard a counsel thus address a jury for a prisoner: "Gentlemen, at the very moment the policeman says he saw us in the tap, I will prove that we were locked up in the station-house, in a state of intoxication."

(2) It is worthy of remark that the prologue to "The Temple Beau" was written by James Ralph, who contributed some forgotten pieces to the stage, and with whom Fielding was afterwards associated as a periodical essayist in "The Champion." (See chapters x. and xi.)

the bold outline of a plot or character, neglecting altogether the minuter touches and polished graces which contribute to form the perfect work of art. It was impossible, under such circumstances, that he should achieve high success in the drama; and thus, notwithstanding his undoubted genius, a long career of failures, or at best, of imperfect successes, lay before him.

CHAPTER III.

"THE AUTHOR'S FARCE."—"HURLOTHRUMBO."—ORATOR HENLEY.—AUTHORSHIP IN 1730.

[1730.]

FIELDING'S third dramatic production was a medley, entitled "The Author's Farce, with a Puppet-Show called the Pleasures of the Town." This piece was first performed at the Haymarket Theatre, in March, 1730, and was some years afterwards reproduced at Drury Lane, "revised and greatly altered by the author." Fielding had now begun to feel that his strength lay in satire—in humorous delineations of the follies and delusions of the age, and in caustic denunciations of public abuses. "The Author's Farce" was aimed at a numerous and formidable host of fashionable follies:—at "Henley's gilt tub"—immortalised in the "Dunciad;"—at the vulgar rage for foreign opera, tumbling, and puppetshows, and the disgraceful popularity of nonsensical dramas, "full of sound and fury—signifying nothing." All these abominations are thus denounced by Witmore, the philosopher of the farce:—

"'Sdeath! in an age of learning and true politeness, where a man might succeed by his merit, there would be some encouragement. But now, when party and prejudice carry all before them; when learning is decried, wit not understood; when the theatres are puppetshows, and the comedians ballad-singers; when fools lead the town, would a man think to thrive by his wit? If you must write, write nonsense, write *Hurlothrumboes*, set up an *oratory*, and preach nonsense, and you may meet with encouragement enough. Be profane, be scurrilous, be immodest; if you would receive applause, deserve to receive sentence at the Old Bailey; and if you would ride in a coach, deserve to ride in a cart."

The extraordinary drama of "Hurlothrumbo," above

alluded to, was then (*mirabile dictu!*) the talk and admiration of the town. A more curious or a more insane production has seldom issued from human pen. Its author was one Samuel Johnson, a dancing-master from Cheshire—a strange compound of the madman and charlatan—who himself performed one of the principal characters (Lord Flame), dressed in a suit of black velvet, with a white flowing perriwig; and speaking, it is said, sometimes in one key, and sometimes in another; sometimes dancing, sometimes fiddling, and sometimes walking on stilts! The piece, notwithstanding its absurdity, was played above thirty nights to large and fashionable audiences, of whom a very considerable proportion, it is reasonable to suppose, were attracted to the representation for the sole purpose of seeing the author make a fool of himself. The greater part of the dialogue was quite unintelligible—pure rant and fustian; but to those who were simple enough to say they could not understand it, Johnson had the ready answer that he had written it himself with a violin in his hand, and that no person could hope properly to comprehend it who did not make use of the same instrument to quicken his apprehension.[1] An epilogue to this strange performance was written by John Byrom, the inventor of a system of short-hand, and author of sundry almost forgotten rhymes, whose private journal has been recently published under the auspices of the Chetham Society.[2]

(1) See Tom Jones, book iv. c. 1.

(2) The title of "Hurlothrumbo" may be quoted as a fair specimen of the extravagance of the work:—

"Hurlothrumbo; or, the Super-Natural. As it is acted at the New Theatre in the Haymarket. Written by Mr. Samuel Johnson, from Cheshire:

> "Ye sons of fire, read my 'HURLOTHRUMBO,'
> Turn it betwixt your finger and your thumbo,
> And being quite undone, be quite struck dumbo."

Amongst the *dramatis personæ* appear the following personages of the masculine gender:—Soarethereal, Dologodelmo, Lomperhomock, &c.; and of the feminine—Cademore, Sermentory, Seringo, Lusingo, Cuzzonida! Such was "Hurlothrumbo," the object of Fielding's satire; and it is a curious, as well as

Orator Henley—another object of Fielding's satire—was a personage of more mark and note than the crack-brained author of "Hurlothrumbo." With all his charlatanism, he was a man of ability, and an effective declaimer. At an early period of his career, he aroused the animosity of his "cloth" by an inconvenient display of originality, and alarmed the dignitaries of the Establishment by rhetorical displays. Whilst officiating as a clergyman, his discourses were stigmatised as "theatrical and indecent" by the "humdrum" divines (so he calls them) of the day; but they attracted huge congregations, and were the admiration of the multitude. Never was a preacher more sedulously followed by the crowd, or more severely handled by theological critics. That Henley was a vain as well as a clever man is very evident; and the consequence was that, intoxicated with popular applause, he grew more and more disdainful of clerical criticism, and more and more ambitious of oratorical renown. Notoriety to such a man was as "the breath of his nostrils;" and London the only arena where

a humiliating fact, that the miserable rant and fustian of a half-witted quack should have filled a theatre for more than a month, and obtained the applause of English audiences. So great, indeed, was its popularity for a short time, that a club was formed, called "The Hurlothrumbo Society;" of which a list of members was printed, with a frontispiece, on which was engraved the monster described in Horace's "Art of Poetry."

From the extravagances of "Hurlothrumbo" may be culled the following examples of terse and peculiar phraseology:—

"Pride is the serpent's egg, laid in the hearts of all, but hatched by none but fools."

"Conscience is an intellectual caul that covers the heart, upon which all the faculties sport in terror, like boys that dance on the ice."

In "Byrom's Remains," above referred to, there is the following *naïve* account of Johnson's success:—"As for Mr. Johnson, he is at present one of the chief topics of talk in London: Dick's coffee-house resounds 'Hurlothrumbo!' from one end to the other. He had a full house, and much good company on Saturday night, the first time of acting, and report says all the boxes are taken for next Monday. . . . We had seven or eight Garters, they say, in the pit; I saw Lord Oxford and one or two more there, but was so intent upon the farce that I did not observe many quality that were there. *We agreed to laugh and clap beforehand, and kept our word from beginning to end.* . . . For my part, who think all stage entertainments stuff and nonsense, I consider this as a joke upon 'em all."—*Byrom to Mrs. Byrom, April 2nd*, 1729.

his peculiar talents could find scope. The Earl of Macclesfield—a generous patron of men of genius and learning—had given him a living in Suffolk of the value of £80 per annum; but it did not suit Henley's tastes to retire into the country; and having found a curate-of-all-work, who performed the varied duties of "preaching, praying, christening, marrying, and burying," for the moderate stipend of £20 (!), he obtained a dispensation for non-residence, and continued to astonish the religious world of the metropolis, instead of burying himself in a quiet country parsonage. The style of his sermons, however, at length subjected him to the censure of his diocesan; and ill-natured rumours affecting his private character were at the same time busily circulated.[1] It was now obvious that Henley was too obnoxious to his order to be permitted to occupy any longer his favourite position of a popular London preacher. The Bishop of London accordingly required him to resign his

(1) Pope, in the "Dunciad," tells us—

> "How Henley lay inspired beside a sink,
> And to mere mortals seemed a priest in drink."—(Book ii.)

And the orator was subsequently too well known by the designation of "drunken Henley," to permit us to doubt that the imputation is unfounded. Here is an anecdote of him in subsequent years:—

"It must be nearly seventy years ago; yet, though then a boy, well do I remember every tittle of the conversation that once, in particular, passed at old Slaughter's [coffee-house, St. Martin's Lane], between my respected friend, William Gostling [a clergyman and antiquarian], and drunken Henley, who kept the mild man on the cold staircase, as we were going out together, in a long confabulation, and in a loud hoarse whisper, about a quarrel with Master Foote, who had written a satire upon his nonsensical rant at his chapel in the neighbouring market. 'You will tell Mr. Bully, from me that—' 'Fye, fye!' said Gostling, putting his hand gently before his mouth, stifling an oath in its birth; 'fye, Mr. Henley! you are an old man, these quarrels bring disgrace upon our holy calling.' Henley looked at the good man less angry than compunctious, and shook his head; his eyes were red with drinking, and he stood mute awhile, an awful personification of frail humanity. 'Can you spare me the loan of ten shillings?' said the *orator*. Gostling took from his purse a guinea, and put it in his hand. The wretched man looked in his reprover's face with the drunkard's ghastly smile, that hides a broken heart. 'God bless you!' said Henley; 'I'll call and pay you to-morrow.' Gostling saw him no more."—*Wine and Walnuts*, by Ephraim Hardcastle, vol. i. p. 132. 1823.

metropolitan lectureship, and to retire to his Suffolk living. To these terms Henley haughtily refused to accede. "It was beneath him," he said, "to hold what it was the complainant's power to take away;" and he at once resigned both the lectureship and rectory, and shook off the shackles of ecclesiastical authority.

This was in 1725; and from that period, for many years, his name was constantly before the public. After leaving the Church of England, he fitted up at his own expense, in Newport Market, a place which he called "The Oratory." Here he gave full scope to his passion for notoriety and display, and rendered himself an object of curiosity and derision. His pulpit was hung with scarlet velvet, embroidered with gold, and the walls of his chapel were adorned with painted devices and inscriptions. On Sundays he preached on theological subjects, but on Wednesdays he held forth on miscellaneous topics. Subscribers to the Oratory received a medal, on which was a rising star, with the motto "AD SUMMA;" and below were the words, "INVENIAM VIAM AUT FACIAM."[1] Casual auditors were admitted on the payment of a shilling—a practice which subjected the orator to much ridicule and censure. When pressed upon this subject, Henley defended himself by quoting the following well-known anecdote:—"Where then is the mighty difference," he said (addressing his congregation in the Oratory), "of paying (for pay is the word in every church and chapel in London) weekly or quarterly? Neither can I suppose you to be ignorant of the well-known and true story of my Lord Rochester's going, with another nobleman, to the parish church of sweet St. Giles's in the Fields, to hear Dr. Sharp, late Archbishop of York. The two peers went *incog.*,—but, as strangers, could not gain admittance into any of the lower aisles. Upon which my Lord Rochester ran up stairs, clapt a shilling into the blower's hand, and got into the

(1) Notes to the Dunciad, &c.

organ-loft; and looking down, and seeing his friend at last seated, he called out to him,—'My Lord,' says he, 'what do you pay for the pit? I have paid a shilling for the upper-gallery.'"[1]

In his satirical "Puppet-Show," attached to the farce, Fielding introduces the Goddess of Nonsense, attended by "the Orator in a tub," who makes a ridiculous oration, quite appropriate to his situation, on the history of a fiddle;[2] and who, with Signior Opera, Don Tragedio, and Monsieur Pantomime, is a candidate for the goddess's favour. Another character in the "Puppet-Show" is Count Ugly, the familiar nickname of the notorious Heidegger, to whom in the previous year Fielding addressed his satire called "The Masquerade."

A melancholy although ludicrous picture is presented in

(1) See Retrospective Review, vol. xiv., part 2.
The caustic pen of Pope has transmitted to posterity a portrait of "Orator Henley," in which some of his prominent peculiarities are thus humorously described:—

> "Imbrowned with native bronze, lo! Henley stands,
> *Tuning his voice, and balancing his hands.*
> How fluent nonsense trickles from his tongue!
> How sweet the periods, *neither said nor sung!*
> Still break the benches, Henley! with thy strain,
> While Sherlock, Hare, and Gibson preach in vain.
> Oh, great restorer of the good old stage,
> Preacher at once, and zany of thy age!"—*Dunciad*, book iii.

(2) In "The Craftsman," No. 141 (March 15, 1728—29), appears a discourse of Henley's upon *Fishes*, which is not altogether deficient in humour. "I went last night," says a correspondent of Mr. Caleb D'Anvers, "to hear the celebrated Mr. Henley, at his new Oratory in Lincoln' -Inn-Fields, and think myself obliged to acknowledge the agreeable entertainment which he gave us. His discourse was on *Fishes;* and he proved very learnedly and metaphysically that everything was *fish*, and that the world was nothing but a great fishpond, where mankind laid baits to ensnare and catch one another. He observed very acutely that *politicians* were *crab-fish*, who go backwards and forwards; or a sort of *eels*, that wriggle and twist, and slip through our fingers, do what we will; or *pikes*, who tyrannize in the waters, and devour almost every other fish that comes in their way, especially *trouts* and *gudgeons;* though it is remarkable, said he, that *plaice* is their most favourite food." The conversation of the fishermen in "Pericles" might have suggested this idea: "Master, I marvel how the fishes live in the sea. *1st Fish.* Why, as men do a-land: the great ones eat up the little ones," &c.

"The Author's Farce" of the condition of the lowest class of literary craftsmen in Fielding's early days. Miserable indeed the trade of authorship, when taken up, as it often was, by ignorant pretenders. A bookseller's drudge was alternately the object of scorn and sympathy. He was chained to the desk like a merchant's clerk, and paid and treated worse than a ticket-porter. In Fielding's farce a wealthy bookseller is introduced, surrounded by his drudges,—Dash, Quibble, Blot-page, and Scarecrow, and a characteristic scene ensues, in which the secrets of hack authorship are thus ruthlessly exposed:—

Bookweight. Fye upon it, gentlemen! what not at your pens? Do you consider, Mr. Quibble, that it is a fortnight since your Letter to a Friend in the Country was published? Is it not high time for an answer to come out? At this rate, before your answer is printed, your letter will be forgot. I love to keep a controversy up warm. I have had authors who have writ a pamphlet in the morning, answered it in the afternoon, and answered that again at night.

Quibble. Sir, I will be as expeditious as possible; but it is harder to write on this side the question, because it's the wrong side.

Book. Not a jot. So far on the contrary that I have known some authors choose it as the properest to show their genius. But let me see what you have produced,—"With all deference to what that very learned and most ingenious person, in his Letter to a Friend in the Country, hath advanced—" Very well, sir; for besides that it may sell more of the Letters, all controversial writers should begin with complimenting their adversaries, as prize-fighters kiss before they engage. Let it be finished with all speed. Well, Mr. Dash, have you done that murder yet?

Dash. Yes, sir, the murder is done; I am only about a few moral reflections to place before it.

. . . .

Scarecrow. Sir, I have brought you a libel against the ministry.

Book. Sir, I shall not take anything against them;—for I have two in the press already. (*Aside.*)

Scare. Then, sir, I have an apology in defence of them.

Book. That I shall not meddle with neither; they don't sell so well.

Scare. I have a translation of Virgil's Æneid with notes on it, if we can agree about the price.

Book. Why, what price would you have?

Scare. You shall read it first, otherwise how will you know the value?

Book. No, no, sir. I never deal that way: a poem is a poem, and a pamphlet a pamphlet with me. Give me a good handsome large volume, with a full promising title-page at the head of it, printed on a good paper and letter, the whole well bound and gilt, and I'll warrant its selling. You have the common error of authors, who think people buy books to read. No, no, books are only bought to furnish libraries, as pictures and glasses, and beds and chairs are for other rooms. Look-ye, sir, I don't like your title-page; however, to oblige a young beginner, I don't care if I do print it at my own expense.

Scare. But pray, sir, at whose expense shall I eat?

Book. At whose? why at mine, sir, at mine. I am as great a friend to learning as the Dutch are to trade: no one can want bread with me who will earn it; therefore, sir, if you please to take your seat at my table, here will be everything necessary provided for you: good milk-porridge, very often twice a day, which is good wholesome food, and proper for students: a translator, too, is what I want at present; my last being in Newgate for shoplifting. The rogue had a trick of translating out of the shops as well as the languages.

Scare. But I am afraid I am not qualified for a translator, for I understand no language but my own.

Book. What, and translate Virgil!

Scare. Alas! I translated him out of Dryden.

Book. Lay by your hat, sir, lay by your hat, and take your seat immediately. Not qualified! thou art as well versed in thy trade as if thou hadst laboured in my garret these ten years. Let me tell you, friend, you will have more occasion for invention than learning here. You will be obliged to translate books out of all languages, especially French, that were never printed in any language whatever.[1]

(1) In a conversation between Pope and Lintot, the bookseller, during a journey to Oxford (recorded by the former in a letter to the Earl of Burlington, dated August, 1714), a characteristic picture is given of the sharp dealing which prevailed in the early part of the 18th century between a bookseller and his drudges. Speaking of translators Lintot remarked that—"These are the saddest pack of rogues in the world; in a hungry fit they'll swear they understand all the languages in the universe. I have known [he continued] one of them take down a Greek book upon my counter, and cry, 'Ah, this is Hebrew, and must read it from the latter end.' By G—, I can never be sure in these fellows, for I neither understand Greek, Latin, Italian, or French myself. But this is my way; I agree with them for ten shillings per sheet, with a proviso that I will have their doings corrected by whom I please; so by one or the other they are led at last to the true sense of an author; my judgment giving the negative to all

At the time when this was written, young Harry Fielding had little reason to sneer at the poverty of his humbler brethren of the quill. It is doubtful whether the bookseller's hack, provided with porridge twice a day, was not better off than our playhouse bard, and occupying, on the whole, a more satisfactory position. Two years of a life about town had initiated Fielding into all the mysteries of Bohemianism. To him were now well known the many expedients by which expensive pleasures and sumptuous living were occasionally obtained by the penniless wit, at the cost of character and self-respect. Familiar to him the taverns where the nightly revel was loudest and most unrestrained; and familiar also the squalid haunts, where in the daytime reckless and dishonoured poverty hid its aching head. The life on which he had entered permitted no indulgence in calm and tranquil pleasures,—no sustained and vigorous exertion: all was riot, intoxication, confusion, glare, and gloom. The theatre to which he turned for his bread, was in truth no bad emblem of his daily life at this period. When the candles were lighted up for the performance, when the company assembled, and the orchestra played some lively air, how gay and seductive the scene! But when in the silent morning the daylight peeped in on the forsaken benches, the tawdry gilding, and faded "properties," what sight more melancholy could the universe present?

Had Fielding been ever so steadily disposed, the associates whom he picked up at the playhouse doors were men whose precepts and example were sufficient to drive every prudent notion out of his head. Among the idlers in the green-room he met with members of the literary tribe who had been long habituated to a life of careless indulgence,

my translators." A little further on, the poet gives the bookseller's revelations on the mode of converting critics; how "a lean man that looked like a very good scholar," having abused his client's translation of Homer, was judiciously asked by him to take a piece of beef and a slice of pudding, with which invitation complying, he speedily altered his opinion.

indolence, and dependence. To such men it was unimportant whether the wants of the hour were supplied by their own exertions, or by alms extorted from men and women more prudent than themselves. Instead of esteeming it "a glorious privilege" to be independent of others, they were constantly scheming how and where they could beg or borrow a guinea, or obtain fine clothes without paying for them. So long as they could live sumptuously upon their friends, and eat without stint the bread of dependence, they did not trouble themselves about the future, or condescend to the slightest mental labour. Gay, witty, amusing, and (sometimes) well-dressed, they were popular in the circles which had for Harry Fielding such immense attractions:—not only behind the scenes of the theatre, but in fashionable taverns and other haunts of dissipation—amongst gay Templars, fast young merchants, and youths of fortune and estate, who considered that wit gave a zest to champagne.

With one man to whom this description most literally applies, namely, Richard Savage, the young dramatic author must have been frequently brought into contact. Savage was at this period a constant attendant at the theatres, and a great favourite with the performers. Two of Fielding's earliest theatrical friends were his stanchest benefactors. Wilks, of whom favourable mention has been already made, and who, says Johnson, "whatever were his abilities and skill as an actor, deserves at least to be remembered for his virtues," successfully exerted himself in procuring occasional supplies of money for the dissipated poet from his unnatural parent. Mrs. Oldfield did more than this: out of her professional income she allowed Savage £50 a year, which was regularly paid him until her death in 1730. Such an act of generosity might have aroused the suspicions of a censorious world, were it not for Savage's solemn and often repeated declaration, that he had never seen his benefactress alone, "or in any

other place than behind the scenes."[1] How he was able year after year to receive this money without being weighed down by a sense of degradation, it is, however, difficult to conceive. While his benefactress toiled upon the boards, he reconciled it to his conscience to lounge about in lace, grumbling at the inequalities of fortune, indulging in low dissipation, and only escaping the gallows by a miracle of good luck. Content, at any time, to be treated in a tavern by a stranger,—lodging as well as dining by accident, and often without either lodging or dinner,—producing from his pocket, whenever he could find a sufficiently credulous victim, proposals for publishing new poems or collecting old ones, and soliciting a subscription in advance,—pursued by creditors,—shunned by prudent friends, who knew how hopeless it was to attempt to assist him,—such was the man who enlivened the green-room with his wit when Fielding's town life commenced, and whose dangerous acquaintanceship must have been early forced on the lively and volatile youth.

As the story of Fielding's life is gradually unfolded, it will be made apparent how powerfully and unfortunately his character and position were influenced by these early associations. A taste for a wild, roving, unsettled life is easily acquired, and not easily shaken off; the hot blood of youthful genius is at all times impatient of control, but especially so after a season of uncontrolled license, and the unrestrained indulgence of every impulse and inclination

(1) Johnson's Lives of the Poets.

CHAPTER IV.

DRAMATIC CAREER CONTINUED.—"THE COFFEE-HOUSE POLITICIAN."—"TOM THUMB."

[1730.]

"THE Coffee-House Politician; or, the Justice caught in his own Trap," appears to have been Fielding's next dramatic work. In this piece he first exhibited in very marked degree his skill in character-painting. None of his previous plays contain any strongly individualised portraits; but "The Coffee-House Politician"[1] may be described as one of those lucky sketches which a master's hand could have alone produced. The idea of a political enthusiast, who is so occupied with the affairs of foreign states as to lose sight altogether of his own domestic interests, is an extremely happy one, and well adapted for stage purposes.[2] But besides the politician, this comedy contains a capital portrait of a London justice of the peace (Mr. Justice Squeezum)—one of those strange compounds of ignorance and knavery by whom the laws were administered at metropolitan justice-rooms in the early part of the 18th century. In this coarse but

(1) The piece was also acted and published under the title of "Rape upon Rape."

(2) Other satirists besides Fielding have held up such politicians to ridicule. Thus Churchill:—

> "The cit—a common councilman by place,
> Ten thousand mighty nothings in his face,
> By situation, as by nature, great,
> With wise precaution parcels out the State.
> . . . .
> Fearfully wise he shakes his empty head,
> And deals out empires as he deals out thread:
> His useless scales are in a corner flung,
> And Europe's balance hangs upon his tongue."

amusing caricature are embodied all the peculiarities which popular rumour ascribed to this happily extinct variety of the judicial character—unbounded rapacity, despicable meanness, and the grossest incapacity. As Fielding lived to be himself a justice of peace, an opportunity will hereafter arrive for discussing the duties and social position of these functionaries: at present it is enough to say that in this instance his satire was not ill-directed. When magistrates were paid by fees, and trafficked in committals and convictions, it is not improbable that the worst of them adopted something like the sentiments avowed by Squeezum in this comedy: "Come, come, child, you had better take the oath, though you are not altogether so sure. Justice should be rigorous. It is better for the public that ten innocent people should suffer, than that one guilty should escape; and it becomes every good person to sacrifice their conscience to the benefit of the public." Nor was it so uncommon a thing for such justices to act according to the principle openly enunciated by his worship:—"Well, sir, if you cannot pay for your transgressions like the rich, you must suffer for them like the poor."

Justice Squeezum was most efficiently represented by a comedian who had long acquired celebrity in such characters — Hyppesly, the original Peachum in "The Beggar's Opera." In the delineation of amorous dotage, covetousness, and cunning, this actor is said to have been unrivalled; the part of the knavish justice was therefore peculiarly adapted to his powers; and if anything could have insured the success of a comedy it would have been such an actor in such a part.[1] But low as was then the

(1) There is a tradition that it was during the performance of this comedy the talents of Macklin (whose name is printed among the *dramatis personæ* as *Maclean*) were first made known to a London audience. A very subordinate part had been assigned him, which in the hands of any other performer would have passed unnoticed. The character in question was that of Porer—one of the political cronies of the coffee-house politician; and all that he had to do

standard of theatrical morality, it may be surmised that the "Coffee-house Politician" was too gross, and too indelicate for the audiences even of that tolerant age; and though indulgently received at first, such scandalous indecency could not long maintain possession of the stage. One can scarcely imagine it possible for women to have listened patiently to the dialogue of this comedy, of which the worst part was uttered by persons of their own sex. However loose the morals of the fashionable world, however degraded the character of town-bred ladies, it seems strange that not much more than a century since that should have been listened to in public, without manifestation of displeasure, which no well-bred English woman would now read in private.

There are, however, some scenes in this comedy which are written in Fielding's happiest manner. The conferences between Politick (the coffee-house politician) and his friend Dabble, upon the subject of foreign affairs, are extremely diverting, particularly when the geographical ignorance imputed to both these worthies is taken into consideration, *ex. gr.*:—

Dabble. I would fain ask one question, Mr. Politick; pray, how large do you take Tuscany to be?

Politick. How large do you take Tuscany to be—let me see—Tuscany, ay; how large do I take it to be—hum—Faithful!—bring some more tobacco. How large do I take it to be—why, truly, I take it to be as large as the kingdom of France—or something larger.

Dabble. As large as the kingdom of France—you might as well compare this tobacco-pipe to a cannon. Why, Tuscany, sir, is only a town; a garrison to be admitted into Tuscany, that is, into the town of Tuscany.

Many other examples of pointed satire might be selected from this play; as the following terse sentence, which is put into the mouth of the drunkard Sotmore:—"We punish drunkenness, as well as other sins, only in the

was to appear once upon the stage, and announce the arrival of some important news. In this trifling part he managed, however, to make a strong impression on the town, and was much applauded.

lower sort. *Drink, like the game, was intended for gentlemen.*" And Mr. Worthy, the moralist of the comedy, musing on his friend Politick's eccentricities, is made to observe:—"The greatest part of mankind labour under one delusion or other; and Don Quixote differed from the rest, not in madness, but in the species of it. The covetous, the prodigal, the superstitious, the libertine, and the coffee-house politician are all Quixotes in their several ways." *Si sic omnia*—if Fielding had written always thus, his plays would not now lie neglected on the library shelf.

In the course of this year (1730) it was Fielding's good fortune to achieve success in a department of theatrical composition which has been diligently cultivated amongst us—that of the burlesque. For this kind of writing he had unquestionably great natural aptitude, and he had fallen on a lucky period for the exercise of his ability. The tragedies of this era were characterised by their stiff formality and insufferable bombast, as the comedies were distinguished for indelicacy and unblushing immorality. In tragic acting, also, as well as tragic writing, everything had become as far removed as possible from nature and natural utterance. So accustomed were the audiences of those days to hear the sonorous lines of Lee and Rowe mouthed by actors like Quin and Booth, that when, about the year 1725, Macklin came up to London, after performing in several strolling country companies, and solicited an engagement from Mr. Rich (the manager of the Lincoln's-Inn Theatre), he informs us that his manner of speaking was so familiar, "and so little in the *hoity-toity* tone of the tragedy of that day, that the manager told him he had better go to grass for another year or two."[1] This *hoity-toity* tragedy-tone was admirably imitated and ridiculed by Fielding in "The Tragedy of Tragedies; or, the Life and

(1) Macklin's Memoirs. "Going to grass" was the theatrical term for the period of provincial probation, which was once considered a necessary preparation for the London stage.

Death of Tom Thumb the Great,"—which (with the exception of the comedy of the "Miser") is the only one of his dramatic efforts that has found favour in the eyes of posterity.[1]

Fielding's burlesque, however, it is right to say, was not the only well-aimed blow inflicted by the wits on the inflated tragedy writing of the day. One of the most popular and most effective productions of this kind was the mock tragedy of "Chrononhotonthologos" (published in 1734), which certainly contains some most inimitable strokes of humour. For proof of this, it is enough to refer to the well-known lines:—

> "Go call a coach, and let a coach be called,
> And let the man that calls it be the caller,
> And in his calling let him nothing call
> But coach! coach! coach! Oh, for a coach, ye gods!"

And, as Mr. Dibdin remarks, "the idea of the warrior's piling himself upon dead bodies till he reached the gods, who invited him for his heroism to remain with them, which offer he rejected, because he was summoned to earth by the eyes of his mistress, is a very happy one." The author of this once-famous burlesque—Carey, a musician by profession, and the writer of several farces—was not exempt from the misfortunes which then so often attended the wit's career. "The author before me," says Dibdin, "finishes an account of his history with these words: 'He led a life free from reproach, and hanged himself October 4th, 1743!'"[2]

To return to "Tom Thumb," it may be observed that it was originally only one act, and proved so successful that it was afterwards enlarged to three, in which state it was performed and published in 1731. Amongst the writers

(1) "Tom Thumb," or rather the modern version of it by Kane O'Hara, still keeps possession of the stage. Within the recollection of the playgoers of this generation, the character of Lord Grizzle has been personated by those two masters of broad farce—Liston and Reeve.

(2) Dibdin's History of the Stage, vol. V.

who came in for their full share of ridicule were Dryden, Lee, Rowe, Thomson, and Young, whose sonorous lines and poetical extravagances were humorously parodied and ridiculed. The savage speech of the king in "Tom Thumb" is hardly an extravagant burlesque on the utterances of the stage-tyrants of those days:—

> "Let nothing but a face of joy appear;
> The man that frowns this day shall lose his head,
> That he may have no face to frown withal."

In the following *regal* notion of festivity, the tragedy-tone of the time is also happily caught:—

> *King.* Petition me no petition, sir, to-day;
> Let other hours be set apart for business.
> To-day it is our pleasure to be drunk,
> And this our queen shall be as drunk as we."

Thomson's famous lines in "Sophonisba" did not escape:—

> "O Sophonisba, Sophonisba, O!"

which is ludicrously parodied—

> "O Huncamunca, Huncamunca, O!"

According to Johnson, some town-wag perpetrated a still better parody of this feeble line:—

> "O Jemmy Thomson, Jemmy Thomson, O!"

In the "annotations of Scriblerus Secundus," affixed by Fielding to the published copies of his burlesque, are quoted most of the passages which it was intended to ridicule or parody. Many of these were from the plays which belong to the corrupt theatrical period ushered in by the Restoration; when in tragedy, extravagance, and in comedy, licentiousness, became the vogue. Dryden's "Conquest of Granada" (first acted in 1672) furnished many bombastic lines, only slightly altered in "Tom Thumb." Thus, in the burlesque, the king addresses the Ghost in this fashion:—

> "Ye stars, 'tis well; were thy last hour to come
> This moment had been it; yet by thy shroud
> I'll pull thee backward, squeeze thee to a bladder,
> Till thou dost groan thy nothingness away."

The passage in Dryden's play, as quoted by Scriblerus Secundus, is as follows:—

"I'll pull thee backwards by thy shroud to light,
Or else I'll squeeze thee, like a bladder, there,
And make thee groan thyself away to air."

And, again, this elegant image is put into the mouth of Tom Thumb:—

"With those last words he vomited his soul;"

an idea which is taken from a line in Dryden's "Cleomenes" (1692):—

"And in a purple vomit poured his soul."

Amongst the other tragedies satirized in "Tom Thumb" may be mentioned, as occupying the chief place, Young's "Busiris," Nat Lee's and Thomson's "Sophonisba," and Bank's "Earl of Essex." The annotations of Scriblerus Secundus, it may be added, form in themselves an admirable satire on pedantic commentaries and commentators.[1]

(1) "Tom Thumb" was first acted in 1730, and followed the "Coffee-house Politician," probably after a short interval: the latter comedy being alluded to in Scriblerus's notes (see note to "Tom Thumb," Act iii., scene 10).

In the first volume of the "Gentleman's Magazine," Fielding's "Tragedy of Tragedies" is thus mentioned in a long poem on the versifiers of the age:—

"'Tis not enough to gain a wild applause,
When crowded theatres espouse your cause.
. . . . . .
But aim to soar in Shakspere's lofty strain;
Or nature draw in Jonson's merry vein.
To F——g names unknown—to him have come
The fame of Hickathrift and brave Tom Thumb,
The brave Tom Thumb does all his thoughts engage:
See with what noble port, what tragic rage,
The Lilliputian hero treads the stage!"

The mention of Hickathrift in these lines reminds us that "an ingenious living critic (Mr. Thackeray)" has claimed the old story-book of that name for Fielding (Forster's "Life of Goldsmith," 2nd edition, vol. i. p. 371). The story is, however, a very old one, and must have been in print before Fielding's time. In an article on Nursery Literature, in the "Quarterly Review" (1819), the following account is given of this marvellous personage, and the origin of the old tale, which, with "Tom Thumb" and "Jack the Giant-killer," amused our marvel-loving ancestors:—"Mr. Thomas Hickathrift, afterwards Sir Thomas Hickathrift, knight, is praised by Mr. Thomas Hearne as a famous champion. The honest antiquary has identified this well known knight with the far less

By this time Fielding had acquired something like an established reputation as a wit and dramatic author. Such a reputation proved to him a most unfortunate possession. It bound him to London, and to the frivolities and dissipations of a town life; it enlarged his acquaintance with the worthless and profligate, and prevented him from following the true bent of his genius. His hours were mostly passed in the green-room or the tavern; and when he put pen to paper, his only object was to find the means of gratifying the demands of the moment's prodigality. Under such circumstances, he threw off many light, sketchy performances, that are little worth the pains of criticism, and which he scarcely took the trouble to correct after the framework had been once committed to paper. The author's devotion to pleasure did not, indeed, leave him much time to cultivate the graces of composition. Some of his smaller pieces were the result of only two or three mornings' work, and he often held the pen before he had well slept off the fumes of the last night's champagne.

"When he had contracted," says Murphy, "to bring on a play or a farce, it is well known by many of his friends now living, that he would go home rather late from a tavern, and would the next morning deliver a scene to the players, written upon the papers in which he had wrapped the tobacco in which he so much delighted."[1] The celebrity at which he aimed was that of the man of pleasure rather

celebrated Sir Frederick de Tylney, Baron of Tylney, in Norfolk, the ancestor of the Tylney family, who was killed at *Acon*, in Syria, in the reign of Richard Cœur-de-Lion; *Hycophric* or *Hycothrift*, as the mister-wight observes, *being probably a corruption of Frederick*. . . . From the most remote antiquity, the fables and achievements of *Hickifric* have been obstinately credited by the inhabitants of the township of Tylney. Hickifric is venerated by them as the assertor of the rights and liberties of their ancestors. The monstrous giant who guarded the marsh was, in truth, no other than the tyrannical lord of the manor, who attempted to keep his copyholders out of the common field called *Tylney Smeeth*; but who was driven away with his retainers by the prowess of Tom, armed only with his axletree and cartwheel. Spelman has told the story in good Latin."

(1) Essay on the Life and Genius of Fielding.

than of the author. Writing was a drudgery to which he only resorted when impelled by necessity. He lived a careless prodigal of Heaven's best gifts — health, genius, cheerfulness. His fine animal spirits enabled him to endure without repining the ills of poverty, as the penalty which he was content to pay for hours of riot and extravagance. Duns might knock at his door—if they could find it; his personal liberty might be threatened; he might be driven to the humiliation of begging or borrowing a guinea; his gay apparel might be parted with to furnish a meal;—but still nothing could repress his buoyant good-humour, or induce him to regard his worldly position in a desponding spirit. Never was poet or playwright prouder of his debts, his garret, and careless expenditure. He was content to look on "suffering as a badge of all his tribe," and to make a jest of penury. As a proof of this, it is only necessary to turn to a poetical epistle which he addressed to the prime-minister, Sir Robert Walpole, this year (1730), and from which a few lines are extracted.

"The family that dines the latest
Is in our street esteemed the greatest;
But latest hours must surely fall
'Fore him who never dines at all.

Your taste as architect, you know,
Hath been admired by friend and foe;
But can your earthly domes compare
With all *my* castles—in the air?

We're often taught it doth behove us
To think those greater who 're above us;
Another instance of my glory,
Who live above you twice two storey;
And from my garret can look down
On the whole street of *Arlington.*

Greatness by poets still is painted
With many followers acquainted;
This too doth in my favour speak;
Your levée is but once a week;
From mine I can but exclude one day—
My door is quiet of a Sunday!"

CHAPTER V.

"THE MODERN HUSBAND."—"MOCK DOCTOR."—"THE MISER."

[1731—1733.]

Fielding's contributions to the literature of the stage, during the year 1731, are precisely such as might have been expected from him under the circumstances detailed in the former chapter. Whilst they occasionally exhibit considerable tact and cleverness, they bear in every scene the most obvious marks of recklessness, haste, and indifference. No man possibly was more sensible of their defects than himself, and he often laughed at the public which applauded his nonsense. Amongst them are three afterpieces, viz.: "The Lottery," "The Letter-Writers; or, a New Way to keep a Wife at Home," and "The Grub Street Opera." The latter was originally entitled "The Welsh Opera," from the scene being laid in the principality. It is properly styled by Dibdin "a strange jumble," without any intelligible plot or incidents. One regular five-act comedy, of more ambitious pretensions, entitled "The Modern Husband," was also written by him in the same year, and acted at Drury Lane, without any considerable success, in February, 1732. That such a play could have been tolerated, indeed, by any decent audience seems at this time of day impossible. No doubt the morals of the upper classes were bad enough in the reign of George II.; no doubt the marriage-tie, like many other social obligations, was often lightly regarded by persons of quality in that unscrupulous age; no doubt there were then many town-bred ladies who gambled away their husband's money at *quadrille*, and perhaps also some female gamesters who were not afraid

or ashamed to cheat: but that such a state of morals as Fielding has depicted in "The Modern Husband" was common in any class or circle is an incredible and monstrous supposition. In probing the lowest depths of profligacy, it is possible that a couple like Mr. and Mrs. Modern in this comedy (a husband trading on his wife's dishonour), might have been found; but to represent such persons as the ordinary products of the social system then in vogue was a libel on the age, and exceeded the limits of the comedian's license. Bad men and women there have always been in all classes, but amongst no class of Englishmen and English women can it be believed that the tone of morality was ever half so bad as that which Fielding ascribes to polite society in the year 1731.

"The Modern Husband" was regarded by Fielding and his theatrical friends as the most ambitious effort of his hitherto "unskilled muse." In the prologue (spoken by Wilks),[1] he is represented as "repenting the frolic flights of youth," flying "to nature and truth," and aspiring to fame "in defence of virtue!" A modern reader will think that it would have been better for his fame if such scenes had never been written; although he evidently entertained the notion that he had rendered thereby a service to society, as well as added to his literary reputation.

Before this comedy was represented or published, Fielding seems to have been especially anxious to avail himself of the judgment of his clever kinswoman, Lady Mary Wortley Montague. For this purpose he addressed two letters to that lady, which are preserved amongst her miscellaneous correspondence. Although too laboriously polite to be considered favourable specimens of his epistolary style, they possess some value from the light which they throw on his early intimacy with Lady Mary:—

(1) The character of Mr. Bellamant, in this comedy, was the last new part played by Wilks, who died in September, 1732.

"MADAM,

"I have presumed to send your ladyship a copy of the play which you did me the honour of reading three acts of last spring, and hope it may meet as light a censure from your ladyship's judgment as then; for which your goodness permits me (what I esteem the greatest, and indeed the only happiness of my life), to offer my unworthy performances to your perusal, it will be entirely from your sentence that they will be regarded or disesteemed by me. I shall do myself the honour of calling at your ladyship's door to-morrow at eleven, which, if it be an improper hour, I beg to know from your servant what other time will be more convenient. I am, with the greatest respect and gratitude, madam,

"Your ladyship's most obedient,

"Most devoted, humble servant,

"HENRY FIELDING."

"*To the Right Honourable*
"*the Lady Mary Wortley Montague.*"

"I hope your ladyship will honour the scenes which I presume to lay before you with your perusal. As they are written on a model I never yet attempted, I am exceedingly anxious lest they should find less mercy from you than my lighter productions. It will be a slight compensation to 'The Modern Husband' that your ladyship's censure of him will defend him from the possibility of any other reproof, since your least approbation will always give me pleasure infinitely superior to the loudest applauses of a theatre. For whatever has passed your judgment may, I think, without any imputation of immodesty, refer want of success to want of judgment in an audience. I shall do myself the honour of waiting on your ladyship at Twickenham, next Monday, to receive my sentence; and am, madam,

"Your ladyship's most obedient servant,

"*London, September* 4, 1731." "HENRY FIELDING."[1]

When published, the comedy of "The Modern Husband" was dedicated by its author to Sir Robert Walpole. Fielding seems, for some time, to have laboured under the impression that this all-powerful minister might be induced by importunity to take an interest in the fortunes of a struggling man of letters, who was in want of a patron, and who had wit, youth, a handsome person, and good family to recommend him. Hence the poetical epistle of the former year, and hence also another similar copy

(1) Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montague. Edited by Lord Wharncliffe. Vol. i., p. lv. Lady Mary was Fielding's second cousin.

of verses, in which the poet compared his own *levée* of creditors to the minister's *levée* of courtiers. But of these strong hints no notice was taken, and Fielding cooled his heels in the minister's antechamber in vain. Having, however, now produced a literary performance of some pretensions,—for a five-act comedy was *then* thought something of,—he seized the opportunity of laying it at Sir Robert's feet, and of addressing in pompous prose the august dispenser of patronage:—"Nations and the Muses," he wrote, "have generally enjoyed the same protectors. . . . . When the little artifices of your enemies, which you have surmounted, shall be forgotten,—when envy shall cease to misrepresent your actions, and ignorance to misapprehend them,—the Muses shall remember their protector, the wise statesman and the generous patron, the steady friend and the true patriot; but above all, that humanity and sweetness of temper, which shine through all your actions, shall render the name of Sir Robert Walpole dear to his no longer ungrateful country." It cannot be denied that these terms of praise were judiciously chosen: but literature was not in Walpole's way, and Fielding's elaborate prose eulogium was not more successful than his poetical panegyric.

In the summer of 1732, Fielding attempted to satisfy the public craving for novelty by the production of a new burlesque, and a three-act comedy levelled at the Jesuits, which were both acted at Drury Lane on the same evening. The burlesque was entitled "The Covent Garden Tragedy," and was intended as a satire on "The Distressed Mother" of Ambrose Phillips. Phillips's tragedy (which is a very stiff and formal version of Racine's stiff and formal play of "*Andromaque*"), on its first production in 1712, had been laboriously puffed and praised by the literary celebrities of the day. "Before the appearance of the play," says Johnson, "a whole 'Spectator'—none indeed of the best—was devoted to its praise; while it

yet continued to be acted, another 'Spectator' was written, to tell what impression it made upon Sir Roger; and on the first night a select audience was called together to applaud it." Its success was further enhanced by an excellent prologue, ascribed to Eustace Budgel, but believed to be from the pen of Addison. Nor was this success merely transient. "The Distressed Mother" was regarded by managers as a stock-piece, and its dull and decorous scenes were frequently inflicted upon somnolent audiences. Mr. Dibdin, in his "History of the Stage," observes with reference to this tragedy, that "the perpetual see-saw of interest being divided between four characters, who relieve one another like sentinels, or buckets in a well, is intolerably tedious. I once," he adds, "saw it acted by four performers, *each of whom had a different lisp.*"

A glance at Fielding's burlesque will enable the reader to see how cleverly he has parodied this "see-saw of interest," which Dibdin describes. For the stately classical interlocutors of the tragedy, he substituted the lowest frequenters of the lowest haunts of London—bullies, thieves, and street-walkers.[1] The humour of the burlesque, which is very considerable, is consequently deformed by unusual coarseness and indecency. It is enough to say that the *dramatis personæ* have sentiments and expressions put into their mouths which are quite compatible with their characters and position.

"The Debauchee; or, the Jesuit Caught," was a skilful

(1) Covent Garden is reported by Macklin to have been a scene of much dissipation at this period (from the year 1730 to 1735), being surrounded with taverns, night-houses, &c. Here and in Clare Market congregated most of the theatrical wits. "The ordinaries of that day," he adds, "were from 6*d.* to 1*s.* per head; at the latter there were two courses, and a great deal of what the world calls good company in the mixed way. There were private rooms for the higher order of wits and noblemen, where much drinking was occasionally used. The butchers of Clare Market, then very numerous, were stanch friends to the players; and on every dread of a riot or disturbance in the house, the early appearance of these *formidable critics* made an awful impression."

attack on that powerful order, at this time (1732) the object of public detestation throughout Protestant Europe. The shocking and melancholy story of Father Girard and Catherine Cadière was now the talk of the town. Girard was a Jesuit, and the confessor of the unhappy lady, whose dishonour he had accomplished by artfully taking advantage of his priestly office and character. Detected and exposed, he was tried for the offence, and condemned to be burnt alive; but the Jesuits interfered in his behalf, and he was enabled to make his escape. Whilst this tale was fresh in the public recollection, no one could paint a Jesuit black enough to satisfy the popular taste; and Fielding accordingly tried his hand, and produced a finished portrait of clerical perfidy and hypocrisy. His Jesuit (Martin) was, however, undistinguished by any marked individuality. One scoundrel who assumes the cloak of religion for the better gratification of his unhallowed passions is pretty much like another: Jesuit or Puritan—Martin, Tartuffe, or Cantwell—the features are about the same; and consequently Fielding's Popish monster is only the old stage-hypocrite after all. When compared with dramas of the same description, this comedy is, however, entitled to favourable consideration. Its language and incidents, it is true, are too gross and indelicate to be tolerated in these days:[1] but this is a fault which it shares not only with most contemporary comedies, but also with many more recent plays of the class to which it belongs.

In the autumn of this year, Fielding resorted to a practice which was not so common amongst the dramatists of that age as of ours. Instead of relying on his own powers

(1) Both "The Covent Garden Tragedy" and "The Debauchee" were freely censured at the time for their flagrant indecency. In the "Grub Street Journal" of July, 1732, copious extracts are given from the burlesque, and it is stated that both plays "have met with the universal detestation of the town." If this were so, it is strange that they should have been tolerated on the stage so long as they were. The truth is, Fielding too faithfully consulted the taste of the age.

of invention, he borrowed a few scenes from the théatre of the French. With the comedies of Molière he had been familiar from his earliest youth, and of the genius of that great dramatist he was a profound admirer. With a thorough appreciation of his author, what could he do better than adapt his matchless humour to the English stage? Accordingly, under the title of "The Mock Doctor; or, the Dumb Lady Cured," he produced at Drury Lane a very farcical and amusing version of "*Le Médecin malgré lui.*"[1] The genial hearty humour of this little piece comes upon us quite as a relief after the vapid and indecent trash which the thoughtless dramatist had, during the previous twelvemonth, inflicted on the town. Large audiences were charmed with and applauded it; and its merits were rewarded by a more permanent popularity than was conceded to most of Fielding's dramatic efforts.

In the preface to the "Mock Doctor"—(Fielding published this trifle with a dedication to Dr. John Misaubin[2]) —the dramatist takes occasion to state that the success of his experiment would stimulate him to further exertion in the same field. "One pleasure I enjoy," he says, "from the success of this piece is a prospect of transplanting successfully some others of Molière of *great value.*" This promise he redeemed at the close of the year by his

(1) "*Le Médecin malgré lui*" had been previously adapted to the English stage by Lacy (1672), in a comedy called "The Dumb Lady;" and by Mrs. Centlivre, in "Love's Contrivances" (1703).

(2) In the fifth book of "Tom Jones" a characteristic anecdote is narrated of this gentleman: "Nay, sometimes," says the novelist, "by gaining time, the disease applies to the French military politics, and corrupts nature over to his side, and then all the powers of physic must arrive too late. Agreeable to these observations was, I remember, the complaint of the great Doctor Misaubin, who used very pathetically to lament the late applications which were made to his skill; saying, 'Bygar, me believe my pation take me for de undertaker: for dey never send for me till de physicion have kill dem.'" And in the thirteenth book of the novel, chap. ii., reference is again made to this professor of the healing art: "The learned Dr. Misaubin used to say that the proper direction to him was, '*To Dr. Misaubin, in the World;*' intimating that there were few people in it to whom his great reputation was not known."

adaptation to the English stage of Molière's "*l'Avare,*" itself a copy from an antique original. Upon this piece (which was first acted on the 17th February, 1733) mainly rests his permanent fame as a dramatist. Its literary merits are great, and some writers, with an extravagance of eulogy in which we do not concur, have not hesitated to prefer it to the original. Notwithstanding the extreme length of the dialogue, and the absence of all indelicate allusions (then unhappily considered necessary to ensure the success of a comedy), it was received with marked approbation, and has always since retained a place among the stock-pieces of the theatre. Perhaps a portion of this enduring popularity may be ascribed to the scope which it affords for the display of the powers of a finished actor. Lovegold, the miser, has been always considered what is termed in the language of the stage, a first-rate "character part." In the eighteenth century Shuter and Macklin were its most famous representatives; and even so late as the past year (1854) it has found favour in the eyes of one of the most distinguished dramatic artists of our day.[1] Whatever its attractions on the stage, the reader, however, cannot fail to admire the genuine humour and nervous dialogue of this famous version of Molière's famous comedy. It affords an emphatic proof of Fielding's good taste and just sense of propriety, when his better genius had fair play.

"The Mock Doctor," and "The Miser," exhibit a marked improvement in Fielding's dramatic style. Had he ceased to write altogether after the production of the latter comedy, his name would be always remembered in connection with the literature of the stage. He was as yet, be it observed, not six-and-twenty, and the life of dissipation into which he had plunged left him little time or inclination for study, reflection, or mental improvement. Happy

(1) "The Miser" was selected by Mr. Phelps, the manager of Sadlers Wells Theatre, for his benefit in the spring of 1854. The performance, however, we believe was never repeated.

indeed would it have been for him had it been otherwise! But in the midst of his wild career he had indited scenes which posterity has thought worthy of preservation. Though to gratify the taste of a licentious age he had supplied the stage with abundance of immoral dialogue, he had at length produced a dramatic work which the most rigid moralist would exempt from the verdict of general censure to which his early literary efforts are liable. True it is that "The Miser" was only a translation,—or at least an adaptation to the English stage of a foreign work,—but is not a good copy of a good picture preferable to an indifferent original?

"The Miser" was selected by Miss Raftor (afterwards Mrs. Clive[1]) for her benefit, on the 6th of April, 1733.[2] The afterpiece on this occasion was a farce called "Deborah; or, a Wife for You All," which the playbills announced to be "written by the author of 'The Miser.'" This piece—hurriedly thrown off by Fielding for a particular purpose, and designed to display the special talent of the actress—was performed but once, and was never printed. Among the characters were Justice Mittimus (probably only a reproduction of Justice Squeezum), Lawyer Trouble, and Deborah the heroine, personated by Miss Raftor.

(1) See next chapter, and note to page 54.

(2) For this date, as well as others, and for much valuable and minute information respecting Fielding's dramatic career, the biographer is indebted to the voluminous and careful "Account of the English Stage, from the Restoration in 1660 to 1830," in ten volumes, published at Bath in 1832.

CHAPTER VI.

FIELDING AT BARTHOLOMEW FAIR.—THEATRICAL DISASTERS. —"THE INTRIGUING CHAMBERMAID."—"DON QUIXOTE IN ENGLAND."—"THE UNIVERSAL GALLANT."

[1733—1735.]

Closely connected as he was with the stage at this period, it is not surprising—although at the first blush the announcement may appear rather startling—to find Fielding catering for the amusement of the holiday folks at Bartholomew Fair. In 1733 he had a booth there with Hyppesley, the comedian, at which the performances were "Love and Jealousy; or, the Downfall of Alexander the Great," and "A Cure for Covetousness." In the latter piece Mrs. Pritchard appeared, and took part in a duet which became immensely popular.[1] At this time of day it seems somewhat derogatory to a dramatist to have written or designed entertainments for such a place: but Bartlemy Fair in Fielding's time was the Londoner's great holiday, and attracted visitors of fashion and quality, as well as the undistinguished multitude. Besides Fielding, Cibber and Hyppesley, Griffin, Mills, and other eminent actors, had their booths there; and exhibited to gaping crowds a happy medley of high tragedy and low comedy:—"Tamerlane intermixed with the Miser," and "Jane Shore with the comical humours of Sir Anthony Noodle and his man, Weazle."[2] During the time the fair lasted—

(1) This dialogue or duet is printed in the poet's corner of "The Gentleman's Magazine" for September, 1733, as sung at "Fielding's booth at Bartholomew Fair." It begins with the following lines:—

> "Sweet, if you love me, smiling turn,
> Smiling turn, smiling turn," &c.

(2) Some Account of the History of the English Stage, &c.

then recently reduced from fifteen to three days[1]—the theatres were closed, and the actors emigrated to this grand arena of miscellaneous amusements, which Sir Hans Sloane once visited to copy specimens of natural history; and where, in former years, Ben Jonson had set up a booth, and, at the same time, found materials for humorous caricature.

The theatrical season of 1733—34 was a disastrous one in English dramatic annals, and a period of much perplexity to Fielding. The fortunes of authors and managers were clouded by a conjuncture of untoward circumstances. New theatres were opened, whilst audiences fell off both in number and quality; the best actors were either lost to the stage altogether, or scattered through various parts of the town; whilst, above all, the attractions of the Italian Opera overpowered and cast into the shade the exertions of native talent. The preference shown by the great to foreign artists was not indeed a new grievance. The Opera and masquerade had monopolised for some years the patronage of the Court; and two eminent vocalists from the chosen land of song—Cuzzoni and Faustina—divided the admiration of the town; and, under the patronage of rival ladies of quality, gave occasion to riots, duels, and libels:[2] silly fops drew their bright steel in the cause of one or other of these popular favourites; and hungry poets, with wit not quite

(1) Cunningham's "Hand-Book of London," &c. Fielding alludes to this alteration in the "Author's Farce," where the Poet says, "My lord mayor has shortened the time of Bartholomew Fair in Smithfield, and so they are resolved to keep it all the year round at the other end of the town." After a long and illustrious existence Bartholomew Fair expired this year (1855), unhonoured and unregretted.

(2) "Dr. Arbuthnot, although a stanch supporter of his friend Handel, could not forego the pleasure of a slap, *en passant*, at certain insolent Italians, who kept the fashionables in such ridiculous warfare. He was the *reputed* author, at least, of a pamphlet entitled, 'The Devil to pay at St. James's; or, a full and true Account of a most horrid and bloody Battle between Madame *Faustina* and Madame *Cuzzoni*. Also, of a hot Skirmish between Signor *Boschi* and Signor *Palmerini*. Moreover, how *Senesino* has taken Snuff, is going to leave the Opera, and sing Psalms at Henley's Oratory.'"—*Wine and Walnuts*, vol. i. (note).

so bright, abused them both without stint. It was by the multiplication of theatres, however, that the interests of the national drama were most seriously affected at this period. The waning fortunes of time-honoured Drury suffered especially from the erection of a new theatre in Covent Garden, which was about this time opened under the auspices of manager Rich, by whom "The Beggar's Opera" was brought out; and the secession of some of the best actors in the company, who, at the instigation of Theophilus Cibber, deserted the patentees, and opened the Haymarket Theatre. On the boards of Drury most of Fielding's plays during the past two years had been produced: he had become identified with the place and the actors. Above all, he regarded the case of the patentees—Highmore (who from an amateur actor had become a manager, and who had sunk a large fortune in the speculation) and Mrs. Wilks (the widow of the celebrated actor)—as a peculiarly hard one.[1] To him, therefore, this playhouse revolution, and the factions amongst the actors, were in the highest degree embarrassing. Like a stanch seaman, however, he would not desert the ship, even when the waves threatened to engulf her. He exerted himself, therefore, to retrieve the fortunes of old Drury; and was seconded in his efforts by an artist of incomparable talent in her peculiar walk—the renowned Kitty Clive, who had first won

(1) In November, 1733, Highmore, having applied without success to the Lord Chamberlain to protect his patent, attempted to put the law in force against the seceding actors. He accordingly caused Harper, the comedian (who is said to have been an extremely quiet and timid man), to be arrested as a rogue and vagabond, and committed to Bridewell. On November 20th, the case was argued in the King's Bench; and on the part of Harper it was contended "that though he was a player, yet he did not *wander* about from place to place like a vagabond; nor was there any appearance of his being chargeable to any parish, for that he was not only a freeholder in Surrey, but a housekeeper in Westminster, and farther, that he was an honest man and paid his debts." *Per contra* it was argued "that he came under the Act of 12 Anne, and that he did wander from place to place, for that he had formerly acted at Drury Lane, and likewise at Bartholomew and Southwark fairs." The result was, Harper was discharged on his own recognizance.—(London Magazine, quoted in "Some Account of the English Stage.")

the admiration of the town under her maiden name of Raftor. With this lady in the principal character, he produced at Drury Lane a two-act comedy, called "The Intriguing Chambermaid" (adapted from "*Le Dissipateur,*" a French piece by Regnard), which may be numbered amongst the best and liveliest of his minor dramatic essays.

If not written purposely for the great comic actress who personated the heroine, this piece was admirably calculated to develop her peculiar excellences. We have the authority of Churchill for placing Mrs. Clive first amongst the representatives of the witty and designing Abigails, who usually play so prominent a part in our comedies and farces:—

> "First, giggling, plotting chambermaids arrive,
> Hoydens and romps, led on by Gen'ral Clive.
> In spite of outward blemishes she shone;
> For humour famed, and humour all her own.
> Easy, as if at home, the stage she trod,
> Nor sought the critic's praise, nor feared his rod.
> Original in spirit and in ease,
> She pleased by hiding all attempts to please."[1]

To the merits of this great actress Fielding also bore a warm testimony in the dedicatory epistle to her, which he prefixed to the published copies of this play. "It is your misfortune," he said, "to bring the greatest genius for acting on the stage at a time when the factions and divisions among the players have conspired with the folly, injustice, and barbarity of the town to finish the ruin of the stage, and sacrifice our own native entertainments to a wanton, affected fondness for foreign music; and when our nobility seem eagerly to rival each other in distinguishing themselves in favour of Italian theatres, and in neglect of our own. However, the few who have yet so much English taste and good-nature left, as sometimes to visit that stage where you exert your great abilities, never fail to receive you with the approbation you deserve; nay, you

(1) The Rosciad.

extort, by the force of your merit, the applause of those who are languishing for the return of Cuzzoni."

Nor does the dramatist fail to dwell with complacency on the private worth and blameless life of the subject of his panegyric. He distinguishes—and it is well that he could do so—the actress from the woman; the performer, professionally compelled to give utterance to licentious language and ideas, from the excellent wife, daughter, sister, and friend. "But as great a favourite," he adds, "as you at present are with the audience, you would be much more so were they acquainted with your private character; could they see you laying out great part of the profits which arise from entertaining them so well, in the support of an aged father; did they see you, who can charm them on the stage with personating *the foolish and vicious characters* of your sex, acting in real life the part of the best wife, the best daughter, the best sister, and the best friend."[1]

Simultaneously with the production of "The Intriguing Chambermaid," Fielding's "Author's Farce" was revived at Drury Lane with alterations and allusions adapted to the period. In a previous chapter, this piece has been noticed at some length: it is therefore sufficient here to state that in the form in which it has come down to us, it contains many hits on the "setting up of new playhouses,"[2]

(1) Mrs. Clive was the daughter of Mr. William Raftor, an Irish gentleman, who sacrificed a considerable estate by his attachment to the cause of James II., whose fortunes he followed, even after the decisive battle of the Boyne, and obtained a captain's commission in the French service. He was ultimately pardoned, and returned to England. His daughter, Kitty, made her first appearance on the stage under the auspices of Cibber, and in the course of a few seasons became immensely popular. She married Mr. Clive, a brother of Mr. Baron Clive, the eminent judge. From this gentleman she separated; but it is but right to say that calumny never assailed her character. In the latter years of her life she was the neighbour of Horace Walpole, at Strawberry Hill, who often entertained himself and his correspondents with the wit and gossip of Kitty Clive.

(2) The multiplication of theatres was considered so great a grievance that, about two years subsequently, the subject occupied the attention of the legis-

and other matters which have an obvious reference to the state of dramatic affairs in 1733—34. An excellent prologue was written for the farce on the occasion of its revival, and delivered by Mrs. Clive. As a picture of manners, the following lines, in which the past and then present state of the drama were contrasted, are well worthy of quotation:—

"Here the beau-monde in crowds repaired each day,
And went well pleased and entertained away.
While Oldfield here hath charmed the list'ning age,
And Wilks adorn'd, and Booth hath fill'd the stage.

. . . .

lature. In the "Commons' Debates," for the session of 1734-35, a motion by Sir John Barnard on this matter, and the discussion thereon, are thus recorded:—

"*March* 5. Sir J. Barnard moved for bringing in a bill for restraining the number of houses for playing of interludes, and for the better regulating common players of interludes. In support of his motion, he represented the mischief done to the city of London by the playhouses, in corrupting the youth, encouraging vice and debauchery, and being prejudicial to trade and industry; and how much those evils would be increased, if another playhouse should be built in the very heart of the city.* Sir John Barnard was seconded by Mr. Sandys, and supported by Mr. Pulteney, Sir R. Walpole, Sir J. Jekyll, Sir T. Sanderson, and several other members. Mr. James Erskine, in particular, reckoned up the number of playhouses then in London, viz.: the Opera House, the French Playhouse in the Haymarket, and the theatres in Covent Garden, Drury Lane, Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, and Goodman's Fields; and added, 'That it was no less surprising than shameful to see so great a change for the worse in the temper and inclinations of the British nation, who were now so extravagantly addicted to lewd and idle diversions, that the number of playhouses in London was double to that of Paris: That we now exceeded in levity even the French themselves, from whom we learned these and many other ridiculous customs, as much unsuitable to the mien and manners of an Englishman or a Scot, as they were agreeable to the air and levity of a Monsieur: That it was astonishing to all Europe that Italian eunuchs and singers should have set salaries, equal to those of the Lords of the Treasury and Judges of England.' After this, it was ordered, *nem. con.*: That a Bill be brought in pursuant to Sir J. Barnard's motion, which was done accordingly: But it was afterwards dropt, on account of a clause offered to be inserted in the said bill for enlarging the power of the Lord Chamberlain, with respect to the licensing of plays." The once celebrated Tony Aston—a strolling comedian, who had been bred an attorney—was, on his own petition, permitted to deliver a speech in the House of Commons against this measure, which two years afterwards, it will be seen, was substantially passed into law.

* There was at this time a project on foot for erecting a playhouse in St. Martin's-le-Grand.

> But now, alas! how alter'd is the case!
> I view with tears this poor deserted place;
> None to our boxes now in pity stray,
> But poets free o' the house, and beaux who never pay.
> No longer now we see our crowded door
> Send the late comer back again at four.
> At seven now into our empty pit
> Drops from his counter some old prudent cit,
> Contented with twelve pennyworth of wit.

This must have been a peculiarly unpropitious period to Fielding, who had hitherto drawn his means of subsistence principally, if not entirely, from the playhouse treasury. When that source failed him, he had nothing on which to rely. Provision for a rainy day he never made. In prosperous times he could not keep a guinea in his pocket, and the day of adversity always found him penniless. True it is, that his wit had obtained for him wealthy and influential patrons, who were both able and willing to assist him. "The severity of the public," says Mr. Murphy, "and the malice of his enemies, met with a noble alleviation from the patronage of the Duke of Richmond, John, Duke of Argyle, the late Duke of Roxburgh, and many persons of distinguished rank and character, amongst whom may be numbered the present Lord Lyttleton."[1] George Lyttleton, we have seen, was an Eton-boy with Fielding, and he remained through life and after life his stanchest friend. To the Duke of Richmond the young dramatist had dedicated the comedy of "The Miser." John, Duke of Argyle, was a noted friend and admirer of the principal actors and actresses of the period, and the constant frequenter of that amusing circle of playhouse wits where Fielding shone—a star of the first magnitude. From these powerful friends the necessitous author no doubt occasionally received pecuniary assistance. But that assistance came in too questionable a shape to be altogether satisfactory to the recipient. Besides, if there were nothing

(1) Essay on the Life and Genius of Fielding.

humiliating in receiving the alms of the great, such means of support are at best most uncertain. A man of genius or talent, however witty and agreeable, is often "cut" by his wealthy acquaintances, if he is eternally begging or borrowing guineas.

A strange alternation, therefore, of light and shade did these early years of Fielding's life present. To-day, familiar with the sordid haunts of poverty; to-morrow, gay in velvet, ruffles, and embroidery. Now, dining at the tables of the great, and quaffing champagne in ducal banquet-halls; and now seeking out the cheapest ordinary; or, if dinner were impossible, solacing himself with a pipe of tobacco. This is no imaginary picture. Fielding's youthful portrait has been sketched by a contemporary limner, and will bear out this description line for line. An anonymous satire[1] (published about this time) thus records his sudden transformations from the grub to the butterfly condition:—

"F——g, who yesterday appeared so rough,
Clad in coarse frieze, and plaistered down with snuff,
See how his instant gaudy trappings shine!
What playhouse bard was ever seen so fine?
But this not from his humour flows, you'll say,
But mere necessity—for last night lay
In pawn the velvet which he wears to-day."

Although the exertions of the dramatist were at this time rewarded with little enough of solid pudding, he received his full share of praise. "By an unknown hand," a copy of verses was sent to him, "occasioned by the revival of 'The Author's Farce,'" replete with every term and topic of eulogy. The bard (whoever he was) from whom this production emanated, addressed him in language of warm and judicious friendship. After dwelling on Fielding's claims to the gratitude of the age for his manly assault on its faults and follies, it was broadly intimated that such merit was deserving of the

(1) Seasonable Reproof: a Satire in the manner of Horace. 1735.

substantial reward which a minister of the crown is able to bestow:—

"Proceed, even thus proceed, bless'd youth, to charm,
Divert our hearts and civil rage disarm,
Till fortune, once not blind to merit, smile
On thy desert, and recompense thy toil;
Or Walpole, studious still of Britain's fame,
Protect thy labours and prescribe the theme.
On which, *in ease and affluence*, thou may'st raise
More noble trophies to thy country's praise."[1]

As the stage now offered few attractions in the way of remuneration, and as poets cannot live on panegyric, it is not surprising to find that about this time little was done by Fielding in the way of original composition. He had found by experience, as the bookseller asserts in "The Author's Farce," that "a play, like a bill, is of no value till it is accepted." As he had at all times laboured for present profit, he had no disposition to pass his time in the manufacture of wares for which there was no market. Still he was not wholly idle. He had by him some crude scenes of a comedy which he had written at Leyden, and of which mention has already been made. It was a wild extravaganza—called "Don Quixote in England"—a bold attempt to introduce the immortal knight of La Mancha on the English stage, under new scenes and circumstances. The idea was rather a boyish and impracticable one; and when Fielding began to have a little experience in theatrical affairs, and had taken counsel with older heads than his

(1) This year was produced at Drury Lane a play by Charles Johnson, called "Cœlia; or, the Perjured Lover," to which Fielding contributed an epilogue,—the same Johnson who is described in the notes to the "Dunciad" as being famous "for writing a play every year, and being at Button's every day." He was a member of the Middle Temple, but deserted the law for the stage, and finally married a buxom widow with a good fortune, on which he set up a tavern in Bow Street. That he was fatter than bard beseems, and no stranger to creature-comforts, may be surmised by the portrait given of him in the notes to "The Dunciad:"—"He had probably thriven better in his vocation, had he been a small matter leaner; he may be justly called a martyr to obesity, and be said to have fallen a victim to the rotundity of his parts."

own, he laid the play on the shelf, and thought no more of it for some years. Its existence, however, was known to most of his theatrical friends, and in the distressed state of Drury Lane (as he could not perhaps be prevailed on to write a new play), he was solicited to produce these first fruits of his dramatic frenzy. To these solicitations he yielded; and probably not without secret satisfaction. The first and favourite idea of an author, like the first love of man or woman, has always an enduring influence on the mind. It is in many cases a passion which more or less colours the after-life, and gives a direction to the genius. It was undoubtedly thus with Fielding. To represent Don Quixote mistaking road-side public-houses for castles, in England instead of Spain, an English country squire with his dogs for a giant at the head of his armies, and a pert rural Abigail for a distressed princess, perhaps exceeded the bounds of extravagance permitted even to the burlesque; whilst the humour was of too subtle and grave a character to be popular with ordinary theatrical audiences. But however wild and incongruous the notion, it was identified with Fielding's earliest intellectual aspirations. He had fastened from his boyhood with eager delight on the immortal creations of Cervantes. They were the load-stars of his fancy: the fairy forms which had led captive his youthful imagination. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that the rude comedy written at Leyden, in the first transports of youthful ardour, was a favourite with its author, for the idea had taken deep root in his mind. When called on to produce a play, without much, if any, expectation of profit, he set to work to revise it *con amore;* and he added some new scenes, in which the Don is represented as a candidate at an English election.

Although, as may be gathered from Fielding's preface, the comedy in its altered form was several times rehearsed at Drury Lane, and a day fixed for its representation, it was never produced on those boards. The intervention of

the actors' benefits, and other circumstances, would have altogether prevented its appearance during the theatrical season, had not the author removed it to the New Theatre in the Haymarket, which, after having been closed for some years, had been lately opened by a company of comedians, who had revolted from the patent theatres. Here it was performed early in 1734, and, as might have been expected, met with little success.

However absurd in design, or unfitted for the stage, this comedy will nevertheless be found in the closet both readable and entertaining. If Don Quixote and his trusty squire are not very felicitously introduced by Fielding on English ground, yet their respective characters, as developed in the romance, are admirably preserved. The first scene introduces us to Sancho vainly endeavouring to stave off the demands of Guzzle, the English innkeeper, and answering his threats with a string of proverbs worthy of the Sancho of Cervantes:—

Guzzle. Tell me not of Spain, sir; I am an Englishman, where no one is above the law, and if your master does not pay me, I shall lay his Spaniardship fast in a place which he will find it as difficult to get out of, as your countrymen have found it to get into Gibraltar.

Sancho. That's neither here nor there, as the old saying is; many are shut into one place and out of another. Men bar houses to keep rogues out, and jails to keep them in. He that's hanged for stealing a horse to-day has no reason to buy oats for him to-morrow.

Fielding's Don Quixote is the identical Don Quixote of the romance; the very soul of honour; a monomaniac, it is true, but a man of rare wit and wisdom. Even the greedy Sancho would consent to fast in order to listen to his discourses. Whilst his acts are those of a madman, his language is that of a philosopher. He mistakes a flock of sheep for an army, but he denounces in no measured terms the social anomalies and vices which most revolt a chivalrous nature. He wages war, in a spirit of true knight-errantry, not only against giants and monsters, but against

hypocrisy, servility, cunning, and corruption. In fact, a happy mixture of sense and extravagance distinguishes the hero of the comedy as well as of the romance. Take the following passage, in which the coarse characters and amusements of the country squires of the eighteenth century are felicitously satirised.

Don Quixote. There is now arrived in this castle one of the most accursed giants that ever infested the earth. He marches at the head of his army, that howl like Turks in an engagement.

Sancho. Oh, lud! oh, lud! this is the country squire at the head of his pack of dogs.

Quixote. What dost thou mutter, varlet?

Sancho. Why, sir, this giant that your worship talks of is a country gentleman who is going a courting, and his army is neither more nor less than his kennel of fox-hounds.

Quixote. Oh, the prodigious force of enchantment! Sirrah, I tell thee this is the giant Toglogmoglog, lord of the island Gogmogog, whose belly hath been the tomb of above a thousand strong men.

Sancho. Of above a thousand hogsheads of strong beer, I believe.

Quixote. This must be the enchanter Merlin. I know him by his dogs. But, thou idiot! dost thou imagine that women are to be hunted like hares, that a man would carry his hounds with him to visit his mistress?

Sancho. Sir, your true English squire and his hounds are as inseparable as the Spaniard and his Toledo. He eats with his hounds, drinks with his hounds, and lies with his hounds; your true arrant English squire is but the first dog-boy in his house.

Quixote. 'Tis pity then that fortune should contradict the order of nature. It was a wise institution of Plato to educate children according to their minds, not to their births; these squires should sow that corn which they ride over. Sancho, when I see a gentleman on his own coach-box, I regret the loss which some one has had of a coachman; the man who toils all day after a partridge or a pheasant might serve his country by toiling after a plough; and when I see a low, mean, tricking lord, I lament the loss of an excellent attorney.

In his dedication of this comedy to Philip, Earl of Chesterfield, the author dwells with much complacency on the wholesome tendency of the "election scenes" which he had engrafted upon it. "The most ridiculous exhibitions of luxury or avarice" (so writes the young dramatic censor)

"may have little effect on the sensualist or the miser; but I fancy a lively representation of the calamities brought on a country by general corruption might have a very sensible and useful effect on the spectators." Fielding's object was laudable enough, and his exposure of electoral corruption is characterised by wit and vigour; but he must have been a Quixote indeed who could have conceived it possible that any amount of satire and sarcasm would have induced Sir Robert Walpole to have abandoned the system of widespread corruption by which he carried on the government of England at this period. Politics apart, however, the scenes in which Don Quixote is brought into contact with the corrupt rulers of the borough, which he is solicited to stand for as a candidate, exhibit a dramatic skill and humour which few of our comic writers have excelled.

At the beginning of the year 1735, Fielding brought out another farce at Drury Lane, which, like its predecessor, "The Intriguing Chambermaid," was evidently written to display the peculiar comic talents of Mrs. Clive. It was entitled "An old Man taught Wisdom; or, the Virgin Unmasked." In this trifle an unsophisticated young lady, after receiving various suitors selected by her father, disappoints them all by marrying a footman. This was by no means an unprecedented occurrence in real life at that period. Many ladies of quality displayed their admiration of the cane and the top-knot, by leading (or being led by) John or Thomas to the hymeneal altar.[1] Such ladies

(1) In a paper on ballad-singing in "The Grub Street Journal" of February, 1735, the frequent fraternisation of the kitchen and parlour, celebrated in the common street ballads of the time, is thus described: "One tells, How a footman died for love of a young lady, and how she was haunted by his ghost and died for grief. Another, How the coachman ran away with his young mistress, took to hedging and ditching, and she to knitting and spinning, and lived vastly happy, and in great plenty. And a third, How the young squire, master's eldest son, fell in love with the chambermaid, married her at the *Fleet*, was turned out of doors, kept an inn, got money as fast as hops, till the old gentleman died suddenly without a will, and then his son got all, kept a coach, and made his wife a great lady, who bore him twins for twelve years together, who all lived to be justices of the peace."

were probably attracted by the charms described by Miss Lucy in Fielding's farce, where we have the following capital picture of the model "flunkey" of 1735:—

"A footman! he looks a thousand times more like a gentleman than either Squire Foxchase or Squire Tankard; and talks more like one,—ay, and smells more like one, too. His head is so prettily drest, done all down upon the top with sugar, like a frosted cake, with three little curls on each side, that you may see his ears as plain! and then his hair is done up behind just like a fine lady's, with a little hat, and a pair of charming white stockings, as neat and as fine as any white-legged fowl; and he always carries a great swinging stick in his hand, as big as himself, that he would knock any dog down with who was to offer to bite me. A footman, indeed! why Miss Jenny likes him as well as I do; and she says all the fine young gentlemen that the ladies in London are so fond of, are just such persons as he is."

Astonishing were the airs assumed by the aristocratic footmen of those days. They not only imitated with great success the manners and behaviour of their masters, but to a disgusting and ridiculous extent mimicked their very vices. Whilst my lord was gambling in the drawing-room, his partycoloured retainers were playing cards or dice on the staircase, or in the servants'-hall. The fashionable slang of the town was familiar to these gentry, and they drawled it forth in their common discourse. Their dress was assimilated closely to that of their employers; and, strangely enough, the footmen of the present day are habited in the costume which belonged to that golden age of flunkeyism. Their privileges also were great. According to the absurd custom of the time, large *vails*, or presents in money, were distributed by guests to the lackeys of their entertainers, and these, in the course of time, were claimed as a right. They enjoyed, likewise, to the great annoyance of managers, free access to the theatre, where they filled the upper-gallery, from which they excluded all other visitors. Their behaviour in this exalted position was not characterised by forbearance or modesty, and both actors and authors dreaded their

opposition.[1] So intolerable did their presence at length become, that, in 1737, Fleetwood, the manager of Drury Lane, deprived them of their privilege. This led to a serious riot. The footmen of London assembled in vast numbers; broke open the doors of the theatre; fought their way into the house, and prevented the reading of a proclamation by the magistrate, Colonel de Veil. Several of the ringleaders were, upon this occasion, taken and committed to Newgate; many more were wounded; whilst the spectators (amongst whom were the Prince and Princess of Wales) were much terrified.

A few weeks after the production of "The Virgin Unmasked" the prolific dramatist announced another original comedy. It was entitled "The Universal Gallant," and was placed on the stage with some care, for the principal characters were assigned to Quin, Cibber, and other eminent actors. Nevertheless it proved a most undoubted failure, and not undeservedly so; although it must be confessed that worse and more immoral comedies had been, only a few years before, honoured with public approbation.[2] The poor author is quite pathetic in the advertisement which he prefixed to the published copies of this play. "I have heard," he writes, "that there are some young gentlemen of this town who make a jest of damning plays; but did they seriously consider the cruelty they are guilty of by this practice, I believe it would prevent them." And in the prologue, written after the

(1) The offensive conduct of the London footmen at the theatres is thus noticed in "The Weekly Register" of March 25, 1732:—"The theatre should be esteemed the centre of politeness and good manners; yet numbers of them every evening are lolling over the boxes, while they keep places for their masters, with their hats on; play over their airs, take snuff, laugh aloud, adjust their *cocks'-combs*, or hold dialogues with their brethren from one side of the house to the other."

