

CHARACTERISTICS
OF THE
GENIUS AND WRITINGS

OF
L. E. L.

WITH
ILLUSTRATIONS FROM HER WORKS,
AND FROM
PERSONAL RECOLLECTION;

BY
S. S.
AUTHOR OF "THE HEBREW CONVERTS,"
&c.

" In Her shone Genius, in its high revealing !
In Her too smiled a Woman's gentler feeling ! "

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It is perhaps necessary to state, that the outline and much of the First Part of the following ANALYSIS of *L. E. L.'s* WORKS were written, some time since, in preparation for a volume, of which the completed Essays were intended to form a portion.

Little did the Writer then anticipate that this tribute of sincere admiration would be offered to the memory of the dead. As a simple wild-flower garland from her own England, from one who knew and loved her well, the hand of friendship would place it on the lonely and far-off grave of the gifted and lamented *L. E. L.*

PART 'I.



POETICAL WORKS.

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PART I.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE present age seems to be characterized partly by a superficial, partly by a calculating, spirit. Hence the prevalence of dogmatic, but incorrect judgment, and of low-toned estimates. Prejudice usurps the place of impartial examination ; while mere hearsay is often adduced as evidence for opinion. Great evils must necessarily be the result of such a state of things,—evils which spread themselves more or less through every department of the social system.

We have now only to do with one province,—that of the literary life. It is impossible not to see that the spirit of the age has intruded within the pale of literature ; and while it has sometimes defied the intellectual spirit to open combat, at others it has tried to gain its own ends by insinuation, by imperceptibly pervading with its cold and withering influences the genial atmosphere of bright thoughts and warm emotions. In the one case it has attacked the genius of literature ; in the other the supporters of that genius : with the latter it may sometimes be successful ; with the former, never.

From these partial successes originates the difference between literary fame and general opinion. An individual signalizes himself or herself as a son or

daughter of Genius, and immediately every member of that one glorious family recognizes and acknowledges the relationship. Yet frequently the very title to rank, as partaker of an intellectual birthright, is made by the law of the unthinking multitude a deed of separation from the privileges and immunities of general society. And why this strange decision? Because they whose decision it is, are subjects of the superficial spirit of the age, which leaves them unacquainted with all of which it appoints them judges. Because, either from a dislike of trouble, or inability to pursue the inquiry, these judges never deviate from their own beaten right line to observe how genius acts and is acted upon,—how it is influenced, and what effects it produces on society. Hence the mistaken opinions concerning literary characters one is often compelled to hear from those who, it is to be feared, know little of what they affirm; and of literary works from those who, it is also to be feared, are not competent to decide on their merits. It is indeed strange with what decision people set their seal of condemnation on volumes beyond whose title-pages they have scarcely looked.

If persons, guided by candour, would find fault only with what they had thoroughly examined, perfectly understood, and yet with what their judgment and taste could not consistently approve, their opinion would deserve respect, and commend itself to the good sense, forbearance and gratitude of the party most concerned. Our former censure refers

only to the wrong spirit and unworthy motives of depreciation, which operate like the indolence and fear of the Hebrew spies inducing an evil report of Canaan, while all the time the land was an exceeding fruitful land, flowing with milk and honey.

Although these remarks may seem severe, their truth will be attested by all who have marked through good and ill report the career of some distinguished literary characters. The higher the elevation to which talent raises its possessor, the more distinguished is the mark for the arrows of ill-nature. The brighter the sunshine of genius and fame, the deeper will be the shadows cast by suspicion, envy, depreciation, malice, and all uncharitableness.

Thus is a literary life too often made one of bitter endurance or intense suffering: the cold—the careless world seeks for no object beyond its own amusement, and will not hesitate to turn against an author weapons decked even with the fine gold and precious gems gathered from his own intellectual treasury. Emotions, too, the deepest and sweetest ever breathed from the heart's lyre, are frequently called forth only to be again suppressed by the world's reckless hand. They are valued as the "*sons étouffées*" of the harp, merely for the additional effect they may impart to some brilliant composition.*

* See Note at end of Introduction, p. 12.

L. E. L. has attained an elevation in the literary world to which genius alone can entitle an individual; and yet are her works generally appreciated according to their merits? In the high places of intellect, indeed, her name is dear as a household word, and the radiance of fame encircles her brow. What hand among the gifted tribe would refuse to add a flower to her wreath of renown? What voice among all the children of song would be silent in her praise? But, speak of L. E. L. and her poetry in general society, and a want of appreciation is perceptible. Her name, indeed, has become so identified with the literature of the day, that not to know anything of it is scarcely possible. At the same time who, from general opinion, would give her credit for the characteristics of a philosophical mind, and for its intellectual results; for the discursive observation, the profound reflection, the accurate analysis, the correct judgment of the high-toned intellect, united with the feeling and fancy generally considered the chief requisites for an imaginative writer? Yet by these combined agencies, and nothing less, have L. E. L.'s mental riches been accumulated from the broad paths of observation, from the hidden mines of thought, from the ocean-depths of the heart; and then wrought by her genius into the creations of intellectual beauty and worth which live in the "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn," throughout her pages of the soul's own poetry.

Let it not be supposed, that, in the following remarks, the writer presumes to discover or attach any new merit to Miss Landon's genius. This would be indeed an attempt to

" Gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
And throw a perfume on the violet."

Her genius has been too long and rightly valued by the few, however unappreciated by the many, to require any additional setting forth. Still it is desirable to seek to counteract the spirit of the age by offering inducements to candid and impartial minds carefully to examine before they judge. This is our simple motive, and our earnest hope. The most devoted of L. E. L.'s friends may be satisfied for her fame to rise or fall according as her works shall bide the test of a right-minded and competent scrutiny by well-qualified judges; for it is vain to expect the admiration of the blind, though they were led through all the beauties and sublimities of natural scenery;—vain to hope that the deaf will be charmed, though amid the outpourings of the sweetest harmonies!

Note, p. 9.—Extract from Ethel Churchill.

“NOTHING astonishes me more,” observes L. E. L., “than the envy which attends literary fame, and the unkindly depreciation which waits upon the writer. Of every species of fame, it is the most ideal and apart; it would seem to interfere with no one. It is bought by a life of labour, generally also of seclusion and privation. It asks its honour only from all that is most touching and elevated in humanity. What is the reward that it craves? To lighten many a solitary hour, and to spiritualize a world that were else too material. What is the requital that the Athenians of the earth give to those who have struggled through the stormy night and the dark water for their applause? Both reproach and scorn. If the author have—and why should he be exempt from?—the faults of his kind, with what greedy readiness are they seized upon and exaggerated! How ready is the sneer against his weakness or his error! What hours of feverish misery have been passed, what bitter tears have been shed, over the unjust censure and personal sarcasm!

“The imaginative feel such wrong far beyond what those of a less sensitive temperament can dream. The very essence of a poetical mind is irritable, passionate, and yet tender, susceptible, and keenly alive to that opinion which is the element of its existence. These may be faults, but faults by which themselves suffer most.”—*Ethel Churchill*, vol. i. p. 309.

Conversational Remarks on the Literary Character.

THOSE who knew L. E. L. in the sweet intimacy of social life will remember, with us, that, whenever any remark chanced to strike the chord of personal feeling, she would expatiate with mournful eloquence on the trials with which a literary life is fraught for woman. “I have not courage,” she observes, in one of her letters on the same subject, “to look to the future in such a case: the noble aspirations, the gifted mind, the warm heart,

are so many daggers set with precious stones to a woman. God bless you, and keep them from turning upon yourself!"

Touchingly beautiful were the contrasts she drew between the ideal and actual of a poet's existence; between the lofty thoughts and proud resolves and enchanting hopes of the gifted mind in solitude, and the weariness, the vexation and disappointment which often attend the public career of the children of Genius. During the moods which prompted such remarks, who, while gazing on her countenance, where the lights of genius and the shadows of life fitfully chased each other, —who could help acknowledging that,

" If glorious be the gifted poet's lot,"

amid the dreams of solitude, yet, when brought into collision with the ruder elements of society, that lot must be often

" Painful more than glorious ?"

Such were the eloquent sentiments of one who well knew literary life; of one whose own experience may be cited as illustrative of our introductory remarks. Surely it will be acknowledged there is great disparity between the literary fame of this gifted writer and the popular estimation of her works!

CHARACTERISTICS OF POETICAL GENIUS.

“CRITICISE the works, analyze the talents of L. E. L. ! Truly you have chosen a hopeless task !” some pseudo-utilitarian may exclaim. Anatomize the dust of a butterfly’s wing—decompose the morning dew-drops sparkling on the opening flower—fetter and analyze the lightning’s transitory flash,—bring these and similar objects to the test of induction, the crucible of experiment, and then you may try the power of analysis upon L. E. L.’s poetry.

Are you admiring that plumage, delicate as the vesture of some fairy-land bird ? How exquisitely articulated is each feather, and how beautiful the arrangement of the whole ! that is the dust of the butterfly’s wing, each particle of which, you perceive, is a bright particular feather. Do you observe that glorious sun-beam glassing itself in the mirror of the falling shower, thereby painting on the clouds the many-coloured rainbow, which, though frail it appears to you, cannot be produced without two of Nature’s grandest elements—light and water ? That glance of the lightning’s eye from beneath the dark lid of the thunder-cloud, transient though it was, passing as a child’s thought, could not have flashed forth without the presence of electricity,—that pervading principle, without which, constituted as you are, you could neither live, move, nor have your being.

Thus the manifestations of the Creative Spirit, and the operations of His laws in the material world, are no less wonderful and minute than the results are beautiful and complete ; so likewise, in the universe of mind and the world of poetry, brilliant

effects require for their production the spontaneous impulses of genius, their first cause, together with the combined and often recondite workings of all the agencies which constitute the intellectual being.

This fact will be evident, if we go, in the first instance, to the very root of the matter, and inquire what are the requisites for an imaginative writer—a term often used in a depreciating sense. By none, however, who thus use it, can the nature of the mind and its faculties be at all understood; for imagination is not an inferior mental power. By its aid are carried on some of the noblest intellectual processes, while it also brings into exercise many of the mind's highest capabilities; it pre-supposes abstraction,—that power which enables the mind to separate from each other objects and qualities; a vivid fancy, to blend them again in new and more striking forms; a keen susceptibility to all sublime and beautiful influences; a refined taste, and a correct judgment to regulate and direct in forming right combinations of ideas. By every imaginative writer these important mental elements must be possessed in a greater or less degree; proportionate to that degree will be, of course, his own grade in the ranks of literature. Hence, therefore, any disparagement of what is termed the imaginative class of minds can proceed only from ignorance.

If we turn from the imaginative mind to the effects which it may originate,—to its works of art,—we shall find a similar want of appreciation, resulting also from ignorance. How few persons, as they gaze on a fine painting, while, perhaps, they may admire the colouring, be pleased with the figures, and interested in the subject, ever dream of the powers and efforts that must have been put in requisition ere that picture could be completed! The science of the

philosopher to develop the laws of light and shade, with the principles of perspective, and to adapt the several parts to the whole composition; the skill of the anatomist to give with due precision the relative proportions, and harmonize the complete figure; the technical knowledge of the artist, his cultivated eye and his practised hand, together with a large share of judgment and feeling, to give life and expression to his production;—these all must have gathered around that canvas, tracing out line by line forms and objects, bringing forth shade by shade effects of beauty and loveliness, and then lighting up the whole with a rich sunburst of genius.

Or, to take another illustration. How little do we think generally of the wondrous art of musical combinations! We listen, perchance, with hushed delight to a sublime composition of some master-spirit.* We close our eyes, and Fancy places us on a lofty mountain; the mists of chaos envelop us, and darkness is upon the face of the deep; but, ere long, the serene tones of conscious Power breathe through that elemental gloom and confusion, "Let there be light!" and at once the clouds are rent, the mists are dispersed; we stand amid a shower of sunshine, which sparkles over God's creation—for—there is light!

Soon again we walk in Paradise, and hear, softly swelling from the heights of heavenly distance, the choral song of the sons of the morning, blending its triumphal notes with our first parents' grateful hymn of adoration.

Such power has music, and yet how few think of what is required for its creations! Brilliant are its effects, complicated also are its causes, and

* We take, for example, Haydn's "Creation "

noble is its origin! While, as a science, it is founded on that part of natural philosophy which, by mathematical deductions from constant phenomena, elucidates the properties of sounds, those sounds, which *its philosophy* distinguishes, music, as *an art*, combines in such a manner as to gratify our senses while it captivates our imagination. And then, how numberless are the technicalities of this art! what endless combinations of notes, what adjustment of tones, what adaptation of concords and discords, what varied modulations of harmony, enter into every noble composition!

We have adduced these two illustrations to show, that if, for the arts which appeal so directly to the senses as music and painting, there is so little general appreciation of what goes to make up the productions of those arts, we must not be surprised if a yet more disparaging feeling be manifested towards the purely intellectual sources of enjoyment which it is the poet's especial province to create.

Note.—L. E. L.'s Appreciation of Genius and the Fine Arts.

MANY people have expressed surprise that a gifted mind like Miss Landon's should not have taken more pleasure in the Fine Arts; and have been at a loss to reconcile her love of poetry with her apparent indifference to music and painting. That she did not care for scientific music nor for elaborate pictures, merely as music and as paintings, was certainly true; but that she was utterly indifferent to the effects produced by music and painting, was not correct. Those who knew her were often witnesses of the influence of music on her mind; for in the midst, perhaps, of an interesting conversation, a few notes of melody floating to her ear from an adjoin-

ing room would cause her to start up, utter an exclamation of deep emotion, and then diverge from the previous topic into some discussion "most musical and sweet."

Her own idea and feeling with regard to music were precisely those which she has expressed in one of her prose works: "We would liken music to Aladdin's lamp,—worthless in itself; not so for the spirits which obey its call. We love it for the buried hopes, the garnered memories, the tender feelings it can summon with a touch."

As for painting, it was impossible that its combinations should not be duly appreciated by one whose own taste was exquisitely picturesque, using that term in its artistic rather than in its sometimes more romantic application. How did pictures ever seem to speak to her soul! how would she seize on some interesting characteristic in the painting or engraving before her, and inspire it with new life, till that pictured scene spread before you in bright association with some touching history or spirit-stirring poem! L. E. L.'s appreciation of painting, like that of music, was intellectual rather than mechanical,—belonging to the combinations rather than to the details; she loved the poetical effects and suggestive influences of the Arts, although caring not for their mere technicalities.

While poetical genius shone as the central sun of Miss Landon's character, in the correct judgment, the refined taste and delicate feeling emanating from this source were found the elements of that true and kindly appreciation which, like the due proportion of light for paintings, not only attests its own high origin, but confers additional charms on the objects upon which it rests. L. E. L.'s faculty of appreciation was peculiarly keensighted and deep-toned. It was a source of great enjoyment to herself, and often gave sincere pleasure to others. No merit, beauty or excellence in a work ever escaped her notice. Very often her remarks, as she read or recited any passage, would throw a new light upon what previously might have been to her hearers a hidden meaning; or enhance the value of what had been even frequently read and admired. As a precious stone fallen among less valuable things might be passed by, without

observation, did it not glitter beneath a sunbeam's touch ; so gems of intellectual worth and beauty, that had been perhaps carelessly overlooked, shone forth as newly-discovered treasures beneath the brilliant light of L. E. L.'s appreciation.

To her favourable opinions of the works of her contemporaries, Miss Landon ever gave free and generous expression. Writing to a young author, she observes : " Criticism never yet benefited a really original mind ; such a mind macadamizes its own road." Jealousy seemed utterly opposed to her nature. In the petty rivalries which sometimes disturb the outer-court worshippers of the Muses, she ever disdained to take part, except in vindication of a friend. Her disposition was peculiarly disinterested, kindly and generous ; she never paused to think of her own interest when others required any assistance which she could bestow.

PECULIARITIES OF L. E. L.'s WORKS.

BEFORE passing on to a direct examination of L. E. L.'s writings, there are two or three objections which are so frequently stated against their peculiarities, that we cannot refrain from attempting, at least, to refute their validity.

The first of these objections applies to the *manner* or rather *style* of her poetry. "It is too flowery and frivolous, consisting in a heap of words prettily strung together with very little meaning, and entitled to no higher rank than is implied in the sarcastic phrase of 'Young Ladies' Verses.'" To some minds the rainbow may seem no more than bright colours; they think not of its causes, its purpose, nor why its magnificent archway bridges the earth and sky with a glory caught from the fountain of life and light.

We admit that there is a rainbow-colouring, a richness of style thrown over the poetry of L. E. L., which at first sight diverts the mind from the subject-matter, herein differing from many other writings, whose excellencies are rather obscured by clouds than darkened by excess of their own light. With many of our poets their gems are set in lead; their pictures framed in painted wood; their flowers and fruits buried among weeds and rubbish; so that the gems and pictures and flowers when they are discovered appear brighter from the relief of contrast. Not thus is it with L. E. L. The setting of her jewels is all so brilliant and finely wrought, that no wonder if the gem be often passed over for the broader surface of the glittering metal in which it is shrined; and her pictures are hung in such gorgeous

frames, that the eye at first is prone to rest upon them ; and her flowers and fruit are so embowered in leaves, that care is required lest we pass unheedingly the choicest productions.

A redundant style (if it be an error) leans to the side of excellence, when embodying, as in this instance, the creations of thought and imagination. It is a living witness of the presence, not an evidence of the absence, of genius ; while the very obscurity which it occasions is pleasing as the soft summer mist stealing over a landscape, and shrouding in its half-transparent veil, woven of sun and dews, the field and forest, hill and dale, stream and flower, half-hiding, indeed, their individualities, yet withal so lovely ; that we cannot persuade ourselves to wish it away. Is not the poet's language likewise beautiful as a forest tree's foliage ; and does it not receive light and clearness from the day-beam of genius, which doth ever make

“Bright sunshine in the shady place?”

Such a kind of diction, being poetical, is consistent with the writer's character as a poet. It may not possess, indeed, the consolidation of algebraical statements, or the conciseness of mathematical propositions : the attempt to give it these characteristics would destroy its nature. For while Philosophy piles its massive bridges of reasoning across the deep streams of thought, Poetry gracefully throws over them its suspended chain-work, which combines equal safety with greater elegance.

It does not follow, therefore, that truth and right reason must be absent when the manner of their exposition differs from that employed in the abstract sciences, to which truth is supposed essentially to belong. A geometrical diagram itself may

be equally correct in all its parts, though drawn in golden lines on tablets of silver as if sketched in the roughest manner with the rudest materials. The demonstration, too, need be no less conclusive, though proved amid the elegancies of a drawing-room, than if worked out in the recesses of a cloister. So truths are not less true when decorated with the graces of poetry than when contemplated in the abstract; while in the former case they have the advantage of being more agreeable to the mental eye.

This reminds us of a second objection, a plea against the *subject-matter* of L. E. L.'s poetry, viz., that her poems are always founded upon or connected with the passion of love. Admitting for a moment the truth of this objection, what does it prove but the writer's acquaintance with human nature, as developed in the sentiments of the mind and the feelings of the heart? Philosophy will tell us that love is the excitement of one class of our susceptibilities,—one order of our moral emotions.

Admitting that the delineation of such emotion occupies the chief part of our author's works, we cannot see why this circumstance should be adduced as a ground of objection against those writings. Such emotion is confessedly an inherent characteristic of human nature; a writer, therefore, who professes to make human nature an object of study, and yet considers as unworthy of attention one of its principal manifestations, cannot deserve the name of a philosopher. Now, the very essence of L. E. L.'s poetry is human nature. Intellect and feeling, the head and heart, are her leading topics. Genius and study, knowledge and taste, all centre here; while nature and art, society and conventional life are made to subserve the grand design of illustrat-

ing the development of human character, with all its diversified phases incident from adventitious circumstances. And if, in pursuance of this design, she recurs frequently to what may be termed, philosophically, the ruling emotion of human nature, let her own eloquent words aid our defence: "For a woman whose influence and whose sphere must be in the affections, what subject can be more fitting than one which it is her peculiar province to refine, spiritualize and exalt? I have always sought to paint it self-denying, devoted, and making an almost religion of its truth; and, I must add, such as I would wish to draw her, woman, actuated by an attachment as intense as it is true, as pure as it is deep, is not only more admirable as a heroine, but also in actual life, than one whose idea of love is that of light amusement or vain mortification."*

It is indeed well, that the highest and purest forms which love ever assumes should be often portrayed; since upon the characters of those in whose hearts it sets up its throne it is necessarily so influential. "Even into philosophy is carried the deeper truth of the heart. If there be one emotion that stirs all that is truly generous and unselfish within us, that awakens all the knowledge of our nature, and that makes us believe in that heaven of which it bears the likeness, it is love—love, spiritual, devoted and eternal; love, that softens the shadows of the valley of death, to welcome us after to its own and immortal home." †

Truly does right affection awaken the deepest susceptibilities, and the noblest efforts of which our nature is capable. The feelings and conduct to

* Preface to "The Venetian Bracelet."

