English; we hear, but cannot see the shock; its terrors are increased by the cloudy veil in which it is involved. The wind freshens; the smoke rolls away; the armies gradually appear; the chiefs, distinguished by their ensigns, now rush forward, now retire; one moment sink, the next, recover; each is seen; each is distinguished. We look for the hero; we perceive him in the thickest of the fight; he disappears; the battle thickens round him. A wounded knight is borne slowly from the field: it is Marmion: he is carried to the hill, and in his last moments is indebted to the charitable assistance of the injured Clara. Suddenly, the noise of the fray which had subsided for a moment, revives; and Marmion, forgetting his wounds, exhausts his dying breath in an exclamation worthy of a soldier.

The war, that for a space *did* fail
Now trebly thundering, swell'd the gale,
  And, "Stanley," was the cry:
A light on Marmion's visage spread,
  And fir'd his glazing eye:
With dying hand, above his head,
He wav'd the fragment of his blade,
  And shouted—"victory.
Charge, Chester, charge—on, Stanley on,"
Were the last words of Marmion.

Night separates the combatants, and discovers to the Scotch, who still faintly maintain the field, the discomfiture of their host, and the loss of their king. The poem concludes, as may be expected, by the marriage of Wilton and Clara.

To quote all the beautiful passages would be to copy nearly the whole canto. To omit any would be injustice to all. We cannot however pass over the following, not solely on account of its intrinsic merit, but because among many reflections interspersed through the work, which contribute very much to clog and impede the narrative, this is the only one which is free from this fault.

O woman! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade,
By the light quivering aspen made;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!—
Scarce were the piteous accents said,
When with the baron's casque the maid,
  To the nigh streamlet ran;
Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears;
The plaintive voice alone she hears,
  Sees but the dying man.

Such is the faint outline of this poem. In the narrow limits to which we are confined, it is impossible to do it complete justice. We can neither dwell on its beauties, nor point out its defects: nor is it necessary to enlarge on either; both are of that striking kind which must arrest our notice. The beauties are often of the brightest, the sublimest nature: the faults are chiefly those of haste, or over-confidence. The want of arrangement and perspicuity in the plot, the careless style of composition, the prosaic measures, the vulgar expressions, the false rhimes, the grammatical errors which too often occur, might easily have been avoided. Had he followed the example of the great master of Latin poetry; had his cooler judgment corrected the fervour of his imagination, we should have looked forward to the time, when posterity would place his name among the number of those, whose writings are handed down from age to age, through admiring generations, a record of themselves and their country, when themselves and their country have ceased to exist.

ANCIENT LITERATURE.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

SIR,

WITH pleasure observing that your prospectus has proposed admission to classical dissertations, I submit to the inspection of you and your revising committee, the following essay, impartially wishing it whatever fate it merits. I cannot express the pleasure I derive from making the smallest contribution to so high a depart-

ment of your work, and beg leave to assure you, that as often as time, and as far as abilities allow, I shall always be proud of a similar honour. Its object is to notice some of the principal beauties in Homer's interview between Hector and Andromache, book vi. line 369; and also to introduce such examples from other illustrious authors as prove a consonance of sentiment.

I am, &c.

LECTOR.

"Still in our ears Andromache complains,
And still in sight the fate of Troy remains;
Still Ajax fights, still Hector's dragged along,
Such strange enchantment dwells in Homer's song,
Whose birth could more than one poor realm adorn,
For all the world is proud that he was born."

ALCÆUS.

HOMER, from his general majesty of style, the exceedingly great advantage to which he brings forward his characters, the various use to which he adapts the flexibility of the Greek language, his strong tide of sentiment, and smooth flow of versification, may be justly denominated the prince of heroic poetry. Among all his other excellent passages, the episode at present under consideration is seen to stand highly eminent. The tender emotions felt on the part of Andromache; and the gentle sympathy, but invincible manhood of Hector, are valid proofs of his critical power of characterizing, and accurate knowledge of human nature.

Hector, the son of Priam by Hecuba, on account of his superior valour, was chosen leader of the Trojans against the Greeks. His strength also, and his size, as would appear from the epithet μεγας so frequently applied to him, and the εγχος εχ' ενδεκαπηχυ, did not fall short of his heroic magnanimity. He married Andromache, daughter of Eetion king of Thebes, who herself was bold and of tall stature, which Juvenal, describing a lady's mode of dressing for an interview with her gallant, seems to glance at:

"Tot premit ordinibus, tot adhuc compagibus altum
Aedificat caput: Andromachen a fronte videbis."