(2) It is said in a periodical paper of the day, called "The Prompter," quoted in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1735, that the audience sat quietly till the third act was almost over, expecting the play to mend; but finding it grow worse and worse, they lost all patience.

first night's performance, spoken by Quin, the barbarity of a harsh judgment is thus deprecated:—

> "Can then another's anguish give you joy?
> Or is it such a triumph to destroy?
> We, like the fabled frogs, consider thus:—
> This may be sport to you, but it is death to us."

The audiences of these days, it must be remembered, were very differently constituted from those of our own time. When a new play was produced, the pit was almost entirely filled with critics, who congregated there, and gave the signal for applause or condemnation. The boxes were altogether reserved for the quality—for persons of rank, note, and fashion. The *beaux* all attended in full-dress, and came to see and to be seen, rather than to attend to the play. The ladies conducted themselves in the manner described by Fielding in one of his farces,[1] where a country-bred lady innocently inquires what they do "at your what-d'ye-call-'ems—your plays?" "Why, if they can," she is answered, "they take a stage-box, where they let the footman sit the first two acts, to show his livery, then they come in to show themselves, spread their fans upon the spikes, make curtsies to their acquaintance, and then talk and laugh as loud as they are able." The "vulgar and indifferent"[2] being excluded from the pit and boxes, found refuge in the lower-gallery, where they occasionally amused themselves with cat-calls and other discordant noises:—

> "'Tis not the poet's wit affords the jest,
> But who can cat-call, hiss, or whistle best."

Such were the audiences which then condemned or applauded plays. A critical pit, filled with gay Templars and prosperous merchants, who had little sympathy for an indigent author; a bevy of frivolous belles and gallants in the boxes, all ogling, criticising, or scandalising each other;

(1) "Miss Lucy in Town," sequel to "The Virgin Unmasked."
(2) Macklin's Memoirs, p. 73. 1804.

and an upper-gallery crammed with liveried coxcombs, imitating the listless indifference of their masters. In those days, it will be borne in mind, London merchants really lived in London, generally in residences attached to their counting-houses, and, indeed, their credit depended on their living there. Macklin said that he remembered the first emigration of merchants from the city, but they did not venture farther than Hatton Garden; whilst the lawyers all resided in the neighbourhood of the inns of court, and were the principal playgoers of the period.

From the circumstances above detailed, it may be gathered that a theatrical audience towards the middle of the eighteenth century was rather a difficult body to please. Fatal jealousies, also, too often prevailed amongst actors and authors; and Fielding bitterly complained that he, who in his whole life had never done an injury to a living person, should have been assailed from motives of private malice.[1] He urged upon the public that a fair hearing had not been accorded to his comedy; and endeavoured to obtain a reversal of the judgment so cruelly passed upon it. But in this he did not succeed; nor will any one who takes the trouble to read "The Universal Gallant" be much surprised at his failure.

(1) See Fielding's "Advertisement" to The Universal Gallant. "Authors," he says, "whose works have been rejected at the theatres are of all persons, they say, the most inveterate; but of all persons I am the last they should attack, as I have often endeavoured to procure the success of others, but never assisted at the condemnation of any one."

CHAPTER VII.

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE.—COUNTRY LIFE.

[1735—1736.]

The preceding pages have chronicled the literary achievements of Fielding during his seven years' apprenticeship to the precarious trade of dramatic authorship—from 1728 to 1735. But we have now arrived at a new and most important era in his life. For a time, therefore, we must bid farewell to theatrical triumphs, contentions, and disasters; and quit the feverish excitement of the town to breathe a fresher and more wholesome atmosphere.

In the year 1735, Fielding formed a matrimonial alliance which was in all its circumstances a pure love-match.[1] That his heart had been always peculiarly susceptible of the tender passion some of the earlier passages of his life fully prove. On his return from Leyden he conceived a desperate attachment for his cousin, Miss Sarah Andrews. That young lady's friends had, however, so little confidence in her wild kinsman, that they took the precaution of removing her out of his reach; not, it is said, until he had attempted an abduction or elopement. The unfortunate issue of this first passion seems to have severely preyed upon his youthful spirits. Amongst his miscellaneous poems, there appears an imitation, or "modernization" (as he calls it) of the sixth Satire of Juvenal, which, he

(1) There is considerable difficulty in fixing the date of Fielding's first marriage. The dedication of "The Universal Gallant" to the Duke of Marlborough is dated "Buckingham Street, Feb. 12" [1735]; and up to this time he had been supplying the stage with "an annual crop" of farces, comedies, and burlesques. After the publication of "The Universal Gallant," he produced nothing for rather more than a twelvemonth, when "Pasquin" was brought out at the Haymarket. It was in this interval, it may be assumed, that his marriage and brief residence in the country took place.

tells us, was originally "sketched out before he was twenty," and "was all the revenge taken by an injured lover."[1] Thus is Fielding found, like many other disappointed Lotharios, avenging himself for the fancied cruelty of a mistress by wholesale and indiscriminate abuse of the sex:—a proceeding as illogical as it is unfair. His cousin was afterwards married to a plain country gentleman, and in that alliance found, perhaps, more solid happiness than she would have experienced in an early and improvident marriage with her gifted kinsman. Her image, however, was never effaced from his recollection; and there is a charming picture (so tradition tells) of her luxuriant beauty in the portrait of Sophia Western, in "Tom Jones."[2]

It may be that this first disappointment contributed in a great degree to confirm Fielding in those habits of dissipation which are attributed to his early manhood. It is well for him and for the world, however, that he never degenerated into the hardened sceptic, the confirmed *roué*, —the habitual scoffer at every tie, human and divine. Happily his better nature survived the contamination of the loose principles and profligate habits of a town life. After six or seven years of reckless living, his heart remained susceptible of genuine emotions; and in spite of the bad examples by which he was surrounded, he was able to estimate at its proper value the priceless privilege of a virtuous attachment to a graceful and pure-minded woman.

The lady with whom Fielding—now in the twenty-seventh year of his age—entered the bonds of matrimony was one of three sisters named Cradock,[3] who were amongst the most celebrated *belles* of the town of Salisbury,—then

(1) Preface to Fielding's Miscellanies. 1743.

(2) Book iv. c. 2.

(3) The maiden name of Fielding's first wife, given in "Collins's Peerage," vol. iii., and in subsequent works of that class, is *Brawicke*. This confusion of names may probably arise from the circumstance of her illegitimacy, alluded to by Richardson in his Correspondence: "In his 'Tom Jones,' his hero is made a natural child, because his own first wife was such." In some places the name is given as *Braddock*.

better known as New Sarum. With these young ladies he had been for some time on terms of intimacy. Amongst his miscellaneous poems (published in 1743, but not included in any collection of his works) are several trifling compositions addressed to them on different occasions. These productions are of little value as poetical exercises, for Fielding did not possess in any high degree the talent for versification; but they were well adapted for the purpose and place for which they were written—the young lady's album or scrap-book; and they throw some light on his personal history. The language was smooth and elegant, showing a ready and practised pen; and the ideas such as might fairly pass muster in those palmy days of pastoral revery,—when every lover was a Damon or a Strephon, and his beloved a Delia or a Celia. The prevalence of such a conventional jargon almost necessarily excluded the expression of genuine passion. One ought not, therefore, to expect to find much of that ingredient in the amatory lines which Fielding, as Strephon, addressed to Miss Cradock, on whom he conferred the name of Celia—the prettiest of pastoral designations.[1] The courtship of Strephon and Celia doubtless soon became a common topic of conversation in the polite circles of Salisbury; and if the poetical effusions of the former displayed little passion or strong emotion, they certainly were remarkable for an amount of wit and fancy but rarely met with in such compositions.

Strephon's ingenuity was exercised in giving a poetical colouring to several prosaic incidents in his mistress's daily life. Celia, for instance, one night appears to have

(1) Her Christian name was *Charlotte*. Amongst Fielding's miscellaneous poems is the following "Rebus" addressed to Celia:—

"HER CHRISTIAN NAME.

"A very good fish, very good way of selling
A very bad thing, with a little bad spelling,
Make the name by the parson and godfather given
When a Christian was made of an angel in Heaven."

apprehended that the house would be broken open, and engaged an aged watchman to keep guard over the place with an unloaded gun. Thereupon of course Strephon called Cupid to account.[1] Poor swain! he had dreamt that he saw his Celia with a pale cheek and a heaving bosom, disturbed by a distant cry of "Thieves!" Addressing her, he says:—

> "Not so you look when at the ball
> Envy'd you shine, outshining all;
> Not so at church when priest perplex'd
> Beholds you and forgets his text."

Having addressed himself to Venus in this emergency, the goddess sends for Cupid, and soundly rates him for leaving Celia unprotected, save by this Sancho—who is armed with a gun, indeed, but without powder or shot—when a band of loves had been committed to his care for the purpose of vigilantly guarding her. The following is Cupid's defence:—

> "Poor Cupid now began to whine,
> 'Mamma, it was no fault of mine.
> I in a dimple lay *perdue*—
> That little guard-room chose by you.
> A hundred loves (all arm'd) did grace
> The beauties of her neck and face;
> Thence by a sigh, I dispossest,
> Was blown to Harry Fielding's breast!
> Where I was forced all night to stay
> Because I could not find my way.
> But did mamma know there what work
> I've made—how acted like a Turk;
> What pain, what torments he endures,
> Which no physician ever cures,
> She would forgive.'"

Upon another occasion the charms of the Cradocks were celebrated by Strephon in an ingenious mythological allegory, in which Venus is represented to have formed the

(1) "Cupid called to Account." See Fielding's Miscellanies, vol. i. 8vo. 1743.

resolution of appointing vice-regents upon earth, to be chosen for their personal loveliness. Thereupon all mundane ladies send in their pretensions. And what took place at Sarum?—

> "Sarum, thy candidates be named,
> Sarum, for beauties ever famed,
> Whose nymphs excel all beauty's flowers,
> As thy high steeple does all towers."

A court is held, and proclamation is made by Cupid, the crier:—

> "When lo, in bright celestial state,
> Jove came, and thundered at the gate.
> 'And can you, daughter, doubt to whom
> (He cried) belongs the happy doom,
> While *Cradocks* yet make blessed the earth,
> Cradocks, whom long before their birth,
> I, by your own petition moved,
> Decreed to be by all beloved?
> Cradocks to whom—celestial dower!—
> I gave all beauties in my power;
> To form whose lovely minds and faces
> I stripped half heaven of its graces.
> Oh, let them bear an equal sway,
> So shall mankind well-pleased obey.'"

Many circumstances had often combined to disgust Strephon with a town life, and to that disgust characteristic expression is given in the following copy of verses addressed to Celia:—

> "I hate the town and all its ways,
> Ridottos, operas, and plays;
> The ball, the ring, the mall, the court,
> Wherever the *beau monde* resort;
>
> . . . .
>
> All coffee-houses and their praters,
> All courts of justice and debaters;
> All taverns and the sots within 'em;
> All bubbles and the rogues that skin 'em;
>
> . . . .
>
> All nobles of whatever station,
> And all the parsons in the nation;

All quacks and doctors read in physick,
Who kill or cure a man that is sick;
All authors who were ever heard on,
From Bavius up to Tommy Gordon.[1]

. . . . . .

I hate all scholars, beaux, and squires;
Pimps, puppies, parasites, and liars;
All courtiers with their looks so smooth;
And players from Boheme[2] to Booth.
I hate the world crammed altogether,
From beggars up the Lord knows whither!
Ask you then, Celia, if there be
The *thing* I love? My charmer, thee;
Thee more than light, than life adore,
Thou dearest, sweetest creature, more
Than wildest rapture can express,
Than I can tell, or thou canst guess."

There is some real feeling in these lines, and they faithfully expressed the sentiments of the hour. The mirth of the tavern had ceased to charm; the cup of pleasure—in mockery so called—had been drained, and the dregs alone remained. From worthless companions, hollow gaieties, and disappointed hopes, how pleasant was it to turn to the image of the Salisbury beauty!—how great a privilege to exchange for the love of a pure-minded girl all the empty frivolities and sickening dissipations which had been once regarded as the charms of life!

Miss Cradock was not a portionless beauty. She had a fortune, at her own disposal, of £1500; by no means an insignificant sum in Fielding's eyes. Nor was this his only dependence. A small estate, situated at East Stour, in Dorsetshire, had come into his possession after his mother's death; and offered him and his young bride an asylum in

(1) A periodical essayist, who was taken into the pay of Sir R. Walpole. He is best known as the translator of Sallust and Tacitus.

(2) Anthony Boheme was an actor of some reputation both in tragedy and comedy; but having been bred a sailor, he could never, it is said, cure himself of the nautical gait which he acquired in early life. He died in the prime of life, in 1731. ("Some Account of the English Stage," &c., vol. iii.)

the country.[1] Peace, happiness, and competence, were now within his grasp. In the first transports of connubial happiness, and yielding to the earnest solicitations of his young wife,—who was naturally anxious to detach him from the scene of his former irregularities,—he resolved to make a permanent exchange of a London for a country life. His small estate afforded him a comfortable retreat, where he could, if so minded, lead the life of a country gentleman; surrounded by his books, and relieving his literary labours by rural recreations. His constitution had suffered severely from early dissipation; and retirement, with regular and tranquil habits, was necessary to the health both of mind and body. Such were the calm suggestions of his own reason and of his best counsellors. Sincerely penitent for past follies, and with a keen recollection of the privations and disappointments he had endured, what a blissful future—could he have profited by the experience of the past, and properly availed himself of surrounding advantages—was now presented to him! With a lovely and

(1) Mr. Murphy, and the other biographers of Fielding, state that "about this time" the death of his mother put him in possession of the estate at East Stour (or Stower). Fielding's mother, however, died in 1718, and was buried at East Stour, where General Fielding was then living, having left Sharpham Park a few years after the novelist's birth. Probably the £200 per annum derived from the property at East Stour was the £200 which the general agreed to pay his son when he came of age, and forgot to do it. On Fielding's marriage, the house at East Stour was given up to him; but it does not appear that he occupied it long. In Hutchins's "History and Antiquities of Dorset" (second edition), vol. iii., p. 211, there is a picture of the house at East Stour, and a remarkable tree growing there. The latter is called a "Locust-tree (*Robinia Pseud. Acacia* of Linnæus), the body of which, it is said, is eight feet high, and ten feet six inches in circumference. The height of the tree is fifty-three feet. In the middle of the body grows an alder-tree twenty-four feet high, which at the bottom is twenty-four inches in circumference. . . . . The farmhouse, which is of stone, was some time the residence of Henry Fielding. The present kitchen remains (1813) as in his time, when it was a parlour, and large prints of the twelve Cæsars on horseback adorn it."—*Hutchins's Dorset*, vol. iii. The tree is described in the "Gentleman's Magazine," vol. lxxi. Both the tree and the house (it has been courteously communicated to the biographer by Mr. Buckland, the town-clerk of Shaftesbury) have now disappeared. The tree was very much decayed before it was taken down, but the house, though out of repair, might have been restored. It has however been replaced by a modern farmhouse.

amiable wife, a moderate competence, and abundant leisure, who would not have esteemed him a fortunate man? Fortunate he was, and happy he would have been beyond the lot of most men, had he been able to put in practice a tithe of the worldly wisdom with which the later productions of his pen abound. Could he have acted out some of his own common-sense notions of life, all had now been well; but, as it was, with the characteristic infirmity of genius, he escaped from one set of errors only to plunge into follies no less egregious, ruinous, and ridiculous.

Soon after his marriage, Fielding settled in Dorsetshire, and commenced a new course of life. The experiment was attended with some difficulties, and unluckily he stumbled at the very outset. Though neither qualified by nature or education for a hermit, a life of comparative privacy and seclusion was that best adapted to his limited means and intellectual tastes. Instead of this, he preposterously resolved to become a Squire of the first magnitude. His ambition was to be talked about. He determined to show the rude Squirearchy of Dorset how superior to their order was the London-bred gentleman. Family pride also whispered to him the expediency of keeping up an appearance corresponding to the dignity of the distinguished race from whence he sprang. Accordingly, Squire Fielding soon began to create a sensation in the county. His mansion was the scene of profuse hospitality and riotous enjoyment. His horses and hounds were numbered amongst the glories of the neighbourhood. His equipage outvied in splendour and elegance the carriages of his richer neighbours, and the yellow liveries of his serving-men were long held in remembrance. The selection of such a colour was characteristic of Fielding's thoughtless extravagance. Yellow plush, however splendid, proved by no means an economical article of attire for a careless lackey. Directly the glories of a suit were dimmed or soiled, it was thrown aside; for the rustic

flunkeys considered it their duty to keep up the Squire's character by the lustre of their personal appearance.[1] Such was Fielding's household! It may be asked how it was that Mrs. Fielding—the Salisbury beauty—did not, with a woman's quick sense of propriety, interfere to check this ridiculous extravagance. Alas! it is to be feared that, from vanity or weakness, she abetted him in his follies, or, at the most, confined herself to a timid remonstrance, without venturing on a firm expostulation. Poor girl! her fortune was soon dissipated to the winds; run away with by horses and hounds; lavished on yellow plush inexpressibles for idle flunkeys; banqueted on by foolish squires, or consumed by other senseless extravagances. Not being a strong-minded woman—that is pretty clear—but rather, it would seem, a fond and foolish one, she was dazzled by this brief dream of pride and pleasure; and though the future might have worn to her eye a lowering aspect, she was too much gratified by her husband's popularity, and too proud of his wit and agreeable qualities, to check him in his mad career.

The day of reckoning came. In a very short time[2] Fielding found that all was spent and gone—all swallowed up in the abyss of ruin! It seemed like a dream, a wild, incoherent vision. The roar of mirth, the deafening cheer, the splendid liveries, prancing horses, staring rustics, full-mouthed dogs, faded before him like some "insubstantial pageant." He had been generous, hospitable, profuse; and what was his reward? Those who had sat at meat with him now ridiculed his extravagance. Even the gaping boors of the neighbourhood cracked their heavy jokes at his expense. The prudent gentlemen and ladies who had not scrupled to sit at his jovial board, and partake of his cheer, now shook their heads, and gravely condemned his prodigality. Those of his more ambitious neighbours whom he had recently

(1) See Essay on the Life and Genius of Fielding. By A. Murphy.
(2) Murphy says "in less than three years." See note 1, p. 67.

outshone in splendour, rejoiced in his downfall, without attempting to conceal their satisfaction. In the midst of all these untoward circumstances, he had to escape from his creditors as best he might, and to seek for happiness and a livelihood in some other sphere.

How bitterly Fielding cursed his folly, and how penitently he bewailed his imprudence, can be well imagined. His sorrow—now, alas! unavailing—was not unmixed with feelings of resentment. The jealousy with which he had been regarded in the height of his ostentatious career, and the treatment he experienced in his reverses, long rankled in his breast. He could not easily forget the sneers and slights of those whom in his heart he so much despised; and from this time forth, therefore, the Squirearchy of England had to expect little mercy at his hands.

That this experiment of his in rustic living could have been attended with any other result must, however, have seemed to him, when he returned to his sober senses, unlikely, if not impossible. With his tastes and disposition, he could not conform to the quiet, monotonous routine of a homely country life; and he had not the means of prolonging for an indefinite period the riotous enjoyments and ridiculous splendour which he considered necessary to a distinguished rural position. Amongst the home-bred country gentlemen of Dorset he was what is popularly called "a fish out of water." Their amusements, their gossip, their prejudices, their politics, their vices and their virtues, were not *his*. Above all, he was sorely mortified to find that his attempts at splendour and gentility did not produce upon their minds the effect he intended. The coach and yellow liveries, which had been designed to astonish, only called forth feelings of ill-disguised envy and dissatisfaction, or gave birth to sarcastic remarks;—variations perhaps on the homely proverb, that "a fool and his money are soon parted." The homage which he expected to be paid to his superior gentility was obstinately withheld;

and he was in fact contemned by those whom he had expected to overwhelm by his importance.

The impression which his rural misadventure made on Fielding's mind was not effaced by the lapse of years. Some of the principal circumstances attending it are evidently referred to in his latest novel,—"Amelia." The follies into which Booth represents himself as falling, when deprived of the sage counsel of Dr. Harrison, are of the same character as those imputed to the novelist. Not content with enlarging his farm, it will be remembered, the hero of the novel is guilty of the crime of setting up his coach; whereupon the neighbours with whom he had hitherto lived on terms of equality began to envy, hate, and declare war against him and his wife. "The neighbouring little squires, too," continues Booth, or rather Fielding, "were uneasy to see a poor renter become their equal in a matter in which they placed so much dignity; and not doubting but it arose in me from the same ostentation, they began to hate me likewise, and to turn my equipage into ridicule; asserting that my horses, which were as well matched as any in the kingdom, were of different colours and sizes; with much more of that kind of wit, the only basis of which is lying."

That there is a touch of personal feeling in this quiet satire cannot be doubted; and it is equally clear that the rapturous description given by Booth, of the happiness which he derived from his wife's society in the country, may be identified with the novelist's own history; for, in spite of its glaring follies and indiscretions, this period of Fielding's life presented some features on which he could look back with pleasure and satisfaction. All the endearments of wedded life which he afterwards depicted in "Amelia" were his; blest with a wife whom he dearly loved,—whose amiability was so great that she endured without a murmur all the misfortunes of which his folly was the cause, and whose beauty was everywhere the subject of admiration.

If he were unable—from want of prudence or over vivacity of disposition—to make a proper use of the gifts of fortune, he could nevertheless rate them at their true value. He could afterwards speak like a philosopher of the cheap happiness which in the hurry of youthful excitement he had carelessly flung away,—"the pleasure which the morning air gives to one in perfect health; the flow of spirits which springs up from exercise; the delight which parents feel from the prattle and innocent follies of their children; the joy with which the tender smile of a wife inspires a husband; or lastly, the cheerful solid comfort which a fond couple enjoy in each other's conversation."[1] These unfailing sources of happiness were fully tasted by Fielding during his retirement from the bustle and anxieties of a town life, nay, further, they were fully appreciated by him at the time; but unfortunately they were not sufficient to satisfy the cravings of a nature like his: his disposition required excitement; and hence it was that he fell into the mistake of courting the temporary applause and wonderment of the Dorsetshire squires by extravagant hospitality and anomalous splendour.

(1) Amelia, book iii. c. 12.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GREAT MOGUL'S COMPANY.—"PASQUIN" AND "THE HISTORICAL REGISTER FOR 1736."

[1736—1737.]

FIELDING now began life again, and he began it under many disadvantages. He had squandered away his wife's fortune, and had nothing left in return but mortification and embarrassment. Having ventured upon what Johnson calls "the great experiment of life," he had incurred responsibilities to the serious nature of which he was sensitively alive, and which permitted no further trifling with the business of existence. He had not merely a single life to protect and care for, but a beloved wife and child[1] now depended upon him for support. With many past follies to expiate, many misspent moments to redeem, he embarked once more on the ocean of life—"a daring pilot," and hitherto an imprudent and unskilful one.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that these "disadvantages," if surveyed from another point of view, might wear a contrary aspect. He had bought experience which, however dearly purchased, might prove to him, if duly husbanded, well worth the price he had paid. The hostages he had given to Fortune, if they failed to propitiate that fickle goddess, furnished him at any rate with a strong stimulus to exertion. Family ties are oftener aids than impediments to prosperity, and manhood rarely achieves its best without them: for let it be remembered (as Lord Bacon has it), that "wife and children are a kind of humanity."

It was in the spring of 1736 that he reappeared in

(1) This child—a daughter—was named Eleanor Harriet.

London, attracted thither by the intention of qualifying himself for the practice of a profession. General Fielding had from the first intended his lively son for the Bar, and it was as a preliminary to his legal studies that the youth was sent to Leyden. On his return to England, however, his early theatrical success combined with other circumstances to turn his thoughts into another channel. Amidst the gaieties and dissipations of a town life, a scheme of continuous study was out of the question. The law possessed no attraction in his eyes, and as long as he could provide for the passing hour, he thought little and cared less about the future. But his circumstances were now altered, and the advice of friends, as well as his own good sense, pointed out the necessity of securing some more permanent source of income than he was likely to derive from authorship.

Just at this moment, however, the necessitous dramatist saw, or thought he saw, a favourable opportunity for a novel theatrical venture. Great confusion—amounting almost to anarchy—had for some time prevailed in the playhouse world. The theatrical state was out of tune. Broils and distractions tried the patience and emptied the pockets of managers, without benefiting actors. At such a period it was no difficult thing for an adventurer, without any other capital than his brains, to collect together a company of mediocre performers, and find a theatre for them to act in; but that such experiments should prove successful seemed improbable. It was a subject of complaint amongst sensible persons in the theatrical profession that there were already too many theatres, and the only way (it was suggested) to make the drama flourish, was to shut up half of them. Fielding, however, who had carefully studied the temper of the times, thought that he perceived a road to dramatic fame and profit, which had been neglected by other schemers; and the result showed that he was not mistaken. In the year 1734 a company of

actors, under no managerial authority, had performed his comedy of "Don Quixote in England" at the little theatre in the Haymarket. The election scenes in that comedy had been particularly applauded, and their success probably furnished a hint for the construction of a satirical drama of a more ambitious character. The able and powerful minister who at this time governed Great Britain was now at the height of his unpopularity; and rumour imputed to him the systematic practice of the grossest corruption. On the election of the parliament then sitting he had expended, it was affirmed, £60,000 out of his own private fortune;[1] and, *in* the House, the constant and sudden conversion of some of his most vehement antagonists was, to say the least of it, most remarkable. Whilst Sir Robert Walpole thus carried to perfection the arts of government, he enjoyed the privilege of being the best abused man in the nation; and pamphleteers innumerable earned their daily bread by reviling him. At such a juncture, why could not the stage as well as the press be made use of to give expression to popular sentiment? The ready wit of Fielding seized the idea and carried it out almost at the same moment. He had great talent for satire, and, on personal grounds, no particular reason to spare the prime-minister, whose patronage he had in vain solicited. Impoverished by imprudence—galled by real and fancied slights—his passions as well as his interest inclined him to bitterness. A satirical drama was, therefore, soon produced by his practised pen; the actors who performed his "Don Quixote" were easily induced to enter into an engagement with him; and the Haymarket Theatre, being without a tenant, was without difficulty obtained by the moneyless adventurer.

Thus it was, and under these circumstances, that Fielding entered on a new career in the double capacity of author and manager. To attract the curiosity of the public, he bestowed on his theatrical *troupe* the whimsical designation

(1) History of Party, vol. ii. By G. Wingrove Cooke.

of "The Great Mogul's Company of Comedians," and they were described in the playbills as having dropped from the clouds. His opening piece was entitled "Pasquin: a dramatic Satire on the Times; being the Rehearsal of two Plays; viz.: a Comedy called 'The Election,' and a Tragedy called 'The Life and Death of Common Sense.'" A wide scope was here afforded for satirical allusions, and the scheme was at first successful beyond the author's most sanguine expectations. "Pasquin" had a run of more than fifty nights, and proved a source of profit as well as fame. This success was not ill-deserved, although the piece itself has been freely abused. It has been called "a bold and unwarrantable satire."[1] Bold it was; but as for its being unwarrantable, it is enough to say that its satire was principally directed at the electoral corruption of the age, and at the abuses which prevailed in the learned professions. Surely it was no crime to hold up to public derision and contempt the placemen and corruptionists who derided the idea of public virtue, and denied the existence of political honesty.

The plot of "Pasquin" is similar to that of the "Rehearsal" and the "Critic." It embraces the mock-rehearsal of two plays, in one of which are presented the ordinary incidents of a country election, and in the other the most flagrant offences committed by the learned profession against common sense:—

> "Good sense, which only is the gift of Heaven,
> And tho' no science, fairly worth the seven."

The election scenes (which form the best part of the entertainment) are full of broad humour, of which a specimen may not be unacceptable. Two Court candidates—my Lord Place and Colonel Promise—are introduced upon their canvass in a snug borough, and the system of "bribery direct" is thus illustrated:—

(1) Dibdin's History of the Stage, vol. iv.

Trapwit (the author). You, Mister, that act my lord, bribe a little more openly, if you please, or the audience will lose that joke, and it is one of the strongest in my whole play.

Lord Place. Sir, I cannot possibly do it better at the table.

Trapwit. Then get all up, and come forward to the front of the stage. Now, you gentlemen that act the mayor and aldermen, range yourselves in a line; and you, my lord and the colonel, come to one end, and bribe away with right and left.

Fustian (the tragic author). Is this wit, Mr. Trapwit?

Trapwit. Yes, sir, it is wit; and such wit as will run all over the kingdom.

Fustian. But, methinks Colonel Promise, as you call him, is but ill-named; for he is a man of very few words.

Trapwit. You'll be of another opinion before the play is over; at present his hands are too full of business; and you may remember, sir, I before told you this is none of your plays wherein much is said and nothing done. Gentlemen, are you all bribed?

Omnes. Yes, sir.

Trapwit. Then, my lord and the colonel, you must go off, and make room for the other candidates to come and bribe too.

[*Exeunt* LORD PLACE *and* COLONEL PROMISE.

Besides its general satire, "Pasquin" contained many strokes of personal raillery. The Laureate, Cibber (whose politics rather than his poetry had won him the bays), was assailed in it after the following manner. In the course of his canvass, one of the court candidates (who is peculiarly liberal in promises) thus disposes of the Laureate's wreath:—

Lord Place. Gentlemen, be assured I will take care of you all; you shall all be provided for as fast as possible. The Customs and Excise afford a great number of places.

1st Voter. Could not your lordship provide for me at Court?

Lord Place. Nothing easier. What sort of a place would you like?

1st Voter. Is there not a sort of employment, sir, called—beef-eating? If your lordship please to make me a beef-eater, I would have a place fitted for my capacity.

Lord Place. Sir, I will be sure to remember you.

2nd Voter. My lord, I should like a place at Court, too. I don't care what it is, provided I wear fine clothes, and have something to do in the cellar. I own I should like the cellar, for I am a devilish lover of sack.

Lord Place. Sack, say you? Odso! you shall be Poet-Laureate.

2nd Voter. Poet! no, my lord; I am no poet; I can't make verses.
Lord Place. No matter for that, you will be able to make odes.
2nd Voter. Odes, my lord! what are those?
Lord Place. Faith, sir, I can't tell what they are, but I know you may be qualified for the place without being a poet.

This was a home-thrust for Colley Cibber; and it was not the last he received from Fielding, whom he afterwards described in his "Apology," as "a broken wit."[1] The dramatist's worldly circumstances were doubtless at this time anything but satisfactory; and poverty is never a recommendation to the world's favour. "The 'Pasquin' of Fielding," says his friend, Mr. Murphy, "came from the pen of an author in indigence, ... and, *therefore,* though its success was considerable, it never shone forth with a lustre equal to its merits."[2] Such wonderful aids to popularity are wealth and worldly position, and so potent in all ages the sway of *Snobbism!* The manager of the Great Mogul's Company had no capital but his wit; but that wit, whatever Colley Cibber might think of it, was undimmed by poverty and adverse circumstances. Whilst he keenly felt the discomforts attending a life of pecuniary embarrassment, he could jest away his troubles, and treat the misfortunes of his tribe with all his former lightheartedness. The opening passage of "Pasquin" presents a pitiful picture of the abject poverty of a dramatic author, which might probably have been drawn from personal experience.

1st Player. When does the rehearsal begin?
2nd Player. I suppose we shall hardly rehearse the comedy this morning, for the author was arrested as he was going home from King's Coffee-house; and as I heard it was for upwards of *four pounds, he will hardly find bail.*

What a large debt does the world owe to the poverty of authors—more, far more, than to their wealthy leisure! As a matter of policy, it would seem that we ought not to pension and pamper the intellectual great. The most

(1) See *post*, p. 120.
(2) Essay on the Life and Genius of Fielding.

priceless treasures have been wrung from their necessities. From our own literary annals, countless instances might be produced of the stimulating influence of the spur of poverty. But there is an anecdote in M. Viardot's life of Fielding's great model,—the author of "Don Quixote,"—which may not be altogether out of place here. It is related that when the chaplain of the Archbishop of Toledo, who had been entrusted with the censorship of the second part of that immortal novel, was asked during the lifetime of the author, by some gentlemen in the French embassy, what works of imagination were then popular in Spain, he immediately referred to the adventures of the wondrous "Don." The Frenchmen had read the first part of that romance, and they expressed themselves so warmly respecting its merits, that the chaplain offered to introduce them to the author,—an offer which they eagerly accepted. "They questioned me," he said, "very minutely, respecting his age, his profession, his rank, his fortune. I was obliged to reply that he was an old soldier—a poor gentleman." "What!" exclaimed one with surprise, "has not Spain then made such a man rich? Is he not supported at the public cost?" But another added, with great address: "If it be necessity which has compelled him to write, God grant that he may never be rich,—since, by continuing poor, he may enrich by his works the whole world!"[1] However selfish or ungenerous in one sense, there is profound sagacity and truth in the Frenchman's observation. By the poverty of Fielding (as will hereafter appear), no less than by the poverty of Cervantes, the world has been a priceless gainer. A curious instance this, how every evil has its counterbalancing advantage; and how true it is that Adversity, though,

> "Like the toad, ugly and venomous,
> Wears yet a precious jewel in his head."

To return to Fielding: The success of "Pasquin" was a

(1) Notice sur la Vie et les Ouvrages de Cervantes, par L. Viardot.

temporary gleam of prosperity, and inspirited him to proceed with vigour in his novel undertaking. Accordingly, in the spring of 1737, the "Great Mogul" once more gathered together his motley crew at the Haymarket, and announced another satirical drama, called "The Historical Register for 1736." This proved a much bolder, and to the then ruling powers of the State, a more objectionable performance even than "Pasquin;" and its representation led to important consequences, as regarded the interests and independence of the stage. Sir Robert Walpole himself was introduced in the piece, under the name of Quidam; silencing some noisy patriots with a bribe, and then dancing off with them; —a proceeding thus explained by Medley (the author): "Sir, every one of these patriots has a hole in his pocket, as Mr. Quidam, the fiddler, there knows; so that he intends to make them dance till all the money is fallen through, which he will pick up again, and so not lose one halfpenny by his generosity." The most famous scene of the play, however, is that laid in the auction-room of Mr. Cock, the great auctioneer of the day.[1] It cannot be denied that this scene contained an unprecedented amount of personal and political satire; and satire well calculated both to offend and alarm a wary minister of State. As to the tendency of the following bold and unsparing invective

(1) This portion of the piece was afterwards stolen by Theophilus Cibber, in a very impudent manner, and performed, with slight additions, under the title of "The Auction."—*Dibdin's History of the Stage.*

Theophilus Cibber is introduced in the "Register" under the name of Pistol, and in that character makes allusion to the great contest which was then agitating the theatrical and fashionable world, between Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Clive, as to whom properly belonged the part of Polly Peachum, in "The Beggar's Opera":—

> "Say then, O town, is it your royal will
> That my great consort represent the part
> Of Polly Peachum, in the Beggar's Opera? (*Mob hiss.*)
> *Pist.* Thanks to the town, that hiss speaks their consent."

Mrs. Cibber, who was then in the full bloom of beauty, had been cast at Drury Lane for Polly, and Mrs. Clive for Lucy, who performed the latter part with a bad grace, and continued to claim the more favourite character. This dispute gave rise to several dramatic satires. ("Some Account of the English Stage," vol. iii. p. 507.)

there can be little doubt. Mr. Auctioneer Hen, selling off some curiosities collected by Peter Humdrum, Esq., thus introduces them to the notice of the audience :—

Hen. Gentlemen and ladies, this is Lot 1. A most curious remnant of Political Honesty. Who puts it up, gentlemen? It will make you a very good cloak. You see it's both sides alike, so you may turn it as often as you will. Come, five pounds for this curious remnant: I assure you, several great men have made their birth-day suits out of the same piece. It will wear for ever, and never be the worse for wearing. Five pounds is bid; nobody more than five pounds for this curious piece of Political Honesty? five pounds, no more (*knocks*)—Lord Bothsides. Lot 2. A most delicate piece of Patriotism, gentlemen, who bids? Ten pounds for this piece of Patriotism?

1st Courtier. I would not wear it for a thousand pounds.

Hen. Sir, I assure you, several gentlemen at Court have worn the same; it's quite a different thing within to what it is without.

1st Courtier. Sir, it is prohibited goods; I sha'n't run the risk of being brought into Westminster Hall for wearing it.

Hen. You take it for the Old Patriotism, whereas it is indeed like that in nothing but the cut; but, alas! sir, there is great difference in the stuff.

. . . .

Hen. Lot 7. A very clear Conscience, which has been worn by a judge and a bishop.

Mr. Screen. Is it as clean as if it was new?

Hen. Yes, no dirt will stick to it; and pray observe how capacious it is; it has one particular quality—put as much as you will into it, it is never full.

Whatever may be thought of Fielding's taste in bringing a real personage on the stage, as in this instance of Mr. Cock, the auctioneer, or of the wit (if wit it can be called) which attempted to raise a smile by playing upon his name, the town was greatly diverted, and the manager was rewarded with laughter if not with applause. The actor, or rather actress, to whom the part was assigned, was that strangest member of a strange family,—the sport of fortune, and scandal to her sex,—Mrs. Charlotte Charke.[1] This woman—the daughter of Colley and sister of Theophilus

(1) This woman also performed the character of Lord Place in "Pasquin," after the first few nights of its run.

Cibber—passed through every vicissitude of fortune, and succeeded in rendering herself more unpleasantly notorious than any of her relations. From her childhood she affected the amusements, manners, and habits of the opposite sex; and for some years, to render herself as unwomanly as possible, she assumed the masculine attire. Her husband, Mr. Richard Charke (a member of Fielding's Great Mogul's Company), was a celebrated performer on the violin. He was a man of dissolute habits; and after a life of much misery and many vicissitudes, he died in the island of Jamaica; leaving his eccentric wife free to contract a second marriage, of which privilege she availed herself by secretly espousing "a very worthy gentleman," whose name she studiously concealed, and who died soon after their union. In her youth Mrs. Charke prided herself on her skill in the use of the currycomb. She could groom a horse as well as the best stableboy at Newmarket, and a more daring rider never bestrode a quadruped. To complete her list of feminine accomplishments, she was an excellent shot, and from a child passionately fond of fire-arms. Her career in life was as diversified as her character was eccentric. She was "everything by turns, and nothing long." First an actress, in which profession she generally selected male characters; then the keeper of an oil-shop in Long Acre, where she was the dupe of sharpers, and a general object of curiosity; then again an actress in the lowest theatrical parts; then a nobleman's valet, and after that a maker and seller of sausages. Next a waiter at a tavern in Marylebone, and then the manager of a strolling company of players; after that the keeper of a public-house in Drury Lane, and, failing in this employment, actress again in a company assembled at the Haymarket by her brother Theophilus (in imitation it would seem of Fielding); then for a time the assistant of an eminent exhibitor of puppets: for nearly nine years after that leading a miserable and vagabond life as a strolling player; then reappearing in

London, and publishing an account of her strange adventures; after which she opened a public-house in Islington, and died there in 1760. Such was the career of the Laureate's youngest child, who is said to have possessed much of the cleverness of her family, combined with more than a due proportion of their eccentricity. With her father she was all her lifetime on unfriendly terms. At an early period of her chequered existence she appears to have grievously offended him, and he never forgave her. In her bitterest distresses—in the hour of her most abject poverty, he refused to assist her: a circumstance the more remarkable as Cibber was esteemed by his contemporaries a good-natured man.

The Laureate did not escape the raillery of Fielding in his "Historical Register." He is introduced under the name of Ground-Ivy, and his impertinent alterations of Shakspere are deservedly held up to the indignant contempt of the public. The following may be numbered amongst the happiest passages of Fielding's dramatic satire.

Enter GROUND-IVY.

Ground-Ivy. What are you doing here?

Apollo. I am casting the parts in the tragedy of King John.[1]

Ground-Ivy. Then you are casting the parts in a tragedy that wont do.

Apollo. How, sir! Was it not written by Shakspere? And was not Shakspere one of the greatest geniuses that ever lived?

Ground-Ivy. No, sir; Shakspere was a pretty fellow, and said some things which only want a little of my licking to do well enough; King John, as now writ, will not do. But a word in your ear—I will make him do.

Apollo. How?

Ground-Ivy. By alteration, sir: it was a maxim of mine, when I was at the head of theatrical affairs, that no play, tho' ever so good, would do without alteration. For instance, in the play before us, the bastard Faulconbridge is a most effeminate character, for which

(1) A ridiculous version of "King John," by Cibber, under the title of "Papal Tyranny," was at this time rehearsed at Drury Lane, but withdrawn in deference to the critics. The idea was a favourite one with Cibber, for he returned to the stage in 1745, when seventy-three years old, to play the part of Pandulph, the pope's nuncio, in a play bearing the same title. ("Baker's Biographia Dramatica.")

reason I would cut him out, and put all his sentiments in the mouth of Constance, who is so much properer to speak them. Let me tell you, Mr. Apollo, propriety of character, dignity of diction, and emphasis of sentiment, are the things I chiefly consider on these occasions.

Prompter. I am only afraid as Shakspere is so popular an author, and you, asking your pardon, so unpopular—

Ground-Ivy. D—, I'll write to the town, and desire them to be civil, and that in so modest a manner that an army of Cossacks shall be melted. I'll tell them that no actors are equal to me, and no authors ever were superior: and how do you think I can insinuate that in a modest manner?

Prompter. Nay, faith, I can't tell.

Ground-Ivy. Why, I'll tell them that the former only tread on my heels, and that the greatest among the latter have been damned as well as myself; and after that, what do you think of your popularity? I can tell you, Mr. Prompter, *I have seen things carried in the house against the voice of the people before to-day.*

Apollo. Let them hiss, let them hiss, and grumble as much as they please, as long as we get their money.

Medley. There, sir, is the sentiment of a great man, and worthy to come from the great Apollo himself.

Sourwit. He's worthy his sire, indeed. To think of this gentleman for altering Shakspere!

Medley. Sir, I will maintain this gentleman as proper as any man in the kingdom for the business.

Sourwit. Indeed!

Medley. Ay, sir; *for as Shakspere is already good enough for people of taste, he must be altered to the palates of those who have none;* and if you will grant that, who can be properer to alter him for the worse?

Of the justice and propriety of this satire there can be no doubt, and it also shows that Fielding, in point of dramatic taste, was much in advance of his age. Alterations and perversions of Shakspere were at this time uniformly substituted in representation for his genuine productions. To make matters worse, the clumsiest of workmen had been employed in this objectionable occupation. "Even Nahum Tate," as observed by Mr. Campbell, "after his wholesale murder of King David, laid his hangman hands on Coriolanus."[1] The same inferior versifier produced

(1) The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth; or, the Fall of Coriolanus. 1681.

an *improved* version of "King Lear," from which the Fool was altogether banished, and a love-plot introduced between Edgar and Cordelia. So vitiated was the taste of the play-going public, even in the middle of the eighteenth century, that when an attempt was made to play "King Lear" as Shakspere wrote it, the audience, we are told by Dr. Johnson, decided in favour of Tate! Cibber's alterations, in like manner, obtained a firm hold on the stage, and one of them (that of "Richard III.") still retains a place amongst the stock-pieces of the theatre. The preference shown by the multitude for the brass of Tate and Cibber to the gold of Shakspere was no unfit subject for Fielding's indignant satire. The mischief perpetrated by these unscrupulous adapters was of so extensive and permanent a character, that generation after generation felt its influence; and it is doubtful even yet whether the world appreciates the full force of the truth, that to submit the work of a great artist to the touch of an inferior hand is the worst of profanity.[1]

"The Historical Register" was published with a dedication "to the Public," written in the same tone as the piece itself. Ministerial scribes had denounced the satire for its seditious tendency, but by these attacks Fielding was nothing daunted. He boldly claimed the protection of the public, on the ground of the necessity he had for so potent a patron, "to defend him from the iniquitous surmises of a certain anonymous dialogous author," who in "The Gazetteer" (a celebrated ministerial print) had represented his play "as aiming, in conjunction with 'The Miller of Mansfield,'[2] the overthrow of the m——y." Fielding,

(1) Had Fielding lived in the middle of the nineteenth, instead of that of the eighteenth century, he would have been gratified by Mr. Macready's restoration to the stage of the text of Shakspere—deserving of all commendation and gratitude.

(2) This farce was first acted in 1736, and published in 1737. It is founded on the old ballad of "The King and the Miller of Mansfield," and contains a great deal of pointed satire upon courtiers and the corruptions of a court, which

thus attacked, makes the following retort on his antagonists:—"The eagerness which these gentlemen express at applying all manner of evil character to their patrons, brings to my mind a story I have somewhere read:—As two gentlemen were walking the street together, the one said to the other, upon spying the figure of an ass hung out, 'Bob, Bob, look yonder! some impudent rascal has hung out your picture on a sign-post!' The grave companion, who had the misfortune to be exceedingly short-sighted, fell into a violent rage, and calling to the master of the house, threatened to prosecute him for exposing his features in that public manner. The poor landlord, as you may well conceive, was extremely astonished, and denied the fact; upon which the witty spark who had just mentioned the resemblance, appealed to the

were considered to have reference to the politics of the period, and greatly contributed to its popularity. Its author was Dodsley, the well-known bookseller,—first a footman, and indebted for an introduction to literature to the kindness and protection of Pope.

The *Gazetteers* are thus mentioned in "The Dunciad" (book i.):—

"And see thy very Gazetteers give o'er,
E'en Ralph repents, and Henley writes no more."

And in the notes (by Warburton) the following account is given of the ministerial press, and the money lavished upon it:—"The Daily Gazetteer was a title given very properly to certain papers, each of which lasted but a day. Into this, as a common sink, was received all the trash which had been before dispersed in several journals, and circulated at the expense of the nation. The authors were the same obscure men; though sometimes relieved by occasional essays from statesmen, courtiers, bishops, deans, and doctors. The meaner sort were rewarded with money; others with places or benefices from a hundred to a thousand a year. It appears from the report of the secret committee for enquiring into the conduct of R[obert] Earl of O[rford]:—'That no less than fifty thousand and seventy-seven pounds were paid to authors and printers of newspapers, such as Free Britons, Daily Courants, Corn-Cutter's Journals, Gazetteers, and other political papers, between February 10, 1731, and February 10, 1741:' which shows the benevolence of one minister to have expended, for the current dulness of ten years in Britain, double the sum which gained Louis XIV. so much honour in annual pensions to learned men all over Europe." Such a distribution of public money amongst the dullest writers for the press was calculated to excite the indignation of Fielding, and men of his class, relying upon their talents for support. Arnall, an attorney, who wrote for "The Free Briton," and is mentioned in "The Dunciad," boasted that he had received for Free Britons, in four years, £10,997 6*s*. 8*d*. out of the Treasury.

mob now assembled together, who soon smoked the jest, and agreed with him that the sign was the exact picture of the gentleman. At last a good-natured man, taking compassion on the poor figure, whom he saw the jest of the multitude, whispered in his ear: 'Sir, I see your eyes are bad, and that your friend is a rascal and imposes on you: the sign hung out is the sign of an ass; nor will your picture be here, unless you draw it yourself.'"[1]

By this time, "Pasquin" and "The Register" had become objects of attention in high places. They had been brought to the notice of the cabinet. Ministerial lackeys condemned their scurrility, and prophesied dangers innumerable from the appearance of a constant succession of dramatic libels. The prime-minister himself felt that it would be inexpedient to allow the stage to become the vehicle of anti-ministerial abuse. Still, there were some difficulties in the way of direct interference. The Lord Chamberlain, it is true, had the power of forbidding the representation of any pieces offensive to public morals or obnoxious to public policy; and this power had been often exercised.[2] Nay, further, it is evident that at one period it was considered necessary to obtain a license, previously to the representation of a play. But this jurisdiction of the

(1) There can be little doubt that "Pasquin" and "The Register" furnished Sheridan with many hints for "The Critic." The idea of the wise Lord Burleigh's shaking his head seems to be taken from the silence of the patriots in "The Register," which is thus accounted for by Medley:—"Sir, what they think now cannot well be spoke, but you may conjecture a great deal from their *shaking their heads;* they will speak by-and-bye—as soon as they are a little heated with wine."—(Act iii., sc. 1.)

(2) It is well known that, stimulated by the great success of "The Beggar's Opera," a second part, or sequel, called "Polly," was written by Gay, and rehearsed at Covent Garden. On the eve of its representation, there came an order from the Lord Chamberlain to prohibit its performance; not, as it would appear, on account of any strokes of satire it contained—for the piece is dull and spiritless enough—but by reason of the offence which some reflections on the Court in "The Beggar's Opera" had given in high places. The cause of Gay was upon this occasion taken up so warmly by the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry that they were forbidden the Court. The Duchess wrote a very spirited letter on the occasion (Scott's "Swift," vol. vii. p. 325). Nearly fifty years

Chamberlain had never been declared or defined by positive law: if it existed, it was only by custom and precedent, and great laxity had prevailed with regard to its exercise. Plays were performed, and theatres opened without any license, and the advocates of a free stage stoutly maintained that by law no license was required. Under these circumstances, the ministry resolved to meet the difficulty, and prevent any future attacks of a similar description by a legislative enactment. A convenient pretext was all that was required; and just at the right moment the wished-for opportunity presented itself. By a curious and somewhat suspicious coincidence an event occurred which seemed fully to demonstrate the necessity of legislative interference.[1] This incident, however, and the circumstances connected with the introduction of the bill to regulate dramatic performances, will be treated of in another chapter.

afterwards, Colman performed this piece, with some alterations and amendments, at the Haymarket (1777); and Gay's stanch patroness—then known as the Old Duchess of Queensberry—attended. Under the Stuart *régime* it is also notorious that Nat Lee's "Lucius Junius Brutus" was prohibited after the third night's acting, by Lord Chamberlain Arlington, as an anti-monarchical play. Many other instances of a like interference, but of less importance, are upon record.

(1) Mr. Dibdin says, that "it was in the opening of the theatres in the Haymarket and Goodman's Fields, in defiance of all law, that was considered by the minister as the offence, rather than any strictures on his personal conduct." ("History of the Stage," vol. iv. p. 412). But all contemporary writers agree that Fielding's satire was particularly obnoxious to Sir R. Walpole, and one object of the Licensing Act was certainly to muzzle so bold a dramatic satirist. The multiplication of unlicensed theatres in London had previously occupied the attention of the legislature. (See note 2, pp. 54, 55.)

CHAPTER IX.

THE LICENSING ACT, AND DISPERSION OF THE GREAT MOGUL'S COMPANY.—FIELDING'S ADMISSION AS A STUDENT OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE.

[1737.]

WHILST the bitter witticisms of "Pasquin" and "The Register" were fresh in the recollection of the public, and whilst the Tadpoles and Tapers of the day were shaking their heads at the audacity and immorality of the stage, and gravely condemning the indecency of making a prime-minister dance a jig upon the stage, another dramatic libel of a most portentous character fell into the hands of a theatrical manager—Mr. Giffard, then director of the theatre in Lincoln's-Inn Fields,—which that prudent person resolved to turn to a better account than public representation. The piece in question bore the title of "The Golden Rump," and was full, if we are to believe all that we are told about it, of the most alarming and treasonable matter. For this account of it, let it be remembered, however, we are solely indebted to the report of the persons in authority to whom Giffard submitted it. It was never either acted or printed, nor was the name of the author, or the person from whom the manager received it, disclosed.[1] That the latter might be no loser by his patriotism, the

(1) In the notes to his "Memoirs of the Reign of George II.," Horace Walpole asserts that "The Golden Rump" was written by Fielding, and also that he had in his possession an imperfect copy of the piece, as he found it amongst his father's papers after his death. But this is too loose a statement to be accepted. The existence of any such piece was openly questioned at the time.

One or two papers of the same title appear in the opposition prints of the time, viz.: "The Vision of the Golden Rump," in "The Englishman's Journal," March 19, 1737; and "On the Original and Rites of the Golden Rump," in "Common Sense," Sept. 17, 1737.

Treasury paid him very liberally for the manuscript, which was at once laid before the cabinet; and it was speedily resolved that so audacious a libel, coupled with Fielding's recent satires, rendered it imperative on the government to place some direct and positive restrictions on the stage.

So far all was well; but there were not wanting incredulous persons who regarded the whole affair as a ministerial scheme, and Giffard as a dupe or a convenient tool. It was observed that the manager had reaped a much larger profit from the suppression of the piece than he could have hoped to have gained from its representation. Then again, no account was given of the source from which it was obtained; and it was shrewdly surmised that it was just possible a clever ministerial spy might have sent the play to Giffard, with a hint as to the course he ought to take: and that the manager had either fallen unsuspectingly into the snare, or, with a keen eye to his own interest, had seized the opportunity of currying favour with persons in power, and earning a little Treasury gold. Certain it is that "The Golden Rump" was presented to the cabinet at the very nick of time—just before the close of the parliamentary session, and whilst Fielding's caustic satire was in the height of its popularity.

Having once resolved to place a curb on the stage, the ministry acted with unusual promptitude. On Friday, the 20th May, a motion was made in the House of Commons to bring in a bill "to explain and amend so much of an act made in the twelfth year of the reign of Queen Anne, entitled, An Act for reducing the laws relating to Rogues, Vagabonds, sturdy Beggars and Vagrants, into one Act of Parliament; and for the more effectual punishing such Rogues, Vagabonds, sturdy Beggars and Vagrants, and sending them whither they ought to be sent, as relates to Common Players of Interludes." The principal feature in the measure (which is certainly not disclosed in the above mass of verbiage), was that which provided that every

dramatic piece, previous to its representation, should receive the license of the Lord Chamberlain. The House ordered the bill to be at once prepared and brought in, and it was accordingly read for the first time on Tuesday, the 24th. Though great opposition was offered to it at every stage, "it passed through both Houses with such dispatch that it was ready for the royal assent on Wednesday, the 8th of June following;"[1] and on the 21st it received that assent from his Majesty, on his putting an end to the parliamentary session.

Both in the Lords and Commons the debates on this measure were characterised by unusual animation. The most remarkable speech in opposition to it was delivered in the Upper House by Philip Earl of Chesterfield,—a nobleman who, whatever were his faults and shortcomings as a man, may be properly described as a jealous and enlightened friend of freedom, and one of the first and most intrepid of parliamentary orators. This speech of Lord Chesterfield's against the Licensing Bill is one of the few specimens of the parliamentary eloquence of the period that has come down to us in a perfect form; and though perhaps rather too elaborate and pedantic to suit the taste of the present age, it is so striking an oratorical effort that a few extracts from it may not improperly be presented to the reader.[2] Having deprecated the remarkable haste

(1) Debates of the House of Lords, vol. v.

(2) In the fourth book of "The Dunciad" this speech, and the occasion of it, are thus noticed:—

> "There sunk Thalia, nerveless, cold, and dead,
> Had not her sister Satire held her head;
> Nor could'st thou, Chesterfield! a tear refuse,
> Thou weptst, and with thee wept each gentle muse."

Cibber states that Lord Chesterfield opposed the bill of 1737 "in an excellent speech, with a lively spirit and uncommon eloquence." And Lord Hervey, in his curious memoirs of the period, gives the following account of the debate in both Houses upon it. "In the House of Commons little opposition was made to this bill by anybody of note but Mr. Pulteney, nor in the House of Lords but by Lord Chesterfield, who made one of the most lively and ingenious speeches

with which the bill had been hurried through parliament, and having emphatically denied the necessity for its introduction at all, his lordship thus noticed the (alleged) objectionable license which had been taken by Fielding and others, and the means which existed for the prevention and punishment of such abuses:—

"I do not, my lords, pretend to be a lawyer; I do not pretend to know perfectly the power and extent of our laws; but I have conversed with those that do, and by them I have been told that our laws are sufficient for punishing any person that shall dare to represent upon the stage what may appear, either by the words or the representation, to be blasphemous, seditious, or immoral. I must own, indeed, I have observed of late a remarkable licentiousness in the stage. There have but very lately been two plays acted, which one would have thought should have given the greatest offence, and yet both were suffered to be represented without disturbance, without censure. In one,[1] the author thought fit to represent the three great professions—religion, physic, and law—as inconsistent with common sense; in the other,[2] a most tragical story was brought upon the stage—a catastrophe too recent, too melancholy, and of too solemn a nature to be heard of anywhere but from the pulpit. How these pieces came to pass unpunished I do not know; if I am rightly informed, it was not for want of laws, but for want of prosecution, without which no law can be made effectual. But if there was any neglect in this case, I am convinced it was not

against it I ever heard in parliament, full of wit, of the genteelest satire, and in the most polished, classical style that the Petronius of any time ever wrote; it was extremely studied, seemingly easy, well delivered, and universally admired. On such occasions nobody spoke better than Lord Chesterfield; but as he never could, or at least never did, speak but prepared, and from dissertations he had written down in his closet and got by heart, he never made any figure in a reply, nor was his manner of speaking like debating, but declaiming."—*Memoirs of the Reign of George II.* By John Lord Hervey. London, 1848.

(1) Pasquin.

(2) Charles I.: a Tragedy.

with a design to prepare the minds of the people, and to make them think a new law necessary."

The tragedy of "King Charles I.," alluded to by Chesterfield, was from the pen of Mr. Havard,[1] the comedian,—an excellent man, but an indifferent actor and author. It was produced at the theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, in 1737, and met with considerable success. In the censure passed by the orator on this play and on "Pasquin," there is undoubtedly a tone of grave irony. Fielding's attack upon the learned professions could not by any candid construction be held to exceed the bounds of legitimate satire; and even if it had done so, Chesterfield was not the man to rebuke the impropriety. As regards the first and most important of those professional bodies—the clergy of the Church of England—the opinions entertained and expressed by his lordship are well known; and with respect to the decapitated monarch, Charles I., it will be found that he has spoken of him quite as irreverently as of the clergy themselves.[2]

(1) The following curious *professional* epitaph on this gentleman (who died in 1778) was written by Garrick:—

"'AN HONEST MAN'S THE NOBLEST WORK OF GOD.'

"Havard, from sorrow rest beneath this stone;
An honest man—beloved as soon as known;
Howe'er defective in the mimic art,
In real life he justly played his part!
The noblest character he acted well,
And Heaven applauded when the curtain fell."

(2) See Lord Chesterfield's remarks on the clergy of his time, in Lord Mahon's recent edition of his works. The character of Charles I. is thus portrayed by his lordship, when speaking of Archbishop Laud:—"He (Laud) met with a prince who seemed to be made for him. Weak, warm, and superstitious, he was convinced of his own divine right, as well as of his archbishop's, and they joined to establish absolute hierarchy in the Church, and despotic power in the State (two most gross impositions, which, to the shame and disgrace of human understandings, had been reared, believed, and submitted to, as divine institutions, for twelve or thirteen centuries), but were such arrant bunglers in the prosecution of their design that they both lost their heads for it. The punishment, perhaps, was too rigorous, but the example was certainly of great use to succeeding kings and priests."—*Lord Chesterfield's Works.* Edited by Lord Mahon.

"Every unnecessary restraint upon licentiousness,"—Chesterfield went on to say,—"is a fetter upon the legs, a shackle on the hands of liberty. One of the greatest blessings we enjoy, one of the greatest blessings, my lords, a people can enjoy, is liberty;—but every good in this life has its alloy of evil—licentiousness is the alloy of liberty; it is an ebullition—an excrescence,—it is a speck upon the eye of the political body, which I can never touch but with a gentle—with a trembling hand, lest I destroy the body, lest I injure the eye on which it is apt to appear." . . . . "There is such a connexion," he observed again, "between licentiousness and liberty, that it is not easy to correct the one without dangerously wounding the other. It is extremely hard to distinguish the true limit between them. Like a changeable silk, we can easily see there are two different colours, but we cannot easily discover where the one ends, or where the other begins."

As to the ridicule of public men and measures, the fault might be (the orator remarked) in the men and measures themselves; if the latter *deserved* ridicule, what was to prevent an audience from seizing on some casual expression in order to point the shaft of satire at the object of their scorn? "The great Pompey," he said, "after the many victories he had obtained, and the great conquests he had made, had certainly a good title to the esteem of the people of Rome: yet that great man, by some error in his conduct, became an object of general dislike; and, therefore, in the representation of an old play, when Diphilus, the actor, came to repeat these words, *Nostra miseria tu es Magnus*, the audience immediately applied them to Pompey, who at that time was as well known by the name *Magnus* as by the name Pompey, and were so highly pleased with the satire, that, as Cicero says, they made the actor repeat the words a hundred times over. An account of this was immediately sent to Pompey, who, instead of resenting it as an injury, was so wise as to take it for a just reproof.

He examined his conduct, he altered his measures, he regained by degrees the esteem of the people, and then he neither feared the wit, nor felt the satire of the stage.

"In the case I have mentioned, my lords," continued Chesterfield, "it was not the poet who wrote, for it was an old play; nor the players that acted, for they only repeated the words of the play: it was the people who pointed the satire; and the case will always be the same. When a man has the misfortune to incur the hatred or contempt of the people, when public measures are despised, the audience will apply what never was, what could not be, designed as a satire on the present times. Nay, even though the people should not apply, those who are conscious of guilt, those who are conscious of the wickedness or weakness of their conduct, will take to themselves what the author never designed. *A public thief is as apt to take the satire, as he is apt to take the money, which was never designed for him.* We have an instance of this, in the case of a famous comedian of the last age; a comedian who was not only a good poet but an honest man, and a quiet and good subject. The famous Molière, when he wrote his "Tartuffe," which is certainly an excellent and a good moral comedy, did not design to satirize any great man of that age; yet a great man in France at that time took it to himself, and fancied the author had taken him as a model for one of the principal, and one of the worst characters in that comedy: by good luck he was not the licenser, otherwise the kingdom of France had never had the pleasure, the happiness I may say, of seeing that play acted; but when the players first proposed to act it at Paris, he had interest enough to get it forbid. Molière, who knew himself innocent of what was laid to his charge, complained to his patron, the Prince of Conti, that, as his play was designed only to expose hypocrisy, and a false pretence to religion, 'twas very hard it should be forbid being acted; when, at the same time, they were suffered to expose religion itself every night

142121

publicly on the Italian stage: to which the prince wittily answered, ''Tis true, Molière, harlequin ridicules heaven and exposes religion; but you have done much worse, you have ridiculed the first minister of religion.'"

The history of the English stage itself—the orator contended—furnished an example of the inconvenience and impropriety of the licensing system. "In King Charles the Second's days, the playhouse was under a license. What was the consequence?—The playhouse retailed nothing but the politics, the vices, and the follies of the Court. Not to expose them—no, but to recommend them; though it must be granted their politics were often as bad as their vices, and much more pernicious than their other follies. 'Tis true, the Court had at that time a great deal of wit; it was then, indeed, full of men of true wit and great humour; but it was the more dangerous; for the courtiers did then, as thorough-paced courtiers always do, they sacrificed their honour, by making their wit and their humour subservient to the Court alone; and what made it still more dangerous, no man could appear on the stage against them. We know that Dryden, the Poet-Laureate of that reign, always represents the Cavaliers as honest, brave, merry fellows, and fine gentlemen. Indeed, his fine gentleman, as he generally draws him, is an atheistical, lewd, abandoned fellow, which was at that time, it seems, the fashionable character at Court. On the other hand, he always represents the Dissenters as hypocritical, dissembling rogues, or stupid, senseless boobies."

With characteristic acuteness, Chesterfield stigmatised the measure, not merely as an encroachment on liberty, but also as an attack on *property*. "Wit, my lords," he said, "is a sort of property. It is the property of those that have it, *and too often the only property they have to depend on*. It is, indeed, but a precarious dependence. Thank God! *we, my lords, have a dependence of another kind;* we have a much less precarious support, and there-

fore cannot feel the inconveniences of the bill now before us; but it is our duty to encourage and protect wit, whosoever's property it may be. . . . . I must own I cannot easily agree to the laying of a tax upon wit; but by this bill it is to be heavily taxed—it is to be excised; for if this bill passes, it cannot be retailed in a proper way without a permit; and the Lord Chamberlain is to have the honour of being chief gauger, supervisor, commissioner, judge, and jury."[1]

Let the reader picture to himself the courtly Chesterfield delivering himself of this racy piece of satire, in the stately and formal House of Peers—in those halcyon days of velvet inexpressibles and embroidered waistcoats. There is no visible emotion—certainly not the faintest appearance of a smile—on his imperturbable face; only, perhaps, a slight and scornful curl of the thin, aristocratic lip. When he says, with a raised voice,—accompanied, it may be, with a gentle wave of the hand,—"Thank God! we, my lords, have a dependence of a different kind"—some matter-of-fact peer breaks out into an approving "Hear! hear!"—pulls down his ruffles, and endeavours to look stupidly important. The witty orator receives, with the slightest and most courtly of bows, the well-meant but indiscreet applause; and gazing scornfully through his half-closed eyes at the unintellectual faces around him, adds, in the blandest tone imaginable:—"we have a much less precarious support, and therefore cannot feel the inconveniences of the bill before us." Who in that assembly would have placed himself on an equality with a poor devil of an author writing for his daily bread? if the head of the house of Denbigh were present, wouldn't he have thought it an insult to be told that he had a clever struggling kinsman who was in reality a greater man than his lordship? Did any noble peer perceive the satire which lurked in the eloquent discourse of the orator, whom Johnson, in one

(1) History and Proceedings of the House of Lords, vol. v.

sense unfairly, described as "a wit amongst lords, and a lord amongst wits"? If none of them did perceive it,—and if Chesterfield, sitting down amidst opposition cheers, received congratulations for having upheld the dignity of his order,—how richly he must have enjoyed the joke; and though perhaps, even in private, he never indulged in broad, hearty laughter, the chuckle with which he contemplated his triumphant irony of the over night, as he sipped his chocolate in the morning, must have been the nearest approach to unbounded hilarity which his profound good breeding could admit of![1]

About a year and a half after this, in one of his "Champions," Fielding humorously alluded to Lord Chesterfield's legislative dictum—that wit was a kind of property. His legal studies had by that time familiarised him with the Norman French black-letter jargon in which the law was then wont to veil its terrible mysteries; and it need not surprise us to find him making a sportive use of that piebald tongue. The following specimen of Law-French from his hand, is not unworthy of a place by the side of the celebrated report of the case of "Stradling *v.* Styles," attributed to Mr. Justice Fortescue, and published by Pope. The opinion of Mr. Counsellor Vinegar is sought on the following question:—

"*If a man says of an author that he is dull, or hath no wit (seeing that wit is his property, according to a noble lord, who hath more of that property than any man), will not an action lie for the said author?*"

(1) To the periodical paper called "Common Sense," Chesterfield also contributed a paper on the Licensing Act, which concludes with the following characteristic sentence: "Secondly, since wit and modesty, morality and religion, ought chiefly to be regarded in these entertainments, that everything destructive to either may be sure to be expunged; and since the fair sex have lately shown so laudable a zeal for wit, that they may have a share of the administration of it, I propose that the Lord Chamberlain's power, given by this act, be transferred to a Committee of the Maids of Honour and Bishops, who shall act in joint commission in this important affair; since the first are the best judges of wit and modesty, and the latter of religion and morality, in this kingdom."—*Lord Chesterfield's Works.* Edited by Lord Mahon.

ANSWER.

"Moy semble quod si ascun dit de J. S. eteant un Poete quod est dull Action bien volt gyser et le Resolution de le Case 1 R. A. 55. S. 16. Bien agree que ces ubi action fuit port per un Apprentice del Ley et Filt declare quod Deft avoit dit de luy quod est Dunce, and will get nothing by the law. Et le Opinion del Court fuit quod Action bien gist, car Home Poet este heavie et nemy tam pregnant come ascun auters sont et encore un bon Lawyer. Mes quia il avoit dit que il ne voet get ascun chose per le Ley Action gist. Sic icy car si poet soit Heavie ou Dull non volt gett ascun chose en le World.

"WIL: VINEGAR."

Besides "The Register" and "Pasquin," two or three dramatic trifles belong to this period of Fielding's life. At the beginning of 1737, a farce or interlude of his was produced at Drury Lane,—and most unequivocally condemned. It was entitled "Eurydice; or, the Devil Henpecked;"—the old mythological story serving as a peg for the dramatist, on which to hang an abundance of rather commonplace satire. With a license not very felicitous, Pluto was converted into Satan, and the infernal regions were peopled with modern *beaux,* wits, and lawyers. Whether it was that the audience disliked the profanity of the idea, or were disgusted with the want of plot and incident—a common fault in Fielding's lighter pieces—is not recorded: certain it is that the farce was a ludicrous failure, though Macklin, then rising into eminence as an actor, played a prominent part in it. The condemnation of "Eurydice" seems to have occasioned its author much annoyance. His over-sensitive disposition could not conceal the wound which it would have been wiser to have left undisclosed; and he betrayed his vexation by the ostentatious affectation of a disregard of censure which was neither genuine nor natural. The farce was afterwards printed at the end of "The Historical Register," not "as it was acted," but "as it was damned at Drury Lane." He also brought out at the Haymarket a piece called "Eurydice Hissed; or, a

Word to the Wise," in which, without venturing to arraign the judgment of the public, he endeavoured to show that the condemned farce had been hastily and inconsiderately composed—

"The trifling offspring of an idle hour:"—

an excuse which, it cannot be doubted, possessed the merit of truth, although there was more vanity than policy in urging it with such vehemence on the attention of the public. One other trifle was produced by Fielding at the Haymarket, during the existence of "The Great Mogul's Company,"—an extravaganza called "Tumble-down Dick; or, Phaeton in the Suds," designed as a satire on the pantomimes and spectacles then in vogue;[1]—and thus ends the history of the enterprise. At the close of the season of 1737, the company disbanded; "and the manager, not having attended to the voice of economy in his prosperity, was left no richer nor more independent than when he engaged in the project."[2]

The truth is, Fielding was one of those sanguine men who are constantly liable to over-elation by any sudden gleam of prosperity. The success of "Pasquin" induced him to believe that he had discovered the fabled stone which could turn all things into gold; and he exulted in the idea of being the great censor and satirist of his age. Perhaps it was fortunate for him that reverses taught him wisdom, together with a juster appreciation of his own powers.

It may be said that, but for the alteration of the law, his dramatic project might have been attended with a long career of prosperity. That he himself honestly entertained this notion is evident from the following observations which occur in the preface to his "Historical

(1) It appears to have been specially aimed at Rich's harlequinade in an unsuccessful piece called "The Fall of Phaeton," acted at Drury Lane, in March, 1736. The trifle is prefaced by a satirical dedication to "Mr. John Lun, vulgarly called Esquire." *Lun* was the name under which Rich performed harlequin.

(2) Baker's Biographia Dramatica.

Register," published in May or June, 1737: "The very great indulgence," he says, addressing the public, "you have shown my performances at the little theatre these two last years, have encouraged me to the proposal of a subscription for carrying on that theatre, for beautifying and enlarging it, and procuring a better company of actors. If you think proper to subscribe to these proposals, I assure you no labour shall be spared on my side, to entertain you in a cheaper and better manner than seems to be the intention of any other. If nature hath given me any talents in ridiculing vice and imposture, I shall not be indolent, nor afraid of exerting them, while the liberty of the press and stage subsists, that is to say, while we have any liberty left among us." This passage shows that Fielding had looked to his Great Mogul's Company as a permanent source of emolument; and that he relied upon his satirical talents to provide constant amusement for the public. But there can be little doubt that he was here much misled by vanity or an over-sanguine temperament. If he had succeeded in obtaining better actors, and if the utmost and freest scope had been allowed to his powers of ridicule, it is not likely that his company could have weathered out another season. In his dramatic satire, there was no great variety. His attacks upon public men were pointed and felicitous; but they derived their great success from the novelty of the idea; and if oftentimes repeated, would have soon palled on the public ear. That Fielding, therefore, could have continued, year after year, to have amused the town with satirical representations is highly improbable, and it was perhaps lucky for him that an act of parliament put an end to his project whilst his laurels were still green.

His temporary success, however, produced imitators. Theophilus Cibber, some years afterwards, made several attempts to bring out a series of similar performances at the Haymarket; but the law proved always too strong

for him, and the theatre was generally closed after the first or second night. Macklin (the actor) was also amongst Fielding's followers. He was the author of a piece called "Covent Garden Theatre; or, Peter Pasquin turned Drawcansir;" in which, like his prototype, he endeavoured to ridicule plays and players—managers and poets; but the effort was attended with small success. It is probable, too, that Foote derived the first hint of his celebrated performances at the Haymarket from Fielding's experiment. The unrivalled mimicry of the English Aristophanes overcame even the law itself; for although in his first attempt to defy the provisions of the Licensing Act, in 1747, he met with some opposition, the patronage of powerful friends enabled him to surmount all obstacles; and he was permitted, without molestation, for many years to amuse a scandal-loving public, on the same boards where the exhibition of Fielding's satirical talents had provoked legislative interference with the freedom of the stage.

The Great Mogul's Company being disbanded, and the theatrical speculation at an end, Fielding resolved to relinquish all further dalliance with the comic muse, and to devote himself to the law. This resolution was speedily put into practice; for it was characteristic of his earnest and sanguine disposition that he never allowed much time to intervene between the design and its execution. Accordingly, in Michaelmas Term, 1737, he entered himself a student of the Middle Temple; and his admission is thus recorded in the books of that Honourable Society:—

[574 G.] 1° *Nov^ris* 1737.

Henricus Fielding de East Stour, in Com. Dorset, Ar: filius et hæres apparens Brig: Gen^lis: Edmundi Fielding, admissus est in Societat: Medij Templi Lond. specialiter, et obligatum una cum, &c.

Et dat. pro fine . . . £4 0 0

CHAPTER X.*

STUDENT LIFE.—"THE CHAMPION."—CIBBER'S "APOLOGY."

[1737—1740.]

When Fielding donned the student's gown, and took his place in the magnificent dining-hall of the Middle Temple, he was upwards of thirty years old. Were age, however, to be reckoned by experience in the world's ways, rather than by lapse of time, he was quite a patriarch amongst the candidates for legal distinction who were "keeping terms" (as the phrase is) at the same time. Doubtless, the contrast which his position afforded to that of others occasioned him some sad reflections. In knowledge of the world, most of his fellow-students were mere boys to him; but they were entering upon the pursuit of an arduous profession with advantages which were not his. In most cases they had youth, health, leisure, friends, and fortune to aid them in the struggle in which they were about to engage; whilst he had reached the noon of life, with family ties and hourly anxieties to distract his attention, and with a constitution impaired by early irregularities. Still, with all these disadvantages and drawbacks he was not the man to despair. Upheld by an irrepressible gaiety of disposition and unbounded self-confidence, neither present necessities nor forebodings of future calamity could depress or discourage him.

The distinction between a student of law and a law student has been known at all times. Of those who enter their names on the books of an inn of court, the majority, perhaps, are only ambitious of the latter designation. To eat the required number of dinners, observe all necessary

forms, and be called to the Bar;—all this may be done without any extensive acquaintance with the mysteries of legal science; and this is all that the mere law student,—who may at the same time be a man of fashion, fortune, or pleasure,—will probably aim at. Fielding, however, aimed at something more. He was a student *of* law;—and a most diligent and earnest one, as soon as he entered the pale of the profession. His industry was most exemplary. All the time he could spare, he devoted to drawing pleadings, copying precedents, and noting up cases. Now and then, perhaps, his old habits returned upon him. He had occasional fits of dissipation; but these were followed by severer fits of study. Sometimes a friend would lure him to the theatre and afterwards to the tavern, where he was the delight of assembled convivialists, and the gayest amongst the gay. But it is recorded that on his return home from these scenes, late at night or early in the morning, he would savagely apply himself to study; reading and making extracts from abstruse authors for hours before he sought his pillow.[1]

His worldly circumstances would not, however, permit him at this time to devote all his attention to the law. While the juridical fruit was ripening, he was unable to give up the whole period of probation to professional studies. It was not in his power to sacrifice altogether the present for the future; and to "Lady Common Law" he was constrained to yield a divided allegiance—though she doubtless occupied the first place in his thoughts. To provide subsistence for the passing hour, his law studies were accordingly diversified by literary occupation; and he became, like many others similarly situated, a contributor to periodicals. For this kind of writing he displayed great aptitude and ability, and it is not surprising that he was soon recognised as one of the most successful of periodical essayists.

(1) See Murphy's Essay on the Life and Genius of Fielding.

Towards the close of the year 1739, he became connected with, and partly proprietor of, "The Champion," a collection of essays on the model of "The Spectator" and "The Tatler," published three times a week, viz., on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. His essays in this production are identified by an advertisement prefixed to a reprint in two volumes, published in 1741, which contains the "Champions" issued from November 15, 1739, to June 19, 1740; being the period during which Fielding presided over the publication.[1] His contributions were distinguished by the letters C. and L., and in the early numbers were very numerous. The following detail of the plan of the publication is from the pen of Dr. Drake:[2]—

"The assumed name under which 'The Champion' issues his lucubrations is Captain Hercules Vinegar; and in the introductory number is given a detail of the whole family of Vinegars, to whom different departments in the paper are assigned. To Mr. Nehemiah Vinegar, for instance, the Captain's father, history and politics are allotted; to Mr. Counsellor Vinegar, Nehemiah's brother, all subjects of law and judicature; to Dr. John Vinegar, the Counsellor's son, medicine and natural philosophy; to Nol Vinegar, the Captain's brother, classical literature; to Tom Vinegar, his eldest son, modern poetry; to Jack Vinegar, his youngest son, the superintendence of fashionable manners; and to Mrs. Joan Vinegar, his wife, domestic news."[3]

The Vinegar family, which Fielding's fertile brain had called into existence, soon became popular with the town.