† Ethel Churchill, vol. i.

which love gives rise are far more self-denying, and involve a much greater sacrifice of personal interest and comfort, than mere justice or benevolence ever induce.

“The exertions of the affections of love and friendship,” says a judicious philosopher, “are directed to promoting the interest or comfort of the objects of our regard; preserving, defending or advancing their reputation, treating their feelings with peculiar tenderness, and their failings with peculiar indulgence, receiving their opinions with peculiar favour, and anxiously endeavouring to improve their intellectual and moral condition. In exercising simple love and friendship, we rejoice in the advantage and happiness of the objects, though they should be accomplished by others and be separate from our own.” *

Another and yet more eloquent philosopher observes, in replying to some objections against love, “If true love be selfishness, it must be allowed at least to be a selfishness which, *for the sake of others*, can often prefer penury to wealth; which can hang for many sleepless nights, unwearied, and unconscious of any personal fear, over the bed of contagion; which can enter the dungeon, a voluntary prisoner, without the power even of giving any other comfort than that of the mere presence of an object beloved; or fling itself before the dagger which would pierce another breast, and rejoice in receiving the stroke. It is the selfishness which thinks not of itself,—the selfishness of all that is generous and heroic in man.” †

If testimonies like these, from high authorities in the intellectual empire, be admitted and undenied, why

* Abercrombie on the Moral Feelings.

† Dr. T. Brown's Lectures on the Philosophy of Mind.

should our poet's pages be condemned when she makes this love her theme—when she tells us, with equal truth and beauty, how

“ affection can resign
Its own best happiness for one dear sake ;

And doth prefer another to itself :
Unchangeable and generous, what like Love
Can melt away the dross of worldliness,—
Can elevate, refine, and make the heart
Of that pure gold which is the fitting shrine
For fire, as sacred as e'er came from heaven ?”

History of the Lyre.

—when she represents love as

“ Made of every fine emotion,
Of generous impulses and noble thoughts ;—
It looketh to the stars, and dreams of heaven ;
It nestles 'mid the flowers, and sweetens earth :
Love is aspiring, yet is humble too ;
It doth exalt another o'er itself,
With sweet heart-homage which delights to raise
Its object ?”

—or, again, when we are eloquently assured that

“ There is in life no blessing like affection ;
It soothes, it hallows, elevates, subdues,
And bringeth down to earth its native heaven :
It sits beside the cradle patient hours,
Whose sole contentment is to watch and love :
It bendeth o'er the death-bed, and conceals
Its own despair with words of faith and hope :
Life has nought else that may supply its place ;
Void is ambition, cold is vanity,
And wealth an empty glitter without love ?”

Ethel Churchill, vol. i.

Besides, surely that must be a worthy subject of consideration which is not only a source of direct individual influence, but also of general benefit and happiness! It is the affection on which all our other emotions may be said indirectly to depend,

and of which the moral relations, while so powerful in their effects on character and conduct, claim also universal empire. It is an affection whose right use is not more productive of virtue and happiness than its neglect and abuse tend to vice and misery. By the refining and humanizing—by the brightening and soothing—by the generous and expanding influences which affection diffuses over the world, it holds its place among the component elements of the happiness and good of the social system. “It is affection,” observes the philosopher already quoted, “which in some of its forms, if I may use so bold a phrase, animates even life itself, that without it would be scarcely worthy of the name.”*

If then the wise and good thus turn reverentially and admiringly to contemplate the light of love and the ennobling blessings of that light; if its influences be almost universal as those of the sun, and in themselves as pure, however occasionally darkened and distorted by the *media* through which they may pass, is it reasonable to condemn a gifted writer for shedding over her pages, or even for there concentrating, as in a crystal focus, the unsullied rays of pure and exalted affection?

After all, we cannot agree with the assertion that there is nothing but “love” in Miss Landon’s poetry. How varied are the subjects which her versatile genius has delineated! Has it not fathomed the depths of the poet’s soul, and laid bare to our

* Dr. T. Brown. He gives a most striking illustration of this assertion. “How pathetically, and almost sublimely, does one of the saints of the Romish Church express the importance of affection to happiness, who, when speaking of the great enemy of mankind whose situation might seem to present so many other conceptions of misery, singles out this one circumstance, and says, ‘How sad is the state of that being condemned to love nothing!’”

gaze its glorious intellectual operations and their results,—its creations and aspirings,—its hopes and fears,—not only with poetic feeling, but with philosophic accuracy? Has not that genius led us into the interior of conventional life, and showed to us the vanity, the heartlessness, the petty strifes, the mean jealousies of the circles whose idols are outward appearances? Has it not borne us on its rainbow-coloured wings from scene to scene, from subject to subject, of nature and art, giving to each a grace and interest it knew not before; and, from apparently the most intractable sources, winning rich gems of historical association and permanent truth, being always and every where constant to the grand philosophical principle of generalization, and to the writer's favourite topic of human character? It needs only a reference to her works to prove that there is scarcely one production of her genius that might not be cited as an illustration of her extensive knowledge and diversified talents.

The last objection which we shall mention relates to the *effect* of L. E. L.'s poetry: this, it is said, is invariably melancholy.

Her works may indeed be read almost as a commentary on the words of the wise man, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" Intellect, with its lofty aspirations, but comparatively feeble effects; genius, with its burning energies, surrounded by antagonist elements; emotion, pouring out its treasures on the unthankful and unreturning sands; earthly hope, ever ending in disappointment or satiety; worldly pleasure, wearing out its votary with unsatisfying dissipation; life, in short, affording no rest to the soul,—no aliment suited to the cravings of an immortal spirit. These are truths which ought to be familiarized to the mind, however the worldly or selfish

may shrink from their declaration; and these are the truths which are so often eloquently exposed in the poems of L. E. L. If they induce melancholy, at all events that must be a wise melancholy whose tendency is thoughtfulness.

The young and inexperienced, too, might learn wisdom in the midst of enjoyment (a combination somewhat rare on earth), would they but read these poems in a right spirit. Are they expecting fame, as with the might of a Creator's voice, to embody happiness? Time will soon set his seal to the mournful truth of the poet's experience,—

“ Oh dream of fame, what hast thou been to me,
But the destroyer of life's calm content !”

Or is it in pleasure they are seeking an enduring portion? Let the sea of worldly enjoyment encircle them with sparkling tide; and as each billow bursts into foam at their touch and sinks back into the ocean of forgetfulness, let them listen to every receding wave, whose deep-toned murmuring seems to say of happiness—“ It is not in me,” while blending its chorus with the poet's truthful music,—

“ Mortal, nor pleasure, nor wealth nor power
Are more than the toys of a passing hour ;
Earth's flowers bear the foul taint of earth,
Lassitude, sorrow, are their's by their birth :
One only pleasure will last—to fulfil
With some shadow of good the Holy One's will ;
The only steadfast hope to us given,
Is the one which looks in its trust to heaven.”

Golden Violet.

Far be it from us to sanction a spirit of complaint, or a disposition to morbid misanthropy, which looks on nature and society with the jaundiced eye of discontent or disappointment, and which speaks of all

things in the querulous tone of thankless repining. Truth, however, is truth, whether pleasant or unpalatable; and we challenge any one who has made the actual experiment of seeking for happiness amid worldly pleasures, to deny either the correctness of the outline, or of the deep filling up shadows of L. E. L.'s faithful delineations. Such a votary, if he allowed himself to be sincere, must acknowledge the truth of the representation which tells him that

“ One word may read his heart,
And that one word is utter weariness.”

Melancholy in sooth are such representations, in the sense in which most people use the term, as a synonyme for any sentiment or feeling which bears the impress of right reflection,—of serious, yet serene emotion. When such persons are compelled to a moral introversion, to a turning from the glittering exterior of earthly things, to fast-fading impressions on their own minds,—from the gay dissonance of outward but hollow mirth to the still solemn voice of their own hearts, echoing “All is vanity!”—then do they accuse of needless melancholy the cause that has been instrumental in arresting for a moment their thoughtful attention. Well will it be if at length they acknowledge its salutary influence; for is not such a monition calculated to teach the important lesson that happiness is not of the earth, earthly, but can only be realized in the pursuit of objects which bear the image of the heavenly? By implication at least it must be so, since a vivid representation of the hollowness and deception of earthly vanities, founded on the conviction and experience of their instability and insufficiency as a foundation whereon to rear the superstructure of abiding hope, must tend

to induce inquiry after some supreme good,—some all-sufficient object of felicity,—whose glory it should be man's chief aim to promote, and whose favour it will be found better than life to have secured. What is the end of all else, the poet tells us by the sad and warning voice of "Experience :"—

" My very heart is filled with tears ! I seem
As I were struggling under some dark dream,
Which roughly bore me down life's troubled stream.

The past weighs heavily upon my soul,
A tyrant mastering me with stern control,
The present has no rest—the future has no goal ;

For what can be again, but what has been ?
Soon the young leaf forgets its early green,
And shadows with our sunshine intervene.

Quenched is the spirit's morning wing of fire,
We calculate where once we could aspire,
And the high hope sets in some low desire.

* * * * *

Alas ! our kindest feelings are the root
Of all experience's most bitter fruit,
They waste the life whose charm they constitute.

At length they harden, and we feel no more
All that we felt so bitterly before,
But with the softness is the sweetness o'er.

Of things we once enjoyed how few remain !
Youth's flowers are flung behind us, and in vain
We would stoop down to gather them again.

Why do we think of this? bind the red wreath,
Float down time's waters to the viol's breath,
Wot not what those cold waters hide beneath.

We cannot do this : from the sparkling brink
Drops the glad rose, and the bright waters shrink ;
While in the midst of mirth we pause to think.

And if we think we sadden—thought and grief
 Are vowed companions:—while we turn the leaf
 It darkens, for the brilliant is the brief.

* * * * *

Our better nature pineth,—let it be!
 Thou human soul,—*earth is no home for thee;*
Thy starry rest is in eternity! ”

ANALYSIS OF L. E. L.'s POETRY.

MISS LANDON's longer poems consist of the volumes entitled “The Improvisatrice,” “the Troubadour,” “The Golden Violet,” “The Venetian Bracelet,” and “The Vow of the Peacock.” To these may be added, as longer than her general miscellaneous pieces, “The Zenana,” contained in the “Drawing-room Scrap Book for 1834,” “Erinna,” in the volume of “The Golden Violet,” “The History of the Lyre,” and the dramatic sketch of “The Ancestors,” in the volume of “The Venetian Bracelet;” together with a small volume of Sacred Poetry, “The Easter Offering.” Many pages also are bright with the beauty of her minor poems; minor only on account of their comparative shortness.

We do not intend now to analyze each of these poems separately, or to compare their respective merits, but to give the result of our own analysis of the whole; and by some illustrative quotations to establish the truth of an estimate which assigns to L. E. L. the essential characteristics of genius.

The component elements of poetical genius are many and various. Its very soul is the power of invention,—a power resulting from that combination of the pre-existing faculties of imagination, memory

and judgment, assisted by the laws of suggestion,—by which are originated the beings of the mind. This attribute is developed in the works before us, primarily, in the conception of their subjects, but not less essentially in their mode of treatment,—in the forming and tracing out of scenes, circumstances and characters, and then in their keeping,—the consistency that is observed in their individual and relative adaptations. Diversity of subjects, richness of descriptions, variety of characters, with their appropriate qualities and sentiments, and a beauty of imagery, may be adduced as illustrative of the exercise of invention.

The facility with which so wide a diversity of subjects is successfully treated by L. E. L. evinces great vigour as well as versatility of imagination. Not only is this apparent in themes chosen by the poet's own sweet will, but in those involuntary tasks imposed on her in her literary vocation of illustrating pictures, and (if we may here use the phrase) of "working to order." There is no constraint, no laboured effort apparent; but so completely does genius overcome obstacles which to ordinary minds would seem insurmountable, that, in looking over the volumes of the "Drawing-room Scrap Book," for instance, one would suppose that the pictures had been subsequently introduced to illustrate the poems, instead of the poems being arbitrarily required at the convenience or will of the publisher. Especially is this the case with the Indian tale of "The Zenana." It is a long poem, written apparently without constraint; and yet the various accompanying pictures are all introduced into the body of the poem with so much tact, that one might fancy an artist had been employed to depict the most striking passages after they were written.

What heterogeneous topics have been illustrated by L. E. L. ! what uninteresting and barren subjects have been made to pass before her fancy ! and in that transit how have they gained in interest ! Ay, subjects apparently as unpromising as the unchiselled marble in the studio of a Chantrey, as the newly-stretched canvas on the easel of a Fielding, or as intractable as the single string on the instrument of a Paganini ;—yet soon like these to be animated with a living spirit ! The genius that kindles the marble into the glorious shapes, that transforms the canvas into isles of fairy beauty and summer magnificence, and that wakes the soul of music sleeping in the string into thrilling power, also infuses into the poet's tasks the principle of a beauteous vitality.

Swift has defined "Sight" as "the art of seeing things invisible ;" there is much truth and philosophy in this seeming paradox, while it admits of special application to the mental vision of genius. In scenes and objects that to common eyes appear just what they are, and nothing beyond—common minds wondering what can be said of them—the gifted intellect discerns a charm they cannot see, and hears a voice they cannot hear. These objects the while acquire a grace and interest from the light of talent, like Memnon's statue imbibing harmony from the morning sunbeams. Thus, from ruined tower and olden castle, from Indian temple or Roman palace, from English landscape or foreign scenery, from portrait, or pictured group,—in a word, from the simplest to the most elaborate subject, there rise tones of music fraught with tender and sublime feeling, with moral or intellectual truth, with historical or otherwise interesting associations. We are

thus compelled to acknowledge that it is the poet's privilege to shed a charm

"Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
Binding all things with beauty ;"

—we are made to feel the truth of L. E. L.'s own beautiful language, and its exquisite classical allusions :—

"It is the minstrel's part to fling
Around the present's common cope
The solemn hues on memory's wing
The spiritual light of hope.

The scene that to a careless eye
Seems nothing but itself to be,
Hath charmed earth and haunted sky
Soon as a minstrel's eye can see.

* * * *
* * * *

Without such lovely light the while,
Dark, silent, strange, all things would be,
And Ithaca were but an isle
Unknown upon a nameless sea ;
But now a thousand years come back,
The gift of one immortal line,—
Each with new splendour on its track
As stars upon the midnight shine.

* * * *
* * * *

I ask of every pictured scene,
What human hearts have beaten there,—
What sorrow on their soil has been,—
What hope has blighted human care ?"

Drawing-room Scrap Book, 1837.

Yes ; and the lessons deduced from every pictured scene are not merely adventitious ; they appeal to the general principles of human nature. This is one of the most prominent characteristics of L. E. L.'s

writings. Her prefatory remark to "The Zenana," will equally apply to all her poems: "While I have adhered as accurately as possible to character, costume and scenery, it is on the expression of universal feelings that I rely for sympathy."

Miss Landon's works, as tales, will probably disappoint the reader; for in almost every instance the narrative is subordinate to the sentiments; it is like a silver thread, almost hidden by the rich pearls strung thereon. This is true also in a great measure of her prose works. Her style is very episodic; hence the beautiful lyrics interspersing her longer poems, and the truthful and brilliant isolated passages so often introduced among her tales; so that what is defective in the story, as such, is compensated by development of character, by richness of description, by the portraits and pictures that surround us with living beauty, by the thoughts that are bright with immortal truth.

That most essential and remarkable characteristic of genius, the powerful life-giving imagination by which, at will, the poet identifies himself with his creations, no writer, perhaps, has more displayed than L. E. L. Whatever circumstance or scene she wishes to evoke is called up before her mind and that of her reader; not by a mere laboured description, but by a vivid representation, as if she were an actual spectator, and wished you to become one also. This is the case throughout her works. Take up "The Improvisatrice," and, in its opening burst of genuine poetic inspiration, you can scarcely withhold the conviction that the poet is speaking of herself:—

"I am the daughter of that land,
Where the poet's lip and the painter's hand
Are most divine; where the earth and sky
Are picture both and poetry."

You see before you the young enthusiast, destined to be her country's future Corinne, and ere long to be crowned at the capitol, now, amid the radiant dreams of solitude, with the great and glorious dower which genius gives,—

“ Pouring her full and burning heart
In song, or on the canvas making
Her charms of beauty visible ;”

and you gaze on her in the excitement of emerging from her solitude,—

“ When first upon the gallery's wall
Picture of hers is placed, to share
Wonder and praise from each one there ;”

while your spirit listens to her future songs, as to the audible voice of a living presence.

Turn now to the tales of old romance and glorious chivalry :—

“ Lo ! the past yields up an hour
To the painter's magic power ;
Mastered into life and light,
Breathing, beautiful and bright,
One bright hour in glory dyed
Of the old chivalric pride,
With war-music round them poured,
With the sunshine on the sword,
Girdled by their southern clime,
Stand a group of olden time.”

Would you look on the warriors of that chivalric day? Come then with Count Leoni, to see his band—

“ With helm on head and spear in hand,
Proud as he marks the sunbeams shine
Over the long embattled line,
And says, exulting, “ They are mine !”
No chief were he who could have eyed
Such soldiers without chieftain's pride :
Plumed, and full armed, from head to heel,
They sat like statues carved in steel ;
He of that body was the soul
To lead, to curb, inspire, control.”

The poet of chivalry himself might be justly proud of this spirited description, and even more so of the following battle-scenes:—

“ The ranks are set, the hosts are met,
 The morning sun-beams shine
 O'er tents with dews of night-fall wet,
 O'er the long warrior line.
 By heaven ! it is a glorious thing
 Upon the gallant steed to spring,
 With white plume dancing o'er the crest,
 With spur on heel, and spear in rest,
 And sword impatient of its night ;
 A sun that reddens into light ;—
 To feel the energy of strife ;
 The life that is so much of life ;
 The pulse's quickened beat, the eye
 Whose dark light kindles to defy.

By heaven ! it is a glorious pride
 To lead the stormy battle-tide.
 Ay ! let the crimson banner spread,
 So soon to wear a darker red ;
 Let the proud trumpet wake the air,
 As Victory's sounding wing were there.
 It is in Death's and Danger's hour
 That most existence feels its power !”

Hear you not, in the energy of these noble lines, the spirit-stirring voice of the clarion sounding to the charge?

But, look again, and see the end of the strife:—

“ And is this all?—the flush and glow
 When war's wild waves at morning flow ?
 Ah, no ! night cometh, and she flings
 The weight and darkness of her wings ;
 The tide has ebb'd, the beach is left,
 Of its bright panoply bereft ;
 The glittering waves that caught the sun,
 Their light is past, their course is done :
 The field is fought !—who walketh there ?
 The shadow Victory casts—Despair !

For the proud chief, in shining mail,
Comes the young orphan, mute and pale ;
For the red banner's radiant fold
Some maiden rends her locks of gold ;
For the war-steed, with bit of foam,
The image of a desolate home ;
While, wandering o'er the ghastly plain,
Some mother seeks her child in vain."

Vow of the Peacock, pp. 7. 36. 42. 77-80.

This finely-drawn contrast, with its vivid, picturesque and mournful scenes, cannot need, even for the superficial, any assistance to point out its merits.

Do you wish to visit distant climes, and breathe beneath summer skies?—the magic of our poet will bear you at once far away, and lead you through the glorious land of Italy, as through familiar haunts, spreading before you its chief wonders of art ; or waft you to the gorgeous scenery of the eastern world, and set you amid the "giant temples where fable had its birth ;" or land you on the green isles of the southern seas, where breathe around you balmy gales and spicy odours ; or, when wearied with change, will conduct you home again, and show you

"How much our England doth outweigh the world!"

Wish you for society?—our poet will introduce you to the sons and daughters of Genius, with whom you may enjoy "the feast of reason and the flow of soul;" or will lead you amid the gay throngs of lighted halls ; or, with equal ease, make you feel at home among the green pastures and beside the still waters of domestic life ; while, in each of these varied scenes, may you fancy yourself an actual participator, so completely will you seem surrounded with realities.

Would you come into yet closer contact with the spirit of humanity, and learn more of your fellow-creatures, with their joys and sorrows, than a

general survey will afford? Listën to the earnest and soul-fraught tones of "The Improvisatrice," and the varying minstrelsy of "The Troubadour;" or go to "The Provençal Festival," and hear the songs of the Bards—the competitors for "The Golden Violet,"—as they pour forth many a true and touching strain of the mind's loftiest thoughts,—the heart's deepest emotions. We will not presume to choose for you, where all are beautiful, but leave you to enter on the themes most accordant with your own mood.