The first place in which our hero is brought conspicuously forward, is in the v. book of the Iliad, line 467, where he receives a high compliment from Mars, in the form of Acamas, who upbraids the supineness of the Trojans with regard to Æneas, saying, "A hero lies, whom we respect equal even to the god-like Hector." In some subsequent lines he appears to diffuse his own martial ardour through the Trojan ranks with much effect, when roused by the reprimand of Sarpedon, a reprimand indeed which reflects much lustre on the character of that gallant Lycian. In line 590, he re-appears, painted in the strongest colours, flying to meet Menelaus and Antilochus, attended by Mars and his terror-clad daughter Bellona. From him the bold Diomede himself turns with dismay, as a traveller turns from the impassable torrent which irresistibly hurries all before it to the vast ocean. Here Menesthes and Anchialus fall by his mighty hand; and in line 680, he comes to the assistance of the Lycians, clothed in all the horrors of destruction: he passes by the wounded Sarpedon, seemingly deaf to his affecting cries, but impelled by the ardent desire of Grecian slaughter: the darts of death, he scatters with incalculable profuseness, slaying Teuthras, Orestes, and others. In the vi. book, line 102, he rushes with much vehemence into the thickest of the fight, recals the courage of the Trojans, and succeeds in the repulse of the enemy: he delivers to his men the most animating exhortations to battle, and goes to instruct the council and wives in the city to offer prayers and sacrifices, to the gods for their success. When he arrives at the Scæan gate, the females' anxiety for the fate of their relations, is extremely natural. Among the rest, his mother accosts him in the most tender manner; but he answers her in a speech which evinces much self-denial and piety. He enters the palace of Paris, and rouses him to a sense of duty, by upbraiding him with kindling a flame to which he was unwilling to lend his support; is addressed by his sister Helen in terms of penitence for her crime, and the difficulties in which she had involved him; but impatient of delay, expresses much anxiety to see his beloved wife and family, ignorant

if he shall ever again return from the field of slaughter.

" For Hector in his blaze of wrath subscribes
To tender objects."

To his own house he hastens; but there finds not the fair object of his quest, whose mental uneasiness had led her to the top of Ilion, thence to view the field of her husband's glory, but dreaded danger.

Says Fingal to Cuchullin, of his wife, " See Bragela leaning on a rock: her tender eye is in tears, and the winds lift her long hair from her heaving breast."

He inquires, and is informed whither she had gone. With hasty steps he returns in search of her, who was bound to his heart, not only by the nuptial chain, but also by her *fidelity* and *virtue;* which our author does not fail to express by the word αμυμονα. They were indeed alike endeared to each other: she to him by her chastity, he to her by his courage.

" He hath a lady, wiser, fairer, truer,
Than ever Greek did compass in his arms."

Lo! he meets her. Let the heart feel, for words cannot express what follows. Yes, the scene was conceived, and expressed by Homer, in terms which alone would be sufficient to place him on the highest pinnacle of fame, and immortalize his poetic talents. She comes running to meet him, accompanied by her nurse, with his dear infant in her arms, *like to a beautiful star.* How expressive of the beauty and unspotted innocence of the child; and how well calculated, from the sublimity of the simile, to inspire a high idea of the object! As an instance of stars being emblematic of purity, perhaps might be adduced the words of Othello, when about to take the life of his wife: " Let me not name it to you, ye chaste stars." &c.

On Astyanax he smiles, in whom were centered his highest hopes, and all the strong affections, which the mother so abundantly shared. He is overwhelmed with joy, and stands, ιδων εις παιδα, gazing upon his son, in a state of silent incapability. Andromache meantime issues the mingled tear of joy for his approach, and dread of his departure.

....." Lachrymæque decoræ,
Gratior & pulchro veniens in corpore virtus."

She hangs upon his hand, studies what words will be most availing, and with difficulty utters them. Surely no form of address could more readily insinuate its way to the human breast than hers: she knows the greatness of his soul; commences by paying a compliment to his courage, and warns him that this very courage will end his life.

" Cry, Trojans, cry; lend me ten thousand eyes,
And I will fill them with prophetic tears."

She then touches the string of his parental and conjugal feelings. She brings to his mind her desolate state. She has no father; no mother; no friends; but in him she finds a substitute for all: thus by risking his own life, will he put to second death all her relations. Nothing could exceed the power of the sentence,

Εμοι, δ' κε κεφαλον ερη,
Σευ σφαξματουσιν χθονα δυμεναι.*

to express the depth of her misery after his death. Then the sun of joy will never dart his beams on her forsaken head; but the dark clouds of grief will continually involve her....she will hurry to the tomb for relief.

Whether it is natural for her, when under the influence of such keen sorrow, to detail the *manner* of her relations' death, is, with much diffidence, questioned by the writer. Surely the force of the piece would have been better collected without that unnecessary intermission of passion, which appears from line 415 to 428. But so trifling an objection, even if admitted, would be but an inconsiderable speck on a surface of such abundant beauty. She most pathetically entreats him to remain in the tower; not to avoid death, as fearing it on his own account; but lest he should leave her a miserable widow, and his boy a helpless orphan. Language how well suited to melt the heart of the generous warrior! But alas! it is unavailing, and the failure is

*" Oh! grant me gods, e'er Hector meets his doom,
All I can ask of heaven, an early tomb."
Pope.

ready to draw tears from the eye of the sensible reader. On this subject, the pathetic words of Hector's sister, Cassandra, by the immortal Shakespeare, are worthy of being quoted: they are indeed alike fruitless in causing his stay:

" O farewell dear Hector!
Look how thou diest; look how thine eyes turn pale!
Look how thy wounds do bleed at many vents!
Hark, how Troy roars; how Hecuba cries out;
How poor Andromache shrills her dolour forth!
Behold distraction, frenzy, and amazement,
Like witless antics, one another meet,
And all cry, Hector, Hector's dead. O! Hector!"

For a passage of import somewhat similar, see Virgil, Æneid iv, line 314, the words of Dido, to Æneas: " Mene fugis?" &c. There is however this difference: Andromache is a wife, Dido only a lover, consequently has no posterity to whom her care can be extended; yet she is represented as loving Æneas even to madness, using both prayers and threats to cause his stay; but he too perseveres with inflexibility, in consequence of which Dido puts an end to her own existence.

(To be concluded in our next.)

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