(1) Another edition of "The Champion" was published in 1743, and another with Fielding's name, in 1766.

(2) Abridged from the first number. See Drake's Essays on Periodical Papers, vol. i. 1809.

(3) Mrs. Joan Vinegar's portrait has much of Fielding's later manner:—"This good woman is one of those notable housewives whom the careless part of the world distinguish by the name of a scold. This musical talent of hers, when we were first married, did not so well agree with me. I have often thought myself in the cave of Æolus, or perhaps wished myself there, on account of this wind music; but it is now become so habitual to me, that I am little

All topics of interest were discussed by them in a lively vein —literature, religion, politics, and sometimes even law. As a Temple student, the essayist possessed the advantage of minutely observing the peculiarities of the craft amongst whom he had enrolled himself. He saw many examples of pompous ignorance and unlettered idleness, displayed side by side with shining instances of industry and capacity. It was not to be wondered at, therefore, if some satirical views of the legal profession should be included in the early lucubrations of the Vinegars; and accordingly, in the "Champion" of December 25, 1739, appears a mock-serious proposal for banishing learning from the professions, in which the following observations are made by Captain Hercules Vinegar:—

"As to the law, I know it may be objected that Cicero hath affirmed a complete knowledge of all arts and sciences to be necessary to the formation of a perfect orator: and my Lord Coke, in his comments on Lyttleton, insinuates that an accurate education is the proper introduction to the study of the law. But these will have but little weight if we consider the difference between the Roman and English law; in the latter of which oratory is by the most thought utterly useless; and, secondly, that my lord Coke himself is (I am told) at present generally esteemed (especially by all those good judges who have never read a syllable of him) to be a very stupid, dull fellow, who would have made a very indifferent figure in Westminster Hall in this age. I am assured by my son, Tom Vinegar, who hath been a student in Lincoln's-Inn these five years, that a very competent knowledge of the law is to be met with in Jacob's Dictionary, and the other *legal* works of that learned author. Nay, he very confidently asserts that nothing is more hurtful to a perfect

more alarmed at it than a garrison at the tattoo or *reveillé;* indeed I have, I thank God, for these thirty years last past, seldom laid myself down, or rose up, without it; all the capitulations I have made are, that she would keep the garrison hours, and not disturb my repose by such her performances."

knowledge of the law than reading it; for (says he) it is common in our books to meet with controverted opinions, which mightily confound and distract the mind of the student, who will be much more likely to be in the right, if he adheres to his own judgment, assisted with those books above-mentioned. He confirms this with the example of some old plodders, who have lost themselves in the wood, without ever finding the road to business; and ludicrously says, the best advice to a student is not to *outlaw* himself."[1]

In the management and composition of "The Champion" Fielding was assisted by James Ralph, a political writer and intriguer of some reputation in his day, and the author of a "History of England" and other works, long since forgotten. This personage was originally a schoolmaster in Philadelphia; but becoming tired of the monotony of a colonial life, he left America, and repaired to London, about the beginning of the reign of George II. On his arrival in the metropolis he became a writer-of-all-work, and in this capacity acquired a large experience of the miseries and misfortunes which were at that period almost inseparable from the profession of authorship. The sufferings of the literary tribe, of which he was for many years an eye-witness, made a deep impression on his mind; and he ultimately embodied his observations in an excellent pamphlet on the subject.[2] Having, in a poem called

(1) This banter was probably not unacceptable to that large class of gentlemen of the inns of court, described by Captain Vinegar in a previous Champion, "who, having had too high parts to confine themselves to the dull, crabbed study of the law, have spent so much of their youthful days in dress, amour, and other diversions, that they get a very uncomfortable subsistence at the Bar; and from their want of other employment are generally to be seen in the coffee-houses about Temple-bar and the theatres."

(2) The Case of Authors. By James Ralph. 1758. That Ralph experienced in his own person most of the calamities of authorship, is evident from the following extracts from his correspondence with Dr. Birch and others, in Nichols' "Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century," communicated by the Rev. S. Ayscough:—"May 20, 1739. Requests Dr. Birch to correct 'The Universal Spectator.' May 30. Requests further lights for the Debates in Parliament on which he was engaged. Nov. 12. Requests the loan of two or three guineas. Feb. 14. 1740. 'I am to have a benefit on Tuesday, Feb. 24; and if it suits you

"Sawney," made some disrespectful remarks on the then powerful literary triumvirate—Pope, Swift, and Gay—Ralph obtained a niche in "The Dunciad," and is liberally abused in one of the notes. He was the author of a poem yclept "Night," to which Pope alludes in these lines:—

> "Silence, ye wolves! while Ralph to Cynthia howls,
> And makes Night hideous—answer him, ye owls!"

In a note to this couplet Ralph is described as "a low writer"—wholly illiterate, knowing no language, "not even the French." But this is quite untrue; he was well acquainted both with Latin and French, and was also no mean Italian scholar.[1] Fielding's first acquaintance with the American schoolmaster commenced at the theatre;[2] for the latter, to his other literary avocations, had occasionally joined that of a dramatic writer. To "The Champion" Ralph contributed, from its commencement, several political essays;[3] and he also superintended a summary of foreign and domestic news, appended to most of the numbers, and called an "Index to the Times." As a politician it is sufficient to say that he was "the honest Mr. Ralph" of Bubb Dodington's Diary, who in spite of his honesty was, according to his patron's avowal, "ready to be hired to any cause."[4]

The winter of 1739-40 was remarkable both for its duration and severity. On Christmas-day the inclement weather set in; the Thames at London Bridge became completely frozen over; and tremendous snowstorms darkened the air. This extreme cold was general all over Europe. In

to do me any service, it will most seasonably oblige.' *(Without date)*. 'As poor as a poet. I am now really at my last resource till my play is finished; and unless you can relieve me, both that and I shall die together.' "—*Nichols' Literary Anecdotes*, vol. ix. (additions to vol. v).

(1) Baker's Biographia Dramatica.

(2) Ralph was the author of an excellent prologue to Fielding's comedy of "The Temple Beau." See p. 19.

(3) Generally distinguished by the signature "Lilburne."

(4) See Preface to "Diary of the late George Bubb Dodington." By H. Penruddocke Wyndham. 1809.

Holland provisions of all kinds were frozen; and in Poland and Lithuania wolves and bears ravaged the country, carrying away men, women, and children. In London the rigour of the season was severely felt. Water and coals were sold at an incredibly high price; and the former necessary was even dearer than the latter. That at such a period men's hearts should fail them for fear is not astonishing. In January, 1740, the chronicler of daily events in "The Champion" remarks—"'Tis observable the following words in last Sunday's evening-service (January 27) were uttered with a devotion suitable to the season:—

"'*He giveth snow like wool: and scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes.*

"'*He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who is able to abide his frost?*'"[1]

Whilst this severe weather continued, the sufferings of the poor were terrible to contemplate. Private charity, however, was exerted, in the most conspicuous manner, to mitigate and relieve the general distress. In one place "The Champion" remarks that "it had become *fashionable* to be charitable;" in another number, the editor, with grave irony, commemorates an instance of episcopal beneficence:—"'Tis said that charity, in the shape of frost and snow, has even touched the heart of a bishop, who has lately doled about his pittance of alms to supply several of his poor neighbours with coals—a piece of news which no doubt his lordship, after the example of his brethren, did not intend should reach the public ear; those venerable personages generally keeping so strictly to the letter of the Gospel that their good deeds are utterly unknown."[2]

(1) Psalm cxlvii. 16, 17.

(2) A hard winter, with all the inconvenience and suffering it produces, has always its circumstances of mitigation in the amusements it gives rise to, and the singular natural phenomena which it often exhibits. A curious instance of this is afforded in the following description of a winter gin-palace, in 1740, in "The Champion:"—"Of all the various phenomena which this fertile winter has produced—such as the various incrustations of ice that from tide to tide have furrowed the river, entire houses in a manner glazed over with sleet, and

During the whole of the month of January, 1740, the tyrant Frost maintained with little relaxation his rigorous sway. On the 10th it is stated that "the damage already done upon the river, since the first setting in of the frost, was computed at £100,000,"—a large sum indeed in those days; and, later in the month, "The Champion" contains the following paragraph:—"On January 24th, about one o'clock, the frost, which for a while before seemed to relent, resumed its vigour, not like a sovereign but a tyrant, making the proudest tremble, and lording it over the elements." The winter appears, in fact, to have been one of the hardest ever experienced on these shores. That it caused great distress and a fearful depression in trade and general prosperity cannot be doubted; and that Fielding's periodical should have prospered at such a season is a signal proof of its superior merits.

hung with icicles, trees candied with the hoarfrost, &c., no one seems to be a greater curiosity, or has afforded greater entertainment, than what happened a little beyond the turnpike by the bursting of one of the Chelsea water-pipes; for part of the water that spouted up met in its descent with a willow-tree, and, freezing before it fell, enclosed every individual twig with ice: whence fresh streams continually trickled down, forming the greatest variety of twisted, branching, and in every way interfering icicles, that the fancy can imagine, which in the end reached to the very ground, and in the middle formed a perfect harbour of crystal, to the infinite admiration of all who beheld it; but being soon converted into a *gin-shop*, every one who purchased a dram took away a fragment of this extraordinary fragment with them, so that in a very little time hardly the ruins of it remained."

The Thames, it is said, at this season presented a strange and picturesque appearance, being covered with rocks and shoals of ice, in various fantastic shapes, and covered with snow of the purest white. Tents and printing-presses were erected on it, and a huge Frost-fair held. It was whilst pursuing her avocations here that Doll the pippin-woman, celebrated in Gay's "Trivia," lost her life:—

> "The cracking crystal yields; she sinks, she dies—
> Her head, chopped off, from her lost shoulders flies;
> Pippins she cried, but death her voice confounds,
> And 'Pip, pip, pip,' along the ice resounds."

Some vintners in the Strand, upon this occasion, bought a large ox to be roasted whole on the ice; and one Hodgson, a butcher in St. James's Market, claimed the privilege of felling or knocking down the beast as a right inherent in his family, his father having knocked down the ox roasted on the river in the great Frost-fair of 1684. (See Timbs' "Curiosities of London.")

This success was not unmerited. Dr. Drake—a competent authority on the matter—observes, that "The Champion," with the exception of "The Freethinker," is superior to any similar publication up to the time of its appearance, since the close of the eighth volume of "The Spectator."[1] Both in style and matter, it soared above the ordinary publications of the day. Some of its lighter essays would not have been unworthy of the pen of Addison, whilst it embraces moral homilies which the author of "The Rambler" need not have blushed to own. The following observations upon vice and virtue—unquestionably Fielding's—might have been dictated by the "great moralist" himself:—

"Vice cheats us with the appearance of good, while virtue only gives it us in reality. Honour, pleasure, wealth, are only found under her conduct. Vice plays the courtier with us; it flatters, and promises, and deceives. Virtue is more reserved, less liberal to us on a slender acquaintance; but when we prove ourselves worthy her favours she is always profuse in bestowing them.

"And this is she that hath been represented in so rigid and odious a light by her own advocates; that hath been pictured as such a tyrant, requiring things almost impossible to be performed, and forbidding us other things from which it is as difficult to abstain. This is that virtue which wanton wits have strove to ridicule, and wicked sophisters have argued to be so contrary to our worldly interest; whereas her commands are most easy, and her burthens light; she commands us no more than to be happy, and forbids us nothing but destruction. In short, 'her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.'"[2]

In the same grave and dignified tone the Essayist (in the course of an apology for the clergy) delineates the character of a model priest. The sketch is worthy of the pen that produced the portrait of Parson Adams:—

(1) Essays on Periodical Publications.
(2) The Champion, January 24, 1740.

"A clergyman is a successor of Christ's disciples: a character which not only includes an idea of all the moral virtues—such as temperance, charity, patience, &c.; but he must be humble, charitable, benevolent, void of envy, void of pride, void of vanity, void of rapaciousness, gentle, candid, truly sorry for the sins and misfortunes of men, and rejoicing in their virtues and happiness. This good man is entrusted with the care of our souls, over which he is to watch as a shepherd for his sheep: to feed the rich with precept and example, and the poor with meat also: to live in daily communication with his flock, and chiefly with those who want him most (as the poor and distressed), nay, and after his blessed Master's example, to eat with *publicans and sinners;* but with a view of reclaiming them by his admonitions, not of fattening himself by their dainties."[1]

Amongst the writers whom Fielding diligently studied, and whose style he selected for imitation, may be mentioned the learned and witty Dr. South. This celebrated divine is frequently quoted by him in "The Champion;" and there can be no doubt that his masculine discourses formed the model of that pure and undefiled English in which the author of "Tom Jones" so much excelled.

The curious reader will discover in Fielding's essays in "The Champion" many indications and examples of the peculiar excellences for which he was afterwards distinguished as a writer. It was in this publication, in fact, that his genius began to discover its proper bent. As a dramatic writer his faults had certainly overbalanced his merits. His contributions to the stage were, for the most part, crude performances; thrown off, as it has been shown, without reflection, and many of them written merely to supply the necessities of the moment. For the worst of them the only excuse that can be offered is, that they must be numbered amongst the sins of youth, and apologised for like other early indiscretions. But he had now reached a

(1) The Champion, April 19, 1740.

period of life when the passions are more under the control of the judgment; his mind had been severely disciplined by misfortune, by experience, and latterly also by serious study; and though he wrote for bread, he probably began to feel the promptings of a nobler ambition than could be satisfied with the applause of a capricious multitude, or by raising a temporary peal of mirth at the expense of morality and decorum.

Ideas were also suggested to the Essayist which were afterwards carefully elaborated, and formed the germ of more considerable productions. In "The Champion" of May 24th, 1740, will be found "A Vision," which evidently served as the groundwork of the most admirable of his minor productions—"The Journey from this World to the next." Many examples, likewise, of the apt illustrations drawn from the occurrences of ordinary life, for which he was subsequently so famous, are continually to be met with in these essays. The celebrated simile with which he commences the novel of "Tom Jones"[1] seems to have had its prototype in the following apt comparison, which appears in a letter from Sir Hercules to Captain Vinegar, in "The Champion" of January 10th, 1740:—"I consider my paper as a kind of stage-coach, a vehicle in which every one hath a right to take a place. If any letter, therefore, should hereafter appear in it, which may give offence to particular persons, they can have no more anger to me on that account than they would show to the master of a stage who had brought their enemy to town." Remarkable as they are for so many excellences, it is difficult to understand why such of these essays as are capable of identification have not been included in any collection of Fielding's works. Should Mr. Murphy's edition be reprinted, they ought not to be omitted.

(1) "An author ought to consider himself, not as a gentleman who gives a private or eleemosynary treat, but rather as one who keeps a public ordinary, at which all persons are welcome for their money."

Whilst "The Champion" was at the height of its reputation, Colley Cibber published his famous "Apology."[1] This eccentric egotist, whom Ralph has coarsely but rather happily described as "a bottle of as pert small beer as ever whizzed in any man's face,"[2] had been deeply wounded by the blows which had been dealt him in "Pasquin" and the "Register." In revenge for these attacks, he penned a contemptuous notice of Fielding in the "Apology;" not mentioning him, indeed, by name, but at the same time taking good care that there should be no mistake as to the person intended. After speaking of theatrical speculations in 1736, the Apologist thus proceeds:—"These so tolerated companies gave encouragement to *a broken wit* to collect a fourth company, who for some time acted plays in the Haymarket. . . . This enterprising person, I say (whom I do not choose to name, unless it could be to his advantage, or that it were of importance), had sense enough to know that the best plays with bad actors would turn but to a very poor account, and therefore found it necessary to give the public some pieces of an extraordinary kind, the poetry of which he conceived ought to be so strong that the greatest dunce of an actor could not spoil it: he knew, too, that as he was in haste to get money, it would take up less time to be intrepidly abusive than decently entertaining; that to draw the mob after him he must rake the channel and pelt their superiors. . . . Such then was the mettlesome modesty he set out with; upon this principle he produced several frank and free farces, that seemed to knock all distinctions of mankind on the head—religion, laws, government, priests, judges, and ministers, were all laid flat, at the feet of this *Herculean* satirist! this Drawcansir in wit, who spared neither friend nor foe! who, to make his poetical fame immortal, like another Erostratus,

(1) The first edition was published at the beginning of 1740, the dedication being dated November, 1739.

(2) The Case of Authors.

set fire to his stage by writing up to an act of parliament to demolish it. I shall not give the particular strokes of his ingenuity a chance to be remembered by reciting them; it may be enough to say, in general terms, they were so openly flagrant that the wisdom of the legislature thought it high time to take a proper notice of them."[1]

Thus virulently assailed, it is not wonderful that Fielding should have used his position as a public writer to inflict condign chastisement on his opponent. As soon as the "Apology" made its appearance, it was accordingly subjected to a vigorous criticism in "The Champion;" its bad grammar, slip-shod style, and extravagant phraseology, being mercilessly ridiculed and exposed.[2] In another paper Fielding published a humorous mock-trial of his antagonist for murdering his native tongue; wherein he makes excellent use of the legal formularies with which his law studies had rendered him familiar. This *jeu d'esprit* obtained great celebrity; and a brief specimen will show that it was not without point and genuine wit:—

2. T. Pistol[3] was called to the bar, but the gaoler answered that he had been that morning taken out of his custody by the officer of

(1) Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber. 2nd edition, chap. v., p. 232. 1740.

(2) April 22, 29, and May 6, 1740. A brief extract from the latter paper is subjoined:—"The pages 217 and 218 are almost entirely taken up to inform the reader that the biographer lent Colonel Brett his clean shirt. This brings to my mind a story in Dr. South's letter to Sherlock, which is in substance as follows: 'Once on a time a gentleman and his servant were travelling together, and the gentleman called to his man and said unto him, "John, get thee down from thy horse, and I will get me down from my horse; then take off the saddle that is on thy horse, and afterwards take off the saddle that is on my horse. Then take thou the saddle that was on my horse and put on thy horse, and the saddle that was on thy horse put thou on my horse!" "Lord, sir," says John, "could you not have said, Change saddles."' So might our biographer have said Change shirts." In the same paper Fielding tells the following story of Cibber: "This brings to my mind a story which I once heard from Booth, that our biographer had in one of his plays, in a local simile, introduced a lion in some island or country where this generous beast did not grow; of which being informed by the learned Booth, the biographer replied, 'Prithee tell me then where there is a lion, for, God's curse, if there be a lion in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America, I will not lose my simile.'"

(3) Theophilus Cibber.

another court, the said Pistol being at this time in almost every court of the kingdom.[1]

3. Col. Apol. was then sent to the bar.

Clerk. Col. Apol., hold up your hand.

Some time was spent before the prisoner could be brought to know which hand he was to hold up.[2]

Clerk. You stand indicted here by the name of Col. Apol., late of Covent Garden, Esq., for that you not having the fear of grammar before your eyes, on the day of , at a certain place called the Bath, in the county of Somerset, in Knightsbridge, in the county of Middlesex, in and upon the English language an assault did make, and then and there with a certain weapon called a goosequill, value one farthing, which you in your *left* hand then held, several very broad wounds, but of no depth at all, on the said English language did make, and so you the said Col. Apol. the said English language did murder.[3]

To this indictment the prisoner pleaded "not guilty," and evidence in support of it is therefore called, after which the prisoner is in due course called on for his defence. The jury are ultimately directed to bring him in not guilty of murder, as he had no intention of doing any harm, but to find his offence *chance medley.*

Cibber's mock trial was very widely read, and its clever personalities much relished. Of the attention it created, some evidence is furnished in a pamphlet published by one T. Johnson (by whom the preface is signed),[4] and dedicated to "Mr. Ralph of Redriffe (or Rotherhythe, in the vulgar tongue)." This production is a strange jumble, and was probably intended merely as a re-issue of the papers in "The Champion," relating to Cibber, which are all reprinted and denominated libels. At the end there is a brief address "To the self-dubbed Captain Hercules Vinegar, *alias* Buffoon," stating that the writer had faithfully laid before the public "the malevolent flings exhibited by him

(1) Alluding to the scandalous case of Cibber *v.* Sloper; an action for *crim. con.*, in which the plaintiff laid the damages at £5000, and recovered £10.

(2) Cibber was left-handed.

(3) The Champion, May 17, 1740.

(4) The Tryal of Colley Cibber, comedian, &c. 8vo., 1740.

and his man Ralph." Then follows an "Advertisement," which is here presented verbatim :—

"ADVERTISEMENT.

"If the ingenious Henry Fielding, Esq. (son of the Hon. Lieut.-General Fielding, who, upon his return from his travels, entered himself of the Temple, in order to study the law, and married one of the pretty Miss *Cradocks* of Salisbury), will own himself the author of eighteen strange things, called Tragical Comedies and Comical Tragedies, lately advertised by J. Watts,[1] of Wild Court, printer, he shall be *mentioned* in capitals in the *third* edition of Mr. Cibber's Life, and likewise placed among the *poetæ minores dramatici* of the present age: then will both his *name and writings be remembered on record* in the immortal poetical register written by Mr. GILES JACOB."

From this coarse satire it may be gleaned that Fielding had openly expressed resentment at being described by Cibber as "a broken wit," without being mentioned by name. The insult rankled in his sensitive bosom, and was never forgotten or forgiven. Henceforth he endeavoured, in season and out of season, to cover the comedian with ridicule. His satire, like that of Pope, was, however, too obtrusive, and too disproportionate to the object of attack, to secure its desired effect. If the character of Cibber were as contemptible as "The Dunciad" and Fielding's writings represent it, much printer's ink was thrown away in blackening it.

(1) John Watts was at this time the ordinary theatrical publisher. He is mentioned by Fielding in his "Eurydice Hissed," where, in describing the process of condemnation, one of the characters observes :

. . . . "John Watts,
Who was this morning eager for the copy,
Shrank hasty from the pit, and shook his head."

CHAPTER XI.

LITERARY NOTICES IN "THE CHAMPION."—BOYSE.—LILLO.—HOGARTH.

[1740.]

THE period at which Fielding first lent his powerful pen to the periodical press was a very gloomy one in the annals of letters. The profession of authorship was at its lowest ebb, both with respect to emolument and consideration. Most of those who lived by the quill had to encounter every species of degradation and misery, and were fully entitled to the compassion which, in the preceding century, a titled author expressed towards this long-suffering class:—

> "I pity from my soul unhappy men,
> Condemned by want to prostitute their pen;
> Who must, like lawyers, either starve or plead,
> And follow, right or wrong, where guineas lead."[1]

The finest minds were condemned to the meanest task-work. The author of "London" was still engaged in the drudgery of filling the columns of "The Gentleman's Magazine," having vainly endeavoured to extricate himself from the precarious occupation of writing for bread. James Thomson—whose poem of "The Seasons" has since gladdened so many hearts—was subsisting still more miserably by writing for the stage.[2] And whilst men of letters of the first class (or such of them as really lived by the pen) were thus employed, those in the second and third rank

(1) Roscommon. Essay on Translated Verse.

(2) Thomson's Tragedy of "Edward and Eleonora," finished in 1739, was refused a license by the Lord Chamberlain. "He endeavoured," says Johnson, "to repair his loss by a subscription, of which I cannot now tell the success."

fared still worse. Some of these latter were constrained to sink into the mere "scribblers for a party," whom Johnson classed, with Commissioners of Excise, as the lowest of human beings; whilst others were contented to write poems, essays, and prefaces for booksellers—receiving rather less wages than carpenters or bricklayers, and working twice as hard.

There is one literary notice in "The Champion" which brings most forcibly to mind the miserable condition of the hack author at this time. On the 12th of February, 1740, the periodical critic thus writes: "Last week a poem was published with the simple but all-comprehensive title of 'Deity.' . . . . It is wrote in a clear and elegant style, the versification smooth and flowing, but, being cramped with almost perpetual distiches, allows very little variety of cadence and period. And that it is not void of the sublime let the following passage demonstrate." Then occurs an extract from the poem which is to be found in one of the introductory chapters in "Tom Jones,"[1] where it is thus introduced:—

"The brevity of life hath likewise given occasion to this comparison. So the immortal Shakspere:

. . . . 'Life's a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more.'

For which hackneyed quotation I will make the reader amends by a very noble one, which few, I believe, have read. It is taken from the poem called 'The Deity,' published about nine years ago, and long since buried in oblivion,—a proof that good books, no more than good men, do always survive the bad:—

'From Thee[2] all human actions take their springs,
The rise of empires and the fall of kings!
See the vast theatre of Time displayed,
While o'er the scene succeeding heroes tread!
With pomp the shining images succeed,
What leaders triumph, and what monarchs bleed!

(1) Book vii. c. 1. (2) The Deity.

> Perform the parts Thy providence assigned,
> Their pride, their passions, to Thy ends inclined:
> Awhile they glitter in the face of day,
> Then at Thy nod the phantoms pass away;
> No traces left of all the busy scene,
> But that remembrance says—THE THINGS HAVE BEEN.' "

These lines must have made a strong impression upon Fielding when he first read them; since they remained after the lapse of nine years so firmly fixed in his memory. The poem itself is certainly a remarkable one;—especially when the character and position of the author (to whom, said "The Champion," "the Church owes great obligations") are brought under consideration.

Samuel Boyse—the writer of the poem on the Deity—was, during this bitter year of 1740, the victim of the most abject poverty. Without clothes to walk abroad, he spent the whole of his time in bed, huddled up in some old blankets,—for sheets he had none,—through which there was a hole for the passage of his arm when he wrote for the purpose of procuring a daily meal.[1] Imagination cannot picture any sight more miserable than this poor shivering wretch, in his desolate garret, pursuing under such circumstances his literary labours. That those labours were but ill-requited is tolerably evident, not only from his extreme poverty, but also from the character of his employers. Cave, the proprietor of "The Gentleman's Magazine," was one of these. He was in the habit of purchasing Boyse's poetry, and paying for it by the hundred lines; but after a time, taking advantage of the author's poverty, he insisted on making this "the long hundred;" and so got his ten or twenty lines in. That grave misconduct, however, as well as the niggardliness of his patrons, contributed to the poet's calamity, may be well conceived. For the sensual enjoyment of the hour he submitted to days of misery; and though common prudence might not have insured him a competence, it would

(1) Chalmers' Biographical Dictionary, &c.

have preserved him from some of the worst ills of poverty. Whatever he possessed soon found its way into the hands of the pawnbroker—books, clothes—everything went the same way, and when redeemed by his friends, they were soon pawned again. Dr. Johnson, a genuine Samaritan in his way, collected on one occasion a considerable sum to release Boyse's clothes, in order that he might rise from his uncomfortable couch: but in two days the clothes were pawned again. "The sum was collected," the Doctor afterwards said, "in sixpences, at a time when to me sixpence was a serious consideration."

What hope was there in such an age for such a man as this? No art could lure him within the pale of comfort and civilization; misery could not reform, experience could not instruct him. Yet Boyse had been carefully nurtured and educated, and possessed at one time troops of generous and sympathising friends. He was the son of an English dissenting minister, residing in Dublin, where he received his early education. At eighteen the youth was sent to Glasgow, and here he committed his first worldly mistake by an early and improvident marriage. His poetical abilities afterwards procured patrons, who one by one became disgusted with his imprudence, or alienated by his arrogance. At length he found himself in London, —an author-of-all-work in the days of Savage, Johnson, Amherst, and Rolt. The privations he endured, in common with other members of his craft, have been above sketched. Poverty and dependence became, as years rolled on, his normal condition. It was not a strange thing for him to fast for days together. In July, 1742, he addressed to Cave a letter from a sponging-house, in which, piteously imploring a pecuniary advance, he said, "I am every moment threatened to be turned out here, because I have not money to pay for my bed two nights past, which is usually paid beforehand; and I am loth to go into the Compter till I see if my affair can possibly be made up.

I hope, therefore, you will have the humanity to send me half-a-guinea for support, till I can finish your papers in my hands. . . . I humbly entreat your answer, having not tasted anything since Tuesday evening I came here; and my coat will be taken off my back for the charge of the bed, so that I must go into prison naked, which is too shocking for me to think of." This letter was accompanied by the following lines, which bear witness to the elasticity of this poor wretch's mind under the pressure of extreme suffering:—

"INSCRIPTION FOR ST. LAZARUS' CAVE.

"Hodie, teste cœlo summo,
Sine pane, sine nummo;
Sorte positus infeste,
Scribo tibi dolens mœste,
Fame, bile, tumet jecur:
Urbane, mitte opem, precor
Tibi enim cor humanum
Non a malis alienum:
Mihi meus nec male grato,
Pro a te favore dato.

"*Ex gehenna debitoria*
Vulgo, domo spongiatoria." "ALCÆUS."[1]

This appeal, it is satisfactory to find, was responded to by Cave, who forwarded half-a-guinea to his distressed journeyman.

On his release from prison, Boyse subsisted partly by obtaining subscriptions for works he never intended to write—a favourite plan with the unscrupulous denizens of Grub Street at that time—and partly by soliciting charity through his wife, on the plea that he was sick or dying. He was afterwards engaged by Mr. Henry, of Reading, upon some historical composition, and—improved by country air and a quiet life—he is said to have become "more decent in his dress and behaviour." He died in

(1) The signature under which Boyse wrote in "The Gentleman's Magazine."

great indigence, however, at a lodging in Shoe Lane, and was buried at the parish cost.[1]

Boyse was not the only labourer in the literary vineyard, at this epoch, whose life was clouded by misfortune and closed in penury. Of Savage it is unnecessary here to speak; but two other literary outcasts may be mentioned, who endured more than an ordinary share of the calamities of authorship. One of them was Amherst, for many years editor of that powerful opposition print, "The Craftsman," whose fate was only in one degree less miserable than that of Boyse. "Poor Amherst," says Ralph, in the pamphlet already quoted,[2] "after having been the drudge of his party for the best part of twenty years together, was as much forgot in the famous Compromise of 1742,[3] as if he

(1) Hawkins' Life of Johnson, &c.

(2) The Case of Authors.

(3) When Sir Robert Walpole was hunted out of office by the conjoined efforts of the opposition press and parliamentary orators, Pulteney having contented himself with a peerage, lent himself to the famous "Compromise" which excited the suspicion and indignation of his party. A meeting of members of both Houses was subsequently held at the Fountain Tavern in the Strand, which Pulteney attended, and made his "explanations." This meeting—so often referred to in contemporary pamphlets and periodicals—is also immortalised in Sir C. Hanbury Williams' celebrated ode of "The Statesman," which contains the following caustic lines on the powerless "Earl of Bath," once so formidable as Pulteney:—

> "Leave a blank here and there in each page,
> To enroll the fair deeds of his youth;
> When you mention the acts of his age,
> Leave a blank for his honour and truth.
>
> "Say he made a great monarch change hands,
> He spake, and the minister fell;
> Say he made a great statesman of Sandys,
> (O that he had learnt him to spell)."

Amherst was, from the period of its establishment (Dec. 1726), associated with Pulteney and Bolingbroke in "The Craftsman." The influence of this paper was immense, the circulation sometimes reaching 10,000 or 12,000; and it contributed greatly to render Walpole unpopular. Like Fielding, Amherst was a Whig; and in attacking Sir R. Walpole, neither of these facile scribes had any desire to assist the views of the Tory and Jacobite party. Their dream, it is evident, was to make intelligence a power in the State, which should control the moneyed and mercantile influence, through which Walpole reigned. When

had never been born! And when he died of what is called a broken heart, which happened within a few months afterwards, he became indebted to the charity of his very bookseller for a grave—a grave not to be traced now, because then no otherwise distinguished than by the freshness of the turf, borrowed from the next common to cover it." Of Richard Rolt, another literary drudge of this age, it is sufficient to say, that on the publication of Akenside's "Pleasures of the Imagination" (in 1744), he went over to Ireland, and boldly reprinted it as his own work—putting his name upon the title-page: a piece of unblushing effrontery unequalled in the annals of literature.[1]

Very differently situated with respect to worldly circumstances,—and presenting in character and disposition a marked contrast to these literary vagrants,—was the jeweller and dramatist, George Lillo, to whose genius Fielding, in "The Champion," paid a proper tribute of respect. Lillo is principally known to posterity by the

on the fall of the minister Amherst found his mistake,—when he was thrown over as an instrument no longer needed, and left to shift for himself in the barren field of literature,—his disappointment was so bitter that it occasioned his death. He is said to have been a good scholar, and he was certainly a vigorous political writer. In early life he was expelled from Oxford, according to his own statements, on account of his zeal for the house of Hanover; his opponents say for irregularities and violations of college discipline. There is reason to believe that Pulteney unfairly took to himself the credit of Amherst's writings. H. Walpole says he was assured by Franklin, the printer of The Craftsman, "that Lord Bath never wrote a 'Craftsman' himself, only gave hints for them; yet great part of his reputation was built on these papers!" —*Letter to Sir H. Mann. Correspondence*, vol. ii. "The Craftsman" (says Goldsmith, in his "Life of Lord Bolingbroke") "though written with great spirit and sharpness, is now almost forgotten, although when it was published as a weekly paper, it sold much more rapidly than The Spectator." And again in "The Bee," Goldsmith thus writes:—"More, Savage, and Amherst, were possessed of great abilities; yet they were suffered to feel all the miseries that usually attend the ingenious and the imprudent,—that attend men of strong passions, and no phlegmatic reserve in their command."

(1) This story is too good to be pronounced a fabrication; but it is said to have been "completely refuted." (See Croker's "Boswell's Life of Johnson," vol. ii. p. 125. 1853.)

somewhat lugubrious morality of "George Barnwell:" a dramatic work which, whatever its literary merits, should not be lightly spoken of, since it has drawn tears from thousands, and effected the reformation of many a youthful profligate.[1] Besides this piece, Lillo was the author of two or three plays, which possess, at any rate, a distinct character of their own, and are still read with interest. The best of these—a domestic drama in blank verse, called "The Fatal Curiosity"—was produced by Fielding at the Haymarket Theatre in 1736, and acted by the Great Mogul's Company. "Tom Davies," who performed the part of young Wilmot, says that Lillo's play was not successful at first, but that in the following season the manager tacked it to "The Historical Register," when it was acted to more advantage, and was frequently repeated.[2] That the play is distinguished by a homely, genuine pathos, rarely, if ever met with, in the dramatic efforts of the age, will be admitted by every reader. In fact, Lillo was to dramatic, what Crabbe, half a century later, was to narrative poetry.

(1) A remarkable instance of the salutary effect produced by the representation of this play is related by Mr. Ross, the actor. In the year 1752, Dr. Barrowby, the eminent physician, was called in to see a young gentleman, apprenticed to a merchant, who was suffering from a slow fever, and apparently at the point of death. The doctor saw that the patient's mind was ill at ease, and entreated him to divulge the oppressive secret. The attendants and relatives being sent out of the room, the youth confessed that he had appropriated some of his master's money, and that afterwards going to Drury Lane, and seeing Mr. Ross and Mrs. Pritchard in the characters of George Barnwell and Millwood, he was struck with horror at his crime, and had not since enjoyed a moment's peace. Dr. Barrowby upon this communicated with the patient's parents, the money was quickly paid, and the youth lived to become an eminent London merchant. "Though I never knew his name," writes the actor, "or saw him to my knowledge, I had for nine or ten years, at my benefit, a note sealed up with ten guineas, and these words, 'A tribute of gratitude from one who was highly obliged, and saved from ruin, by seeing Mr. Ross's performance of Barnwell.'" It has also been stated that at the first representation of this play not a few of the auditors came prepared to ridicule it, and were for that purpose furnished with copies of the old ballad; but the play had not proceeded far, when they were obliged to drop their ballads and pull out their handkerchiefs. (Dibdin's "History of the Stage," vol. v.)

(2) Dramatic Miscellanies.

If not a genius of the highest order, he had strong and healthful sympathies; and at a period when profligacy, fustain, and affectation, held possession of the stage, it is refreshing to turn to his simple humanity and unexceptionable morality.

As a man he was honourable and just in all the relations of life. Like Richardson, "he kept his shop, and his shop kept him."[1] His disposition was genial, kind, and social; and, though prudent and correct himself, he could tolerate error in others, and render assistance to those who too often neglected to assist themselves. Fielding was evidently on terms of great intimacy with him; and the character which he gives of him in "The Champion" shows how highly he respected him, and how much he valued his friendship. This character was written on the occasion of the production of "Elmerick" (a posthumous tragedy of Lillo's), in February, 1740.[2] "His Fatal Curiosity" (writes the somewhat too eulogistic friend), "which is a masterpiece of its kind, and inferior only to Shakspere's best pieces, gives him a title to be called the best tragic poet of his age; but this was the least of his praise: he had the gentlest and honestest manners, and at the same time the most friendly and obliging. He had a perfect knowledge of human nature, though his contempt of all base means of application, which are the necessary steps to great acquaintance, restrained his conversation within very narrow bounds. He had the spirit of an old Roman, joined to the innocence of a primitive Christian; he was content with his little state of life, in which his excellent temper of mind gave him a happiness beyond the power of riches, and it was necessary for his friends to have a sharp insight into his want of their services, as well as good inclination or abilities to serve him.

(1) Macaulay's Essays. "Keep your shop and your shop will keep you," was a favourite tradesman's motto in the olden time. (See Timbs' "Curiosities of London," p. 607.)

(2) Lillo died in September, 1739.

In short, he was one of the best of men, and those who knew him best will most regret his loss."

Lillo was unmarried; and with respect to the disposition of his property after death a rather singular story is told. Resolving to put the sincerity of his friends to the test, he proposed to borrow a large sum of money, for which he would give no other security than his own note of hand. On applying to one or two of his most intimate friends, those prudent gentlemen declined to make an advance on such terms. He then addressed himself to a nephew, with whom he had been long at variance, and who at once consented to lend the money on the proposed security. This so gratified Lillo, and so well satisfied him of his nephew's disinterested regard, that he bequeathed to him the bulk of his fortune.[1]

On the whole, the literary notices in "The Champion," during Fielding's management, are highly creditable to his taste and judgment. One or two other examples may be advantageously quoted. In the number for May 17th, 1740, are published copious extracts from the ballad of "Hardyknute," which had been given to the world in 1719 as a composition of great antiquity, though its modern origin has been since satisfactorily established.[2] That this production should have attracted Fielding's notice is not remarkable, for of nature and simplicity he was a genuine worshipper. But it is not improper to remind the reader that the same ballad also influenced in a most remarkable manner the mind of another great novelist. "The ballad of Hardyknute," says Sir Walter Scott,

(1) On the 26th of February, 1740, it appears that "Elmerick" was acted the third time, "for the benefit of the author's poor relations, and by command of the Prince and Princess of Wales."—*Some Account of the English Stage*, vol. iii. From this it has been inferred that Lillo died in impoverished circumstances; but this was by no means the case, as he was possessed of an estate of £60 per annum, and personal effects to a considerable value. (Baker's "Biographia Dramatica.")

(2) It is now known to have been written by Lady Wardlaw, who died about 1727. Dodsley published an edition in 1740.

"was the first poem I ever read, and it will be the last I shall forget."[1] A ballad which has been extolled by the author of "Waverley" and of "Tom Jones"—whether ancient or modern—must have merit and attractions of no common order.

It is also worthy of remark that in "The Champion" for June 10th, 1740, will be found the first reference made by Fielding to the great artist of the age, with whom he afterwards lived on terms of the closest friendship, and whose works are so often mentioned in his novels. In no place, however, has he so warmly commended the genius of Hogarth as on this, the first occasion, in which he did homage to it. "I esteem," says The Champion, "the ingenius Mr. Hogarth as one of the most useful satirists any age has produced. . . . I almost dare affirm that those two works of his, which he calls the 'Rake's' and the 'Harlot's Progress,' are calculated more to serve the cause of virtue and for the preservation of mankind than all the folios of morality which have been ever written; and a sober family should no more be without them than without 'The Whole Duty of Man' in their house."

The period of Fielding's legal probation was now drawing to a close; and, in the anticipation of other duties and avocations, he meditated a gradual withdrawal from "The Champion." Perhaps he considered that, on being called to the Bar, it was neither seemly nor "professional" to be connected with a public print, and he may have expected that he should obtain sufficient legal business to employ his time without the aid of literature. Accordingly a fresh arrangement was made in the proprietorship

(1) Lord Byron, according to Sir Walter Scott, was equally affected with this celebrated imitation of the ancient ballad. On their first meeting, Scott says, "I remember particularly repeating to him the fine poem of 'Hardyknute,' an imitation of the old Scotch ballad, with which he was so much affected, that some one in the same apartment asked me what I could possibly have been telling Byron by which he was so much agitated."—*Lockhart's Life of Scott*, vol. iii.

and conduct of the publication, and Fielding, parting with his share in it, was succeeded by Ralph. He continued, however, to contribute a few papers for a twelvemonth afterwards.

It was at no very favourable juncture that Fielding prepared to enter on the practice of his profession. The sun of England has been rarely obscured by thicker clouds than those which overshadowed it in this disastrous year. In the previous autumn war had been declared against Spain, in opposition to the better judgment of Sir Robert Walpole, who suffered himself to be goaded into the measure by popular clamour. This contest was in the commencement signalised by reverses, destructive alike to the national interests and honour. In every sea, British commerce suffered severely from Spanish privateers. At the end of the year 1740, it was computed that no less than four hundred and seven English merchantmen had been captured; whilst the injury inflicted on the enemy was small in comparison. The opposition newspapers contained every week announcements of ships taken by the Spaniards, and by the English—none. The prospect at home was as unsatisfactory as that presented abroad. For once the elements seemed to combine with foreign foes to depress the fortunes of Britain. A hard winter had been succeeded by a cold spring, and a summer so late as to realise the description in the "Midsummer Night's Dream:"—

> "The seasons alter; hoary-headed frosts
> Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose."[1]

(1) "The Drought of 1740" is commemorated by a poem in the "Gentleman's Magazine," which contains, amongst others, the following lines:—

> "Seasons no longer by their fruits are known,
> . . . .
> Nor March her winds, nor April had her show'rs,
> Nor bloomy herbage May, nor June her flowers;
> The mob run mad, their famine turned to rage,
> They almost dare our well-fed troops engage;
> The staff of life is broke, the naked fields
> Ceres forsakes, nor hope of harvest yields."

On the 3rd June, there appeared in "The Champion" the following gloomy picture of the prospects of the country:—"The long continuance of the wind in the north-east, our late violent hard winter, the present backward spring, the visitation of an epidemic cold, almost as contagious, though not so fatal as a plague; the stagnation of trade, the scarcity of money, the present dearness of provisions, and danger of an approaching famine; wars, fleets, armies, taxes, and poverty,—present us at this time with a very dreadful prospect, and have afforded wise and cool heads a melancholy subject for their reflection." Such a combination of calamities might appal the stoutest heart. Hard times these for the struggling adventurer, who had at last fought his way to a position in which he hoped to secure competence and independence! His own life's summer, like that of the year, Fielding might have thought had come too late, especially after the chill that had fallen on its spring. An untried ocean lay before him; and as he prepared to embark on it, the dark clouds lowering over head must have filled even his sanguine mind with gloomy forebodings.

CHAPTER XII.

CALL TO THE BAR.—THE WESTERN CIRCUIT IN 1740.—LEGAL EXPERIENCES.

[1740—1741.]

FIELDING was called to the Bar by the benchers of the Middle Temple on the 20th of June, 1740, and chambers were assigned him in Pump Court. On assuming the wig and gown, he at once commenced the practice of the profession, and chose the Western Circuit, a district in which he had many personal friends as well as family connexions.

The road to legal honours and emoluments was in those days, no less than in our own, beset with difficulties and perplexities. At the very time when Fielding joined the Western Circuit, one of the greatest lawyers of the age was commencing on it a career of brieflessness, destined to last for eight or nine dreary years.[1] This was Charles Pratt (son of a chief-justice, and afterwards Earl of Camden), whose so long unrewarded assiduity proves that the most shining talents, combined with the rarest industry, were not in times past always appreciated by the attorneys of the West. Perhaps the independence of Pratt's nature, which could stoop to no unworthy artifice to achieve success, might partly account for his long exclusion from business: certain it is, that heart-sick at length from hope deferred, he resolved to abandon the law, and qualify himself for holy orders. It was at this crisis of his fate that through

(1) In the year 1741, in a familiar letter to a friend, Pratt thus describes his desperate circumstances:—"Alas! my horse is lamer than ever; no sooner cured of one shoulder than the other began to halt. My losses in horseflesh ruin me, and keep me so poor that I have scarce money enough to bear me out in a summer's ramble; yet ramble I must, if I starve to pay for it."—*Life of Lord Camden, in Law Magazine*, vol. ix. At this time, it must be remembered, barristers *rode* the circuit.

the friendship of Henley, his senior on the circuit, he received a brief in an important cause which his friend led. The story goes that in order to give Pratt a chance, Henley contrived to be absent at the trial, and so afforded his junior an opportunity of displaying his powers of advocacy and professional ability.

Pratt, like Fielding, was an Etonian; but as the latter was at least six years the great lawyer's senior, it is not probable that there was any very early intercourse between them. On the circuit, some common tastes, as well, perhaps, as a common experience of the *res augustæ*, must have attracted the two men together. Pratt was a great reader of romances, a devout admirer of the genius of Fielding's idol—Cervantes; and being a fifth son, with a very slender private fortune and no business, he was, in respect to worldly circumstances, little better off than the future novelist.[1] To this it may be added that Pratt was not disinclined to the pleasures of the festive board, and where could he have met with a convivial companion equal to Harry Fielding?

Henley, afterwards Lord Chancellor Northington, was a curious specimen of a race of lawyers which may be now

(1) Mr. George Hardinge, a Welsh judge, had formed an idea of preparing a Life of Lord Camden, founded principally on personal recollections, and had written the skeleton of the contents, which is given by Lord Campbell in his "Lives of the Chancellors." From this skeleton it would appear that Pratt's acquaintanceship with Fielding began in London, whilst the former was a law-student, and the latter a professed town-wit. A few entries are given where Fielding's name occurs:—

" ——— fond of convivial habits and convivial talents,
——— but abstaining from vice.
——— read, as before, at broken intervals.

. . . .

——— formed an acquaintance
——— with Hawkins Browne,
——— and with Henry Fielding.
——— Short character of both as given by him.
——— became intimate with Lord Northington, who took a fancy to him.
——— called to the Bar,
——— hated it
——— was going to leave it," &c.

Lord Campbell's Lives of the Chancellors, vol. v.

pronounced extinct. Though of a genial and kindly nature, he affected a rough and rude demeanour, which approached the verge of bearishness. In private conversation he rarely let fall a sentence which was not garnished with an oath; and this habit, which the license of the times excused in a private individual, he carried with him to the highest judicial station. Even on the Woolsack itself,—when visited by a twinge of gout more than usually severe, the Chancellor would indulge in a muttered imprecation,—to the inexpressible astonishment of suitors, and to the grave scandal of the profession. To hear him swear at his coachman and footman, as he entered or left the state-coach which carried him to the House of Lords with the mace and seals, was a rich treat to the idler of those days:—what effect such a practice must have had upon public morals can be too well surmised. Of his undignified bearing, when his temper was more than ordinarily tried, the following story is told. Upon one occasion the Speaker, Onslow, who was at all times remarkable for the decency of his demeanour, on coming later than usual to the House of Commons, complained that his coach had been detained by the obstinacy of a carman. He was told that the Lord Chancellor had met with the same obstruction. "Indeed!" said the Speaker, "what did he do? Did he not show him the mace and seals, and strike the fellow dumb with terror?" "No," was the reply, "he merely said with an oath" (which it would be unseemly to transfer to these pages) "that if he had been in his private coach, he would have jumped out and beaten the —— rascal to a jelly."[1]

Pratt and Henley were not the only distinguished lawyers on the Western Circuit at this period. That most successful advocate, Mr. (afterwards Serjeant) Davy, was then a member of it. For ready wit Davy has been rarely surpassed in his profession. Lord Mansfield himself is said to have quailed beneath one of his witticisms: for that

(1) Strictures on the Lives of Eminent Lawyers. 1790.

eminent judge having on one occasion threatened to sit on Good Friday, to clear off the arrears of business in his court, Davy at once put an end to the project by saying, perhaps rather profanely, that if he did, "he would be the first judge who had sat on that day since Pontius Pilate." Of this privileged joker, the following characteristic story, well known in his profession, is told. Being once summoned before the Circuit Mess, for an alleged irregularity in taking "silver" from a client, when the profession recognised nothing but a "golden" coinage, the Serjeant made the following defence: "It is true, gentlemen, I took silver from the fellow; but I took it because I could not get gold:—and, further, I took every sixpence the man had;—if that is not keeping up the character of the profession, I don't know what is." [1]

(1) In Manning and Bray's "History of Surrey," the following curious account is given of Mr. Serjeant Davy's early career:—"This gentleman was a most eccentric character. He was a chymist at Exeter, and a sheriff's officer coming to serve on him a process from the Court of Common Pleas, he very civilly asked him to drink some liquor. Whilst the man was drinking, he contrived to heat a poker, and then asking what the parchment process was made of, and being answered of sheep-skin, he told the man he believed it must eat as well as mutton, and recommended him to try. The bailiff said it was his business to serve processes, not to eat them; on which Mr. Davy told him if he did not eat that, he should swallow the poker; the man preferred the parchment: but the Court of Common Pleas (not then accustomed to Mr. Davy's jokes) sent for him to Westminster Hall, read him a serious lecture in contempt of their process, and sent him to the Fleet. From this circumstance, and the conversation of some unfortunate legal man whom he met there, he acquired that taste for the law which the eating a process had not given to the bailiff, and when he was discharged from the Fleet, he applied to the study of it in earnest. He was called to the Bar, made a serjeant, and by his humour acquired so much the ear of the court and of the juries, that every one desired to have him as an advocate. He was a great while in very considerable practice; but not confining his wit to the narrow compass of the courts, the guineas procured in it slipped through his pockets into some other place, and he ended his professional career little richer than he began it."—*Manning and Bray*, vol. iii. p. 456. He died in 1780, and was buried at Newington, Surrey.

Since the notice of Davy in the text was written, reference has been made to the manuscripts of Serjeant Davy, deposited in Lincoln's-Inn Library, and from one of his note-books it appears that he was, in 1750, a member of the Home Circuit. He might nevertheless have originally belonged to the Western, as professional etiquette permits *one* change of circuit.

Fielding also found on the circuit a relative who was carefully plodding his way into business, and who in due time carried away a large proportion of its honours and emoluments. This was his cousin, Mr. Gould, afterwards Sir Henry Gould, a judge of the Court of Common Pleas. No two men could be in all respects more dissimilar than were Fielding and his kinsman. Whilst the one was a man of taste and pleasure, the other was simply and solely a lawyer. Mr. Gould looked into no books except the crabbed volumes of the law—a science which Blackstone had not yet taught to speak English; cared for no diversions; went not to plays; affected not the society of wits, and sought not to recommend his pleadings by elegance of diction. He is described by one who knew him at the Bar as having no eminence as an advocate. "Speaking," says the legal critic in question, "is not his talent; his arguments are more pleasing to the eye than grateful to the ear; his tones are the reverse of harmony, and his voice is extremely faint and feeble. Action he has none; neither elegance nor energy. The graces are out of the question. His language is the plain unadorned style of common conversation: often defective in purity and correctness, and always destitute of that warmth and variety which characterise ardour of character and vigour of conception."[1] Such was Mr. Gould, one of the most successful lawyers of his day, and at this time a "junior" in great estimation. Had Fielding been told, however, that his cousin would have risen step by step to the bench, he might have treated the supposition with disdain. If such were the stuff of which judges were made, what chance had one of his lively parts, vivid imagination, and brilliant wit, of achieving professional distinction?

On the bench, it is right to say, that Mr. Justice Gould displayed considerable ability as well as independence.[2]

(1) Strictures on the Lives of Eminent Lawyers. 1790.

(2) During the riots of 1780, after the attack on Lord Mansfield's house by

He often differed from the other members of the court, and sometimes singly; a circumstance that shows not, perhaps, that he had greater learning than his brethren, but that he possessed considerable firmness of character. His mind was in his work: his time and talents entirely devoted to the public. "He sticks close," says the critic before quoted, "to Rolle and Littleton and Coke; and his just praise is, that he is learned in the laws of his country, which he studies with labour, and interprets with integrity, tempered by the most amiable of all virtues—humanity."[1]

For some time after he was called to the Bar, Fielding regularly attended circuit and sessions;[2] and in term time he was rarely absent from Westminster Hall. That he possessed considerable aptitude for the legal profession cannot be doubted. Few men of the period could have had a more varied knowledge of mankind, a keener insight into human motives, or a more extensive fund of general information; and to these important qualifications he added the faculty of expressing himself upon every subject with clearness and precision. His manners were agreeable, his society fascinating in the extreme; his powers of application considerable at all times, and now sharpened by necessity. Above all, he possessed a vigorous will, which was dismayed by no opposing obstacles, and which refused to recognise the possibility of disappointment or defeat. That he conscientiously laboured at his profes-

a lawless mob, a message was sent by the king to each of the twelve judges, offering them the protection of a military guard. Mr. Justice Gould, with a courage and equanimity which every one must have admired, refused this offer, stating, "That he had grown old under the protection of English laws; that he was persuaded, however some persons might be misled, the people in general loved and respected the laws; and so great was his own attachment to them, that he would rather die under them than live under the protection of any other laws."—*Gentleman's Magazine.*

(1) Mr. Justice Gould was admitted a member of the Middle Temple in 1728, called to the Bar in 1734, became a bencher in 1754, and a serjeant in 1761.

(2) Murphy's Essay on the Life and Genius of Fielding. He is said to have selected the Wiltshire Sessions. (Hutchins' "History of Dorsetshire.")

sion, and had a taste for some branches of it, is also evident. He is known to have compiled a work on Crown or Criminal Law, forming in manuscript two folio volumes, which was, after his death, placed in the hands of his half-brother, Sir John Fielding, the magistrate,—a competent judge of its merits,—and who is said to have pronounced it as being in some parts a perfect work.[1] The reputation for legal learning which he afterwards earned on the Middlesex bench, likewise tends to show that at one period of his life he must have taken pains to acquire a competent knowledge of his profession. A mind like his could not seriously apply itself to any subject with a perfectly unsatisfactory result. It is a great mistake to suppose that the intellectual powers which have been successfully exerted in the world of letters, would have been fruitlessly employed in the practical business of life. Had not Murray and Blackstone been attracted by circumstances to the practice of the law, can it be doubted that they would have each achieved distinction in literature? If "so sweet an Ovid" were lost in the one, it is not impossible that in the other the world has been deprived of an Addison or a Prior. Had Johnson or Swift, again, been attached to the Bar, allured by fortune to exert their talents in that arena, is it to be for a moment supposed that they would have ignominiously failed? It was a favourite idea of the former, that had he pursued the law as a profession, he would have mounted the judicial bench, with the title of Baron Lichfield; and as for the latter, it seems impossible that the powers of advocacy displayed in the "Drapier's Letters" could have failed to command attention, when employed in the discussion of private rights.[2]

(1) Murphy's Essay on the Life and Genius of Fielding.

(2) It is almost impossible here to avoid a reference to Mr. Justice Talfourd's successful cultivation of literature amidst his professional pursuits, and which will cause his name to be handed down to a late posterity, who might never have heard of him only as a judge.

That the world should refuse to give the man of letters credit for being able to learn what duller persons are known to acquire without much difficulty is obviously unjust. But the fallacy, in all its stark, staring deformity, was prevalent at the period when Fielding commenced his legal career, and is not quite hunted down yet. The dangerous reputation of a wit clung to him from the very outset, and scared away attorneys. Uncheered by the patronage of those powerful allies, he was constrained to take his place in the melancholy ranks of the briefless, or almost briefless, hangers-on of the courts,—a position not perhaps of discredit, but certainly of grave inconvenience.

Many a brilliant career at the Bar has commenced under circumstances of equal discouragement. With some men, however, it has happened that time and patience have stood in the place of early patronage and encouragement. But Fielding could not afford to wait. He had a wife and child to whom he was tenderly attached (for a fonder husband and father never breathed), who depended for their subsistence upon his exertions. The wolf poverty was at his door, and to scare it away he was again compelled to have recourse to authorship. Accordingly, at the very time when he was devoting himself to his profession by a constant attendance on the courts and private study, he managed to compose two or three trivial pamphlets,—evidently thrown off to supply the necessities of the hour,—and he continued still to contribute a few papers to "The Champion." Six months after his call to the Bar (in January, 1741), he published two poetical *brochures*, to one of which, entitled "True Greatness," [1]

(1) "True Greatness: an epistle to George Dodington, Esq." This was afterwards reprinted by Fielding in his "Miscellanies." The person to whom it is addressed, George Bubb Dodington (afterwards Lord Melcombe), was one of the most notorious personages of the age. A restless political intriguer,—active, clever, and witty,—he was likewise a fop of the first water, and managed to bring upon himself continual ridicule. Sir Charles Hanbury Williams lam-

he affixed his name; the other—yclept "The Vernoniad" —was sent forth anonymously. It is a coarse burlesque, of which the hero was the popular idol of the day, Admiral Vernon, whose victories over the Spaniards were then in every mouth. The title displays a rather humorous affectation of learning.[1] In the following December another trifle, called "The Opposition: a Vision," was added to the list of his occasional compositions, and was about the last which he published anonymously.[2]

If the attendance on courts at this period were productive of little pecuniary profit to the struggling barrister, it doubtless enlarged considerably his fund of experience. At country sessions he became acquainted with the qualifications of the rural magistrates of that day;

pooned him in a ballad, once immensely popular, called "A Grub upon Bubb;" and Lord Chesterfield says of him, "With submission to my Lord Rochester, God made Dodington the coxcomb he is—mere human means could never bring it about." Dodington attached himself to the party of Frederick, Prince of Wales, to whom he lent money; and in his famous Diary will be found a curious record of party secrets and political intrigues.

(1) "ΤΗΣ 'ΟΜΗΡΟΥ ΥΕΡΝΟΝ-ΙΑΔΟΣ Ραψωδια ἤ Γραμμα ά. The Vernoniad, done into English from the Original Greek of Homer, lately found at Constantinople, with Notes in usum, &c. Book the first." In Mr. Roscoe's edition of Fielding's works (8vo., 1841) is published the following note, as a fac-simile of his handwriting, from the collection of the late Mr. Upcott:—"Mr. ——, please to deliver Mr. Chappel fifty of True Greatness, and fifty of the Vernoniad. Yours, Henry Fielding." Dated April 20th, 1741. Admiral Vernon's successful attack on Porto Bello (Nov., 1739) had, at this period, made him the idol of the hour. H. Walpole, writing to Sir H. Mann, Nov. 12, 1741, says, "It is Admiral Vernon's birthday, and the city shops are full of favours, the streets of marrowbones and cleavers, and the night full of mobbing, bonfires, and lights." Such were the manifestations of popular joy in 1741!

(2) Several other trivial productions were probably thrown off by Fielding at this period, of some of which even the very names have perished; mention of one —evidently a political squib—is made in Nichols' "Literary Anecdotes" (Additions to vol. iii.):—"I possess a pamphlet," says the writer, "intituled 'The Crisis: a Sermon on Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11; necessary to be preached in all the Churches in England, Wales, and Berwick-upon-Tweed, at or before the next general election; humbly inscribed to the Right Reverend the Bench of Bishops. By a Lover of his Country. *Vendidit hic auro Patriam.* VIRG. London: Printed for A. Dodd, without Temple Bar. 1741. 8vo.' On the title-page of which is this remark:—'This sermon was written by the late Mr. Fielding, author of Tom Jones, &c., as the printer of it assured me.—R. B.'"

a class of persons severely satirised in his subsequent works. The lady who relates "The History of the Unfortunate Leonora," in "Joseph Andrews," gives, it will be recollected, a description of "sessions practice," which is gravely contradicted by Parson Adams; and the quiet irony both of the description and contradiction must have been much relished by Fielding's contemporaries at the Bar. "It seems it is usual," said the lady, "for the young gentlemen of the Bar to repair to these sessions, not so much for the sake of profit, as to show their parts, and learn the law of the justices of the peace; for which purpose one of the wisest and gravest of all the justices is appointed speaker or chairman, as they modestly call it; and he reads them a lecture, and instructs them in the true knowledge of the law." "You are here guilty of a little mistake," says Adams, "which, if you please, I will correct; I have attended at one of these quarter-sessions, where I observed the counsel taught the justices, instead of learning anything of them." And in the same novel there is presented a picture of "justice business" not very flattering to the rural gentry of the west in 1740. The depositions taken by the magistrate, in the absence of his clerk, previous to committing Joseph and Fanny to Bridewell, for the offence of cutting a twig (a crime which the learned personage defines as "a kind of felonious larcenous thing"), may be taken as a fair caricature of the documents which occasionally came under the satirical barrister's own eye:—

"The depusition of James Scout, layer, and Thomas Trotter, yeoman, taken before me, one of his majesty's justasses of the peace for Zumersetshire.

"These deponents saith, and first Thomas Trotter for himself saith, that on the of this instant October, being Sabbath-day, between the ours of two and four in the afternoon, he zeed Joseph Andrews and Frances Goodwill walk akross a certane felde belunging to layer Scout, and out of the path which ledes thru the said felde, and there he zede Joseph Andrews with a nife cut one hasel

twig, of the value, as he believes, of three halfpence, or thereabouts; and he saith, that the said Frances Goodwill was likewise walking on the grass out of the said path in the said felde, and did receave and karry in her hand the said twig, and so was comfarting, eading, and abating to the said Joseph therein. And the said James Scout for himself says, that he verily believes the said twig to be his own proper twig," &c.[1]

Even on the bench of the superior courts at this time there were some singular varieties of the judicial character. When Fielding's legal experience commenced, certain judges of the old school presided on circuit and in Westminster Hall, who, however competent their professional knowledge, were neither distinguished for dignity nor suavity of demeanour. Like a notorious chief-justice, they knew how to give "a lick with the rough side of their tongues." Of one of these personages a capital story is told in "Tom Jones" by Partridge, which may be properly referred to this period. Not only is the story a good one, but the exposure of the unfairness and inhumanity of the practice which then (and till a comparatively recent time) prevailed of depriving an accused person of the full privilege of professional advocacy, is creditable to the writer's sense of justice. Partridge has related how Francis, the son of Farmer Bridle, had detected a horse-stealer at a fair in possession of his father's mare. The thief is secured, bound over to take his trial, and the narration thus proceeds:—"Well, at last down came my Lord Justice Page to hold the assizes, and so the fellow was had up, and Frank was had up as a witness. To be sure I shall never forget the face of the judge when he began to ask him what he had to say against the prisoner. He made poor Frank tremble and shake in his shoes. 'Well, you fellow,' says

(1) "I know some justices," says Lawyer Scout to Lady Booby, "who make as much of committing a man to Bridewell, as his lordship at 'size would of hanging him; but it would do a man good to see his worship, our justice, commit a fellow to Bridewell; *he takes so much pleasure in it:* and when once we ha un there, we seldom hear any more o'um. He's either starved or eat up by vermin in a month's time."

my lord, 'what have you to say? Don't stand humming and hawing, but speak out;' but however he soon turned altogether as civil to Frank, and began to thunder at the fellow; and when he asked him if he had anything to say for himself, the fellow said 'He had found the horse.' 'Ay!' answered the judge, 'thou art a lucky fellow; I have travelled the circuit these forty years, and never found a horse in my life; but I'll tell thee what, friend, thou wast more lucky than thou didst know of: for thou didst not only find a horse, but a halter too, I promise thee.' To be sure I shall never forget the words. Upon which everybody fell a laughing, as how could they help it? Nay, and twenty other jests he made, which I can't remember now. There was something about his skill in horseflesh, which made all the folks laugh. To be certain the judge must have been a very brave man, as well as a man of much learning. *It is indeed charming sport to hear trials upon life and death.* One thing, I own, I thought it a little hard that the prisoner's counsel was not suffered to speak for him, though he desired only to be heard one very short word; but my lord would not hearken to him, though he suffered counsellor to talk against him for above half an hour. I thought it hard, I own, that there should be so many of them—my lord, and the court, and the jury, and the counsellors, and the witnesses, all upon one poor man, and he too in chains."

Mr. Justice Page, here referred to, died in December, 1741, having "adorned" the bench to the last. He is well known in literary history as the judge before whom Richard Savage was tried for wilful murder in the year 1728. Upon that occasion,—if Savage's partial biographer is to be trusted,—he behaved with great indecency and unfairness. He is even represented as endeavouring to enlist the prejudices of the jury against the accused. "Had his [Savage's] audience been his judges," says

Johnson, "he had undoubtedly been acquitted; but Mr. Page, who was then upon the bench, treated him with his usual insolence and severity; and when he had summed up the evidence, endeavoured to exasperate the jury, as Mr. Savage used to relate it, with this eloquent harangue:—'Gentlemen of the jury, you are to consider that Mr. Savage is a very great man—a much greater man than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; that he wears very fine clothes—much finer clothes than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; that he has abundance of money in his pocket—much more money than you or I, gentlemen of the jury: but, gentlemen of the jury, is it not a very hard case, gentlemen of the jury, that Mr. Savage, should therefore kill you or me, gentlemen of the jury?'"[1]

(1) Some years afterwards Savage took his revenge in a rancorous and elaborate satire, published in "The Gentleman's Magazine" for September, 1741, entitled, "A Character." In the commencement the poet admirably delineates the excellent qualities of Philip Yorke (Lord Hardwicke), the greatest lawyer of his age:—

> "Were all, like Yorke, of delicate address,
> Strength to discern and sweetness to express;
> Learn'd, just, polite, born every heart to gain,
> Like Comyns mild, like Fortescue humane."

Then, as a contrast, Savage thus depicts the character of Page:—

> "Of heart impure, and impotent of head,
> In hist'ry, rhet'ric, ethics, law unread;
> How far unlike such worthies! once a drudge,
> From floundering in low cases rose a judge."

Upon some subjects Mr. Justice Page entertained liberal notions of rather an advanced character, for he appears to have considered that women were unfairly excluded from the elective franchise. On the question being argued before the Court of King's Bench, whether a woman could be chosen sexton, and vote at such elections, Page J. observed, coinciding with the affirmative opinion of Chief Justice Lee, "I am of the same opinion as to the principal case. But I see no disability in a woman from voting for a parliament man."—7 *Mod. Rep.* 265.

Page's coarseness and severity are also commemorated by Pope:—

> "Slander or poison dread from Delia's rage:
> Hard words or hanging, if your judge be Page."

When these lines first appeared, the name of Page was represented by four asterisks. But, taking the compliment to himself, he sent his clerk to Pope to complain of the insult. "Pope told the young man that the blank might be supplied by many monosyllables other than the judge's name: 'But, sir,' said the

In June, 1741, died Fielding's father, the General, at the age of sixty-five. His decease is recorded in "The Gentleman's Magazine" for that month, where it is said he held the appointment of Colonel of Invalids. At the close of his life the veteran was by no means in affluent circumstances, and his son Henry obtained by his death no accession of fortune. Both father and son, indeed, were victims of a prodigal disposition, and probably no amount of wealth could have kept either of them out of difficulties.

clerk, 'the judge says that no other word will make sense of the passage.' 'So then it seems,' says Pope, 'your master is not only a judge but a poet; as that is the case, the odds are against me. Give my respects to the judge, and tell him I will not contend with one that has the advantage of me, and he may fill up the blank as he pleases.' "—*Johnson's Lives of the Poets* (note).

The facetious barrister, Mr. Crowle, according to Horace Walpole, being once upon circuit with Page, was asked by some person "if the judge was not just behind." To which it is said he replied, "I don't know; but I am sure he was never *just* before." This was the same Mr. Crowle of whom a well-known story is told. Being counsel for Sir George Vandeput, at the famous Middlesex election in 1749, he was charged before the House of Commons with wilfully protracting the scrutiny, and showing contempt of the House, and was sentenced to be reprimanded on his knees by the Speaker. As he was rising from the ground, after the reprimand, he was heard to mutter, "This is the dirtiest house I ever was in."—*Walpole's Memoirs of the Reign of George II.*

CHAPTER XIII.

RICHARDSON'S "PAMELA."—"JOSEPH ANDREWS."

[1742.]

In the month of February, 1742, Fielding sent forth into the world his first novel,—"The Adventures of Joseph Andrews and his friend, Mr. Abraham Adams." This work must have been written during the latter months of the previous year, when the author—unencumbered by briefs—had both leisure and necessity for literary exertion; and its origin may be briefly narrated.

At the close of the year 1740 the first part of Richardson's "Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded," made its appearance, and suddenly soared into astonishing popularity. Amongst all classes—in all intelligent circles—the book was quite the rage. The old recommended it to the young; brothers presented it to their sisters; its merits were extolled from the pulpit, and that too by no less celebrated a divine than Dr. Sherlock. Even at Ranelagh Gardens, it is said—the chosen resort of the gay world, and the temple of fashion and frivolity—the ladies were in the habit of holding up the book to each other, to show that they were not without the popular favourite. Mr. Urban, in "The Gentleman's Magazine" for January, 1741, excuses himself for not reviewing what everybody had read; "it being judged in town," he says, "as great a sign of want of curiosity not to have read 'Pamela,' as not to have seen the French and Italian dancers." It was also whispered abroad that the great literary autocrat, Mr. Pope, had said that this so famous novel would do more good than volumes of sermons. In addition to this flood of eulogy the author received substantial and satis-

factory proofs of the approval of the public, several editions of the work being disposed of within a twelvemonth. A French translation also was published in London, about a year after the publication of the original, which procured for "Pamela" even a continental reputation.

It would be idle to say that a work which was so extensively read, does not possess merits of a very high order. But, on the other hand, it is clear, that however great its attractions, they were much over-estimated and over-praised. The moral teaching which received the approbation of Pope and Sherlock should not be lightly spoken of; yet, with all due deference to such great authorities, it may be questioned whether many readers have risen from the perusal of Richardson's novel with more elevated notions of female honour than they before entertained. His morality was that of the age—rather the virtue of prudence than principle. His heroine adroitly resists the arts of the wealthy seducer, but her ruling motive is obviously lawful matrimony, rather than the simple preservation of chastity. The fortunate girl who gains a husband superior to her in station, and possessed of many amiable qualities, by vigilantly guarding her honour, must be always considered by the prudent portion of womankind an excellent pattern for imitation. In such a sketch the "rewards of virtue" are no doubt eloquently set forth; but in what do they consist?—a coach-and-six, a gay wedding-dress, and a handsome bridegroom! Such temptations may certainly induce women to persevere in the path of virtue; but very similar inducements also may lead them to infamy. This Richardson-morality was, in fact, vulgar and conventional, not high-toned and spiritual; appealing only to self-interest and self-love; cool, shrewd, calculating, and sagacious; a good marketable article to pass through the world with, and to win its hollow respect and substantial rewards.

Fielding saw the "morality" of "Pamela" in this light

when he ridiculed it in "Joseph Andrews." It is not fair to suppose that he had any intention of representing in a ludicrous light those ideas of female purity which have received for ages the sanction of religion and the respect of mankind. His object was very different. It was a sham morality which he assailed,—the affectation of virtue, not virtue itself. He saw that the popular idol was not made of solid gold, as its worshippers believed, but a gilt and lacquered image, got up for show, and manufactured to suit the fashion of the times. A man of his hearty and genial humour could not hear with patience all the cant and nonsense uttered about it, and he therefore determined to show the world what it was made of. The self-sufficiency of the author was also no less provocative of satire than the book itself. Richardson's peculiarities were well known to Fielding. He knew him to be dull, respectable, vain, and sensitive, and he took a secret pleasure in aiming a shaft which he knew would wound him in his tenderest point.

The character of the author of "Pamela" was, indeed, in perfect keeping with his work. From his youth upwards he had delighted in feminine society and in tea-table sentimentality. In his maturer years his greatest pleasure was to give laws to a little senate of soft admirers, who regarded him with awe and tenderness, and never contradicted, argued with, or thwarted him. Whilst Fielding—roughly handled by the world—had made acquaintance with every species of folly and dissipation, and had been as familiar with the mirth of the tavern as the misery of the sponging-house, Richardson had lived the life of the thoroughly respectable and respected trader; accurate in his accounts, punctual in his dealings, regular in his habits, comfortable in his circumstances. No two men could differ more widely from each other. Fielding had escaped from his wild life, not without stain or reproach, but with a knowledge of the world and the world's ways, a

quickness of apprehension, and a faculty for discerning and dissecting human motives, which could never have been acquired in a life of retirement and staid propriety.[1] He had been too much rubbed about in the world to be duped by the most specious cunning, cant, or hypocrisy. Richardson, on the other hand—who had never known the want of a guinea, or committed an act which the most rigid moralist could censure—had so fortified and hedged himself up in his little citadel of virtue, and had so narrowed his views of human life, that he stumbled quite unsuspiciously into the pit-falls of insipidity and absurdity which lay in his way. Though an amiable and respectable, he was by no means a generous or large-minded man, and his mode of life had not been calculated to develop any great qualities. He had been flattered and idolised; whilst Fielding had been abused as a mad-brained profligate, ridiculed and cut by his acquaintances. The breath of adulation was pleasant to Richardson, but Fielding estimated it at its true worth. The one was childishly covetous of praise, and greedy of the applause of partial friends; the other was as reckless of reputation as of his purse. If the proceeds from an essay or a pamphlet were sufficient to buy out an execution, or to satisfy a relentless tax-gatherer, Fielding was a happier man than if the whole society of wits at Will's, or all the critics of the press, had combined to trumpet forth his excellences. With such striking differences of disposition, it is not surprising to find the two great novelists of the age in direct antagonism. The success of "Pamela" was all that

(1) "Lastly, come Experience, long conversant with the wise, the good, the learned, and polite. Nor with these only, but with every kind of character, from the minister at his *levée*, to the bailiff at his sponging-house; from the duchess at her drum, to the landlady behind her bar. From these only can the manners of mankind be known, to which the exclusive pedant, however great his parts or extensive his bearing may be, hath ever been a stranger."—*Tom Jones*, book xiii. c. 1. Richardson said of Fielding, no doubt with truth, in one of his letters:—"His brawls, his jars, his gaols, his sponging-houses, are all drawn from what he has seen and known."

was required to draw Fielding out. He was determined that the virtuous heroine should not have it all her own way, and his "wicked wit" suggested to him a most original and effective method of ridiculing the popular favourite.

Though Fielding's principal object in the composition of "Joseph Andrews" was to caricature "Pamela," by presenting a picture of male virtue in humble life, as a ludicrous counterpart of Richardson's sketch, another and much higher design was included in his plan. From his youth, as we have seen, he had been a warm admirer of Cervantes and his wonderful book, "Don Quixote." His earliest literary effort (already glanced at) had been to identify with English scenes, in a dramatic form, the humour of the greatest of European romance-writers; and it is not, therefore, to be marvelled at that, in his first novel, he should endeavour to imitate the manner, and catch a portion of the spirit, of his idol. To present an English parallel to the adventures of the chivalrous Don suggested itself to his mind; and he created a hero calculated, like the Don, to afford amusement to his readers, without ever forfeiting their esteem.[1]

The character of Mr. Abraham Adams is the most delightful in the whole range of English fiction. It is the embodiment of Christianity in all its noblest bearings—the grandest delineation of a pattern priest which the world has yet seen. From the moment we are introduced to him drinking his cup of ale in Sir Thomas Booby's kitchen, and taking that opportunity of asking Joseph Andrews a few questions about religion, till we bid farewell to him at the celebration of his young friend's nuptials, when he courageously rebukes Mr. Booby and Pamela "for laughing in so sacred a place, and on so solemn an occa-

(1) See the title of Joseph Andrews—"The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and his friend, Mr. Abraham Adams. Written in imitation of the manner of Cervantes, author of Don Quixote."

sion," there is such a noble consistency and unaffected simplicity in his character—so beautiful a union of true dignity and genuine humility—that, in spite of the unseemly tricks and unbecoming treatment to which he is exposed, we never cease both to love and respect him. There is no adventure, however low and ludicrous, no undeserved misfortune to which Adams is exposed, which can at all tend to lower him in our estimation. Even when—mistaken for the pig-dealer—he is prostrated in the mire with Parson Trulliber's hogs, or when—the victim of a practical joke—he is soused in the water-tub by his treacherous entertainers, our respect for his simple faith and manliness represses the tendency to contemptuous mirth; and, though he stands before us bespattered with mud or drenched with water, with a ragged cassock and a crownless hat, he has lost none of the dignity of the cloth, and has become in no degree an object of contempt.[1]

It is impossible here to ignore the tradition that Parson Adams was sketched from a living original, and that that original was one of Fielding's own friends, the Rev. William Young. "Mr. Young," says Murphy, "was remarkable for his intimate acquaintance with the Greek authors, and had as passionate a veneration for Æschylus as Parson Adams; the overflowings of his benevolence

(1) Mr. Forster has the following admirable criticism on the characters of the Vicar of Wakefield and Mr. Abraham Adams:—"Resemblances have been found, and may be admitted to exist, between the Rev. Charles Primrose and the Rev. Abraham Adams. They were from kindred genius; and from the manly habit which Fielding and Goldsmith shared of discerning what was good and beautiful in the homeliest aspects of humanity. In the parson's saddle-bag of sermons would hardly have been found this prison-sermon of the vicar; and there was in Mr. Adams not only a capacity for beef and pudding, but for beating and being beaten, which would ill have consisted with the simple dignity of Doctor Primrose. But unquestionable learning, unsuspecting simplicity, amusing traits of credulity and pedantry, and a most Christian purity and benevolence of heart, are common to both these masterpieces of English fiction; and are in each with such excellent touch discriminated, as to leave no possible doubt of the originality of either."—*Life and Times of Goldsmith*, vol. ii. 2nd edition.

were as strong, and his fits of reverie were as frequent." Dr. Johnson, speaking of the same individual as the original of Fielding's immortal sketch, tells us of him, that "he supported an uncomfortable existence by translating from the Greek; and if he did not seem to be his own friend, was at least no man's enemy."[1] A curious story is narrated by Mr. Murphy in illustration of the reverend gentleman's absence of mind, and occasional forgetfulness of mundane affairs. During the Duke of Marlborough's campaign in Flanders, Mr. Young served as chaplain in an infantry regiment, and one evening, when encamped close to the enemy, carelessly wandered into the hostile camp, with his "Æschylus" in his hand, and with a heart full of benevolent reflection, called forth by the tranquillity of the hour, and the balmy sweetness of the evening air. The French sentry's cry of "*Qui va là!*" first apprised him of his danger, and he immediately surrendered himself a prisoner of war. But the officer in command, perceiving the simplicity of his character, and that his appearance in the camp was unintentional, immediately released him, and politely directed him back to his regiment. In conjunction with this profound and simple-minded Grecian, Fielding meditated a translation of "Aristophanes," and one play was published as a specimen, soon after the appearance of "Joseph Andrews."[2] But the manner in which it was received did not probably encourage the friends to persevere in their undertaking, or to continue this notable partnership of wit and scholarship.