Ah! young poet! well may your dreaming eye glisten! your ear hath caught the echo of your own soul's long-treasured aspirations! Know you not the portraiture;—feel you not its truth?—

" Oh! glorious is the gifted poet's lot,
 And touching more than glorious; 'tis to be
 Companion of the heart's least earthly hour;
 The voice of love and sadness, calling forth
 Tears from their silent fountain; 'tis to have
 Share in all nature's loveliness; giving flowers
 A life as sweet, more lasting than their own;
 And catching from green wood and lofty pine
 Language mysterious as musical;
 Making the thoughts, which else had only been
 Like colours on the morning's earliest hour,
 Immortal, and worth immortality;
 Yielding the hero that eternal name
 For which he fought; making the patriot's deed
 A stirring record for long after-time;
 Cherishing tender thoughts, which else had passed
 Away like tears; and saving the loved dead
 From Death's worst part, its deep forgetfulness!"

Golden Violet. Erinna.

" Young poet, if thy dreams have not the hope
 To purify, refine, exalt, subdue,
 To touch the selfish, and to shame the vain
 Out of themselves, by gentle mournfulness;
 Or chords that rouse some aim of enterprise,
 Lofty and pure, and meant for general good;

If thou hast not some power that may direct
 The mind from the mean round of daily life ;
 Waking affections that might else have slept ;
 Or high resolves, though petrified before ;
 Or rousing in that mind a finer sense
 Of inward and external loveliness,
 Making imagination serve as guide
 To all of heaven that yet remains on earth,
 Thine is an useless lute ;—break it, and die !”

Summer Evening's Tale. Venetian Bracelet.

And thou with those strangely mingled gifts of
 woman's clinging home-bound affections, and the
 restless wings of genius ; thou who, perhaps, hast
 made

“Thy heart too like a temple for a home,”

yet whose spirit-music echoes the words,

“ I am a woman, tell me not of fame !
 The eagle's wing may sweep the stormy path,
 And fling back arrows, where the dove would die.
 The lily of the valley—mark how pure
 The snowy blossoms, and how soft a breath
 Is almost hidden by the large dark leaves !
 Not only have those delicate flowers a gift
 Of sweetness and of beauty, but the root—
 A healing power dwells there—fragrant and fair,
 But dwelling still in some beloved shade.
 Is not this woman's emblem? she whose smile
 Should only make the loveliness of home—
 Who seeks support and shelter from man's heart,
 And pays it with affection quiet, deep,
 And in his sickness, sorrow, with an aid,
 He did not deem in aught so fragile dwelt.”

History of the Lyre.

Ay, do thou, fair enthusiast, look on thy prototypes,
 and read thy life's history in the fates of the glorious,
 the intellectual Erinna, of the gentle yet impassioned
 Eulalie.

We might go on forming other classifications and adducing other specimens to illustrate the power of L. E. L.'s imagination, especially in that form of it which philosophers so much value, when its operations correspond with its name, and become an actual imaging forth, or picturing of its intended representations. It is to such manifestation of her genius that Miss Landon is indebted for the prevalent opinion which has attached to herself all the varied modifications of feeling that are to be found in her poems, and which supposes herself to be the chief subject of her writings.

The mental powers requisite for describing any emotions as intellectual creations, are perfectly distinct from the moral susceptibilities which they call into action when received as vital feelings and as governing principles. The same truth is, of course, general in its application; for, unless we admit this obvious fact, what absurd inferences may be deduced from similar premises, what unfounded hypotheses to which reality would refuse its demonstration!

“In considering the author and his works as one, a sufficient distinction is not drawn between the ideal and the real; the last is only given by being passed through the crucible of the first. He does not give the events of his life, but the deductions that have been drawn from events. It is not that he has been placed in the circumstances that he paints, but a quick intuition born of quick feeling, and that power of observation which is the first requisite in a poet, enable him to bestow actual life on his breathing pictures.”*

In conversation L. E. L. would often playfully sketch ideal scenes and situations, filling them with

* Ethel Churchill, vol. ii.

their appropriate accessories, till you suddenly found yourself transported to fantastic regions wild and gorgeous as any which have delighted the readers of the Arabian Tales, or you were introduced to associations correct and tasteful as reality in its most graceful aspects could supply.

In social life Miss Landon's refined and picturesque taste was manifested in detecting the slightest incongruity, and in admiring to the least minutia any arrangements accordant with the laws of beauty.

No illustration need be given of her vivid sketches from imagination ; her works abound with beautiful subjects for pictures, displaying exquisite taste in their skilful grouping, their rich colouring, and the introduction of those most striking points on which an artist delights to dwell.

The same power by which L. E. L. so individualizes her creations makes her likewise appear an actual spectator of scenes and circumstances which she so graphically describes. An Indian lady, after reading "The Zenana," observed to us, "Miss Landon, I suppose, has passed a considerable time in India ; her descriptions are so oriental, that they must have been written either on the spot or from memory." A similar idea might be also applied to her descriptions of Italian and other scenery.

This highest development of the imagination, the throwing itself out of itself, whereby an author, through a kind of intellectual transmigration, identifies himself with the beings of his mind, transforming the ideal into realities, is perhaps of all faculties the least understood, abstractedly, although the most striking in its effects. It was by this power that Shakspeare breathed into his creations a living soul, by virtue of which those creations have reflected on himself their merits, and crowned him not only

as their king, but as a mighty sovereign in the universal empire of mind.

And wherever this power displays itself, there is shadowed forth the spiritual presence and operations of genius ; therefore, since this power is so strikingly evinced in the writings of L. E. L., and since it cannot exist apart from that mental constitution, which, for its superior endowments and capabilities, we denominate genius, it follows that genius must be attributed to L. E. L.

This Genius may be further illustrated by examining the Descriptions and Imagery of its productions.

In attempting to select any specimens of Miss Landon's descriptions, we feel bewildered, where all are so varied and beautiful. We will, however, quote two as illustrating her descriptive powers and her peculiar faculty of associating moral sentiments with natural objects:—

“ The present ! it is but a drop from the sea,
 In the mighty depths of eternity.
 I love it not, it taketh its birth
 Too near to the dull and the common earth ;
 It is worn with our wants and steeped with our cares,
 The dreariest aspect of life it wears ;
 Its griefs are so fresh, its wrongs are so near,
 That its evils of giant shape appear ;
 The curse of the serpent, the sweat of the brow,
 Lie heavy on all things surrounding us now.

The actual ! it is as clay to the soul,
 The working-day portion of life's wondrous whole.
 How much it needeth the light and the air
 To breathe their own being—the beautiful there !
 Like the soil that asks for the rain from the sky,
 And the soft west wind that goes wandering by,
 So the wonderful world within will arise,
 And rejoice in the smile of the summer's soft eyes.

The present, the actual, were they our all,
 Too heavy our burden, too hopeless our thrall ;

But Heaven, that spreadeth o'er all its blue cope,
 Hath given us memory, hath given us hope !
 And redeemeth the lot which the present hath cast,
 By the fame of the future, the dream of the past.

The future ! ah there hath the spirit its home !
 In its distance is written the glorious to come.
 The great ones of earth lived but half for their day,
 The grave was their altar, the far-off their way.
 Step by step hath the mind its high empire won ;
 We live in the sunshine of what it hath done.

* * * * *
 Such music hope brings from the future to still
 Humanity vexed with the presence of ill.

The past ! ah, we owe it a tenderer debt !
 Heaven's own sweetest mercy is not to forget ;
 Its influence softens the present, and flings
 A grace like the ivy, wherever it clings.
 Sad thoughts are its ministers—angels that keep
 Their beauty to hallow the sorrows they weep.
 The wrong, that seemed harsh to our earlier mood,
 By long years with somewhat of love is subdued ;
 The grief that at first had no hope in its gloom,—
 Ah, flowers have at length sprung up over the tomb !
 The heart hath its twilight, which softens the scene,
 While memory recalls where the lovely hath been.
 It bends by the red rose, and thinketh old songs ;
 That leaf to the heart of the lover belongs ;
 It clothes the green tree with the leaves of its spring,
 And brings back the music the lark used to sing.
 But spirits yet dearer attend on the past,
 When alone 'mid the shadows the dim hearth has cast ;
 Then feelings come back that had long lost their tone,
 And echo the music that once was their own.
 Then friends, whose sweet friendship the world could divide,
 Come back with kind greetings, and cling to our side.
 The book which we loved when our young love was strong ;
 An old tree long cherished ; a nursery song ;
 A walk slow and pleasant by field and by wood ;
 The winding 'mid water-plants of that clear flood,
 Where lilies, like water-queens, looked on their glass,
 That stream we so loved in our childhood to pass.
 Oh ! world of sweet phantoms, how precious thou art !
 The past is perpetual youth to the heart.

The past is the poet's,—that world is his own ;
 Thence hath his music its truth and its tone.
 He calls up the shadows of ages long fled,
 And light as life lovely illumines the dead ;
 And the beauty of time, with wild flowers and green,
 Shades and softens the world-worn, the harsh and the mean. ”

Vow of the Peacock, pp. 1-6.

Mary Howitt is deservedly a favourite with many, for her sweet pictures of natural objects ; yet where even in her works can be found aught more exquisitely true to nature than in L. E. L.'s poem, “The Old Times” ? Take one verse,—

“ Ah ! little recked we then of those sick fancies
 To which in after-life the spirit yields ;
 Our world was of the fairies and romances
 With which we wandered o'er the summer fields ;
 Then did we question of the downballs blowing
 To know if some slight wish would come to pass ;
 And if we feared a shower, we sought where growing,
 Some weather-flower, which was our weather-glass
 In the old old times,
 The dear old times. ”

These are not solitary passages ; similar ones abound in her pages equally beautiful, as descriptions of the outward world, and all fraught with suggestions of truth to the inner world of the heart. We would just observe here in passing, that some of the most lovely and touching reminiscences of childhood ever written, are sufficient of themselves to prove that there is no deficiency of natural truth in the productions of this fascinating writer.

It is true that L. E. L. does not so frequently as Mrs. Hemans devote whole poems to studies from nature ; her descriptive passages are rather wrought in as illustrative of subjects immediately associated with the spirit of humanity.

Hence springs up likewise the felicitous Imagery which adorns her poems. Original and varied, this imagery is always in correct taste. Here again is difficulty in selection ; but we will venture to pick up a few gems while hastily passing over this rich mine of poetic thought and feeling. Like precious stones, to judges, they will attest their own value :—

“ The stormy sky with its clouds,—
Like a death-black ocean, where billows lie
Dreaming dark dreams of storm in their sleep,
When the wings of the tempest shall over them sweep.”

“ He wished his lot
Had been cast in that humbler life
Over whose peace the hour of strife
Passes, but, like the storm at sea,
That wakes not earth’s tranquillity.”

“ Flowers, like hopes, that spring and fade,
As only for a mockery made ;
And shadows of the boughs that fall
Like sorrow drooping over all.”

“ There spread
A wide heath covered with thick furze, whose flowers
So bright, are like the pleasures of the world,
Beautiful in the distance ; but once gained,
Little worth, piercing thro’ the thorns which grow
Around them ever.”

“ I can pass days
Stretched in the shade of those old cedar trees,
Watching the sunshine like a blessing fall,
The breeze, like music, wandering o’er the boughs ;
Each tree a natural harp, each different leaf
A different note, blent in one vast thanksgiving.”

Referring to a sun-dial in the garden of her childhood’s home :—

“ Ah! was it omen of life’s after-time
That even then the hours were told in shade ?”

A description of early morning :—

“ The hours of the night were yet cold on the air.”

We are almost ashamed of the injustice of giving so few of the metaphors which sparkle on every page ; but even these will show the beauty of the imagery in itself, and also its relative value as linked with all the deep and pure sympathies of humanity.

This leads us to another characteristic of L. E. L.'s Poetry. Its frequent Philosophical spirit, both of an Intellectual and Moral nature. The first is evidenced in the Manner of treating her subjects. Many passages might be adduced which would illustrate the soundest principles of intellectual and technical criticism, and peculiarly exemplify those primary laws in the philosophy of human nature, association and generalization. In the Subjects themselves is this philosophical spirit yet more developed ; especially in setting forth the powers and susceptibilities of the mind ; most of all, of the Poetical mind. Passages might be selected which would form a history of a POET'S soul, with revealings of his inner life, with manifestations of the spiritual genius that sometimes consecrates the frail shrine of human nature. Passages where the young and eager, and gifted might look on his probable future destiny, might see the vast disproportion between the fond fancies of his early dreams and the sternness of reality ; might behold his lofty hopes, his noble intentions, his high aspirations glittering in the sunlight of his youthful imagination, contrasted with the shadows and darkness gathering in the distance over his exhausted energies. He might foresee the disappointments from the world's neglect or from the cold cautiousness of unappreciating friends, from the malevolence of envious foes, and, above all, from the withholden,

draught of fame, offered at length a vain oblation upon his early grave. To such passages we can only refer as admirably illustrative of the peculiar glories and sorrows of Genius—of the dignified, yet dangerous lot of the Poet. Had we room for citation here, we would select pp. 15. 153. 162. of “The Golden Violet;” pp. 10. 12. of “The Troubadour;” pp. 55. 256. of “The Venetian Bracelet.” Many passages from “The Improvisatrice” and from “Miscellaneous Pieces,” and the entire poems of “Erinna” and “The History of the Lyre.”

Subjects intimately connected with Moral Philosophy have also a home in L. E. L.’s just portraitures of various characters and their appropriate conduct; in her delineations of social life; and especially in the eloquent and truthful sentiments which abound in her papers. Strange it is that an author, whose writings are replete with wisdom and with truth, illustrative of human nature, should ever be considered a frivolous, or at best a fanciful writer! *

* Not long since, in the course of conversation, happening to quote the lines of L. E. L., not less morally true than poetically beautiful,—

“ Alas! we make
A ladder of our thoughts, where angels step,
But sleep ourselves at the foot;—our high resolves
Look down upon our slumbering acts,”—

a friend who was present (a decided enemy, by the by, to what was termed “all such poetry as Miss Landon’s”), exclaimed, “Ah! that is something like poetry; none of your modern versifiers will ever equal the olden poets; I always do so admire Young.” The most effective way of silencing such cavils would be to make a collection of quotations, arranged under different heads, from L. E. L.’s works; thus might be best proved how much of thought, of correct sentiment and true feeling, these works contain.

At present our quotations must be few and brief; yet we trust they will be sufficient to prove the intrinsic excellence of the volumes from which they have been selected. The Pilgrim's Tale, in "The Troubadour," a record of life's experience, is too long for these pages; as also are many other passages we would fain quote. The following lines will read us a true lesson on the heartlessness and selfishness of the world:—

" We judge
Of others but by outward show, and that
Is falser than the actor's studied part.
We dress our words and looks in borrowed robes ;
The mind is as the face, for who goes forth
In public walks without a veil, at least ?
'Tis this constraint makes half life's misery.
'Tis a false rule, we do too much regard
Other's opinions, but neglect their feelings ;
Thrice happy if such order were reversed.
Oh ! why do we make sorrow for ourselves ?"
And not content with the great wretchedness
Which is our native heritage,—those ills
We have no mastery over—sickness, toil,
Death, and the natural grief which comrades death ;
Are not all these enough, that we must add
Mutual and moral torment, and inflict
Ingenious tortures we must first contrive ?"

The following lines contain a fine burst of moral indignation against one of the greatest evils with which the spirit of man can be cursed,—the love of money. The poem itself is in the "Drawing-room Scrap Book," for 1834, and seems to have been called forth by the picture of a lonely burying-ground in India:—

" 'Tis the worst curse on this our social world,
Fortune's perpetual presence ; wealth which now
Is like life's paramount necessity :
For this the household band is broken up,
The hearth made desolate, and Sundered hearts
Left to forget or break. For this the earth

Is covered with a thousand English graves,
 By whose side none remain to weep or pray.
 Alas! we do mistake, and vainly buy
 Our golden idols at too great a price.
 I'd rather share the lowest destiny,
 That dares not look beyond the present day,
 But treads on native ground, breathes native air,
 Than win the wealth of worlds beyond the waves,
 And pine and perish 'neath a foreign sky."

Another poem in the same spirit, yet even more touching in its associations, is "The Factory." We cannot refrain from giving one or two verses:—

" We read of Moloch's sacrifice,
 We sicken at the name,
 And seem to hear the infant cries,—
 And yet we do the same ;

Yea, worse,—'twas but a moment's pain
 The heathen altar gave ;
 But we give years—our idol, Gain,
 Demands a living grave.

How precious is the little one
 Before his mother's sight,
 With bright hair dancing in the sun,
 And eyes of azure light.

* * * * *

" And such should childhood ever be,
 The fairy well ; to bring
 To life's worn, weary memory
 The freshness of its spring.

But here the order is reversed,
 And infancy, like age,
 Knows of existence but its worst,
 One dull and darkened page ;—

Written with tears and stamped with toil,
 Crushed from the earliest hour,
 Weeds darkling on the bitter soil
 That never knew a flower.

Look on yon child, it droops the head,
 Its knees are bowed with pain ;
 It mutters from its wretched bed,
 ' Oh ! let me sleep again !'

Alas ! 'tis time, the mother's eyes
 Turn mournfully away ;
 Alas ! 'tis time, the child must rise,
 And yet it is not day.

* * * * *

" Good God ! to think upon a child
 That has no childish days,
 No careless play, no frolics wild,
 No words of prayer and praise !

Man from the cradle,—'tis too soon
 To earn their daily bread,
 And heap the heat and toil of noon
 Upon an infant's head.

* * * * *

" Oh England ! though thy tribute waves
 Proclaim thee great and free ;
 While those small children pine like slaves,
 There is a curse on thee !"

The "Spirit and the Angel of Death" is equally beautiful and impressive, and contains a lofty lesson on important subjects ; but we must leave it, with many others, to those who shall search for themselves among these rich embodyings of truth and wisdom. The purest and most valuable feelings of our nature are often appealed to. The writer's address to her own dead father, at the conclusion of "The Troubadour," is exquisitely beautiful, but it should be read in its own connection with the sweet thoughts that precede its introduction. We therefore give a few

lines from another poem, fraught with reflections most dear to the heart:—

“ It is a beautiful, a bless'd belief
 That the beloved dead, grown angels, watch
 The dear ones left behind ; and that my prayers
 Are welcome to my mother's ears, as when
 I knelt a lisping infant at her knee ;
 And that her pure and holy spirit now
 Doth intercede at the eternal throne ;
 And thus religion, in its love and hope,
 Unites us still,—the mother and her child !

* * * * *

“ Thy childhood was thrice blessed,
 Thy young mind sanctified, and after life
 Made holy by the memory of the past.
 I knew no mother's cares to teach my lips
 Those prayers that like good angels keep the heart
 From uncurb'd passions that lay waste and curse.”

Ancestress.

Beautiful and graceful as are L. E. L.'s earlier poems, yet within the last four or five years her mind seems to have made an onward and widening progress ; to have grown stronger beneath its own efforts, and to have added wealth, brilliant and precious, to her previous accumulations. The effect has been evinced in the increased vigor, in the higher aim, in the deeper beauty of her productions, wherein are manifested a yet more striking originality of style, a fuller earnestness of tone, a more valuable vein of truthful thought, and a more radiant glow of poetic imagery. Poems crowd upon the memory which we would fain quote in proof of these assertions. How eloquently wise, how truly patriotic are the “ Birthday Verses to the Princess Victoria.” The “ Drawing-room Scrap Books” would of themselves afford

a sufficient study of the great characteristics of genius in their most lovely display. The lines on some of our poets are especially deserving of notice. The poem to Wordsworth is worthy even of his own calm, lofty and truthful philosophy. The stanzas to the memory of Mrs. Hemans are, in their high-souled and noble thoughts, what only a poet could have addressed to another; ay, more, in their deep yet gentle and appreciating feelings, what only a woman could or would have expressed towards a sister spirit.

How much, too, of the Poet's inner life is embodied in the stanzas on visiting Newstead Abbey.

As these poems will verify many of the previous remarks, we give them each entire.

LINES SUGGESTED ON VISITING NEWSTEAD ABBEY.

WHAT makes the Poet? Nothing but to feel
More keenly than the common sense of feeling;
To have the soul attuned to the appeal
Of the dim music thro' all nature stealing.

Ah! Poetry is like love, its own avenger,
Sweet thoughts, fine fancies by its footsteps roam;
It wanders thro' the world a lovely stranger,
To find this weary world is not its home.