That Parson Adams of the novel is merely the Reverend Mr. Young of real life—a minute copy of a well-known original—cannot, however, be conceded. Some of the qualities which distinguished Fielding's friend—such as his passion for "Æschylus," his absence of mind, his trick

(1) Lives of the Poets.

(2) "Plutus, the God of Riches: a Comedy from the Greek of Aristophanes." By H. Fielding, Esq., and the Rev. Mr. Young. Waller. 1742.

of snapping his fingers when pleased or embarrassed, his unsuspecting gentleness of disposition—might have been transferred, it is true, to Adams.[1] But it is one thing for an artist to give individuality to a grand ideal by copying a few traits from real life, and another to produce an exact portrait.[2] As Hogarth, sitting at his easel, doubtless had in his mind's eye some reputable alderman, whose placid features might become his sketch of the Good Apprentice, or some irreclaimable profligate, whose quick, restless eye and sinister glance might suit the character of Tom Idle; so Fielding, in the delineation of Mr. Abraham Adams, occasionally threw in a few personal traits, which might be recognised by a common acquaintance as pertaining to Mr. Young; but clearly nothing more than this was either attempted or intended.[3]

Amongst the minor characters in the novel, Parson Trulliber (as already mentioned[4]) and Mr. Peter Pounce,

(1) It is said that Mr. Young resented the imputation of having sat for the portrait of Parson Adams, and once threatened to knock down a gentleman who addressed him by that name. He died in Chelsea College, in 1757, and in the registry is this entry, "William Young, a clergyman."—*Hutchins' History of Dorset.*

(2) It is well observed by Mr. Murphy, with respect to the character of Adams, that his "habitual absence of mind, which is his prominent foible, and which never fails to give a tinge to whatever he is about, makes the honest clergyman almost a rival of the renowned Don Quixote. . . . . I will venture to say (he adds) that when Don Quixote mistakes the barber's basin for Mambrino's helmet, no reader ever found the situation more ridiculous and truly comic than Parson Adams travelling to London to sell a set of sermons, and actually *snapping his fingers and taking two or three turns round the room in ecstasy*, when introduced to a bookseller in order to make an immediate bargain; and then immediately after, not being able to find those same sermons, when he exclaims, 'I profess—I believe I left them behind me!'"—*Essay on the Life and Genius of Fielding.*

(3) This view is confirmed by the last paragraph in the preface, where the novelist claims for his sketch the merit of originality, whilst he avows its object. "As to the character of Adams," he says, "as it is the most glaring in the whole, so I conceive it is not to be found in any book now extant. It is designed as a character of perfect simplicity; and as the goodness of his heart will recommend him to the good-natured, so I hope it will excuse me to the gentlemen of his cloth."

(4) See p. 4. It is said in Hutchins' "History of Dorset," 2nd edition, that a curate of Metcombe, a village near East Stour, was the original of

the steward of Sir Thomas Booby, are also said to have been sketches from life. The original of the latter portrait was Mr. Peter Walter, a wealthy attorney and scrivener—*alias* usurer—who purchased an estate near Sherborne, Dorsetshire, and was for some time Fielding's neighbour.[1] He filled the office of steward to several persons of distinction, and realised an immense fortune. Sir Charles Hanbury Williams[2] has ridiculed this important personage in a ballad called, "Peter and my Lord Quidam," written in 1743. In "the curious dialogue" in Joseph Andrews, "which

Trulliber, but this was denied by the reverend gentleman's widow. "The house where he lived," says the local historian, "seemed to accord with Fielding's description ('Joseph Andrews,' book ii., chap. 14.), and an old woman who remembered him, observed, 'that he dearly loved a bit of good victuals and a drop of drink.'"

(1) Walter's estate was at Stalbridge Park, about four miles from East Stower. He represented the borough of Bridport in Parliament, and died in 1745, aged eighty-three. ("History of Dorset.")

(2) See "Poems of Sir C. H. Williams," 3 vols., 1822: the cleverest, though not the most decent collection, of personal and political squibs in the language. Sir Charles Williams was the consistent friend and supporter of Sir R. Walpole, whose fall he revenged by a series of stinging attacks upon Pulteney, Earl of Bath, the hero of the opposition. Amongst them is the following inscription for the Earl of Bath's house in Piccadilly:—

> "Here, dead to fame, lies patriot Will,
> His grave a lordly seat;
> His title proves his epitaph,
> His robes his winding-sheet."

When the Earl of Orford (Sir R. Walpole) first met the Earl of Bath in the House of Lords, he is said to have thus greeted him:—"Here we are, my lord, the two most insignificant fellows in England."

In an ode, written soon after Sir R. Walpole's retirement from power, Sir C. Williams has this most true and pithy stanza:—

> "Oh! my poor country, is this all
> You've gained by the long-laboured fall
> Of Walpole and his tools?
> He was a knave—suppose—what then?
> He'd parts, but this new set of men
> A'n't only knaves—but fools."

His character of Walpole, again—"Whom many loved, few hated, none despised"—is very happy.

Mr. Peter Walter figures frequently in Pope's satires. See "Moral Essays," Ep. iii.; "Satires of Dr. Donne versified;" "Imitations of Horace," &c.

passed between Mr. Abraham Adams and Mr. Peter Pounce, better worth reading than all the works of Colley Cibber and many others,"[1] the inhumanity and self-conceit of the purse-proud steward are felicitously portrayed. The argument on charity is especially characteristic:—

"'Sir,' said Adams, 'my definition of charity is, a generous disposition to relieve the distressed.'

"'There is something in that definition,' answered Peter, 'which I like well enough; it is, as you say, a disposition—and does not so much consist in the act as in the disposition to do it; but, alas! Mr. Adams, who are meant by the distressed? Believe me, the distresses of mankind are mostly imaginary, and it would be rather folly than goodness to relieve them.'

"'Sure, sir, replied Adams, 'hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness, and other distresses which attend the poor, can never be said to be imaginary evils.'

"'How can any man complain of hunger,' said Peter, 'in a country where such excellent salads are to be gathered in almost every field? or of thirst, where every river and stream produces such delicious potations? And, as for cold and nakedness, they are evils introduced by luxury and custom. A man naturally wants clothes no more than a horse or any other animal; and there are whole nations who go without them; . . . . the greatest fault in our constitution is the provision made for the poor, except that perhaps made for some others.'"

With respect to the conduct of the story, it is very evident that, as Fielding proceeded, he thought less of his original design, as he became more attached to those excellent beings whom his fancy had called into existence—good Parson Adams, honest Joseph Andrews, and beautiful, tender-hearted Fanny. As it has been said of Cervantes, so it may be said of his English follower, that he came "at last to love the creations of his marvellous power, as if they were real familiar personages;"[2] and if at the outset he thought only of ridiculing Richardson, and throwing in a sly sarcasm at Cibber, as he advanced in his narrative he ceased to think of those personages or their works. That

(1) Joseph Andrews, book iii., chap. 13.

(2) Ticknor's History of Spanish Literature.

on subjects of religion and morality he occasionally made Adams his mouthpiece, and delivered through him his own sentiments on the most important topics which can interest mankind, is also very evident. True Christianity, undefiled by bigotry or fanaticism, had always in Fielding a powerful advocate; and of this there is a splendid instance in the discussion between Adams and Barnabas at the close of the first book of "Joseph Andrews." More enlarged and tolerant, or juster views of religious truth, are nowhere to be found than in Adams' argument.

These were not the palmy days of Church-of-England discipline. From the sketches of Barnabas and Trulliber, it may be assumed that, in the early part of the Georgian era, there did not prevail amongst the rural clergy any high standard of clerical acquirements or conduct. Good Sir Roger de Coverley, in selecting a chaplain (it will be remembered), was modestly anxious "to find a person rather of plain sense than much learning; of a good aspect, a clear voice, and sociable temperament; and, if possible, a man that understood a little of backgammon;" and these were the qualifications of many a polite divine who said grace at the great man's table, or preached him to sleep on Sunday, in the days of Addison and Fielding. But the acquirements of the rural curate were often of a still humbler order, as his social *status* was lower. Poor Adams, "had no nearer access to Sir Thomas Booby or my lady than through the waiting-gentlewoman.[1] . . . They both regarded the curate as a kind of domestic only, belonging to the parson of the parish, who was at that time at variance with the knight; for the parson had for many years lived in a constant state of civil war, or, which is perhaps as bad, civil law, with Sir Thomas himself and the tenants of his

(1) The immortal Mistress Slipslop, herself a curate's daughter, and therefore disposed to regard the parson with tenderness. Sheridan's Mrs. Malaprop—one of the happiest caricatures in the whole range of English comedy—was probably suggested by Lady Booby's "waiting-gentlewoman."

manor." Such disagreements between the wealthier clergy and the rural squires were not infrequent during the earlier half of the seventeenth century. A similar state of things is represented in "The Spectator," as existing in the next parish to Sir Roger:—"The parson is always preaching at the squire, and the squire, to be revenged on the parson, never comes to church. The squire has made all his tenants atheists and tithe-stealers; while the parson instructs them every Sunday in the dignity of his order, and insinuates to them in almost every sermon that he is a better man than his patron. In short, matters are come to such an extremity that the squire has not said his prayers either in public or private this half-year; and the parson threatens him, if he does not mend his manners, to pray for him in the face of the whole congregation." The practice which prevailed amongst some of the homelier clergy of this period—of uniting agricultural occupations with the duties of their sacred calling (as in the case of Trulliber)—must have considerably detracted from their legitimate influence. The vicar who bargained at fairs and markets—and sometimes even at the church porch—with farmers and drovers; who dined and smoked his pipe at the market ordinary, was less a clergyman than a tradesman; and was so regarded by his flock. What greater moral influence was possessed by a Barnabas or a Trulliber, than by any other farmer or grazier?

It may be finally remarked that the grand characteristic of Fielding's first novel is the singular healthiness of its tone. Though some of its pages are not unexceptionable in point of taste and tendency, they are preferable to the sickly sentiment and trite morality of Richardson. Whilst the one writer is all stilts and buckram, the other is full of health, vigour, and animal spirits. "How charming! how wholesome is Fielding!" says Coleridge; "to take him up after Richardson is like emerging from a sick-room, heated by stoves, into an open lawn on a breezy day in

May."[1] No attachment to long-sanctioned worldly proprieties, no comfortable and convenient prejudices, no conventional interpretations of human motives, prevented his recognition of what was radically right, just, and true. Though Parson Adams is a perfect Christian, his conduct is not at all times consistent with clerical etiquette. When insulted, he does not rely on the protection of his gown, but, clenching his brawny fist, tells his tormentor "he has thrashed many a better man."[2] Though as gentle as a lamb, he is at all times ready to wield his cudgel in defence of innocence. He is no less remarkable, in fact, for physical than moral courage, carrying both to an extremity which is calculated to shock many decent worldly minds. "Child," he says to Joseph, when his "condescension" to a footman has provoked surprise, "I should be ashamed of my cloth if I thought a poor man, who is honest, below my notice or my familiarity. I know not how those who think otherwise can profess themselves followers of Him who made no distinction, unless, peradventure, by preferring the poor to the rich." The author of "Joseph Andrews," indeed, was no idolater of wealth and station. In the "byeways and hedges" of the world, rather than its high places, he found his noblest specimens of humanity. When Joseph Andrews is discovered by the wayside, stripped and wounded, he might have perished for all that the respectable people inside or outside the stage-coach would have done for him, "unless," continues the novelist, "the postillion (*a lad who hath since been transported for robbing a hen-roost*) had not voluntarily stripped off a great-coat, his only garment, at the same time swearing a great oath (for which he was rebuked by the passengers),

(1) Coleridge's Table Talk.

(2) A story is told by Horace Walpole which reminds us of Adams' pugnacity:—"A Dr. Suckling, who married a niece of my father's, quarrelled with a country squire, who said, 'Doctor, your gown is your protector.' 'Is it so?' replied the parson, 'then it shall not be yours,' pulled it off, and thrashed him directly."

'that he would rather ride in his shirt all his life than suffer a fellow-creature to lie in so miserable a condition.'"

The publication and immediate popularity of "Joseph Andrews" made Richardson very angry. That one so inferior to him in literary merit, as he imagined Fielding to be, should venture to make fun of any book of his was an insult and an indignity not to be forgotten or forgiven. He was at this time on very intimate terms with his rival's two sisters (both of whom had a most ladylike admiration for him and his writings), and to them he communicated without scruple his severe displeasure. He told them that their brother was a person of low habits, and complained bitterly of his scurrility. From this time forth he could never see a single merit in anything which the fellow wrote; and he persuaded some of his friends to think or to *say* so too. The worst of it was, that the book which he so much decried steadily made its way, and became as great a favourite as a wise and witty book should be; in short, it was almost as much read as "Pamela" itself had been. A second edition was published in August, 1742, and a third was called for in the following March.[1] Like other greatly popular works,

(1) In a brief notice of Fielding's life, contained in a modern work ("British Cyclopædia of Biography," edited by C. F. Partington), an amusing story is told about Fielding's negotiation for the sale of "Tom Jones." But the circumstances recorded, if they occurred at all, must relate (as will hereafter be shown) to the earlier novel of "Joseph Andrews." At the time the author had completed the manuscript, he was anxious, it is said, to discharge a debt of £20. The bookseller to whom he showed it gave a significant shrug on looking through it; whereupon Fielding despondingly asked, "If he gave him no hopes?" "Very faint ones, indeed, sir," replied the bookseller, "for I have scarcely any that the book will *move*." "Well, sir," replied the poor author, "money I must have; so pray give me some idea what you can afford." The bookseller still repeating that [Joseph] was not to the public taste, and would not *move*, mentioned £25 as the highest price he could offer. "And *will* you give that?" inquired Fielding, anxiously. "Why," said the bookseller, "I must think again; leave the book with me, and I will make up my mind to-morrow." "Then remember," rejoined the author, "for £25 the book is yours." After this Fielding happened to meet Thomson, the poet, to whom he related what had taken place at the interview, and who wisely advised him to get the manuscript back. About this there was no difficulty, for it was returned the next morning. Thomson upon this introduced Fielding to Andrew Millar,

"Joseph Andrews" was also subject to piratical attacks. In the October after its publication, the Attorney-general (Sir Dudley Ryder) was instructed to move for an injunction to restrain the sale of an unauthorised impression. The first application having been unsuccessful, on account of a technical objection, Sir Dudley thus communicated the circumstance to his wife, then at Bath:—"My dearest girl, I can't help thinking of you in the midst of the noise of Westminster Hall. I have this moment sat down, after endeavouring to rescue Joseph Andrews and Parson Adams out of the hands of pirates, but in vain; for this time we are foiled by a mistake in the attack. However, another broadside next week will do the business."[1]

It need scarcely be stated that his irascible rival insisted on believing that this success was only temporary—a gush of ephemeral popularity scarcely worth having. Comfortably wrapped up in his garment of self-sufficiency, he declared that "Pamela" would be remembered when "Joseph Andrews" and its author were alike forgotten; just as Aaron Hill speculated on the period arriving when his own name should be more celebrated in the realm of song than that of Pope.

who was not in the habit then of publishing light literature; but his wife, having read the manuscript, advised him not to let [Joseph Andrews] slip through his fingers. Accordingly, Thomson and Fielding were invited by Millar to a tavern to settle the bargain over a bottle of wine. With much modest trepidation, Fielding, after the second bottle of port, asked the bookseller what he would give for the novel. "I am a man," said Millar, "of few words, and fond of coming to the point, but I don't think I can afford to give more than £200." "Two hundred pounds!" said Fielding, in amazement; "are *you serious?*" "Never more so," replied Millar. "Then," said the delighted author, "give me your hand, the book's yours." That this could not have occurred with respect to the novel of "Tom Jones," is evident from two or three facts. That work was published in 1749, and Thomson died in 1748. Millar, also, was the publisher of "Joseph Andrews," which appears to be the first work of Fielding's which issued from his press. In addition to this, it will be borne in mind, that when "Tom Jones" was published, Fielding had established a reputation as a novelist.

(1) Lord Campbell's Lives of the Chief Justices, vol. ii. The letter is endorsed October 23, 1742.

CHAPTER XIV.

DEFENCE OF THE DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH.—"MISS LUCY IN TOWN."—"THE WEDDING DAY."—GARRICK AND FIELDING.

[1742—1743.]

EITHER inclination or necessity at this period led Fielding to give more attention to literature than to law. Probably he found the latter by no means the profitable pursuit he had imagined; and briefs not arriving when he expected them, he fell back on his ready pen for the means of livelihood. At this time, too, he began to suffer from the attacks of his inveterate and ultimately victorious adversary—the gout; and attendance in court became inconvenient, sometimes impossible. Thus situated, it is not surprising to find him endeavouring to earn money as a political pamphleteer, and also once more as a writer for the stage. In April, 1742, he published anonymously a pamphlet in defence of the Duchess Dowager of Marlborough,[1] who, though tottering on the verge of the grave,[2] continued actively to interfere in politics; and had just published, with the literary assistance of Nathaniel Hooke, an account of her eventful career. The manner in which Fielding

(1) A Full Vindication of the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough. . . . In a Letter to the noble Author of a late scurrilous Pamphlet.

(2) In December, 1741, young Horace Walpole thus writes of old Sarah to Sir Horace Mann:—"Old Marlborough is dying—but who can tell! last year she had lain a great while ill, without speaking; her physicians said, 'She must be blistered, or she will die.' She called out, 'I wont be blistered, and I wont die.' If she takes the same resolution now, I don't believe she will." In another budget of gossip addressed to the same person, the Duchess' Memoirs are thus described:—"Old Marlborough has at last published her 'Memoirs;' they are digested by one Hooke, who wrote a Roman History, but from her materials, which are so womanish, that I am sure the man might sooner have made a gown and petticoat with them."

speaks of "Old Sarah" will astonish those who only remember her as Pope's Atossa, who,

> "From loveless youth to unrespected age,
> No passion gratified except her rage:"

for, in language of extravagant eulogy, he does not hesitate to describe her as "a glorious woman, whose character he had never contemplated but with admiration." Probably Fielding had more reasons than one for forming so flattering an estimate of the character of a woman who is considered, by most impartial readers of history, a troublesome and mischievous intriguer. It is not impossible that his advocacy received pecuniary reward from the Duchess or her partisans; but it should also be remembered that his father had fought under Churchill, and the name of Marlborough had been honoured by him from childhood.

On the 5th of May following, a ballad-farce was produced at Drury Lane from Fielding's pen, called "Miss Lucy in Town," being a sequel to "The Virgin Unmasked." The latter production ended with the marriage of the heroine to Thomas the footman:[1] in the sequel, Thomas and his wife are brought up to London, where the wife falls unsuspectingly into the hands of a vicious procuress—one Mrs. Midnight[2]—who seems to be the original of Foote's celebrated sketch of Mrs. Cole in "The Minor." The coincidence, in language and idea, is, to say the least of it, remarkable; and affords one instance, amongst many, of the unscrupulous use made of Fielding's hurried sketches by succeeding dramatists. Mrs. Clive, who had originally performed in "The Virgin Unmasked," made a decided hit in the character of the heroine, and the farce promised to be a profitable one to its author. On May 19th he had a benefit-night, when it was performed for the seventh

(1) See page 62.
(2) Originally Mrs. Haycock.

time, after his comedy of "The Miser."[1] It was represented once more, when, to the surprise and indignation of the author, its further performance was prohibited by the order of the Lord Chamberlain. The ground of prohibition was not that it was offensive to public morals (although it must be confessed that the piece is coarse enough), but that in one of its characters—Lord Bawble—a particular person of quality was aimed at. This personal experience of the rigour of the Chamberlain drew from Fielding a sharp expostulation. He published a pamphlet on the subject,[2] in which he disavowed any idea of a personal attack; and it would appear that subsequently the prohibition was withdrawn. Although throughout this farce there are undoubted marks of Fielding's strong hand, he remarks, in the preface to his "Miscellanies," that "he had but a small share in it." By whom he was assisted he does not say.

Towards the close of the year, in spite of repeated vows against the stage, Fielding was again induced to devote his attention to dramatic composition, attracted thereto by a temptation which it was not in his nature to resist. A new theatrical star had just risen above the horizon, whose brightness dazzled every eye. A young actor had taken the town by storm, and in one season achieved a reputation second only to that of Betterton or Booth. The name of GARRICK was upon every lip; his merits and defects as an actor were the engrossing topics of coffee-house discussion; and those who had not attended a theatre for years were attracted thither to witness his wonderful achievements in tragedy, comedy, and farce.[3]

(1) Some Account of the English Stage, vol. iii. Bath, 1832. The author of this work (to which the biographer has been indebted for much information) was the Reverend John Genest, of Bath.

(2) A Letter to a noble Lord to whom alone it belongs, occasioned by the Representation of a Farce called "Miss Lucy in Town." 1742.

(3) In the following budget of dramatic gossip, addressed (May 26, 1742) to Sir Horace Mann, Horace Walpole thus refers to Fielding's farce and Garrick's

Very early in his dramatic career, or rather ere it actually commenced, Garrick had made acquaintance with the wit and genius of Fielding. Before he trod the boards of any theatre, or resolved on making the stage his profession, he privately performed a character in one of Fielding's farces in a place and under circumstances of some interest. The place was the room over St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, where a stage was improvised, and suitable decorations and dresses invented for the occasion. The time was soon after Garrick's friend and tutor, Samuel Johnson, had formed a close intimacy with Cave, the printer and publisher of "The Gentleman's Magazine;" whilst Garrick was still in the wine-trade with his brother Peter, and secretly meditating a withdrawal from it, in order to adopt the congenial but (in the opinion of his mercantile friends) disreputable calling of an actor.[1] The audience was composed, first, of Cave himself, who, though not a man given to mirth, or with an idea beyond his printing-presses, had been tickled by Johnson's description of his young townsman's powers, and was willing to bear an experiment upon his risible nerves. Then there was the burly Johnson—in those days very shabby and seedy indeed, but proudly battling his way in the world, and not a little elated by reflecting on the figure which the boys, who had enjoyed with him and Garrick the advantage of being flogged and taught by Mr. Hunter of Lichfield, were likely to make in it.[2] Several more of Cave's literary handicraftsmen were

acting:—"There is a little simple farce at Drury Lane, called 'Miss Lucy in Town,' in which Mrs. Clive mimics the Muscovite admirably, and Beard Amorevoli tolerably. But all the run is now after Garrick, a wine-merchant, who is turned player at Goodman's Fields. He plays all parts, and is a very good mimic. His acting I have seen, and may say to you, who will not tell it again, I see nothing wonderful in it—but it is heresy to say so; the Duke of Argyll says he is superior to Betterton."

(1) In "The Gentleman's Magazine" for September, 1740, there is an Epilogue to "The Mock Doctor," signed G. It is not impossible that this was written by Garrick, expressly for the performance recorded by Hawkins.

(2) Besides Johnson and Garrick, there is said to have been amongst Mr.

doubtless amongst the audience: Webb, the enigma writer, Duick, the pen-cutter, and Tobacco Browne, whose serious poetry even the religious Johnson confessed himself unable to read with patience. The actors who assisted Garrick upon this occasion were some of Cave's journeymen printers, who laid aside their composing-sticks, and read or recited the parts allotted to them as well as they could. The play was Fielding's successful farce of "The Mock Doctor; or, the Dumb Lady cured;" in which the *débutant* of course played the part of Gregory.[1]

For broad farcical humour "The Mock Doctor" is almost without its equal; and who can doubt that Garrick did full justice to it upon this occasion? Even Cave's hard features must have soon relaxed into a smile, whilst his journeymen were unable to read their parts for laughing. As for Johnson—every one has heard how, in his later years, returning from the Mitre with Boswell, in the early morning, he would grasp the street-post by the Temple gate, and send forth a peal of laughter, which echoed and re-echoed through the silent streets; even with such a laugh—broad, hearty, earnest indication of enjoyment—did he hail the irresistible humour of his clever friend, little Davy.

From performing in Fielding's farce, Garrick's next step was to make the acquaintance of the author; and this was an easy matter. The witty barrister was a most accessible personage, one who was hail-fellow-well-met with any man who liked good wine, good company, and hearty merriment. For many reasons the young actor must have desired this intimacy. There was no name so well known

Hunter's pupils the following eminent judges—Wilmot, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas (who was present at Garrick's first and last appearance on the stage); Lord-Chancellor Northington; Sir Thomas Clarke, Master of the Rolls; Chief Justice Willes; and Chief Baron Parker. "The head-master (Hunter)," said Johnson, "was very severe, and wrong-headedly severe. He used to beat us unmercifully; and he would beat a boy equally for not knowing a thing, or for neglecting to know it."

(1) Hawkins' Life of Johnson, p. 45.

in the green-room as Fielding's when Garrick first "came out" in Goodman's Fields, in October, 1741. His witticisms were widely circulated; the events of his life were well known; and his reputation as a comic dramatist stood as high, at least, as any of his contemporaries. Circumstances, therefore, soon brought Garrick and Fielding into close intimacy; and when the former had been upon the stage rather more than a twelvemonth, he expressed to his friend an earnest wish to appear in a new play from his pen. At that time Fielding had by him two unfinished comedies. One of them, to which he had intended to give the title of "The Good-natured Man," he thought of in this emergency; but before proceeding to revise and finish it, he hinted to Garrick his misgivings that the manager of Drury Lane (Mr. Fleetwood) would not at that time (probably about December, 1742) feel disposed to incur the risk and expense of introducing a new piece. A word from Garrick, however, was law to the manager; and Fielding, who confesses that he was "full as desirous of putting words into his friend's mouth as he could appear to be of speaking them,"[1] was at once engaged by Fleetwood to produce a comedy on a given day, in which Garrick should have a suitable part.

When the author came to revise his comedy—which had been written some years before—he found that he had allowed himself "too little time for perfecting it;" and being more than usually attached to the plan and plot, he was unwilling that it should be represented in an imperfect and unripe condition. But, besides this, he found that the part he had designed for Garrick was a comparatively insignificant one; and as it was at the actor's suggestion he had resolved to bring it on the stage at all, his principal object would have been frustrated by its representation. It was true that Garrick himself made no objection to the character assigned him; and the play was actually

(1) Preface to Fielding's Miscellanies. 1743.

written out in parts for the actors, when Fielding bethought him of the other unfinished comedy,—a more crude and inartistic work than "The Good-natured Man,"—but having the merit of giving nearly the whole business of the piece to one actor.

This comedy was called "The Wedding Day," and was "the third play he ever wrote."[1] Whether he could never get a manager to risk its representation, or whether he was himself somewhat ashamed of it, or had forgotten it altogether, he does not say, but he informs us that the principal characters were originally intended for Wilkes and Mrs. Oldfield. They were now proposed to be allotted to Garrick and Mrs. Woffington; Fleetwood agreed to the exchange, and Garrick was not dissatisfied with it. Having concluded this arrangement, Fielding prepared himself, with characteristic energy, to perform his part of the original agreement, by having a comedy ready at the appointed time. Accordingly, he sat down with a resolution to work night and day during the short time allowed him—which was about a week—in altering and correcting this production of his more juvenile years.[2] The time was in all conscience short enough, but ere the week was over domestic calamity stayed his hand altogether. The extreme danger of life into which a person very dear to him was reduced, rendered him, he says, altogether incapable of executing his task.[3] This very dear person was Mrs. Fielding, whose declining health had long filled him with anxiety. Other sorrows about the same time visited his cheerless home. During this winter he was laid up with an attack of the gout, and he had the misery, as he tells us, "of seeing a favourite child dying in one bed, and his wife, in a condition very little better, on another, attended with other circumstances which served as very proper decoration to such a scene."[4]

(1) Preface to Fielding's Miscellanies. 1743.
(2) Ibid. (3) Ibid. (4) Ibid.

What these "circumstances" were may be readily imagined. In the presence of sickness and pecuniary difficulties it was mockery, he thought, to be squeamish about literary reputation. He therefore permitted "The Wedding Day" to be put in rehearsal with all its imperfections, and in that state announced for representation. "Perhaps it may be asked me," he writes, in the garrulous preface already quoted, "Why then did I suffer a piece which I knew to be imperfect to appear? I answer honestly and freely, that reputation was not my inducement; and that I hoped, faulty as it was, it might answer a much more solid, and, in my unhappy situation, a much more urgent motive." Under such disadvantages the comedy was produced on the 17th February, 1743, and though supported by the inimitable acting of Garrick, Macklin, Mrs. Pritchard, and Mrs. Woffington—a brilliant constellation of dramatic talent!—it is not surprising to find that it proved a failure. Through the friendship of Fleetwood and Garrick it kept its place on the stage, however, for six nights; but the author's share of the profits did not amount to £50.[1] On the last night of its performance there were only five ladies in the boxes. Rumours had been circulated, which were not without foundation, that the comedy was objectionable on the score of its indecency; but from this charge Fielding defends it, by saying that the report arose entirely from the objection of the licenser to certain passages, which were immediately expunged. But this defence is not tenable. In the plot of the comedy, with which the licenser's pen could not interfere, there is an ingrained deformity; and portions of the dialogue remind us of the age of Wycherley and Congreve.[2] That ladies of quality, in the year 1743, should refuse to sanction such an enter-

(1) Preface to Fielding's Miscellanies. 1734.

(2) Mrs. Clive refused a part in the comedy which she considered particularly objectionable: a circumstance which gave rise to a copy of verses by Sir C. H. Williams. (See Williams' Poetical Works. 1822.)

tainment with their presence, is a proof that an improvement in public morals was gradually taking place. More than fifteen years had elapsed since Fielding produced his first comedy. During that period many play-goers—male and female—who had been accustomed from their youth to the license of a corrupted theatre, had passed away, and their successors happily were not equally disposed to ignore every sense of decency and propriety. The dramatic author is not so often the corrupter of his audience as he is corrupted by it. Vicious tastes had been heretofore pandered to by the glorious pen of Dryden, not from inclination, but necessity; and in an irreligious and immoral age, young Harry Fielding had learned to write immoral comedies for the amusement of immoral audiences.

In a doggrel prologue to "The Wedding Day," spoken by Macklin, and full of rough humour, Fielding clearly intimates that he had by this time discovered that the stage was not the proper sphere for the exercise of his talents. After many mistakes he had found out the right road to fame,—and that road was not the dramatic one. Macklin, "with his good, long, dismal, mercy-begging face," thus apostrophised the author, supposed to be seated amongst the audience:—

"What think you now? Whose face looks worse, yours or mine?
Ah! thou foolish follower of the ragged Nine!
You'd better stuck to honest ABRAHAM ADAMS, by half:
He, in spite of critics, can make your readers laugh."

It is not improper here to remark that the ill-success of Fielding's last comedy was attributed by some of his friends to his unconquerable independence of spirit, and "the sovereign contempt (to quote the words of Mr. Murphy) which he always entertained for the understandings of the generality of mankind." His behaviour to Garrick, who remonstrated with him on the effect likely

to be produced by a particularly objectionable passage, is quoted as an instance of this. At the rehearsal, the young actor told him that he feared the audience might express their disapprobation of this passage, and added, that "a repulse might so flurry his spirits as to disconcert him for the rest of the night." But Fielding was inexorable. "If the *scene* is not a good one," he said, "let them find *that* out." The actor's forebodings, however, turned out to be well-founded. The objectionable passage was met with a storm of hisses, and Garrick, who was peculiarly sensitive on such matters, retired from the stage in a huff, and sought for consolation in the gossip of the green-room. There he found Fielding, sitting over a bottle of champagne, of which he had drunk rather freely. "What's the matter, Garrick?" he exclaimed, as the actor entered the room in a somewhat excited state; "what are they hissing now?" He was angrily informed it was the scene he had been advised to retrench. "Oh," said the author, with an oath, coolly resuming his pipe of tobacco, "they HAVE found it out, HAVE they?"[1]

Fielding was fully sensible of Garrick's good offices in forcing on the representation of his comedy, as the means of relieving him from pecuniary difficulties. Gratitude for this act of kindness, combined with a high admiration for the actor's genius, laid the foundation of a friendship as close and sincere as the very different characters of the two men permitted. In one respect, certainly, they were most unlike. Fielding was profuse and generous to a fault; Garrick was niggardly and parsimonious to a pitiful degree. This spirit manifested itself in the actor from the earliest period of his wonderful career; and nothing delighted Fielding more than to ridicule and expose it. On one occasion he attempted to do this by means of a practical joke, which is thus narrated by Macklin. Garrick, we are told, had given a dinner at his lodgings to Fielding,

(1) Murphy's Essay on the Life and Genius of Fielding.

Macklin, Havard (the comedian), Mrs. Cibber, and others; and vails to servants being then much in fashion, Macklin, and most of the company, gave Garrick's man (David, a Welshman) something at parting—some a shilling, some half-a-crown, whilst Fielding very formally slipped a piece of paper into his hand, with something folded in the inside. When the company were all gone, David seeming to be in high glee, Garrick asked him how much he got? "I can't tell you yet, sir," said David; "here's half-a-crown from Mrs. Cibber, Got pless her—here's a shilling from Mr. Macklin—here is two from Mr. Havard—and here is something more from the poet, Got pless his merry heart." By this time David had unfolded the paper, when, to his great astonishment, he saw it contained no more than *one penny!* Garrick felt nettled at this, and next day spoke to Fielding about the impropriety of jesting with a servant. "Jesting!" said Fielding, with seeming surprise; "so far from it, I meant to do the fellow a real piece of service; for had I given him a shilling or half-a-crown, I know you would have taken it from him: but by giving him only a penny, he had a chance of calling it his own."[1]

Notwithstanding the ridicule to which Garrick's parsimony exposed him, it was certainly a more serviceable quality than Fielding's thoughtless and often misplaced generosity. It cannot escape observation that the profuse man is often unjust both to himself and others. What is lightly and without reflection parted with to-day, is found on the morrow necessary to meet a claim which it is dishonourable to leave unsatisfied. Men of Fielding's stamp are thus continually betrayed into acts of injustice (to give them their lightest name), not from want of principle, but from yielding impulsively to the prompting of a thoughtless good-nature. That this temperament proved his curse through life is very plain. When he had earned

(1) Macklin's Memoirs. 1804.

a score of pounds he would spend or lend them, though beggary stared him in the face the next moment. "Open, unbounded, and social in his temper," says Mr. Murphy, "he knew no love of money; but inclined to excess even in his very virtues, he pushed his contempt of avarice into the opposite extreme of imprudence and prodigality."

An anecdote may properly find insertion here which shows to what an imprudent extent Fielding carried his generosity of disposition.[1] Certain parochial rates on a house which he occupied in Beaufort Buildings having been long due and unpaid, he was told by the collector, after repeated demands, that no further delay would be granted. In this strait he applied to his bookseller (perhaps Andrew Millar[2]) for an advance, and received from him the sum he wanted (about ten or twelve guineas), on the security of a work he was writing. Returning home to pay off the obdurate tax-gatherer, he met with an old college friend whom he had not seen for many years, and whose circumstances he found, on comparing notes, to be still more desperate than his own. His benevolent heart was touched by the narrative of his friend's distresses; and having invited him into a tavern, he called for a bottle of wine, and then and there, without reflecting on the consequences of the act, immediately handed him over all the money he had received from the bookseller. When he reached home (where he had been long expected), overjoyed with the consciousness of having done a generous act, he was told that the collector had called twice for the taxes. Fielding's reply, says the narrator of the anecdote, was as laconic as it is memorable: "Friendship has called for the money and has had it; let the collector call again." It is satisfactory to add that the bookseller, whoever he was, was liberal enough to make a second advance to the

(1) Gentleman's Magazine. 1781.

(2) The relater of the anecdote gives the name of Jacob Tonson; but this is obviously incorrect.

thoughtless man of letters, with which the collector was paid.[1]

That Fielding should from the first have shown a full appreciation of Garrick's genius, is not less satisfactory than that Garrick should have recognised in him—despite his carelessness and irregularities—the healthiest and wittiest writer of the age. In the several spheres in which their talents found scope, both men were remarkable for their disdain of conventionalisms, and for their freedom from every trace of affectation. In the healthful tone and natural ease of "Joseph Andrews," there was something not dissimilar to Garrick's acting. The novel was read by thousands, and the actor followed for the same reasons. In each there was visibly displayed the grace of truth and

(1) In an account of the club at Old Slaughter's coffee-house ("Wine and Walnuts," vol. i. p. 119), when enlivened by the presence of Hogarth and Fielding, there is the following characteristic sketch of the wealth-despising novelist:—"In the same strain I have heard my great-uncle say, in defending the reputation of the witty fraternity—'No, sir, ill-nature had no seat at our table. It is true that Fielding, the lively rogue, would sometimes entertain us at the expense of some well-known, harmless, humdrum prosers, who filled a box in the coffee-room, or others; and above all, some overbearing, purse-proud miscreants who frequented the house, against whom he indulged an ever-increasing antipathy. O what a look of indignation did he assume immediately, on metamorphosing his features from the vacuity of a grovelling man of wealth back again to his own intelligent countenance, after playing the consequential grub in the act of asking, when a bright man of letters or genius has been praised, the sickening questions—'HOW MUCH CAN HE EARN? WHAT MAY HE BE WORTH?'"

From the same work (written by Mr. Pyne, and published, we believe, originally in the "Literary Gazette") we cull another anecdote of Fielding and the club-life of this convivial period:—"There is a curious story of Jonathan Richardson [the painter] and Harry Fielding, which I have heard my uncle relate, but it is too long for this chapter. It was about Richardson's notes to Milton, which he used to read to all comers at Old Slaughter's, Button's, and Wills'. He seldom rambled city-ways, though sometimes he slipped in at the Rainbow, where he counted a few worthies, or looked in at Dick's, and gave them a note or two. He would not put his foot on the threshold of the Devil [a tavern by Temple Bar, long since removed], for he thought the sign profane. . . . . Fielding would run a furlong to escape him; he called him Doctor Fidget." It should be observed that these sketches are not matter-of-fact relations, but a collection of biographical incidents illustrative of the period, some of which only have any authentic foundation.

nature, in opposition to strut and rant, bombast and buckram. In the case of Garrick, the transition was great and strange. "If this young fellow," said Quin, "be right, I and the rest of the players must be all wrong." It was impossible, thought the veteran, that a mere stripling should have seized by intuition on an idea which proved that so many Richards, Lears, and Othellos, had been fools and blunderers. He comforted himself, therefore, with the notion that "it was a fashion, and would soon be over. It was a new religion: Whitfield was followed for a time, but the people came back to church."[1] When this observation was reported to Garrick, he truly and wittily observed, that "it was not heresy but reformation." And reformation it undoubtedly was, which swept away high-heeled boots and enormous perriwigs, and made even tragedy-kings talk like reasonable beings.

Another oracle of the green-room, beside Quin, refused to recognise the merits of the popular idol. When Fleetwood had made a hit at Drury Lane by securing the services of Garrick, Fielding's old antagonist, Colley Cibber, strolled one night into the green-room. "Mr. Cibber," said the manager, deferentially, "when may we hope to have another comedy from you?" "From *me!*" replied the Laureate, "why who the deuce have you got to act it?" "Why, sir," said Fleetwood, modestly, "there's Garrick, Macklin, Pritchard, and Clive—" "Oh yes," broke in the irritable comedian, "I know all these very well; but (coolly taking a pinch of snuff) *where the devil are your* ACTORS?"[2] Garrick, as well as Fielding, could, however, well afford to bear the enmity and sarcasms of Colley Cibber. It was more than a compensation to the former that the great poet of an age of great wits

(1) Dibdin's History of the Stage, vol. v.

(2) Macklin's Memoirs. 1804. A qualified admiration of Garrick was nevertheless soon wrung from Cibber. "I'faith, Bracy," he is reported to have said, taking snuff, and turning to his ancient partner in theatrical glory, Mrs. Bracegirdle, "the lad is clever."—*Forster's Life of Goldsmith*, vol. i.

and poets—who had known Betterton in his best days, and enjoyed his friendship—took the trouble, though in feeble and failing health, to see him when he performed in Goodman's Fields. Mr. Pope—for it was he—made the remark that "he was afraid the young man would be spoiled, for he would have no competitor." Can it be doubted that the admiration of Pope, and the friendship of Fielding, were amongst the most agreeable incidents of Garrick's professional career?

CHAPTER XV.

FIELDING'S "MISCELLANIES."—POEMS.—ESSAYS.—"JOURNEY FROM THIS WORLD TO THE NEXT."—"JONATHAN WILD."

[1743.]

THE domestic distresses which interrupted Fielding when engaged in the task of revising "The Wedding Day" for the stage, also delayed the publication of a work which he had for some time promised. He had undertaken to issue three volumes of "Miscellanies," consisting of fugitive poems, and some original pieces in prose. The work was to be published by subscription; and it is gratifying to state that the members of his profession rallied round him on the occasion with generous zeal. When the "Miscellanies" at length appeared (in the course of the year 1743), he mentioned in his preface his deep sense of the friendship shown him by a profession of which he was "a late and unworthy member," and from whose assistance he derived more than half the names in his subscription-list. The delay which had taken place in the publication of the volumes he apologised for in terms of the deepest pathos. The real reason of it, he said, was "the serious illness of one from whom I draw all the solid comfort of my life during the greatest part of the winter. This, as it is most sacredly true, so will it, I doubt not, sufficiently excuse the delay to all who know me." It may seem that Mr. Murphy's anecdote respecting his behaviour on the night of the first representation of "The Wedding Day," is somewhat inconsistent with the excessive anxiety which he endured on account of his wife's failing health. But a man of Fielding's temperament is always liable to fall into extremes. From his wife's sick-bed to the riot of

the green-room must appear indeed a strange transition. But it may be assumed, that on the night in question Fielding repaired to the theatre with a heavy heart, being naturally anxious about the fate of a piece from which he expected the pecuniary supplies he so much required. What followed was in keeping with his character. He felt that the play was not likely to prove a "success;" and a glass of champagne was resorted to, which brightened up his spirits and unloosed his tongue. And then what more natural from such a man than the jest at calamity and disappointment, and the loud laugh in which the aching heart often hopes to find relief?

The three volumes of "Miscellanies" which Fielding now gave to the world contained at once some of the best and some of the worst productions of his pen. He applied to them, with truth, Martial's famous line:—

> "Sunt bona, sunt quædam mediocria, sunt mala plura."

In the last class may be included most of the poems which filled the greater portion of the first volume. For versification he never possessed any striking talent; and as he wrote his verses off, and published them, as he did much of his prose, without correction or retrenchment, it is not surprising to find them diffuse and inelegant. Some of his early rhymes—perhaps "The Masquerade," by Lemuel Gulliver, before-mentioned—induced Dean Swift to insert his name in the early copies of his "Rhapsody on Poetry," in the well-known lines:—

> "For instance, when you rashly think
> No rhymer can like Wellsted sink;
> His merits balanced, you shall find
> That Fielding leaves him far behind."

Swift, however, saw reason afterwards to respect Fielding's character and talents, withdrew his name from the line, and inserted "the Laureate" instead.

Doubtless it would be unfair to subject these fugitive

poems to the test of severe criticism. They are written at very different periods, and, for the most part, dictated by the whim of the moment. One copy of verses bears the early date of 1728,[1] whilst another, addressed to a lady at Bath, and "written extempore in the pump-room,"[2] belongs to the year 1742. The most ambitious poem in the collection is the "Epistle on True Greatness," addressed to George Dodington, Esq., and first published in 1741; and the best is an address "To a Friend on the Choice of a Wife," which contains many vigorous and nervous lines. In delineating the character of a model wife, the poet—it may be almost unconsciously—sketched the portrait of his own charming helpmate, in whom it is obvious that unvarying gentleness of disposition, and a yielding temper, were the most conspicuous qualities:—

> "May she thus prove who shall thy lot befall,
> Beauteous to thee, agreeable to all;
> Nor wit, nor learning, proudly may she boast,
> No low-bred girl, nor gay fantastic toast,
> Her tender soul good-nature must adorn,
> And vice and meanness be alone her scorn.
>
> . . . .
>
> Superior judgment may she own thy lot;
> *Humbly advise, but contradict thee not;*
> Thine to all other company prefer;
> May all thy troubles find relief from her!
> If fortune gives thee such a wife to meet,
> Earth cannot make thy blessings more complete."

The poetry in the first volume of the "Miscellanies" is followed by three prose essays: the first on "Conversation," the second on the "Knowledge of the Characters of Men,"

(1) A description of U——n G—— (*alias* New Hog's Norton), in Com. Hants. Written to a young lady in the year 1728.

(2) Bath was at this time a place of much resort, and the health-restoring quality of its waters in high repute. The barristers who *rode* the Western Circuit—for in those days barristers as well as bagmen traversed the country on horseback—were wont to assemble in this city of gaiety and pleasure after the labours of the circuit. (See Lord Campbell's Lives of the Chancellors—"Life of Lord Northington.")

and the third on "Nothing." The two former are replete with good sense and sound philosophy.[1] No one had a more acute sense of the tact which constitutes good-breeding than Fielding. He was also well skilled in that most difficult knowledge—the art of placing a proper estimate on oneself and others. "If," he says, in the Essay on Conversation, "I prefer my excellence in poetry to Pope or Young —if an inferior actor should, in his opinion, exceed Quin or Garrick—or a signpost painter set himself above the inimitable Hogarth—we become only ridiculous by our vanity; and the persons themselves, who are thus humbled in the comparison, would laugh with more reason than any other." In the same spirit he rebukes the offence against good manners, so often committed by members of his profession. "There is another very common fault, ... discoursing on the mysteries of a particular profession, to which all the rest of the company, except one or two, are utter strangers. Lawyers are generally guilty of this fault, as they are more confined to the conversation of one another; and I have known a very agreeable company spoiled, where there have been two of these gentlemen present, who have seemed rather to think themselves in a court of justice than in a mixed assembly of persons, met only for the entertainment of each other."

In the "Essay on the Characters of Men," the following excellent directions are given for testing the disposition of a friend or acquaintance:—"Trace then the man proposed to your trust into his private family and nearest intimacies. See whether he hath acted the part of a good son, brother, husband, father, friend, master, servant, &c. If he hath discharged these duties well, your confidence will have a good foundation; but if he hath behaved himself in these offices with tyranny, with cruelty, with infidelity, with inconstancy, you may be assured he will take the first oppor-

(1) They are both printed in Mr. Murphy's edition of Fielding's Works. The Essay on "Nothing" is published in Mr. Roscoe's edition. 1840.

tunity his interest points out to him of exercising the same ill talents at your expense. . . . Nothing, indeed, can be more unjustifiable to our prudence than an opinion that the man whom we see act the part of a villain to others, should, on some minute change of person, time, place, or other circumstance, behave like an honest and just man to ourselves."

Two or three other slight pieces—thrown off at different times—were included in the first volume of these "Miscellanies." The pedantic papers of the Royal Society are ridiculed in a piece called "Philosophical Transactions for the year 1742-3;" the contents being "Several papers relating to the terrestrial Chrysipus, Golden-foot, or guinea, —an insect, or vegetable, which has this surprising property, that being cut into several pieces, each piece lives, and in a short time becomes as perfect an insect, or vegetable, as that of which it was originally only a part."[1] Fielding spoke experimentally of the habits of the Chrysipus, or guinea, when, in one part of this paper, he thus describes the difficulty of keeping it under some circumstances:—"As to the age of the Chrysipus, it differs extremely; some being of equal duration with the life of man, and some of scarce a moment's existence. The best method of preserving them is, I believe, in bags, or chests, in large numbers; for they seldom live long when they are alone. The great Gualterus says, he thought he could never put enough of them together. If you carry them in your pockets, singly, or in pairs, as some do, they will last a very little while, *and in some pockets not a day.*" To show that he had not altogether neglected classical learning during his gay and busy life, Fielding also inserted in this volume a translation of the First Olynthiac of Demosthenes.[2]

(1) Intended to ridicule a paper published by the Royal Society on the Fresh-water Polypus.

(2) A Dialogue between Alexander the Great and Diogenes the Cynic, together with a Mythological Interlude (which had been intended to form an introduction to an unwritten comedy), complete the volume.

The greater portion of the second volume of these "Miscellanies" is occupied with that curious and valuable fragment, called "A Journey from this World to the next." The groundwork, or rough sketch, of this production is to be found, as already intimated, in one of the numbers of "The Champion," when Fielding presided over that publication. The idea was a very fortunate one, since it enabled him, not only to indulge in a rich vein of pleasantry, but also to display a very considerable fund of learning and information. It is, indeed, said by Mr. Murphy that the subject, or its treatment, "provoked the dull, short-sighted, and malignant enemies of our author to charge him with an intention to subvert the settled notions of mankind in philosophy and religion." From such a charge, however, Fielding does not require any serious vindication. The people who accused him of profanity must have been "dull and short-sighted" enough; and their religious notions were just as liable to subversion from reading "Telemachus" or "Gulliver's Travels."

There is, in truth, much excellent satire in this imagined spirit-journey. The punishment of the miser, for instance, who is sentenced to keep a bank, and to distribute money *gratis* to all passengers,—is exquisitely devised. "This bank," says the satirist, "originally consisted of just that sum which he had miserably hoarded up in the other world, and he is to perceive it decrease visibly one shilling a day, till it is totally exhausted; after which he is to return to the other world, and perform the part of a miser for seventy years; *then, being purified in the body of a hog,* he is to enter the human species again and take a second trial."

The spirit's description of the conversation and demeanour of some of the world's great literary celebrities in the Elysian fields, is likewise full of humour and character. Every one must admire the nice discrimination displayed by Fielding in the following little sketch of two

of his most distinguished predecessors in the kingdom of letters :—

"Virgil then came up to me, with Mr. Addison under his arm. 'Well, sir,' said he, 'how many translations of these few last years produced of my Æneid?' I told him I believed several, but I could not possibly remember, for that I had never read any but Dr. Trapp's. 'Ay,' said he, 'that is a curious piece indeed!' I then acquainted him with the discovery made by Mr. Warburton of the Eleusinian mysteries couched in the sixth book. 'What mysteries?' said Mr. Addison. 'The Eleusinian,' answered Virgil, 'which I have disclosed in my sixth book.' 'How?' replied Addison; 'you never mentioned a word of any such mysteries to me in all our acquaintance.' 'I thought it was unnecessary,' cried the other, 'to a man of your infinite learning: besides, you always told me you perfectly understood my meaning.' Upon this I thought the critic looked a little out of countenance, and turned aside to a *very merry spirit, one Dick Steele,* who embraced him, and told him he had been the greatest man upon earth; that he readily resigned up all the merits of his own works to him. *Upon which Addison gave him a gracious smile, and clapping him on the back with much solemnity, cried out, 'Well said, Dick!'*"

The meeting with Shakspere, standing between Betterton and Booth, is equally characteristic, and the dispute on the true reading of the famous line in "Othello"—

"Put out the light, and then put out the light"—

is well worthy of the attention of Shaksperian critics and commentators. After various readings and emendations had been proposed, the matter is referred to Shakspere himself, "who," says the satirist, "delivered his sentiments as follows:—'Faith, gentlemen, it is so long since I wrote the line, I have forgot my meaning. This I know: could I have dreamt so much nonsense would have been talked and writ about it, I would have blotted it out of my works.'"

The curious transmigrations of Julian the Apostate, which appear at the end of the fragment, and are left unfinished, may be also referred to as presenting a succession of pictures of men and manners replete with historical truth, and surpassed by very few writers of fiction.

The third volume of Fielding's "Miscellanies" is wholly occupied with the "History of the Life of the late Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great." This is certainly the least agreeable of all his fictions. Its scathing satire and bitter truisms remind one rather of the manner of Swift than of the genial humour of the author of "Joseph Andrews" and "Tom Jones." Nevertheless, it must be conceded that none of his works display greater shrewdness of observation; and in none do we meet with sounder philosophical reflections. The "prodigious force of habit" was never better illustrated than by the conduct of Wild and the gambling Count La Ruse, when wiling away the tedious hours of their imprisonment by a game at cards; "for though," we are told, "the Count knew, if he won ever so much of Mr. Wild, he should not receive a shilling, yet he could not refrain from packing the cards; nor could Wild keep his hands out of his friend's pockets, though he knew there was nothing in them." In the delineation of Wild's character and motives, there is throughout a vein of fine general satire, and the very perfection of irony. "He carried good nature," it is observed, "to that wonderful and uncommon height, that he never did a single injury to man or woman, by which he himself did not expect to reap some advantage." A remarkable acuteness, again, is shown in the following observation:—"Wild, indeed, always kept to as much truth as was possible in everything; and this, he said, was turning the cannon of the enemy upon themselves."

In the preface to the "Miscellanies," Fielding guarded his readers against expecting an authentic history of the famous thief-taker; a narrative which was to be found in its proper place—the pages of "The Newgate Calendar." "The History of Jonathan Wild," he says, "is rather a narrative of such actions as he might have performed, or would, or should have performed, than what he really did; and may, in reality, as well suit any other man as the

person himself whose name it bears." The argument is, in fact, roguery in the abstract rather than the career of any particular rogue;—an exposition of the motives which actuate the unprincipled *great* in every walk and sphere of life, and which are common alike to the thief and murderer on the small scale, and to the mighty villain or reckless conqueror who invades the rights and destroys the liberties of nations. He also protested against the inference which the multitude would be too likely to draw, that he intended to write a general satire on mankind, or meant his hero to represent human nature in general. "Such insinuations," he said, "must be attended with very dreadful consequences; nor do I see any other tendency they can naturally have, but to encourage and soothe men in their villanies, and to make every well-disposed man disclaim his own species, and curse the hour of his birth into such a society." With regard to his use of the word *greatness,* he conceived it necessary to warn the world that the greatness he intended to satirise was that which was altogether divorced from goodness, and which seemed to resemble the *false sublime* in poetry. "This bombast greatness," he observes, "is the character I intend to expose; and the more this prevails in and deceives the world, taking to itself not only riches and power, but often honour—or at least the shadow of it—the more necessary it is to strip the monster of these false colours, and show it in its native deformity; for by suffering vice to possess the reward of virtue, we do a double injury to society, by encouraging the former, and taking away the chief incentive to the latter."

Such is Fielding's explanation of the design and intention of this curious work; but it can scarcely be held a sufficient excuse for the mass of disagreeable details—the revolting villanies and unrelieved depravities which it unfolds to the general reader. With all its wit and cleverness, it cannot be classed with his other fictions, nor read

with the same degree of pleasure. Yet it contains some things which scarcely any one else could have written:—witness the characters of Heartfree and his wife; the Newgate scenes between Wild and the Ordinary;[1] and the description of the hero's trial and condemnation:—

"The day of his trial now approached, for which, as Socrates did, he prepared himself; but not weakly and foolishly, like that philosopher, with patience and resignation, *but with a good number of false witnesses.* However, as success is not always proportioned to the wisdom of him who endeavours to attain it, so are we more sorry than ashamed to relate, that our hero was, notwithstanding his utmost caution and prudence, convicted and sentenced to a death, which, when we consider not only the great men who have suffered it, but the much larger number of those whose highest honour it hath been to merit it, we cannot call otherwise than honourable. . . . . For my own part, I confess, I look on this death of hanging to be as proper for a hero as any other; and I solemnly declare, that had Alexander the Great been hanged, it would not in the least have diminished my respect for his memory. Provided a hero in his life doth but execute a sufficient quantity of mischief; provided he be but well and heartily cursed by the widow, the orphan, the poor, and oppressed, ... I think it avails little of what nature his death be, whether it be by the axe, the halter, or the sword. Such names will be always sure of living to posterity, and of enjoying that fame which they so gloriously and eagerly coveted; for, according to a great dramatic poet,—

'Fame
Not more survives from good than evil deeds.
The aspiring youth that fired the Ephesian dome,
Outlives in fame the pious fool who raised it.'"

As a matter of some literary interest, it may be observed that there is a complimentary allusion in "Jonathan Wild" to the parliamentary reports which Dr. Samuel Johnson had been for some years in the habit of compiling for "The Gentleman's Magazine." It is well known that soon after Cave had commenced reporting the debates,

(1) The reverend gentleman's reason for preferring punch to wine, is one of Fielding's happiest hits. "ORDINARY. Why wine? Let me tell you, Mr. Wild, there is nothing so deceitful as the spirits given us by wine. If you must drink, let us have a bowl of punch; a liquor I the rather prefer, as it is nowhere spoken against in Scripture."

and when they had increased in interest and importance, he received an intimation from one of the clerks of the House of Commons that their publication had given offence to the Speaker, and that measures would be taken to interfere with it as a breach of parliamentary privilege. Upon this, Mr. Urban hit upon the expedient of giving fictitious names to the speakers in parliament, and to places and countries alluded to in debate; and as "Gulliver's Travels" were then widely read, and in the height of their popularity, the Houses of Lords and Commons were transformed into the senate of Magna Lilliputia; the peers were termed Hurgos; France was called Blefuscu; and a similar liberty was taken with other names of places and persons. Happily, Cave published in his magazine, from time to time, a key to this curious jargon, or otherwise orators might have been unable to recognise their harangues in the ornate phraseology of the reporter. To this Fielding alludes in his account of Jonathan Wild's courtship, when, having quoted his love-letter, and remarked on the difference presented in its style of elaborate compliment to the writer's ordinary discourse, he observes that the ancients (particularly Sallust) embellished their narratives with speeches which had obviously received some flourishes from the eloquence of the historian. "Nay," he adds, "even amongst the moderns, famous as they are for elocution, it may be doubted whether those inimitable harangues, published in the monthly magazines, came literally from the mouths of the HURGOS, &c., as they are there inserted, or whether we may not rather suppose some historian of great eloquence hath borrowed the matter only, and adorned it with those rhetorical flowers for which many of the said HURGOS are not so extremely eminent."

This curious experiment in the art of parliamentary reporting answered so well that it enabled Cave to set up his coach, and raised the credit of the English legislature so high as to draw from Voltaire the remark, that the

"eloquence of Greece and Rome was revived in the British senate."[1] With respect, however, to the reporter's impartiality and fidelity, it is only necessary to refer to his avowed confession, that he took care "the Whig DOGS should never have the best of the argument." Nothing also can be more strikingly *Johnsonian* than the pointed, antithetical sentences put into the mouths of all the speakers, good, bad, and indifferent,—so that the blunt Sir John Barnard, famed for his vulgarisms,[2] the courtly Wyndham, the polished Pulteney, and the impetuous Pitt, were made to deliver their sentiments precisely in the same style and language.

(1) Hawkins' Life of Johnson. (2) Ibid.

CHAPTER XVI.

DEATH OF MRS. FIELDING.—PREFACE TO "'DAVID SIMPLE,' ETC.—REBELLION OF '45.—"THE TRUE PATRIOT."

[1743—1746.]

WHILST thus busily employed,—hanging on to the law, but subsisting mainly by literature,—Fielding was stunned by a calamity which seemed to fill up the measure of his misfortunes. The wife to whom he was so tenderly attached had been for some time a confirmed invalid. The flower of New Sarum gradually faded in the huge "brick desert," where she had, like a true woman, faithfully shared her husband's fortunes. Alas! the vicissitudes of his life were sufficient to try the strength of a more vigorous frame than hers. Every variety of fortune, from comparative comfort to absolute privation, had she experienced with him: sometimes, it is on record, they lived in decent lodgings; sometimes in a garret.[1] Continual experience of narrow circumstances, constant anxieties, many privations, however cheerfully borne, in the end undermined the constitution, and left it open, like a defenceless city, to the inroads of disease. Still the husband was little prepared for the sudden stroke which deprived him for ever of her dear companionship on this side the grave. After many months of declining health she caught a fever, it is said, and died in his arms.[2] Up to this moment—apprehending no immediate danger—he had marked with sorrow and anxiety her

(1) "Sometimes they lived in decent lodgings, with tolerable comfort; sometimes in a garret, without necessaries; to say nothing of the sponging-houses and hiding-places in which he was occasionally found."—*Letters of Lady M. W. Montague.* Edited by Lord Wharncliffe. Introductory Anecdotes.

(2) Letters of Lady M. W. Montague.

failing strength, but never ventured to think of final separation. The blow with which he was now stricken was too painful for endurance: poverty, with her, he could bear; sickness, pain, detraction, disappointment—all but *this!*

It is not wonderful that this bereavement should have powerfully affected him; for he was bound to his departed wife by no common tie. They had not been many years united when Death "sued out this strict divorce between them," but those years had been crowded with the events of a lifetime. They had known prosperity, or apparent prosperity, together; enjoyed together the smiles of fortune; and had tasted together the bitterest cup of adversity. We need not, therefore, be surprised to learn that Fielding mourned over his loss as one that would not be comforted. His grief was so excessive that his friends feared that the consequences might be fatal to his reason. It may be that, with the tears of sorrow which he shed over his wife's early grave, were mingled those of remorse. Though a fond and faithful, had he not also been a reckless and imprudent husband? Had he not brought misery and misfortune upon himself and upon her who was no more, which common prudence might have averted? Never harsh or cruel in word or thought, had he not been so practically in act and deed? It is a beautiful trait in the human character, as every one who has lost a dear friend or relative must know, that when Death strikes down a beloved object, the first feelings which rend the heart and aggravate the tide of grief, are those of self-accusation. Then it is that every unkind deed, and thought, and word, rises up in judgment against us. Then it is that the accusing spirit within reminds us of every selfish sin which brought disquietude, care, or misery, upon the dear departed one. Not only for what we have done do we then reproach ourselves, but for what we have left undone—for words unspoken, for duties unperformed, for self unsacrificed. Reflections like these added, in all probability, to the

poignancy of Fielding's sufferings. But, beyond this, his calamity had another circumstance of aggravation. In his painful struggles with adversity he had hitherto been supported by womanly sympathy, and the consolation which a loving woman knows so well how to administer in the hour of misfortune and disappointment; *now* he must labour on alone—a dark night had closed around, and a cheerless path lay before him.

Of the lasting impression which this sad event made on Fielding's mind, there is evidence in many parts of his subsequent writings. The manner in which, for instance, he commemorates Mr. Allworthy's sense of a similar bereavement (in the first book of "Tom Jones") reminds us of this melancholy passage in his own domestic life:—"This gentleman had, in his youth, married a very worthy and beautiful woman, of whom he had been extremely fond; by her he had three children, all of whom died in their infancy. He had likewise had the misfortune of burying this beloved wife herself, about five years before the time at which this history chooses to set out. This loss, however great, he bore like a man of sense and constancy; though it must be confessed, he would often talk a little whimsically on this head: for he sometimes said, he looked on himself as still married, and considered his wife as only gone before him a journey which he should most certainly, sooner or later, take after her; and that he had not the least doubt of meeting her again, in a place where he should never part with her more:—sentiments for which his sense was arraigned by one part of his neighbours, his religion by a second, and his sincerity by a third."[1]

As soon as Fielding had somewhat recovered from the

(1) This description of marital constancy was perhaps intended by Fielding to apply more particularly to the case of his friend George Lyttleton, who sustained a similar loss, in the beginning of the year 1747. Lyttleton gave expression to his grief in a Monody, which was ridiculed by Smollett in a parody called "An Ode on the Death of my Grandmother:" published in "Peregrine

stupor of grief into which his wife's death had plunged him, and felt sufficient fortitude to face the world once more, he applied himself seriously to his profession. It is said by Mr. Murphy that the law "had its hot and cold fits with him;" and that "he pursued it by starts, and after frequent intermissions."[1] These "intermissions" were not voluntary; for attacks of illness often confined him to his house, when he ought to have been in Westminster Hall or on circuit. Nevertheless, he struggled on vigorously and courageously, impelled to exertion by the strong incentive of parental affection. As to literature, for some time he abandoned it upon principle, and from motives of policy. He had found out that his reputation as an author interfered with his progress at the Bar, and the fame which he acquired was no compensation for the loss of a livelihood. Few men of his powers had ever devoted themselves to letters and reaped therefrom so little advantage. In bitterness of spirit he cursed such barren triumphs, derided the notion of purchasing posthumous fame by a life of poverty and wretchedness, and sought elsewhere for more substantial rewards.

Now and then, indeed, he was beguiled into print. In 1744, his sister Sarah published, anonymously, her novel of "David Simple," which having in the first instance been

Pickle" (first edition). In the following stanza Lyttleton gives emphatic expression to his grief:—

"O best of wives! O dearer far to me
Than when thy virgin charms
Were yielded to my arms!
How can my soul endure the loss of thee?
How in the world, to me a desert grown,
Abandon'd and alone!
Without my sweet companion can I live?
Without thy lovely smile,
The dear reward of every virtuous toil,
What pleasure now can pall'd Ambition give?
Ev'n the delightful sense of well-earned praise,
Unshar'd by thee, no more my lifeless thoughts could raise."

(1) Essay on the Life and Genius of Fielding

ascribed to him, he was induced to prefix a preface to a second edition, in which he disclaimed its authorship, and at the same time announced his abandonment of literature. More than one motive impelled him to make this declaration: first, he was anxious to rescue himself from the charge of anonymous publication, after having in his preface to the "Miscellanies" undertaken, in the most solemn terms, never to send forth a book or pamphlet without his name.[1] In spite of this declaration, many anonymous libels had been fathered upon him. Self-constituted critics affected to detect his style in every scurrilous pamphlet which was issued from the press; and busy rumour (he complained, with deep feeling) reported him the author of half the treason and blasphemy the few last years had produced.[2] One poetical libel of a particularly gross and offensive character had been attributed to him, of the authorship of which he eagerly seized the opportunity of proclaiming his innocence. "Among all the scurrilities," he said, "with which I have been accused (though equally and totally innocent of every one), none ever raised my indignation so much as 'The Causidicade:' this accused me not only of being a bad writer and a bad man, but with downright idiotism, in flying in the face of the greatest men of my profession. I take, therefore, this opportunity to protest that I never saw that infamous, paltry libel till long after it had been in print; nor can any man hold it in greater contempt and abhorrence than myself."[3]

(1) "And I do further protest that I will never hereafter publish any book or pamphlet whatever, to which I will not put my name;—a promise, which, as I shall sacredly keep, so will it I hope be so far believed, that I may henceforth receive no more praise or censure, to which I have not the least title."—*Preface to Miscellanies.* 1743.

(2) Preface to David Simple.

(3) Ibid. "The Causidicade" was certainly a worthless performance. It was published in 1743, with the following title:—"The Causidicade, a panegyri-satiri-serio-comic-dramatical Poem on the *Strange* Resignation and stranger Promotion. By Porcupinus Pelagius." Most of the members of the legal profession who were then in prominent business came in for their share of

Fielding's second object in assigning "David Simple" to its right owner was to prevent an ill-natured world from assuming that he was still coquetting with literature, instead of applying himself to law: an assumption, he observed, which would have a tendency to injure him in a profession, to which he had applied with so arduous and intent a diligence, that he had no leisure, even if he had inclination, to compose anything of that kind. "Indeed," he adds, "I am very far from entertaining such an inclination; I know the value of the reward which fame confers on authors too well to endeavour any longer to obtain it; nor was the world ever more unwilling to bestow the glorious, envied prize of the laurel and the bays, than I should now be to receive any such garland or fool's cap."[1] That he should at this period have been so tender of his legal reputation, induces the belief that the struggling barrister was visited with a temporary gleam of professional prosperity. There was formerly a tradition on the Western Circuit that Fielding, having for some time travelled it without success, at length hit upon the expedient of circulating amongst the attorneys of the West a proposal for a new law-book. The scheme succeeded, and on his next circuit he had more than a due proportion of briefs; but the business thus suddenly acquired soon left him, and he was reduced to his former condition of brieflessness.[2] Whether this tale has any

abuse. As a specimen of its style and personalities, we give four lines, in which the weak voice of Chief Justice Willes is selected for ridicule:—

> "When strait a weak voice was heard, crying out,
> Like some poor old woman pent up in a butt,
> All took it for granted 'twas C[hief] J[usti]ce W[illes],
> But who should it be but my good Master M[ills]."

The "Strange" resignation alluded to was the retirement of Sir John Strange, from the Solicitor-generalship, in order to make room for Murray, afterwards Lord Mansfield. H. Walpole, alluding to the alleged Jacobite tendencies of the last-named eminent lawyer, thus mentions the circumstance to Sir H. Mann (December, 1742):—"I suppose *you have heard from Rome* that Murray is made Solicitor-general, in the room of Sir J. Strange, who has resigned for his health."

(1) Preface to David Simple.

(2) London Register, April, 1762.

foundation in truth or not, it is evident from the language of the preface to "David Simple," that at the time it was written the law received the author's undivided attention, which he could hardly, from his position, have given to it, had he found it still unremunerative.

A third and more unselfish motive which urged Fielding into print upon this occasion, was to do justice "to the real and sole author" of the book, who, he said (the observation does not appear very complimentary to the sex), "*notwithstanding* the many excellent observations dispersed through it, and the deep knowledge of human nature it discovers, is a young woman; one so nearly and dearly allied to me, in the highest friendship as well as relation, that if she had wanted any assistance of mine, I would have been as ready to have given it her as I would have been just to my word in owning it." The tone of superiority here assumed by the brother may be thought, perhaps, too patronising; but in that age it was not common for a very high respect to be paid to the female intellect. Nevertheless, in a preface to his sister's subsequent work, published in 1747 ("Familiar Letters between the principal Characters in David Simple"[1]), Fielding expressed his sense of a truth which has been fully recognised since his time—namely, that it is possible for the keen instinct of woman to discover

(1) Richardson, who was extremely fond of praising the literary efforts of the ladies of his court, was very liberal of his eulogy on Miss Fielding. In a letter of his to that lady, dated December 7th, 1756, he thus commends her "Familiar Letters:"—"I amuse myself," he says, "as well as I can with reading. I have just gone through your two volumes of 'Letters;' have reperused them with great pleasure, and found many new beauties in them. What a knowledge of the human heart! Well might a critical judge of writing say, as he did to me, that your late brother's knowledge of it was not (fine writer as he was) comparable to yours. His was but as the knowledge of the outside of a clockwork-machine, while yours was that of all the finer springs and movements of the inside." An observation of the same description was made by Dr. Johnson, on the comparative merits of the writings of Richardson and Fielding:—"Gray was much pleased with an answer which Dr. Johnson once gave to a person on the different and comparative merits of Fielding and Richardson. 'Why, sir, Fielding could tell you what o'clock it was; but as for Richardson, he could make a clock or watch.'"—*Boswell's Life of Johnson*. 1853. vol. x. (*Supplementary Anecdotes.*)

and develop traits of character, which escape the observation of the acutest writers of the opposite sex. A knowledge of human nature, he confessed, was not necessarily learnt by living in the hurry of the world. "True genius, with the help of a little conversation, will be capable of making a vast progress in this learning; and, indeed, I have observed there are none who know so little of men as those who are placed in the crowds either of business or pleasure. . . . I shall only (he continues) add an answer to the same objection, relating to 'David Simple,' given by a lady of very high rank, whose quality is, however, less an honour to her than her understanding.[1] 'So far,' said she, 'from doubting David Simple to be the performance of a woman, I am well convinced it could not have been written by a man.'"[2]

At this period Fielding passed much of his time with his sister, and they probably resided under the same roof till his second marriage. Joseph Warton, writing to his brother from Basingstoke, in 1746, records a delightful evening passed in their society:[3]—"I wish you had been with me last week," he says, "when I spent two evenings with Fielding and his sister, who wrote 'David Simple,' and you may guess I was very well entertained. The lady, indeed, retired pretty soon, but Russell and I sat up with the poet till *one or two* in the morning, and were inexpressibly diverted. I find he values, as he justly may, his 'Joseph Andrews' above all his writings. He was extremely civil to me, I fancy, on my father's account."[4] From this

(1) Probably Lady Mary Wortley Montague, who seems to have entertained almost as great an admiration for the works of "Sally Fielding" as those of the brother.

(2) Preface to the Familiar Letters.

(3) Wooll's Biographical Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Warton. 1806.

(4) The Rev. Thomas Warton, Vicar of Basingstoke, who died in 1745. He was Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and, like most Oxford men of his time, had a strong tincture of Jacobitism in his composition, which subjected him to some sharp attacks from Amherst, in the periodical called "Terræ Filius," published by the latter on his expulsion from the university. It was not without reason that Gibbon designated Oxford the head-quarters of "port and prejudice" in the eighteenth century.

statement of Warton's, many of Fielding's biographers have fallen into the error that the author preferred "Joseph Andrews" to the more perfect work, "Tom Jones;" but it will be seen, from the date, that at the time of Warton's visit the latter novel was not written.

The memorable events of the year '45 induced Fielding to resume the pen once more, and to enter the lists of authorship in a new character—that of a political journalist. At the beginning of the month of September came the news to London[1] that the Chevalier Charles Edward Stuart had landed in Scotland with six or seven friends; that he had been joined by some of the Highland clans, and had raised his standard in the ancient city of Perth. Rumours soon followed that many Scotch noblemen, together with several disaffected English gentlemen, had taken up arms in the Stuart cause, and had proclaimed the Pretender at Dundee and other places. Still, at that time, amongst well-informed persons in the metropolis, there was little apprehension that the rebellion would assume a very formidable character: for it was known that the adventurer was ill-provided with the munitions of war, and the Highlanders who constituted the bulk of what was called his army were regarded as an undisciplined rabble.[2] Then came the

(1) "I came back last night," writes Horace Walpole to his friend Sir H. Mann, from Arlington Street, on September 6th, "and found three packets from you, which I have no time to answer, and but just time to read. The confusion I have found, and the danger we are in, prevent my talking of anything else. The young Pretender, at the head of 3000 men, has got a march on General Cope, who is not 1800 strong, &c. The clans will not rise for the government: the Dukes of Argyle and Atholl are come post to town, not having been able to raise a man."

(2) The Highland troops of Charles Edward were thus described by a spy, sent from England about the middle of October:—"They consist of an odd medley of grey-beards and no-beards—old men fit to drop into the grave, and young boys, whose swords are near equal to their weight, and I really believe more than their length. Four or five thousand may be very good, determined men; but the rest are mean, dirty, villanous-looking rascals, who seem more anxious about plunder than their Prince, and would be better pleased with four shillings than a Crown."—*Lord Mahon's History of England.*

When the news of the rebels being at Edinburgh reached London, Horace

astounding intelligence that Edinburgh had been entered and taken possession of by the Chevalier, who, surrounded with his Highlanders, was actually holding his court in the Palace of Holyrood; and this was followed by the more serious news that Sir John Cope and the troops under his command had been completely defeated by the rebels, with great slaughter, at Preston Pans. These events—following each other with astonishing rapidity—alarmed the most phlegmatic; and courtiers as well as citizens admitted that the country was in danger.

That the cause of order and constitutional government in Great Britain was at this time in extreme peril cannot be doubted. The country swarmed with secret Jacobites, who only waited to see rebellion successful in order to dignify it with the name of loyalty. Many causes existed for popular discontent. The arms of England were unprosperous abroad; taxes were increased, and the laws severely administered. Above all, it cannot be denied that the house of Brunswick had entirely failed to conciliate the affections of the English people. Both George I. and George II. were essentially foreigners; and, in a country naturally jealous of foreign influence, they had the bad taste and bad policy to manifest a continual preference for Hanoverian over English interests. So little regard had George II. for his English subjects, that his only study seemed to be to get away from them as often as possible. On one occasion (in 1736), when some church debates had

Walpole, in communicating the fact to Sir H. Mann, thus speculates on their "desperate enterprise:"—"There never was so extraordinary a rebellion! One can't tell what assurances of support they may have from the Jacobites in England, or from the French, and nothing of either sort has yet appeared. . . . One can hardly believe that the English are more disaffected than the Scotch; and among the latter no persons of property have joined them—both nations seem to profess a neutrality. Their money is all gone; and they subsist merely by levying contributions. But sure banditti can never conquer a kingdom! . . . . They have hitherto taken no place but open towns, nor have they any artillery for a siege but one-pounders."—*Letter to Sir H. Mann, September 20th,* 1745. *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. ii.

protracted a parliamentary session longer than he expected, and so postponed his customary journey to his continental dominions, he is reported to have said to the Queen, "I wish with all my heart that the devil may take your bishops, and the devil take your ministers, and the devil take the parliament, and the devil take the whole island, provided I can get out of it and go to Hanover."[1] The notion that English money was squandered abroad upon foreign minions and mercenaries, aggravated the public displeasure to a grave extent, and placed the royal authority in imminent danger.

To this it must be added, that the two first princes of the house of Brunswick were deficient in most of the personal qualities which command respect or secure attachment. They had no elegant tastes—caring neither for *Boetry* nor *Bainting*—no refinement of character; nor could either of them speak or spell the English language correctly. Both of them also lacked the kingly bearing and demeanour which, to the vulgar eye, bespeak the sovereign, and oftentimes make up for the absence of the sterling qualifications of a ruler. To a moral nation their habits likewise were, in the highest degree, repulsive. Charles II. was a shameless profligate; but his profligacy was to some extent redeemed by the wit and taste which veiled its most disagreeable features from the public eye. On the other hand, the vices of George II. were so coarse

(1) Lord Hervey's Memoirs of the Court of George II. During the king's long absence in Hanover, in 1736, many pasquinades were, according to Lord Hervey, openly exhibited in London, which show the temper of the times. "At the Royal Exchange a paper with these words was stuck up:—

"'*It is reported that his Hanoverian Majesty designs to visit his British dominions for three months in the spring.*'

"On St. James' gate this advertisement was pasted:—

"'*Lost or strayed out of this house, a man who has left a wife and six children on the parish; whoever will give any tidings of him to the churchwardens of St. James' parish, so as he may be got again, shall receive* FOUR SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE *reward.—N.B. This reward will not be increased, nobody judging him to deserve a* CROWN.'"

and depraved, that they could inspire no other feeling than that of disgust. A nation will always make large allowances for the indiscretions of a youthful sovereign; but what could be said or thought of an old reprobate, who prided himself upon what he called his *"foiblesses,"* and regaled the ears of his too indulgent queen with the details of his unsentimental amours?

With such a monarch on the throne, and with the prospect of a successor whose fickle and uncertain character filled courtiers and ministers with alarm,[1] the chances of Charles Edward were not altogether desperate. But the good sense of the nation saved it at this crisis. The Jacobite risings which were reckoned upon in different parts of England did not take place; for a little reflection convinced even many of the discontented that the triumph of the Stuarts would inevitably lead to national disgrace and infamy.[2] All thoughtful Englishmen knew full well that it would bring with it the suppression of parliamentary government, and of the freedom of the press; that it would lead to the repudiation of the state debts; to subserviency to France; arbitrary rule at home; the ascendancy of absolutism abroad; and, finally, that it

(1) Frederick Prince of Wales. Lord Hervey has the following sketch of his royal highness's character:—"A poor, weak, irresolute, false, lying, dishonest, contemptible wretch; that nobody loves, that nobody believes, that nobody will trust, and that will trust everybody by turns; and that everybody by turns will impose upon, betray, mislead, and plunder."

(2) The most ingenious appeals were made at this time also to the prejudices and self-interest of the people. "My dear child," says H. Walpole to Sir H. Mann (October 4th, 1745), "dry your wet-brown-paper-ness, and be in spirits again. . . . . Pray let Mr. Chute have ample accounts of our zeal to figure with at Rome. . . . . Tell him of the whole coast so guarded that nothing can pass unvisited; and, in short, send him this advertisement out of to-day's papers, as an instance of more spirit and wit than there is in all Scotland:—

"'TO ALL JOLLY BUTCHERS.

"'MY BOLD HEARTS,

"'The Papists eat no meat on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, nor during Lent. Your friend,

"'JOHN STEEL.'"

—*Walpole's Correspondence*, vol ii.

would crush for ever the cause of English Protestantism and religious liberty. Such forebodings as these preserved the bulk of the intelligent classes from the contagion of Jacobitism: and it was with the view of forcibly impressing these considerations on the public mind that Fielding at this crisis became a political writer.

On Tuesday, the 5th of November, he published the first number of "The True Patriot." Under similar circumstances, in 1715, Addison had lent his pen to the support of constitutional authority, by the establishment of "The Freeholder;" and such a precedent was an excellent one for imitation. The rebels were at this period encamped in some force near Edinburgh, and were meditating an expedition across the Border. In London their movements were watched with intense anxiety; every scrap of intelligence was devoured with eagerness, and newspaper writers had enough to do to satisfy the popular craving. At such a time many false rumours were put into circulation by unprincipled writers, and the comments in the press were by no means distinguished by a high standard of intelligence. The editor of "The True Patriot," accordingly, in launching his paper, did not scruple to assail the imbecility and corruption of contemporary journalists, whilst, with excusable vanity, he promised the public a better article than they had been accustomed to:—

"Fashion," he began, "is the great governor of this world. It presides not only in matters of dress and amusement, but in law, physic, politics, religion, and all other things of the gravest kind; indeed, the wisest of men would be puzzled to give any better reason why particular forms in all these have been at certain times universally received, and at others universally rejected, than that they were in or out of fashion . . . . In strict obedience to the sovereign power, being informed by my bookseller, a man of great sagacity in his business, *that nobody at present reads anything but newspapers*, I have determined to conform myself to the reigning taste. The number indeed of these writers at first a little staggered us both; but upon perusal of their works, I fancied I had discovered a little imperfection in them all, which somewhat diminished the force of

this objection. . . . . The first little imperfection in these writings is, that there is scarce a syllable of TRUTH in any of them. If this be admitted to be a fault, it requires no other evidence than themselves, and the perpetual contradictions which occur not only on comparing one with the other, but the same author with himself on different days. Secondly, There is no SENSE in them. To prove this likewise, I appeal to their works. Thirdly There is in reality NOTHING *in them at all.* And this also must be allowed by their readers, if paragraphs which contain neither wit, nor humour, nor sense, nor the least importance, may be properly said to contain nothing. Such are the arrival of my Lord ——, *with a great equipage;* the marriage of Miss ——, *of great beauty and merit;* and the death of Mr. ——, *who was never heard of in his life*, &c. &c. Nor will this appear strange, if we consider who are the authors of such tracts; namely, the journeymen of booksellers, of whom, I believe, much the same may be truly predicated as of these their productions. But the encouragement with which these lucubrations are read, may seem more strange and more difficult to be accounted for. And here I cannot agree with my bookseller, that their eminent badness recommends them. The true reason is, I believe, simply the same which I once heard an economist assign for the content and satisfaction with which his family drank water-cyder, viz., because they could procure no other liquor. Indeed, I make no doubt but that the understanding, as well as the palate, though it may out of necessity swallow the worse, will in general prefer the better.

The journalist then proceeded to describe his personal qualifications for his office. He observes that he is a gentleman, and of no party: "a word," he adds, "which I hope, by these my labours, to eradicate out of our constitution: this being indeed the true source of all those evils which we have reason to complain of." He finally defends the high price which he placed on his labours, as compared with those of other news-writers; and "to conclude the whole," exclaims, "in the words of the fair and honest tradesman—Gentlemen, upon my word and honour, I can afford it no cheaper; and I believe there is no shop in town will use you better for the price."

In his third number the editor records the incidents of a frightful dream, in which it had appeared to him that the rebels having been victorious, he was arrested for writing against the government, dragged from his family,

whom he saw treated with great barbarity, and, being brought to Westminster Hall, tried as a traitor. The trial, under the new order of things, is thus sketched:—

"A charge of high treason was then, I dreamed, exhibited against me, for having writ in defence of his present Majesty King George, and my paper of 'The True Patriot' was produced in evidence against me.

"Being called on to make my defence, I insisted entirely on the statute of Henry VII., by which all persons are exempted from incurring the penalties of treason, in defence of the King *de facto*. But the Chief Justice *told me in broken English*, that if I had no other plea, they should presently overrule that; for that his Majesty was resolved to make an example of all who had anyways distinguished themselves in opposition to his cause. Methought I then replied, with a resolution which I hope every Englishman would exert on such an occasion, *that the life of no man was worth preserving longer than it was to be defended by the known laws of the country;* and that if the King's arbitrary pleasure was to be that law, I was indifferent what he determined concerning myself.

"The Court having put it to the vote (*for no jury, I thought, attended*), and unanimously agreed that I was guilty, proceeded to pass the sentence usual in cases of high treason, having first made many eulogiums on the Pope, the Roman Catholic religion, and the King, who was to support both, and be supported by them."

The month of December, '45, was long remembered in London. The news that the rebels had arrived in Derby, after beating up for recruits in Manchester and other large towns, and were actually within two days' march of the metropolis, occasioned a general panic. Shops were shut, and groups of anxious idlers congregated in the principal streets; whilst some prudent citizens rushed to the Bank, which is said only to have saved its credit by paying the demands upon it in sixpences, and thus gaining time. The day on which the rumour was circulated (December 6th) was afterwards designated *Black Monday*. The city Jacobites, of whom there were not a few, headed by Alderman Heathcote, made no secret of their exultation, which increased the apprehensions of the well-affected. No confidence was felt in the army, which had been encamped

at Finchley to protect the Londoners; and indeed such was the state of affairs, that historians have confidently asserted that if the resolution of the Pretender to march on the metropolis had been indulged by his followers, he would have been quietly recognised as Regent of England before Christmas Day, 1745.[1]

In this season of dismay, "The True Patriot" was distinguished by its enthusiastic advocacy of the cause of the house of Hanover, and by a literary merit then rarely seen in the political journal. On the 17th December (No. 7), its readers were gratified by the reappearance in its columns of an old acquaintance—the worthy Mr. Abraham Adams—who characteristically delivers his opinion of public affairs, and declares his approval of Fielding's paper:—"I am delighted," he says, "and that greatly, with many passages in these papers. The moderation which you profess towards all parties perfectly becomes a Christian. Indeed, I have always thought that moderation in the shepherd was the best, if not only, way to bring home all the straggling sheep to his flock. I have intimated this at the vestry, and even at visitation before the Archdeacon: *Sed Cassandræ non creditum est.* I like your method of placing a motto from the classics at the head of every paper. It must give some encouragement to your readers, that the author understands (at least) one line of Latin, which is, perhaps, more than can be safely predicated of every writer in this age."

The honest parson naturally expresses surprise at the progress of the rebellion, which, he observes, can only be ascribed to one cause,—"the just judgment of God against an offending people;" and he advises, with characteristic emphasis, recourse to fasting and prayer, and, above all, the exercise of Christian charity.

The Jeremiad of Mr. Abraham Adams over the marvellous successes of the rebels was scarcely in print, when

(1) Lord Mahon's History of England, and the authorities there cited.

their fortunes began to decline.[1] With the Duke of Cumberland on their track, they had commenced their retreat from Derby in sullen silence and bitter despondency. As they retraced their steps, their reception in Manchester, and other towns through which they passed, was very different from that which they met with in their advance. Having finally entered Carlisle—the great border town—they left there a scanty garrison, whilst the main body marched into Scotland. Before the year had ended, Carlisle was surrendered unconditionally to the forces of King George, and England was cleared of her rebellious invaders, who promised, on their departure, that they would pay another visit in the spring: a promise they were little likely to keep, now that the *prestige* of success had vanished.

(1) On the invasion of England by the rebels, Fielding, in all probability, "turned out," with his brethren of the Bar, prepared to serve his sovereign with the sword as well as the pen. On December 9th, 1745, Horace Walpole thus writes to Sir H. Mann:—"We are threatened with great preparations for a French invasion, but the coast is exceedingly guarded; and for the people, the spirit against the rebels increases every day. Though they have marched thus into the heart of the kingdom, there has not been the least symptom of a rising, not even in the great towns of which they possessed themselves. . . . . But here in London, the aversion to them is amazing; on some thoughts of the king's going to an encampment at Finchley, the weavers not only offered him a thousand men, but the whole body of the Law formed themselves into a little army, under the command of Lord Chief-Justice Willes, and were to have done duty at St. James', to guard the royal family in the king's absence." This precedent was followed in more recent times by the inns of court, whose members, on the apprehended invasion of England by Napoleon Buonaparte, formed themselves into a volunteer corps under the command of the celebrated Erskine, who appropriately baptised his awkward squadron "The Devil's Own."

CHAPTER XVII.

"THE TRUE PATRIOT."—END OF THE REBELLION.—SECOND MARRIAGE.

[1746.]

The beginning of the year 1746 found Fielding still occupied with "The True Patriot," and rendering thereby acknowledged service to the panic-stricken government. His varied information and nervous diction imparted an unwonted interest to the discussion of political topics, and his paper was in great request. Rarely indeed have literary talents of so high an order been pressed into the service of party journalism. Nor is it to be supposed that the accomplished journalist wielded a merely mercenary pen on behalf of established authority. His sympathies were entirely with the cause he so warmly espoused and so ably supported; he was, upon principle and from conviction, a devoted friend of the house of Hanover—regarding its permanent sway as the best guarantee for social order and rational liberty;—and his political writings have consequently an additional value as the faithful reflex of his genuine sentiments.

When the cause of the rebels became more desperate, and the panic occasioned by their advance into England began to subside, Fielding felt justified in treating the attempt in a lighter strain than might have appeared becoming in the first instance. He accordingly now indulged in a vein of caustic satire, which was calculated to render the unprosperous cause ridiculous as well as odious. In the number for January 7th, for instance, he printed an imaginary journal of events in 1746, formed on the

supposition that the rebels had proved victorious, from which the following items are selected :—

"*Jan.* 12. Being the first Sunday after Epiphany, Father Macdagger, the royal confessor, preached at St. James'—sworn afterwards of the Privy Council—arrived the French Ambassador with a numerous retinue.

. . . .

"*Feb.* 2. Long Acre and Covent Garden allotted out in portions to the Highland Guards. Two watermen and a porter committed to Lollards' Tower at Lambeth, for heresy.

. . . .

"*Feb.* 13. Four heretics burnt in Smithfield—Mr. Mac Henley[1] attended them, assisted on this extraordinary occasion by Father O'Blaze, the Dominican.

. . . .

"*March* 4. An eminent physician fined 200 marks in the King's Bench for an inuendo at Batson's, that Bath water was preferable to holy water. Three hundred Highlanders of the opposite party, with their wives and children, massacred in Scotland. The Pope's nuncio arrived this evening at Greenwich."

In the thirteenth number (January 28th), there is a second communication from Mr. Abraham Adams. The parson begins by stating that he is concerned to find, by all the public accounts, that the rebels still continued in the land.

"In my last," he writes, "I evidently proved that their successes were owing to a judgment denounced against our sins, and concluded with some exhortations for averting the divine anger, by the only methods which suggested themselves to my mind. These exhortations, by the event, I perceive have not had the regard paid to them I had reason to expect. Indeed, I am the more confirmed in this conjecture, by a lad whom I lately met at a neigh-

(1) Mr. Orator Henley. This person, whose eccentric career has been noticed in a previous chapter (pp. 23—26), distinguished himself as a furious Jacobite. On the 4th December, 1746, it is stated, in a contemporary newspaper, that he was, "by order of the Earl of Chesterfield, one of the secretaries of state, delivered into the custody of a messenger, in order to be examined on a charge of endeavouring to alienate the minds of his majesty's subjects from their allegiance, by his harangues at his Oratory Chapel." Horace Walpole thus notices the circumstance: "The famous Orator Henley is taken up for treasonable flippancies."—*Correspondence*, vol. ii.

bouring baronet's, where I sojourned the two last days of the year, with my good friend Mr. Wilson.[1] This lad, whom I imagined to have been come from school to visit his friends for the holidays (for though he is perhaps of sufficient age, I found, on examination, he was not yet qualified for the university) is, it seems, a man *sui juris;* and is, as I gather from the young damsels, Sir John's daughters, a member of the Society of Bowes. I know not whether I spell the word right; for I am not ashamed to say, I neither understand its etymology nor true import, as it hath never once occurred in any lexicon or dictionary which I have yet perused."

The manners and opinions of this *beau* are most revolting to the patriotic spirit of Adams, whose comments thereon are curious and characteristic:—

"When grace was said after meat, and the damsels departed, the lad began to grow more wicked. Sir John, who is an honest Englishman, hath no other wine but that of Portugal. This our Bowe could not drink; and when Sir John very nobly declared he scorned to indulge his palate with rarities for which he must furnish the foe with money to carry on a war with the nation, the stripling replied, 'Rat the nation!' (God forgive me for repeating such words!) 'I had rather live under French government than be debarred from French wine.' Oho, my youth! if I had you horsed, thinks I again. But, indeed, Sir John well scourged him with his tongue for that expression . . . . Mr. Wilson now found me grow very uneasy, as indeed I had been from the beginning; nor could anything but respect to the company have prevented me from correcting the boy long before; he therefore endeavoured to turn the discourse, and asked our spark when he left London. To which he answered, the Wednesday before. 'How, sir,' said I, 'travel on Christmas-day!' 'Was it so?' says he; 'fags, that's more than I knew; but why not travel on Christmas-day as well as any other?' 'Why not!' said I, lifting my voice, for I had lost all patience; 'were you not brought up in the Christian religion? Did you never learn your Catechism?' He then burst out into an unmannerly laugh, and so provoked me that I should certainly have smote him, had I not laid my crabstick down in the window, and had not Mr. Wilson been fortunately placed between us."

The rebellion, having lingered out the winter, was decisively crushed in the spring by the bloody battle of Culloden, which was fought on the 16th of April. In one half hour

(1) See Joseph Andrews.

of fearful carnage—for no quarter was given[1]—the Stuart cause was effectually crushed, and about one thousand of its faithful adherents left dead upon the battle-field. This victory relieved the nation from all anxiety on the score of Jacobitism, and prevented any further manifestations of hostility to the reigning dynasty.

The summer after the rebellion many piteous spectacles were witnessed in the metropolis, and the unhappy men who were a few months before regarded with so much terror and indignation, became the objects of a deep and generous compassion. In the punishment of its rash but brave assailants, the government of George II. displayed a degree of inhumanity which admits of no excuse.[2] The detestable cruelties which were practised in Scotland after the rout of Culloden[3] soon found a parallel in the proceedings taken in England against the traitors who had been

(1) It is said to have been on this occasion that the Duke of Cumberland wrote a hasty order to General Campbell, to refuse quarter, on a playing card—the nine of diamonds—hence and since called the *curse of Scotland.*

(2) Horace Walpole, after describing with great minuteness the behaviour of Lords Kilmarnock and Balmerino on their trial, in a letter to Sir H. Mann, observes: "The King is much inclined to some mercy, but the Duke, who has not so much of Cæsar after a victory as in gaining it, is for the utmost severity. It was lately proposed in the city to present him with the freedom of some company; one of the aldermen said aloud, 'Then let it be the *butchers.*'" . . . . To Lord Kilmarnock, especially, mercy would have been judiciously shown. He was miserably poor, and, according to Horace Walpole, thus replied to the Duke of Argyle, who expostulated with him for engaging in such a cause: "My lord," said he, "for the two kings and their rights I cared not a farthing which prevailed; but I was starving, and if Mahomet had set up his standard in the Highlands, I had been a good Mussulman for bread, and had stuck close to his party." These were the sentiments, no doubt, of many of the luckless combatants.

(3) "Quarter was seldom given to the stragglers and fugitives, except to a few considerately reserved for public execution. No care or compassion was shown to their wounded; nay more, on the following day most of them were put to death in cold blood, with a cruelty such as never perhaps before or since has disgraced a British army. Some were dragged from the thickets or cabins where they had sought refuge, drawn out in line, and shot, while others were dispatched by the soldiers with the stocks of their muskets. One farm-building, into which some twenty disabled Highlanders had crawled, was deliberately set on fire the next day, and burnt with them to the ground."—*Lord Mahon's History of England.*

captured in arms. A special commission was held in July for the trial of the rebel prisoners, when eight persons who had held commissions in the Pretender's army were condemned to die; and in the same month suffered on Kennington Common the punishment then awarded to the crime of high-treason, which was executed on them with disgusting barbarity. Amongst these victims were Mr. Townley,[1] a gentleman of ancient family in Lancashire, and James Dawson, the hero of Shenstone's pathetic ballad.[2] The fearful scene was witnessed by a

(1) The execution of Mr. Townley is thus described in the "State Trials" (vol. xviii. p. 351): "After he had hung six minutes he was cut down, *and having life in him*, as he lay upon the block to be quartered, the executioner gave him several blows on his breast, which not having the effect desired, he immediately cut his throat; after which he took his head off; then ripped him open and took out his bowels and heart, and threw them into a fire, which consumed them; then he slashed his four quarters, and put them with the head into a coffin." Except in the case of some of the gunpowder-plot conspirators, there is no other instance recorded in which the barbarities inflicted under the old sentence of high-treason was executed on the *living* body, it being usual for the executioner to take care that every sign of life had departed before he commenced his disgusting operations. The government appears to have had a fit instrument for the perpetration of these cruelties in the person of the hangman, John Thrift, who, in 1750, was tried and condemned for murdering a man in a quarrel. He was afterwards pardoned, on condition of resuming his odious office, and the "Old England" (a Tory print) insinuated, that "having become obnoxious to the Jacobites for his celebrated operations on Tower Hill and Kennington Common, he was pardoned *in terrorem*, and to mortify them."—*Gentleman's Magazine*, September, 1750.

(2) There is a letter extant (and preserved in the "State Trials," vol. xviii. p. 376) which gives an account of Dawson's execution, far more touching than the ballad. It is dated July 31, 1746, and contains the following melancholy particulars: "A young lady of a good family and handsome features had, for some time, extremely loved, and been equally beloved by, Mr. James Dawson, one of those unhappy gentlemen who suffered yesterday at Kennington Common for high-treason; and had he been either acquitted, or, after condemnation, found the royal mercy, the day of his enlargement was to have been that of their marriage. . . . . Not all the persuasions of her kindred could prevent her from going to the place of execution; she was determined to see the last of a person so dear to her, and accordingly followed the sledge in a hackney-coach, accompanied by a gentleman nearly related to her, and one female friend. She got near enough to see the fire kindled which was to consume that heart she knew so much devoted to her, and all the other dreadful preparations for his fate, without being guilty of any of those extravagancies her friends had apprehended. But when all was over, and that she found he was no more, she

large multitude, who looked on with awe and silence. No manifestation of feeling took place; but the predominant sentiment in the mind of the spectators must have been that of pity. The execution of the rebel lords Kilmarnock and Balmerino followed in August, both of whom laid their heads upon the block with great dignity, and calmly suffered the punishment which their rashness had incurred.

During a great part of this eventful year Fielding continued to conduct "The True Patriot," and derived from it both profit and reputation. The paper maintained its popularity, not only on account of the constitutional information which it displayed, but also for its occasional "sallies of humour."[1] Of these "humorous sallies" there are some very favourable specimens in the twenty-third number (April 8, 1746), where the following illustrations are given of the different meanings attached to particular expressions by different persons:—

"I remember to have supped last winter at a surgeon's, where were present some others of the faculty. The gentleman of the house declared he had a very good subject above in the garret. As the gentleman who said this was, I knew, himself as good a subject as any in the kingdom, I could not avoid surprise at his choosing to confine such a person in a cold night in such a place: but I soon found my mistake, and that the good subject had been hanged the day before for a most heinous felony. An error of the same kind once happened to me amongst some gentlemen of the army, who all agreed that one Mr. Thunderson was the best man in England. I own I was somewhat staggered when I heard he was a corporal of

drew her head back into the coach, and crying out, 'My dear, I follow thee—I follow thee!—sweet Jesus, receive both our souls together!' fell on the neck of her companion, and expired the very moment she was speaking. The excess of grief, which the force of her resolution had kept smothered within her breast, it is thought, put a stop to the vital motion, and suffocated at once all the animal spirit."

(1) Murphy's Essay on Fielding's Life, &c. It may be here stated that a few select numbers of "The True Patriot" are contained in Murphy's edition of Fielding's Works.

grenadiers: but how much more was I astonished when I found that he had half-a-dozen wives, and was the wickedest fellow in the whole regiment."

As an instance of the "selfish attention" paid by persons to minute circumstances connected with their own occupations or position in life, the journalist, in the same paper, narrates the following anecdote:—

"I knew a gentleman who had a great delight in observing the humours of the vulgar, and for that purpose used frequently to mount into the upper gallery. There, as he told me, he once seated himself between two persons, one of whom he soon discovered to be a broken tailor, and the other a servant in a country family, just arrived in town. The play was 'Henry the Eighth,' with that august representation of the coronation. The former of these, instead of admiring the great magnificence exhibited in that ceremony, observed, with a sigh, 'That he believed very few of these clothes were paid for.' And the latter, being asked how he liked the play (being the first he had ever seen), answered, 'It was all very fine, but nothing came up, in his opinion, *to the ingenuity of snuffing the candles*.'"

Somewhere about this time Fielding contracted a second marriage. Foolishly enough, most of those who have professed to give the particulars of his life, have refrained (as it would appear from a vulgar notion that the fact might lower him in the world's esteem) from stating who succeeded the first Mrs. Fielding as the mistress of his heart and home. "His biographers," writes one who has happily supplied the information so unwisely withheld,[1] "seem to have been shy of disclosing, that after the death of this charming woman he married her maid. And yet the act was not so discreditable to his character as it may sound. The maid had few personal charms, but was an excellent creature, devotedly attached to her mistress, and almost broken-hearted for her loss. In the first agonies of his

(1) Letters, &c., of Lady Mary Wortley Montague. Edited by Lord Wharncliffe. Introductory Anecdotes, vol. i. pp. 80, 81.

own grief, which approached to frenzy, he found no relief but from weeping along with her; no solace, when a degree calmer, but in talking to her of the angel they mutually regretted. This made her his habitual confidential associate; and in process of time he began to think he could not give his children a tenderer mother, or secure for himself a more faithful housekeeper and nurse. At least this was what he told his friends, and it is certain that her conduct as his wife confirmed it, and fully justified his good opinion."

In the circumstances connected with this second marriage there is much that is highly characteristic of Fielding's disposition, and also much that is very creditable to him. Another instance is displayed in it of the "sovereign contempt" which he entertained for conventional prejudices and the opinions of "the generality of mankind." Disregarding altogether what many men would have shrunk from with dismay,—the ridicule of acquaintances, the scorn, the jeers, and taunts, he was sure to encounter at the hands of his enemies,—he obeyed implicitly the dictates of his own heart and feelings. "What the world would say" he knew full well, and he accordingly resolved to show the world how little he cared for its opinion. His lively kinswoman, Lady Mary Wortley Montague, wondered indeed at those "natural spirits" of his, which could give him "rapture with his cook." But looking at the matter from a less aristocratic point of view, it is difficult to imagine why so perfectly disinterested an attachment to a genuine and true-hearted woman should provoke a sneer. The sensible companion and tender protector of the motherless child, the attentive nurse, and the faithful friend, could neither have been degraded in his eyes by the performance of menial offices, nor elevated by worldly station.

But in this second union, also, it cannot escape obser-

vation that the bereaved husband gave a fresh manifestation of the deep affection which he felt for his departed wife. The hand which he now grasped at the altar, had helped to wipe away the death-dew from the brow of that "perfect woman." She whom he had now taken for a helpmate, had been by his side and sustained him in the hour of his bitterest agony. With her he had watched in the chamber of death, when that grim visitant, clothed in his worst terrors, robbed him of his angel-wife. Her tears had mingled with his; he had heard her, amidst convulsive sobs, proclaim the kindness, meekness, affection, purity, of her beloved mistress. And when he, bowed to the earth, had yielded up his soul to the pangs of frenzied sorrow, she had cheered and comforted him; had talked with him, in tones he could never forget, of the "mutually-regretted" dead; had ordered his sad household with delicate attention; and, by constant acts of womanly care and kindness, taught his children to regard her as a second mother.

Let it likewise be remembered that the maid was the confidential friend of the first Mrs. Fielding, the depositary of her secrets, the companion of many of her lonely hours. Amidst the vicissitudes and calamities of her husband's life, it is very plain that she must have had need enough of a *confidante*. His business and pursuits carried him much abroad. When he was absent on circuit and sessions, she was frequently left for days alone with her maid in their humble London lodgings; nay, it is to be feared that in the season of their bitterest penury she had often in such companionship worn away the weary hours whilst he was the inmate of the prison or sponging-house. The faithful attendant who had remained with Mrs. Fielding amidst all reverses of fortune, and who was often her only companion, must have known therefore much of her beloved mistress which had never been guessed at by the

sorrowing husband. From her lips he learned secrets which would never have been revealed to him by those now cold in death; learned of tears shed in solitude, of silent griefs, of sufferings from him carefully concealed. Who can thoroughly read a human heart, and that heart a woman's? Vain man! you think you can fathom its inmost depths, and reckon up all its pulsations; but—however unrestrained the intercourse, however close the confidence—there are secrets there which baffle all your boasted cunning. In that heart which you believe is freely laid open to you, there will always be some corner sacred to emotions of which it is impossible for you to have cognisance. For, true it is, women will dissemble for love as well as hate. She who has all your confidence retains from you some tenderly-guarded thoughts, knowing, with the quick apprehensiveness of affection, it were better for your peace they should be buried with her in the secret-keeping grave.

From the friend and attendant of his departed wife it is not unreasonable to suppose that Fielding learned much that rendered her in his eyes an object of almost sacred interest, and made her daily more necessary to his existence, whilst it strengthened and intensified his affection for the dead. How often had the dear dissembler, whose loss they both deplored, met him with a smiling face, and spoken to him cheerily of brightening prospects and better days, when at that very moment she was herself a prey to deep despondency! What pious frauds had she not used to encourage him in his labours; how often promised professional fame and honour, when her own heart had ceased to entertain the flattering hope! Now too, perhaps, he heard, that though her gentle voice breathed to him no word of complaint or of reproach, there were times when it required all her cunning to hide the traces of grief upon her cheek, and to assume

that cheerful air which had so often cheated him into content and happiness.[1]

(1) The maiden name of Fielding's second wife was Mary Macdaniel. She survived him nearly half a century, and died at Canterbury, in the year 1802, at a very advanced age. In "The Gentleman's Magazine" for July, 1746, there are some satirical stanzas "On Felix, marry'd to a Cook-maid," which may probably have referred to Fielding. The following are two of the verses,—the first and last:—

> "Felix, who once an ode could write
> To a victorious duke,
> Must needs in humble strains indite
> Love-sonnets to a cook.
>
> . . . .
>
> "Marriage his wit may check—to show it
> Before he was too eager,
> Now better qualified for poet
> Since he became a beggar."

CHAPTER XVIII.

"THE JACOBITE JOURNAL."—PERSONAL ATTACKS ON THE EDITOR.—FIELDING APPOINTED A JUSTICE OF THE PEACE.

[1747—1748.]

SOON after the suppression of the rebellion, "The True Patriot," having performed its office, was discontinued. Its success, however, encouraged Fielding, after the lapse of a considerable interval, to set on foot another political paper, to which he gave the name of "The Jacobite Journal." The object of this publication was (in the words of the author of "Waverley") "to eradicate those feelings and sentiments which had been already so effectually crushed on the field of Culloden."[1] Though the rebellion had been quelled, and disaffection dared not openly manifest itself, the cause of the Stuarts was not at this period wholly abandoned by their English and Scotch adherents. "The king over the water" was still toasted in many old-fashioned country houses; and many a peer and politician who professed an ardent attachment to the house of Hanover was known to be ready and eager to transfer his allegiance to the Stuarts, if a safe opportunity offered. At this juncture, when the ranks of the Jacobites had been thinned by the sword, by exile, and the scaffold, the political journalist sought "to discredit the shattered remnant of an unsuccessful party," by covering it with ridicule, and holding it up to national contempt. The design, it is said, was heartily approved of by persons in power; for Fielding's talents were well-known, and it was believed that ridicule might have more success than argument in the eradication of Jacobite sentiments.

(1) Scott's Life of Fielding. Lives of the Novelists.

The first number of "The Jacobite Journal, by John Trott-plaid, Esq.," was published in December, 1747. As in commencing "The True Patriot," so in his new paper, Fielding began with a wholesale assault on contemporary news-writers, little likely to conciliate that fraternity. "If ever there was a time," he says, "when a weekly writer might venture to appear, it is the present; for few readers will imagine it presumption to enter the lists against those works of his contemporaries which are now known by the name of newspapers; since his talents must be very indifferent, if he is not capable of shining among a set of such dark planets."

With a faithful hand the journalist describes the demeanour of the unavowed Jacobites of the time—a numerous and very dangerous class:—

"Others, though very stanch Jacobites in their hearts, have been ashamed of owning themselves so in all companies. Amongst one another, indeed, whilst the glass goes merrily round, they freely drink the healths and talk the language of the party, according to the old observation—*Defendit numerus*, &c.; but in the presence of wicked Whigs, who look grave at *the king over the water*, the *Royal Exchange*, the *three W's* (a great health), and other such witty jests, a modest man may be put out of countenance;—as men of wit generally blush when their jest is not laughed at. Besides, he may thus be drawn into argument, and be put upon the defence of those doctrines by reason, which are far above the reach of it; for it may be truly said of Jacobitism (what a modern writer, with as much malice as falsehood, says of Christianity) that *it is not founded on argument.*"

"The Jacobite Journal" was adorned with a woodcut, representing Mr. Trott-plaid and his wife, the one arrayed in a plaid waistcoat, and the other in a plaid petticoat, huzzaing, whilst a sly-looking Jesuit introduces to their notice a copy of "The London Evening Post."[1] To this

(1) This description is taken from "The Gentleman's Magazine," for we have not been lucky enough to meet with any original copy of Fielding's paper. Might not the caricature in question have been designed by the pencil of Hogarth, himself a stanch Whig as well as Fielding's friend? To appreciate

caricature the journalist refers in the course of his introductory address; and he winds up with a piece of whimsical satire on the affectation then so prevalent amongst political writers of italicising unimportant words, and printing only the first and last letters, or a mere skeleton of others, for the purpose of attracting attention, and giving mysterious importance to their lucubrations. Having remarked that the days of severity in dealing with Jacobitism had passed, the journalist (in the person of Mr. Trott-plaid) thus proceeds:—

"But, God be praised, there is no such spirit at present in power; and if a man will only venture being laughed at, he may own himself a Jacobite without any other danger. Now, as I really love to make men laugh, more than any other of my acquaintances, so I have owned myself a Jacobite thus publicly, and have contrived a method of appearing in my *Scotch* plaid all over the kingdom at one and the same time.

"In this dress I intend to abuse the * * * and the * * *; I intend to lash not only the m—stry, but *every man* who *hath* any p—ce or p—ns—n from the g—vernm—t, or who is entrusted with *any degree* of *power* or *trust* under it, let his r—nk be ever so *high*, his f—rt—ne never so *great*, or his ch—r—cter never so *good*. For this purpose I have provided myself with a *vast* quantity of *Italian* letter, and asterisks of all sorts. And as for all the words which I *embowel*, or rather *envowel*, I will never so mangle them but they shall be as well-

properly the purpose and satire of "The Jacobite Journal," the circumstances of the period must be borne in mind. Symptoms of disaffection manifested themselves in 1748-9, not in open rioting and outrage, but in ostentatious displays of the symbols of a proscribed faction. The Scotch plaid was selected as the most favoured emblem of Jacobitism. "Many individuals," says Smollett (1748), "animated by the fume of inebriation, now loudly extolled that cause which they durst not avow when it required their open approbation and assistance; and, though they industriously avoided exposing their lives and fortunes to the chance of war, in promoting their favourite interest when there was a possibility of success, they betrayed no apprehensions in celebrating the memory of its last effort, amidst the tumult of a riot, and the clamours of intemperance. In the neighbourhood of Lichfield the sportsmen of the party appeared in the Highland taste of variegated drapery; and their zeal descending to a very extraordinary exhibition of practical ridicule, they hunted with hounds clothed in plaid, a fox dressed in a red uniform. Even the females at their assembly, and the gentlemen at the races, affected to wear the chequered stuff by which the Prince Pretender and his followers had been distinguished."—*History of England.*

known as if they retained every vowel in them. This I promise myself, that when I have any meaning they shall understand it."

In December, 1747, Fielding also published a political pamphlet, in vindication of the character of a deceased friend and schoolfellow, Mr. Winnington, well-known as an active politician, who had held office under Sir Robert Walpole, and had acted as chairman of committees in the House of Commons.[1] He died in 1746; and about a year after his decease a pamphlet was published, entitled, "An Apology for the Conduct of a Second-rate Minister, from the Year 1739, when he commenced Courtier," and said to be "written by himself, and found amongst his papers." This apology was a Tory squib, written with some art and method, and representing that Sir R. Walpole and his associates were all *secret Jacobites*, who had designedly legislated in the manner best calculated to waste and enervate the strength of the nation, so that the people "would in length of time come of themselves to a sense of their condition, and be ready to exchange it for a better;" and that "another branch of his scheme was to corrupt the morals of the people generally, in order to create an indif-

(1) Horace Walpole has left us the following amusing account of this celebrated politician:—"Winnington had been bred a Tory, but had left them in the height of Sir R. Walpole's power: when that minister sunk, he had injudiciously, and to please my Lady Townsend, who had then the greatest influence over him, declined visiting him, in a manner to offend the sturdy old Whigs; and his jolly way of laughing at his own want of principles had revolted all the graver sort, who thought deficiency of honesty too sacred and profitable a commodity to be profaned and turned into ridicule. He had infinitely more wit than any man I ever knew, and it was as ready and quick as it was constant and unmeditated. His style was a little brutal; his courage not at all so; his good humour inexhaustible: it was impossible to hate or to trust him."—*Memoirs of the Reign of George II.* In a letter to Sir H. Mann, dated April 25th, 1746, Walpole gives a circumstantial account of Winnington's death, and attributes it entirely to the bad treatment of Thomson, whom he contemptuously describes as "One Thomson, a quack, whose foundation of method could not be guessed but by a general contradiction to all received practice." Of this physician (who was the friend of Fielding and other literary men of the period) more will be said hereafter (see chap. xxi.) Thomson's treatment of Winnington gave rise to many pamphlets.

ference to religion and posterity." To these impudent assertions Fielding replied in a pamphlet full of clever retort and convincing argument.[1] The friends and representatives of the deceased statesman were not contented, it seems, to leave the matter here, as they might very safely have done. They took the extreme step of offering a reward of £50 for the discovery of the writer of the libel, certifying (somewhat unnecessarily) that no such production had been found amongst Mr. Winnington's papers, and expressing an opinion that it had been put into circulation with a most treasonable view.[2]

It has been seen that Fielding did not spare contemporary journalists, and it followed, as a natural corollary, that they did not spare *him*. Whilst he looked down upon them with the lofty contempt which it was natural for a man of genius to feel towards an inferior gang of scribblers, they revenged themselves by discharging at him volley after volley of abuse, which it was perfectly impossible for him to answer. The follies and irregularities of his life were absurdly magnified. He was taunted with his poverty; accused of corrupt motives; and assailed with personal insults of the grossest character. Whatever might have been the faults and errors of his earlier years, the penalty which he was made to pay for them was unreasonably severe. They were wantonly thrown in his teeth upon all occasions; and his enemies, instead of engaging in a fair controversy with him, collected together all the scandalous tales that had ever been circulated about him, and lampooned him without mercy.

Party feeling at this time ran high, and private character was savagely calumniated by some of the creatures who contributed to the newspapers. Fielding appears to have been attacked with a peculiar malignity. His assailants

(1) A proper Answer to a scurrilous Libel, entitled, An Apology, &c. By the Editor of "The Jacobite Journal." 1747.

(2) See Gentleman's Magazine, December, 1747, and February, 1748.

exhausted the vocabulary of scurrility, and indulged in the most wanton personalities. Of the kind of abuse to which he was subject, a characteristic specimen is preserved in "The Gentleman's Magazine" for March, 1748. In giving his customary extracts from the journals for this month, Mr. Urban observes, that "they are pretty much taken up with personal altercations." "The Jacobite Journal," he continues, "having mentioned Porcupinus Pelagius, author of 'The Episcopade,'[1] with contempt, Mr. Pelagius begs room to pay his respects to the *press-informer*, whose character he describes at great length to this effect in 'Old England,'[2] March 3." Amongst other elegant expressions of abuse, Fielding is then described as "A needy vagrant, who long hunted after fortunes, scored deep at taverns, abused his benefactors in the administration of public affairs, from the state to the stage; hackneyed for booksellers and newspapers; lampooned the virtuous; ridiculed all the inferior clergy in the *dry unnatural character* of Parson Adams, related the adventures of footmen, and wrote the lives of thief-catchers; bilked every lodging for ten years together, and every alehouse and every chandler's-shop in every neighbourhood; defrauded and reviled all his acquaintance, and meeting and possessing universal infamy and contempt."

This is a character with a vengeance! but the malignity of the libel deprived it altogether of its sting. Fielding replied to it with a quiet forbearance and magnanimity, which prove how properly he appreciated its probable

(1) And also "The Causidicade," noticed in p. 197. The biographer is unable to identify Porcupinus Pelagius; but the works to which this pseudonym appeared are very contemptible. A correspondent of Richardson's (Mr. Edwards) writes: "The Ruttiad, the Causidicad, and other foolish things which have come out with this termination, in imitation of 'The Dunciad,' have given people a surfeit of, and even an aversion to, *omne quod exit in ad*."

(2) "Old England; or, the Constitutional Journal, was a weekly paper, written to oppose the ministry which succeeded to the long reign of Sir Robert Walpole. It commenced in February, 1743, and had many contributors; of whom William Guthrie, the author of 'The Geographical Grammar,' and who died in 1769, was the principal."—*Drake's Essays on Periodical Papers*, vol. i.

influence, in the following brief notice of the proceedings in his *Court of Criticism*:—"One Porcupine Pillage came into the court, and crying out, 'I am the author of the Causidicade, Processionade, Triumvirade, 'Piscopade, and Old England,' threw a great shovelful of dirt at his honour, *but luckily none of it hit him;* he was immediately seized, brought to the bar, and severely reprimanded by the court."

It is not the business of a biographer to palliate or explain away proved delinquencies; but, in the case of Fielding, it is obvious that the accusations so wantonly heaped upon him by envious rivals or political opponents were, for the most part, groundless slanders. That the world had frequently found him guilty of impecuniosity is undoubtedly true; for misfortune, privation, and remorse, had never taught him even the common rudiments of prudence. But that he had ever designedly committed a base or fraudulent action, is not only unproved, but—taking into consideration his high principle and open and generous disposition—is to the last degree improbable. As to the charge of "defrauding and reviling acquaintances," it is notorious that no man was more fortunate than Fielding in retaining through life the esteem and regard of his personal friends. And who were those friends? Not the vicious or the frivolous, certainly; but men like the pious Lyttleton—the generous Allen, whose name is a synonyme for benevolence—and honest, high-minded Hogarth. It is hardly necessary to say more,—for the libeller who denounces the character of Adams as "dry and unnatural," will scarcely be received as an authority when deposing to the nonliquidation of an ale-house score. The libel itself is cited rather to show the spirit which animated the lowest order of political scribes at that period, and the kind of warfare to which the journalist was then exposed.

Undeterred by personalities, the editor of "The Jacobite

Journal" steadily pursued the object for which the journal had been started,—the ridicule of Jacobite principles, and the exposure of the intrigues of Jacobitism. As in "The True Patriot," so here he displayed a breadth of humour and a liveliness of expression which contrasted most favourably with the dull declamation of most of his contemporaries. In the fifteenth number (Saturday, March 12th, 1748), there is a favourable specimen of his pointed satire, in an alleged version of a new poem in three books, "*De Arte Jacobiticâ.*" After the invocation, come the following characteristic instructions:—

"First of all, learn the art of lying and misrepresenting. *Fling dirt enough, and some will certainly stick.* You may venture to abuse the king himself; but do this with caution, for the sake of your ears and head. But spare not his ministers—give a wrong turn to their most plausible actions. If they prosecute the war with vigour, swear they are neglectful; if they desire peace, call them cowards; if war, call them bloodthirsty, and seekers after the ruin of their country. . . . . The next thing you are to remember, is to feign a love to your country and religion: the less you have of both, the better you can feign both. O liberty! O virtue! O my country! Remember to have such expressions as these constantly in your mouth: words do wonders with silly people. But do not too openly discover your design of ruining your country by changing the religion of it, and introducing arbitrary power and a popish king. Do not be caught in your own trap. Remember the end of Perillus, who was burnt in his own bull; and you may be ruined yourself before you bring about the ruin of your country. Keep, therefore, to general terms, and never descend to particulars: you may wish things went better. You can't tell, but surely 'twas better in good Queen Anne's days,—or in the bacchanalian times of Charles,—or in the holy martyr's reign. At the mentioning the martyr you may drop a tear; and if you are sure of your silly company, you may swear the present ministry cut off his head. Anachronism in politics is no more faulty than anachronism in poetry. If you are among good and orthodox churchmen, you may swear the Church of England is in danger under a Church of England king, and cannot be secured unless the popish Pretender is restored. Paradoxes in conversation are to be supported with confidence and sophistry. Remember, likewise, that you frequently inculcate the divine right of kings to do wrong, and that they are accountable to God only for being devils upon earth."

"Mr. Trott-plaid's Jacobite Journal" made its appearance regularly every Saturday during the year 1748, till the month of November, when it was discontinued. In his last number the journalist gave substantial and satisfactory reasons for withdrawing from his post. Jacobitism, which had been dangerous at the end of the former year,—when England was involved in a sanguinary war, with enemies ready to invade her on the slightest encouragement held out by a native faction,—was now, on the restoration of peace (ratified by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle), no longer formidable. It was useless to wage a relentless war with a crushed and powerless party; and accordingly "The Jacobite Journal," like "The True Patriot," was given up as soon as the circumstances which called it into being had changed. Fielding's enemies, indeed, gave another reason for the discontinuance of the paper, and also insinuated that he was actuated by corrupt motives. They said that he had been discarded for inability and buffoonery, and that his salary was stopped at Michaelmas.[1] That Fielding had been all along in the pay of the government, or, as they chose to call him, a "press-informer," was the common cry of opposition news-writers. But this accusation rests upon no proof, and, indeed, contrasts very strangely with the neglect which he unquestionably experienced at the hands of persons in power. Services less conspicuous than his had been heretofore rewarded by commissionerships and pensions; and talents inferior to those which he had employed in the cause of the house of Hanover, had been thought worthy of ministerial recognition. He might, therefore, have honestly and fairly hoped that his labours would have found some more permanent recompence than the pence of his subscribers. But to assert that he prostituted his pen for pay—that he was a mere government scribe, hired to write up or

(1) Gentleman's Magazine, November, 1748.

write down particular opinions—was a most unjust and illiberal insinuation. His heart was in his work; he expressed his genuine opinions—opinions to which he had consistently clung through evil and through good report; he started his journals in times of difficulty and of danger, and only ceased writing when he believed there was no further necessity for his labours.[1]

Grave anxieties for the future he must, at this period of his life, have reasonably entertained. He was now above forty, and frequent attacks of the gout disabled him altogether from pursuing his profession. To have relied upon his pen for the means of supporting his wife and family would have been almost madness. Literature is at all times but a precarious trade—a fragile staff to lean upon; and if it be so to the strong, what would it have been to the confirmed valetudinarian, whose body was sometimes so racked with pain that it was impossible for him to hold a pen! Without some regular employment—some certain means of subsistence—Fielding's prospects were dark indeed. In this extremity he was induced to accept an office which was then considered disreputable, but which was the only appointment his friends were able to procure for him. Such as it was, he owed it, not to his writings on behalf of the government, but to the inter-

(1) A scurrilous epitaph on Mr. Trott-plaid appeared in the "Old England" newspaper of November 20th, from the pen of Fielding's bitter antagonist—"Porcupine Pillage." The following is the first stanza of this contemptible doggrel:—

> "Beneath this stone
> Lies Trott-plaid John,
> His *length of chin and nose;*
> His crazy brain,
> Unhum'rous vein,
> In verse and eke in prose."

The peculiarity in Fielding's features here alluded to (viz., the prominence of nose and chin) is very observable in the portrait sketched by Hogarth from recollection, and in the miniature preserved by his daughter, and engraved in Hutchins' "History of Dorset," vol. iii., and Nichols' "Library Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century."

cessions of his schoolfellow and friend, George Lyttleton, who had been made one of the lords of the Treasury in 1744. Through his powerful advocacy, towards the close of the year 1748, our great novelist was nominated to the office and emoluments of a justice of the peace for Middlesex and Westminster—a sphere of duty in which he speedily earned for himself credit and distinction.

CHAPTER XIX.

FIELDING A JUSTICE OF THE PEACE.—CRIME AND CRIMINALS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

[1748—1749.]

FIELDING appears to have commenced his duties as an acting magistrate for the county of Middlesex, and city and liberties of Westminster, in the month of December, 1748.[1] The office of a paid Middlesex magistrate was not at this time held in very high estimation. According to the popular notion, his worship generally realised a large income by mulcting rich offenders, whilst he upheld the terrors of his office by sending the poor ones to Bridewell or Newgate. The nick-name conferred on him—that of a *trading* justice—expressed the character of his office. He was paid by fees—certainly the most objectionable mode of remunerating a public functionary; and the commercial value of his post rose and fell with the depression or prosperity of crime. The portrait of the justice of the peace in "Hudibras"—perhaps not overdrawn for the period at

(1) In "The General Advertizer" for December 10, 1748, it is stated that one John Salter was committed to the Gatehouse, the day before, by Henry Fielding, Esq., "of Bow Street, Covent Garden, formerly Sir Thomas de Veil's." The illness and retirement of an esteemed magistrate, about this time, had probably caused the vacancy which the novelist was promoted to fill; for in "The General Advertizer" of December 19, 1748, appears the following flattering obituary:—"On Saturday last died, after a few days' illness, aged seventy-eight, at *his house in Bow Street, Covent Garden*, John Poulson, Esq., who hath been one of his Majesty's justices of the county of Middlesex, and city and liberties of Westminster, for upwards of thirty-seven years. He was a loving and affectionate husband, a tender parent, a good master, a true and faithful friend, and charitable to the oppressed, which makes him greatly lamented by all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance." And in the same paper we read, that on the day of Justice Poulson's decease, one John Fandley "was committed to the Gatehouse by Henry Fielding, Esq."

which it was sketched—was considered applicable, in its most prominent features, to the same officer administering justice in the eighteenth century:—

"An old dull sot, who toll'd the clock
For many years at Bridewell dock,
At Westminster and Hicks' Hall,
And Hiccius Doctius played in all;
Where, in all governments and times,
He'd been both friend and foe to crimes.

. . . .

Let out the stocks and whipping-post,
And cage, to those who gave him most;
Imposed a tax on bakers' ears,
And for false weights on chandelers;
Made victuallers and vintners fine
For arbitrary ale and wine;
But was a kind and constant friend
To all that regularly offend."

Most of Fielding's friends looked upon his acceptance of such an office as a degradation; whilst his enemies affected to compassionate him. Paul Whitehead, in a poetical epistle to Dr. Thomson, has contemptuously referred to the literary magistrate,[1] and narrated an anecdote, in a note, which, if authentic, shows the estimation in which the office he filled had been formerly held by men of letters. "It is reported," he says, "that during the time Mr. Addison was secretary of state, when his old friend and ally, Ambrose Phillips, applied to him for some preferment, the great man very coolly answered, that 'He thought he had already provided for him by making him justice for Westminster;' to which the bard, with some indignation, replied, 'Though

(1) "Rich in these gifts, why should I wish for more?
Why barter conscience for superfluous store?
Or haunt the *levée* of a purse-proud peer
To rob poor F—d—g of the curule chair."

And, after relating the anecdote printed in the text, the satirist adds:—"However great men in our days may practise the secretary's prudence, certain it is the person here pointed at was very far from making a precedent of his brother poet's *principles*."

poetry was a trade he *could not* live by, yet he scorned to owe his subsistence to another that he *ought not* to live by.'"

That the discreditable practices of many of his predecessors had made the office disreputable, Fielding well knew; and he also soon found out, to his great disquietude, how difficult it was for any man in such a situation to escape from grave imputations and ill-natured criticism. The proceedings of the Middlesex justice had too long been associated with fraud and extortion to permit him an exemption from calumny. But in his case, it may be maintained, without any fear of serious contradiction, that the aspersions of his unscrupulous enemies are as little to be trusted as the idle accusations of the thoughtless and censorious. It is more than probable that he might have made his office more remunerative if he had followed the example of some of his judicial brethren; but his proud and independent spirit shrank with indignant sensitiveness from any practice which savoured of meanness or dishonour.[1]

(1) A short manual, written by the celebrated Bow Street justice, Sir Thomas de Veil, and published after his death, for the instruction of Middlesex magistrates, illustrates the unsatisfactory position of "the trading justice," the dangers and temptations to which he was exposed, and the small consideration in which he was held:—

"A justice of the peace should be firm in his resolution to act according to the several statutes relating to the office of a justice, and not be biassed by entreaties or shaken by threatenings. He *is to avoid familiarity with the constables*, who are too apt to take great liberty upon such freedoms, which greatly lessen the dignity of a magistrate.

"A justice of the peace must be very careful to distinguish well what is cognisable before him and what is not; for the Old Bailey solicitors, &c., make it their business to entangle him in difficulties, and do very often bring matters before him in a very courteous manner, and use the most plausible arguments to induce him to act in a thing which they at the same time know is only cognisable in the courts of Westminster Hall; but whenever they prevail, and have effected their design, they immediately cause an action to be brought against the justice for concerning himself where he had no jurisdiction. . . . . .

"As to justice's fees or perquisites, the best rule is to observe strictly the oath of office; which tells you what you may safely take yourself, or suffer your clerk to receive for you; which last method is best suitable to the dignity of that honourable station. For though a justice of the peace be never so just in taking only what he has a right to, yet the receiving that himself brings a contempt on the office, as well as on the justice that doth it; and makes those persons who

Amidst all the temptations of his position, he maintained the integrity of his character, and preferred an honest poverty to venal affluence. In the introduction to the last production of his pen, "The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon," he has taken the pains to vindicate his character, and to lay bare the secrets of his office, in a manner which shows how keenly he felt any reflections on his integrity. A portion of that vindication will not be out of place here:—

"I will confess," he says, "that my private affairs, at the beginning of the winter (1752-3), had but a gloomy aspect; for I had not plundered the public or the poor of those sums which men, who are always ready to plunder both as much as they can, have been pleased to suspect me of taking; on the contrary, by composing, instead of inflaming the quarrels of porters and beggars (which I blush when I say hath not been universally practised), and by refusing to take a shilling from a man who most undoubtedly would not have had another left, I had reduced an income of about £500 a year, *of the dirtiest money upon earth*, to little more than £300, a considerable portion of which remained with my clerk; and, indeed, if the whole had done so, as it ought, he would be but ill paid for sitting sixteen hours in the twenty-four in the most unwholesome, as well as nauseous air in the universe, and which hath in his case corrupted a good constitution without contaminating his morals."

In a note to this passage Fielding enters more into detail.

"A predecessor of mine," he adds, "used to boast that he made £1000 a year in his office; but how he did this (if indeed he did it) is to me a secret. His clerk, now mine, told me I had more business than he had ever known there; I am sure I had as much as any man could do. The truth is, the fees are so very low, when any are

are before him look on him with disdain, when after their mean low way of thinking, they believe they can bias the justice with a shilling, which often makes them take indecent liberties, till they find that the gentleman they are before acts in a different character. Nor would I have a justice of the peace, when he has a clerk, make a bargain with him that may savour of mercenary views—such as giving so much in the shilling to the clerk, &c., which spurs him on for his own interest to look out indecently, and at the expense of his master's reputation, for business."—*Observations on the Practice of a Justice of the Peace; intended for such Gentlemen as design to Act for Middlesex or Westminster.* By Sir Thomas de Veil, Knt. London, 1747.

due, and so much is done for nothing, that if a single justice of the peace had business enough to employ twenty clerks, neither he nor they would get much by their labour. The public will not, therefore, I hope, think I betray a secret when I inform them that I received from the government a small pension out of the public service money, which I believe indeed would have been larger, had my great patron been convinced of an error which I have heard him utter more than once. that he could not indeed say that the acting as a principal justice of peace in Westminster was on all occasions very desirable, but that all the world knew it was a very lucrative office."

In a country where wealth, or the outward manifestation of it, has been always necessary to secure a large amount of respect, the influence of the magistrate was naturally affected by his position, and that to a most mischievous extent. "In some countries, perhaps," it is observed by Fielding, "you may find an overgrown tyrant, who lords it over his neighbours and tenants with despotic sway, and who is as regardless of the law as he is ignorant of it: but as to the magistrate of a less fortune, and more knowledge, every riotous, independent butcher and baker, with two or three thousand pounds in his pocket, laughs at his power, and every pettyfogger makes him tremble."

Whatever might be the opinion entertained of Fielding's office by his contemporaries, it is not unworthy of remark, that he has himself, by his own forcible and inimitable satire, contributed to render it odious in the eyes of posterity. However irreproachable his own conduct as a Middlesex magistrate, he did not spare the order to which he belonged. It is in his pages that we find the ignorance, rapacity, and meanness of the "trading justices" more relentlessly exposed, and more minutely described, than in the productions of any other writer of the period. After his appointment to the office, and when he had for some time diligently performed its duties, he did not scruple to embody in one immortal portrait all the popular prejudices against his fraternity. The sketch alluded to is that of

Justice Thrasher, in "Amelia,"—a character which was perhaps drawn from some too well-known original:—

"On the 1st of April," says the novelist, "in the year ——, the watchman of a certain parish (I know not particularly which) within the liberty of Westminster, brought several persons, whom they had apprehended the preceding night, before Jonathan Thrasher, Esq., one of the justices of the peace for that liberty. . . . Mr. Thrasher, ... the justice before whom the prisoners above-mentioned were now brought, had some few imperfections in his magisterial capacity. I own I have been sometimes inclined to think that this office of justice of peace requires some knowledge of the law; for this simple reason, because in every case which comes before him, he is to judge and act according to law. Again, as these laws are contained in a great variety of books, the statutes which relate to the office of a justice of peace making of themselves at least two large volumes in folio, and that part of his jurisdiction which is founded on the common law being dispersed in an hundred volumes, I cannot conceive how this knowledge should be acquired without reading; and yet, certain it is, Mr. Thrasher never read one syllable of the matter.

"This, perhaps, was a defect—but this was not all: for when mere ignorance is to decide a point between two litigants, it will always be an even chance whether it decides right or wrong; but sorry am I to say, right was often in a much worse situation than this, and wrong hath often had five hundred to one on his side before that magistrate, who, if he was ignorant of the law of England, was yet well versed in the laws of nature. He perfectly well understood that fundamental principle so strongly laid down in the institutes of the learned Rochefoucault, by which the duty of self-love is so strongly enforced, and every man is taught to consider himself as the centre of gravity, and to attract all things thither. To speak the truth plainly, *the justice was never indifferent in a cause, but when he could get nothing on either side.*" [1]

To render such an office as this in any degree respectable, and to perform its duties with honour, fidelity, and zeal,

(1) The portrait of Justice Thrasher was not the first or only satire on the paid magistrates of Middlesex which proceeded from Fielding's pen. Many years before the *res augustæ* had compelled him to belong to the fraternity—before he had studied the law, or been called to the Bar—he had perpetrated a dramatic caricature of a Bow Street justice. The sketch of Justice Squeezum, in the comedy of "The Coffee-house Politician; or, the Justice caught in his own Trap" (see p. 32), preceded that of Justice Thrasher by a long interval of time; but the satire is of the same description, and equally forcible and pointed. We

required, it will be admitted, more than ordinary mental vigour. An over-sensitive nature might have shrunk with disgust from its disagreeable duties, and the still more disagreeable reputation which clung to it. But Fielding was no sentimentalist. Like many other great writers, he was by no means enamoured of a life of seclusion. He was as anxious as any man could be to discharge the most responsible duties of the private citizen, and to bear his part in the active business of life. As a magistrate, he saw that there were many ways in which he could render himself useful to the public; and this consideration was of itself sufficient to reconcile him to an office which had

quote a fragment of one scene, as a specimen of Fielding's notion of the habits and character of a "trading justice," before he had made a personal acquaintance with the duties of the office :—

Act II. Scene 2.

Squeezum, Quill, Staff.

Quill. Sir, here 's Mr. Staff, the reforming constable.

Staff. An't please your worship, we have been at the gaming-house in the alley, and have taken six prisoners, whereof we discharged two, who had your worship's license.

Squeezum. What are the others?

Staff. One is a half-pay officer; another an attorney's clerk; and the other two are young gentlemen of the Temple.

Squeezum. Discharge the officer and the clerk; there is nothing to be got by the army or the law: the one hath no money, and the other will part with none. But be not too forward to quit the Templars.

Staff. Asking your worship's pardon, I don't care to run my finger into the lion's mouth. I would not willingly have to do with any limb of the law.

Squeezum. Fear not—these bear no nearer affinity to lawyers than a militia regiment of squires do to soldiers: the one gets no more by his gown than the other by his sword. These are men that bring estates to the Temple, instead of getting them there.

Staff. Nay, they are bedaubed with lace as fine as lords.

Squeezum. Never fear a lawyer in lace: the lawyer that sets out in lace, always ends in rags.

Staff. I'll secure them. We went to the house where your worship commanded us, and heard the dice in the streets; but there were two coaches with coronets on them at the door, so we thought it proper not to go in.

Squeezum. You did right. *The laws are turnpikes, only made to stop people who walk on foot, and not to interrupt those who drive through them in their coaches.* The laws are like a game at loo, where a blaze of court-cards is always secure, and the knaves are the safest cards in the pack.

sunk, and perhaps justly sunk, so low in popular estimation. Although he looked upon the fees by which he was remunerated as "some of the dirtiest money upon earth," and doubtless felt humiliated in being obliged to take them at all, he neither disliked nor despised the important functions which devolved on him. On the contrary, it will be shown that, as long as his health permitted, he discharged those functions not merely with assiduity, but with hearty good-will; and that the services which he rendered to the public were of so important a kind as to entitle him to the respect of posterity, if he had never written a line.

The times are strangely altered since Henry Fielding presided in the justice-room at Bow Street, committing rogues and vagabonds to Bridewell, and highwaymen to Newgate. Every facility was then offered to the proceedings of the lawless depredator and bold-faced villain. The streets of the metropolis were dangerous after nightfall. When a peaceful tradesman had to take a journey of fifty or sixty miles, he made his will before he took his place in the mail. Notorious highwaymen and swindlers swaggered about in public places, winking at the officers of justice, and enjoying the admiration of the rabble. To prevent the commission of crime, and to detect and secure offenders, the very feeblest means were employed. The nocturnal guardians of the ill-lighted, narrow streets of London were infirm old men, who would have been chargeable to a parish, and shut up in a workhouse, if they had not been employed in protecting the lives and property of the devoted inhabitants of the metropolis. Fielding himself has admirably described the London watchmen of these days, and has not, in all probability, exaggerated their impotence and incapacity:—"To begin," he says, "I think as low as I well can, with the watchmen in our metropolis, who, being to guard our streets by night from thieves and robbers—an office which at least requires

strength of body—are chosen out of those poor old decrepid people who are, from their want of bodily strength, rendered incapable of getting a livelihood by work. These men, armed only with a pole, *which some of them are scarce able to lift,* are to secure the persons and houses of his Majesty's subjects from the attacks of gangs of young, bold, stout, desperate, and well-armed villains.

> '*Quæ non viribus istis*
> *Munera conveniunt.*'

If the poor old fellows should run away from such enemies, no one, I think, can wonder, unless it be that they were able to make their escape."[1]

When such men were the only guardians of the night, it was easy enough for the practised thief to lighten the home-returning reveller of his watch and purse. If the booty were not delivered up in pursuance of a civil request, the unhappy wight was soon stretched upon the pavement, stunned and stupified—sometimes even deprived of life—whilst the thief walked quietly away to pursue his profession in some other locality. The Bow Street officers, who were more immediately charged with the apprehension of desperate offenders, were also distinguished for their peculiar remissness and capriciousness in the performance of their duties. No one knew how or why, but, to the great scandal of public justice, known offenders—highwaymen, pickpockets, and footpads—were often at large for months after warrants had been issued for their apprehension,—walking about London without disguise or concealment, frequenting their nightly haunts of dissipation, and pursuing, without let or hindrance, their lawless calling. The truth was, that the thief then belonged to a powerful corporation, with its army of spies and desperadoes, and hosts of secret allies. Oftentimes the officer of justice was himself little better than the thief's confederate; but

(1) Amelia, book i. c. 2.

oftener still prudence compelled him to refrain from meddling with a notorious ruffian. "How long," says Fielding, in his treatise on The Causes of the Increase of Robbers, "have we known highwaymen reign in this kingdom after they have been publicly known as such? Have not some of these committed robberies in open day-light, in the sight of many people, and have afterwards rode solemnly and triumphantly through the neighbouring towns, without any danger or molestation? This happens to every rogue who has become eminent for his audaciousness, and is thought to be desperate; and is, in a more particular manner, the case of great and numerous gangs, many of which have for a long time committed the most open outrages in defiance of the law. Officers of justice have owned to me that they have passed by such, *with warrants in their pockets against them*, without daring to apprehend them; and, indeed, they could not be blamed for not exposing themselves to sure destruction: for it is a melancholy truth, that, at this very day, a rogue no sooner gives the alarm, within certain purlieus, than twenty or thirty armed villains are found ready to come to his assistance."[1]

(1) In one of his letters to Sir Horace Mann, in 1742, Horace Walpole gives the following frightful picture of the conduct of the officers of justice in these days: "There has lately been the most shocking scene of murder imaginable. A parcel of *drunken* constables took it into their heads to put the laws in execution against *disorderly* persons, and so took up every woman they met, till they had collected five or six-and-twenty, all of whom they thrust into St. Martin's round-house, where they kept them all night, with doors and windows closed. The poor creatures, who could not stir or breathe, screamed as long as they had any breath left, begging at least for water · one poor wretch said she was worth eighteen pence, and would gladly give it for a draught of water—but in vain! So well did they keep them there, that in the morning four were found stifled to death, two died soon after, and a dozen more are in a shocking way. In short, it is horrid to think what the poor creatures suffered; several of them were beggars, who, from having no lodging, were necessarily found in the street, and others honest labouring women. One of the dead was a poor washerwoman, big with child, who was retiring home late from washing. One of the constables is taken, and others absconded; but I question if any of them will suffer death, *though the greatest criminals in this town are the officers of justice;* there is no tyranny they do not exercise, no villany of which they do not partake."

Highwaymen and street-robbers were, however, at this period by no means the vulgar and common-place creatures they have since become. Desperate men then "took to the road" as the legitimate and congenial occupation of an unquiet and adventurous spirit. Horace Walpole gives us a fair picture of a professional plunderer of this period, in whose fate (as may be seen by the newspapers of the day) a remarkable interest was excited, particularly amongst the fair sex. Writing to Horace Mann, in August, 1750, he says:—"I have been in town for a day or two, and heard no conversation but about M'Lean, a fashionable highwayman, who is just taken, and who robbed me amongst others. . . . . His history is very particular, for he confesses everything, and is so little of a hero, that he cries and begs. . . . . His father was an Irish Dean; his brother is a Calvinist minister in great esteem at the Hague. He himself was a grocer, but losing a wife that he loved extremely, about two years ago, and a little girl, he quitted his business with £200 in his pocket, which he soon spent, and then took to the road, with only one companion, Plunket, a journeyman apothecary. . . . . M'Lean had a lodging in St. James' Street, over against White's, and another at Chelsea; Plunket one in Jermyn Street; and their faces are as well known about St. James' Street as any gentleman's who lives in that quarter, and perhaps goes upon the road too." A few days later he writes to the same correspondent:—"M'Lean is condemned, and will hang. . . . . His profession grows no joke: I was sitting in my own dining-room on Sunday night, the clock had not struck eleven, when I heard a loud cry of 'Stop thief!' A highwayman had attacked a postchaise in Piccadilly: the fellow was pursued, rode over the watchman, almost killed him, and escaped." In another letter, written nearly two years later, a still more fearful picture of the state of London in the middle of the last century, is given by the same writer:—"It is shock-

ing," he says, "to think what a shambles this country is grown: seventeen were executed this morning, after having murdered the turnkey on Friday night, and almost forced open Newgate. One is forced to travel, even at noon, as if one were going to battle."

It is impossible to avoid coming to the conclusion that the frightful fertility of crime in these days was increased by the very means resorted to for its repression—that of indiscriminate severity of punishment. During the reigns of the first two princes of the house of Hanover, the life of man was rated by the legislature as a thing of slight importance, when compared with the preservation of property. Whenever any offence against private property increased to an inconvenient degree,—such as forgery, shoplifting, nay, even the wilful destruction of trees planted for ornament,[1] or the cutting a hop-bind in a hop-plantation,[2]—it was made capital. George II. is said to have expressed an opinion that a fine young oak-tree was worth more than a man's life; the oak could not be replaced, the man might.[3] At every assize scores of men—aye, and of boys and women—were "told off" for the gallows with the utmost indifference; and even the great panegyrist of English jurisprudence (Mr. Justice Blackstone) ventured mildly, in his "Commentaries," to draw

(1) 9 Geo. I. c. 22.

(2) 10 Geo. II. c. 32.

(3) Lord Hervey's Memoirs. Although the merciful spirit of George II. has been commended by Fielding and other writers, he was in truth callously regardless of human life. The most notorious instance of his inhumanity was his obstinate refusal to grant the mercy of the crown to a young Oxford student, named Paul Wills, convicted in September, 1749, of a trifling forgery, only because Chief Justice Willes, who had tried the case, and had recommended the youth to his mercy, belonged to the party of the Prince of Wales, with whom his majesty was then at daggers drawn. Wills was executed, says Horace Walpole, "for the following scarce-to-be-called forgery: being sued by a Mrs. Crooke for a debt of only £9, and odd money, W. altered the date of the year in the bond to the ensuing year, to evade the suit for twelve months."—*Memoirs of the Reign of George II.* Such was the value of man's life in the middle of the eighteenth century!

attention to "the melancholy truth that among the variety of actions which men are liable to commit, no less than a hundred and sixty have been declared by act of parliament to be felonies, without benefit of clergy, or, in other words, to be worthy of instant death."

This severity of punishment—unknown to the more merciful spirit of the English common law—it is needless to say, defeated its own object. The highwayman felt no hesitation in adding the crime of murder to that of robbery, when he knew that it would not alter his punishment if detected. The punishment of death lost much of its disgrace and terror when there perished on the same gallows with the brutal murderer, a harmless lad who had cut down a tree, or a poor servant girl who, in a moment of temptation, had committed a trifling robbery. But the greatest mischief which resulted from this extreme severity of the laws, was the reluctance naturally felt by judges, juries, and prosecutors to carry them into execution. Technical objections of the most absurd description were permitted by the former to prevail—*in favorem vitæ*. Juries stultified themselves, and disregarded the oath they had taken by refusing to convict on the clearest evidence, or by committing the pious falsehood of finding a one pound note of less value than one shilling. All who could escape from prosecuting were too glad to avoid the terrible responsibility of sending a fellow-creature to the scaffold; and even when the thief had been brought to trial, the timid and the tender-hearted would often conceal some important fact to favour his acquittal. Such a state of things favoured the hardened criminal immensely. He chuckled when his counsel discovered a convenient flaw in the indictment, or adroitly managed to shut out some important evidence; but if defeated here, he had still the hope remaining that either the prosecutor or the jury would take a lenient view of his case, rather than have him hanged. If he had committed a serious robbery, and the facts were too clear to warrant an acquittal, still a

merciful-minded jury would take the value of the articles into consideration, and solemnly determine that they were not worth a shilling. Instead of being hanged, he would then be sentenced to a whipping—a public whipping at the cart's tail. Although the sentence had a disagreeable sound, the thief chuckled again, for he knew that the flogging, like the trial, would be only a farce. When the bare-backed ruffian was tied to the cart, his associates crowded the streets, jostled the hangman, and adroitly impeded his operations. If necessary, a riot upon a small scale was got up to defeat the execution of the sentence; until at length the lucky thief, uninjured by the cat-o'-nine-tails, was untied from the cart, and perhaps the very same day renewed his nefarious trade.

The whip was much in vogue at this period. If a prentice-lad got into bad company and robbed his master, he was publicly whipped through the street in which his master dwelt; and if he was not a hardened criminal, with hosts of abandoned associates to protect him, the lash was laid on with savage severity, whilst in character he was ruined and disgraced for life. Women, too, were whipped—publicly whipped at noonday through the crowded streets of London, in defiance of public decency, and to the disgrace of the national character. And what was the result of these brutal punishments? Did they deter from the commission of crime, or excite a wholesome respect for the law and its administrators? The answer may be found in the criminal records of the period, which are filled with details of cruelty and brutality, happily unparalleled at the present day.

As the frequency of capital punishments was calculated to weaken that respect for the sanctity of human life which it is the interest of governments to inculcate, so the manner in which these punishments were carried into effect was at once disgraceful to the law and demoralizing to the public. With a pedantic barbarity, as shocking as it was absurd,

female offenders, in a particular class of cases which came under the denomination of *treasons*, were burnt alive. Coining was one of these offences, and so late as 1777, Sir William Meredith related in parliament an instance of a little girl, not fourteen years of age, who, for an alleged participation in this offence, was on the point of undergoing this cruel punishment.[1] Revolting punishments were in these days accompanied by indulgences almost as revolting. On their way from Newgate to Tyburn, criminals were permitted to drink, and were often "turned off" in a state of intoxication. Poor wretches, who, for slight offences, were hurried from the scene of life, buried their senses in forgetfulness, ere they encountered the pangs of dissolution. The following brief notice of an execution in the year 1750, seems to speak trumpet-tongued against the administration and execution of the laws in the reign of George II.:—"Executed at Tyburn, July 6, Elizabeth Banks, for stripping a child; Catherine Conway, for forging a seaman's ticket; and Margaret Harvey, for robbing her master. *They were all drunk*, contrary

(1) "By this nickname of treason, however, there lies at this moment in Newgate, under sentence to be burnt alive, a girl just turned of fourteen; at her master's bidding, she hid some whitewashed farthings behind her stays, on which the jury found her guilty, as an accomplice with her master in the treason. The master was hanged last Wednesday; and the faggots all lay ready—no reprieve came till just as the cart was setting out, and the girl would have been burnt alive on the same day, had it not been for the humane but casual interference of Lord Weymouth! . . . . Sir, we are taught to execrate the fires of Smithfield, and are we lighting them now to burn a poor harmless child for hiding a whitewashed farthing! And yet this barbarous sentence, which ought to make men shudder at the thought of shedding blood for such trivial causes, is brought as a reason for more hanging and burning. It was recommended to me, not many days ago, to bring in a bill to make it treason to coin copper, as well as gold and silver. Yet, in the formation of these sanguinary laws, humanity, religion, and policy, are thrown out of the question. This one wise argument is always sufficient; if you hang for one fault, why not for another? If for stealing a sheep, why not for a cow or a horse? If for a shilling, why not for a handkerchief that is worth eighteen pence? and so on. We therefore ought to oppose the increase of these new laws; the more, because every fresh one begets twenty others."—*Speech of Sir W. Meredith, in the House of Commons, May* 13, 1777, *in committee on a bill creating a new capital felony.*

to an express order of the court of aldermen against serving them with strong liquors."[1] Here were three women, condemned to undergo the same punishment for offences of very different magnitude—permitted, most probably, by a kind of rude compassion, to yield up in a state of insensibility the life which the law so wantonly deprived them of. Public executions, even now-a-days, though inflicted at rare intervals, and for atrocious crimes, are obviously not attended with much profit to the beholders; but what must they have been when, to the ordinary scenes of riot and levity, was superadded the spectacle of a human being, stupified by intoxication, on the verge of eternity.[2]

Such was the aspect of crime in the metropolis, and such the state of our criminal code, when Fielding commenced the exercise of his magisterial functions. That he would apply his powerful mind to the exposure and correction of the abuses within his reach, might have been safely predicted by any one at all acquainted with his active temperament and earnest disposition. That he would, however, have been equally successful in the performance of the laborious and irksome duties of his office, might have seemed more problematical. Although not old in years,

(1) Gentleman's Magazine, July, 1750.

(2) Fielding was too sensible a man not to perceive the brutalising tendency of these shameful scenes; but he does not appear to have felt that horror at the indiscriminate severity of the law which one would have expected. The coarse and common spectacle of a public execution he readily admitted was an unmixed evil; and for that objectionable spectacle he advocated the substitution of a more solemn and imposing show—fantastic and peculiar, but no less barbarous and revolting. His suggestion was as follows:—

"Suppose," he says, "that the court at the Old Bailey was, at the end of the trials, to be adjourned during four days; that, against the adjournment day, a gallows was erected in the area before the court; that the criminals were all brought down on that day to receive sentence; *and that this was executed the very moment after it was pronounced, in the sight and presence of the judges.* Nothing can, I think, be imagined (not even torture, which I am an enemy to the very thought of admitting) more terrible than such an execution; and I leave it to any man to resolve himself, upon reflection, whether such a day at the Old Bailey, or a holiday at Tyburn, would make the strongest impression on the mind of any one."—*Causes of the Increase of Robbers, &c.*

he was now old in constitution: he was a martyr to the gout in its worst and most virulent form. And even had he been blessed with uninterrupted health, his previous pursuits—the irregularities of his early life, his taste for literature, his want of business habits—might justify the apprehension that he would shun the fœtid air of Bow Street as much as possible, and find little interest in taking the depositions of reluctant witnesses, and examining into the complicated details of atrocious criminality. But the result proved that such apprehensions were groundless. As already intimated, the man of letters and the novelist proved a most efficient magistrate; and the newspapers of the period furnish a trustworthy record of his activity, energy, and spirit, in the performance of his duties. In the commencement of the year 1749, aggravated street robberies appear to have been peculiarly prevalent, and he was kept constantly on the alert.[1] But while thus occupied in identifying felons, examining wit-

(1) In "The General Advertizer" for February 18th, 1748-9, we read that the day before—

"One Edward Mullins was committed to Newgate, by Henry Fielding, Esq., on the oaths of John Ball and John Few, for assaulting them, with several other persons, cutting and wounding them with cutlasses and hangers in a desperate manner; and also for going armed by night in the publick streets."