Cares, envyings, blame, disturb its bright dominion,
Fretted, it labours of its own unrest;
The wounded dove folds up its drooping pinion,
And pines and fevers on its lonely nest.

Or rather say it is the falcon, scorning
The shaft by which he met his mortal blow;
Stately he rose to meet the golden morning,
Ere noontide came, the gallant bird lay low.

Ah! who may know what gloomy guests unbidden,
Await such spirits in their unstrung hours;
Thoughts by the better nature vainly chidden,
Forcing allegiance to the darker powers.

And who may know how sad and how subdued,
 When with its own o'ertasking, faint and weary,
 The mind sinks down into that gloomy mood,
 To which all future hours seem dark and dreary.

The soul is out of tune—its sweet notes scattered,
 Vexed, irritable, harsh, its power is flown ;
 Like some fine lute, whose higher chords are shattered,
 By forcing too much music from their tone.

But few can pity such a mood as this,
 Because they know it not,—calm is their sadness ;
 Tranquil their joy, they dream not how it is,
 Genius is feverish in its grief and gladness.

It has no quiet, for it could not live
 In the far sunlight of some placid ocean ;
 It asks the warring winds and waves that give
 Need for its strength, and life to its emotion.

And then it suffers bitterly, consuming
 With the fierce struggle which itself hath sought ;
 While fame, the future's mighty world illuming,
 Is never wholly by the present bought.

Fame is a noble vision, fixed for ever ;
 Praise is its mockery ; for one word of praise
 A thousand come, of blame for each endeavour
 That turns the mind's pure light on coming days.

All daily ills beset its daily path,
 Poverty, toil, neglect, dislike, and sorrow ;
 The many visit it with scorn and wrath,
 Its hopes come never nearer than the morrow.

Vainly did he resist, half mirth, half rage,
 The weight with which the world on genius presses ;
 What bitter truths are flung upon his page,
 Truths which the lip denies, the heart confesses.

Life is a fable, with its lesson last,
 Genius too has its fable and its moral ;
 Of all the trees that down their shadows cast,
 Choose you a wreath from any but the laurel.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND.

(The Residence of Wordsworth.)

THE influence of a moral spell
 Is found around this scene,
 Giving new shadows to the dell,
 New verdure to the green.
 With every mountain-top is wrought
 The presence of associate thought,
 A music that has been ;
 Calling that loneliness to life
 With which the inward world is rife.

His home—our English Poet's home—
 Amid these hills is made ;
 Here with the morning hath he come,
 Here with the night delay'd.
 On all things is his memory cast,
 For every place wherein he past,
 Is with his mind arrayed,
 That wandering in a summer bower,
 Asked wisdom of the leaf and flower.

Great Poet, if I dare to throw
 My homage at thy feet ;
 'Tis thankfulness for hours which thou
 Hast made serene and sweet ;
 As wayfarers have incense thrown
 Upon some mighty altar-stone,
 Unworthy, and yet meet,
 The human spirit longs to prove
 The truth of its uplooking love.

Until thy hand unlocked its store,
 What glorious music slept !
 Music that can be hushed no more,
 Was from our knowledge kept.
 But the great mother gave to thee
 The poet's universal key,
 And forth the fountains swept—
 A gushing melody for ever,
 The witness of thy high endeavour.

Rough is the road which we are sent,
 Rough with long toil and pain ;
 And when upon the steep ascent,
 A little way we gain,
 Vexed with our own perpetual care,
 Little we heed what sweet things are
 Around our pathway blent ;
 With anxious steps we hurry on,
 The very sense of pleasure gone.

But thou dost in this feverish dream
 Awake a better mood,
 With voices from the mountain stream,
 With voices from the wood.
 And with their music dost impart
 Their freshness to the world-worn heart,
 Whose fever is subdued
 By memories sweet with other years,
 By gentle hopes and soothing tears.

A solemn creed is thine and high,
 Yet simple as a child,
 Who looketh hopeful to yon sky,
 With eyes yet undefiled
 By all the glitter and the glare,
 This life's deceits and follies wear,
 Exalted and yet mild ;
 Conscious of those diviner powers,
 Brought from a better world than ours.

Thou hast not chosen to rehearse
 The old heroic themes ;
 Thou hast not given to thy verse
 The hour's impassioned dreams.
 Forth flows thy song, as waters flow,
 So bright above, so calm below,
 Wherein the heaven seems
 Eternal as the golden shade,
 The sunshine on the stream hath laid.

The glory which thy spirit hath,
 Is round life's common things,
 And flingeth round our common path,
 As from an angel's wings,

A light that is not of our sphere,
 Yet lovelier for being here ;
 Beneath whose presence springs
 A beauty never marked before,
 Yet, once known, vanishing no more.

How often, with the present sad,
 And weary with the past,
 A seeming respite have we had,
 By but a chance look cast
 Upon some word of thine that made
 The sullenness forsake the shade,
 Till shade itself was past ;
 For hope divine, serene and strong,
 Perpetual lives within thy song.

Eternal as the hills thy name,
 Eternal as thy strain ;
 So long as ministers of Fame,
 Shall LOVE and HOPE remain.
 The crowded city in its streets,
 The valley in its green retreats,
 Alike thy words retain.
 What need hast thou of sculptured stone ?
 Thy temple is thy NAME alone.

Drawing-room Scrap Book, 1838.

Who but a gifted and generous-minded woman could have so touchingly and truly portrayed the life's history of a sister genius, as L. E. L. has done in the following beautiful lines to the justly appreciated memory of—

FELICIA HEMANS.

No more, no more, oh ! never more returning
 Will thy beloved presence gladden earth ;
 No more wilt thou with sad yet anxious yearning
 Cling to those hopes which have no mortal birth.
 Thou art gone from us, and with thee departed,
 How many lovely things have vanished too ;
 Deep thoughts that at thy will to being started,
 And feelings, teaching us our own were true.

Thou hast been round us like a viewless spirit,
 Known only by the music on the air ;
 The leaf or flowers which thou hast named, inherit
 A beauty known but from thy breathing there ;
 For thou didst on them fling thy strong emotion,
 The likeness from itself the fond heart gave ;
 As planets from afar look down on ocean,
 And give their own sweet image to the wave.

And thou didst bring from foreign lands their treasures ;
 As floats thy various melody along,
 We know the softness of Italian measures,
 And the grave cadence of Castilian song.
 A general bond of union is the poet,
 By its immortal verse is language known,
 And for the sake of song do others know it—
 One glorious poet makes the world his own.
 And thou—how far thy gentle sway extended !
 The heart's sweet empire over land and sea ;
 Many a stranger and far flower was blended
 In the soft wreath that glory bound for thee.
 The echoes of the Susquehanna's waters
 Paused in the pine-woods, words of thine to hear ;
 And to the wide Atlantic's younger daughters
 Thy name was lovely, and thy song was dear.

Was not this purchased all too dearly ?—never
 Can fame atone for all that fame hath cost.
 We see the goal, but know not the endeavour,
 Nor what fond hopes have on the way been lost.
 What do we know of the unquiet pillow,
 By the worn cheek and tearful eyelids prest,
 When thoughts chase thoughts, like the tumultuous billow,
 Whose very light and foam reveal unrest ?
 We say the song is sorrowful, but know not
 What may have left that sorrow on the song ;
 However mournful words may be, they show not
 The whole extent of wretchedness and wrong.
 They cannot paint the long sad hours passed only
 In vain regrets o'er what we feel we are.
 Alas ! the kingdom of the lute is lonely—
 Cold is the worship coming from afar.

Yet what is mind in woman but revealing
 In sweet clear light the hidden world below,

By quicker fancies and a keener feeling
 Than those around, the cold and careless know?
 What is to feed such feeling, but to culture
 A soil whence pain will never more depart?
 The fable of Prometheus and the Vulture
 Reveals the poet's and the woman's heart.
 Unkindly are they judged, unkindly treated,
 By careless tongues and by ungenerous words;
 While cruel sneer, and hard reproach repeated,
 Jar the fine music of the spirit's chords.
 Wert thou not weary, thou whose soothing numbers
 Gave other lips the joy thine own had not?
 Didst thou not welcome thankfully thy slumbers
 Which closed around thy mourning human lot?

What on this earth could answer thy requiring,
 For earnest faith—for love the deep and true,
 The beautiful, which was thy soul's desiring,
 But only from thyself its being drew!
 How is the warm and loving heart requited
 In this harsh world, where it awhile must dwell,
 Its best affections wronged, betrayed and slighted—
 Such is the doom of those who love too well.
 Better the weary dove should close its pinion,
 Fold up its golden wings, and be at peace,
 Enter, Oh, Ladye! that serene dominion,
 Where earthly cares and earthly sorrows cease.
 Fame's troubled hour has cleared, and now replying,
 A thousand hearts their music ask of thine.
 Sleep with a light, the lovely and undying,
 Around thy grave—a grave which is a shrine.

Drawing-room Scrap Book, 1838.

Intellectual strength, moral truth, and classical taste are strikingly exemplified in a series of poems lately published in the *New Monthly Magazine*, entitled "Subjects for Pictures;" where from historical or local circumstances, in themselves beautifully described, are also deduced, by the masterly use of the philosophical principle of generalization, sentiments universally applicable in their truth to the characteristics of human nature in all ages. Perhaps

the "Death of Camoëns" is the most interesting and beautiful of these pictures ; but we quote a few lines from the subject of "Alexander on the Banks of the Hyphasis," chiefly as an instance of philosophical deduction of general inferences from individual facts. After a splendid picture of the conqueror weeping as he kept his midnight watch, the poem thus concludes :—

" In those mighty tears o'erflowing
 Found the full heart scope,
 For the bitter overthrowing
 Of its noblest hope.
 So will many weep again ;
 Our aspirings have arisen
 To another world—
 Life is but the spirit's prison,
 Where its wings are furled,
 Stretching to their flight in vain,
 Seeking that eternal home
 Which is in a world to come.

Like earth's proudest conqueror turning
 From his proudest field,
 Is the human heart still yearning
 For what it must yield
 Of dreams unfulfilled, and powers.
 Like the great yet guided ocean
 Is our mortal mind,
 Stirred by many a high emotion,
 Yet subdued, confined.
 Such are shadows of the hours,
 Glorious in the far-off gloom,
 But whose altar is the tomb."

The headings of the chapters in Ethel Churchill, which, with one or two exceptions, were written expressly for that work, are gems of thought and feeling, frequently reminding us, in their richness, power and concentration, of some of the finest passages in the olden dramatists.

We give the following gently satirical lines, as

something different from the general style of former quotations :—

“ Vanity ! guiding power, 'tis thine to rule
Statesman and vestryman—the knave or fool.
The Macedonian crossed Hydaspes' wave,
Fierce as the storm, and gloomy as the grave.
Urged by the thought, what would Athenians say,
When next they gathered on a market-day ?
And the same spirit that induced his toil,
Leads on the cook to stew, to roast, to boil :
Whether the spice be mixed, the flag unfurled,
Each deems his task the glory of the world.”

Who has not experienced the truth of the following remark from the page of experience ?—

“ What mockeries are our most firm resolves !
To will is ours, but not to execute.
We map our future like some unknown coast,
And say, ‘ There is an harbour, here a rock ;
The one we will attain, the other shun ;’
And we do neither. Some chance gale springs up,
And bears us far o'er some unfathomed sea.
Our efforts all are vain ; at length we yield
To winds and waves that laugh at man's control.”

And again :—

“ Ah ! there are memories that will not vanish ;
Thoughts of the past we have no power to banish ;
To show the heart how powerless mere will,
For we may suffer, and yet struggle still.
It is not at our choice that we forget,
That is a power no science teaches yet ;
The heart may be a dark and closed-up tomb,
But memory stands a ghost amid the gloom.”

The next extract embodies in few words the essence of Bishop Butler's argument for a future life :—

“ If I could doubt the heaven in which I hope,
The doubt would vanish, gazing upon life,

And seeing what it needs of peace and rest ;
 Life is but like a journey during night.
 We toil thro' gloomy paths of the unknown ;
 Heavy the footsteps are with pitfalls round ;
 And few and faint the stars that guide our way ;
 But at the last comes morning ; glorious
 Shines forth the light of day, and so will shine
 The heaven which is our future, and our home."

Many thoughts of lofty enterprise and glowing patriotism are embodied in the "Birth-day Tribute to the Princess Victoria." As this fine poem is comparatively little known, we shall quote a few verses, valuable alike for the moral feeling and patriotic interest with which they invest our Country and its Sovereign :—

" 'Twas in a Woman's reign uprose
 That soul of enterprise
 Which since has borne our English flag
 Thro' foreign seas and skies.

* * * *

" And more than glory, or than gold,
 May British merchants say,
 Look on what blessings infinite
 Have followed on our way.

To civilize and to redeem
 Has been our generous toil ;
 To sow the seeds of future good
 In many a thankful soil.

Where'er to dark and pagan lands
 Our path has been decreed ;
 Have we not brought the Christian's hope,
 The Christian's holy creed ?

'Tis from a woman's glorious reign
 Our English isles may date
 The honours of their after-hours,
 The triumphs of their state.

And yet how much remains to do,
 How much is left behind ;
 Young Daughter of a line of kings,
 Much is to thee assigned.

Great changes have been wrought since first
 The Roman legions stood
 Beneath the ancient oaks that formed
 The Druid's mystic wood.

Men crowded round the victim pyre,
 In worship vile as vain ;
 And God's own precious gift of life
 Was flung to him again.

We were the savages, of whom
 We now can only hear ;
 The change has been the mighty work
 Of many a patient year.

The progress of our race is marked,
 Wherever we can turn ;
 No more the gloomy woods extend,
 No more the death-fires burn.

The village rises where once spread
 The inhabitable moor ;
 And Sabbath-bells sweep on the wind
 The music of the poor.

The sun sinks down o'er myriad spires,
 That glisten in the ray ;
 As almost portions of that heaven
 To which they point the way."

How eloquently does the poet speak of the
 monarch's responsibilities :—

" Farewell unto thy childhood and for ever ;
 Youth's careless hours dwell not around a throne ;
 The hallowed purpose and the high endeavour,
 The onward-looking thought must be thine own.

An hour of moral contest is before thee,
 Not the old combat of the shield and spear,
 But to the azure heaven arching o'er thee
 Rises a nobler hope, a loftier fear.

Low in decay lies many an aged error ;
 From dust of mouldering falsehood springeth truth ;
 The past is to the present as a mirror,
 And hope to mankind has eternal youth.

Vast is the charge entrusted by high Heaven—
 Heavy the weight upon that delicate hand ;
 Into thy keeping is the balance given,
 Wherein is weighed the future of our land.

* * * * *
 * * * * *

From glowing Ind to Huron's waters spreading
 Extends the empire that our sword hath won ;
 There have our sails been, peace and knowledge spreading ;
 Upon thy sceptre never sets the sun.

A nobler temple still awaits thy winning,
 'The mind's ethereal war' is in its birth ;
 The cross of Christ is on its way beginning
 Its glorious triumph o'er the darkened earth.

God's blessing be upon thee, Royal Maiden !
 And be thy throne heaven's altar here below,
 With sweet thanksgivings and with honours laden,
 Of moral victories o'er want and woe."

With one short miscellaneous poem we must close our extracts. If it be a mournful one, yet how accordant with the sentiments and feelings of many a mind and heart, which will earnestly respond to its deep tones of regret.

WE MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

WE might have been,—these are but common words,
 And yet they make the sum of life's bewailing ;
 They are the echo of those finer chords
 Whose music life depletes when unavailing.
 We might have been !

We might have been so happy, says the child,
 'Pent in the weary school-room during summer,
 When the green rushes 'mid the marshes wild,
 And rosy fruits attend the radiant comer.
We might have been !

It is the thought that darkens on our youth,
 When first experience—sad experience—teaches
 What fallacies we have believed for truth,
 And what few truths endeavour ever reaches.
We might have been !

Alas, how different from what we are,
 Had we but known the bitter path before us ;
 But feelings, hopes, and fancies left afar,
 What in the wide bleak world can e'er restore us ?
We might have been !

It is the motto of all human things,
 The end of all that waits on mortal seeking ;
 The weary weight upon Hope's flagging wings,
 It is the cry of the worn heart while breaking,
We might have been !

A cold fatality attends on love,
 Too soon or else too late the heart-beat quickens ;
 The star which is our fate springs up above,
 And we but say, while round the vapour thickens,
We might have been !

Life knoweth no like misery ; the rest
 Are single sorrows, but in this are blended
 All sweet emotions that disturb the breast,
 The light that was our loveliest is ended.
We might have been !

Henceforth how much of the full heart must be
 A sealed book, at whose contents we tremble ;
 A still voice mutters 'mid our misery,
 The worse to bear because it must dissemble,
We might have been !

Life is made up of miserable hours,
 And all of which we crave a brief possessing,
 For which we wasted wishes, hopes and powers,
 Comes with some fatal drawback on the blessing.
We might have been !

The future never renders to the past
 The young beliefs entrusted to its keeping;
 Inscribe one sentence—life's first truth and last—
 On the pale marble where our dust is sleeping,
 We might have been !

New Monthly Magazine.

With regard to the mechanism of L. E. L.'s poetry, we need only observe that it is generally delicate and graceful. Her versification is so varied that it seems to change with every changing key-note of thought. There is melody pleasing to the ear, yet modulated in adaptation to the sentiment.

REMARKS ON THE MORAL TENDENCY OF
 L. E. L.'s GENIUS.

BEFORE closing this imperfect sketch, there are two points of view in which we would place L. E. L.'s works, the one regarding those works as a woman's productions, the other marking their tendency.

The spirit of Miss Landon's writings is essentially feminine in all that blends tenderness, delicacy and devotedness of feeling. We have previously considered the frequent introduction of love, and therefore need only further observe, that it is a love which only a woman could depict in its truthfulness, self-denial and disinterestedness. If in any instance it is wrought up to a higher intensity of feeling, of feeling leading to crime, then, too, does womanly propriety, combined with a delicate and correct judgment, manifest all rightful indignation against evil. There is not a more remarkable instance of this than in the striking portraiture of Amenaïde, in "The Venetian Bracelet;" a poem which, though, as a whole, we like the least of L. E. L.'s, is, perhaps, one of the most valuable as a study, for its concen-

tration of power and emotion, for its working out of character, and fathoming the depths of passion.

Amenaïde is the chief subject of this poem, and a fearful character does she present. In the first pure confiding of her affection, when, as a peasant girl, she pledged herself to return the love of her affianced husband, whose heart she believed equally hers ; in her gladness, when she learned her accession to unbounded wealth, and her reinstatement in her ancestral dignities,—a gladness inspired by the thought that she would be now a more fitting bride for the Count Leoni ; in the upspringing fount of happiness, when told of his return from foreign travel ; in her exultation at the thought of meeting him the first time, surrounded by all the accessories of rank and fortune, which he did not expect ; in the self-sacrificing idea of telling him she valued them only for his sake ;—in all this we have a bright picture of woman's confiding, entire, and generously-devoted love. But a dark shadow is stealing over the sunny hues, and in the bitter misery of the first knowledge that Leoni had been faithless ; in the intense pride of veiling her emotion from the scorn or pity of others ; in the terrible and sudden hatred with which she looked on his fair bride, her unconscious rival ; in the dire purpose of revenge ; in the terrible conflict with herself during the progress and accomplishment of her plans, during that fearful solitude of crime which, happily, few can imagine ; and who can paint ?—in the waking up of remorse after the murder ; and then in the reckless self-abandonment with which she seeks to save the life of Leoni, who has been condemned to die, on suspicion of the crime of which she was the instrument ; and, last of all, in her own self-inflicted death, we have indeed a most powerfully-wrought combination of evil passions, and setting forth of their attendant misery.

There is so much in our gradual acquaintance with Amenaïde to interest our sympathies, that at first we are inclined to think, if she should not prove what we hope, we shall yet be able to justify her conduct: there is so much to admire, that we shall not be able to condemn. What is the impression with which we leave her? Is it not with an utter shrinking of spirit from the fearful development of her deep-folded iniquity; from the withering aspect of her character, where intellectual beauty and moral deformity are so strikingly blended? We turn at once with instinctive disgust from the grosser embodiments of evil, abhorrent in their undisguised loathsomeness as the haggard forms and hideous heads of serpent-haired furies, and hence learn little of the essential guilt and overwhelming consequences of iniquity. But in this portraiture we read a high moral lesson; we look on it only to feel in our inmost being an ever widening recoil from the evil of one indulged sin, which can so weave a curse around all that was else lovely in the character. It is like gazing, till we are well nigh petrified with horror, on the sculptured head of Medusa, whose features are indeed faultlessly chiselled, while over them seems to hover a supernatural grace, but on whose marble brow one serpent darting out its sting of death, tells that a demon is there, and for ever enthroned for the misery and ruin of its victim.