The following paragraph, of the 20th of February following, proves that Fielding was zealously endeavouring to put a stop to these outrages, and taking the most effectual means for that purpose:—

"This morning, at eleven o'clock, Edward Mullins is to be brought from Newgate before Justice Fielding, at his house in Bow Street. And to-morrow, at the same time, Atkinson, Roach, and Michael Malony, will be brought before the same justice, in order to be re-examined and confronted with Nicholas Marney, who has given information against them concerning divers robberies in the streets, and in the highway, when it is hoped that all gentlemen and others who have been robbed within these last six months, either in the streets or on the highway, between Kensington and London, or on Constitution Hill, will attend, in order to see the said persons, and if they should know them, to give evidence against them."

On the 24th of February, there is also the following significant announcement:—

"On Wednesday night, two notorious street-robbers were committed to Newgate by Justice Fielding, under a guard of twelve soldiers."

nesses, and framing schemes for the protection of the peaceable inhabitants of the metropolis, it is a circumstance of more interest to posterity that he found time to superintend through the press, and put the finishing touch to, a work which has placed him at the head of English novelists.

CHAPTER XX.

"TOM JONES."

[1749.]

THE novel of "Tom Jones" made its appearance in the month of February, 1749—exactly seven years after the publication of "Joseph Andrews."[1] The work was not composed by Fielding—as it is often asserted—amidst the bustle of his magisterial duties; but, on the contrary, it had been long in preparation, and was the labour of many years, and those not the brightest, of his life.[2] It is not the least interesting circumstance connected with the history of this fascinating classic, that its sunny portraitures of human character, its genial humour, and healthy sentiment, were the emanations of a mind clouded by misfortune, and depressed by physical suffering. Like another immortal romance,[3] "Tom Jones" was penned amidst "disheartening struggles" and bitter worldly conflicts. How

(1) The following advertisement, announcing the appearance of this famous novel, is copied from "The General Advertizer" of February 28th, 1749:—

This day is published, in six vols., 12mo.,

THE HISTORY OF TOM JONES,

A FOUNDLING.

——*Mores hominum multorum vidit.*

By HENRY FIELDING, *Esq.*

It being impossible to get sets bound fast enough to answer the demand for them, such Gentlemen and Ladies as please may have them served in Blue Paper and Boards, at the price of 16s. a set, of

A. Millar, over against Catherine Street, in the Strand.

(2) See Dedication of Tom Jones to Mr. Lyttleton.

(3) Don Quixote. See Ticknor's "History of Spanish Literature."

great the soul and enviable the disposition which no adverse circumstances, no amount of poverty, disappointment, suffering, or detraction, could deprive of such a glorious sympathy with humanity, and such a perennial fund of cheerfulness!

During the time occupied in the composition of his great novel, Fielding confesses to have received assistance from more than one friend to letters and humanity. Foremost among these was his friend, George Lyttleton, to whom, without permission, he dedicated the work on its completion. Lyttleton would appear, from the language of that dedication, not merely to have dispensed pecuniary assistance to the necessitous author, while engaged upon his novel, but also by his encouraging exhortations to have contributed to its existence. "To you, sir," says Fielding, "it is owing that this history was ever begun. It was by your desire that I first thought of such a composition. . . . . Again, sir, without your assistance this history had never been completed. Be not startled at the assertion. I do not intend to draw upon you the suspicion of being a romance writer. I mean no more than that I partly owe to you my existence during great part of the time which I have employed in composing it." Another benefactor of Fielding's during the same period was the Duke of Bedford,[1] Lyttleton's political patron; and a third was that

(1) John Duke of Bedford—born October 20, 1710, died January 14, 1771—had little title, except that derived from his rank, to be associated with men like Allen and Lyttleton in this philanthropic partnership. According to Chesterfield, "he was more considerable for his rank and immense fortune than for either his parts or his virtues. He had rather more than a common share of common sense, but with a head so wrong-turned, and so invincibly obstinate, that the share of parts which he had was of little use to him, and very troublesome to others." This nobleman was attacked by Junius, in 1769, in one of the most virulent letters ever penned by him:—"You are, indeed," says this formidable assailant, "a very considerable man. The highest rank, a splendid fortune, *and a name glorious till it was yours*, were sufficient to have supported you with meaner abilities than I think you possess." It is unnecessary to quote more from this unsparing denunciation, which is said to have shortened his grace's life.

generous and unostentatious friend of the distressed, whose virtues are immortalised in the well-known couplet of Pope:—

> "Let humble ALLEN, with an awkward shame,
> Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame."[1]

As a mark of gratitude to these friends, and of homage to their virtues, Fielding professed to embody the various excellences of their characters in one of the most prominent delineations in his novel. According to his own statement, Mr. Allworthy is not a mere fancy portrait. The partial eye of friendship kept steadily in view the mental lineaments of his three patrons, whilst the hand was employed in penning this exquisite sketch of a wise and good man. The result is, that we have in the character of Allworthy an assemblage of qualities which rarely, if ever, meet in the same individual: the most perfect benevolence, tempered by a stern sense of justice; a complete immunity from the common faults and weaknesses of our species, joined to an exquisite compassion for, and large toleration of, the frailties of others; in short, a character more nearly approaching perfection than it is possible to conceive of, and offering a marked contrast (perhaps *too* marked a contrast) to the other persons in the story.

One or two other characters in "Tom Jones," besides Allworthy, are said to have been sketched by Fielding from

(1) See chap. xxvi. (and note). "In the first dialogue," says Johnson (originally published under the title of '1738'), "having an opportunity of praising Allen of Bath, he [Pope] asked his leave to mention him as a man not illustrious by any merit of his ancestors, and called him in his verses 'low-born Allen.' Men are seldom satisfied with praise introduced or followed by any mention of defect. Allen seems not to have taken any pleasure in his epithet, which was afterwards softened into 'humble.'"—*Johnson's Lives of the Poets.*

Of the differences which are said to have afterwards existed between Pope and Allen, it is unnecessary here to speak at any length. They seem to have originated entirely in the alleged arrogant behaviour of Mrs. Blount (whom Pope had taken with him to Prior Park), and who requested the use of Allen's chariot to take her to a Roman Catholic chapel, when he was actually Mayor of Bath! Mrs. Allen resented this conduct, and the misunderstanding between the two ladies caused a coolness on the part of Pope to his quondam friend.

living originals. Squire Western—the most striking portrait of all—was, according to some authorities, intended as a caricature of one of the proprietors of Montacute, in Somersetshire. To this tradition it would, however, be improper to attach much importance. Western is the representative of a class rather than of an individual—an embodiment of the peculiarities which distinguished the rural squires in remote parts of England, who lived upon their estates, and despised modern innovations and the refinements of fashionable life. To that class it must be remembered that Fielding had no reason to feel particularly well-disposed. The bitter recollection of the slights he had experienced in his early manhood, when, with foolish ostentation, he squandered his patrimony among the Dorsetshire squires—in hounds, horses, and hospitality—and was only laughed at for his pains, still rankled in his bosom, and added to the contempt which, as a man of genius and education, he naturally felt for the rude manners and unintellectual pursuits of the home-bred squires of those days. In Western are embodied all the faults of this narrow-minded race—faults not unredeemed by characteristic virtues. Though violent, coarse, brutal, and tyrannical, the rude squire is not devoid of a certain strength of affection, and a warmth and heartiness of disposition, which atone for many defects. The only flagrant inconsistency in his character, is the cowardice exhibited by him when he takes unresistingly the beating administered by Lord Fellamar's friend—a part of the story which has naturally provoked much criticism. We do not expect to hear of Western fighting a duel, but we are certainly surprised to find that the sturdy, high-handed, sporting squire should take a drubbing from a London dandy, without lifting a hand in his own defence, and "bellowing" all the while with his utmost might and main for assistance. For the rest, it may be fairly conceded that the prejudices and predilections of Squire Western were common to the

rustic gentry of his time. Like them, he hated all lords, because "they were a parcel of courtiers and Hanoverians;" and he also liberally hated Whigs, Dissenters, Frenchmen, and poachers. He was a Jacobite, partly from a spirit of contradiction and opposition, and partly from a genuine sympathy for ultra-monarchical principles. As regards domestic life, the picture which Fielding gives us of Western's home may be taken as a faithful delineation of the country gentleman's household in the middle of the eighteenth century; where the indoor amusements were entirely confined to eating and drinking, and feminine society was only tolerated during the dinner-hour, and the short time after it which sufficed for the circulation of the first bottle. What place, indeed, had woman in such a household—woman, alternately a drudge or a toy! The accomplishments of Sophia Western are only called into requisition when she performs her evening task upon the harpsichord, after her father is drunk; and of the rank which Sophia's mother had occupied in her husband's house and affections, a humiliating and pathetic sketch is given by the novelist, which shows how fully the lords of the creation, when they are able to have it all their own way, are entitled to the designation bestowed upon them by a wit—that of the *unfair* sex.[1]

(1) "Sophia never had a single dispute with her father, till this unlucky affair of Blifil, on any account, except in defence of her mother, whom she had loved most tenderly, though she lost her in the eleventh year of her age. The squire, to whom that poor woman had been a faithful upper-servant all the time of their marriage, had returned that behaviour by making what the world calls a good husband. He very seldom swore at her (perhaps not above once a week), and never beat her; she had not the least occasion for jealousy, and was perfect mistress of her time; for she was never interrupted by her husband, who was engaged all the morning in his field exercises, and all the evening with bottle-companions. She scarce, indeed, ever saw him but at meals, where she had the pleasure of carving those dishes which she had before attended at the dressing. From these meals she retired about five minutes after the other servants, having only stayed to drink 'The king over the water.' Such were, it seems, Mr. Western's orders; for it was a maxim with him that women should come in with the first dish, and go out with the first glass. Obedience to these orders

Sophia Western herself was also a sketch from life; but the reader is referred to a former chapter for further particulars respecting the "fair original."[1] It should, however, be stated that if—as tradition relates—Fielding depicted from recollection the personal charms of his cousin, he also appears to have intended in Sophia to portray the feminine grace and elegance of his first wife; for he intimates that, under the fictitious name of Sophia, he was anxious to perpetuate the real worth which once existed in his Charlotte.

The popularity of "Tom Jones" on its first appearance was almost commensurate with its wonderful merits. Its sale was extremely rapid, and commendations flowed in from all sides.[2] Lady Mary Wortley Montague wrote in her copy of the work, "*Ne plus ultra.*" The hero was voted by persons of quality a complete gentleman, and excited at once an immense sensation.[3] This sudden success must have

was, perhaps, no difficult task, for the conversation (if it may be so called) was seldom such as could entertain a lady."—*Tom Jones*, book vii. chap. 4.

The squire's notions of marriage are also eminently characteristic:—"The idea of a marriage between Jones and his daughter had never once entered into the squire's head, either in the warmest minutes of his affection towards that young man, or from suspicion, or on any other occasion. He did, indeed, consider a parity of fortune and circumstances to be physically as necessary an ingredient in marriage as difference of sexes, or any other essential; and had no more apprehension of his daughter falling in love with a poor man, than with any animal of a different species."—Book vi. chap. 9.

(1) See chap. vii. p. 68.

(2) As a specimen of the praise at this period lavished on a novel which was destined to become so world-famous, we quote the following lines from a poem addressed to "H. Fielding, Esq., on reading his inimitable History of Tom Jones," published in "The Gentleman's Magazine" for August, 1749, and signed "Thos. Cawthorn:"—

> "Sick of her fools, great Nature broke the jest,
> And Truth held out each character to test,
> When Genius spoke: 'Let Fielding take the pen!'
> Life dropped her mask, and all mankind were men."

(3) "As to Tom Jones," writes one of Richardson's lady-correspondents (Mrs. Belfour), "I am fatigued with the name, having lately fallen into the company of several young ladies, who had each a Tom Jones in some part of the world, for so they call their favourites."—*Richardson's Correspondence*, vol. iv.

gratified Fielding; but it is evident that the anticipation of a more permanent fame had supported him during the long period necessarily employed in the production of so perfect a work of art. No one can read the "Invocation" with which he commences the thirteenth book of the novel, without feeling that it was to the judgment of posterity rather than of his own age that he appealed:—

"Come, bright love of fame! inspire my glowing breast; not thee I call, who over swelling tides of blood and tears dost bear the hero on to glory, whilst sighs of millions waft his spreading sails; but thee, fair gentle maid, whom Mnesis, happy nymph! first on the banks of Hebrus did produce. Thee, whom Mæonia educated, whom Mantua charmed, and who, on that fair hill which overlooks the proud metropolis of Britain, sat'st with thy Milton sweetly tuning thy heroic lyre; fill my ravished fancy *with the hopes of charming ages yet to come.* Foretel me that some tender maid, whose grandmother is yet unborn, hereafter, when, under the fictitious name of Sophia, she reads the real worth which once existed in my Charlotte, shall from her sympathetic breast send forth the heaving sigh. Do thou teach me not only *to foresee, but to enjoy, nay, even to feed on future praise. Comfort me by a solemn assurance, that when the little parlour in which I sit at this instant shall be reduced to a worse furnished box, I shall be read with honour by those who never knew or saw me, and whom I shall neither know nor see.*"

These aspirations after posthumous applause have not been disappointed. No writer has had a more enthusiastic band of eulogists than Fielding. Gibbon has described "Tom Jones" as "the first of ancient or modern romances;" and La Harpe as "*le premier roman du monde et le livre le mieux fait de l'Angleterre.*" Lord Byron has styled its author "the prose Homer." Never, perhaps, was there a novel which has delighted a greater variety of readers—from the scholar and philosopher to the man of the world. As a story, it surprises and charms by its wonderful succession of natural and amusing incidents, and by the remarkable manner in which the interest and excitement of the narrative are kept up to the close; so that it is doubtful (as it has been well observed), up to the very last chapter,

"whether the hero is to be married or hanged." This characteristic merit of the novel did not escape the critical eye of Coleridge. "What a master of composition," he is reported to have said, "Fielding was! Upon my word I think the 'Œdipus Tyrannus,' the 'Alchemist,' and 'Tom Jones,' the three most perfect plots ever planned." [1]

Among the minor characters in Fielding's great novel, it is unfit that Thwackum and Square should pass unnoticed. In the former, the extravagant Antinomian doctrines, which were promulgated with no slight success in an age of general religious indifference, are vigorously assailed; and in the latter, is handed down to posterity a sketch of the sceptical philosopher of the Bolingbroke and Tindal school,—regulating his conduct, in the slang of the age, by the rule of right and the moral fitness of things, and affecting an unbounded faith in the strength and

(1) Table Talk. The following admirable criticism on "Tom Jones" is from the pen of that able but eccentric writer, Lord Monboddo:—"There is lately sprung up amongst us a species of narrative poem, representing likewise the characters of common life. It has the same relation to comedy that the epic has to tragedy, and differs from the epic in the same respect that comedy differs from tragedy; that is, in the actions and characters, both of which are much nobler in the epic than in it. It is therefore, I think, a legitimate kind of poem; and accordingly, we are told, Homer wrote one of that kind, called 'Margites,' of which some lines are preserved. The reason why I mention it is, that we have in English a *poem* of that kind (for so I will call it), which has more of character in it than any work, ancient or modern, that I know. The work I mean is, 'The History of Tom Jones,' by Henry Fielding, which, as it has more personages brought into the story than anything of the poetic kind I have ever seen, so all those personages have characters peculiar to them, insomuch that there is not even an host or an hostess upon the road, hardly a servant, who is not distinguished in that way; in short, I never saw anything that was so much animated, and, as I may say, *all alive* with characters and manners, as The History of Tom Jones."—*Lord Monboddo's Origin and Progress of Language*, vol. iii. pp. 134, 135.

Murphy also justly observes, that in this novel "the seeds of everything that shoots up are laid with a judicious hand, and whatever occurs in the latter part of the story, seems naturally to grow out of those passages which preceded." Of this the hero's parentage is an instance; for though no reader, during the early chapters, perhaps, ever suspected that Mr. Allworthy's sister was the mother of the little foundling, yet, when the discovery is made at the end, every incident will be found to have been wonderfully consistent with the fact.

efficacy of human virtue. To these opposite heresies Fielding was equally hostile. His own opinions are faithfully indicated in the language of good Mr. Abraham Adams, in that famous controversy with Parson Barnabas, already referred to; and although polemical disputations are generally out of place in a novel, he lost no opportunity of inculcating moderation and rational piety, in opposition both to bigotry and scepticism.[1]

"Tom Jones" has been translated into most, if not all, of the languages of Europe. The year after its publication, a version appeared in France, by M. de la Place, illustrated with engravings designed by Gravelot. This translation was actually prohibited by a royal *arrêt*, as it has been asserted, on account of the immoral tendency of the work! —another example, as Sir W. Scott felicitously observes, of the way in which our versatile neighbours, in matters of morality, strain at the gnat and swallow the camel.[2] Great liberties have been taken with the work by many translators, of which an instance is afforded in a Polish version, where the introductory chapters to each book are omitted. Whilst every critical reader will regard this omission as most barbarous, it must be admitted that these preliminary disquisitions have been always stumbling-blocks in the way

(1) The argumentations of the bigot and the philosopher are pleasantly noticed by Goldsmith in "The Vicar of Wakefield," where Olivia displays her knowledge of religious controversy by saying: "I have read the disputes between Thwackum and Square, the controversy between Robinson Crusoe and Friday, the savage, and I am now employed in reading the controversy in Religious Courtship."

(2) "Tom Jones" was also dramatised in France during the eighteenth century. "Tom Jones: Comédie Lyrique. En Trois Actes. Imitée du Roman Anglais de M. Fielding. Par M. Poinsinet. Amsterdam, 1767." That "Tom Jones" was refused a license in France, on account of its *immorality*, seems incredible, when it is recollected that the popular novels in Paris at that period were the grossly licentious tales of Crébillon. Horace Walpole has preserved a *bon mot* of the literary *roué*, who was the son of the well-known tragic poet. "His father, one day in a passion with him, said: 'Il y a deux choses que je voudrais n'avoir jamais fait—mon Catilina et vous.' He answered, 'Consolez-vous, mon père, car on prétend que vous n'avez fait ni l'un ni l'autre.'"—*Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. ii.

of those who read a novel only for the story's sake. Fielding seems to have foreseen this, for he thus commences the introductory chapter to the fifth book:—"Peradventure there may be no part in this prodigious work which will give the reader less pleasure in perusing than those which have given the author the greatest pains in composing. Among these probably may be reckoned those initial essays which we have prefixed to the historical matter contained in every book; and which we have determined to be essentially necessary to this kind of writing, of which we set ourselves at the head." No one of the least discernment can regret the frequent recurrence of these chapters; and whilst the thoughtless merely skim, or pass them over altogether, the more prudent reader will dwell on and digest them, and perhaps, on a re-perusal, may be disposed to consider them the most valuable portions of the tale.

The moral tendency of Fielding's great novel has been much discussed. It might justly be considered prudish in the critic to dilate on the coarseness and indelicacy by which its pages are occasionally deformed, because these are blemishes for which the *age* and not the *man* is responsible.[1] Few of our British classics are unspotted by some such stains, and yet no one dreams of excluding them on that account from our libraries. But more serious charges have been brought against "Tom Jones." In the person of the hero, it is urged, that vice is rendered alluring by

(1) It will be recollected that Johnson, many years later, spoke of Prior as a "lady's-book." And the "Memoirs of Lord Hervey," and other works of the age, show us that in the very highest society, language was deliberately used by princesses of the blood, and maids of honour, which would be now considered discreditable from the lips of a fishwoman. To this it may be added, that Dr. Doddridge read with delight "The Wife of Bath's Tale," as modernized from Chaucer, to young Hannah More. (Forster's Goldsmith, vol. ii.) Of the tendency to cant and illiberality displayed by some modern writers on this subject, there is a characteristic specimen in Phillimore's "Life of Lyttleton" (vol. i.), where, speaking of "Tom Jones," the biographer remarks, that it is "often unread by men, and scarcely ever read by women; though its merits have saved it from the oblivion to which unredeemed indecency has consigned 'Amelia.'"

being united with so many good qualities. In his earliest boyhood, as well as riper youth, this Jones is a perfect scapegrace. From an orchard-robbing boy, without sobriety of manners or respect for superior virtue, he passes into a wild, quick-tempered, impulsive youth, who can never keep himself out of disreputable scrapes. And yet, in spite of all his faults and frailties, he possesses so good a heart, so handsome a person, and such winning manners, that the most serious reader cannot find it in his heart to dislike him. Is not all this, says the moralist, a dangerous tampering with the social proprieties? Why make profligacy so alluring in Jones, and a pretence to virtue so contemptible in Blifil? The answer is obvious. The vices of Tom Jones are vices which lie on the surface of the character; they are the result of impulse rather than design; they are patent to the world, easily exposed, detected, punished. Not so the vice of hypocrisy, ever on its guard against detection, and under the mask of virtue sapping the foundations of morality. The Blifils of the world are not so easily brought to account as the Joneses. Surrounded by a halo of respectability—like "the goodly apple, rotten at the core"—they generally succeed in deceiving all but the most shrewd observers. He does good service to society who brings them down from their high estate, exposing their windings, turnings, and shufflings, and holding them up to public aversion and contempt.

With respect to the objection so often urged—that the attractive features displayed in Fielding's frail but popular hero, are calculated to serve the cause of libertinism—Sir Walter Scott has spoken out with great truth and manliness: "The vices and follies of Tom Jones," he observes, "are those which the world soon teaches to all who enter on the career of life, and to which society is unhappily but too indulgent; nor do we believe that in any one instance the perusal of Fielding's novel has added one libertine to the large list who would not have been such had it

never crossed the press. And it is with concern we add our sincere belief, that the fine picture of frankness and generosity exhibited in that fictitious character has had as few imitators as the career of his follies. Let it not be supposed we are indifferent to morality, because we treat with scorn the affectation which, while in common life it connives at the open practice of libertinism, pretends to detest the memory of an author who painted life as it was, with all its shades, and more than all the lights which it occasionally exhibits to relieve them."[1]

Another high authority may be appealed to on this subject, whose reputation as a Christian moralist is unimpeached, and whose subtle philosophy analysed and exposed with wonderful acuteness the springs of human action. In the British Museum there is deposited an edition of "Tom Jones," which passed through the hands of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and is enriched by his manuscript notes. One of these notes refers to the question under discussion. A portion is lost, through the leaf on which it was written having been torn away; but what remains is intelligible, and very characteristic of the writer. "In short," says Coleridge, "let the requisite allowances be made for the increased refinement of our manners, and then I dare believe that no young man, who consulted his heart and conscience only, without adverting to what the world would say, could rise from the perusal of Fielding's 'Tom Jones,' 'Joseph Andrews,' and 'Amelia,' without feeling himself a better man; at least, without an intense conviction that he *could* not be guilty of a *base* act. If I want a servant or mechanic, I wish to know what he *does;* but if a friend, I must know what he *is.* And in no writer is this momentous distinction so finely brought forward as by Fielding. We do not care what Blifil *does*—the deed, as separate from the agent, may be good or ill—but Blifil *is* a villain, and we feel him

(1) Scott's Lives of the Novelists.

to be so from the very moment he (the boy Blifil) restored Sophia's captive bird to its active and rightful liberty."[1]

On the other hand, Fielding's opponents have maintained that in "Tom Jones" he reached the culminating point of immorality. Soon after its production, Richardson wrote to a French correspondent — "Tom Jones is a dissolute book. *Its run is over* even with us. Is it true that France had virtue enough to refuse to license so profligate a performance?"[2] Nor did Fielding's rival stand alone in the expression of these extreme opinions. Dr. Johnson never hesitated to declare his aversion and contempt for the work, with an illiberality which was astonishing even in the literary autocrat. But it must not be forgotten that Fielding was a Whig, and a political writer in favour of the house of Hanover; whilst Johnson was a Tory, and for a long time a Jacobite. The doctor was also an intimate friend of Richardson's, to whom he was bound by ties of gratitude. These circumstances may, in some respect, account for the severe strictures which, in his recorded conversations, he thought fit to pass on the writings of the great English novelist. On one occasion, according to Boswell—"Fielding[3] being men-

(1) From the language of Fielding's dedication of "Tom Jones" to Lyttleton, it is evident that he himself entertained no misgiving as to the moral tendency of its pages. "From the name of my patron, indeed," he says, "I hope my reader will be convinced, at his very entrance on this work, that he will find in the whole course of it nothing prejudicial to the cause of religion and virtue; nothing inconsistent with the strictest rules of decency, nor which can offend even the chastest eye in the perusal. On the contrary, I declare, that to recommend goodness and innocence hath been my sincere endeavour in this history. . . . . Besides displaying that beauty of virtue which may attract the admiration of mankind, I have attempted to engage a stronger motive to human action in her favour, by convincing men that their true interest directs them to a pursuit of her. For this purpose I have shown that no acquisition of guilt can compensate the loss of that solid inward comfort of mind which is the sure companion of innocence and virtue, nor can in the least balance the evil of that horror and anxiety which, in their room, guilt introduced into our bosoms."

(2) Richardson's Correspondence, vol. v. Letter to M. Defreval.

(3) Johnson always called him "Harry Fieldin'." (Forster's Goldsmith, vol. ii. p. 18.)

tioned, Johnson exclaimed, 'He was a blockhead;' and upon my expressing my astonishment at so strange an assertion, he said, 'What I mean by his being a blockhead is, that he was a barren rascal.'—BOSWELL. 'Will you not allow, sir, that he draws very natural pictures of human life?'—JOHNSON. 'Why, sir, it is of very low life. Richardson used to say that had he not known who Fielding was, he should have believed he was an ostler. Sir, there is more knowledge of the heart in one letter of Richardson's than in all Tom Jones. I indeed never read Joseph Andrews.'"[1] The doctor was also, we are told by the same authority, very fond of quoting with approbation a saying of Richardson's, "that the virtues of Fielding's heroes were the vices of a truly good man."[2]

Before these comments on Fielding's great novel are brought to a conclusion, it may not be improper to draw attention to the fact, that during the progress of the story he paid a tribute of admiration to two of his contemporaries, who were at once his personal friends and intellectual rivals. The genius of Garrick is immortalised in the chapter describing Partridge's visit to the playhouse; a chapter perhaps more familiarly known than any other in the novel. Happy the artist whose peculiar excellences have been so appropriately delineated and forcibly conveyed to posterity! Even the English Roscius, mighty as were his powers of impersonation, and insatiable his thirst for

(1) Boswell's Life of Johnson. Croker's edition, vol. iii. 1853.

(2) Ibid. Johnson's notions about Fielding were shared by his blind old *protegée*, Miss Williams. "In distant times,"—the good old lady writes in "The Gentleman's Magazine" for 1764.:—

> "In distant times, when Jones and Booth are lost,
> Britannia her Clarissa's name shall boast."

—*Verses to Mr. Richardson on his History of Sir C. Grandison.*

A correspondent in the same periodical (vol. lxi. 1791) points out some curious anachronisms in Fielding's novel:—"In the celebrated novel of 'Tom Jones,' we find the first volume closes in the month of June; the second volume contains three weeks, five days, twelve hours, and in the end we find a hard and long frost; the other two volumes proceed with winter transactions."

applause, could not have desired or hoped for a more discriminating estimate of his genius, or a more permanent panegyric. The literal-minded Partridge, it will be recollected, is taken completely off his guard by the admirable truth and nature of Garrick's Hamlet. When the ghostly visitant, clad in complete steel, appears, the sapient pedagogue visibly shares the terrors of "the little man upon the stage," and even justifies his cowardice to his companions. "Nay," he says to Jones, "you may call me coward if you will; but if that little man there upon the stage is not frightened, I never saw any man frightened in my life. Ay—ay; go along with you! ay, to be sure! Who's fool then? Will you? Lud have mercy upon such fool-hardiness!" This, indeed, is the triumph of acting; and, though the description may at first sight seem improbable, yet several traditionary anecdotes show that Fielding has not exaggerated the effect of Garrick's impersonations. There is a well-known story related by Macklin, and received by him from Dr. Johnson, respecting a grocer in Garrick's native town, who, coming to London with a letter of introduction to the great performer from his brother, Peter Garrick, went to the theatre first, to see him in the character of Abel Drugger. Like Partridge, the honest grocer was completely taken in by the actor. "On Garrick's appearance," it is said, "he was for some time in doubt whether it could be he or not; at last, being convinced of it by the people about him, he felt so disgusted by the mean appearance and mercenary conduct of the performer (which, by a foolish combination, he attached to the *man*), that he went out of town without delivering the letter."[1] It is added that, on returning to Lichfield, the grocer was naturally asked by Mr. Peter Garrick how his brother had received him, when he was informed, with some hesitation, that the letter had never been delivered. "To say the truth," observed his towns-

(1) Macklin's Memoirs.

man, "I saw enough of him on the stage to make that unnecessary; he may be rich, as I dare say any man who lives like him must be, but—" and here the grocer delivered himself of a tremendous oath—"though he is your brother, Mr. Garrick, he is one of the shabbiest, meanest, most pitiful hounds, I ever saw in the whole course of my life." From such a circumstance having occurred in real life, it may be properly inferred that the intensity of Garrick's acting has not been exaggerated by Fielding. But it is in the criticism of Partridge, after the performance, that the happiest tribute is paid to the triumph of the art which conceals itself so effectually from the vulgar eye, that the player altogether disappears from the scene. "He the best player!" cries Partridge, with a contemptuous sneer; "Why, I could act as well as he myself. I am sure if I had seen a ghost, *I should have looked in the very same manner, and done just as he did.* And then, to be sure, in that scene, as you called it, between him and his mother, when you told me he acted so fine, why, Lord help me, any man—that is, any good man that had such a mother—would have done exactly the same. I know you are only joking with me; but indeed, madam, though I was never at a play in London, yet I have seen acting before in the country; and the king for my money; he speaks all his words distinctly, half as loud again as the other. *Anybody may see he is an actor.*"

To another great genius inseparably associated with the age, whose manners he has so inimitably portrayed, Fielding, also, took occasion in his novel to pay a proper tribute of respect. The works of William Hogarth are often alluded to in "Tom Jones," and in more than one instance the novelist directly refers his reader to the artist for portraits of his characters. In describing the *disinterested* attachment of Captain Blifil for Miss Bridget Allworthy, the charms of that fair personage are thus set forth: "The lady, no more than her lover, was remarkable for beauty.

I would attempt to draw her picture, but that is done already, by a more able master, Mr. Hogarth himself, to whom she sat many years ago, and hath been lately exhibited by that gentleman in his print of a Winter's Morning, of which she was no improper emblem, and may be seen walking (for walk she doth in the print) to Covent Garden Church, with a starved foot-boy behind, carrying her Prayer-book." And that inexorable virago, Mistress Partridge, has her likeness pointed out in the same manner: "This woman was not very amiable in her person. Whether she sat to my friend Hogarth or no, I will not determine; but she exactly resembled the young woman who is pouring out her mistress' tea in the third picture of the Harlot's Progress." Parson Thwackum, also, is described as very nearly resembling in countenance "that gentleman, who, in the Harlot's Progress, is seen correcting the ladies in Bridewell."

Whilst Fielding thus keenly relished the productions of "the moral satirist," it cannot escape observation that the two men had many qualities in common. Both of them are remarkable as minute painters of the habits of mankind, so far as those habits fell under their own scrutiny. The pen of the one was no less remarkable for the scrupulous accuracy of its delineations than the pencil of the other. Both were men of large experience and quick apprehension; of lively fancy, subtle wit, and a remarkable sense of humour. In both also, it must be admitted, there was a tendency to dwell too much on the disagreeable, the repulsive, and the low. That two such minds could have existed in the same age and country, without being strongly attracted towards each other, was impossible. The admiration which each of them entertained for the other's genius naturally led to an intimacy, which subsisted without interruption until the fatal hour when inexorable death laid his cold hand on the novelist. Hogarth's regard for Fielding, however, stretched beyond

the grave. The sensitive sorrow which he felt for his departed friend frequently manifested itself; and when, upon one occasion, Garrick (whose powers of impersonation were almost miraculous) thoughtlessly attempted to frighten him, by appearing as the ghost of Fielding, whose manners and features the actor counterfeited to the life, the painter was dreadfully affected, and could never afterwards speak of the incident without evident emotion.[1]

(1) Macklin's Memoirs.

CHAPTER XXI.

JUSTICE BUSINESS.—FIELDING'S PRIVATE LIFE DESCRIBED BY WALPOLE.—TREATISE ON ROBBERIES.—DENUNCIATION OF GIN.

[1749—1751.]

WHILST the novel of "Tom Jones" was delighting the town, and affording unlimited satisfaction to every reader of taste, the author was busily engaged in the discharge of his responsible and multifarious duties. On the 12th of May, 1749, he was unanimously elected by the Middlesex magistrates to preside as chairman at the sessions, then, as now, held at Hicks' Hall, better known in modern parlance as the Clerkenwell Sessions House.[1] This additional duty, whilst it afforded a higher scope for the exercise of his intellectual faculties, and the application of his extensive legal knowledge, imposed upon Fielding a considerable increase of labour. His mind—too active for his weakened and wasted frame—was now constantly occupied. On the Middlesex bench, and in the justice-room at Bow Street, he was equally distinguished as an efficient and conscientious magistrate. As the judge of a criminal court, he performed his duties with great propriety and ability. Of this we have a convincing proof in the excellent charge which he delivered to the grand jury of the Middlesex Sessions, on Thursday, the 29th of June, 1749, which is printed in all the editions of his collected works. This production is no less delightful to the lawyer than to the lay reader. The former will admire the depth and sound-

(1) "Last Friday (12th of May, 1749), Henry Fielding, Esq., was unanimously chosen chairman of the sessions at Hicks' Hall, in the room of Thomas Lane, Esq., now one of the Masters in Chancery."—*Newspaper paragraph.*

ness of Fielding's legal learning, and his clear exposition of legal principles; whilst the latter will be both pleased and surprised to find how entertaining the dryest of disquisitions may be made by an accomplished master of elegant style and forcible diction. At the commencement of his address, the acute and able magistrate vindicates and eulogises the principle of jury-trial as the best guarantee of the subject's liberty, and as the noblest institution devised by the wisdom of our ancestors. He then defines the functions of the grand, as distinguished from the petty, jury; particularly enlarging on the privilege enjoyed by the former of presenting notorious offences against religion, morality, and the laws. The observations which are made by Fielding in this portion of his charge, on the state of society and of public morals in 1749, are rather curious, particularly when the earlier incidents of his life are brought to recollection. With a zeal, which certainly savours much of inconsistency, he rebukes the personalities of Foote, whose performances at the Haymarket, in 1748-9, received a larger measure of popularity than had been formerly awarded to "Pasquin" and "The Register:"—"There is a great difference, gentlemen," says the magistrate (no longer a dramatist), "between a morose and over-sanctified spirit, which excludes all kinds of diversion, and a profligate disposition, which hurries us into the most vicious excesses of this kind. . . . For the upper part of mankind, and in this town, there are many lawful amusements, abundantly sufficient for the recreation of any temperate and sober mind. But, gentlemen, so immoderate are the desires of many, so hungry is their appetite for pleasure, that they may be said to have a fury after it; and diversion is no longer the recreation or amusement, but the whole business of their lives. They are not content with *three* theatres, they must have a *fourth;* where the exhibitions are not only contrary to law, but contrary to good manners, and where the stage is reduced back again to that degree of licentiousness

which was too enormous for the corrupt state of Athens to tolerate; and which, as the Roman poet, rather I think in the spirit of a censor than a satirist, tells us, those Athenians, who were not themselves abused, took care to abolish from their concern to the public."

The magistrate then vehemently denounces the corrupting and licentious character of other public amusements. "Our newspapers," he says, "from the top of the page to the bottom, the corners of our streets up to the eaves of our houses, present us with nothing but a view of masquerades, balls, and assemblies of various kinds, fairs, wells, gardens, &c., tending to promote idleness, extravagance, and immorality among all sorts of people." As a natural consequence of this state of things, gaming-houses flourished in all directions; the vice of gambling, as observed by Fielding, "being inseparable from a luxurious and idle age: for while luxury produces want, idleness forbids honest labour to supply it." In conclusion, after reminding the grand jury that they were summoned to the execution of an office of the utmost importance to the well-being of the community, he charges them not "to suffer that establishment, so wisely and carefully regulated, and so stoutly and zealously maintained by our wise and brave ancestors, to degenerate into mere form and shadow."

From these details of Fielding's public career, we turn to his private life and habits at this period. With regard to his worldly position, it may be concluded that after the publication of "Tom Jones" his circumstances were much easier;[1] and though his magisterial duties were irksome, they were performed with cheerfulness. Above all, he had a full sense of the value of family ties, and a hearty, manly turn for domestic enjoyments. He loved his wife and children; delighted in the conversation of a few intimate friends; and, when free from bodily pain, had a keen zest for the simplest pleasures of existence. He was also still

(1) See *post.*

distinguished for his hospitality and generosity to the unfortunate, often beyond his means. "When in the latter end of his days," says Murphy, "he had an income of four or five hundred a year, he knew no use of money but to keep his table open to those who had been his friends when young, and had impaired their own fortunes."[1] Such a taste—if expensive to gratify—brought with it many sweet rewards. If his aristocratic friends pitied him for being compelled to accept a preferment which condemned him to familiarity with every form "of vice and misery,"[2] he had the compensatory pleasure of being often able to relieve those who were poorer and more unfortunate than himself; and many hours were passed beneath his roof which peers and princes might have envied.

One very unflattering picture, indeed, of the justice's *ménage* in Bow Street has been transmitted to posterity; but it is a sketch from so unscrupulous a hand, that little reliance can be placed on its accuracy. In one of his letters to George Montague (dated May 18th, 1749), Horace Walpole introduces, with characteristic flippancy and malevolence, the following "humiliating" anecdote (as Sir W. Scott calls it) of our great novelist. After relating a scene of low life in Holborn, he says:—"Rigby gave me as strong a picture of nature. He and Peter Bathurst, t'other night, carried a servant of the latter's, who had attempted to shoot him, before Fielding, who, to all his other avocations, has, by the grace of Mr. Lyttleton, added that of Middlesex justice. He sent them word he was at supper; they must come next morning. *They did not understand that freedom, and ran up,* when they found him banqueting with a blind man and three Irishmen, on some cold mutton and a bone of ham, both in one dish, and the dirtiest cloth I ever saw. *He never stirred, or asked them to sit.* Rigby, who had seen him come so often to beg a

(1) Essay on the Life and Genius of Fielding.
(2) See letter of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, quoted in chap. xxv.

guinea of Sir Charles Williams, and Bathurst—at whose father's he had lived for victuals—understood that dignity as little, and pulled themselves chairs; on which he civilised."[1]

A very slight examination of this ungenerous and insolently worded paragraph, will enable us to fix with tolerable accuracy the degree of credit which ought to be attached to it. In the first place, the *animus* of the aristocratic writer is apparent in every expression. A Middlesex justice—and, worse still, one who had once depended on his pen for his support—had DARED, in the plentitude of his insolence, to treat the august friends of Walpole as he would have treated any other of his Majesty's subjects! Having pressed this business of theirs on the magistrate at an unseasonable hour, they were met with a suitable admonition to come at a proper time. Was this to be endured? Who was this Fielding, that dared to send such a message to men like Bathurst and Rigby? A fellow who, in former days, had received a guinea from his patron for a trumpery play or dedication; a scribbler, who had once been glad to receive his board in exchange for his wit. That such a man should attempt to vindicate the dignity of his office, or presume to treat persons of quality as he would have treated the common people, was beyond the comprehension of the dandy *littérateur*. Not "understanding" this freedom, he tells us that his friends invaded the privacy, and rushed unannounced into the presence of the impertinent magistrate! Is it so surprising that, under such circumstances, a man like Fielding, with noble blood in his veins, and boasting the better nobility of a sovereign intellect, should have been deficient in the observance of certain ordinary courtesies towards the intruders? Having been guilty of an unparalleled act of rudeness to the man, and disrespect to the magistrate, these worthy gentlemen, according to Walpole, were surprised to find that Fielding

(1) Walpole's Letters, vol. ii. p. 280.

did not rise with a low bow and request them to be seated. Perhaps some persons may think that the novelist, if not the justice, would have been perfectly justified in compelling them to make a speedy retreat down the stairs they had so unceremoniously ascended. Instead of doing this, we learn that, though naturally angry and annoyed at their unjustifiable interruption, the good-natured magistrate suffered the intruders to remain, and, to use the expression of his libeller, actually "civilised" towards them.

Again, with respect to the persons said to have been assembled at Fielding's supper-table: he was "banqueting," we are told, amongst others, "with a blind man." Very possibly; for the novelist's half-brother,[1] who succeeded him as a Middlesex magistrate, was then an inmate of his house. To sneer at such a calamity was worthy of Walpole! "The blind man," however, in spite of his misfortune, happens to have been a person of rare judgment and attainments; and that being so, we shall know how to appreciate the description given of the other parties. The libeller would have us believe that Fielding was indulging his taste for low society by a nocturnal orgie with beggars and persons of disreputable character. But after this exposure of the spirit and *animus* of the libel, we think it more than probable that there was not a person present with whom the aristocratic Walpole himself might not have associated without dishonour, and perhaps with profit.

As for the cold mutton and the bone of ham, to these Fielding may plead guilty without much disparagement to his character. Poets and novelists have been often obliged to content themselves with much worse fare. Nor is it any

(1) Afterwards Sir John Fielding, who succeeded Fielding as a Bow Street Magistrate, and, though an able lawyer, had been blind from his youth. In an article on the Education of the Blind, in the "North American Review," July, 1833, the following admirably confused account is given of this gentleman:—"It is recorded of the *father* of FLETCHER, the novelist, that he was long continued in the post of Judge of the Police-court of London *after* he became blind; and that he knew the voices of more than 3000 of the light-fingered gentry, and could recognise them at once when brought in."

serious circumstance of aggravation that these viands were both in one dish. Fielding was indulging himself in a private symposium with his friends, without the slightest idea of his crockery being criticised by visitors so alarmingly polite. The dirty table-cloth, again, which is said to have offended the fastidious taste of Walpole's friends, was in all probability a polite invention, to add zest to the story. Is not the introduction of such topics, however, a mark of the writer's intellectual littleness and pitiful meanness of disposition? On the whole, having subjected this "humiliating anecdote" to a fair examination, and noticed the spirit of misrepresentation which pervades it, it would be insulting the common sense of the reader[1] to accept it as anything like an accurate picture of Fielding's private life.

It is true that a morbid taste for low society has been imputed to the novelist by another of his contemporaries; but this accusation also proceeds from a most suspicious quarter. The dislike which, after the publication of

(1) We are indebted to Horace Walpole for the information that Fielding was some time resident at Twickenham—that quiet village by the silver Thames to which Essex, Bacon, and Hyde, by turns, retired from the bustle of court and the toils of active life; and where, at a later period, Pope made love to Lady Mary, received the visits of Swift and St. John, and indited verse that will never die. In a poem by Walpole, entitled, "The Parish Register of Twickenham," written about the year 1758, Fielding's name is thus introduced, amongst the other celebrities whose genius has hallowed this locality:—

> "Where Fielding met his bunter* muse,
> And as they quaffed the fiery juice,
> Droll nature stamped each lucky hit
> With unimaginable wit."

With respect to the period at which the novelist resided at Twickenham, it is not in our power to afford any accurate information. Probably he adopted it as a retreat, when compelled by severe attacks of gout to relinquish for a season his official duties. The change from his house in Bow Street to those green river-banks, so long celebrated as the haunt of the Muses, must have been peculiarly grateful to his jaded frame. What a contrast between the close and fœtid air of the justice-room, and those balmy, life-giving breezes which on gentle summer evenings rippled the waters of the winding Thames!

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* *Bunter*, a cant word for a woman who picks up rags about the street; and used by way of contempt for any low vulgar woman.—*Johnson.*

"Joseph Andrews," Richardson entertained for Fielding's writings extended itself to the person of the author. In the select *coterie* where he presided as a little divinity, he freely gave expression to his querulous animosity; affecting to treat Fielding with a kind of insolent compassion, as a person whose vulgar tastes and habits altogether unfitted him for polite society. "*Poor* Fielding," he writes, in one of his letters, "I could not help telling his sister that I was equally surprised at, and concerned for, his continued lowness. Had your brother, said I, been born in a stable, or been a runner at a sponging-house, one would have thought him a genius, and wished him a liberal education, and of being admitted into good company." These observations, it will be observed, were addressed to Fielding's sister, the accomplished authoress of "David Simple," and were doubtless intended to be conveyed to the person of whom they were spoken. They prove Richardson's immeasurable self-conceit and narrow-mindedness, but nothing else. The "vulgarity" imputed to Fielding was certainly not the vulgarity of the mean mind and grovelling nature—for those who knew him best say that his sense of honour was lively and delicate;[1] but it is quite true that, having been for years exposed to all the painful shifts of poverty, he had suffered therefrom in health and reputation; and in his necessities had condescended to expedients which he never thought of justifying.[2] It was natural, perhaps, for the wealthy bibliopolist

(1) Murphy's Essay.

(2) "When he was not under the immediate urgency of want, they who were intimate with him are ready to aver that he had a mind greatly superior to anything mean or little; when his finances were exhausted, he was not the most elegant in his choice of the means to redress himself, and he would instantly *exhibit a farce or a puppet-show in the Haymarket Theatre*, which was wholly inconsistent with the profession he had embarked in. But his intimates can witness how much his pride suffered, when he was forced into measures of this kind; no man having a juster sense of propriety, or more honourable ideas of the employment of an author and a scholar."—*Murphy's Essay on Fielding's Life and Genius.*

This passage shows that the imputations cast on Fielding for vulgarity and

to associate "continued lowness" with penury; but a more generous disposition would have made large allowances for the misfortunes of a man of talent, continually struggling for existence. To this it may be added that in all probability Fielding was careless about the company into which he flung himself—pleased with eccentricity and *character* in every walk of life—an accessible, pleasant, easy companion; and whilst these habits and qualities gave occasion to many unfounded calumnies, they were undoubtedly sometimes carried further than prudence would justify. It would nevertheless be most unfair to take his character from the lips of an angry and vindictive rival, or from the devoted son of the powerful minister whom he had ridiculed in the height of his power.[1]

In the summer of 1749,[2] Lyttleton followed Fielding's example by entering a second time into the wedded state. Dr. Johnson, after describing the melancholy death of the first Mrs. Lyttleton, adds: "He did not, however, condemn himself to perpetual solitude and sorrow, for after awhile he was content to seek happiness again by a second marriage with the daughter of Sir Robert Rich; but the experiment was unsuccessful."[3] By the subject of this biography the intelligence of this "experiment" was received with the satisfaction usually manifested or expressed on such occa-

unprofessional conduct, were founded on some of the early events of his life. But his "Haymarket scheme," alluded to by Murphy, was before he was called to the Bar, or entered as a student.

(1) Although personal pique or private antipathy had made Fielding in early life the bitter satirist of Sir Robert Walpole, at a subsequent period he fully acknowledged his transcendant qualities as a first minister. In his "Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon" he thus dilates on Sir Robert's attention to the naval armaments of England:—"When the late Sir Robert Walpole, *one of the best of men and of ministers*, used to equip us a yearly fleet at Spithead, his enemies of taste must have allowed that he at least treated the nation with a fine sight for their money."

(2) Lyttleton's second marriage was solemnized on the 10th July, 1749, and, according to the custom of the time, he is advertised in "The Gentleman's Magazine" as having married "the daughter of Sir Robert Rich, with £20,000."

(3) Lives of the Poets.

sions; and he wrote the following congratulatory letter to his friend, which was preserved amongst the Lyttleton papers, and is published in Mr. Phillimore's "Memoirs and Correspondence of George Lord Lyttleton":—

"SIR, *Bow Street, Aug.* 29, 1749.

"Permit me to bring up the rear of your friends in paying my compliments of congratulation on your late happy nuptials. There may, perhaps, be seasons when the rear may be as honourable a post in friendship as in war; and if so, such certainly must be every time of joy and felicity. Your present situation must be full of bliss; and so will be, I am confident, your future life from the same fountain. Nothing can equal the excellent character your lady bears amongst those of her own sex, and I never yet knew them speak well of a woman who did not deserve their good words. How admirable is your fortune in the matrimonial lottery! I will venture to say there is no man alive who exults more in this, or in any other happiness that can attend you, than myself, and you ought to believe me from the same reason that fully persuades me of the satisfaction you receive from any happiness of mine; this reason is that you must be sensible how much of it I owe to your goodness; and there is a great pleasure in gratitude, though I believe it second to that of benevolence, for of all the delights upon earth, none can equal the raptures which a good mind feels in conferring happiness on those whom we think worthy of it. This is the sweetest ingredient in power, and I solemnly protest I never wished for power more than a few days ago, for the sake of a man whom I love, the more, perhaps, from the esteem I know he bears you than any other reason. This man is in love with a young creature of the most apparent worth, who returns his affections. Nothing is wanting to make two very miserable people extremely blest, but a moderate portion of the greatest of human evils, so philosophers call it, and so it is called by divines, whose word is the rather to be taken as they are, many of them, more conversant with this evil than even the philosophers were. The name of this man is Moore, to whom you kindly destined the laurel, which, though it hath long been withered, may not probably soon drop from the brow of its present possessor.[1] But there is another place of much the same value now vacant: it is that of deputy-licenser to the stage. Be not offended at this hint; for though I will own it impudent enough in one who hath so many obligations of his own to you to venture to recommend another man to your favour, yet impudence

(1) Colley Cibber still wore the laurel, which he had received on the death of Mr. Eusden, in 1730. Cibber died in December, 1757, aged 86.

itself may possibly be a virtue when exerted on behalf of a friend: at least, I am the less ashamed of it, as I have known men remarkable for the opposite modesty, possess it without the mixture of any other quality. In this fault then you must indulge me—for should I ever see you as high in power as I wish, and as it is perhaps more my interest than your own that you should be, I shall be guilty of the like as often as I find a man in whom I can, after much intimacy, discover no want but that of the evil above mentioned. I beg you will do me the honour of making my compliments to your unknown lady, and believe me to be, with the highest esteem, respect, and gratitude,

"Sir, your most obliged,

"Most obedient, humble servant,

"HENRY FIELDING."

"*To the Honourable George Lyttleton, Esq.*"

This characteristic letter affords abundant evidence, if further proof were needed, of the warmth and kindliness of Fielding's nature. The friend whom in this instance he was so anxious to serve was well worthy of his intercession. Edward Moore is now remembered by his tragedy of "The Gamester," which still keeps possession of the stage, and his "Fables for the Female Sex," almost as remarkable for easy versification as the more celebrated fables of Gay. He was originally a linendraper, but forsook business early in life for the more congenial pursuits of literature. The "young creature" with whom he was at this time in love, who "returned his affections," and whom he afterwards married, was the daughter of a Mr. Hamilton, who held the important office of "table-decker" to the princesses. This lady united considerable literary ability to an amiable disposition, and in the warmth of her attachment for Moore she published a poem in "The Gentleman's Magazine" for 1749, which acquired some celebrity. It is addressed to the daughter of Stephen Duck, the thresher and poet, and commences thus:—

"Would you think it, my Duck, for the fault I must own,
Your Jenny, at last, is quite covetous grown;
Tho' millions if fortune should lavishly pour
I still should be wretched, if I had not MORE."

The last stanza of the poem has also an equally felicitous quibble:—

> "You will wonder, my girl, who this dear one can be,
> Whose merit can boast such a conquest as me;
> But you sha'n't know his name, tho' I told you before
> It begins with an M, but I dare not say MORE."

After this poetical demonstration of affection, it would have been indeed a pity if adverse fate had separated the lovers.

Before the date of Fielding's letter, Moore had shown his appreciation of Lyttleton's many excellent qualities by warmly complimenting him in a poem called "The Trial of Selim the Persian." Dr. Johnson says, "Moore courted his (Lyttleton's) favour by an apologetical poem, called 'The Trial of Selim,' for which he was paid with kind words, which, as is common, raised great hopes, that were at last disappointed."[1] This latter statement is by no means correct. Lyttleton did not indeed present Moore with any appointment (perhaps it was not in his power to procure a suitable one), but he nevertheless seized an early opportunity of rendering him substantial assistance. In January, 1753, was commenced the periodical called "The World," printed and published by Dodsley, who accepted the services of Moore as the editor, and undertook to pay three guineas for every paper he communicated, whether written by himself or others. Lyttleton, being informed of this bargain, immediately "beat up" for a staff of fashionable contributors, and his exertions were so successful, that it became (as one of them expressed it) "the bow of Ulysses, in which it was the fashion for men of rank and genius to try their strength."[2] Lord Chesterfield himself contributed three or four papers; Horace Walpole nine; and Soame Jenyns, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, Lord

(1) Lives of the Poets. The Trial of Selim was intended as a defence of Lyttleton for having taken office under Mr. Pelham, which had subjected him to much abuse from some of his quondam associates.

(2) See Drake's Essays illustrative of Periodical Papers.

Hailes, the Earl of Orrery, and the Honourable Hamilton Boyle, were the authors of several others. Amongst its less known but equally accomplished contributors may be mentioned the name of the Rev. Richard Owen Cambridge, the author of "The Scribleriad," and a celebrated clerical wit.[1] Recommended by such high and aristocratic support, "The World" made its way with astonishing rapidity; and the editor—thanks to Lyttleton—soon found himself in a position of comparative affluence. He died in 1757.

As a dramatist, Moore's genius was of a kindred character to that of Fielding's old friend Lillo. The novelist lived to see the play of "The Gamester" performed, and must have been reminded by it of the truthful pathos of "George Barnwell" and "The Fatal Curiosity." It was first acted in 1753, and was received rather coldly: "the general cry against it being that the distress was too deep to be borne."[2] Shrewder critics, however, assert that it assailed too vehemently the fashionable vice of gaming, which then infested every grade of society, to prove agreeable to a general audience.

The tone of this letter to Lyttleton must altogether be regarded as highly honourable to Fielding. The grateful terms in which he speaks on this, as on other occasions, of benefactions received, prove that he was deeply sensible of an act of kindness, and never slow to acknowledge it. Desirous at all times of performing a service, or procuring a favour for a friend, he never forgot one rendered to himself. Had unbounded power or wealth been his, his largesses would have freely distributed amongst the necessitous of every rank; no loving pair, anxious to be united in the bonds of wedlock, but divided by want of means, would long

(1) The following repartee is related by his son:—"A note from Mr. Moore (the conductor of 'The World'), requesting an essay, was put into my father's hands on a Sunday morning, as he was going to church; my mother, observing him rather inattentive during the sermon, whispered, 'Of what are you thinking?' he replied, '*Of the next World!*'"—*Life, prefixed to his Works.* 1803.

(2) Baker's Biographia Dramatica, vol. ii.

have lacked a wedding portion; no man of letters would have been without the means of gratifying his most luxurious tastes; no poverty, no grief, which wealth could have alleviated, would longer have afflicted earth. A plentiful and unsparing distribution of the gifts of Providence seemed to Fielding all that was required to make the world a paradise.

In the month of November, this year, Fielding took an active part in a case which excited considerable public interest. A young man named Penlez, or rather Bosavern Penlez, a Jew, was capitally convicted, with others, of a riotous attack on a disorderly house in the Strand, where some sailors had been robbed. Through Fielding's representations, however, all the prisoners except Penlez were reprieved, but the latter (upon whom were found some clothes taken from the house attacked) suffered the extreme penalty of the law, to the horror and indignation of hundreds who had participated in the offence. In justification of the punishment of Penlez, Fielding published an article in "The London Review" of November 25, which was afterwards enlarged into a pamphlet, in which the principle and policy of the Riot Act (1 Geo. I.) were fully discussed.[1]

Whilst thus earnest and zealous in the discharge of his public duties, it is to be regretted that the exertions of the active magistrate were so often interrupted by his constitutional infirmities. Just as he had completed the first year of his official life, a serious illness deprived the public for some time of his services. So alarming was his state of health at this period, that his disease was reported to be mortal; and that report is thus contradicted, and his re-appearance as a magistrate announced in the columns

(1) The title of the pamphlet is as follows:—"A True State of the Case of Bosavern Penlez, who suffered on account of the late Riot in the Strand; in which the law regarding this offence, and the statute of George I., commonly called the Riot Act, are fully considered." 8vo. 1749.

of "The General Advertizer" of Thursday, December 28, 1749:—

"Justice Fielding has no mortification in his foot, as has been reported; that gentleman has indeed been very dangerously ill with a fever, and a fit of the gout, in which he was attended by Dr. Thomson, an eminent physician, and is now so well recovered as to be able to execute his office as usual."

Dr. Thomson, "the eminent physician" above mentioned, has been denounced by Sir John Hawkins as "one of the many physicians who, in this country, have enjoyed a short-lived reputation, acquired by methods unknown to any but themselves;"[1] and Johnson speaks of him as "a man who had, by large promises and free censures of the common practice of physic, forced himself up into a sudden reputation."[2] He had been the medical attendant of Pope (who was persuaded by Thomson's enemies to dismiss him), and was subsequently private physician to Lord Melcombe[3] (Bubb Dodington), who gave him £50 a year, and an apartment in his house, which was supposed to confer on him what the doctor, it is believed, much required—a privilege from arrest. "He was," says Hawkins, "an everlasting prater on politics and criticism, and saw so deep into the counsels of the King of Prussia, that he could assign the motives of all his actions during the last war in which he was engaged. At taverns, in coffee-houses, at the cyder-cellars in Maiden Lane, he was frequently to be found holding forth on these subjects without interruption, in a tone of voice which Mr. Garrick

(1) Hawkins' Life of Johnson, p. 337.

(2) Life of Pope.

(3) The following entries in Lord Melcombe's diary refer to this physician:—

"*April* 16. Consulted the speaker about Dr. Thomson's privilege.

"*April* 17. Went to town to attend Dr. Thomson's action of defamation against Saxon, the apothecary, at the King's Bench—begun at six, ended at nine. Evidences speaking to the doctor's skill and reputation were—the Duke of Roxburgh, Earl of Middlesex, Mr. Levison, Sir Francis Dashwood, Sir Francis Eyles, Mr. Drax, and myself. He carried his cause, and the jury gave £20 damages."

would say was like the buzz of an humble-bee in a hall-window." The self-sufficient knight afterwards relates that Thomson sunk into "contempt and obscurity," "notwithstanding the advantages with which he set out, and the extravagant encomiums of Fielding and others, of him and his practice." But a striking contrast to this depreciating criticism is afforded by Sir John himself in the same page, where he narrates an instance of a young military officer, who had received a wound in the leg, which was saved from amputation by Thomson, in opposition to the opinion of two "eminent surgeons," who wished to proceed *secundum artem*.[1]

During the whole of the year 1750, the novelist had his hands full of justice business. Flagrant violations of the law were at this time of frequent occurrence. Bands of ruffians infested the streets of London, and committed the most daring depredations. The state of the metropolis was represented as so fearful, that country people were afraid to venture there.[2] Every form of villany flourished in rank luxuriance, and a morbid interest was taken in the fate of notorious criminals, which rendered malefactors the heroes of the age, and imparted a mischievous prestige to crime. In a letter to Sir H. Mann (dated October 18, 1750), Horace Walpole thus playfully alludes to the growing evil: "Robbery is the only thing which goes on with any vivacity, though my friend Mr. M'Lean is hanged.[3] The first Sunday after

(1) Thomson's professional treatment of Mr. Winnington has been already referred to. Hawkins calls him "a free-thinker" in medicine, and this may explain the hostility displayed towards him by Walpole and others.

(2) "The Gentleman's Magazine" of August, 1751, inserts the following very *naïve* and cool suggestion of a country correspondent for the repression of the crimes which were so prevalent at this period:—"A gentleman in the country who is deterred, with many others, from coming to London, for greater terror of malefactors, proposes that the convicted should be thrown into *Eldon Hole*, in the Peak. As that dreadful hole is too far distant to be used on such occasions, suppose they were thrown from the Monument into Monument Yard, or from Westminster Bridge, with a stone round their necks?"

(3) See also p. 242.

his condemnation *three thousand people* went to see him; he fainted away twice with the heat of his cell. You can't conceive the ridiculous rage there is of going to Newgate; and the prints that are published of the malefactors, and the memoirs of their lives and deaths, set forth with as much parade as—as—Marshal Turenne's—we have no generals worth making a parallel."[1]

The extensive experience which at this period Fielding acquired at Bow Street he was laudably anxious to turn to public account, and he accordingly employed his pen in the composition of a treatise on the criminal disorders of the age, with suggestions for their cure. The result of his labours appeared in a bulky pamphlet, published in January, 1751, and entitled, "An Inquiry into the Causes of the late Increase of Robbers, &c.; with some Proposals for remedying the growing Evil." It is said by Murphy that this pamphlet (which has been already referred to in these pages) "was held in high estimation by some eminent persons who have administered justice in Westminster Hall;" and among these may be mentioned that great lawyer, Philip Yorke, Lord Hardwicke, to whom it is dedicated. Of the extent of the evil with which he endeavoured to grapple, and of the dangers which threatened society, the zealous magistrate gives us a startling picture: "What indeed," he says, "may not the public apprehend, when they are informed as an unquestionable fact, that there are at this time a great gang of rogues, whose number falls little short of a hundred, who are incorporated in one body, have officers and a treasury, and have reduced theft and robbery into a regular system. There are of this society men who appear in all disguises, and mix in most companies. Nor are they better versed in every act of cheating, thieving, and robbing, than they are armed with every method of evading the law if they should ever be discovered, and an attempt made to bring

(1) Walpole's Correspondence, vol. ii.

them to justice. Here, if they fail in rescuing the prisoner, or (which seldom happens) in bribing or deterring the prosecutor, they have for their last resource some rotten members of the law to forge a defence for them, and a great number of false witnesses ready to support it." As to the inadequate motives which at this time occasionally instigated persons to commit the most heinous crimes, the justice relates an instance of an highwayman "who lately," he says, "confessed several robberies before me, his motive to which, he assured me (and so it appeared), was to pay a bill that was shortly to become due."

Voluptuousness and extravagance are cited by Fielding as the most ordinary causes which at that period induced persons to enter on a career of crime. He advocated, therefore, the rigorous interference of the law, so far as it was possible, with expensive diversions and luxurious indulgences. Whatever his private failings may have been, in theory, at any rate, he was a rigid moralist. Though he might have been himself addicted to convivial habits, as a magistrate he did not hesitate to denounce the vice of intemperance as the fruitful source of crime. His emphatic denunciation of gin-drinking—which he describes as "a new kind of drunkenness, unknown to our ancestors," which had lately sprung up—might satisfy the most enthusiastic tea-totaller of the present day.

"The drunkenness I here intend (he says) is that acquired by the strongest intoxicating liquors, and particularly by that poison called *gin*; which, I have great reason to think, is the principal sustenance (if it may be so called) of more than one hundred thousand people in this metropolis. Many of these wretches there are who swallow pints of this poison within the twenty-four hours, the dreadful effects of which I have the misfortune every day to see, and to smell too. But I have no need to insist on my own credit, or on that of my informers; the great revenue arising from the tax on this liquor (the consumption of which is almost wholly confined to the lowest order of the people) will prove the quantity consumed better than any other evidence."

Having described in vivid colours the enervated condi-

tion of a gin-drinking people, the indignant magistrate compares "the first inventor of this diabolical liquor" to "the poisoner of a fountain whence a large city was to derive its waters." He even hints at the expediency, if it were practicable, of passing a kind of *Maine* law, so far as spirits were concerned. "Suppose," he says, "all spirituous liquors were, together with other poison, to be locked up in the chemists' or apothecaries' shops, thence never to be drawn till some excellent physician calls them forth for the cure of nervous distempers; or suppose the price was to be raised so high, by a severe impost, that gin would be placed entirely beyond the reach of the vulgar." If such extreme measures were, however, impracticable, he contends that the State was bound to take some steps to palliate the monstrous evil. "Some little care," he concludes, "on this head is surely necessary; for though the increase of thieves and the destruction of morality; though the loss of our labourers, our sailors, and our soldiers, should not be sufficient reasons, there is one which seems to be unanswerable, and that is, the loss of our gin-drinkers: since, should the drinking of this poison be continued in its present height during the next twenty years, there will, by that time, be very few of the common people left to drink it." [1]

This powerful exposure of the monster evil of the time was not without its effect. On the meeting of parliament in January, 1751, the king's speech referred to the "outrages and violence" of which the metropolis had been lately the theatre; and a committee of the Lower House was appointed to take into consideration the most effectual means of repressing them. The proceedings before this committee are thus noticed by Horace Walpole.

(1) Of the squalid misery caused by "King Gin," an appalling representation is given by Hogarth, in his picture of "Gin Lane." The historians of the period, as well as the newspapers and magazines, all admit the magnitude of the evil.

Under the date of February, 1751, he says:—"A committee had been appointed to consider on amending the laws enacted against the vices of the lower people, which were increased to a degree of robbery and murder beyond example. Fielding, a favourite author of the age, had published an admirable treatise on the laws in question, and agreed with what was observed on this occasion, that that these outrages proceeded from *gin*. The depopulation of the city was ascribed to the same cause."[1] On the 12th of March following, Potter (son of the archbishop of that name), according to the same authority, "produced several physicians and masters of workhouses to prove the fatal consequences of spirituous liquors, which laid waste the meaner parts of the town, and were now spreading into the country." The magnitude of the evil being thus fully demonstrated by parliamentary inquiry, a statute was passed (24 Geo. II. c. 40, commonly called the Tippling Act), which, after reciting that "the immoderate drinking of distilled spirituous liquors by persons of the meanest and lowest sort hath of late years increased to the great detriment of the health and morals of the common people," proceeded to impose restrictions on the sale of spirits, which, although described by Walpole as "slight ones for so enormous an evil," were in fact of a very stringent character.[2]

The once famous "Glastonbury Waters" appear, amongst

(1) Memoirs of the Reign of George II.

(2) One section of this act of parliament (which is still in force) is often productive of great hardship and injustice. By section 12, it is enacted that "no person shall be entitled to sue for, or on account of, any spirituous liquors, unless such debt shall have been *bonâ fide* contracted for, at *one time*, to the amount of 20*s*. or upwards; nor shall any particular item or article in any account or demand for distilled spirituous liquors be allowed and maintained, when the liquors delivered at one time, and mentioned in such article or item, shall not amount to 20*s*. at the least." The only use of this enactment now is to furnish a fraudulent defence to a tavern-bill; and it is difficult to understand why, when the reason of a law has ceased, the English legislature should so obstinately retain it on the statute-book. Obsolete laws are often, in legal proceedings, the source of serious inconvenience and injustice.

other more important matters, to have occupied Fielding's attention in the year 1751. A man of about thirty years of age, living at Glastonbury, in Somersetshire, who was afflicted with what was considered an incurable asthma, dreamed (according to the newspaper accounts) "that he saw, near the Chain-gate, in the horse-track, the clearest pool of water, and that a person told him if he drank a glass of the same, fasting for seven Sundays, he would be cured; which actually proved true, as he attested the same on oath." As soon as this marvellous circumstance became known, thousands of persons, suffering from asthmatic and other complaints flocked to Glastonbury. Bath was almost deserted by its colony of invalids, and the merits of the new waters were everywhere vehemently proclaimed.

Fielding naturally took some interest in this matter. He was born near Glastonbury,[1] and had therefore a local knowledge of the scene where the alleged miracle was worked. Moreover, he was himself an invalid, and prone (as such persons often are) to try every new remedy which promises sudden relief. He accordingly visited the celebrated spring, whose virtues were then the theme of general wonderment, and, on his return to London, was able to confirm, from his own experience, the marvellous accounts of their efficacy. In answer to the numerous letters which were published in the newspapers by more sceptical persons, who doubted or denied the merits of the waters, he published in the month of September a statement in "The London Daily Advertizer." His letter is signed "Z. Z.," and was dictated, he asserts, by a sincere desire to serve his countrymen; having seen great numbers of his fellow-creatures under two of the most miserable diseases human

(1) Sharpham House, where Fielding was born, was one of the rural residences of the abbots of Glaston. It had been in the possession of the Gould family since the middle of the seventeenth century. (History of the Abbey of Glaston and Town of Glastonbury. By the Rev. R. Warner. Bath. 1826.) The writer speaks of Sharpham House as then "destined to be levelled with the ground."

nature can labour under—the asthma and evil—return from Glastonbury cured of their ailments, and having himself been relieved from a disorder which baffled the most skilful physicians.[1] Whatever temporary relief Fielding may have experienced from this marvel-working spring, it is certain, however, that he derived no permanent benefit from it. As with many others, probably, the cure only existed in imagination.

(1) Gentleman's Magazine, September, 1751.

CHAPTER XXII.

"AMELIA."

[1751.]

Happily for posterity, Fielding's important duties as an acting magistrate did not monopolise all his time. Though he freely presented the public with the first-fruits of his labours, he found leisure enough before the close of the year 1751, to compose another work of fiction. In "The General Advertizer" of December 15th, his novel of "Amelia" is advertised by Millar to be published on the 18th of that month. The wonderful popularity of "Tom Jones" encouraged the bookseller to expect a rapid sale, as the following somewhat ungrammatical notice would imply:—"To satisfy the earnest demand of the publick, *this work* is now printing at four presses; but the proprietor, notwithstanding, finds it impossible to get *them* bound in time, without spoiling the beauty of the impression, and therefore will sell them sewed at half a guinea the set." According to Sir Walter Scott, the worthy bookseller did not content himself with the puff direct, but also adopted the following *oblique* and ingenious method of pushing the sale of the new novel. "Millar," says the author of Waverley, "published 'Amelia' in 1751. He had paid £1000 for the copyright; and when he began to suspect that the work would be judged inferior to its predecessor, he employed the following stratagem to push it upon the trade. At a sale made to the booksellers previous to the publication, Millar offered his friends his other publications on the usual terms of discount; but when he came to 'Amelia,' he laid it aside as a work expected to be in such demand that he could not afford to deliver it to the

trade in the usual manner. The *ruse* succeeded—the impression was anxiously bought up, and the bookseller relieved from every apprehension of a slow sale."

The sum given by Millar for the copyright of "Amelia" appears large, and, at that period, it was unprecedentedly so. But the bookseller had been a great gainer by "Tom Jones." For this work he had originally given Fielding £600, and to that sum he afterwards voluntarily added £100,[1] in consideration of its wonderful popularity. As it is too much the fashion amongst authors to regard the booksellers as their natural enemies, this instance of generosity ought to be recorded for the credit of the craft. Millar, too, be it remembered, was not only a bookseller, but a Scotchman—a shrewd, hard man of business, of a singularly *literal* turn of mind. *Apropos* of the latter quality, the following anecdote, from an old copy of "The St. James' Chronicle" newspaper, will not be out of place. Fielding, it is said, always asserted that the Scotch had no taste for, or idea of, humour. This was denied by a friend, and the trial was agreed to be made upon the aforesaid Millar, who was at that very moment ascending the stairs, to pay a visit to the justice and novelist. Upon his entering the room, Fielding pretended to be continuing a conversation, and said: "I will be judged by my friend here, whether my scheme be not a good one."—"What is it?" inquired the bookseller, quite unsuspiciously.—"I was thinking," replied Fielding, "how I might keep a coach with little or no

(1) "Millar, the bookseller, has done very generously by him (Fielding); finding 'Tom Jones,' for which he gave him £600, sell so greatly, he has since given him another £100."—*H. Walpole. Letter to George Montague.*

Dr. Johnson paid an authoritative tribute of respect to "honest Andrew." "I respect Millar, sir," he said; "he has raised the price of literature." This testimonial will appear of the more value when some of the lexicographer's dealings with the bookseller are brought to mind. When the messenger who carried the last sheet of his Dictionary to Millar returned, Johnson asked him, "Well, what did he say?"—"Sir," answered the messenger, "he said, 'Thank God, I have done with him!'"—"I am glad," replied Johnson, with a smile, "he thanks God for anything."—*Boswell's Life of Johnson.* Hawkins inserts two notes which are said to have passed on the occasion, but these are fictitious.

expense."—"How is that?" said Millar, "I would keep one myself on those terms."—"You shall go halves with me, if you will, Millar," answered the facetious magistrate. "You know that I send a good many prisoners to gaol in hackney-coaches, and if I were to let my own coach do that business, I might pay for the job in shillings and eightpences to Newgate, Bridewell, and Clerkenwell. What think you?" Millar looked very grave, shook his head, and said with great solemnity that he thought it very unbecoming a magistrate to make his coach a carriage for rogues, highwaymen, and pickpockets. At this observation, Fielding burst into a loud laugh, and triumphantly exclaimed, "I thought so!" The friend immediately gave up the dispute, and they passed to the business of the day, without any suspicion on the part of the bookseller that he had been made the subject of an experiment.

"Amelia" was dedicated by Fielding to his generous friend, Ralph Allen,[1] from whom he had more than once received pecuniary assistance and valuable counsel. The novel, he observed, was "sincerely designed to promote the cause of virtue, and to expose some of the most glaring evils, as well public as private, which then infested the country. . . . . . The best man," he continues, "is the properest patron of such an attempt. This, I believe, will be readily granted; nor will the public voice, I think, be now divided to whom they will give that appellation. Should a letter, indeed, be thus inscribed, Detur Optimo, there are few persons who would think it wanted any other direction." Strong as these expressions may appear, they flowed from the heart of the writer, and, if applicable to any human being, they may fairly be taken to have been so to the noble-minded personage to whom they were addressed.

It has been observed that in his former novels Fielding sketched many of the characters from life; and the heroine

(1) This gentleman is said to have once sent him a present of 200 guineas, before he had any personal knowledge of him.

of his last work of fiction is undoubtedly copied from an original. In the loving, gentle, and true-hearted Amelia, he has transmitted to posterity a portrait of his first wife, over whose early grave he had shed so many bitter tears. "Henry Fielding," says Lady Mary Wortley Montague, "has given a true picture of himself and his first wife in the character of Mr. and Mrs. Booth, some compliments to his own figure excepted; and I am persuaded several of the incidents he mentions are real matters of fact." Among these "matters of fact" may be noticed the accident by which Amelia's nose was deprived of its original symmetry,—a misfortune which, with the same circumstances of aggravation, occurred to Mrs. Fielding.[1]

The tradition that Fielding intended Amelia as an affectionate tribute to the memory of his first wife, imparts an additional interest to the character. Years had not obliterated from his mind the solace he had received from her society in his day of adversity; the sacrifices she had made for him, and the sufferings she had undergone. The highest intellects have never disdained "to humble themselves at the shrine of departed excellence;"[2] and in this charming portrait it is reasonable to believe that Fielding attempted to satisfy the yearnings of an atoning love, which followed its object beyond the grave. In depicting under such circumstances the model wife, he has by no means confined himself to the novel-writer's ordinary track: Amelia is not only the most lovable of women, but she possesses withal a fund of good sense rarely bestowed on the heroines of fiction. It is observable, however, that the gentle and

(1) "Amelia, even to her *noselessness*," Richardson writes, "is again his first wife."—*Correspondence*, vol. iv. "The injury," says Booth, relating his history to Miss Matthews, "done to her beauty by the overturning of a chaise, by which, as you well remember, her lovely nose was beat all to pieces, gave me an assurance that the woman who had been so much adored for the charms of her person, deserved a much higher adoration to be paid to her mind; for that she was in the latter respect infinitely more superior to the rest of her sex than she had ever been in the former."—*Amelia*, book ii. chap. 1

(2) Washington Irving's "Life of Goldsmith."

yielding qualities of the sex predominate over intellectual strength. Amelia is all the woman. Her virtues shine forth with the greatest lustre when engaged in her household occupations, or in imparting to her children those lessons of religion which are best learned from a mother's lips. "This admirable woman," says the novelist, "never let a day pass without instructing her children in some lesson of religion and morality; by which means she had, in their tender minds, so strongly annexed the ideas of fear and shame to every idea of evil of which they were susceptible, that it must require great pains and length of habit to separate them." Instead of repining at poverty, how cleverly does the unromantic heroine accommodate herself to circumstances! Like a wise and true woman, she takes care that her husband's house shall always wear a cheerful and alluring aspect. During his absence, with the assistance of a little girl, who was their only servant, she managed, we are told, to dress her dinner; "and she had likewise dressed herself as neat as any lady who had a regular set of servants could have done." And thus, in humble lodgings, with poverty at the door, the wife rises superior to fortune, and preserves the husband from despair. She takes as much pleasure, it is said again, in cooking "as a fine lady generally enjoys in dressing herself for a ball." It is by these minute touches that Fielding brings before us the "perfect woman" whose memory he so fondly idolised. Some of these scenes of poverty, illumined by the smiles, and softened by the careful contrivances of a wife, doubtless had their parallel in the incidents of his own life, and such experiences have given an air of Defoe-like truthfulness to the narrative.

The compunctious visitings of conscience, by which the unworthy Booth is occasionally harassed, tend still further to remind us of "the expiatory spirit" in which this story seems to have been penned. Could he have met his wife's caresses without a pang of self-reproach, how great had

been his happiness! "The behaviour of Amelia," we are told, "would have made him completely happy, in defiance of all adverse circumstances, had it not been for those bitter ingredients which he himself had thrown into his cup; and which prevented him from truly relishing his Amelia's sweetness, by reminding him how unworthy he was of this excellent creature." True, indeed, is the observation of Tom Jones to Sophia:—"The delicacy of your sex cannot comprehend the grossness of ours." But there are moments when that gross nature is made to feel, and to feel deeply, its own unworthiness—when affectionate tenderness recalls the wanderer to the path of duty; and past irregularities are bitterly repented of, without a glance of complaint or word of reproach from the injured object.

Whilst in the composition of his last novel Fielding was principally actuated by a desire to do honour to the memory of a being he had so fondly loved, he had also another object in view—namely, that referred to in the dedication to Mr. Allen—the exposure of many public and private evils which then infested the country. Among those evils, the worst and most deadly were those connected with the administration of the criminal law, and the punishment of crime. The prisons were hotbeds of moral and physical pestilence, nurseries of immorality, and hideous temples of disease. No Howard, it will be remembered, had yet set out on his "voyage of Christian benevolence;"[1] nor had any Romilly laboured with unselfish devotion and unshrinking courage to remove the cruelties and inconsistencies which sullied the penal code of England. The captive was yet unvisited; the horrors of the prison-house not yet exposed. No apostle of humanity had selected "the lot in which was to be found the least of that which selfish human nature covets, the most of what it shrinks from;"[2] nor had any Christian legislator raised his voice against the odious practices of whipping women in the public streets, hanging

(1) Burke. (2) Jeremy Bentham.

them for shoplifting, or burning them for coining. Within the walls of a prison wealth could purchase luxurious indulgence, whilst innocent poverty incurred the perils of starvation. The condemned highwayman merrily caroused up to the last moment of his existence, and was accommodated with the lightest irons, and enabled to "die like a gentleman;" whilst the poor rogue, without friends or money, was left to perish with cold or fever—saving the jailer, the judge, and the hangman, a world of trouble by dying out of the way. Instead of the decency, order, and discipline, which ought to be the characteristics of a place of punishment, the jails of those days exhibited every form of rampant vice and squalid wretchedness. The loud laugh of hardened villany, the song of the reveller, the wicked oath and obscene jest, mingled with the groans of the suffering and the supplicating cries of the distressed. In such a pandemonium every virtuous impulse withered and perished; penitence was a thing unknown,—for, instead of feeling remorse, the criminal boasted of his misdeeds, and was respected in proportion to their atrocity.

The evils which were thus permitted to disgrace the administration of the law, reacted upon society at large with a retributive justice as natural as it was terrible. The pestilence which was nurtured in the jail, as well as the immorality and crime generated there, extended beyond its gloomy precincts. The educated jail-bird was a terror to the community, whilst the jail-fever was recognised as one of the most fearful scourges in the catalogue of disease. In the year 1750 it raged in Newgate to such an extent, that, at the Old Bailey Sessions, one of the judges (Mr. Justice Abney), an alderman, and many jurymen and witnesses, were numbered amongst its victims; and from that time up to this day it has been usual to place sweet-smelling herbs in the prisoner's dock, to prevent infection. Some personal peril was, in truth, formerly incurred in the administration of the law. In 1730, Chief Baron Pengelly

and Serjeant Shippen were killed by the jail-fever, whilst attending the Dorsetshire Assizes, held at Blandford; and the High-Sheriff for Somersetshire perished during the same circuit from the same cause.

The jail scenes depicted in "Amelia" may be referred to as valuable and faithful sketches of prison-life in these dark days of criminal jurisprudence. The spectacles which are stated to have met the eye of Booth, during his incarceration, were then common enough: the street robbers, who were certain of being hanged the next session, "enjoying themselves very merrily over a bottle of wine and a pipe of tobacco;" the daughter supporting the head of a dying father, who had been committed for stealing a loaf; the wounded soldier, who had been tried for stealing three herrings, and acquitted, but was still detained for his fees.[1] Such scenes as these, though they occur in a work of fiction, were matters of everyday occurrence in Fielding's time. His experience as a magistrate had familiarised him with the secrets of the prison-house, and it was with a sincere desire of being useful to his country that he exposed them in their proper colours.

The enlightened views of Fielding upon political matters are fully displayed in his last novel. Some of the "administrative reformers" of our own eventful times will be surprised to see how completely he has anticipated many of the views which are at length becoming fashionable. In Dr. Harrison's interview with the nobleman whom he solicits to use his interest with a minister for obtaining Booth's promotion, most of the sentiments enunciated by the doctor would be loudly cheered at any public meeting in these days. The peer having observed that "the conduct of politicians is not formed upon the principles of religion," his suitor makes these observations:—

"'I am sorry for it; but I will talk to them then of honour and honesty. . . . . Now to deny a man the preferment which he merits,

(1) Amelia, book i. chap. 4.

and to give it to another man who doth not merit it, is a manifest act of injustice; and is consequently both inconsistent with honour and honesty. Nor is it only an act of injustice to the man himself, but to the public, for whose good principally all public offices are, or ought to be, instituted. Now this good can never be completed nor obtained but by employing all persons according to their capacities. Wherever true merit is liable to be superseded by favour and partiality, and men are intrusted with offices, without any regard to capacity or integrity, the affairs of that state will always be in a deplorable situation. Such, as Livy tells us, was the state of Capua, a little before its final destruction. . . . . But, my lord, there is another mischief which attends this kind of injustice—and that is, it hath a manifest tendency to destroy all virtue and all ability among the people, by taking away all that encouragement and incentive which should promote emulation, and cause men to aim at excelling in any art, science, or profession. Nor can anything, my lord, contribute more to render a nation contemptible among its neighbours; for what opinion can other countries have of the councils, or what terror can they conceive of the arms, of such people? And it was chiefly owing to the avoiding of this error that Oliver Cromwell carried the reputation of England higher than it ever was in any other time.'

. . . .

" 'And do you really think, doctor,' cries the nobleman, 'that any minister could support himself in this country upon such principles as you recommend? Do you think he would be able to baffle an opposition, unless he should oblige his friends by conferring places, often contrary to his own inclination and his own opinions?'

" 'Yes, really do I,' cries the doctor. 'Indeed, if a minister is resolved to make good his confession in the Liturgy, *by leaving undone all those things which he ought to have done, and by doing all those things which he ought not to have done*, such a minister, I grant, will be obliged to baffle opposition, as you are pleased to term it, by these arts; for as Shakspere somewhere says—

Things ill begun, strengthen themselves by ill.

But if, on the contrary, he will please to consider the true interest of his country, and that only in great and national points; if he will engage his country in neither alliances or quarrels, but where it is really interested; if he will raise no money but what is wanted, nor employ any civil or military officers but what are useful, and place in these employments men of the highest integrity, and of the greatest abilities; if he will employ some few of his hours to advance our trade, and some few more to regulate our domestic government; if he would do this, my lord, I will answer for it he shall either have no opposition to baffle, or he shall baffle it by a fair appeal to his

conduct. Such a minister may, in the language of the law, put himself on his country when he pleases, and he shall come off with honour and applause.' "[1]

"Amelia" was but coldly received. Regular novel-readers were displeased with its didactic tone, and complained of the want of entertaining incidents. As a work of art, it is certainly manifestly inferior to "Tom Jones," and it has none of the rich humour of "Joseph Andrews." On the whole, the criticism of Arthur Murphy is exceedingly just and accurate :—"Amelia," he says, "which succeeded 'Tom Jones' in about *four*[2] years, has indeed the marks of genius, but of a genius beginning to fall into decay. The author's invention in this performance does not appear to have lost its fertility; his judgment, too, seems as strong as ever; but the warmth of imagination is abated; and in his landscapes, or his scenes of life, Mr. Fielding is no longer the colourist he was before. . . . . And yet 'Amelia' holds the same proportion to 'Tom Jones' that 'The Odyssey' of Homer bears, in the estimation of Longinus, to 'The Iliad.' A fine vein of morality runs through the whole; many of the situations are affecting and tender; the sentiments are delicate; and, upon the whole, it is 'The Odyssey,' the moral and pathetic work, of Henry Fielding."[3]

Some of the readers of "Amelia," it is true, formed a different estimate of its merits. Dr. Johnson spoke of it as the only book, within human recollection, of which, being published in the morning, a new edition was called for before night. This sudden, or apparently sudden sale, was owing, however, in all probability, to the *ruse* of the publisher, which has been already described. The great moralist, in spite of his antipathy to Fielding, was charmed with "Amelia." So delighted was he with it, that he read

(1) Amelia, book xi. chap. 2.

(2) This is of course a mistake. The interval between the publication of the two novels was about two years and nine months.

(3) Essay on the Life and Genius of Fielding.

it through, without pausing, from beginning to end. The unexceptionable morality of the tale, and the feminine grace of the heroine, extorted his enthusiastic approbation. Nor did he stand alone amongst his contemporaries in this opinion: for in "The Gentleman's Magazine" for January, 1752, there is a letter, signed "Criticulus," containing the following flattering observations on the work:—"Though this novel," says the writer, "has its imperfections, yet some of the characters are handled in so masterly a manner—virtue and vice meet with their due rewards—and it abounds with such noble reflections on the follies and vices, the perfections and imperfections of human nature—that he must be both a bad and ill-natured reader who is not by it agreeably entertained, instructed, and improved."

On the other hand, Richardson, who could never be prevailed on even to read "Tom Jones," obstinately refused to see the slightest merit in "Amelia." If Fielding's former novels were dissolute and scurrilous, this last production was absolutely *dull*. The author of "Grandison" and "Clarissa Harlowe" waded through the first volume, but found no encouragement to proceed further! Who can forbear a smile when reading the following lines, addressed by this most self-sufficient of mortals to one of his female admirers and correspondents?—"Will I leave you to Captain Booth? Captain Booth, madam, has done his business. Mr. Fielding has over-written himself, or rather under-written; and in his own journal seems ashamed of his last piece, and has promised that the same muse shall write no more for him.[1]

(1) Alluding to a paragraph in Fielding's "Covent Garden Journal"—the periodical noticed in the next chapter, where the following proceedings are stated to have taken place before the *Court of Criticism*:—"At the Court of Criticism Amelia is set to the bar, and after many things have been alleged against her by Counsellor *Town*, &c. . . . . a grave man being permitted to speak, relates that he is her father, that she was his favourite child, that he had taken great pains in her education; and though he does not think her free from faults, yet she does not deserve the rancour with which she has been treated by the public; that he does not attempt a defence, but, as a compromise, declares that he will trouble

The piece, in short, is as dead as if it had been published forty years ago, as to sale. You guess I have not read 'Amelia?' Indeed I have read but the first volume."

the world no more with any children of his by the same *muse*."—*The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1752.

In a letter to Mr. Edwards, Richardson writes in the following equally charitable vein:—"Mr. Fielding met with the disapprobation you foresaw he would meet with of his 'Amelia.' He is, in every paper he publishes, under the title of 'The *Common* Garden,' contributing to his own overthrow. He has been overmatched in his own way by people whom he had despised, and whom he thought he had vogue enough—from the success his spurious brat 'Tom Jones' *so unaccountably* met with—to write down, but who have turned his own artillery against him, and beat him out of the field, and made him even poorly in his Court of Criticism give up his 'Amelia,' and promise to write no more on the like subject."—*Richardson's Life and Correspondence*, vol. iii.

It is hardly necessary to multiply examples of Richardson's ill-nature and injustice to Fielding's literary merits; but the following extract from another of his letters proves how keenly he felt the ridicule thrown upon "Pamela" by "Joseph Andrews:"—"So long as the world will receive, Mr. Fielding will write. Have you seen a list of his performances? Nothing but a shorter life than I wish him can hinder him from writing himself out of date. The 'Pamela,' which he abused in his '*Shamela*,' taught him to write to please. Before his 'Joseph Andrews' (hints and names taken from that story, with a lewd and ungenerous engraftment), the poor man wrote without being read, except when his 'Pasquin,' &c., roused party attention and the legislature at the same time. . . . . But to have done for the present with this fashionable author."—*Correspondence*, vol. iv. The "Shamela" alluded to by Richardson was a collection of letters in ridicule of "Pamela," which there is no ground for attributing to Fielding. "An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews. Necessary to be had in all Families. 1741."

Mrs. Donnellan, one of Richardson's correspondents, thus compassionately writes of "Amelia:"—"Poor Fielding! I believed he designed to be good, but did not know how, and in the attempt lost his genius—low humour."

CHAPTER XXIII.

"THE COVENT GARDEN JOURNAL."—ATTACKS OF HILL AND SMOLLETT.

[1752.]

ALTHOUGH the great novelist had published his last novel, his literary career was not yet closed. Scarcely had "Amelia" issued from the press, when his active mind commenced another laborious undertaking. At the close of the year 1751, he designed a new periodical publication, to be conducted by himself, and supported principally, if not entirely, by his own pen. The scheme was a bold one, and its success very dubious. All Fielding's friends had long marked his declining health; his tall and vigorous frame was bowed by weakness and disease; the duties of his office alone occasionally overtasked his strength. It is certainly, therefore, most characteristic of his active and enterprising spirit that he should have projected, at such a period, a publication which would be a constant tax upon his time and energies. The professional newspaper-writer knows what it is to prepare an article, or perform an allotted task from day to day, or from week to week; and it is notorious that there are few men who can satisfactorily unite such duties with any other occupation. How, then, could Fielding hope to keep his journal alive for any length of time? Already he had known many, many days and nights of agony, which had totally incapacitated him from labour, and every year which was added to his life increased his infirmities. Of this he must have been well aware, but he would not give way. His spirit was daunted by no obstacles, nor was it to be vanquished

even by pain and disease. A resolution once taken by such a man was not easily abandoned.

That he was eminently qualified to become the most successful essayist and censor of the age no one can doubt. His contributions to "The Champion," "The True Patriot," and "The Jacobite's Journal," though written for bread, and not reputation, had found hosts of admirers. Since the period when these were produced, his style had been improved by the practice of composition till it had attained the very perfection of ease and polish. His experience had been also enlarged by converse with men and books, and by a keen observation of human manners. With such qualifications, had health and opportunity permitted, he might have attained a rank in English periodical literature second only, and perhaps equal, to Addison and Steele. He evidently thought that his strength lay in this kind of writing, and an author is generally a shrewd judge of his own powers.

The first number of his new periodical was published on the 4th of January, 1752, under the title of "The Covent Garden Journal, by Sir Alexander Drawcansir, Knight, *Censor* of Great Britain." The object of the publication was indicated by the editor's assumed style and title, and was further explained in an opening address, in which Fielding, according to his custom, expressed his contempt for contemporary periodical critics, and threw down the gauntlet to all the scribblers of the age. "As to my brother authors," he observes, "who, like mere mechanics, are envious and jealous of a rival in their trade, to silence their jealousies and fears, I declare that it is not my intention to encroach on the business now carried on by them, nor to deal in any of those wares which they at present vend to the public." As a significant token of his design, in another part of the paper he published what he called "An introduction to a journal of the present paper-war between

the forces under Sir Alexander Drawcansir, and the army of Grub Street."

The declaration of war was soon followed by active hostilities. Before the paper was a month old, its editor was busily engaged in exchanging shots with an opponent, who was a practised as well as unscrupulous hand in personal warfare. This opponent was the literary Proteus, Dr., afterwards Sir John Hill, who shared with Orator Henley the dubious honour of being the most notorious man of his age. Hill was originally an apothecary, but abandoning his business for the stage, he produced a few bad farces at the Haymarket, in which he appeared as an actor. This attempt gave rise to Garrick's well-known epigram upon him:—

> "For physic and farces
> His equal there scarce is;
> His farces are physic,
> His physic a farce is."

Having been hissed off the stage, he betook himself with industry to the study of medicine and natural history; and many works on these subjects, displaying considerable information and research, proceeded from his pen. As a consequence of his scientific labours, and armed with the cheap honours of a Scotch degree, he obtained a large practice as a physician, and was enabled to launch out into extravagances which increased his notoriety, and showed the shallowness of his character. At every place of amusement, and at every ball or assembly to which he could obtain access, he made his appearance dressed in the height of fashion; offending many by the insolent airs which he assumed, and collecting scandalous stories, which he afterwards retailed, and turned to profitable account in a crop of licentious novels,[1] of which the names are now

(1) Amongst them were "The Adventures of Loveill," "The History of Lady Frail," and "The Adventures of George Edwards, a Creole."

only remembered. This infamous propensity soon made him an object of suspicion and disgust. He was publicly caned in Ranelagh Gardens by an Irish gentleman whom he had libelled; and though he appeared at the fashionable routs in magnificent apparel, it was a point of honour amongst persons of quality to take no notice of him. The Royal Society also refused to admit him as a member—a refusal which he revenged in a long series of abusive attacks. Notwithstanding the indignities heaped upon him, and his thoroughly contemptible character, Dr. Hill prospered in worldly circumstances. His activity and industry were indeed marvellous. Though he spent so much of his time in the amusements of the gay world, and in frequenting places of entertainment, his pen was never idle. Pamphlets, treatises, and novels, were issued forth by him in quick succession, and in 1751 he commenced a series of *daily* essays, called "The Inspector," originally published in a newspaper. In these essays he attacked many of his contemporaries with unparalleled scurrility; and Fielding, in commencing his "Covent Garden Journal," undoubtedly regarded him as a nuisance which ought to be abated.

Accordingly, in the second number of that periodical the "Journal of the War" is continued; and in describing the disposition of the contending forces, the following attack is made upon Dr. Hill, in the strain of coarse jocularity then so much in vogue:—"We marched," says the general, "into Covent Garden, and presently ordered a part of our army to file off to the right, and to sit down before the Bedford Coffee-house. We doubt not but we have many good friends in the garrison, and who are very desirous to admit our forces; but as yet they dare not declare themselves, being kept in awe by a strange mixed monster, not much unlike the famous *Chimera* of old; for while some of our reconnoiterers tell us that this monster

has the appearance of a lion,[1] others assure us that his ears are much longer than those of that generous beast. Be this as it will, as we are not yet prepared for an attack, yesterday, about six in the evening, we *blockheaded* up the said coffee-house."

To this banter Hill immediately replied in "The Inspector," and thus artfully attempted to injure Fielding's reputation as a man of honour and sincerity: "The author of 'Amelia,'" he said, "whom I have only once seen, told me, at that accidental meeting, he held the present set of writers in the utmost contempt, and that, in his character of Drawcansir, he should treat them in a most unmerciful manner. He assured me, with great civility, that he had always excepted me from the general censure; and after honouring me with several encomiums, which as I neither desired nor deserved I shall not repeat, told me he hoped we should always be on good terms. He proceeded to mention a conduct which would be, he said, useful to both. This was the amusing our readers with a mock fight; giving blows that would not hurt, and sharing the advantage in silence. I hold the public in too great respect to trifle with it in so disingenuous a manner, and hope I shall always retain a better sense of the obligations I have to it, than to return them with such an insolent deceit. I told him that had he published his paper ever so long without mentioning mine, it would never have appeared from me that any such thing had an existence; but, as he has made what he imagines a very formidable attack upon me in his last paper, it may be understood as a concession

(1) Alluding to Hill's letter-box at the Bedford. "In July, 1713, a lion's head, 'a proper emblem of knowledge and action, being all head and paws,' was set up at Button's, in imitation of the celebrated lion at Venice, to receive letters and papers for 'The Guardian.' . . . . The lion's head was removed to the Shakspere Tavern, under the Piazza, and in 1751 was placed in the Bedford Coffee-house adjoining, as the letter-box of The Inspector."—*Timbs' Curiosities of London.*

if I am silent. Whom I slighted as an associate," he adds, with characteristic insolence, "I cannot fear as an adversary;" and he thus rather cleverly retorts on Fielding's clumsy pun: "As to my head-quarters at the Bedford, since it is his own legions that have invested the place, I cannot quarrel with his particular orthography of the word *blockade*."

The editor of "The Covent Garden Journal" was ready with his rejoinder, and continuing "The Journal of the War" in the same strain of coarse *badinage*, thus contemptuously assails his adversary: "It being reported to the general that a *hill* must be levelled before the Bedford Coffee-house could be taken, orders were given accordingly; but this was afterwards found to be a mistake, a second express assuring us that this HILL was only a little paltry dunghill, and had long before been levelled with the dust." In the same strain the satirist exposes the doctor's intentional misrepresentation of the conversation referred to in "The Inspector;" and it is obvious that Fielding must have been not only an indiscreet, but a most reckless personage, if he had made use of the language ascribed to him by Hill at a mere casual meeting, when he well knew the character of the man, and the use he would be likely to make of any idle expression.[1]

It is stated in "The Gentleman's Magazine" for January, 1752, that "since this skirmish 'The Inspector' has totally neglected his adversary, who has been opposed in 'The Drury Lane Journal,'[2] &c. . . . . and in a narra-

(1) Fielding's skirmishes with Hill are noticed in Disraeli's "Quarrels of Authors," vol. ii.

(2) "Have at you all; or, the Drury Lane Journal. By Madam Roxana Termagant. Address'd to Sir Alexander Drawcansir, author of 'The Covent Garden Journal,' continued every Thursday." This production was from the pen of Bonnell Thornton. In the first number "Sir Alexander" is coarsely abused, and described "as an old dealer in this sort of merchandize." Amongst the contents of No. 5, there is "a new chapter in 'Amelia,' more witty than the rest, if the reader has but sense enough to find out the humour." The drift of the satire is to ridicule the domestic economy of the prudent Amelia, who,

tive concerning Habbakuk Hilding, supposed to be written by the author of 'Peregrine Pickle,' and some other pieces, in which he is treated with the utmost wantonness of contempt; and as these productions," continues Mr. Urban, "have had a quick sale, it may be inferred that the laugh of the public is turned against him." These comments furnish an instance, amongst many others, of the ungenerous way in which Fielding was treated as a public writer by this periodical. Cave's literary journeymen regarded him undoubtedly with little favour; for it is matter of observation that he never belonged to a *clique* or *côterie*. He was a thoroughly independent writer, and never took the trouble to conciliate an adversary, or to ingratiate himself with the mob of scribblers who constituted the literary fraternity of the age.

The pamphlet here ascribed to Smollett, is a very discreditable compound of scurrility and indecency. Its full title is as follows:—"A Faithful Narrative of the Base and Inhuman Arts that were lately practised upon the Brain of Habbakuk Hilding, Justice, Dealer, and Chapman, who now lies at his House in Covent Garden in a deplorable state of Lunacy; a dreadful Monument of False Friendship and Delusion. By Drawcansir Alexander, Fencing Master and Philomath. 1752." In this pamphlet Lyttleton and Fielding are attacked in the coarsest strain of personal abuse. The greater portion of it, even were it of any intrinsic interest, would be unfit for reproduction. But the following brief extract will convey some notion of its style, and also of the line of attack adopted by the pamphleteer:—"First, then," says Drawcansir

whilst sitting up with her children, is distressed by the return of Booth in a state of intoxication, and with "his high-arched Roman nose, that heretofore resembled the bridge of a fiddle" beaten to pieces. The allusion to the most prominent feature in Fielding's face is very obvious. Several papers, called "The Covent Garden Journal *extraordinary*," are included in this discreditable production, in which, for some reason or other, the author of "Tom Jones" is treated with most unmerited contumely.

Alexander, "it will be necessary to premise that I have for some time past lived on fast and friendly intercourse with the above-named Hilding, being thereunto moved by the report of divers substantial housekeepers in the neighbourhood, who assured me that he had quitted all the vicious and abandoned courses of his former life, and now behaved in every respect like a sober subject and vigilant magistrate; and although, during the term of our acquaintance, I have known him break out into sundry irregularities, both in life and conversation, I cannot help owning that he was on the whole more calm and moderate than one could well expect of a person so long accustomed to riot, outrage, and all manner of profligacy."

It is a strange as well as a humiliating circumstance, that Smollett should have ever written or spoken disparagingly of Fielding. Such men *ought* not to have been divided by any petty jealousy or party feeling. But it is plain that Smollett's animosity towards his great contemporary delineator of English life arose from Fielding's intimacy with Lyttleton and Garrick, both of whom were objects of peculiar antipathy to the hot-headed Scotchman. His aspirations after dramatic fame had been foiled, as he believed, by the prejudices of the latter; whilst the former eminent personage had disappointed him in his expectations of patronage, and thus unwittingly converted him into a personal enemy.[1] In the first edition of "Peregrine Pickle" (published in 1751), he inserted a coarse and offensive caricature of Lyttleton, under the

(1) In the preface to the tragedy of "The Regicide," Smollett says, that "as early as the year 1739, his tragedy was taken into the protection of one of those little fellows who are sometimes called *great men*, and, like other orphans, it was neglected accordingly." He afterwards adds, that "he actually discarded his patron." This patron is understood to have been Lyttleton. And in the pamphlet on "Habbakuk Hilding," that personage is represented as thus addressing Sir Gosling:—"Pray am not I the person who, in defiance to his own conscience, hath been an humble and assiduous minister to your vanity and self-conceit? Have I not been your bully in private conversations, representing you as a mighty orator, profound statesman, immense scholar, critic, and wit?"

name of "Gosling Scrag,"[1] which he had afterwards the good taste to cancel. A contemptuous reference was in the same work made to Fielding (dictated principally, no doubt, by this antipathy to his friend and patron), in the following counsel to a young author:—"I advise Mr. Spondy to give him the refusal of this same pastoral; who knows but he may have the good fortune of being listed in the number of his beef-eaters, in which case he may, in process of time, be provided for in the Customs or the Church; *when he is inclined to marry his own cook-wench, his gracious patron may condescend to give the bride away; and may finally settle him, in his old age, as a trading Westminster Justice.*"[2]

Smollett's attack on Fielding must also have been provoked in some degree by the part which the latter had taken as a journalist and politician. Whilst the one writer was bewailing in verse the butcheries of Cumberland,[3] and the miseries inflicted on his country by a victorious soldiery, the other was busily engaged in ridiculing and denouncing the shattered faction which had dared rebellion, and

(1) In the character of Gosling Scrag, and in the pamphlet on "Hubbakuk Hilding," Lyttleton's lank figure and spectral appearance furnish the principal topics of ridicule. Horace Walpole has thus described these peculiarities, in his racy and humorous vein: "Absurdity was predominant in Lyttleton's composition. . . . . With the figure of a spectre and the gesticulations of a puppet, he talked through his nose, made declamations at a visit, and played at cards with scraps of history or sentences of Pindar."—*Memoirs of the Reign of George II.*

"In 1741 there was printed for T. Cooper, at 'The Globe,' Pater Noster Row, price 3*d.*, a political caricature, called 'The Motion.' . . . . Underneath it were some lines written, among which were:—

"'Who's dat who ride astride de poney,
So long, so lank, so lean, so bony?
Oh, he be de great orator, Little-toney.'"

—*Phillimore's Memoirs and Correspondence of Lyttleton*, vol. i.

It will also be recollected that Dr. Johnson was in the habit of maintaining that the character of the Respectable Hottentot, in Lord Chesterfield's Letters, was intended for Lyttleton. The Respectable Hottentot, however, it is notorious, was Johnson himself, though few of his associates would have dared to tell him so.

(2) Peregrine Pickle. Edit. 1751, c. 102.

(3) The Tears of Scotland. By Smollett.

incurred so signal a defeat. Party prejudice, therefore, tended to confirm this unnatural alienation. On Fielding's side, however, there existed no jealousy or antipathy towards his great rival. He doubtless felt his power; honoured his genius; and, making allowances for his irritable temperament, never suffered himself to be provoked into any personal attack on him. As for Smollett, it is also fair to state, that in the preface to the second edition of "Peregrine Pickle," he expressed his regret at the personalities—suggested by personal resentment—which had found their way into the original impression.[1]

To return to "The Covent Garden Journal:" judged by the standard of the newspaper-writing of the age, its occasional essays on the topics of the day possess a very high order of merit. In the fourth number (Tuesday, January 14th), there is an excellent specimen of the journalist's talent for refined satire, in a "Modern Glossary," being a collection of words in common use, with the meaning alleged to be attached thereto by polite society. From this glossary a few definitions are selected:—

Author. A laughing-stock. It means likewise a poor fellow, and in general an object of contempt.

Coxcomb. A word of reproach, and yet, at the same time, signifying all that is most commendable.

(1) With regard to Fielding and Smollett, there was a remarkable similarity in the incidents of their lives, as well as the character of their genius, which is thus noticed by Sir W. Scott:—"Fielding and Smollett were both born in the highest rank of society, both educated to learned professions, yet both obliged to follow miscellaneous literature as the means of subsistence. Both were confined, during their lives, by the narrowness of their circumstances,—both united a humorous cynicism with generosity and good nature,—both died of the diseases incident to a sedentary life and to literary labour,—and both drew their last breath in a foreign land, to which they both retreated under the adverse circumstances of a decayed constitution and an exhausted fortune. Their studies were no less similar than their lives. They both wrote for the stage, and neither of them successfully; they both meddled in politics; they both wrote travels, in which they showed that their good-humour was not wasted under the sufferings of their disease; and, to conclude, they were both so eminently successful as novelists, that no other English author of that class has a right to be mentioned in the same breath with Fielding and Smollett."—*Lives of the Novelists.*

Dulness. A word applied by all writers to the wit and humour of others.

Fool. A complex idea, compounded of poverty, honesty, piety, and simplicity.

Humour. Scandalous lies; tumbling and dancing on the rope.

Judge. } An old woman.
Justice. }

Marriage. A kind of traffic carried on between the two sexes, in which both are constantly endeavouring to cheat each other, and both are commonly losers in the end.

Patriot. A candidate for a place at court.

Politics. The art of getting such a place.

Riches. The only thing upon earth that is really valuable or desirable.

Rogue. } A man of a different party from yourself.
Rascal. }

Taste. The present whim of the town, whatever it be.

Teazing. Advice; chiefly that of a husband.

Worth. Power; rank; wealth.

Wisdom. The art of acquiring all three.

In the twenty-third number (March 21st), there is a brief history of the literary commonwealth, which may be numbered amongst Fielding's happiest efforts in essay-writing, and from which an extract will not be out of place:—

"In the reign of James I., the literary government was an aristocracy; for I do not choose to give it the evil name of oligarchy, though it consisted only of *four*; namely, Master William Shakspere, Master Benjamin Jonson, Master John Fletcher, and Master Francis Beaumont. This quadrumvirate, as they introduced a new form of government, thought proper, according to Machiavel's advice, to introduce new names; they therefore called themselves *the wits*,—a name which hath been affected since by the reigning monarchs in this empire.

"The last of this quadrumvirate enjoyed the government alone during his life; after which the troubles that shortly after ensued involved this lesser commonwealth in all the confusion and ruin of the greater; nor can anything be found of it with sufficient certainty, till the *wits* in the reign of Charles II., after many struggles among themselves for superiority, at last agreed to elect John Dryden to be their king.

"This King John had a very long reign, though a very unquiet one; for there were several pretenders to the throne of wit in his

time, who formed very considerable parties against him, and gave him great uneasiness, of which his successor has made mention in the following lines:—

> "'Pride, folly, malice, against Dryden rose,
> In various shapes of parsons, critics, *beaux*.'

Besides which, his finances were in such disorder, that it is affirmed his treasury was more than once entirely empty.

"He died, nevertheless, in a good old age, possessed of the kingdom of wit, and was succeeded by King Alexander, surnamed Pope.

"This prince enjoyed the crown many years, and is thought to have stretched the prerogative much further than his predecessor; he is said to have been extremely jealous of the affections of his subjects, and to have employed various spies, by whom, if he was informed of the least suggestion against his title, he never failed of branding the accused person with the word *Dunce* on his forehead in broad letters, after which the unhappy culprit was obliged to lay down his pen for ever, for no bookseller would venture to print a word that he wrote.

"He did indeed put a total restraint on the liberty of the press: for no person durst read anything that was writ without his licence and approbation; and this licence he granted only to four during his reign; namely, to the celebrated Dr. Swift, to the ingenious Dr. Young, to Dr. Arbuthnot, and one Mr. Gay, four of his principal courtiers and favourites."

After the first few numbers of the paper had been issued, "The Journal of the War" was discontinued, and a "Court of Criticism," similar to that which had been held in "The Jacobite Journal," was substituted for it. In this court a more moderate tone was adopted by the censor. Some of Fielding's contemporaries nevertheless stigmatised the periodical as vulgar and abusive. Richardson, indeed, insisted on calling it "The Common Garden Journal;"[1] a remarkable instance of his pertinacious malignity, especially as the following handsome compliment was paid him in the tenth number of the journal: "Pleasantry (as the *ingenious author of 'Clarissa'* says of a story) should be only the vehicle of instruction; and thus romances themselves, as well as epic poems, may become

(1) See p. 301 (note).

worthy the perusal of the greatest of men." A better proof could not be adduced of Fielding's tolerant and magnanimous disposition.

"The Covent Garden Journal" lived on till the close of the year 1752,[1] when ill-health, and the press of other occupation, compelled the editor to discontinue it. A selection from it, consisting of twenty-six numbers, is contained in Murphy's edition of Fielding's Works: and on its discontinuance, that gentleman commenced (October 21st, 1752) "The Gray's-Inn Journal," in which he waged an active warfare with his friend's antagonist, Sir John Hill, and other writers of the same stamp.[2]

(1) In November, 1752, the Covent Garden journalist espoused with some warmth, and with abundance of coarse humour, the cause of Woodward, the comedian, who had been attacked by Hill in "The Inspector." Whilst on the stage, the actor had an apple thrown at him by a gentleman in one of the boxes, which outrage he resented in words which the assailant attempted to construe into a challenge. In reply to Hill's attacks, there was published "a letter from Henry Woodward, comedian, the meanest of all characters, to Dr. John Hill, the greatest of all characters;" "of which," says The Gentleman's Magazine, "three editions were printed in a few days, and in which there is perhaps as high a strain of humour as is anywhere to be found." It is not improbable that this letter was from the pen of Fielding.

(2) "Periodicals were the fashion of that day. They were the means of those rapid returns of that perpetual interchange of bargain and sale, so fondly cared for by the present arbiters of literature; and were now, universally, the favourite channel of literary speculation. Scarcely a week passed in which a new magazine or paper did not start into life, to perish or survive, as might be. Even Fielding had turned from his 'Jonathan Wild the Great' to his 'Jacobite's Journal' and 'True Patriot;' and from his 'Tom Jones' and 'Amelia' sought refuge in 'The Covent-Garden Journal.' We have the names of fifty-five papers of the date of a few years before this (1757), regularly published every week."—*Forster's Life of Goldsmith.* 2nd edit. vol. i.

"The Covent Garden Journal" was sold at *3d.* each number, which was considered a high price for such publications. In his introductory address, Fielding says that the circumstance of the price of his paper being by half, or at least a third part, higher than any others might quiet the apprehensions of rival journalists. The enhanced price was on account, not merely of the quantity of matter it contained, but also of its superior paper and print. See "Gentleman's Magazine" for January, 1752, where a very full description is given of the contents and character of Fielding's paper.

CHAPTER XXIV.

JUSTICE BUSINESS.—CASE OF ELIZABETH CANNING.

[1752—1753.]

WHILST engaged in the production of "The Covent Garden Journal," Fielding did not neglect the duties of his office. As the shades of evening closed over his career, his mind lost none of its activity, albeit his body was racked with pain, and the hour of his departure, as he knew full well, was drawing nigh. Though his state of health alarmed all his friends, he dragged himself, with heroic resolution, from his publisher's office to the justice-room; and even, when confined to a sick-chamber, busied himself with schemes of public utility, or employed his pen in composition.

As a "Westminster Justice," it curiously enough fell to his lot to carry out with vigour the provisions of the Theatrical Licensing Act, which his own dramatic productions were said to have provoked. A person named Kenrick—notorious for an infamous libel on Garrick—had written a coarse dramatic satire called "Fun," in which he attacked several prominent public characters of the day, amongst whom were Fielding himself and his adversary Hill. This piece was performed, contrary to the act of parliament, in an unlicensed room at the Castle Tavern, in Paternoster Row. Information having been given to Justice Fielding of the circumstance, he repaired to the tavern with a body of constables, and spoiled Kenrick's *fun*, by arresting the actors and audience on the first night of the performance.[1] Experiments of this kind were not of unfrequent occurrence at this period. "The Gentleman's

(1) Dibdin's History of the Stage, vol. v.

Magazine" for April, 1752, relates a similar interference with an illegitimate dramatic performance of less celebrity and importance than Kenrick's:—"On advice that a set of barber's apprentices, journeymen staymakers, maid-servants, &c., had taken a large room at the Black Horse, in the Strand, to act the tragedy of 'The Orphan,' Justice Fielding issued his warrant to Mr. Welch, high constable,[1] who apprehended the actors, and conducted them through the streets in their tragedy dresses before the justice, who, out of compassion to their youth, only bound them over to their good behaviour."

A curious French romance of the old *régime* was also brought before Fielding's notice, whilst officiating as a justice at Bow Street, in April, 1752.

"Application was made to Justice Fielding under the following circumstances:—Monsieur Bertin, Marquis de Frateaux, of Bordeaux, on some family quarrel had been formerly conveyed from France to Spain by some of his relations, where he was afterwards imprisoned, but escaped by the assistance of Count Marcillac, his cousin. About three years afterwards he visited England, and lodged privately at one Mrs. Giles', of Mary-le-bone, till the 27th [March], when late at night he was arrested by one Alexander Blasdale, a Marshelsea-court officer, who had with him as a follower an Italian, a person known to the Marquis, upon whose appearance the latter started and exclaimed, 'I am a dead man!' and refused to go with the officer. Mrs. Giles then sent for the Rev. Nicholas Probart, to whom Blasdale showed the writ, which Mr. Probart persuaded the Marquis to obey, and to go with the officer to his house, whither one M. Dubois accompanied him, intending to stay there till the next morning. But the Marquis and his friend had not been together more than half-an-hour, when the Italian follower acquainted M. Dubois that a person wanted him, and on his going to see

(1) See pp. 336, 337 (note).

who it was, he only found the bailiff, who roughly told him he should not pass the night there, and turned him out of doors. On his return, the next morning, with some other friends, they were told by the servant that the Marquis was gone from thence with several gentlemen, and that the bailiff was out of town. A warrant was accordingly granted by the justice, on a supposition of murder, and application made to the Lord Chief Justice for a *habeas corpus*, as well as to the Secretary of State, to prevent the unfortunate gentleman from being carried out of the kingdom. All, however, was to no purpose, as advice was afterwards received of the Marquis' arrival in France, when the gates of Calais were opened for his admission after the usual hour, and he was from thence carried to his father's house at Paris, and soon after removed, by order of the court, to the Bastile, to prevent any private attempts on his life. The officer who arrested him escaped out of the kingdom."[1]

At this time the public mind was much agitated by the trial and condemnation of Miss Blandy, for the murder of her father at Henley-on-Thames. The interesting parricide was young and handsome, and there were circumstances in her case peculiarly calculated to excite the morbid interest of sensation-seekers. Her execution at Oxford, on the 6th of April, 1752, was attended by a large concourse of spectators, and minute details concerning the dress she wore, and her demeanour on her trial, in prison, and on the scaffold, were published in all the newspapers, and most greedily devoured.[2] Several assassinations of a

(1) Gentleman's Magazine, April, 1752.

(2) "About nine she came out of her chamber [on her way to execution], dress'd extremely neat, in a black bombasine short sack and petticoat, with her arms and hands tied with black paduasoy ribbons."—*Gentleman's Magazine.*

Horace Walpole thus speaks of Miss Blandy's fate, in a letter to Sir H. Mann (May 18th, 1752): "Miss Blandy died with a coolness and courage that is astonishing, and denying the fact, which has made a kind of party in her favour; as if a woman who would not stick at a parricide would scruple at a lie! We have made a law for immediate execution on conviction of murder;

hideous character occurred about the same period, and murder was then uppermost in the public mind. To improve the occasion by pointing out how certainly the Divine wrath overtakes the destroyer of human life, Fielding's ready pen was engaged in the composition of a pamphlet intended for temporary circulation. This pamphlet, which was often advertised in "The Covent Garden Journal," was entitled, "Examples of the Interposition of Providence in the Detection and Punishment of Murder; with an Introduction and Conclusion." It has never been reprinted.

At the close of the year, and after the discontinuance of his journal, Fielding was busily engaged in maturing a scheme for the better administration of the laws relating to the poor. The amount of pauperism in the metropolis, and the increasing number of "sturdy beggars," had been continually brought before his notice whilst officiating as an acting magistrate. After much consideration of the subject, in January, 1753, he submitted a proposal to the public, which he was sanguine enough to believe would meet the existing evil.[1] His proposal contemplated nothing less than the repeal of the Act of Elizabeth, and an entire reconstruction of the poor laws. After an introduction—in which he pointed out the expediency of compelling all the members of a state to contribute to its necessities in due proportion, the rich according to their means, the

it will appear extraordinary to me if it have any effect, for I can't help believing that the terrible part of death must be the preparation for it." In a previous letter (March, 1752) he thus speaks of Miss Blandy's crime, and another atrocious murder which was occupying attention at this period:—"There are two wretched women that just now are much talked of, a Miss Jefferies and a Miss Blandy; the one condemned for murdering her uncle, the other her father. Both these stories have horrid circumstances, the first having been debauched by her uncle; the other had so tender a parent, that his whole concern, while he was expiring, and knew her for his murderess, was to save her life."

(1) A Proposal for making an Effectual Provision for the Poor, for amending their Morals, and rendering them useful to Society; with a Plan of the buildings proposed, and their elevations. By Mr. Fielding. Dedicated to the Right Hon. Henry Pelham, Esq.

poor by their labour—he proceeded, under fifty-nine heads, or articles, to provide for the erection, regulation, and government of a county workhouse, with a house of correction adjoining to, or incorporated with it. The articles provide for the moral and religious instruction, as well as the proper employment, of the workhouse inmates; and also for the prevention of vagrancy, then a monstrous evil. Under the latter head, there is a very stringent proposition, namely, that no poor person shall travel above six miles from home, without a pass from the magistrate, or the minister or churchwardens of his parish. The proposal was accompanied by a plan of a building for the reception and reformation of the pauperism of the metropolis, calculated to hold 3000 men and 2000 women, and to be called the Country House. Such were the main features of Fielding's scheme, which was received, it is said, with marked approval by the most eminent members of his own profession, and by many Christian philanthropists. "The Gentleman's Magazine," in examining the details of the proposal,—notwithstanding the unfavourable disposition of the conductors towards him,—admitted that it could not fail to give every one a high idea "of his present temper, manners, and ability." That *some* reformation was necessary—whether his own plan was a practicable one or not—was forcibly pointed out by the energetic magistrate: the amount of abject misery, and unrelieved, uncomplaining poverty which existed in the metropolis being described by him in the following pathetic terms: "If," said he, "we were to make a progress through the outskirts of the town, and look into the habitations of the poor, we should there behold such pictures of human misery as must move the compassion of every heart that deserves the name of human; whole families in want of every necessary of life, oppressed with hunger, cold, nakedness, and filth, and with diseases, the certain consequence of all these." To afford relief to this wide-spread wretchedness, and to pro-

vide an asylum for the houseless poor who then swarmed in the streets, was a project worthy of an enlightened mind and a generous heart.

About this time Fielding also took an active part in unravelling the details of one of the strangest cases which have ever occupied the attention of the criminal tribunals of this country. The case alluded to is that of Elizabeth Canning, an illiterate servant girl, whose name has gone down to posterity as the inventor of a story which puzzled the heads of the most ingenious lawyers, and amused the English public for above a twelvemonth. "Elizabeth Canning, Mary Squires the gipsy, and Miss Blandy," writes some one quoted by Southey, in The Doctor, "were such universal topics in 1752 [1753?], that you would have supposed it the business of mankind to talk only of them." Literary partizans arrayed themselves on different sides of the question, and expended much ink in writing on behalf of Canning or against her. Large sums of money were subscribed to maintain her pleasantly and comfortably in Newgate, and a majority of the London aldermen declared in her favour, and even after her conviction attempted to obtain for her a nominal punishment. Such successful fraud would lead us to infer that Canning was a girl of considerable natural ability, with a strong talent for circumstantial story-telling. But, to say the truth, her story was somewhat clumsy in its details, and we can scarcely imagine how it came to be believed in, and most enthusiastically believed in too, by such a man as Henry Fielding.

The tale was as follows:—In the month of January, 1753, Elizabeth Canning disappeared from her master's service for about eight-and-twenty days; and she accounted for her absence, on her return in a piteous plight to her mother's house, by stating that, on the night of the 1st of January, she had been seized by two men in Moorfields, who robbed her, tied her hands behind her, and struck her

a blow on the head which rendered her insensible. On regaining her senses, she found herself on the high road, with the two men who had robbed her, and who dragged her to a house kept by a woman named Wells, at Enfield, about eleven or twelve miles from Moorfields. Here she saw Mary Squires the gipsy, who treated her after the following extraordinary fashion. Finding that she would not comply with her infamous solicitations, this woman cut off her stays, and forced her into a room, or a kind of hayloft, where there was a fireplace, but no bed nor bedstead, nothing but hay to lie on, a pitcher almost full of water, *and about twenty-four pieces of bread, to the amount of a quartern loaf on the whole.* Here she remained, according to her statement, from the morning of the 2nd of January till the afternoon of Monday the 29th, seeing no human creature all the time, except once, when some one peeped at her through a crack in the door. On Friday, the 26th, she had eaten all the bread, and on the 29th she had drunk all the water; after which she made her escape by breaking down a board which was nailed up at the inside of the window, and so was enabled to open it and jump down on the ground. She had previously never attempted to escape, nor had it entered into her head to do so.

Such were the principal portions of the marvellous story told by Elizabeth Canning, to account for her mysterious disappearance. But it is remarkable that on her first account of her imprisonment she said nothing about the *twenty-four pieces* of bread. This embellishment of her story appeared in her subsequent information sworn before Fielding, to which we shall presently refer. Her first statement was, that there were *four or five pieces* of bread, and some water, on which she lived till she made her escape. As she professed to describe the house in which she had been confined, and its situation, a warrant was granted by one of the London aldermen, on the 31st Jan-

uary, for the apprehension of the person by whom it was tenanted—a woman named Wells. Armed with this warrant, Canning, accompanied by her master and some friends, proceeded to the place in question, where, with some hesitation, she identified the room in which she had been confined, although, in many important particulars, it differed from her previous description; and there was no lock on the door, or any appearance of one having been there. She also pointed out Mary Squires, who was a poor old gipsy woman (and who, when the party arrived at Wells' house, was unconcernedly smoking her pipe at the fire), as the person who had robbed her. The miserable creature immediately started up, and, after a stupid gaze of astonishment, exposed her hideous face, which till then was almost covered with a cloth, and exclaimed, "I rob you! take care what you say; if you have once seen my face you cannot mistake it, for God never made such another." She added, without the least hesitation, that, at the time the alleged robbery was committed, she was above one hundred miles off in Dorsetshire.[1]

After the apprehension of Wells and Squires, Elizabeth Canning attended to swear her information before Fielding. Her case had by this time excited great public interest, and the justice had been privately consulted upon it. A Mr. Salt, who had been engaged as a solicitor on Canning's behalf, had previously taken Fielding's opinion on the best mode of bringing the offenders to justice, and of framing an indictment against them;[2] and at that gentleman's request he reluctantly consented to allow Canning to swear her information before him. Accordingly, on the 7th February, the information was sworn, as proved on the trial of Canning by Mr. Brogden, Fielding's clerk. The justice had

(1) State Trials, vol. xix. p. 309.

(2) The "trading justices" were not at this period prevented from practising, and it was not till 1790 that they were paid a fixed salary, and prohibited from taking professional fees.

previously issued his warrant to apprehend all persons who should be found at Wells' house, as disorderly persons; and thereupon two women, named Hall and Natus, who had been lodging there for some time, were secured and brought before him. "Before he had seen Hall," says a writer in The Gentleman's Magazine, "he was informed *she would confess the whole.* He found her trembling and in tears; he endeavoured to soothe and comfort her, assuring her that if she would tell the truth he would protect her. She desired some time to recover from her fright, which was granted, and a chair was ordered her; and after some time he began to examine her, and continued to do it in the kindest manner, till she had been guilty of so many contradictions and prevarications, that he told her he would leave her to stand or fall by the evidence against her, and advised Mr. Salt to prosecute her as a felon; upon which she begged to be heard once more, and said she would tell the whole truth, accounting for her unwillingness to do it from her fears of the gipsy and Wells." After this singular scene, Hall corroborated Canning's story in every important particular! Squires and Wells were soon afterwards tried at the Old Bailey for felony, and, on the testimony of Canning and Hall, were convicted, and received sentence of death.

Many grave reflections are caused by a perusal of these proceedings. The poor ugly old gipsy woman, Mary Squires —unpitied, unprotected, and the object of public indignation—had no alternative but to surrender herself to her fate. The evidence by which her innocence could have been made manifest was in existence, but she had no means of producing it in a satisfactory form, and the law afforded her no facility for doing so. On the subsequent trial of her accuser Canning, for wilful and corrupt perjury, a perfect *alibi,* as it is technically called, was established for her at the expense of the crown; on her *own* trial she was helpless, and deprived of the opportunity of making a proper

defence. The injustice from which she suffered in this respect must appear to every reflecting person a stain on the administration of our criminal law, and it is a stain which has not yet been removed. Whilst, on the part of the prosecution, the attendance of necessary witnesses is secured by payment of their reasonable expenses, not a farthing is allowed to the witnesses who are produced to establish a prisoner's innocence. This is surely not even-handed justice; and it is incumbent on law reformers and the legislature to remedy this serious defect. Many innocent persons, like Mary Squires, have been made the victims of invented stories; and such conspiracies are commonly defeated by evidence which the poor and helpless are unable to procure. Three witnesses, indeed, attended on the part of Squires, who proved that she was at Abbotsbury, in Dorsetshire, in the month of January, 1753; and one of these swore that she had lodged in his house from the 1st to the 9th. But their evidence was wholly discredited, and they were committed for perjury. Had the unfortunate creature possessed the means, she could, however, have produced an overwhelming amount of testimony to corroborate them; and on the subsequent trial of Canning, her accuser, above thirty witnesses were produced by the crown to establish her complete innocence, and the absolute impossibility of her having been at Wells' house at the time of the alleged robbery and outrage. Susannah Wells, the other prisoner, and the tenant of the house, was defended by counsel; but the state of the law at that period did not permit an advocate to address the jury on behalf of his client in cases of felony; all that he was allowed to do was to cross-examine the witnesses, and he had no opportunity, therefore, of forcibly exposing their contradictions or the improbability of their story. Added to all this, public prejudice ran high against the unfortunate accused. The minds of the jurymen had been prepossessed against them by inflammatory statements in the

public newspapers, and an infuriated mob loaded them with execrations on their way to Newgate, and clamoured for their conviction. But the Lord Mayor, Sir Crisp Gascoyne, having learned that Hall had afterwards retracted the evidence she gave on the trial, with praiseworthy humanity forwarded a memorial to the king, soliciting a respite, and thus their lives were saved.

In the course of Canning's trial for wilful and corrupt perjury, which took place in the month of April, 1754, Fielding's conduct in the examination of Hall did not escape observation. From the account of that examination, as quoted from "The Gentleman's Magazine," it is questionable whether, in his anxiety to secure the conviction of the presumed offenders, he did not display more of the zeal of the partizan than the impartiality of the magistrate. It may, indeed, be urged in his favour that he was deceived by the demeanour of Hall, and that he attributed her hesitation and prevarications to her fear of the vengeance of Wells and Squires. But it was complained of him, and with great justice, that, instead of taking her confession *vivâ voce,* he allowed her to be sent out of the room with *Canning's solicitor,* when her evidence was reduced to writing, and was two hours in preparation. "After this," said Mr. Willes, the prosecuting counsel against Canning, "what mighty wonder is there that, when she came into the justice's presence again, she should repeat her lesson without the least hesitation?"

After a very lengthened trial, Elizabeth Canning was convicted, and sentenced to seven years' transportation—the highest punishment to which her offence was liable by law, and certainly not adequate to its enormity. Many of the aldermen, however, although the falsity of her story was proved beyond a doubt, strenuously advocated a milder punishment, eight of them voting for six months' imprisonment.

During the whole of the year 1753, the controversy

respecting the truth of Canning's story raged with extraordinary violence. The tranquillity of many households was disturbed — husbands differing from their wives, brothers from their sisters, children from their parents. Pamphlet after pamphlet issued from the press upon the all-absorbing question; and the little, lying servant-girl enjoyed the monstrous satisfaction of having set the whole country in a commotion. Fielding defended the opinion which he had originally formed as a lawyer, in a pamphlet distinguished by the moderation of its tone.[1] He was replied to by his indefatigable adversary, and the most active controversialist of the age, Sir John Hill, who, to do him justice, had, with some acuteness, taken the opposite side of the question from the very first.[2] It is remarkable, however, that these old opponents displayed by no means the same amount of virulence and exasperation as many of the other combatants who engaged in this ridiculous but memorable paper war.

As to Canning, she persisted to her death's day in maintaining the truth of her story. Though great interest was exerted to procure a reversal of her sentence, it was carried into execution, and she was shipped to the plantations, never to return. She died at Weathersfield, in Connecticut, on the 22nd July, 1773; and the record of her death in "The Gentleman's Magazine" for that year is accompanied by the observation, "that notwithstanding the many strange circumstances of her story, none is so strange as that it should not be discovered in so many years where she had concealed herself during the time she had invariably declared she was at the house of Mother Wells."[3]

(1) A clear State of the Case of Elizabeth Canning. By H. Fielding, Esq. Published in March, 1753.

(2) The Story of Elizabeth Canning considered. By Dr. Hill. 1753.

(3) Canning's address to the court, when called up to receive judgment, seems to amount to a qualified admission of her guilt. "Then Elizabeth Canning addressed the court with the following speech, in a low voice:—'That she hoped they would be favourable to her; that she had no intent of swearing the gipsy's

The activity which Fielding displayed during the investigation of Canning's case subjected him to many ill-natured comments. As a magistrate, perhaps, the only fault that could be found in him was that he was *too* active. His energy of character was not in the least degree abated by declining health and frequent attacks of bodily pain. Whenever work was to be done he was at his post; and the duties of the Westminster justice were then of a perilous and troublesome kind. Besides his attendance at Bow Street, his personal presence was often required in the vigorous execution of the laws. When desperate offenders were to be tracked, early and late, he was ready to give assistance and advice, and to head the officers of the law in any important movement. Some notion may be formed of the duties actually performed by Fielding, in the contemporary accounts of the police transactions of the period. On Tuesday, the 6th March, 1753, an attempt of his to arrest some highwaymen in a gaming-house is thus recorded:—"*About four this morning,* Justice Fielding having intelligence that some highwaymen were to be at the masquerade, went into the gaming-room with the officers upon guard, and obliged all the company to unmask, and give an

life away; and that what had been done was only defending herself; and desired to be considered as unfortunate.'"—*State Trials*, vol. xix. 673.

Mr. Serjeant Davy's reply in this case is the longest reported speech of that acute and eloquent advocate, and is well worth perusal. The address of the Recorder (W. Moreton, Esq.), in passing sentence, is also dignified and appropriate. "It is with horror," he said, addressing the prisoner—a girl under twenty!—"I look back, and think of the evidence you gave at the trial of Mary Squires, whom you knew to be destitute and friendless, and therefore fixed upon her as a proper object to make a sacrifice of, at the dreadful expense of a false oath; this you preferred to the making a plain discovery to those who had a right to know where you really were those twenty-eight days of your pretended confinement at Wells'; and in this you were encouraged to persist, as well by that misapplied charity, which was bountifully given you in compassion to your supposed suffering, as by the advice of your mistaken friends, whom you had deluded and deceived into a belief of the truth of what you had falsely sworn."—*State Trials*, vol. xix. 673.

A person is said to have left Canning a legacy of £500; and during her passage to New England, Smollett relates that she was liberally supplied with every necessary, and secured "an agreeable reception" in her place of exile.

account of themselves. It's supposed these fellows had notice of his coming before he could get up stairs, and so made off in the crowd, for none of them were taken. There had been deep gaming that night, and a plentiful circulation of bad guineas."[1]

Such duties as these required both a clear head and an intrepid heart. For a dainty *littérateur* it would not have been a very congenial occupation; but a strong, healthy-minded writer like Fielding engaged as readily in the task of arresting highwaymen and suppressing disturbances as in supporting by the pen, when need arose, the cause of law and order.

(1) The Gentleman's Magazine, March, 1753.

CHAPTER XXV.

LAST EFFORTS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE.—VOYAGE TO LISBON.

[1753—1754.]

It now only remains for the biographer to present a few of the last melancholy incidents in the life of Henry Fielding, as they have been communicated by his own pen.[1] In the beginning of August, 1753, having placed himself under the care of "Mr. Ranby, the king's premier serjeant-surgeon," he was ordered to Bath, to try the effect of the waters. On this journey he was preparing to depart, when important business detained him in town. This delay was productive of serious injury to his already shattered constitution. Repose at this period was most essential; for the duties of his office had been for some time more than usually severe; and he tells us that "he was almost fatigued to death with several long examinations, relating to five different murders, all committed within the space of a week, by different gangs of street robbers." The public had been much alarmed by these outrages, and the government had determined upon vigorous measures. At such a period, an active magistrate like Fielding could not be spared, and a message was dispatched to him by the Duke of Newcastle, requesting an interview. Thus appealed to, notwithstanding his failing health, he obeyed the summons, and cheerfully set to work to prepare a plan for the suppression of street robberies, which met with the duke's approbation; and an order on the Treasury was given him for a sufficient sum to carry it into execution. The scheme was eminently successful; and though

(1) See "The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon" and the Introduction, from which the materials for this and the following chapter are principally taken.

the Bath journey was delayed beyond the time when it was likely to prove beneficial, Fielding had the satisfaction of breaking up the most desperate gang of ruffians that had ever infested the metropolis.[1] Though his health "was now reduced to the last extremity," he continued "to act with the utmost vigour against these villains; in examining whom, and in taking the depositions against them, he often spent whole days, nay, sometimes whole nights, especially when there was any difficulty in procuring sufficient evidence to convict them."

So successful were Fielding's last labours in the public service, that the dark nights of November and December, 1753, passed away without a single murder or robbery in the public streets of London—an exemption of unparalleled occurrence at that period. This work accomplished, his race was run, his career of usefulness at an end. Three deadly enemies—a jaundice, a dropsy, and an asthma—struggled for a mastery over his wasted frame, "now so entirely emaciated, that it had lost all its muscular flesh." His was no longer what was termed "a Bath case;" and though he had for many weeks cherished the design of visiting that health-restoring city, he was at length reluctantly compelled to give up the lodgings that he had taken there, and to regard his case as desperate. In this melancholy hour he began, with pardonable vanity, to rank himself "with those heroes who, of old times, became voluntary sacrifices to the good of the public." Like another Curtius, he had leaped into the yawning gulf which

(1) "I had delayed my Bath journey for some time, contrary to the repeated advice of my physical acquaintance, and to the ardent desire of my warmest friends, though my distemper was now turned to a deep jaundice; in which case the Bath waters are generally imputed to be almost infallible. But I had the most earnest desire of demolishing this gang of villains and cutthroats, which I was sure of accomplishing the moment I was enabled to pay a fellow who had undertaken, for a small sum, to betray them into the hands of a set of thief-takers, whom I had enlisted into the service,—all men of known and approved fidelity and intrepidity."—*Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon.* Introduction.

threatened his country's safety; but not for the sake of that country alone. It is no discredit to him to say that he had another motive for self-sacrifice besides that of patriotism. His circumstances had never been prosperous, and the ordinary gains of his office had been always insufficient to support his wife and family. If death, as he had long apprehended, should seize him at his post, they would be left destitute,—for he had never been able to make a provision for them. He accordingly gladly seized the opportunity of making the public his debtor, in the hope that the debt would be remembered when he was gone, and that the children of so zealous and faithful a public servant would not be left beggared, as well as fatherless, to the mercies of a cold world. It was this feeling which stimulated him to exertion as he stood on the verge of the grave, and supported him in the agonies of a mortal sickness.[1]

The winter of 1753-54 was unusually severe, and proved fatal to numerous valetudinarians. Many of those who, in Fielding's own words, "might have gasped through two or three mild winters more," were released from their sufferings during the terrible six weeks which succeeded

(1) In the Introduction to "The Voyage," after enumerating the ordinary gains of his office (as already quoted, p. 235), Fielding adds :—"I rejoiced, therefore, greatly in seeing an opportunity, as I apprehended, of gaining such merit in the eyes of the public, that, if my life were the sacrifice to it, my friends might think they did a popular act in putting my family beyond the reach of necessity, which I myself began to despair of doing. And though I disclaim all pretence to that Spartan or Roman patriotism, which loved the public so well that it was always ready to become a voluntary sacrifice to the public good, I do solemnly declare I have that love to my family. . . . . To say the truth, the public never act more wisely than when they act most liberally in the distribution of their rewards; and here the good they receive is often more to be considered than the motive from which they receive it. Example alone is the end of all public rewards and punishments. Laws never inflict disgrace in resentment, nor confer honour from gratitude. 'For it is very hard, my lord,' said a convicted felon at the bar to the late excellent Judge Burnet, 'to hang a poor man for stealing a horse.'—'You are not to be hanged,' answered my ever honoured and beloved friend, 'for stealing a horse; but you are to be hanged that horses may not be stolen.' "

Christmas. To the surprise of his friends, however, as well as to his own, the novelist survived this bitter season, and in February, 1754, he returned to town, but in a most deplorable condition. He was now placed under the care of Dr. Ward, by whose advice he submitted to the operation of tapping. The immediate effects of this operation were not very encouraging. For two days he was believed to be in the agonies of death: but he at last began slowly to mend, and to draw his feet, as he expresses it, out of the grave. In the month of May, he was able to remove to a small cottage which he had taken at Ealing, in Middlesex, "in the best air," he says, "in the whole kingdom, and far superior to that of Kensington Gravel-pits; for the gravel is here much wider and deeper, the place higher, and more open to the south, whilst it is guarded from the north winds by a ridge of hills, and from the smells and smoke of London by its distance."

At this period, he was induced to try the virtues of one of those much-vaunted specifics which are in every age forced upon public attention as adapted to the cure of all forms of disease. Few such specifics have been honoured with a wider renown than *tar-water*, as recommended by Bishop Berkeley in his well-known treatise.[1] Many years previously Fielding had read the bishop's work, and in his present desperate condition, upon a hint given him by the "inimitable and shamefully-distressed author of The Female Quixote,"[2] he was induced to give this treatise a

(1) "Philosophical Reflections and Enquiries concerning the Virtues of Tar-Water." In a letter to Mann (May, 1744), Horace Walpole gives the following account of the introduction of this remedy:—"We are now mad about tar-water, on the publication of a book that I will send you, written by Dr. Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne. The book contains every subject, from tar-water to the Trinity: however, all the women read—and understand it no more than if it were intelligible. A man came into an apothecary's shop the other day—'Do you sell tar-water?'—'Tar-water!' replied the apothecary, 'why I sell nothing else.'"

(2) "The shamefully-distressed author of The Female Quixote" was Mrs. Arabella Lennox, of whom Mr. Forster speaks as "a very ingenious, deserving, and not very fortunate woman, who wrote the clever novel of 'The Female

re-perusal, and to make a trial of the panacea it recommended. He dosed himself every morning and evening with half-a-pint of tar-water—no very pleasant beverage!—and though the medicine failed to relieve him from his dropsical symptoms, its effects were on the whole satisfactory. In the meanwhile, he looked forward to the approach of summer with hope and confidence. "But this chance"—he thus wrote with his dying hand—"began daily to lessen. I saw the summer mouldering away, or rather, indeed, the year passing away, without intending to bring on any summer at all. In the whole month of May the sun scarce appeared three times; so that the early fruits came to the fulness of their growth, and to some appearance of ripeness, without acquiring any real maturity; having wanted the heat of the sun to soften and meliorate their juices. I saw the dropsy gaining, rather than losing ground; the distance growing still shorter between the tappings. I saw the asthma likewise beginning again to become more troublesome. I saw the Midsummer quarter drawing towards a close! so that I conceived, if the Michaelmas quarter should steal off in the same manner as it was in my opinion very much to be apprehended it would, I should be delivered up to the attacks of winter before I recruited my forces, so as to be anywise able to withstand them."

Thus situated, he resolved to try the effect of a warmer climate. He cherished the hope—the last hope of many a despairing invalid—that the soft breezes of the sunny south might revive his exhausted energies, and arrest the ravages of disease. But, alas! the hope was in vain. The journey had been too long delayed to be of any use to him;

Quixote,' and a somewhat silly book about Shakspere, to which Johnson, a great friend of hers, was suspected to have contributed."—*Life and Times of Goldsmith*, vol. ii.

Her maiden name was Ramsay, and she was a native of North America. She married in England a gentleman connected with some public office; and necessity compelled her to turn authoress by profession.

the lamp of life was well-nigh extinguished when he embarked on it; and in seeking a foreign clime, he embraced the melancholy certainty of yielding up his breath in a land of strangers.

Aix, in Provence, was the first place thought of; but the difficulty, toil, and expense of the land-journey were considered insurmountable obstacles, and Lisbon was selected instead. A trading craft bound thither was soon found; the arrangements for the voyage were made, and, accompanied by his wife and eldest daughter, who faithfully attended him to the last, the great English novelist bade farewell for ever to the busy towns and green fields of merry England. In the journal which he kept on the voyage, and which he continued up to the period of his arrival in Lisbon, he thus describes the melancholy scene of his departure:—

"*Wednesday, June 26th,* 1754.—On this day the most melancholy sun I had ever beheld arose, and found me awake at my house at Fordhook. . . . . At twelve precisely my coach was at the door, which was no sooner told me than I kissed my children round, and went into it with some resolution. My wife, who behaved more like a heroine and philosopher, though at the same time the tenderest mother in the world, and my eldest daughter, followed me; some friends went with us, and others here took their leave; and I heard my behaviour applauded, with many murmurs and praises, to which I knew I had no title; as all other such philosophers may, if they have any modesty, confess on the like occasions."

As he was carried into the boat[1] which was to convey

(1) "To go on board the ship, it was necessary first to go into a boat; a matter of no small difficulty, as I had no use of my limbs, and was to be carried by men, who, though sufficiently strong for their burden, were, like Archimedes, puzzled to find a steady footing. . . . . However, by the assistance of my friend Mr. Welch, whom I never think or speak of but with love and esteem [see p. 337, note], I conquered this difficulty, as I did afterwards that of ascending the ship, into which I was hoisted with more ease by a chair lifted with pullies."—*Voyage to Lisbon.*

him to the vessel, his helpless and hopeless condition is thus graphically described :—"I think upon my entrance into the boat, I presented a spectacle of the highest horror. The total loss of limbs was apparent to all who saw me, and my face contained marks of a most diseased state, if not of death itself. Indeed, so ghastly was my countenance, that timorous women with child had abstained from my house for fear of the ill consequences of looking at me. In this condition I ran the gauntlope (so, I think, I may justly call it) through rows of sailors and watermen, few of whom failed of paying their compliments to me by all manner of insults and jests on my misery. No man who knew me will think I conceived any personal resentment at this behaviour; but it was a lively picture of that cruelty and inhumanity in the nature of men which I have often contemplated with concern, and which leads the mind into a train of very uncomfortable and melancholy thoughts."

The sea-captain, into whose custody the novelist was committed, was a curious specimen of that well-known species, the nautical despot; and his portrait has been thus handed down to posterity by the pen which sketched a Partridge and a Western :—"The particular tyrant, whose fortune it was to stow us on board, laid a farther claim to this appellation [that of captain] than the bare commander of a vehicle of conveyance. He had been the captain of a privateer, which he chose to call being in the king's service, and thence derived a right of hoisting the military ornament of a cockade over the button of his hat. He likewise wore a sword of no ordinary length by his side, with which he swaggered in his cabin among the wretches, his passengers, whom he had stowed in cupboards on each side. He was a person of very singular character. He had taken it into his head that he was a gentleman, from those very reasons that proved he was not one; and to show himself a fine gentleman, by a behaviour which seemed to insinuate he had never seen one. He was, moreover, a man of gallantry;

at the age of seventy, he had the finicalness of Sir Courtly Nice, with the roughness of Surly; and while he was deaf himself, had a voice capable of deafening all others." Before the voyage was over, Fielding found reason, however, to alter the unfavourable opinion with which he had at first regarded the old captain. But of this in its place.

All who would wish to form a notion of the delays and discomforts of a sea-voyage, before the introduction of steam power, should peruse with attention Fielding's Journal. As the vessel slowly drifted down the river, the passengers found, however, many agreeable objects to relieve the tedium of the journey. The noble ships which sailed by them reminded the novelist of the maritime superiority of his country, and occasioned some landsman's reflections thereon at which Smollett would have smiled; whilst the scenery of the Kentish coast drew from him an expression of surprise, that only "two or three gentlemen's houses, and those of very moderate account," should have presented themselves between Greenwich and Gravesend, where such hosts of villas crowded the river's banks from Chelsea to Shepperton, "where the narrower channel affords not half so noble a prospect, and where the continual succession of the small craft (like the frequent repetition of all things which have nothing in them great, beautiful, or admirable) tire the eye, and give us distaste and aversion instead of pleasure." In the same garrulous strain, the sick man records the sufferings of his wife from a "raging tooth" (which is subjected to the inspection of a Gravesend operator), and the unmannerly conduct of a Custom-House officer[1] attached to that port, whose behaviour led to a

(1) "*Monday, July* 1.—This day Mr. Welch took his leave of me after dinner, as did a young lady of her sister, who was proceeding with my wife to Lisbon. . . . . Soon after their departure, our cabin, where my wife and I were sitting together, was visited by two *ruffians*, whose appearance greatly corresponded with that of the sheriff's, or rather the knight-marshal's, bailiffs. One of these especially, who seemed to affect a more than ordinary degree of rudeness and insolence, came in without any kind of ceremony, with a broad gold lace on his hat, which was cocked with much military fierceness

train of moral reflection more edifying than entertaining. From Gravesend the vessel made its way, without any incident which called for remark, to Deal, off which place it was detained some days by contrary winds. Released at length, it proceeded slowly up the Channel as far as the Isle of Wight, where the passengers were doomed to sustain a longer delay. From the 11th of July to the 23rd, they remained at Ryde, the wind being adverse all the time. Here the travellers were exposed to every variety of extortion and discomfort. Having taken up their abode ashore in a small hostelry, they were victimised by the landlady, a Mrs. Francis, of whom the novelist has drawn the following unattractive portrait, in revenge for her exactions: —"She was a short squab woman; her head was closely joined to her shoulders, where it was fixed somewhat awry;

on his head. An inkhorn at his button-hole, and some papers in his hand, sufficiently assured me what he was, and I asked him if he and his companion were not Custom-House officers; he answered, with sufficient dignity, that they were, as an information which he seemed to conclude would strike the hearer with awe, and suppress all further inquiry; but, on the contrary, I proceeded to ask of what rank he was in the Custom-House, and received an answer from his companion (as I remember) that the *gentleman* was a riding-surveyor. I replied that he might be a riding-surveyor, but could be no gentleman; for that none who had any title to that denomination would break into the presence of a lady without any apology, or even moving his hat. He then took his covering from his head, and laid it on the table, saying, he asked pardon, and blamed the mate, who should, he said, have informed him if any persons of distinction were below. I told him he might guess by our appearance (*which, perhaps, was rather more than could be said with the strictest adherence to truth*) that he was before a gentleman and lady, which should teach him to be very civil in his behaviour, though we should not happen to be of that number whom the world calls people of fashion and distinction."—*Voyage to Lisbon.*

Mr. Saunders Welch succeeded Fielding as a justice of the peace. Dr. Johnson, according to Boswell, maintained with him a long and intimate friendship, and when the justice, like his predecessor, was driven by failing health to try the experiment of a more genial climate, the doctor wrote him an affectionate letter, instinct with good feeling. It is plain that his office was not considered by the author of "The Rambler" disreputable or unimportant. "Johnson," says Boswell, "who had an eager and unceasing curiosity to know human life in all its variety, told me that he attended Mr. Welch in his office for a whole winter, to hear the examination of the culprits, but that he found an almost uniform tenor of misfortune, wretchedness, and profligacy."—*Boswell's Life of Johnson.* Mr. Welch was also the intimate friend of Hogarth.

every feature of her countenance was sharp and pointed; her face was furrowed with the smallpox; and her complexion, which seemed to be able to turn milk into curds, not a little resembled in colour such milk as had already undergone that operation. She appeared indeed to have many symptoms of a deep jaundice in her looks; but the strength and firmness of her voice overbalanced them all: the tone of this was a sharp treble at a distance, for I seldom heard it on the same floor, but was usually waked with it in the morning, and entertained with it almost continually through the whole day." The vixenish disposition and insolent demeanour of this woman evidently made a strong impression upon him, and he was not a little pleased to be released from her system of extortion, which every day became more intolerable. "If her bills were remonstrated against," he says, "she was offended with the tacit censure of her fair dealing; if they were not, she seemed to regard it as a tacit sarcasm on her folly, which might have set down larger prices with the same success. On this latter hint she did indeed improve; for she daily raised some of her articles. A pennyworth of fire was to-day rated at a shilling, to-morrow at eighteen pence; and if she dressed us two dishes for two shillings on the Saturday, we paid half-a-crown for the cookery of one on the Sunday; and whenever she was paid, she never left the room without lamenting the small amount of her bill, saying, 'she knew not how it was that others got their money by gentlefolks, but for her part she had not the art of it!'"

The most admirable feature of this curious Journal is the hearty, honest spirit of cheerfulness which pervades it. There are in it no useless repinings, no sickening complaints of the ill-usage of the world or the slights of fortune. An evident desire to make the best of everything had taken complete possession of the poor, infirm, dropsical, dying man. He could even jest at sufferings and infirmi-

ties, from which the strongest of us would have recoiled with dismay. "In this last sketch," says Murphy, "he puts us in mind of a person under sentence of death jesting on the scaffold." But this is certainly not a fair comparison. His cheerfulness is not forced or unnatural; it was the habit of his mind, which neither pain, nor weakness, nor sorrow, could subdue or change.[1] Though death had marked him for its own, why should he make others miserable? Why not preserve as long as he could that merry countenance which had carried pleasure into every circle, and lightened the cares of those who were dearest to him on earth? He was no trifler, be it remembered; for a becoming seriousness occasionally pervaded his last meditations: but that his natural manner never forsook him—that he was the gay, light-hearted humourist to the last—is to us a pleasant subject for reflection. Better, in the final hours which must come to all of us, the cheerfulness of a Fielding, than the gloom and despondency of a Swift!

Above all, it is gratifying to observe how grateful he was for the attentions lavished on him by his devoted wife and child. The smallest kindnesses were not thrown away upon him; and those more considerable offerings of feminine devotedness, which involved self-sacrifice and personal discomfort, were fully appreciated. His second wife, whatever her origin, must have been a true woman; and he does not forget to speak of her as one "who, be-

(1) One of Richardson's correspondents makes the following absurd and illiberal remarks on Fielding's Journal:—"I have lately read over with much indignation Fielding's last piece, called his 'Voyage to Lisbon.' That a man who had led such a life as he had should trifle in that manner, when immediate death was before his eyes, is amazing. From this book I am confirmed in what his other works had fully persuaded me of, that, with all his parade and pretences to virtuous and human affections, the fellow had no heart. And so—his knell is knelled." This precious piece of criticism is from the pen of Mr. Edwards of Turrick, Bucks, author of "The Canons of Criticism," and other long since forgotten works. Mrs. Barbauld says, that though "his letters are not brilliant, he seems to have been a very good, pious, and kind-hearted man!" —*Richardson's Life and Correspondence.*

sides discharging excellently well her own and all the tender offices becoming the female character, besides being a faithful friend, an amiable companion, and a tender nurse, could likewise supply the wants of a decrepid husband." And afterwards, in a gale of wind, when the anxiety of the captain communicated alarm to the passengers, the novelist concludes his comments on the occurrence by observing that, in the event of accidents, his "dear wife and child were both too good and too gentle to be trusted to the power of any man he knew."

Thus, after so many miseries and mischances, retaining the priceless treasure of a happy and contented mind—cheerful in spite of bodily anguish and the gloomiest apprehensions—displaying to the last the tenderest care and most considerate regard for the dear objects clinging, like tendrils, to him for support—the bold and battered Voyager, who had contended so bravely with the storms of life, and in so many tempests buffeted back its fiercest waves, drifted on towards the haven of Eternal Rest.[1]

(1) It may be proper here to state that, before he left England, Fielding prepared for the press a new edition of "Jonathan Wild," originally published in his "Miscellanies." In the "Advertisement from the publisher to the reader," allusion is made to the personal attacks of which the author was so often the object. As this "Advertisement" has not been reprinted, it is here given in its original form:—"The following pages are the corrected edition of a Book which was first published in the year 1743. That any personal application could have ever been possibly drawn from them, will surprize all who are not deeply versed in the black Art (for so it seems most properly to be called) of deciphering Men's Meaning when couched in obscure, ambiguous, or allegorical expressions: This Art hath been exercised more than once on the Author of our little Book, who hath contracted a considerable Degree of Odium from having had the Scurrility of others imputed to him. The Truth is, as a very corrupt state of morals is here represented, the scene seems very properly to have been laid in Newgate: Nor do I see any Reason for introducing any allegory at all; unless we will agree that there are, without those Walls, some other Bodies of Men of worse Morals than those within; and who have, consequently, a Right to change Places with its present Inhabitants. To such persons, if any such there be, I would particularly recommend the perusal of the third chapter of the fourth Book of the following History, and more particularly still the speech of the Grave Man in pages 195 and 196 of that Book."—*Life of Jonathan Wild*. A new edition, with considerable corrections and additions, by Henry Fielding, Esq. Millar. 1754.