Another portrait of equal truth, and yet greater beauty, is that of Amenaïde in "The Vow of the Peacock." There is not in the whole compass of modern poetry a character more lovely in itself or more touchingly wrought, than that of this high-souled yet gentle and devoted orphan. From our first introduction to her, as a sweet thoughtful child, whose chief happiness was her intense affection for her cousin and guardian, Count Leoni, valuing his

smiles far before all the toys with which he sought to please her; through the growing consciousness that she really loved him with the true love of woman, united with the quick perception that his affection for her was only that of a parent for a child, of a brother for a younger sister; through all the fresh deep misery of knowing that he was beloved by another, and that other loved by him again; through all the pure, noble, disinterested and self-sacrificing feelings which prompted her to devote every energy to the comfort and happiness of her unconscious rival, till the last sacrifice was completed, and she had saved Leoni's life at the price of her own; through all this, we feel Amenaïde to be one of the sweetest portraitures ever sketched of woman's character, as developed in her affections.

Among the lovely descriptions, the profound knowledge of the human heart, and the truthful sentiments which fill this poem, there are two especial points of interest; the one is where Leoni's love for Irene is represented as felt and understood by Amenaïde, from innate consciousness of her own heart's experience; she herself loved: how could she mistake the presence or absence of love in others?

Then, too, her self-devotedness; no revenge mingled with her thoughts of Irene; it was enough that she was loved by Leoni; her happiness was now identified with his, and must be promoted. Men have represented a Constance bowing her pride to follow the train of a Marmion; and a Kaled forgetting all else to soothe the caprices of a Lara; with a hundred similar instances. Their conception of woman's generosity reaching no further than to suppose it capable of leading them to follow the fortunes of the beloved objects, a devotedness which would be repaid by their constant presence. It remained for

a woman's heart to conceive, and a woman's hand to embody a yet higher standard of unselfish affection and devotedness. Disguised as a page, Amenaïde follows the young queen amid the dangers of war, not to enjoy Leoni's society, but to minister to the comfort and happiness of Leoni's future bride; and finally saves the Count from an assassin's hand by receiving the death-blow in her own heart. Such is one among many portraits of "woman actuated by an attachment as intense as it was true, as pure as it was deep."

Every production that tends in the present age of lowered feeling and bad taste to refine the one and elevate the other, must be valuable. Especially is Poetry valuable on this account. It is a moral impossibility for genuine poetic feeling to coexist with coarseness of mind and vulgarity of habits: whatever be the station in life, once admit the Spirit of Poetry, and you admit an influence which will soften, refine and exalt. It will perhaps be said that some contrary facts go to disprove this assertion; but wherever such facts exist, they rather testify, that although the *intellect* of poetry might have sparkled in the sentiment, the *soul* of poetry did not inspire the feeling. The mechanism is little worth if the vital power be wanting; the body is but a mockery, if the living spirit be absent.

Again: Every production that tends in this age of selfishness and expediency to expand the heart, to dignify the character, to raise the hopes of society to a better order of things than the wearying round of heartless ceremonies, of bustling love of gain, of disgusting self-indulgence; such productions must have a moral value far beyond the consideration of their mere marketable price.

“ Oh never had the poet’s lute a hope,
 An aim so glorious, as it now may have
 In this our social state, where petty cares
 And mercenary interests only look
 Upon the present’s littleness, and shrink
 From the bold future, and the stately past ;
 Where the smooth surface of society
 Is polished by deceit, and the warm heart
 With all its kind affections’ early flow,
 Flung back upon itself, forgets to beat,
 At least for others ;—’tis the poet’s gift
 To melt these frozen waters into tears
 By sympathy with sorrows not our own,
 By waking memory with those mournful notes
 Whose music is the thoughts of early years,
 When truth was on the lip, and feelings wore
 The sweetness and the freshness of their morn.”

Miscellaneous Poems. Venetian Bracelet, p. 251.

It is the poet’s aim to awaken our sympathies,
 to remind us that—

“ We do too little feel each other’s pain,
 We do too much relax the social chain
 That binds us to each other ; slight the care
 There is for grief in which we have no share.”

Golden Violet, p. 197.

—to strengthen the mind and refresh the heart by
 bringing before us thoughts—

“ That waken some more lofty mood
 Than dwelleth with the common-place of life.”

—and to elevate and dignify our nature by pointing
 out the highest sources of instruction and happiness :—

“ Not with the world to teach us, may we learn
 The Spirit’s noblest lessons. Hope and Faith
 Are stars that shine amid the far-off heaven,
 Dimmed and obscured by vapours from below ;
 Impatient selfishness, and shrewd distrust,
 Are taught us in the common ways of life ;
 Dust is beneath our feet, and at our side

The coarse and mean, the false and the unjust ;
 And constant contact makes us grow too like
 The things we daily struggle with and scorn.
Only by looking up can we see Heaven."

Ethel Churchill, vol. ii.

But why should we multiply instances? We think no careful reader can rise from the perusal of L. E. L.'s works, without having his intellectual taste refined, his ideas increased, his sentiments as a patriot, philosopher and moral being called forth by the eloquent voice of the charmer, often charming so wisely.

All Christian hearts who desire the increase of God's kingdom will respond to the sentiments of the following beautiful poem, a poem which nobly illustrates the chief end of our holy faith, the salvation of the world by the diffusion of the Gospel:—

THE MISSIONARY.

It is a glorious task to seek
 Where misery droops the patient head;
 Where tears are on the widow's cheek,
 Where weeps the mourner o'er the dead.

These are the moments when the heart
 Turns from a world no longer dear;
 These are the moments to impart
 The only hope still constant here.

That hope is present in our land,
 For many a sacred shrine is there;
 Time-honoured old cathedrals stand;
 Each village has its house of prayer.

O'er all the realm one creed is spread,
 One name adored, one altar known;
 If souls there be in doubt or dread,
 Alas! the darkness is their own.

The priest whose heart is in his toil
 Hath here a task of hope and love;
 He dwells upon his native soil,
 He has his native sky above.

Not so beneath this foreign sky;
 Not so upon this burning strand;
 Where yonder giant temples lie,*
 The miracles of mortal hand;

Mighty and beautiful, but given
 To idols of a creed profane;
 That cast the shade of earth on heaven,
 By fancies monstrous, vile and vain.

The votary here must half unlearn
 The accents of his mother-tongue;
 Must dwell 'mid strangers, and must earn
 Fruits from a soil reluctant wrung.

His words on hardened hearts must fall,
 Hardened till God's appointed hour;
 Yet he must wait and watch o'er all
 Till hope grows faith and prayer has power.

And many a grave neglected lies,
 Where sleep the soldiers of the Lord;
 Who perished 'neath the sultry skies,
 Where first they preached that sacred word.

But not in vain—their toil was blest;
 Life's dearest hope by them was won
 A blessing is upon their rest,
 And on the work which they begun.

Yon city,† where our purer creed
 Was as a thing unnamed, unknown,
 Has now a sense of deeper need,
 Has now a place of prayer its own.

* Cave of Elephanta.

† Cawnpore, where the devoted Henry Martyn laboured for some months, and formed a congregation of 800 souls.

And many a darkened mind has light,
 And many a stony heart has tears ;
 The morning breaking o'er that night
 So long upon those godless spheres.

Our prayers be with them—we who know
 The value of a soul to save,
 Must pray for those who seek to show
 The Heathen hope beyond the grave.

Drawing-room Scrap Book, 1834.

The following lines on Clarkson will interest the Philanthropist, for their glowing and truthful eloquence.

1.

NOR to the many doth the earth
 Owe what she hath of good ;
 The many would not stir life's depths,
 And could not if they would.
 It is some individual mind
 That moves the common cause :
 To single efforts England owes
 Her knowledge, faith and laws.

2.

Too much by small low interests bound,
 We track our selfish way,
 Careless if hope to-day still takes
 Its tone from yesterday.
 We look upon our daily path,
 We do not look beyond,
 Forgetful of the brotherhood
 In nature's mighty bond.

3.

England, how glorious thine estate !
 How lovely thine array !
 Thou art the throned Island Queen,
 Whom land and sea obey.
 Responsible is power, and owns
 The holiest debt on earth ;
 A strict account it owes that Heaven
 From whence it had its birth.

4.

Can such be rendered up by thee ?
 Does neither guilt nor shame—
 Guilt to redress—shame to efface—
 Shade thy imperial name ?
 Thou who dost ask for wealth and rule
 Wherever rolls the sea,
 O ! Island Queen, how rests the claim
 That millions have on thee !

5.

And yet what grievous wrong is wrought,
 Unnoticed and unknown,
 Until some noble one stands forth,
 And makes that wrong his own !
 So stood he forth who first denounced
 The slave trade's cursed gain ;
 Such call upon the human heart
 Was never made in vain.

6.

For generous impulses and strong
 Within our nature lie ;
 Pity and love, and sympathy,
 May sleep, but never die.
 Thousands, awakened to the sense,
 Have never since that time
 Ceased to appeal to God and man
 Against the work of crime.

7.

The meanest hut that ever stood
 Is yet a human home ;
 Why to a low and humble roof
 Should the despoiler come.
 Grant they are ignorant and weak,
 We were ourselves the same ;
 If they are children, let them have
 A child's imploring claim.

8.

The husband parted from the wife,
 The mother from the child ;
 Thousands within a single year
 From land and home exiled.

For what? To labour without hope,
 Beneath a foreign sky;
 To gather up unrighteous wealth;
 To droop, decline and die!

9.

Such wrong is darkly visited;
 The masters have their part;
 For theirs had been the blinded eye,
 And theirs the hardened heart.
 Evil may spring unchecked
 Within the mortal soul;
 If such plague-spot be not removed,
 It must corrupt the whole.

10.

The future doth avenge the past:
 Now, for thy future's sake,
 Oh! England for the guilty part
 A deep atonement make.
 The slave is given to thy charge,
 He hopes from thee alone;
 And thou for every soul so given
 Must answer with thine own.

The character of L. E. L.'s mind affords a most interesting study to the mental philosopher.* The

* Manner, though not an invariable criterion of the mental character, is yet frequently tinged with the mind's prevailing hue, and thus becomes a visible sign of the internal being. One feature of Miss Landon's manner seemed peculiarly connected with her intellectual existence. This was a graceful quickness in every movement; so accordant with that rapidity of thought which is the especial attribute of genius. No one could doubt L. E. L.'s possession of genius who had ever seen her under its influence. Every thing seemed accomplished by her without effort. Her thoughts appeared to spring up spontaneously on any proposed subject; so that her literary tasks were completed with a facility and quickness that to slower minds wore almost the aspect of intuition. In truth she could say,

“ I but call

My trusty spirits, and they come.”

In her conversation too there was the like ease, the like rapidity

great versatility of her talents, the spontaneous upspringing (for we can deem it nothing less) of her thoughts might afford a conclusive answer to the question so often discussed as to the existence of an original essential difference between mind and mind. Genius—who shall define? It seems, as a whole, inscrutable and innate as that mysterious spirit, of which it is, wherever it exists, the most mysterious part; but that it is a natural gift, not an acquired power, there is sufficient demonstration. If it be said that circumstances affect character; granting that they do, would not the *same circumstances* affect two or more individuals *differently*? If this be true, must not that different affection be occasioned by some *originally different* and innate susceptibility in the persons thus affected? And if this original dissimilarity be admitted in one instance, must it not in many and all? It has been well asked, “ If

of transition, together with a correspondent quickness of utterance, as if her beautiful thoughts were glad to escape into expression. Her observations, however brilliant and deep, never seemed laboured, but arose fast and brightly, unrestricted, except by the prevailing mood of the speaker's mind, or perchance the occasions which by a look or word called them into being. How vividly does memory recal her lovely morning room, with its sweet garden prospect; its birds and flowers; its books and works of art;—all arranged with exquisite taste: while the softened light stealing through the overhanging verandah, gave a somewhat shadowy impression to the whole, rendering it a fitting scene for communion with a high priestess of poetry!

There L. E. L. often read to us—frequently her own poems. Her style of reading was peculiar,—a kind of recitative,—more poetical than musical, derived rather from the soul than from the ear; but giving the fullest effect to every variation of thought, feeling and character. She became for the time a literal improvisatrice; and you listened entranced to the earnest yet varying intonations of her voice, as if it were pouring from her soul, in all their first freshness, the beautiful creations of which she was the previous originator.

circumstances make the mind, why did not the Elizabethan age produce two Shakspeares? Why did not the convulsed struggles, the fiery spirit of the times embody more than one Satan, inspire more than one Milton?"

Let L. E. L. have been placed in any situation, however unfavourable to the development of her powers, still her inspired genius would, it must, have shone forth. Place another individual in L. E. L.'s exact position, would the result be similar? Experience ought to make common sense laugh at the question. We no more believe that education, or want of education, or circumstances of trial or prosperity, however similar in their allotment, will destroy the individual distinctions of different minds, and reduce them to one average standard, than that the same regimen will give the same features to different persons.

The few artificial defects or redundancies, rhythmical errors, and occasional verbal inaccuracies, sometimes apparent in the productions of genius, are spots on the surface rather than ingrained faults, and as such we leave them to the candor of the reader, without any additional comment.

Our closing words flow from the heart's most genial mood. Remembering gratefully all the enjoyment with which the genius of L. E. L. has for us brightened many solitary hours, and infused a deeper charm through social pleasures, we would gather up all the noblest thoughts of our mind, all the kindest feelings of our soul, to give earnestness to the prayer for Heaven's best and future blessings to rest upon one of the most gifted children of Genius, one of England's brightest daughters. And thus, sweet Ladye, for the present, fare you well!

PART II.

PROSE WORKS.

— Fictions that contain
Within their gilded caskets gems and gold,
Right meanings, sound philosophy and truth.

C O N T E N T S.

PART II.

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USES OF FICTION.

IF it be true, that "Example is better than precept," it must be wise to avail ourselves of its utility whenever we desire most beneficially to influence our fellow-creatures. The truth of this adage, like most others that have passed into axioms, grows out from among the very roots of human nature, and arises from the present connexion of mind with matter, which connexion renders us more apt to receive impressions from what is presented in some actual and tangible form, than from mere intellectual abstractions. Composed, as we are, of body and spirit, we seem to have an instinctive liking for objects which appeal to both the component parts of our being. We almost require an outward representation of inward thoughts and feelings. This is a natural propensity, and an universal taste.

In the childhood of society—the civilized state of man—this propensity displays itself in allegorical language and symbolical representations. In actual childhood it is discoverable in the eager delight with which children will leave their play to listen to a story; in the illusions with which they frequently amuse themselves by "pretending," as they call this sort of pleasure; and in the facility with which instruction will be received through the *media* of sensible signs. With scarcely less delight do those of maturer years resign themselves to the spell of the enchanter, who raises around them his creations animated with life, and actuated by like passions with themselves.

If these facts be true, what is the part of wisdom? To endeavour to crush this taste? No;—has not every disposition been implanted by our Creator for some wise and good purpose?

Let wisdom and virtue rather continue to mould this propensity into a cause of beneficial influence. In doing this, other agencies must necessarily be brought to subserve the grand end of practical utility. Hereby may be demonstrated the power and consequent importance of Fiction, when employed as a moral agent in upholding virtue and denouncing vice, in exposing the follies and condemning the wickedness of mankind.

Let us go back to our own early impressions: who cannot retrace a long-growing dislike and fear of some particular fault, or a still-strengthening approval of an opposite virtue to the vivid effect produced by a well-written tale? Both virtue and fault perhaps had been set before us a hundred times, but it was not till we saw the one exemplified in the conduct of a good girl, or the consequences of the other pictured in the misery of a naughty boy, that either wrought upon us any degree of that influential impression which has since grown with our growth and strengthened with our strength.

If we could carry out the suggestion of Foster, in one of his admirable essays—“Were it possible for a man to live back again to his infancy, through all the scenes of his life, and to give back from his mind and character at each time and circumstance as he repassed it, exactly that which he took from it when he was there before, it would be curious to see the fragments and *exuviae* of the moral man lying here and there along the retrograde path, and to find what he was in the beginning of this train of modifications and acquisitions,”—if this process

could be realized, it would be interesting to observe how we should take back to our very nursery, and its oft-told tales, some of our strongest impressions of right and wrong. Might we not thus retrace, through all its gradual accumulation from after circumstances, our indignation against oppression, and our contempt and dislike for avarice to "the greedy guardian uncle fierce," in our pet story of "The Babes in the Wood"? or somewhat of our conviction of the benefits of humility and punctuality to Cinderella? Should we find none of our feeling of rightful independence and self-exertion owing to boyhood's hero, Robinson Crusoe? or just sentiments of action to such books as "Sandford and Merton," and Miss Edgeworth's and Mrs. Sherwood's delightful narratives? Should we not thus, moreover, find ourselves indebted for our first lessons on the advantages of patience, industry, and all sorts of virtues, to many a delicious faëry tale, read while nestling under the sunny trees of our childhood's garden, or in a snug corner by the winter-hearth of our early days?

We have heard it rumoured, again and again, that Philosophy intends to extirpate these so-called frivolous fictions from the domain of childhood, after they have been led as captives to grace the triumphal march of intellect. Our own private conviction is, that Philosophy is far too wise to attempt such an egregious folly. No, no; Philosophy is too conversant with the features of her sister, Wisdom, not to recognize her, and acknowledge her influences, even under the simplest disguises she may sometimes see fit to assume—ay, in the very disguises, too, from which the ignorant and superficial have disdainfully turned; although, had they received her, veiled as

she was, they might unawares have entertained an angel of truth.*

We cannot leave this part of the argument for the usefulness of fiction without offering, in the name of all young people who have come under their influences, a most grateful acknowledgment for Miss Edgeworth's and Mrs. Sherwood's admirable tales; so full of principle exemplified in character, —so fraught with precept enforced by example.

Look on now to maturer years; does fiction then lose its influence? Have we not often found the moral truth, or the moral quality, which, in its abstract nature, has scarcely been apprehended by us, startling us into attention, fixing itself with powerful grasp on all our faculties, when clothed in its developed attributes,—when embodied in a real character?

As the agreeableness of fiction to our taste originates in the natural propensity previously considered, so likewise does the usefulness of fiction depend much on its agreeableness. If "a verse may sometimes win him who a sermon flies," so may a well-conceived and well-executed fiction win over at least

* "Never tell me but that a child must be the better for reading anecdotes of generosity, kindness and self-devotion. I am convinced that one of Miss Edgeworth's stories for children is worth all the questions and answers that ever made history easy, or geography light."

"Do you remember a little story called the 'Rival Crusoes?' I cannot describe the effect it took on Frank, as I was reading it to him; but it seems to me that it gave him a more touching lesson against overbearing temper and of affectionate forgiveness than all the advice in the world could have done."—*Romance and Reality*, vol. 2. How many similar instances might every one observant of children supply!

to the approval of excellence many who would shrink from studying precepts in the abstract, or duty in detail.

By the term "Fiction" is simply meant the illustration, by example and graphic description, of the truths or qualities, feelings, sentiments or circumstances which the author intends to represent. Fiction is generally considered as opposed to truth, whereas it may become one of the best *media* for the communication of truth.

Dr. Johnson, in his beautiful allegory of "Truth, Falsehood and Fiction," represents Truth as so repeatedly foiled in her contests with Falsehood, every intellect being so precluded by prejudice, and every heart so pre-occupied by passion, that, in the anger of disappointment, she petitions Jupiter to be called back to her native skies, and leave mankind to the disorder and misery which they deserved, by submitting willingly to the usurpation of her antagonist. Jupiter, compassionating mankind too much to grant her request, yet willing to ease her labours, recommends her to consult the Muses by what methods she might obtain an easier reception, and reign without the toil of incessant war. It was then discovered that she obstructed her own purposes by the severity of her aspect and the solemnity of her dictates, and that men would never willingly admit her till they ceased to fear her. Then the Muses wove in the loom of Pallas a loose and changeable robe, like that in which Falsehood captivated her admirers; with this they invested *Truth*, and named her *Fiction*. She now went out again to conquer with more success; for, when she demanded entrance of the Passions, they often mistook her for Falsehood, and delivered up their charge; but when she had once taken possession, she was soon disrobed by Reason, and shone

out in her original form, with native effulgence and resistless dignity.* Thus advantageously, often, is

“ Truth severe
“ In fairy fiction dressed.”

“The fictions of genius,” as another eloquent writer remarks, “are frequently the vehicles of the sublimest verities, and its flashes often open new regions of thought, and throw new light on the mysteries of our being; even when the letter is falsehood, the spirit is often profoundest wisdom.”†

Yet the very word “novel” is often used as a synonyme for the incarnations of folly, or something worse. While to one class of persons it conveys merely the idea of amusement, to another class it as exclusively implies something morally wrong to be avoided. If, however, what has been stated be true, neither of these opinions is correct. It is indeed to be regretted that, like most other agencies which are at all under man’s control, fiction has been perverted to base and ignoble purposes. Vices, which in themselves are very fiends of darkness, decked in fiction’s robes, have walked the world as angels of light. Fiction hereby has been made a minister to evil passions, and her works have been constructed as a vestibule leading through deception to wickedness. Still, to repeat the trite maxim, the abuse of any thing is no argument against its right use. The greater the power and the more extensive the capabilities of an instrument, the more cogent are the reasons for rescuing it from the service of evil, and employing it as an agent of good. Is it not, therefore, important, that so efficient an auxiliary as fiction should not be contentedly left for a moment as a

* Rambler, No. 96.

† Dr. Channing.

priestess to folly and vice, but should be sedulously won over, appropriated and consecrated by wisdom and virtue to their high and noble services, in the vast temple sacred to the improvement of human society?

In many instances, which cannot now be specified, this has been admirably accomplished, and we trust in many more will yet be fulfilled; since it is no unworthy task for the wise and the virtuous to follow the precept of Horace, and "join both profit and delight in one."

"It is half curious, half ludicrous," says L. E. L., "to hear persons, ay, and critics too, talk of a novel as a pleasant hour's amusement, and gravely exhort an author to turn his talents to higher account; unconscious of the fact, that the novel is now one of the highest efforts, the popular vehicle of thought, feeling and observation." Such was Miss Landon's high estimate of the novel; an estimate which she fully realized herself when she admitted Prose to share with Poetry the throne of her intellectual dominion.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF L. E. L.'s PROSE
WORKS.

WITH perfect truth may L. E. L.'s opinion of a gifted author be applied to herself: "We know no writer who has united so much philosophy with so much imagination. She uses her power to make us feel, chiefly to make us think; it is the consequences which she draws from her creations which force reflection to succeed to interest. Read her pages after the first vivid effect of the story is departed, and you will be surprised at the vast mass of moral investigation and truth which they contain."

Proceed we now, then, to examine the prose writings of L. E. L., from which our introductory remarks have perhaps detained us too long. Only, that being aware of some existent mistakes relative to the value of fiction as an instrument of moral benefit, it seemed that an attempt to demonstrate its general capability for usefulness might increase the interest of analyzing, and assist in appreciating, in one particular instance, this adaptation of fiction, together with its rightly-applied influences.

Miss Landon's shorter prose writings, scattered through various annuals and periodicals, cannot now be specified, though many of them would create a name for writers of less note than herself. Some of her critical papers are especially beautiful; her faculty of appreciation was peculiarly vivid, and it was ever allowed most generous expression. The number of her miscellaneous papers is doubtless far greater than may be supposed; but these we must for the present leave; and, after mentioning "Traits and Trials of Early Life," a sweet and most touching little volume for children, pass on now to her three

larger works, "Romance and Reality," "Francesca Carrara," and "Ethel Churchill."

In these, as in L. E. L.'s Poetical works, the essential characteristics of genius are truly manifested. It is impossible to turn from their perusal without the conviction that their gifted author must be deeply imbued with the influences of intellectual beauty and general knowledge—profoundly skilled in the mysteries of the human heart—most accurate in her perception and delineations of the varied phases of human character, and keen-sighted in discriminating all the workings of the complicated machinery of motives and counter-motives in operation throughout the social system. These volumes embody much of philosophy and poetry; much of the ideal, and of practical common sense; deep thoughts and high, of intellectual musing, with the lighter sparkles of genuine wit, and truthful observations resulting from extensive knowledge of the world. In short, their pages are so frequently the exponents of the mind's loftiest thoughts, of the heart's deepest emotions, that it is evident their writer must have investigated as a philosopher, imagined and reflected as a poet, felt and endured as a woman.

The tendencies of these works are unquestionably of an enlightening and reflective order. The follies and meannesses and vices, that are so rife in the world, are displayed in their true aspects, fearlessly, yet with gentleness.

L. E. L.'s quick perception and refined taste are often evinced in her truly discriminating observations. Satire is far too harsh a term to apply to her genial spirited wit, which, like the summer evening lightning, playfully flashes, but hurts not,—too general in its diffusion for individual injury. It shows out indeed the clouds of faults, follies and discrepancies,

but never, like the heartless sarcasm of malevolence,—the forked lighting of the thunder storm,—never does it strike at the individuals whom those clouds may happen to overshadow.

Miss Landon's own nature was too kindly, too generous, ever to inflict pain by the indulgence of personal ridicule. Things, not persons; qualities, not their possessors; characters, not individuals, were the objects of her witty animadversions. Hers was that graceful and well-applied wit which often, when other methods have failed of effect, reveals in its true light what were best avoided.

Then, too, the deeper tones of her genius, when contrasting the little and low vanities of worldliness with the lofty aims, the noble impulses, the generous deeds, the onlooking and upward aspirations for something brighter and better than earth even in its plenitude of good can supply, are fraught with lessons of true wisdom and moral worth.

Those who did not know L. E. L. may form an idea of the spirit and style of her conversational powers, and of her rapid transitions from "grave to gay, from lively to severe," from her prose works; while, in the same works, her personal friends may recal her living presence, and almost hear her voice, now in its sweet, low, plaintive tones, and anon in its mirthful utterance of gay witticisms. On these pages are still reflected the sparkling mirth and the eloquent sadness which glanced alternately around you from her conversation, like sunlight and shadows chasing each other over the summer landscape.

REMARKS ON "ROMANCE AND REALITY."

"ROMANCE AND REALITY" is a work which displays in its varied beauties great power. There is no character possessing a strong individual interest; nor is the tale itself a highly-wrought fiction. The chief merit consists in the beautiful detached passages, remarkable for their philosophical truth, poetical imagery, and sparkling wit, in the graphic sketches of English society, and in some admirable portraits of a few literary characters.

The tale itself is fraught with an important moral lesson. Emily Arundel, the child of prosperity and luxury, goes into society with imagination, and feelings equally susceptible. An attachment springs up in her heart which is not returned by its object. Yielding to her morbid fancy, life thenceforth seems to her to have no future, and she retires into a convent. There she meets with a young Spanish girl, whose whole life has been one of actual exertion and self-sacrifice,—of heroic daring and womanly fortitude and endurance for others, under circumstances alike trying to the courage and feelings. She is now awaiting in the convent the arrival of her father, a Spanish noble, and of her English lover. It was with a bitter feeling that Emily found, in her new friend, her unconscious rival. "Vain regrets ended in a feeling that could live only in the heart of a woman, young, affectionate and unworldly; Lorraine then loved the young Spaniard, and I thought Emily may love her too. A patriot might take his best lesson of disinterestedness from feminine affection."

The character and conversation of Beatrice wrought most beneficially on Emily, and led her to see her

self-indulgence in its true light. But mental suffering and excitement have destroyed her health, and she returns with Beatrice to England, only to die.

The comparison, most skilfully drawn, between the characters of Emily and Beatrice, is in itself a practical illustration of some of the highest principles of mental and ethical philosophy.

“With Emily, early solitude had increased the power of imagination, early indulgence had weakened her moral as much as delicate health had relaxed her physical energy.” * * * * “The keen feeling, the high-toned romance of her character, had she been more accustomed to the harsh realities of life, or been placed in circumstances where exertion was a necessity, would have been kindly guards against the selfishness contracted in the world; but, left to be that character’s sole ‘*materiel*,’ there was no strength to meet sorrow, no reality to ballast romance. A chain of small events had brought her into continual contact with Lorraine; daily intercourse first gave attachment all the force of habit; loneliness next gave all the exaggeration of unemployed fancy; and love had become to Emily an imaginary world, where thoughts, hopes, feelings, were all gathered and confided. The wreck was total; as total as that ever is which trusts its all to one argosy.”

“Beatrice, on the other hand, had been forced into a wholesome course of active exertion. Obligated to think and act for herself, to have others dependent on her efforts, to know that each day brought its employment, her mind strengthened with its discipline. The duties that excited, also invigorated. The keen feeling, the delicate taste, were accustomed to subjection, and romance refined without weakening.”

* * * * *

“ Both had strong feelings, poetical imaginations, and both had lived much in solitude ; but Emily’s feelings had been left to her imagination, and her solitude had been that of reverie and idleness. Beatrice’s feelings, on the contrary, had been early taught the necessity of restraint ; her imagination, curbed by action, had only been allowed to colour, not create circumstances ; and her solitude had been one of constant and useful employment. Both had much mental cultivation ; but Emily’s was accomplishment, Beatrice’s was information. The one dreamed, the other thought ; the one, only accustomed to feel, acted from impulse ; the other, forced to reflect, soon formed for herself a standard of principle. Emily was governed by others, Beatrice relied on herself. Emily loved Lorraine as the first idol which her feelings had set up, an almost ideal object ; Beatrice loved him from a high sense of appreciation. The English girl would have died beneath the first danger that threatened her lover ; the Spaniard would have stood the very worst by his side.”

Again, Beatrice is represented with another source of strength ; her spirit, firm as it was, yet was early broken by sorrow : what then supported her mind ? when, her father in prison, she was left amid circumstances of privation and danger to watch over her mother, whom misery had rendered hopelessly insane, her consolation was derived from a little English Bible, which had become the chief companion and solace of her lonely hours.

“ There are some works of God, which most especially seem the work of His hands ; and some ills of humanity, which seem most of all to ask aid from above. The mighty gathering of the storms on her native mountains, the thunder that shook the earth, and the lightning that in an hour laid bare

the depths of the forest, which had stood still and shadowy for years ; the starry silence of the summer nights ; the mystery of their large bright planets filled the young heart, that was lifted up by their beauty, with deep and solemn thoughts. Again, her desolate situation ; the dangers beyond her ability to foresee or to avoid, made her at once to feel her nothingness and her need of protection. The holy page, read at first for its beauty, was soon resorted to for its power. Beatrice dwelt on the gentle promises made to the afflicted, and the words of encouragement spoken to the simple, till hope rose strong within her, and grew to be that clear and steady light which hideth not its face in the time of trouble. Beatrice was a genuine Christian, if entire trust, deep humility and earnest conviction could make one.

“ It was to Beatrice that Emily was indebted for her knowledge of true religion. Hitherto she had never considered the rash step she had taken in entering the convent in a religious point of view. Like too many others, religion had been with her matter of general acknowledgment and general observance. She repeated her prayers because she had been accustomed so to do ; she went to church because others did ; but she had never looked to her God for support,—to her Bible for a rule of action. There are more practical infidels from indifference than from disbelief. Beatrice was at first astonished to find how little interest the English girl, who had been brought up in a faith so pure, took in subjects that were of vital importance.

“ We ask for miracles ; is not our own blindness a perpetual miracle ? We live amid the blessings that Christianity has diffused through the smallest occurrences of our daily life ; we feel hourly within us

that pining for some higher state whose promise is in the Gospel ; our weakness daily forces us to look around for support ; we admit the perfection of the Saviour's moral code ; we see that the mighty voice of prophecy, which spoke of old upon the mountains, is awaking year by year its wondrous fulfilments ;— and yet we believe not, or, if we believe, we delay acting upon that belief.

“ Out of evil cometh good. The attention that might have been diverted, the conviction that might have been darkened in the world, were both given entire to the faith that dawned on the subdued and enlightened mind of Emily Arundel. The Bible of Beatrice was their only religious book ; but it was read with that simple and earnest belief by which the dark is soonest made light, and the crooked path made straight.”

But we must not linger ;—the moral of the whole history may be conclusively summed up in the quotation of a few lines from Emily's dying letter to her early friend, Lady Mandeville :—

“ Death sends Truth before it as its messenger. In the loneliness of my sleepless midnight, in the feverish restlessness of days which lacked strength for pleasant and useful employment, how have I been forced on self-examination, and how have my thoughts witnessed against me ! Life, the sacred and the beautiful, how utterly have I wasted ! for how much discontent and ingratitude am I responsible ! I have been self-indulged from my childhood upwards ; I have fretted with imaginary sorrows, and desired imaginary happiness.”

* * * *

“ I was ill. Beatrice read to me from the little Bible, which she said had ever been, in her trying and lonely life, a friend and a support. Alas ! my

heart died within me to think what account I should render of the talents committed to my charge. But God tempers justice with mercy : a new life rose up within me. I said, 'Surely the Saviour of the world will be mine also !' I repented me of my worldly delusions, and strove to fix my thoughts above. Had I earlier made religion the guide of my way, I might now be fulfilling the duties I have neglected, and looking forward in patience of faith. But it is too late. I am perishing as a leaf to which spring has denied her life. * * * I am one-and-twenty to-morrow. Would, Oh God ! my years had been so spent as to be a worthier offering ! But Thy fear is the beginning of wisdom ; and in that fear is my trust, that a broken and contrite spirit Thou wilt not despise !"

It seems almost an injustice to L. E. L. to attempt, by detached extracts, necessarily few and brief, to give an idea of the rich variety of her talents as displayed in her prose works. From each, however, as we proceed, after a general analysis, we will give a passage or two, by way of commending the volumes themselves to the attention of those who may be yet unacquainted with some of the most thoughtful and beautiful works in our language.

EXTRACTS FROM "ROMANCE AND REALITY."

"Truly the history of most lives may be soon comprehended under three heads,—our follies, our faults and our misfortunes."

"Nothing appears to me so absurd as placing our happiness in the opinion others entertain of our enjoyments, not in our own sense of them. The fear of being thought vulgar is the moral hydrophobia of the day; our weaknesses cost us a thousand times more regret and shame than our faults."

"I believe genius to be acute feeling, gifted with the power of expression, and with that keen observation which early leads to reflection; and few can feel much of or think much on the various lessons of life, and not say, in the sorrowful language of the Psalmist, 'My soul is heavy within me.'"

"Amid the many signs of that immortality of which our nature is so conscious, none has the certainty, the conviction, of affection; we feel that love, which is stronger and better than life, was made to outlast it. In the memory that survives the lost and the dear, we have minute evidence of a power over the grave; and religion, while it holds forth the assurance of a blessed re-union, is acknowledged and answered from our own heart. We stand beside the tomb, but we look beyond it, and sorrow is as the angel that sits at the gate of heaven."

"Wordsworth is the most poetical of philosophers. Strange that a man can be so great a poet, and yet deficient in what are poetry's two grand requisites,—

imagination and passion ! He describes what he has seen, and beautifully, because he is impressed with the beauty before his eyes. He creates nothing. I cannot recal one fine simile. He has often expressions of touching feeling ; he is often melancholy, often tender, but with more of sympathy than energy. He never fills the atmosphere with music, lapping us in Elysium, like Moore ; he never makes his readers fairly forget their very identity, like Scott ; he never startles us with the depths of our secret thoughts ; he never brings to our remembrance all that our own existence has had of poetry or passion, the earnestness of early hope, the bitterness of after-disappointment, like Byron ; but he sits by the fireside, or wanders through the fields, and calls from their daily affections and sympathies foundations whereon to erect a scheme of the widest benevolence. He looks forth on the beautiful scenery amid which he has dwelt, and links with it a thousand ties of the human loveliness of thought. I would say his excellence is the moral sublime."

" Strange it is, that people, unless in the way of ostentation, never value the blessings they possess!
 * * The love which is born in childhood—an instinct deepening into a principle—retains to the end something of the freshness belonging to the hour of its birth ; the amusement partaken, the trifling quarrel made up, the sorrows shared together, the punishment in which all were involved, the plans for the future, so fairy-tale like and so false, in which all indulged. What love makes allowances like household love ? What takes an interest in small sorrows and small successes like household love ? God forgive those who turn the household altar to a place of strife ! Domestic dissension is the sacrilege of the heart."

“ How little do even our most intimate friends know of us ! There is an excitement about intense misery which is its support ; light sufferings spring to the lips in words, and to the eyes in tears, but there is a pride in deep passion which guards its feelings even from the shadow of a surmise. It is somewhat that speaks of mental command, to think how little the careless and the curious deem of the agony which like a conqueror is reigning in misery and desolation within ! ”

“ The difference between past grief and past joy is this,—that if the grief recurred again to-day, we should feel it as bitterly as ever ; but if the joy returned, we should no longer have the same delight in it.”

“ Which is it most difficult to judge for,—others or ourselves ? The judgment given in ignorance, or that biassed by passion,—which is best ? Alas for human sagacity, and that which is to depend on it,—human conduct ! Look back on all the past occurrences of our lives ; who are there that on reflection would not act diametrically opposite to what they formerly acted on impulse ? Experience teaches, it is true, but she never teaches in time. Each event brings its lesson, and the lesson is remembered ; but the same event never occurs again.”

“ The attention of the dying Emily was observing the hands move round the dial-plate of her watch. God of heaven ! to think what every segment of that small space involves ! how much of human happiness or misery,—of breath entering into our frail tenement of mortality, and making life—or departing from it, and making death—are in such brief portions of eternity ! How much is there in one minute, when we reflect that that one minute extends over the world ! ”

ANALYSIS OF "FRANCESCA CARRARA."

"FRANCESCA CARRARA."—What a rich mine of golden thought and feeling is laid open in the volumes bearing this title! How much of intellectual power, of moral emotion, and of keen observation have here blended their influences! Setting feeling aside for a moment, mere criticism is constrained to acknowledge the capabilities of that genius—the strength of that talent—which can pass with such graceful facility from the comparative loneliness of an old Italian palazzo, and the touching history of its gentle inhabitants, to the splendor and dazzling wit of the magnificent court of Louis XIV., thence transport us to the greenwood haunts, their natural beauty, and the olden associations of England's forest scenery; to the stern beings, the stirring scenes and domestic trials of the time of the Commonwealth; and again to the gay cavaliers, the mirth, the pleasure, the badinage of Charles the Second's adherents; through the whole, working out characters with truthful interest; depicting scenes and circumstances with accurate tracery, but in glowing colours; and interspersing, among all, thoughts and imaginings, whose truth will no less entitle them to the philosopher's assent, than their beauty will ensure the poet's admiration. At the same time all these changes are most skilfully effected, wrought with a vigor of which the most masculine intellect might be proud, yet touched with a delicacy, lightened by a refinement to which only womanly feeling would be competent.

Some most dramatic situations and perfect poetical pictures are here delineated. We might mention, for example, the execution of Francis Evelyn; the midnight worship of the Puritans; its attendant circumstances on the night previous to their emigration; the arrest of Robert Evelyn at the marriage altar by the father of his bride; the subsequent scene at Avonleigh Castle, in which Evelyn and Francesca receive the royal pardon; and the last awful description of the shipwreck.

But it is not the merit of the work as a literary composition, nor the detached descriptions and dramatic pictures, that constitute its principal charm. This arises from the deep under-current which bears us along in full yet mournful interest with the fateful histories of the young Italian orphans; especially with that and the character of Francesca da Carrara. A spell seems thrown around us, binding our feelings with their fate from the moment of our first introduction amid the shadows of the purple twilight in the deserted halls of the old palazzo, through every chance and change, till Guido sleeps in his English grave, and the waves of the Atlantic close over the head of Francesca.

Never for one moment can we forget that high-souled girl, among all the varied scenes through which we are conducted, and characters to whom we are introduced. The whole work seems skilfully constructed for this purpose; wherever we turn, Francesca is the centre of all interest. She is one of those beings of the mind who compel assent to their reality. Never was a lovelier, more womanly creation. Dignity, gentleness, deep and mournful feelings (the only dower inherited from her native land), an unwearied readiness to think, and act, and suffer for others; high, pure principles, generosity,

patient endurance, and fearless fortitude, are the elements of her character, and are admirably developed by circumstances. To Francesca Carrara may be applied the exquisite feminine portraiture by another gifted hand,—

“ Nor look nor tone revealeth aught,
Save woman's quietness of thought ;
And yet around her is a light,
Of inward majesty and might.”

“ Francesca's beauty belonged to features and to expression,—features perfect in the Greek outline. A brow, noble, as if never unworthy or ungenerous thought had crossed its white expanse ; the lip somewhat scornful, but smiling, when it did smile, with the sweetness of a thousand common smiles. Large lustrous eyes, passionate, thoughtful, clear, and calm ; their general character was repose,—but the lightning slept in their midnight depths,—that flash which the mind alone can give, but whose light is that of the sky whence it emanates. Usually of a clear, delicate, yet healthy paleness, any strong emotion would flood her cheek with crimson. No one would have thought of calling her merely pretty : a sure test of beauty.”