CHAPTER XXVI.

VOYAGE TO LISBON CONTINUED.—ARRIVAL THERE, AND DEATH.

[1754.]

FIELDING'S passage to Lisbon proved a perilous and tiresome one, even for that time of day. Vexed by his long detention off Ryde, the captain weighed anchor in a dudgeon, determined to make headway, from whatever quarter of the compass the wind might blow. After the gale referred to in the last chapter, he was glad enough, however, to find shelter and security in Torbay, where the novelist once more gazed on the coast of Devonshire, and took advantage of his detention to purchase two hogsheads of cyder as a present for some friends, and another hogshead to take with him to Lisbon. "I purchased," writes the garrulous traveller, "three hogsheads for five pounds ten shillings, all which I should have scarce thought worth mentioning, had I not believed it might be of equal service to the honest farmer who sold it me—and who is by the neighbouring gentlemen reputed to deal in the very best—and to the reader, who, from ignorance of the means of providing better for himself, swallows at a dearer rate the juice of Middlesex turnip, instead of that *vinum pomonæ* which Mr. Giles Leverance, of Cheeshurst, near Dartmouth, in Devon, will, at the price of forty shillings per hogshead, send in double casks to any part of the world." It is doubtful whether "the honest farmer" duly appreciated this flattering notice, which, whilst it performed during his lifetime the duty of an advertisement, has likewise handed down his name to a remote posterity.

Master Leverance's excellent cyder was not the only

creature-comfort which solaced the travellers during their detention on the coast of Devon. An acquaintanceship was here formed with the John-dorée, an inhabitant of the deep justly prized by the natives of the west. Having tasted this dainty, the novelist received, with little surprise, the information that his friend Quin, the epicure and actor, "whose distinguishing tooth had been so justly celebrated, had lately visited Plymouth, and had done those honours to the dorée which are so justly due to it from that sect of modern philosophers who, with Sir Epicure Mammon, or Sir Epicure Quin, their head, seem more to delight in a fishpond than in a garden, as the old Epicureans are said to have done. Unfortunately," he adds, "for the fishmongers of London, the dorée resides only in those seas; for could any of this company but convey one to the temple of luxury under the Piazza, where Macklin, the high-priest, daily serves up his rich offerings to that goddess, great would be the reward of that fishmonger, in blessings poured down upon him from the goddess, as great would his merit be towards the high-priest, who could never be thought to overrate such valuable incense."

The "temple of luxury under the Piazza" (Covent Garden) referred to by Fielding, was the singular speculation of that singular genius, Charles Macklin, the actor and dramatist, and in 1754 the talk of the town. In the previous December this eccentric personage had taken leave of the stage, though in "the full vigour of his fame and constitution;"[1] and in his parting address had hinted that he had a scheme in view from which he expected to derive both profit and reputation:—

> "Since then for reasons I the stage give o'er,
> And for *your sakes* write tragedies no more,
> Some other schemes of course possess my brain,—
> For he who once has eat must eat again:

(1) Macklin's Memoirs. 1804.

And lest this lank, this melancholy phiz,
Should grow more lank, more dismal than it is,
A scheme I have in hand will make you stare :—
Though off the stage I still must be the player;
Still I must follow this theatric plan,
Exert my comic powers, draw all I can,
And to each guest appear a different man."

The adventurous actor's scheme had at least novelty to recommend it. He proposed to unite an ordinary, over which he was to preside in the character of host, with a lecture-hall and school of oratory, called "The British Inquisition," in which he was to fill the post of teacher and lecturer. On the 11th March, 1754, he commenced operations by opening a public ordinary, as the first step in the development of his scheme. All the arrangements were here on the most liberal scale, and excluded every chance of profit. For the sum of three shillings the guests were supplied with a luxurious dinner, including wine, "port, claret, or whatever liquor they preferred."[1] A numerous staff of servants was engaged by the liberal host, with whom he communicated by signs, so that the company should not be disturbed by unseemly chattering,—an attention which the epicure Quin particularly commended. Once in Foote's presence, however, at the Bedford, where this practice had been warmly praised, Macklin, in the pride of his heart, made a statement which drew upon him one of the wit's most telling sarcasms. "Sir," said Macklin to his eulogist, "I knew it would do. And where do you think I picked up this hint? Well, sir, I'll tell you: I picked it up from no less a man than James Duke of York, who you know, sir, first invented signals for the fleet."—"Very *àpropos*, indeed," exclaimed Foote (who was lying in wait for the self-satisfied actor), "and good poetical justice; as *from* the *fleet* they were taken—so *to* the *Fleet* both master and signals are likely to return!"[2]

(1) Macklin's Memoirs.

(2) Macklin's Memoirs, 1804. A very minute account of these curious public entertainments is given in this work, from the recollection of a literary gentle-

In the course of the year 1754, Macklin completed his scheme by opening "The British Inquisition," when he delivered himself of some heavy discourses on eloquence and the drama. But the friends who had applauded his dinners refused to pay the same compliment to the lectures. The wits indeed attended, but only to turn the lecturer into ridicule, whose gravity formed a strange contrast to the titterings and even open laughter of the audience. Poor Macklin could not deceive himself long as to the reception which his discourses met with; but he attributed the jocularity of his auditors entirely to the envious machinations of Foote, whose skill in raising a laugh he knew full well. As he could not exclude the humourist from the lecture-hall, he resolved one night to administer to him an open rebuke. Before he began his lecture, therefore, hearing a buzz in the room, and observing Foote talking and laughing to a select circle, he assumed his gravest theatrical manner, and in a tone of stern authority exclaimed, "Well, sir, you seem to be very merry there; but do you know what I am going to say now?"—"No, sir," said Foote; "pray *do you?*"[1] This retort was irresistible,

man then living. "Dinner being announced," it is said, "by public advertisement to be ready at four o'clock, just as the clock had struck that hour, a large tavern bell, which he had affixed to the top of the house, gave notice of its approach. This bell continued ringing for about five minutes: the dinner was then ordered to be dished, and in ten minutes afterwards it was set upon the table; after which the outer room door was ordered to be shut, and no other guest admitted. Macklin himself always brought in the first dish, dressed in a full suit of clothes, &c., with a napkin slung across his left arm. When he placed the dish on the table he made a low bow, and retired a few paces back towards the sideboard, which was laid out in very superb style. . . . . Two of his principal waiters stood beside him, and one, two, or three more, as occasion required. . . . . Thus was dinner entirely served up, and attended to, on the side of the house, all in dumb show. When dinner was over, and the bottles and glasses all laid upon the table, Macklin, quitting his former situation, walked gravely up to the front of the table, and hoped 'that all things were found agreeable;' after which he passed the bell-rope round the back of the chair of the person who happened to sit at the head of the table, and making a low bow at the door, retired. . . . . The company generally consisted of wits, authors, players, Templars, and lounging-men of the town."

(1) Macklin's Memoirs.

and Macklin was so annoyed that he refused to proceed till called on by the unanimous voice of the audience, who, out of compassion, laughed no more that evening.[1]

His speculation in every respect proved as unfortunate as might have been expected. The simple-minded schemer was cheated by his tradesmen, and robbed by his servants, till failure stared him in the face. In the first winter of its existence, "The British Inquisition" closed its doors; and in "The London Gazette" of January 25th, 1755, Macklin appeared in the list of bankrupts, described as "a vintner, coffee-man, and chapman."

That Fielding was ever a guest at his old friend's ordinary, which he has described as "the temple of luxury," seems improbable, when the state of his health, in 1754, previous to his departure for Lisbon, is taken into consideration. But it is also clear that if he could have contrived to have dragged himself thither, no living man would have so fully enjoyed the lively society assembled there. Macklin himself was a study for any humourist: with great natural talents, he was inordinately vain, somewhat shallow, ill-educated, and extremely fond of discoursing on subjects of which he was profoundly ignorant. A more amusing or self-sufficient egotist never existed; with all his weaknesses and absurdities, in some matters he displayed great shrewdness and acuteness; and could rattle out an abundance of lively anecdotes, which made him one of the most entertaining of companions.

From his rapturous comments on the perfections of the John-dorée, Fielding proceeds in his journal (with that taste for digression which was so natural to him) to dilate on the subject of fish in general as an article of food. After remarking on the wonderful fecundity of the tenants

(1) The lectures of "The British Inquisition" are said to have been delivered in Pewterer's Hall, Lime Street. "The hall was formerly let for lectures, and here Macklin, the actor, commenced his 'school of oratory and criticism,' lecturing in full dress, but to be laughed at by Foote and other wits of the day." —*Timbs' Curiosities of London.*

of the deep, he adds, "What then ought in general to be so plentiful, what so cheap as fish? What then so properly the food of the poor? So in many places they are, and so might they always be in great cities, which are always situated near the sea, or on the conflux of large rivers. How comes it then, to look no further abroad for instances, that in our city of London the case is so far otherwise, that, except that of sprats, there is not one poor palate in a hundred that knows the taste of fish?" For this state of things, in a strain of mingled humour and earnestness, the following remedy is suggested. "And first," he says, "I humbly submit the absolute necessity of *immediately hanging all the fishmongers* within the bills of mortality; and however it might have been some time ago the opinion of mild and temporising men, that the evil complained of might be removed by gentler methods, I suppose at this day there are none who do not see the impossibility of using such with any effect. *Cuncta prius tentanda* might have been formerly urged with some plausibility, but *cuncta prius tentata* may now be replied: for surely, if a few monopolising fishmongers could defeat that excellent scheme of the Westminster market (to the erecting which so many justices of the peace, as well as other wise and learned men, did so vehemently apply themselves, that they might be truly said not only to have laid the whole strength of their heads, but of their shoulders too, to the business), it would be a vain endeavour for any other body of men to attempt to remove so stubborn a nuisance." Such was the justice's "short way with fishmongers,"—very effectual, no doubt, if only practicable.

Having regaled himself "gloriously" with that dainty viand, the dorée, and whilst he was "washing it down with some good claret," (even in the midst of pain and sickness what a keen zest for bodily enjoyment the man had!) Fielding's temper was grievously ruffled by the presence of the captain's factotum, who proceeded to execute an order

with which he had been entrusted—to bottle half a hogshead of small beer in the cabin occupied by the passengers. This was not to be borne. By menaces and expostulations the man was compelled to retreat; but the master soon afterwards made his appearance, and roughly asked why his commands had not been obeyed. "I answered him," said Fielding, "very mildly, that I had prevented his man from doing it, as it was at an inconvenient time to me, and, as in his absence, at least, I esteemed the cabin to be my own. 'Your cabin,' repeated he many times (with an oath), 'no, 'tis my cabin! . . . . I will show the world I am a commander, and nobody but I! Did you think I sold you the command of my ship for that pitiful thirty pounds? I wish I had not seen you nor your thirty pounds aboard of her.'" The storm was now at its height, and the novelist, being resolved to quit the ship, gave orders, in a low voice, to have a hoy sent from Dartmouth to convey him ashore. "In the same tone," he adds, "I likewise threatened the captain with that which, he afterwards said, he feared more than any rock or quicksand. . . . . The most distant sound of *law* thus frightened a man who had often, I am convinced, heard numbers of cannon roar around him with intrepidity. Nor did he sooner see the hoy approaching the vessel than he did run down again into the cabin; and, his rage being perfectly subsided, he tumbled on his knees, and a little too abjectly implored for mercy. I did not suffer a brave man, and an old man, to remain a moment in this posture; but I immediately forgave him."

Always the same! impulsive, frank, open-hearted Harry Fielding! "To speak truth, I forgave him," he adds, "from a motive which would make men much more forgiving, if they were much wiser than they are; because it was convenient for me so to do." Yet, in spite of this self-disparaging remark, who can fail to trace in this considerate treatment of "the brave old captain" marks of that generous, noble nature which had won the affectionate

attachment of troops of friends? After this incident he softened towards the veteran, and immediately jotted down another sketch of his character, to prove that under the rough husk which had at first excited his dislike there was a kernel of genuine human kindness:—"To say truth (he writes), notwithstanding the strict rigour with which he preserved the dignity of his station, and the hasty impatience with which he resented any affront to his person or orders—disobedience to which he could in no instance brook in any person on board—he was one of the best-natured fellows alive. He acted the part of a father to his sailors; he expressed great tenderness for any of them when ill, and never suffered any the least work of supererogation to go unrewarded by a glass of gin. He even extended his humanity, if I may so call it, to animals, and even his cats and kittens had large shares in his affections. . . . . Nay, he carried his fondness even to inanimate objects, of which we have above set down a pregnant example in his demonstration of love and tenderness towards his boats and ship. He spoke of a ship which he had commanded formerly, and which was long since no more (which he had called the *Princess of Brazil*), as a widower of a deceased wife. This ship, after having followed the honest business of carrying goods and passengers for hire many years, did at last take to evil courses, and turn privateer, in which service, to use his own words, she received many dreadful wounds, which he himself had felt as if they had been his own." And, in the same tone of respect and regard, he afterwards describes "the good captain" reading prayers on deck, "with an audible voice, and with but one mistake of *a lion* for *Elias*."

In the famous Bay of Biscay—having at length left behind them the shores of England—the travellers experienced a "rolling," which rendered futile all attempts to devour a not very tempting dinner. "Every utensil in our cabin," says the novelist, "rolled up and down, as we should

have rolled ourselves, had not our chairs been fast lashed to the floor. In this situation, with our tables likewise fastened by ropes, the captain and myself took our meals with some difficulty, and swallowed a little of our broth,—for we spilt much the greater part. The remainder of our dinner being an old, lean, tame duck, roasted, I regretted but little the loss of, my teeth not being good enough to have chewed it." This was the last incident—save a sight of one of those glorious moonlight scenes peculiar to a calm in southern latitudes[1]—which called for notice in the Journal; and at length the white churches and convents of Lisbon greeted the gaze of the travellers. Having feasted their eyes on these objects for a period much longer than was agreeable to them, an order to land was at last obtained. As soon as the official forms permitted, the sick man was hoisted into the boat, and carried on shore. So ended the voyage; and the Journal closes with the following words:—"About seven in the evening I got into a chaise on shore, and was driven through the nastiest city in the world, though, at the same time, one of the most populous, to a kind of coffee-house, which is very pleasantly situated on the brow of a hill, about a mile from the city, and hath a very fine prospect of the river Tajo, from Lisbon to the sea. Here we regaled ourselves with a good supper, for which we were as well charged as if the bill had been made on the Bath road, between Newbury and London."

Within two months after these words were written, the hand that traced them was cold in death. Fielding arrived at Lisbon about the middle of August; and on the 8th of October, 1754, he expired, without a groan, in the forty-eighth year of his age. During the last few weeks of his existence he was free from pain. His originally strong constitution, having long battled vigorously against disease, at last gave up the struggle, and submitted at discretion.

(1) "Compared to these, the pageantry of theatres, or splendour of courts, are sights almost below the regard of children."—*Voyage to Lisbon.*

After this, his sufferings almost entirely ceased. The breezes of the south could not, indeed, re-invigorate the wasted frame, or restore to health the shattered valetudinarian, but they breathed gratefully on his sick-bed, and smoothed his passage to the grave. His death was, on the whole, a happy one. His wife and child watched over him with womanly care and affectionate solicitude, anticipated every want, and cheered him with pleasant converse. Undisturbed by racking pain, in full possession of the faculties of hearing, speech, and sight, with an unclouded intellect, and a mind well-prepared, he calmly beheld the approach of Death, marked his upraised dart, and yielded without a shudder.

Thus perished, in a foreign land, one of the most thoroughly English writers of whom England can boast. Sad and strange it seems that not a foot of English ground should have been vouchsafed to cover his remains; and strange also, that after his body was committed to the grave, the first attempt to pay a tribute to his memory, and to mark his last resting-place with a fitting memorial, proceeded from a foreigner! The Chevalier de Meyrionnet, French consul at Lisbon, wrote an epitaph on Fielding, soon after his decease, in the French language, and proposed, at his own expense, to erect a monument to him. Such a proposal from a foreigner naturally excited a spirit of emulation amongst the numerous countrymen of the novelist residing in Lisbon. A monument[1] was accord-

(1) This tomb is thus described by Sir Nathaniel Wraxall:—

"If I could not discover the place of Camoen's interment, I at last found out the grave and tombstone of the author of 'Tom Jones.' Fielding, who terminated his life, as is well-known, at Lisbon, in 1754, of a complication of disorders, at little more than forty-seven years of age, lies buried in the cemetery appropriated to the English factory. I visited his grave, which was already nearly concealed by weeds and nettles. Though he did not suffer the extremity of distress under which Camoen and Cervantes terminated their lives, yet his extravagance—a quality so commonly characteristic of men distinguished by talents—embittered the evening of his days."—*Wraxall's Memoirs of my own Time*, vol. i. 1818.

ingly placed, at the cost of the English factory, over the spot where all that was mortal of the author of so many imperishable creations has long since crumbled into dust. This tomb having fallen into decay, was replaced, in 1830, by a more appropriate memorial,[1] which bears the following inscription :—

"HENRICUS FIELDING
LUGET BRITANNIA GREMIO NON DATUM
FOVERE NATUM."

The personal appearance of the great novelist has been thus described by his friend, Mr. Arthur Murphy :[2]—

(1) Fielding's last resting-place is thus described in one of the best of traveller's guide-books :—"The English burial-ground, termed by the Portuguese *Os cyprestes*, is situated on the hill of the Estrella, above Buenos Ayres. It was allowed to be formed during the last century by the Portuguese government, on condition of being called the hospital of the English factory. A building bearing that name was erected near the entrance, which now serves as a dwelling-house for the chaplain. . . . . The ground is divided by straight walks, intersecting each other at right angles; they are bordered by lofty cypresses, round which scarlet geraniums climb to the height of ten or fifteen feet. Many of the tombs are shaded by the Judas-tree, and other flowering shrubs. . . . . In this cemetery was interred the celebrated novelist, Henry Fielding. . . . . The English had long been reproached for allowing the grave of their distinguished countryman to remain without any memorial. It was not till 1830 that, by the exertions of the late Rev. Christopher Neville, at that time British chaplain, a subscription was set on foot, and the present sarcophagus erected. It is situated about the centre of the cemetery."—*Handbook for Travellers to Portugal.* Murray.

A celebrated traveller also thus writes of Fielding's foreign grave :—"Let travellers devote one entire morning to inspecting the Arcos and the Mai das agoas, after which they may repair to the English church and cemetery —Père la Chaise in miniature—where, if they be of England, they may well be excused if they kiss the cold tomb, as I did, of the author of 'Amelia,' the most singular genius which their island ever produced, whose works it has long been the fashion to abuse in public, and to read in secret. In the same cemetery rest the mortal remains of Doddridge, another English author, of a different stamp, but justly admired and esteemed."—*Borrow's Bible in Spain*, vol. i. chap. 1. 1843.

(2) Arthur Murphy, the editor of Fielding's works, and author of the Essay on his Life and Genius, was a native of Cork—a city which still contains, it is said, a large crop of *Murphys*. At the age of twenty-one he made his appearance in London, and soon attached himself to literature and the drama, although originally intended for mercantile pursuits. With Fielding the young Irishman soon picked up an intimacy, and on the cessation of "The Covent Garden Journal," he produced a paper on the same plan, which lived till October, 1754.

"Henry Fielding was in stature rather rising above six feet; his frame of body large and remarkably robust, till the gout had broken the vigour of his constitution." His features were marked and striking, so much so, that a portrait of him was painted by his friend Hogarth from memory, with the assistance of a profile which had been cut in paper with a pair of scissors by a lady. Though he was singularly handsome in his youth, in his later years it appears, from his own account, that his gouty and dropsical figure was anything but agreeable to behold. But his cheerfulness and good temper rendered him to the last a delightful companion, and endeared him to his family and friends. "It is wonderful to think," observes a great living humourist, "of the pains and misery which the man suffered; the pressure of want, illness, remorse, which he endured; and that the writer was neither malignant nor melancholy, his views of truth never warped, and his generous human kindness never surrendered."[1]

The most prominent trait in Fielding's disposition was his hearty relish for existence,—a relish which the passages

After this, he devoted himself to the stage, and made his appearance as an actor, in the character of Othello. Like most other dramatists, he however failed to distinguish himself as an actor. Ultimately he attached himself to the law, though refused admittance as a student by three inns—the Middle and Inner Temple, and Gray's-Inn, on the sole grounds of his having appeared on the stage—an instance of illiberality by no means pleasant to record. Churchill (who seems to have cherished an illiberal antipathy to Murphy) thus alludes to this incident in "The Rosciad:"—

> "Twice (cursed remembrance), twice I strove to gain
> Admittance 'mongst the law-instructed train,
> Who in the Temple and Gray's-Inn prepare
> For clients' wretched feet the legal snare:
> Dead to those arts which polish and refine,
> Deaf to all worth, because that worth was mine,
> Twice did those blockheads startle at my name,
> And foul rejection gave me up to shame."

Lincoln's-Inn at length opened its doors to the man of letters, and Murphy's life was subsequently dignified and prosperous. He was a commissioner of bankrupts at Guildhall, wrote many tragedies and comedies, and died at a ripe old age in 1805.

(1) Thackeray's Lectures on the English Humourists. 1853.

cited from his Journal show was unabated by disease and the near prospect of death. He possessed an exquisite temperament of the sanguine order; abundant energy, constant activity, and a marvellous capacity for enjoyment. These personal traits, which imparted to his writings unparalleled force and spirit, have been admirably described by his kinswoman, Lady Mary. "I am sorry," says this lively and philosophic lady, in a letter dated 1755, "for Henry Fielding's death; not only as I shall read no more of his writings, but I believe that he lost more than others, as no man enjoyed life more than he did, though few had less reason to do so, the highest of his preferment being raking in the lowest sinks of vice and misery. I should think a nobler and less nauseous employment to be one of the staff-officers that conduct the nocturnal wedding. . . . . His happy constitution (even when he had with great pains half demolished it) made him forget every evil when he was before a venison pasty, or over a flask of champagne; *and I am persuaded he has known more happy moments than any prince on earth.* His natural spirits gave him rapture with his cookmaid, and cheerfulness when he was starving in a garret. There was a similitude between his character and that of Sir Richard Steele. He [Fielding] had the advantage in learning, and, in my opinion, in genius; they both agreed in wanting money, in spite of all their friends, and would have wanted it if their hereditary lands had been as extensive as their imaginations: yet each of them was so formed for happiness it is a pity he was not immortal."

Fielding's death was regretted by mourners more earnest in their sorrow than Lady Mary. In the cynical verses which he wrote on his own anticipated death, Swift singled out three of his literary associates who would receive the intelligence with different degrees of regret:—

> "Poor Pope will grieve a month, and Gay
> A week, and Arbuthnot a day."

In like manner, it may be conjectured, that the account of Fielding's death was received by three members of the intellectual aristocracy of his time, to whom he had been closely allied by bonds of personal friendship. The "grave and godly" LYTTLETON meditated with serious and thoughtful sorrow, which cast for many days a shade over his mind, on the stormy life of him whose spirit was now released from the toils and troubles of earth, and had "put on immortality." As he mused on the loss of his friend, strange and confused pictures of life, in all its varieties, must have been unfolded to his memory:—The playing-grounds of Eton, fresh and fair as the hopes and aspirations of happy boyhood; the crowded green-room, echoing with the laugh he knew so well; and then the roistering host, holding high his head amongst the country squires, with a young fair creature by his side, soon to be initiated into the miseries and squalid wretchedness of London lodgings; then the Temple chambers, with the briefless barrister expatiating on his prospects of boundless wealth—prospects which a few short months served to dissipate: alas! too, there is a view of the sponging-house in the changing diorama, with a remorseful inmate, who thankfully receives aid for the sake of weeping wife at home: there too is a death-chamber, which brings back to Lyttleton's mind the most sorrowful passage in his own life:—Poor Harry Fielding, he is now at rest with the wife he loved so well! WILLIAM HOGARTH when he heard the news turned from the easel, and paid the homage of a tear to the memory of his brave and manly friend. He was gone!—the inimitable delineator of the manners of the age, who had been to letters what he—Hogarth—had aspired to be to art—a genuine painter of human life; no copyist of foreign schools, no wearer of cast-off clothes, no weak sentimentalist; a straightforward, truth-telling, right-thinking Englishman—a Briton to the backbone. Honour to the manly heart which had beaten with such high and kindly thoughts! DAVID GARRICK, too, received

with an unusually thoughtful air the news of Harry Fielding's death, and as he passed from the jests of the theatre, forgot for a moment its mimetic triumphs in presence of this sad reality.

Of the judgment passed by contemporaries on the departed novelist, enough, perhaps, has been said in the course of this narrative. Few of those whose good opinion was worth having, failed, in the long run, to recognise his merits. In addition to other authorities already cited, Gray, the poet, the philologist Harris, and his friend Lyttleton, were amongst his eulogists and admirers. The latter, in his "Dialogues of the Dead," observed of his works that they have "a true spirit of comedy and an exact representation of nature, with fine moral touches"[1]—no mean praise from so conscientious a writer.[2] As a set-off to these friendly criticisms, Sir John Hawkins levelled his abuse at him in a characteristic strain of ignorance, insolence, and vulgar conceit. After enumerating in his "Life of Johnson" some of the inferior scribes who were once dignified by the title of men of letters, he contemptuously refers to the works of Fielding, Richardson, and Smollett, classing them together, but abusing the former with peculiar malignity:—

"Besides these, there was another class of authors who lived by writing, that require to be noticed: the former were in fact pensioners to the booksellers; these vended their compositions when completed to those of that trade

(1) Dialogue between Plutarch and a Bookseller.

(2) Those eminent judges of English style, Blair and Beattie, have also recorded their admiration of Fielding's great works. The former says, "Mr. Fielding's novels are highly distinguished for their humour; a humour which, if not of the most refined and delicate kind, is original and peculiar to himself. The characters which he draws are lively and natural, and marked with the strokes of a bold pencil. The general scope of his stories is favourable to humanity and goodness of heart; and in 'Tom Jones,' his greatest work, the artful conduct of the fable, and the subserviency of all the incidents to the winding up of the whole, deserve much praise."—*Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric, &c.*

who would give most for them. They were mostly books of mere entertainment that were the subjects of this kind of commerce, and were, and still are, distinguished by the corrupt appellation of novels and romances. . . . . At the head of these we must for many reasons place Henry Fielding, one of the most motley of literary characters This man was, in his early life, a writer of comedies and farces, very few of which are now remembered; after that, a practising barrister with scarce any business; then an anti-ministerial writer, and quickly after a creature of the Duke of Newcastle, who gave him a nominal qualification of £100 a year, and set him up as a trading justice, in which disreputable station he died. He was the author of a romance entitled 'The History of Joseph Andrews,' and of another, 'The Foundling; or, the History of Tom Jones,' a book seemingly intended to sap the foundation of that morality which it is the duty of parents and all public instructors to inculcate in the minds of young people, by teaching that virtue upon principle is imposture, that generous qualities alone constitute true worth, and that a young man may love and be loved, and at the same time associate with the loosest women. . . . . He was the inventor of that cant phrase, goodness of heart, which is every day used as a substitute for probity, and means little more than the virtue of a horse or a dog; in short, he has done more towards corrupting the rising generation than any writer we know of."[1]

It is quite unnecessary to point out the misrepresentations which are crowded together in this summary of Fielding's life, and in the observations on the tendency of his writings. To most admirers of the novelist it will be regarded, however, as rather a cheering fact than otherwise, that such an opinion should have been formed of him by the veritable Pecksniff of the age, whose solemn platitudes

(1) Life of Johnson, pp. 213, 214.

and pretentious ignorance by turns amused and bored the literary magnates whose society he affected.[1]

From the vulgar commonplaces of Hawkins, it is pleasant to turn to the genial pages of a living writer for a character of Fielding. With a thorough appreciation of the excellences of the man, and with a large compassion for his errors, Mr. Thackeray has given the following exquisite portraiture of the subject of this biography:—

"I cannot offer, or hope to make a hero of Henry Fielding. Why hide his faults? Why conceal his weaknesses in a cloud of periphrasis? Why not show him, like as he is, not robed in a marble toga, and draped and polished in a heroic attitude, but with inked ruffles and claret stains on his tarnished laced coat, and on his manly face the marks of good fellowship, of illness, of kindness, of care, and wine: stained as you see him, and worn by care and dissipation, that man retains some of the most precious human qualities and endowments. He has an admirable natural love of truth, the keenest instinctive antipathy to hypocrisy, the happiest satirical gift of laughing it to scorn. His wit is wonderfully wise and detective: it flashes upon a rogue, and lightens upon a rascal like a policeman's lantern. He is one of the manliest and kindliest of human beings: in the midst of all his imperfections, he respects female innocence and infantine tenderness, as you would suppose such a great-hearted, courageous soul would respect and care for them. He could not be so brave, generous, truth-telling as he is, were he not infinitely merciful, pitiful, and tender. He will give any man his purse—he can't help kindness and profusion. He may have low tastes, but not a mean mind: he admires with all his heart good and virtuous men, stoops

(1) "Altogether his existence was a kind of a pompous, parsimonious, insignificant drawl, cleverly ridiculed by one of the wits in an absurd epitaph:—

"'Here lies Sir John Hawkins,
Without his shoes and stauckins.'"

—*Forster's Life and Times of Goldsmith*, vol. i.

to no flattery, bears no rancour, disdains all disloyal acts, does his public duty uprightly, is fondly loved by his family, and dies at his work."[1]

(1) Lectures on the English Humourists. 1853. In "The Times" newspaper of September 2nd, 1840, there appears a review of Fielding's Works (Roscoe's edition), which there is no difficulty in affiliating on the author of "Pendennis" and "The Newcomes." In this review will be found the germ of the admirable sketch of Fielding in the "Humourists," together with many of the lecturer's identical expressions.

CHAPTER XXVII.

POSTHUMOUS PUBLICATIONS.—COMMENT ON LORD BOLINGBROKE'S ESSAYS.—THE FATHERS.

[1754—1778.]

SOON after Fielding's death was published his "Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon," and to this was added a fragment of a "Comment on Lord Bolingbroke's Essays," commenced during his last illness, and of which he never lived to complete the first section. Mallet's edition of the works of the "great St. John" had been published on the 6th of March, 1754,—a day also rendered memorable by the death of Mr. Pelham, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and brother to the Duke of Newcastle. It was this circumstance that drew from Garrick the ode which contains the celebrated stanza:—

> "The same sad morn to Church and State
> (So for our sins 'twas fixed by fate)
> A double shock was given:
> Black as the regions of the north,
> St. John's fell genius issued forth,
> And Pelham's fled to heaven!" [1]

(1) Notwithstanding this lofty eulogy, a very indifferent character is given of Pelham by one of his contemporaries, "Leonidas" Glover, who has this sketch of him in his Journal (published in 1814):—"In March, 1754, Mr. Henry Pelham died. He was originally an officer in the army, and a professed gamester; of a narrow mind, low parts, of an affable disposition, and a plausible cunning; false to Sir R. Walpole, who raised him, and ungrateful to the Earl of Bath, who protected him. By long experience and attendance he became considerable as a parliament man; and even when minister, divided his time to the last between his office and the club of gamesters at White's." [Of this club Horace Walpole tells the following story:—"They have put in the papers a good story made on White's: a man dropped down dead at the door, was carried in: the club immediately made bets whether he was dead or not, and when they were going to bleed him, the wagerers for his death interfered, and said it would affect the fairness of the bet."] Mr. Glover—an eminent London merchant, and in 1739 the most popular man in the city—was

Still better known is the comment of Johnson on this celebrated edition of Bolingbroke, when the name of the sceptical philosopher was mentioned in conversation: "Sir, he was a scoundrel and a coward; a scoundrel for charging a blunderbuss against religion and morality; a coward, because he had no resolution to fire it off himself, but left half-a-crown to a beggarly Scotchman to draw the trigger after his death."[1]

Horace Walpole characteristically announced to his correspondent, Mr. Bentley, the appearance of this renowned work. "Lord Bolingbroke is come forth in five pompous quartos, two and a half new, and most unorthodox. Warburton is resolved to answer, and the bishops *not* to answer him." That which, according to Walpole, the prelates of the Establishment were not inclined to undertake, appeared to Fielding a labour worthy, if not easy, of accomplishment. But when the book appeared he was languishing in a sickness which threatened to prove mortal. "I was at my worst," he says, in the introduction of the Voyage to Lisbon, "on that memorable day when

amongst the most remarkable of Fielding's contemporaries. His patriotic speeches on the breaking out of the Spanish war were once referred to as models of eloquence, and in private life he was much esteemed. Unfortunately his patriotism plunged him into difficulties, and in 1751 his commercial reverses compelled him to become a candidate for the place of Chamberlain to the city of London; but he lost the election, and retired for a time into private life. To him have been attributed the Letters of Junius (An Inquiry, &c.); but the only important facts brought forward to support the hypothesis were his intimacy with the family of Lord Temple, and his known ability. His poem of "Leonidas" was once very popular; but it is certainly not up to the standard of heroic or epic poetry. With reference both to Glover and Thomson, Horace Walpole thus rather maliciously writes to Sir H. Mann, in March, 1745:—"I had rather have written the most absurd lines in Lee, than 'Leonidas' or 'The Seasons;' as I had rather be put in the round-house for a wrong-headed quarrel, than sup quietly at eight o'clock with my grandmother." Fielding has the following quiet notice of Glover's epic in "The Journey from this World to the Next:"—"The first spirit with whom I entered into discourse was the famous Leonidas of Sparta. I acquainted him with the honours which had been done him by a celebrated poet of our nation, to which he answered, *he was very much obliged to him.*"

(1) Boswell's Johnson.

the public lost Mr. Pelham." As soon as he began to recover, his removal from England must have distracted his attention, and as disease gained power over him, he had less and less ability to discharge the task which he had allotted to himself in the final hours of life.

That task was worthy of the last moments of a sincere Christian—a title to which Fielding had an undoubted claim. In all the tempests of his life, amid all his difficulties and irregularities, his principles remained unshaken; he was never known to speak lightly of the doctrines and mysteries of Christianity; and in an unbelieving age he claimed for himself the honour of being one of its most uncompromising champions. That he should be eager to do battle with the sceptical philosopher, and to assail him with his own weapons, was therefore natural enough. To subject his opinions to a logical analysis, to point out the danger and absurdity of his conclusions, and to expose his fallacies, were motives sufficient to induce him, on the verge of the grave, to seize once more the pen he had wielded with such skill in other departments of literature.

Although, as already stated, he only lived to compose a very brief portion of his work, and though that portion was written during a mortal illness,—in the brief intervals when he enjoyed a comparative freedom from pain,—the fragment may challenge a comparison in force and vigour, as well as in felicitous phraseology, with the best controversial productions of the period.[1] The scoffing scepticism of the high-born and arrogant philosopher is, for instance, finely dealt with in the following passage:—

"In short, we doubt not but to make it appear as a fact beyond all contest, that his lordship was in jest through the whole work which we have undertaken to examine.

(1) Murphy observes that Fielding had made preparations for this work "of long extracts and arguments from the Fathers, and the most eminent writers of controversy." The manuscript he speaks of "as still extant in the hands of his brother, Sir John Fielding."—*Essay on the Life and Genius of Fielding.*

If an inflamed zealot should, in his warmth, compare such jesting to his in the Psalmist, or if a cooler disposition should ask how it was possible to jest with matters of such importance—I confess I have no defence against the accusation, nor can give any satisfactory answer to the question. To this indeed I could say, and it is all that I could say, that my Lord Bolingbroke was a great genius, sent into the world for great and astonishing purposes: that the ends, as well as means of actions in such personages, are above the comprehension of the vulgar. That his life was one scene of the wonderful throughout. That, *as the temporal happiness, the civil liberties and properties of Europe, were the game of his earliest youth, there could be no sport so adequate to the entertainment of his advanced age as the eternal and final happiness of all mankind.*"

The last sentence in the fragment—probably the last sentence which Fielding wrote—is also highly characteristic of his acute and vigorous mind. "Surely," he says, "it is better to decide in favour of possibility, and to lay the foundations of morality too high, than to give it no foundation at all."

Nearly a quarter of a century after his death, another production of Henry Fielding's was ushered into the light of day. This was his comedy of "The Fathers; or, the Good-natured Man," already mentioned in these pages.[1] At Garrick's request, it will be remembered, he undertook, in 1742, the revisal of this comedy, which had then been written some time, but was induced by circumstances to throw it aside, and to replace it by an earlier and much inferior effort,—"The Wedding Day." The rejected comedy subsequently found its way into the hands of Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, in whose taste and judgment Fielding had much confidence. Sir Charles was subsequently appointed envoy-extraordinary to the Court of Russia, and whether the manuscript travelled with

(1) See page 171.

him thither, or was left behind, is not known. He died in Russia, and all trace of it was lost.

Fielding had frequently mentioned the lost comedy to his family, and many inquiries respecting it were made during his lifetime and after his decease, of the different members of Sir Charles Williams' family. But they all proved fruitless, and it's existence was well-nigh forgotten, when Mr. Johnes, M.P. for Cardigan, received one day a present from a young friend of a tattered manuscript play, with the comment that it "was a damned thing." Mr. Johnes, however, having perused the comedy, felt certain that it was the work of no ordinary hand. He accordingly determined to obtain the opinion of Garrick (the acknowledged arbiter and authority in all theatrical questions) on the subject of its authorship, and instructed a friend to wait on the great actor with the manuscript. Directly Mr. Garrick cast his eye upon it, he exclaimed with friendly rapture, "The lost sheep is found! This is Harry Fielding's comedy!" Mr. Johnes at once restored the "foundling" to the family of the author, and no time was lost in bringing it on the stage for their benefit.[1]

The long-lost play was brought out under the most favourable auspices. It was revised, and in some places re-touched by Garrick, and also by the greatest dramatic writer of the time, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, who had achieved an early renown in the world of letters by his comedy of "The Rivals" and the opera of "The Duenna," first acted in 1775, and "The School for Scandal," produced in 1777. David Garrick, honourably mindful of the friendship which had for many years subsisted between him and the author, also contributed a prologue and epilogue. The former is one of the best of such productions contributed, even by Garrick, to the literature of the stage. From the lips of the admirable actor by whom it was delivered (Mr. King), it is known to have been singularly effective. An addi-

(1) See advertisement to "The Fathers: a Comedy."

tional interest is imparted to the composition from its having been the last which Garrick wrote; whilst both the topics, and their mode of treatment, give it more than a temporary or ephemeral importance. It is therefore reprinted in these pages.

"When from the world departs a son of fame,
His deeds or works embalm his precious name;
Yet not content, the public call for Art
To rescue from the tomb his mortal part;
Demand the painter's and the sculptor's hand,
To spread his mimic form throughout the land;
A form, perhaps, which living was neglected;
And when it could not feel respect, respected.
This night no bust or picture claims your praise;
Our claim's superior,—we the *spirit* raise:
From Time's dark store-house bring a long-lost play,
And drag it from oblivion into day.
But who the author? Need I name the wit
Whom Nature prompted as his genius writ?
Truth smiled on Fancy for each well-wrought story,
Where characters live, act, and stand before ye;
Suppose these characters, various as they are,—
The knave, the fool, the worthy, wise, and fair,—
For and against the author pleading at your bar.
First pleads TOM JONES,—grateful his heart and warm,—
'Brave, generous Britons, shield this play from harm:
My best friend wrote it; should it not succeed,
Though with my Sophy blest, my heart will bleed.'
Then from his face he wipes the manly tear;
'Courage, my master,' PARTRIDGE cries, 'don't fear:
Should Envy's serpents hiss, or Malice frown,
Though I'm a coward, zounds! I'll knock 'em down!'
Next sweet SOPHIA comes—she cannot speak—
Her wishes for the play o'erspread her cheek;
In ev'ry look her sentiments you read;
And more than eloquence her blushes plead.
Now BLIFIL bows,—with smiles his false heart gilding;
'He was my foe—I beg you'll damn this Fielding.'
'Right!' THWACKUM roars,—'no mercy, sirs, I pray;
Scourge the dead author through his orphan play.'
'What words! (cries PARSON ADAMS) fie, fie! disown 'em;
Good Lord! *de mortuis nil nisi bonum;*

If such are Christian teachers, who'll revere 'em?
An' thus they preach, the devil alone should hear 'em.'
Now SLIPSLOP enters. 'Tho' this *scriv'ning vagrant*
'Salted my virtue, which was ever *flagrant*,
Yet, like black 'Thello, I'd bear scorns and whips,
Slip into poverty to the very hips,
T'*exult* this play—may it *decrease* in favour,
And be its fame *immoralized* for ever!'
SQUIRE WESTERN, reeling, with October mellow,
'Tallyho, boys!—Yoax, critics! hunt the fellow!
Damn 'un, these wits are varmint not worth breeding,
What good e'er came of writing and of reading?'
Next comes, brimful of spite and politics,
His *sister* WESTERN, and thus deeply speaks:—
'Wits are armed powers—like France attack the foe;
Negotiate till they sleep—then strike the blow!'
ALLWORTHY last pleads to your noblest passions—
'Ye generous leaders of the taste and fashions,
Departed genius left his orphan play
To your kind care—what the dead wills, obey:
O then respect the FATHER's fond bequest,
And make his widow smile, his spirit rest.' "

A large audience assembled to witness the first performance of the comedy, and it was received with great applause.[1] But this applause, it may be, was mainly intended for the author and the occasion. As for the play itself, it belonged to, and reflected the manners of, a previous age,—nor could any adaptation or alteration, however skilful, have rendered it popular for any length of time as a stock piece. It is true that it belonged to the best period of Fielding's dramatic career,—when his pen had been for some time practised in this kind of composition, and he had become ambitious of doing something better than gratifying the momentary whim of the town. It was written long subsequently to "The Wedding Day" (which was one of his earliest attempts), but before "Pasquin" and the "Register," and he was himself particularly pleased with the plan and plot.[2] That it is altogether a

(1) Gentleman's Magazine, 1778.
(2) Preface to Miscellanies, 1743.

more perfect work than most of his comedies will be conceded by critics, and so far it justifies the remark that "he left off writing for the stage when he ought to have begun." But it cannot be compared with the happier efforts of Sheridan and Goldsmith. Although in his novels so successful in keeping up the interest of his plot, Fielding could not get through a play without suffering the excitement to flag before the end; and he was not insensible of this defect, for it is said to have been one of his favourite toasts, "Confusion to the man who invented fifth acts."[1] It may be added that "The Fathers" is one of the very few English comedies which does not terminate in a marriage.

Of those who were attracted to the representation of this comedy, it is a fair supposition that a great majority were moved by the potent spell which the authorship of "Tom Jones" had cast over Fielding's name. Though, in the brief space of forty years, the bulk of his dramatic writings had been consigned to neglect, if not oblivion, his novels were perused with as keen a zest as when they first issued from Andrew Millar's press. Of those who had known him in life—had grasped his hand, listened to his merry talk, or been witnesses of his grievous sufferings—many had

(1) Mr. Harris (of Salisbury), the eminent critic and philologist, has commemorated this saying of Fielding, and also made the following observations on his career :—"'Twas from a sense of this concluding jumble, this unnatural huddling of events, that a witty friend of mine, who was himself a dramatic writer, used pleasantly, though perhaps rather freely, to *damn the man who invented fifth acts*. . . . . So said the celebrated Henry Fielding, who was a respectable person both by education and birth. . . . . His 'Joseph Andrews' and 'Tom Jones' may be called masterpieces in the *comic epopée*, which none since have equalled, though multitudes have imitated, and which he was peculiarly qualified to write in the manner he did, both from his *life*, his *learning*, and his *genius*. Had his life been less irregular (for irregular it was, and spent in a promiscuous intercourse with persons of *all* ranks), his pictures of humankind had neither been so various nor so natural. Had he possessed less of literature, he could not have infused such a spirit of classical elegance. Had his genius been less fertile in wit and humour, he could not have maintained that uninterrupted pleasantry which never suffers the reader to feel fatigue."—*Philological Inquiries*. By James Harris. Part I.

since passed with him that gloomy barrier, *unde negant redire quenquam.*[1] Hogarth died just ten years after him, in October, 1764, most deeply lamented.[2] Lyttleton made a truly Christian end in August, 1773.[3] Of his contemporaries at the Bar there survived, however, some now loaded with years and honours; amongst them his cousin, Mr. Justice Gould, and Pratt, Earl of Camden. Of his theatrical associates there still flourished, besides David Garrick, the famous Charles Macklin, whose talents and eccentricities were as yet little affected by the weight of years;[4] and, amongst the most remarkable of his younger literary friends, there was Arthur Murphy, who between 1760 and the year in which "The Fathers" was produced, had supplied the stage with many excellent comedies and

(1) "Qui nunc it per iter tenebricosum,
Illuc, unde negant redire quenquam."—*Catullus.*

(2) "It is delightful to go back to those days, and, as it were, to hold converse with such honoured shades. Hogarth's death, I have heard my father declare, spread a general gloom. It was the subject of lamentation in every tavern; and all the social clubs were long accustomed to drink his memory. The sensitive Sterne long missed his ingenious convive; and Garrick's sad countenance rendered awhile the green-room dull."—*Wine and Walnuts*, vol. i.

(3) See Johnson's Lives of the Poets—Lyttleton.

(4) The vigour of Macklin's mind is shown in his comedy of "The Man of the World," first performed at Covent Garden, in May, 1781; although a sketch of it in three acts, under the title of "The True-born Scotchman," had been previously produced in Ireland, in 1764. He was certainly born as early as 1699, and some of his friends even asserted that the date of his birth was 1690. (Macklin's Memoirs.)

The latter account is somewhat corroborated by the following characteristic anecdote, which is given in his life, from his own narration:—"A party of Irish gentlemen, who had come over to England in the long vacation, asked me to sup with them. I did so, sir, and we all got very jolly together; insomuch, that one was so drunk that I made a point of taking him on my back, and carrying him down stairs, in order to be put into his chair. The next day the gentleman waited on me; and, expressing his civilities, said he was sorry I should take so much unnecessary trouble. Here, sir, I stopped him short, by telling him, one reason I had for carrying him on my back was, that I carried either his father or his grandfather the same way, *fifty years* ago, when he was a student of the Middle Temple. 'Very true, sir,' said the other; 'I remember my father often telling it as a family story: but you are mistaken a little in point of genealogy—it was my *great-grandfather* that you did that kindness for.'" Macklin's performance of Sir Pertinax Mac Sycophant, in his own

passable tragedies. Several old play-goers also remained, who remembered the Great Mogul, with his "Pasquin" and "Register," and had heard the applause with which those mordent satires were received by "opposition" audiences. It was no wonder, therefore, that a brilliant company assembled to applaud the foundling-comedy and it is as little a matter of surprise—ill-adapted as it was to the taste and spirit of the times—that its name soon disappeared from the play-bills.[1]

The part which Garrick had taken in bringing it on the stage for the benefit of Fielding's family was, to say the least, most commendable. But some misunderstanding appears to have arisen between the manager and Sir John Fielding—the half-brother of the novelist—respecting it, for which it is difficult to account. Mr. Forster, in his "Life and Times of Oliver Goldsmith," has quoted (in a note) the following endorsement of Garrick's on one of Sir John's "angriest letters:"—

"The beginning of my correspondence with Sir John Fielding was thus:—His brother, the late Mr. Fielding, was my particular friend; he had written a comedy, called 'The Good-natured Man,' which, being sent to his different friends, was lost for twenty years. It luckily fell to my lot to discover it. Had I found a mine of gold on my own land it could not have given me more pleasure. I immediately went to his brother, Sir John, and told him the story of my discovery, and immediately, with all the warmth imaginable, offered my services to prepare it for the stage. He thanked me cordially, and we parted with mutual expressions of kindness."

comedy, even when he had reached a very advanced age, is said to have been "unequalled in the annals of the theatre." After his decease, the character was played by George Frederick Cooke, so successfully that the best judges admitted it to be equal to the original. More recently, the admirers of old English comedy have been gratified by the admirable acting of Mr. Phelps in the same part.

(1) The comedy was performed nine times.

Thus far the endorsement; after which a portion of Garrick's letter, "with which he met Sir John's most petulant explosion," is given by Mr. Forster:—

"We will, if you please, not be the trumpeters of our own virtues (as Shakspere says), but take care that the innocent do not suffer by our mistakes. There shall be no anathema denounced against them by me. If my thoughts and alteration of the plan of 'The Good-natured Man' will be of the least service to their welfare, I will go on with my scribbling with pleasure; though my health is at present so precarious[1] that I am really afraid to undertake the whole (for much is wanted), lest the business should be retarded by my leaving London or the kingdom. What could you possibly mean by saying that the mischief to the poor innocent family would not be so great as my anger teaches me to believe? Surely these, Sir John, were the dictates of *your* anger and not *mine*; and I will venture to say that now it is passed you are sorry that you said it, as barbarity is as great a stranger to my nature as falsehood is to yours. If you have obliged and honoured me, I thank you; that you never were in the way to be obliged by me is certain, or I should certainly have done it. Some reciprocal acts of kindness passed between your brother and me, too trifling to be mentioned—but his praise is fame. You might have guessed at my warmth to you and yours, by the pleasure I had in the discovery of the lost treasure. What you have said kindly, I will remember; what unkindly, I will forget. I will not say, farewell.

"D. GARRICK."

Honourable indeed to Garrick was this regard for his departed friend, and this care for the interest of those he had left behind him. Twenty-four years had elapsed since the great novelist's death, but the interval had not cooled the ardour of his friendship. If the spirits of the dead are cognisant of what passes on earth, what unutterable

(1) Garrick died a few months afterwards—viz., on the 20th January, 1779.

pleasure must Fielding have derived from the instances of strong and lasting attachment displayed towards his memory by his surviving friends!

The "innocent family," for whose welfare he had breathed, on the verge of the grave, so many anxious prayers, found a generous protector in Mr. Ralph Allen, his constant benefactor. The kindness of this most benevolent man to Fielding has been mentioned more than once in these pages. It has been said that whilst engaged in the composition of "Tom Jones," he lived for a considerable time at Tiverton, in the neighbourhood of Prior Park, and dined every day at Allen's table.[1] Be this as it

(1) The description of Mr. Allworthy's house in "Tom Jones" is said to have been intended for Prior Park:—"The Gothic style of building could produce nothing nobler than Mr. Allworthy's house. There was an air of grandeur in it that struck you with awe, and rivalled the beauties of the best Grecian architecture; and it was as commodious within as venerable without. . . . . It was now the middle of May, and the morning was remarkably serene, when Mr. Allworthy walked forth on the terrace, when the dawn opened every minute that lovely prospect we have before described to his eye. And now, having sent forth streams of light, which ascended the blue firmament before him, as harbingers preceding his pomp, in the full blaze of his majesty up rose the sun; than which one object alone in this lower creation could be more glorious, and that Mr. Allworthy himself presented—a human being replete with benevolence, meditating in what manner he might render himself most acceptable to his Creator, by doing most good to his creatures."—*Tom Jones*, book i. c. 4.

Joseph Andrews also thus refers to the good deeds and celebrated mansion of Allen:—"Some gentlemen of our cloth report charitable actions done by their lords and masters; and I have heard Squire Pope, the great poet, at my lady's table, tell stories of a man that lived at a place called Ross, and another at the Bath, one Al—, Al—; I forget his name, but it is in the book of verses. This gentleman hath built up a stately house, too, which the squire likes very well; but his charity is seen further than his house, though it stands on a hill; ay, and brings him more honour too."—*Joseph Andrews*, book iii. c. 6.

Reference has been already made to Pope's intimacy with Allen; but it should be here stated that Warburton—certainly one of the most remarkable men of the age—was also often a guest at Prior Park, and ultimately marrying Miss Tucker, Allen's niece, became possessed of the mansion described in "Tom Jones." In November, 1745, Warburton published a "Sermon, occasioned by the present unnatural rebellion, preached in Mr. Allen's chapel, Prior Park." It is a circumstance of some interest, that the Bible used in Prior Park, on this and other occasions, was that presented to Pope by Atterbury, at their last interview in the Tower.—(Johnson's Lives of the Poets.) The personal appearance of Mr. Allen and his wife are thus described by Derrick, a con-

may, it is certain that he frequently received assistance from him in his difficulties, and when death deprived his widow and children of their protector, the generous patron became "a father to the fatherless," superintended the education of the children, and at his decease (which occurred just ten years after the novelist left England) bequeathed to the family an annuity of £100 a year.

Fielding's eldest son, William, was called to the Bar, and became ultimately a police magistrate. Once, it is said, when he appeared in the Court of King's Bench, Lord Mansfield,—displaying a kind and generous sense of the father's genius,—in his blandest tone and urbanest manner called on him to support a rule in these words, "Well, Tom Jones, what have you to say to this?" His second son entered the Church, and resided at Canterbury.

Mrs. Sarah Fielding, the authoress of "David Simple," survived her brother many years. During the latter part of her life she lived at Bath, much respected for her distinguished literary attainments. She translated Xenophon's "Memorabilia," and is the reputed authoress of "The Cry," a dramatic novel in three volumes.[1] Her good sense and amiable manners, no less than her acquirements (which were in those days considered most remarkable for a woman), caused her society to be much sought and esteemed; and Dr. Hoadley has celebrated her perfections in the following eulogistic lines:—

> "Her unaffected manners, candid mind,
> Her heart benevolent, and soul resigned;
> Were more her praise than all she knew or thought,
> Though Athens' wisdom to her sex she taught."

She died on the 6th of April, 1768, and was buried at

temporary:—"I have had an opportunity of visiting Mr. Allen. He is a very grave, well-looking old man, plain in his dress, resembling that of a Quaker, and courteous in his behaviour. I suppose he cannot be much under seventy. His wife is low, with grey hair, of a very pleasing address, that prejudices you much in her favour."

(1) In the "Biographie Universelle," it is quoted as "Les pleurs."

Charlecombe, near Bath. Dr. Hoadley erected a monument to her memory, which bears, or bore, the following inscription:—"Esteemed and loved, near this place lies Mrs. Sarah Fielding . . . . How worthy of a nobler monument! but her name will be written in the Book of Life!"

Fielding's half-brother, Sir John, acted as a London police magistrate for many years. He was the author of some works of a professional character,[1] and the enlightened originator of many projects of public utility. He died at Brompton, in 1780, having been knighted in 1761. In the dedication of "The Fathers" to the Duke of Northumberland, he thus speaks of his lamented brother:—"The author of this play was an upright, useful, and distinguished magistrate for the county of Middlesex; and by his publications laid the foundation of many wholesome laws for the support of good order and subordination in this metropolis, the effects of which have been, and now are, forcibly felt by the public. His social qualities made his company highly entertaining. His genius, so universally admired, has afforded delight and instruction to thousands. The memory of such a man calls for respect; and to have that respect shown him by the great and praiseworthy, must do him the highest honour."

The principal works of the novelist were collected and published, in 1762, by Arthur Murphy, with the Essay on the life and genius of the author prefixed thereto, of which liberal use has been made in these pages. A complete list of Fielding's writings (so far as they can be ascertained) is, however, subjoined in an Appendix.

After the comments and opinions cited in the course of this narrative, it is unnecessary to attempt a summary of Fielding's merits and defects as a writer or a man. As for his human weaknesses, since, however much they might occasion the regret, they never lessened the regard of such

(1) Among the manuscripts in the British Museum, there is also a Report on the state of the Jews in London, by Sir John Fielding.

men as Lyttleton and Allen, it is not too much to expect that they will meet with a lenient consideration at the hands of all good men—

> "———Not so absolute in goodness
> As to forget what human frailty is."

As an author, his glorious and genial fictions (still read with delight by living thousands) have given him a permanent place in literature, of which no changes in fashion or feeling or modes of thought are likely to deprive him. Faults they have,—and so had their author. An objection may reasonably be taken to a passage here and there; but, having regard to the whole scope and tenour of their characters and conversation, it may be confidently stated that there were never found on earth honester, healthier, wittier, and more agreeable companions than Tom Jones and HARRY FIELDING.

APPENDIX.

A LIST OF FIELDING'S WORKS.

Those marked thus † are not included in Murphy's edition.

Love in Several Masques: a Comedy 1728
† The Masquerade, inscribed to C—t H—d—g—r. By Lemuel Gulliver 1728
The Temple Beau: a Comedy 1730
The Author's Farce; with a puppet-show, called, "The Pleasures of the Town" 1730
The Coffee-house Politician; or, the Justice caught in his own Trap: a Comedy 1730
The Tragedy of Tragedies; or, the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great 1730
(Published afterwards with alterations, &c. 1731.)
The Letter Writers; or, a New Way to Keep a Wife at Home: a Farce 1731
The Grub Street Opera. By Scriblerus Secundus . . 1731
The Lottery: a Farce 1731
The Modern Husband: a Comedy 1732
The Covent Garden Tragedy 1732
The Debauchee; or, the Jesuit Caught 1732
The Mock Doctor; or, the Dumb Lady Cured: a Comedy, done from Molière 1732
The Miser: a Comedy, taken from Plautus and Molière. 1733
Deborah; or, a Wife for You All 1733
(Never printed. See p. 49.)
The Intriguing Chambermaid: a Comedy, in two acts . 1733
Don Quixote in England: a Comedy 1734
An Old Man taught Wisdom; or, the Virgin Unmasked: a Farce 1735
The Universal Gallant; or, the Different Husbands . . 1735
Pasquin: a dramatic Satire on the Times 1736
The Historical Register for the Year 1736 1737
Eurydice: a Farce 1737

Eurydice Hissed; or, a Word to the Wise 1737
Tumble-down Dick; or, Phaeton in the Suds 1737
† The Champion (a collection of Periodical Essays, written in 1739 and 1740, with Ralph). Two vols. 12mo. . 1741 [1]
† True Greatness: an Epistle to George Dodington, Esq. . 1741 [2]
† The Vernoniad; done into English from the original Greek of Homer 1741
The Crisis: a Sermon . . . . humbly inscribed to the Right Reverend the Bench of Bishops. By a Lover of his Country . . . . 1741 (?)

(See page 145, note).

† The Opposition: a Vision 1741
The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and his friend, Mr. Abraham Adams. Written in imitation of the manner of Cervantes 1742
† Plutus, the God of Riches: a Comedy, from the Greek of Aristophanes. By H. Fielding, Esq., and the Rev. Mr. Young 1742
Miss Lucy in Town: a Sequel to The Virgin Unmasked. 1742
† A Letter to a noble Lord, to whom it belongs, occasioned by the Representation of a Farce, called "Miss Lucy in Town" 1742
The Wedding Day: a Comedy 1743
Miscellanies. By H. Fielding, Esq. Three vols. . . 1743

Containing in vol. i.—

† Poems—Miscellaneous.
Essay on Conversation.
Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men.
† Essay on Nothing.[3]
Philosophical Transactions for the Year 1742—43.
Translation of the first Olynthiac of Demosthenes.
Dialogue between Alexander the Great and Diogenes the Cynic.
Interlude between Jupiter, Juno, and Mercury.

Vol. ii. contains—

A Journey from this World to the Next, and two plays (Miss Lucy in Town, and the Wedding Day).

Vol. iii. contains—

The History of the Life of the late Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great.[4]

Preface to "David Simple" 1744

(1) These Essays were afterwards republished with Fielding's name in 1766 He continued to contribute to "The Champion" till June, 1741. See page 111.
(2) Reprinted in the Miscellanies.
(3) This essay is reprinted in Mr. Roscoe's edition of Fielding's Works. 1 vol. 8vo. 1841.
(4) Republished, "with additions and corrections," in 1754.

†	Essays, &c., in "The True Patriot" (a selection only published in Murphy's edition)	1745-46
†	The Jacobite Journal (two Essays only published by Mr. Murphy)	1747-48
	Preface to "Familiar Letters between the principal Characters in David Simple"	1747
†	A proper Answer to a scurrilous Pamphlet, entitled, "An Apology for the Conduct of a second-rate Minister." By the Editor of The Jacobite Journal . . .	1747
	The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling	1749
	A Charge delivered to the Grand Jury of the Middlesex Sessions, on Thursday, the 29th June, 1749	1749
†	A true State of the Case of Bosavern Penlez	1749
	An Inquiry into the Causes of the late Increase of Robbers, &c.; with some Proposals for remedying this growing Evil	1751
	Amelia	1751
†	The Covent Garden Journal (a selection from this paper published in Murphy's edition)	1752
†	Examples of the Interposition of Providence in the Detection and Punishment of Murder; with an Introduction and Conclusion	1752
†	A Proposal for making an effectual Provision for the Poor. . . . . By Mr. Fielding. Dedicated to the Right Hon. Henry Pelham	1753
†	A clear State of the Case of Elizabeth Canning . . .	1753
	The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon. By the late Henry Fielding. With Fragment of a Comment on Lord Bolingbroke's Essays	1755
	The Fathers; or, the Good-natured Man: a Comedy . . (First acted, 1778.)	1779

With regard to Fielding's great novel, a few bibliographical notes are appended. The first edition, as already stated (see page 250), was published by Millar in six volumes 12mo., printed in a good clear type. The most noticeable feature in this edition is a page of *errata*, embracing only five volumes, most of which are not merely corrections of unintentional errors which had crept into the text during its progress through the press, but alterations by the author. For example:—the contents of Book III. profess to describe what took place from the time when the hero arrived at the age of fourteen till he attained that of *seventeen;* but the author, having fixed Sophia's age at the same period, saw the propriety of altering the

of Tom Jones to *nineteen*, remembering, in all probability, the wise counsel of Shakspere's ducal lover in "Twelfth Night:"—

> "Let still the woman take
> An elder than herself; so wears she to him,
> So sways she level in her husband's heart.
> For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,
> Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,
> More longing, wavering, sooner lost and won,
> Than women's are."

With respect to the foreign translations of "Tom Jones," in addition to the observations already made, the following particulars have been communicated by a friend:—

"The Polish translation of 'Tom Jones' in the library of the British Museum is far from either a close or a good one. All the introductory chapters to the different books are mercilessly omitted, which is perhaps of itself enough to show the bad taste of the translator.[1] Again, in a sort of preface to the fourth volume, there is a short 'advertisement' on the object and tendency of the novel, in which the reader is considerately informed that in Tom Jones the author intends to delineate a young man of good heart, but impetuous passions, &c. &c. This 'advertisement,' however, is not from the pen of the translator, Franciszek Zablocki, who, in the preface, states that to compose anything so excellent was beyond his powers, and who was perhaps indebted for it to his patron, Prince Czartoryski, to whom he dedicates the translation, as having been made at his suggestion. The book does not appear to have had much success. Bentkowski, in his 'Historya Literatury Polskiey' (vol. i. p. 464), says that what professes to be a second edition, published at Breslau, in 1804, is in reality the same, with merely fresh title-pages, as the edition which is in possession of the Museum, in four duodecimo volumes, with the date of Warsaw, 1793.

"The Polish 'Tom Jones' was purchased for the British Museum library at the time when a project was entertained of procuring the whole set of foreign translations of some of our most distinguished authors, such as Shakspere, Milton, &c., and in the case of very voluminous writers, the whole set of translations of some one of their most conspicuous productions. It was intended, for instance, to get all of 'Tom Jones,' 'The Vicar of Wakefield,' 'The Antiquary,' and 'The Pickwick Papers.' It was thought that such a collection would furnish an unusually interesting means of comparing the powers and

(1) Dr. Beattie also remarks, that "a certain French author, to render his translation of 'Tom Jones' more acceptable to his countrymen, and to clear it of what he foolishly calls English phlegm, has greatly abridged that incomparable performance, and, in my opinion, expunged some of the finest passages.

copiousness of the different languages of Europe—some of them at very different stages of their progress—and that it would also supply very good materials for the history of the progress of English literature abroad. The execution of the idea was brought to a stand-still by the general decrease in the resources of the library, but I now hope it will be resumed at some not very remote period. It had already been carried far enough to place on the Museum shelves an array of translations of Shakspere into Swedish, Polish, Hungarian, Italian, Russian, Frisian, German, &c., which will supply more than one new page to future bibliographers.

"To return to 'Tom Jones:'—Sopikov, in his 'Russian Bibliography' (in five volumes, published at St. Petersburg, in 1813—16), mentions translations of many of the works of Fielding, but not one of them direct from the original—all either from French or German. The 'Tom Jones' by Kharlamov is from the French. An edition of it, in four volumes, with plates, was published at St. Petersburg, in 1770—71; a second at Moscow, in 1787. There is no other translation mentioned in the subsequent catalogues of Smirdin and Olkhin. This is somewhat surprising, as the Russians are remarkably fond of English novels. I see by a new number of one of their periodicals ('The Otechestvennuiya Zapiski' for June, 1855), that in the midst of the desperate struggle before Sebastopol, the public of St. Petersburg was being amused with translations, given at full length in that magazine, of Lever's 'Dodd Family Abroad,' and Ainsworth's 'Flitch of Dunmow.'

"The Germans, as might be supposed, are rich in translations of 'Tom Jones,' but they do not seem to have been so early in the field as might have been anticipated. Hirsching, in 1795 ('Historisch-literarisches Handbuch, vol. ii. p. 218), speaks of one that had appeared about thirty years before, which is probably the same as that of which Heinsius mentions an edition at Hamburg, in 1771. An entirely new one, from the pen of Professor Schmit, was issued at Nuremberg, in 1780. The merits of both appear to have been very scanty, and they were completely superseded by that of J. J. Bode (6 vols., Leipzig, 1786—88), which was for a length of time the standard version. A new one, by Lüdemann, formed part of Brockhaus's 'Bibliothek classischer Romane,' about 1825; and another, by Diezmann, of the 'Bibliothek der älteren Romandichter Englands,' about 1840. It is worth remarking that 'Tom Jones' has been reprinted at least three times in English in Germany: at Dresden, in 1773; at Basel, in 1791; and at Marburg, in 1814—24. The last of the three, in five volumes, has 'critical and explanatory notes, and grammatical observations, by Karl F. C. Wagner.'

"The catalogue of the Upsal Library mentions a Swedish translation of 'Tom Jones,' published at Westeras, in 1765. It must be very

little known, for it is found neither in Hammarsköld's list of foreign novels translated into Swedish, nor in Lénström's. No Danish translation appears to exist. A Dutch one, in three volumes, published at Amsterdam, is mentioned in Arrenberg's revision of Abkoude's 'Naamregister van Nederduitsche Boeken,' but by some mischance he does not specify the date. The edition is described as the second, and it must of course have been issued before 1773, the date of Arrenberg's publication.

"There is no mention of any Italian translation in the different biographies of Fielding, which I have looked at in various Italian cyclopædias and biographical dictionaries. The library of the British Museum possesses one in Spanish. It is in four volumes, published at Madrid, in 1796. The translator is Don Ignacio de Ordejon, who informs us, in the preface, that he took it from the French of M. Laplace. He also gives in the preface a short account of the author, in which we are told, among other things, 'that although living in an irreligious country and age, he was much attached to religion, whose interests were always sacred in his eyes.'"

In conclusion, it may be stated that, in English, two of Fielding's novels ("Joseph Andrews" and "Amelia") have been illustrated by the graphic and genial pencil of George Cruikshank, in Roscoe's "Novelist's Library."

381

INDEX.

ADAMS, Parson, character of, 155; original of, 156; compared with the Vicar of Wakefield, 156, *n.*; letters of, in The True Patriot, 208, 211.
Addison, Joseph, introduced in Fielding's Journey from this World to the Next, 187; established *The* Freeholder in 1715, 205.
Allen, Ralph, 227, 252, 292, 370.
Allworthy, character of, 195, 252, 370, *n.*
Amelia, Fielding's novel of, 290—301.
Amherst, Nicholas, fate and character of, 129.
Andrews, Joseph. *See* JOSEPH ANDREWS.
———, Miss Sarah, Fielding's attachment to, 67.
Arbuthnot, Dr., satirises Italian singers, 51, *n.*
Argyle, John, Duke of, 56.
Aristophanes, projected translation of, by Fielding and Young, 157.
Arnall, a paid scribe of the Walpole government, 92, *n.*
Aston, Tony, speech of, against the Licensing Act, 55, *n.*
Authors, Case of, by Ralph, 113.
Author's Farce, dramatic satire, by Fielding, 21, 54.
Authorship in 1730, 27.
BALMERINO, Lord, 213, *n.*, 215.
Banks, John, his Earl of Essex ridiculed in Tom Thumb, 38.
Barnabas, Parson, disputes with Adams, in Joseph Andrews, 161.
Barnard, Sir John, 55, *n.*
Bartholomew Fair, Fielding and Hyppesley's booth at, 50.
Bath, the resort of barristers of Western Circuit, 183, *n.*
——, projected journey to, by Fielding, 328.
——, Mrs. S. Fielding a resident at, 371.
Bedford, John, Duke of, 251, *n.*
Beggar's Opera, production and popularity of, 17.
——————, sequel to the, 93, *n.*
Berkeley, Bishop, Treatise on Tar-water, 332.
Blair, Hugh, his criticism on Fielding, 355, *n.*
Blandy, Miss, 317.
Boheme, Anthony (the actor), 72, *n.*
Bolingbroke, Henry St. John, first Viscount, 359.
Bolton, Duchess of (the original Polly Peachum), 17.
Booth (in Amelia), his description of country life, &c., 77.
Bow Street, Fielding presides at, 239.
————— officers, 240.
Boyse, Samuel, his poem of the Deity, 125; his abject poverty and miserable fate, 126.
Burnet, Mr. Justice, anecdote of, 331.
Byrom, John, his epilogue to Hurlothrumbo, 22; account of that piece, 23, *n.*
Byron, Lord, affected by the ballad of Hardyknute, 134, *n.*; opinion of Tom Jones, 256.
CADIÈRE, Catherine, case of, 46.
Cambridge, Richard Owen, 280.
Camden, Earl of. *See* PRATT.
Canning, Elizabeth, case of, 320—326.
Capital punishments, 245.
Carey, Henry, 36.
Causidicade The, 197, 227.
Cave, Edward, 126, 169, 191.
Celia, the poetical name of Miss Cradock, 69.
Cervantes, Fielding's early admiration of, 69; anecdote of, 85; imitated in Joseph Andrews, 155.
Chamberlain, Lord, jurisdiction of, before the Licensing Act, 93.
Champion, The, Fielding's paper of, 109—136.
Charke, Mrs. (daughter of Colley Cibber), a performer in The Historical Register, &c., 87.
Charles I., tragedy of, by Havard, 99; character of, by Lord Chesterfield, 99, *n.*
Chatham, Earl of. *See* PITT.
Chesterfield, Philip Earl of, 16, 61; speech on the Licensing Act, 97—104, 99, *n.*, 104, *n.*
Chrononhotonthologos, burlesque, by Carey, 36.
Chrysipus, a paper on the, by Fielding, 185.
Churchill, Charles, 32, 53.
Cibber, Colley, 9; Fielding's early intimacy with, 14; character of, 15, 64; satirised in Pasquin and in Historical Register, under the name of Ground-Ivy, 89; his version of King John, 89, *n.*; improvements of Shakspere, 91; attack upon Fielding in his Apology, 120; mock-trial of, by Fielding, 121; ridiculed in Joseph Andrews, 160; anecdote of, 179.
———, Theophilus, satirised under the name of Pistol in Historical Register, 86, *n.*; imitates Fielding's Great Mogul's Company, 107; satirised in The Champion, 121.
———, Mrs., dispute with Mrs. Clive as to the part of Polly Peachum, 86, *n.*
Clive, Mrs., 49, 53, 167.
Cock, the auctioneer, 87.
Cœlia: or, the Perjured Lover, prologue to, by Fielding, 58, *n.*
Coffee-house Politician, comedy by Fielding, 32.
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, comparison of Fielding and Richardson by, 162; remarks on the plot of Tom Jones, 257; and on the morality of that novel, 261.
Compromise of 1742, 129.
Congreve, William, imitated by Fielding, 11, 12.
Conversation, essay on, 183.
Covent Garden in 1730—35, description of, 44, *n.*
————— Tragedy, burlesque by Fielding, 44.
————— Theatre, erection of, 52.
————— Journal, 303—311.
Coverley, Sir Roger de, 161.

Cradock, Charlotte, Fielding's first wife, 69.
Craftsman, a sermon of Henley's from the, 26, *n.*
————, Amherst's connection with the, 129, *n.*
Crisis, the, a sermon ascribed to Fielding, 145.
Crowle, the barrister, anecdotes of, 150, *n.*
Culloden, battle of, 212.
Cumberland, Duke of, pursues the rebels from Derby, 209; his severity to them, 213, *n.*
Cuzzoni, the singer, 51.
DAVID SIMPLE, preface to, by Fielding, 196—200.
Davies, Tom, his remarks on Lillo, 131.
Davy, Serjeant, anecdotes of, 139; early life, 140, *n.*; speech of, in the case of Elizabeth Canning, 327, *n.*
Dawson, James, execution of, 214.
Debauchee; or, the Jesuit Caught, comedy of the, 45.
Deborah; or, a Wife for You All, afterpiece by Fielding, 49.
Deity, the, poem by Boyse, 125.
Demosthenes, first Olynthiac of, translated by Fielding, 185.
Denbigh, Earls of, 2, 3.
Desmond, Earl of, 3.
Dodington, George Bubb, afterwards Lord Melcombe, 144; his character by Chesterfield, 145.
Don Quixote in England, comedy of, 7, 59.
Drake, Nathaniel, account of The Champion by, 111; opinion of that periodical, 117.
Drury Lane Theatre deserted by the actors, 52.
Dryden, John, his Conquest of Granada, &c., ridiculed in Tom Thumb, 37.
Dunciad, portrait of Orator Henley from the, 26, *n.*
EALING, Fielding at, 332.
East Stour, Fielding's residence at, 72, 73, *n.*
Edwards, Mr., of Turrick, his criticism on Fielding's Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon, 339, *n.*
Elmerick (tragedy by Lillo), production of, 132.
Erskine, James, speech on the multiplication of playhouses, 1734—35, 65, *n.*
———, Thomas Lord, 209, *n.*
Eton, Fielding's schoolfellows at, 4.
Eurydice, a farce, by Fielding, 105.
——— Hissed.
FARQUHAR, George, 10, 14, *n.*
Fashion, 205.
Fatal Curiosity, tragedy by Lillo, 131.
Fathers, the, comedy by Fielding, 171, 362.
Faustina, the singer, 51.
Feilding. *See* FIELDING.
Fenton, Miss. *See* BOLTON, DUCHESS OF.
Fielding family, 1—3.
————, Lieutenant-general, 7; his death, 150.
————, Henry. Principal events of his life:—
His birth (1707), 3.
Produces his first comedy (1728), 10.
First marriage and country life (1735), 67.
Becomes manager of the Great Mogul's Company (1736), 80.
Fielding admitted a student of the Middle Temple (1737), 108.
Contributes to The Champion (1739), 111.
Called to the Bar, and joins the Western Circuit (1740), 137.
Publication of Joseph Andrews (1742), 151.
Produces a play for Garrick (1743), 168.
Publishes his Miscellanies—containing the Journey from this World to the Next, and the History of Jonathan Wild (1743), 181.
Loses his first wife (1743), 193.
Publishes The True Patriot (1745), 205.
Second Marriage (1746?), 216.
Publishes The Jacobite Journal (1747), 221.
Appointed a justice of the peace for Middlesex, &c. (1748), 231.
Publication of Tom Jones (1749), 250.
Elected Chairman of the Middlesex Quarter-Sessions (1749), 268.
Serious illness (1749), 281.
Publishes Amelia (1751), 290.
———— The Covent Garden Journal (1752), 302.
Last efforts in the public service (1753), 329.
Departure for Lisbon (1754), 334.
Death and burial (1754), 349.
————, Sir John, 273; his correspondence with Garrick respecting the c[illegible]d of The Fathers, 368; career as a magistrate, &c., 372.
————, Sarah, publishes David Simple, 196; her life and character, 371.
————, William, 371.
Fish and Fishmongers, Fielding's remarks on, 345.
Fleetwood, the manager of Drury Lane, 171.
Foote, Samuel, his performances at the Haymarket, 108, 269; anecdotes of, 343, 344.
Footmen, London, in 1735, 62—64.
Fordhook, Fielding's house at, 334.
Forster, John, comparison of the Vicar of Wakefield and Parson Adams by, 156, *n.*
Fox, Henry, 5.
Francis, Mrs., Fielding's sketch of, 337.
Frederick, Prince of Wales, character of by Lord Hervey, 204.
Frost of 1739—40, 115.
GAMESTER (tragedy by Moore), production of, 280.
Gaming, vice of, 270, 280, 328.
Garrick, David, epitaph on Havard, the comedian, 99, *n.*; performs in The Mock Doctor, 169; early intimacy with Fielding, 171; performs in The Wedding Day, 173; his parsimony, 175; Quin and Cibber's opinion of, 179; his Hamlet described in Tom Jones, 263—265; epigram on Sir John Hill, 304; ode on the death of Mr. Pelham, 359; superintends the production of The Fathers, 363; prologue to that comedy, 364; letter to Sir John Fielding, 368.
Genest, Rev. John (of Bath), author of Some Account of the English Stage, 168, *n.*

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