You feel, and the conviction is borne out, that she cannot act unworthily and be true to herself ; and, feeling this, the deeper interest of admiring esteem gathers around her history.

Poor Guido, his tale may be soon told ; possessed of one attribute of genius—imagination, but which, in him, being unregulated by the sterner powers of the mind, makes him its victim, by exciting aspirations he could never fulfil,—by inspiring a love, more than half ideal, doomed never to be requited,—thus lighting in his soul a fire, but supplying no fuel ; the

weary heart pines away in its self-consuming, and the young idealist is soon borne to an early grave, leaving us to ask what must poor Guido have done without his sister's watchful care and soothing tenderness?

Francesca is really more unhappy, and with more cause, than Guido, but not, like him, does she yield to grief's self-indulgence, or to mere imagination's morbid dreams. She thinks, she plans, she acts, she endures for both. Neither prosperous nor afflictive circumstances, admiration nor neglect, disappointment nor hope fulfilled, ever tempt her to swerve from her noble principles, or to deviate from the right line of conduct they have prescribed. There is but one sacrifice which she as a woman can lay on the altar of duty,—her own deep feelings,—and cheerfully, constantly, is that offering yielded.

When an almost friendless orphan in Italy, a noble and generous Englishman gains her affections; not to be his beloved and prosperous bride, will she desert the poor old grandfather who has protected her childhood; and the lovers plight their vows only to seal love's bitter parting. Time passes on, and she meets Evelyn again at the gay court of France, but changed, alas! into a dissolute and reckless cavalier: her feelings change; how can she love what is unworthy? Still she considers her engagement binding, till accident reveals to her his utter worthlessness, and she overhears him expressing a wish to one of his companions that he were really free from her. "She confronts him with a perfect simplicity, a clear purity, a frankness that no art could have assumed; her face, pale as death, for her emotion was far too strong for confusion; her lip curled with unutterable scorn; her large dark eyes seemed filled with light, while her recreant lover cowered beneath

their flashing disdain. 'I do forgive,' exclaimed she, 'what I despise too much to resent, but I owe some disavowal to myself.'" With womanly dignity she then briefly explains to De Joinville the sacred and acknowledged engagement which had subsisted between her and Evelyn.

Deeply did the iron enter into her soul, but Francesca now no longer reproached herself for her former change of feeling; how completely was it justified! her growing dislike had been as it were a natural warning,—the good revolting from the bad. Let us observe here, how strongly, yet how delicately, has the author delineated the almost intuitive recoil of woman's nature from what is bad in principle or wrong in conduct: "I *felt* (said Francesca to Evelyn) your unworthiness even before I *knew* it!"

There is a delicate species of the mimosa, whose leaves not only recede at the touch, but from the near approach of any extraneous object: thus sensitively does the innate propriety of woman shrink from the presence of moral evil.

Again, with equal discrimination is another general truth embodied in a trait of Francesca's character. "She felt as if life had suddenly lost its interest; yet it was not the lover that she regretted, but the love."

In such a case it is the influence that disappointment and treachery have upon the mind in destroying the ideal of truth and of love, that is to be regretted even more than the loss of the individual attachment. "The qualities most natural to youth are at once destroyed; suspicion takes the place of confidence, reserve of reliance, distrust instead of that ready belief in all that was good and beautiful; knowledge has come too soon,—knowledge of evil, unqualified by the general charities which longer

experience infallibly brings: this first great emotion becomes unconsciously a criterion; and the judgment is harsh because the remembrance is bitter."

To return to Francesca's history: No flatteries could move her; not even the proffered love of Louis himself could for an instant affect her mind. By the death of her early friend, Madame de Merieur, with whom she had resided at Paris, she was again left desolate; she only awaited the arrival of Guido from an embassy, to return with him to their native Italy. In the course of events, Francesca learns that she is the daughter of a powerful English noble. Guido and herself, with the Englishman who communicates this intelligence, now embark for England, and take up their abode at a farm-house midway between her father's (Lord Avonleigh's) castle and Evelyn's paternal home. Lord Avonleigh, for political reasons, is confined by Cromwell's party in the Tower.

Many months elapse before his return. In the interim Guido dies. Never were the attendant circumstances of death so touchingly, so exquisitely depicted. How have we repeatedly lingered over those pages of truthful interest and mournful beauty!—pages which only require to be lighted up by a sun-beam from the life and immortality which have been brought to light in the Gospel, to become as important as they are interesting,—as instructive and elevating to our moral principles as they are touching and beautiful to our poetical feelings.*

* If Love be thought to hold a prominent place in Miss Landon's writings, it must be acknowledged that Death has an almost equal prominence. How many dying scenes are recorded in all their own mournfulness, yet filled with the soft light of poetical beauty! Not to mention many instances in her poems, in her prose works, those of Emily Arundel and her uncle, Guido, Francesca, Evelyn, Constance Courtenaye, Sir George Kingston and Walter Maynard,

Soon after Guido's death, Francesca discovers that her recreant lover is affianced to Lucy Alymer, the young girl in whose house she is waiting her father's return. A deep trial ensues. Evelyn is brought in as a prisoner by Cromwell's soldiers, and condemned to die. Lucy implores Francesca to save him by taking his place. Revenge has no home in the heart of this noble-minded girl; she does not hesitate, but aids him to escape; her generous heroism, however, proves fruitless; he is re-captured, and brought back to execution. Before his death he reveals to Francesca the important fact, that a close resemblance had enabled him to pass for his brother, who was still her faithful and unchanged lover. Who can tell the relief of restored confidence,—of the revived early and true affection?

But Lord Avonleigh returns home, acknowledges the rightful claim of Francesca as his daughter; yet, discovering, to his dismay, that this acknowledgment will legally disinherit his favourite son, he proposes to his newly-recovered child to pass for the daughter of an old friend. Francesca generously renounces her claims, "though none could have felt more keenly than herself what she resigned; from her childhood the pride of ancestry, in its noblest and most imaginative feeling, had been cultivated by her grandfather's narratives of the heroic deeds of the noble house of the Carraras." Lord Avonleigh's son is suddenly killed, and his lordship, impressed with a sense of retributive justice, avows Francesca, at her brother's funeral, to

are some of the most striking and touching descriptions. Is it not thus in the actual world? Love and Death, have they not sad meetings, to contend each for its victory? Oh, truthfully is Death thus frequent on pages which unfold the earthly destinies of humanity! for amid what fair and sunny spots in the landscape of Life can we wander, of which the deep still voice of Grief will not tell us, "in that garden there is a sepulchre?"

be his daughter and heiress. Although honoured with the name, she is not blessed with the love of her father ; his only care is to provide a suitable husband for his noble and wealthy daughter. Francesca learns the bitter truth that Lord Avonleigh is Evelyn's declared enemy ; yet she shrinks not from avowing her attachment to her incensed parent, who is urging her to accept the hand of one of Charles the Second's courtiers.

"It matters not!" exclaimed Lord Avonleigh, when he heard of her engagement, "for never shall Robert Evelyn wed daughter of mine, unless he take her pennyless and discarded. Why, your cavalier is a rebel, an exile, whose property is confiscated, and for whose neck the gibbet stands prepared!"

"And for whose sake I will bear an unchanged name, and an unaltered heart to my grave;" is the fearless and true-hearted reply of Francesca.

No sooner does Evelyn hear, from his brother's companion, of Francesca, than he hastens to England. They meet in the New Forest ; he tells her that he is no longer free, wealthy and noble ; he represents all she must risk and endure if she marry an exile. But what woman ever shrunk from suffering for another's sake ? The wealth of the heart's love, sympathy and confidence, is deemed a sufficient ægis against outward trial ; besides, Francesca felt it now her highest duty to cling to him who had loved her as a lonely orphan. Before she knew that she had a father living, she had pledged her faith to Evelyn ; this she explicitly states in her farewell letter to Lord Avonleigh : "I feel that I owe to Robert Evelyn a dearer debt than to yourself ; as he would have shared his prosperity with me, so will I share his adversity with him. I believed myself to be a poor and friendless orphan when I pledged that faith

which I will not retract as your rich and titled daughter. There were no truth in the world if I could depart from mine."

The next evening they kneel before the sacred altar; scarcely is the ceremony closed, when Lord Avonleigh appears with his men-at-arms, and arrests Evelyn. Francesca fell on her knees to supplicate for his pardon, but finding it useless, the blood of her high race mantled in every vein to meet the approach of danger; she calmly rose, went to Evelyn, on whose wrists the shackles were already placed, and, putting her hand through his arm, stood quietly by his side.

"Leave him!" exclaimed Lord Avonleigh; "foolish and obstinate girl, how dare you hold communication with an outlaw and a rebel?"

"I am his wife," said Francesca; while her calm dark eyes met those of her father unshrinkingly. "I am his wife."

What a fine scene would this be for a painting. Events lead on to the grant of the royal pardon, obtained through the kindly intercession of Francesca's early friend, Madame de Soissons, who is on a visit with some of the French court, and with the English monarch, at Avonleigh Castle.

Evelyn has been summoned to receive forgiveness; the King commands the presence of the Lady Francesca; she enters, and Evelyn leads her to Charles, who requests Lord Avonleigh to add his pardon. "My father!" exclaimed Francesca, "I implore you not to part from me with an unkindly feeling; I intreat you to recollect that Robert Evelyn loved me as a lowly and neglected orphan, that our affection has been tried in every way, and that for my sake he has risked liberty and life."

The King offers to restore to Evelyn a part of his

estates, but he disclaims all boon save that of pardon, and declares his intention of accompanying a band of Puritans into exile.

“‘Let my father’s house pass from me,’ he said, ‘even as I am about to pass away from my father’s land. When yonder dearest maiden stood with me before the altar, she knew that she wedded one whose future lot was that of an exile and a wanderer. The plan which I formed thoughtfully, I adhered to steadily. I am still bound to my brave companions; far across the ocean we will seek an altar and a home. For the faith which we profess we are ready to encounter every danger; we go in the name of God, and we believe He will guide us in safety through the wilderness. To night we sail.’”

“‘He is mad!’ said Lord Avonleigh; ‘at all events you, Francesca, will not go with him?’”

“She answered by placing her hand in Evelyn’s, and standing in silence at his side.”

— Another beautiful scene for a painting, and one which would form an exquisite companion to the scene of Francesca’s marriage.

For the one there would be the shadowy churchyard, the ancient tower rising in the moonlight; a few dimly-seen figures in the dark dress of the Puritans hastily retreating from the half-closed grave of Major Johnston. Evelyn and Francesca, who have just come from the bridal altar to kneel beside the grave of Guido, suddenly disturbed by the red glare of torches blending with the silvery moonbeams; and surrounded by steel-clad soldiers, headed by the gaily-dressed Buckingham and the infuriated Lord Avonleigh; these accessories should all lend their picturesque effect to the interest of the moment when Francesca clings to the fettered arm of Evelyn, and,

calmly looking upon her father, firmly says, "I am his wife."

The other picture should have for its scene the magnificent hall of an old baronial castle, the morning sun brightly shining on a group of courtiers gathered around their monarch. In the midst, Evelyn and Francesca, whose simple dress and noble bearing would form a striking contrast to the gaily-robed and light-minded assembly. The moment of interest would be when Evelyn, with undaunted mien and dignified firmness, having declared his high resolve of becoming an exile for his faith—Francesca—with

" Courage cast about her like a dress
Of solemn comeliness,
Her gathered mind, and her untroubled face
Giving her dangers grace,"

(*Donne.*)

—with womanly gentleness and womanly devotedness, calmly turning from that courtly throng, replies to her father's angry and expostulatory question, by placing her hand in her husband's, and standing in silence at his side.

The next night finds them on the ocean; after all their difficulties they are *together*; and with that thought is happiness. But a storm is rising—it increases; Francesca overhears the captain telling Evelyn that in a quarter of an hour they must inevitably strike on the rocks; with agony he exclaims, "It is for my sake she is here!"

"'Yes, Evelyn,' said Francesca, in a voice of touching sweetness, but calm, not one accent changed—'and here I am happy. Whatever be the world of which yonder dark sea is the portal, we shall seek it together. I knew that this earth was not my home,—that here hopes and affections were to be blighted

and to die. Heaven has restored us to each other ; it wills that our future be eternal. A deep and a sweet repose is in my heart at this moment ; and I await, as at an altar, that fate which is not of this life.'

" He gazed on her large bright eyes, raised for one moment to the sky, whose light was within them : they were uplifted but for that moment, and then turned upon him ; from his face they moved no more. Suddenly they were flung with violence against the side where they leant ; the vessel shivered like a living thing ; and planks and joints flew asunder with a sound which echoed far across the waters. One wild shriek, the cry of many voices, arose to Heaven, but in vain. Again the parting waves lifted the shattered vessel on high ; again it was dashed on the hidden rock ; this time it arose no more, and the last of life's agony was lost beneath the unfathomable sea."

We have given this abstract of Francesca's history, and dwelt thus particularly on her character, because we have felt in our inmost soul the touching beauty, the dignified yet softened charm, thrown around her noble and womanly spirit.

The whole work, peopled with its interesting beings of the mind, rich in its truthful sentiments, glowing with its radiant descriptions, language and imagery, leaves an impression of the softly-blended bright and mournful ; of soothing and elevating influences ;— more like than aught beside, in their soul-subduing pathos and spirit-stirring power, to the effects kindled by music's spell as breathed in the haunting strains of Beethoven's "Fidelia." *

* We subjoin, in confirmation of the high opinion above expressed, an appreciating paragraph from the "New Monthly Magazine :"

“ Miss Landon became the author of ‘ Francesca Carrara ’ ! A page of praise would not have greater force than this little sentence to him who has read that noble work studiously and reflectingly. Nobody who had been familiar only with the casual and careless writings of L. E. L. would have given her credit for the searching and many-winding power which is evinced in various passages of that composition. The rich painting, the poetical description, the happy portraiture of manners, the reading and the knowledge, the grace and the tenderness, were to be expected ; but the insight into nature, the penetration into the mysteries of character, the revealings into the inner world, the firm-handed dissection of the philosophy of life, ever curious in the speculations struck out, though often erring in the judgment, and always setting man’s *worst* foot foremost ; these are triumphs of her pen that few could have anticipated.”

EXTRACTS FROM "FRANCESCA CARRARA."

"MUTABLE as is our nature, it delights in the immutable, and we expect as much constancy as if all time, to say nothing of our own changeableness, had not shown that ever 'the fashion of this world passeth away.' And this alone would be to me the convincing proof of the immortality of the soul or mind, or whatever is the animating principle of life. Whether it be the shadow cast from a previous existence, or an intuition of one to come, the love of that which lasts is an inherent impulse in our nature. Hence, that constancy which is the ideal of love and friendship,—that desire of fame which has originated every great effort of genius. Hence, too, that readiness of belief in the rewards and punishments of a future state held out by religion. From the commonest flower treasured, because its perfume outlives its beauty, to our noblest achievements where the mind puts forth all its power, we are prompted by that future which absorbs the present. The more we feel that we are finite, the more do we cling to the infinite."

"We turn from an object even the most common and trivial for the last time, knowing it to be the last, with a touch of sad thoughtfulness. What then must be the feeling with which we look on this beautiful world, and know that such looks are the last? The mysteries of this wonderful universe rise more palpable upon the departing spirit so soon to mingle with its marvels. A voice is on the air, and

a music on the wind, inaudible to other ears, but full of strange prophecies to the dying; he stands on the threshold of existence, and already looks beyond it; his thoughts are on things not of this life; his affections are now the only limits that bind him to this earth; but never was their power so great; all other feelings have passed away. Ambition has gone down to the dust from which it so vainly rose; wealth is known to be the vilest dross of which chains were ever formed to glitter and to fall; hope has resigned the thousand rainbows which once gave beauty and promise to the gloomiest hour; all desires, expectations and emotions are vanished, excepting love, which grows the stronger as it approaches the source whence it came, and becomes more heavenly as it draws nigh to its birth-place—heaven."

"Every feeling that looks to the future elevates human nature, for life is never so low, or so little, as when it concentrates itself on the present. The miserable wants, the small desires and the petty pleasures of daily existence, have nothing in common with those mighty dreams which, looking forward for action and action's reward, redeem the earth over which they walk with steps like those of an angel, beneath which spring up glorious and immortal flowers. The imagination is man's noblest and most spiritual faculty, and that ever dwells on the to-come."

REMARKS ON "ETHEL CHURCHILL,"
WITH EXTRACTS.

"ETHEL CHURCHILL," as a whole, is not marked by a concentration of individual interest like "Francesca Carrara." It rather resembles "Romance and Reality" in its detached sketches and episodes; the scenes are, however, more highly wrought than in the former work, and the whole is pervaded with a richer colouring. With the many, probably, "Ethel Churchill" would be the favourite. There is less of the ideal, more of the actual; less of the poet's inner and abstract life, with more of the outward world's experience and ways; fewer of the beings of the mind, with more of life's every-day characters; while these are depicted rather by the lights of the author's genius, its fancy, wit, and acute perception, than marked by any of its usual shadows of poetical melancholy and sad reflection. The atmosphere of the gay world has steeped these pages in its roseate hues, and we everywhere find the echoes of fashionable circles: many of the delineations of society are strikingly brilliant, and bear witness both to the artist's philosophical and actual knowledge of the world. Wit sheds its brilliance over many a page, though sometimes varied with a shade of satire,—gentle, indeed, yet how truthful!—cast over all from the heart's conviction of the world's utter vanity.

These volumes may truly be called a portrait gallery of characters, which for the most part are admirable specimens of their respective classes. With the

exception of Lady Marchmont, they may find their prototypes among the varied scenes of social life. While they owe much of their interest to the poetical manner of their delineation, they also appear before us, not as the mere automata of fiction, but as actual existences animated with the life-breath of thought, feeling and action. This has required the master skill of the author, who, in placing before us the beings of the mind, has not only invested them with fancied attributes, but moulded them into very personifications of certain qualities and characteristics, which are manifested in their true nature amidst suitable circumstances,—portraits, in fact, whose realities we may often encounter in our every-day intercourse with mankind.

Take, for example, Lord Marchmont; he stands out as the robed and elected representative of his class,—that class, the pettiest, most self-loving, and self-privileged egotists to be found throughout the proprietorships of human nature. His character is the condensed and preserved essence of selfishness. How is this exemplified in every scene where his rigid and formal figure appears before us, looking and proving incapable of the slightest impulse of generous, or kindly, or considerate feeling,—as if his very soul were petrified into insensibility by the continual action of self-love! We scarcely wonder to hear such a man command his wife to put off her mourning for her dearest friend, because the husband of that friend was in the Opposition, and he (Lord Marchmont) would not have the reigning Minister of the day inquire the cause of Lady Marchmont's melancholy dress and appearance! We cannot be surprised even to find such a character, after uttering the sentence of final separation from his repentant and humbled wife, hurrying from her apartment, lest his delay should spoil

the first *gout* of some delicacy he had ordered for supper.

We leave him after this, without regret, to his fate; sympathy is alike unnecessary and impossible. Like all egotists of his class, Lord Marchmont, from his self-revolving pivot, regards his own petty feelings and small interests through the magnifying medium of self-love; while the joys and sorrows and welfare of others, however vast or important, he puts far away from his sight, or with the cold hand of indifference places them at the wrong end of the telescope of observation. Thus does selfishness effectually preclude any due concern for, or sympathy with the lot of our fellow-creatures. Fearfully will the neglect of the divine law of love—"Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you"—bring under condemnation characters who resemble that so forcibly delineated in the conduct of Lord Marchmont.

Constance Courtenaye is a beautifully drawn and touching portrait of a far different class to the character just mentioned. Her nature is one that interests all the best feelings, and appeals to all the deepest sympathies of the heart. Although we are told of no positive beauty, yet we feel throughout her history the spirit-loveliness which hangs around her delicate form. We perceive its charm as we watch her sweet expression, her purity, her fragility; and when we are told "that we must believe in angels as we gaze upon her face," so softly shadowed by her long, pale, golden hair, we are at once reminded of some of the hallowed countenances in Raphael's pictures, which do indeed appear as if their radiance were reflected from angelic beings. There was, too, a spirit-light of tenderest emotion in the eyes of Constance, while "her own peculiarly sweet and pleading smile seemed to implore kindness," and spoke, too, of that

peace within, which arose from her truly Christian character shedding its own soft lustre like lamplight over flowers, on every trait of conduct, and showing forth new beauties not else observable.

We scarcely know whether the touching depth, purity and devotedness of her woman's heart is more exquisitely shown in her love to her cousin, or in her affection to her father. So gentle, so disinterested was the former attachment, it is described as "the deepest and holiest feeling of her nature next to her love for her parent. It was love in its gentlest, tenderest, least earthly essence: it was hopeless, for in her humility she had never dreamed of a return. It was unalloyed by any meaner motive of vanity or interest, and surrendered its whole existence in a spirit of the purest and richest devotion." How is this exemplified in the scene with her father on the morning of her marriage with that cousin whom she so utterly loved, and who, though a former attachment rankled in his heart, had been induced, by family reasons, to wed the gentle Constance? "I never dreamt," were her words, "that one so beautiful and gifted could waste a thought on myself; but it was happiness to hope that he might be happy,—to think of him, to pray for him,—and now to know that he loves me (for he would not marry me without);"—how does the pure and trusting nature of woman shine forth in these few simple words!—"yet his love scarcely fills me with a deeper joy than does yours, my father!"

"As the door closed after Lord Norborne, Constance fell on her knees, and half said, half wept a thanksgiving for her entire happiness." Thus in the hour of joy did her Christian feelings bless the Gracious Hand whose Divine support she would soon need in the hour of trial.

Her love now showed itself in devotedness to her husband ; “ she would have made any sacrifice to have gratified his slightest wish ; or rather she would not have made any, since nothing could have appeared a sacrifice for him.”

“ In works of love, and these alone,
How restless, how minute,”

and how constant were all her tender cares and womanly kindnesses ! But in the midst of her happiness that entire love which can only be answered by love, finds that it is not fully requited. Kind and attentive as her husband was, the impress of his earlier attachment is visible on his spirit to the searching eye and subtle instinct of love. His kindness “ too often appeared to Constance as if it had something to make up to its object.” With most touching pathos is depicted her sweet openness to Lady Marchmont, whom, for the moment, she fancied had been her rival. Her own self-depreciation softly blends with the devoted wife’s appeal to the generosity of one more gifted and beautiful than herself : “ Will you not leave to me the little that my unwearied affection may gain of his heart ! Tell me, (and she knelt at Henrietta’s feet,) that you will not seek to win him again from me !”

Although mistaken as to the object of her husband’s attachment, the impression remains in her heart, and there enkindles that generous feeling which desires only the happiness of its loved one. Never was such feeling more sweetly embodied, or beautifully delineated. When thinking and speaking of her own, to herself, evidently approaching death, Constance rejoices even in the thought that her husband will be spared the bitterness of love’s separation. “ How could I bear,” she says,

“ to dwell for a moment on the agony of sorrow that he must feel did he love me with a love like mine own, and had to part? It soothes me to feel that he will be spared that bitter, that terrible despair.” With a self-forgetting affectionate forethought does she in her dying letter to her father seek to promote her husband’s future happiness, praying even “ that she whom he marries may be to Lord Norborne as a daughter.” “ My father, I charge you with the care of his happiness; think that it is the last, the dearest wish of your child. His ties will become yours, and a new growth of kindly interests and warm affections will spring up under the shadow of the old. If, as I sometimes hope, the departed spirit is permitted to retain its affections in another world, how tenderly will I watch over you !”

This is, indeed, a triumph over self, which only genuine Christian principle could achieve; and to this sacred influence all that is amiable and lovely and pure in Constance Courtenaye is throughout her brief life’s history ascribed. This, too, supports her on her death-bed,—a scene, how pathetically given! and, oh! how different in its light of immortal hope from the dying hour of Guido, elsewhere described! Sweetly does she commend her husband and father to each other’s mutual care: her only request to that husband so purely and devotedly loved, and the only words in which she trusts herself to breathe aught of that affection—(yet what a volume of meaning lies therein!)—speak to the inmost soul—“ Love my father, were it only for the great love I have borne to you.”

The source whence her spirit’s strength had been derived is shown to us in her last act,—the gift of her own Bible to her father,—and in the words which accompany that gift, together with the language of her dying letter: “ This has been my constant com-

panion; let it henceforth be yours: may it teach you, as it has taught me, the blessed hope in which I die. We shall meet again in a happier and better world. Henrietta, dear and kind friend, think sometimes of the peace and faith which support me even in death. Father, my beloved father, could I leave you as I do, with words of comfort, but for that divine belief whose truth is immortal?" * * * "Not in vain have those divine words been spoken; I die in their glorious faith, and in their cheering hope."

We are left to rejoice in, rather than regret, the early death of the gentle, the lovely, the Christian Constance. We feel that it was far happier for her trusting though wounded spirit to find its home of rest far away from the heart-withering realities of what, to her, was a wearying world:—

“ Then hushed be every thought that springs
From out the bitterness of things,—
Her quiet is secure;
No thorns can pierce her tender feet,
Whose life was like the violet sweet,
And like the jasmine pure.
Her nature to its inmost part
Had faith refined, and to her heart
A peaceful cradle given,—
Calm as the dew-drop's, free to rest
Within a breeze-fanned rose's breast,
Till it exhales to heaven.”

Wordsworth.

The other characters portrayed in these volumes have each their own separate interest. To many readers the real and celebrated personages of the time, skilfully introduced and appropriately delineated, will be most attractive. The wit, so piquant and renowned, of Lady Wortley Montague; the acute susceptibility and bitter self-regard of Pope, alike the poet and egotist; the political generalship and predominant qualities of

the statesman, Walpole; are all most graphically given in their circumstantial details, and most accurately wrought out in their varied combinations.

With the other beings of the author's mind, excepting Walter Maynard, we cannot now linger, as we have elsewhere commented on the melancholy history of Lady Marchmont; while for Ethel Churchill and Norborne Courtenaye, we feel from the first an irresistible conviction that we shall somehow leave them comfortably together; there is nothing in either to excite our strongest sympathies. These are called forth by Walter Maynard, the gifted, the enthusiastic, but unfortunate young poet, who is, perhaps, mentally, but too often, a true type of his class.

A sad, yet faithful tale, indeed, is contained in the page of human history which we have now opened; its picture of a literary life is so fraught with truth and beauty, with knowledge and feeling, that we cannot refrain from examining it somewhat minutely, while we embody our quotations from these volumes as illustrations of the mental character and outward history of the young poet.

Walter Maynard is first introduced among the still valleys of his youthful home, where, though apparently leading a desultory life, he was storing his mind with materials for the future productions of a creative and poetical mind. His reflections are the natural results of his own hopes and dreams of fame's charmed futurity.

"Ay," said he, while musing over the tombstones of a village churchyard, "this rude verse long outlasts those for whom it was written. The writer, the reader, the sorrow which it embalmed have long past away; not so the verse itself. Poetry is the immortality of earth; where shall we look for our noblest thoughts and our tenderest feelings, but in its eternal

pages? The spirit within me asserts its divine right; I know I am different from those who surround me. Can the gifts of which I am conscious be given to me in vain? It were a mockery of the mind's supremacy did I not believe in my own future." * * *

"We begin life; how buoyant, how hopeful! difficulties but bring out a healthful exertion, and obstacles stimulate by the resources they call into action. This cannot and does not last; it is not lassitude so much as discouragement that gains upon us; we feel how little we have done of all we once thought that we could do, and still more how little that we have done has answered its intention. This I believe to be experienced in every career, but more especially in a literary one. Necessarily dependent on imagination, feeling and opinion, of how exhausting a nature is both the work and the appeal of literature! Not a volume but has been the burial-place of many hopes, and the graven record of feelings never to be known again!

"Fame is bought by happiness! With what secret sorrow has that praise been received from strangers, denied to us by friends! Nothing astonishes me more than the envy which attends literary fame, and the unkindly depreciation which waits upon the writer; of every species of fame it is the most ideal and apart, and would seem to interfere with no one. * * * Perhaps—for the divine purpose runs through every aim of our being—the disappointment and the endurance are but sent to raise those hopes above, which else might cling too fondly to their fruition below. Sooner or later dawns upon us the conviction, that the gifts we hold most glorious were given for a higher object than personal enjoyment, or the praise which is of man. We learn to look at the future result, to acknowledge our moral respon-

sibility, and to hope that our thoughts, destined to become parts of the human mind, will worthily fulfil the lofty duty assigned to their exercise."

And this was the career Walter Maynard now proposed to himself,—a career begun under the brightest auspices of imagination, but closed amid the darkest shadows of disappointment and of hope unfulfilled. Such were the convictions whose reality he fully verified in his experience. He leaves the scene of his youthful dreams and noble aspirations to seek fame among men. He is soon destined to pine under the harsh realities of life. Necessity forces him to write for his daily bread. His own lofty and refined ideal of literature is brought down by the stern pressure of circumstances to the calculating question—Will what I have written sell? At length, worn out by the conflicts between the actual and imaginative, after having exhausted his energies of body and mind for the amusement of others, he is left to die, almost alone, neglected by all save his earliest friends, and mourning over the frequent abuse of talents of which approaching death reveals to him the true and high responsibility.

Let us, however, first follow him, from the quiet of his early abode, through some of his struggles with circumstance and misfortune. From these, alas! genius can grant no exemption; rather does it render more keenly alive to outward evil that imaginative temperament which is not only susceptible to the thorns, but prone to multiply the briars of this working-day world.

The collision of the poet's ideal hopes with the publisher's matter-of-fact mercenary proceedings is graphically described in Maynard's first interview with his bookseller:—

"It was with slow and languid steps that Walter

Maynard entered a bookseller's shop; he gave in his name, and the young man behind the counter civilly asked him to wait. He sat down, and mechanically turned over some volumes that lay beside him, but their contents swam before him. The lover may tremble while waiting for the mistress on whose lip hangs the heart's doom; but I doubt whether he feels equal anxiety with the young author waiting the fiat of his publisher. One figure after another emerged from the room behind, and at each step Walter Maynard felt a cold shudder steal over him, and then he started and coloured lest his agitation should be discovered; but the shop-boy was too used to such scenes to heed them. He never looked at the white lip tremulous with hope, which was rather fear; he noticed not the drops that started on the forehead. * * * *

“At last Walter Maynard's turn came; he entered a low, dark back-parlour, whose close and murky atmosphere seemed ominous; a little man was seated on a very high stool writing at a desk before him.”

* * * *

The publishing autocrat of the day is then characteristically portrayed. Reputation, feelings, or even chastisement, were as nothing weighed in the balance against his interest; life was to him only a long sum; his ledger was his Bible, and his religion, profit. For a little while he went on writing: this he did on principle.

“‘Do you think the pamphlet will suit you?’ said Maynard.

“‘Why, no—no,—yes, perhaps—but we must talk a little about it. You reason too much,—all young people are so fond of reasons—as if reasons were of any use.’

“ ‘Why, mine is a dispassionate appeal to the reason of the public; my object is to convince.’

“ ‘As if you ever convinced people by reason.’

“ ‘But I feel it is a duty I owe to the public,’ said the author.

“ ‘Good Lord! why, my dear sir, what duty do you owe to the public? The only duty you owe is to me, your publisher. It is your duty to write what will sell, and, I tell you, reasons are unmarketable commodities.’

“ ‘What would you have me do?’ sighed Maynard, in a desponding tone.

“ ‘Why, pepper and salt your reasons; your pamphlet has talent, but talent is like a cucumber,—nothing without the dressing; you must be more personal.’

“ ‘I detest personalities,’ said Walter.

“ ‘And I detest nonsense,’ said the other; ‘and I also detest works that wont sell. You mean to make scribbling your business?’

“ ‘I am,’ replied our young poet, ‘anxious to devote my feeble services to the cause of literature.’

“ ‘Here, take your pamphlet again; there is good material in it, but it requires the making up.’

“ Walter took up his manuscript with an embarrassed and mortified air. He had written with all the enthusiasm of a patriot of one-and-twenty, who believes and who hopes; suddenly, his high profession of faith, his earnest appeal to the noblest principles, was changed into a mere question of business. Moreover, in his secret soul he despised the plan proposed; but what could he do? His forlorn garret rose visibly before him; he could not even pay its rent for the coming week. It was the first conflict between the expedient and the ideal. For the first time a bitter

sense of how little consequence his speculative opinions could possibly be, rushed across him, and he held his papers with a hesitating grasp. Curl's quick eye caught the struggle, which yet he affected not to notice.

“ ‘I must have the pamphlet by the day after to-morrow,’ said he; ‘and to show that I have good hope of its success, here—here are ten guineas for you,’ and he counted the money out upon the table.

“ There was something in the ring of the coin that jarred upon Walter's ear; he was ashamed of being paid,—a false shame, and yet how natural to one both proud and sensitive!

“ ‘Time enough,’ said he, colouring, ‘to pay me when my work is done.’

“ ‘No, no,’ said Curl, ‘it will encourage you as a beginner. You young ones are so eager to see yourselves in print.’

“ ‘In print!’—there was a charm in that phrase which decided Walter. He took up his papers, and assured Curl that he should have sentiment and sarcasm enough by the following night.

“ ‘Good Lord!’ cried the astonished publisher; ‘you are a young hand at your work. Why, you are walking off, and have left your money behind you!’ * * * *

“ Walter again pursued his way, but in a very mixed reverie; sometimes writhing under an idea of degradation in thus making a trade of his talents; and then again somewhat consoled by the pride of art; for how many felicitous and stinging epigrams arose in his mind!

“ Lost in meditated satire, he arrived at the shop of Mr. Lintot. * * * *

“ His welcome to his visitor was more than friendly,—it was paternal, as he asked so anxiously how the air of London agreed with him.

“ ‘Terrible fog, sir,—terrible fog! You did not write your pastoral poems here? Very pretty they are; I wish every body had my taste for green fields and sheep; poetry would sell then.’

“ ‘One portion of my volume, at all events, finds favour with you?’ said Walter, very much encouraged by his reception.

“ ‘The whole, sir—the whole. It is a charming volume; the love-verses, too; pity that people don’t care about love; nobody’s in love now-a-days!’

“ ‘But what do you say to the satires?’ asked the author, not quite so elated.

“ ‘Dangerous things, sir,—dangerous things,’ said Mr. Lintot, drawing a deep breath. * * * *

“ ‘But there is nothing personal in my satire,’ said Walter.

“ ‘So much the worse!’ exclaimed Mr. Lintot. ‘What is the use of denouncing a vice?—denounce the individual.’ * * * *

“ ‘And now, do you think,’ asked Walter, ‘that the volume I left with you is likely to give satisfaction?’

“ ‘It is a charming book—very charming book! and I see that you are a clever young man. * * I foresee that you will succeed.’

“ ‘But about my volumes of poems?’ interrupted its author.

“ ‘Why, sir, it is hard to say,’ replied the cautious publisher; ‘poetry is not worth much at present; indeed, I never heard that it was. Homer begged his bread; you will excuse my little joke.’

“ ‘I am to understand, then,’ replied Maynard, ‘that it does not suit you?’

“ ‘Never draw a hasty conclusion,’ answered Mr. Lintot; ‘I mean to do my best for you.’

“ ‘Do you mean to publish my poems?’ cried Walter.

“ ‘ Why, you see, sir, the times are bad, and I am no speculator. I have a wife and family, and a man with a wife and family must be just before he is generous. * * I appeal to your feelings, sir, whether you would drive a hard bargain with a man in my situation ?’

“ ‘ I leave it entirely to yourself,’ replied Maynard, despondingly.

“ ‘ Sir, I will run the risk of publishing your volume. Paper and printing are terrible things; I wish books could do without them; but I will venture. I heard you highly spoken of yesterday; we will share what profits there are, and your list of subscribers will ensure us against loss.’

“ It did far more, by-the-bye, to say nothing of Sir Jasper Meredith’s secret guarantee.

“ ‘ And now business being over,’ said Lintot, ‘ will you dine with me ?’

“ Walter declined the invitation, precisely because he wanted a dinner. He was also conscious that he had made a very bad bargain; but how could he chaffer and dispute about things so precious as the contents of those pages, which were the very outpourings of his heart? There were recorded dreams glorious with the future, and feelings soft and musical with the past. * * * He walked along those crowded streets alive but to one delicious hope; and amid poverty, labour and discouragement, still steeped to the lip in poetry.

“ The fanciful fables of fairy land are but allegories of the young poet’s mind when the sweet spell is upon him. Some slight thing calls up the visionary world, and all the outward and actual is for the time forgotten. It is a fever ethereal and lovely; but, like all other fevers, leaving behind weakness and exhaustion: I believe there is nothing that causes so

strong a sensation of physical fatigue as the exercise of the imagination. The pulses beat too rapidly; and how cold, how depressed is the reaction!"

"And now Walter Maynard at the midnight hour is bending over a little table, while the rapid pen is slow in putting down the thoughts that crowd upon him; his cheek is flushed with eagerness, and the red lip is curved with triumph. It does not suit the scene around, but from that the mind of the young poet is far, far away. There was that desolate air about the chamber which is peculiar to an ill-furnished London room. * * * The young student was too much engrossed in his own charmed employ not to be insensible for a time to all external influences: he might suffer afterwards, but now his mind was his kingdom. Solitary, chilled and weary, yet the young poet hung over his page, on which was life, energy, and beauty; and under such or similar circumstances have been written those pages to which the world owes so much. A history of how and where works of imagination have been produced would be more extraordinary than the works themselves. Walter Maynard is but a type of his class."

"The life of the most successful writer has rarely been other than one of toil and privation; and here I cannot but notice a singularly absurd popular fancy that genius and industry are incompatible. The one is inherent in the other. A mind so constituted has a restlessness in its powers which forces them into activity. Take our most eminent writers, and how much actual labour must have been bestowed on their glorious offerings at the altar of their country and their fame! What a noble thing that fame is! Think what it is to be the solace of a thousand lonely hours,—to cheer the weary moments of sickness,—to fling a charm around even nature! How many are there to

whom in long after-years your name will come like a note of music, who will love and honour you because you have awakened within them thoughts and feelings which stir the loftiest dreams and sweetest pulses of their nature ! The poet's life is one of want and suffering, and often of mortification ; but far be it from me to say that it has not its own exceeding great reward. It may be late in coming, but the claim on universal sympathy is at last allowed. The future, glorious and calm, brightens over the grave ; and then for the present the golden world of imagination is around it."

We must pass over a powerfully-written description of the first night's success of Walter Maynard's tragedy.

He gains acquaintance, money and popularity ; but the vanity of trivial success led him from loftier pursuits, and induced habits of extravagance which soon involved him in debt, and he became poorer than ever. Bitterly did he feel the moral degradation of writing down to the taste or prejudices of a party, or flattering the self-love of his patrons. The eagerness of youthful hope was now gone, the enthusiasm of high endeavour had been disappointed, his idol of fancied gold had proved but clay in his hour of worship. In the next picture of him at his studies we have a contrast to the one formerly given.

" 'I cannot help,' said Walter, one evening, as he gazed listlessly from the window, 'reading my fate in one of those little boats now rocking on the tide, only fastened by a rope scarcely visible to the passer by. So am I tossed on the ebbing tide of life,—now in sunshine,—now in shade ; seemingly free, yet in reality fettered by the strong yet slight chain of circumstances. For a small sum any passenger may enter that boat, and direct its course ; and here again is

similitude : I am at the beck of others ; I may scarcely think my own thoughts ; they must run in whatever channel public taste may choose. And that reminds me I promised Curl his pamphlet this very night. How weary I am of exhausting the resources of language in dressing up the vague common-places of party, or giving plausibility to sophisms I feel to be untrue ! but it must be done ;' and muttering to himself,—

‘ For inspiration round his head,
The goddess Want her pinions spread,’

he drew his table towards him, and began to write.
* * * At first he wrote mechanically. It was no longer the eager and impassioned writer who in his early composition forgot want, cold and misery. No, the real had eaten like rust into his soul.”

* * * * *

“ Composition, like everything else, feels the influence of time. At first all is poetry with the young poet ; his heart is full of emotions eagerly struggling for utterance ; everything suggests the exercise of his own sweet art. A leaf, a flower, the star far off in the serene midnight, a look, a word, are enough for a poem. Gradually this profusion exhausts itself, the mind grows less fanciful, and poetry is rather a power than a passion. Feelings have hardened into thoughts, and the sensations of others are no longer almost as if they had been matter of experience. The world has become real, and we have become real along with it. Our own knowledge is now the material wherewith we work ; and we have gathered a stock of recollections, bitter and pleasant, which now furnish the subjects that we once created ; but these do not come at the moment’s notice like our former fantasies : we must be in the mood ; and such mood

comes but seldom to our worn and saddened spirits. Still 'the vision and the faculty divine' are never quite extinguished; the spiritual fire rises when all around is night, and the sad and tender emotion finds its old accustomed resource in music.

"Such was now the case with Walter Maynard; the softening influence of the quiet garden and the dreamy evening had gradually subdued him. Scenes long since forgotten had been peopling his solitude with one still cherished image paramount over all, whose eyes seemed to look upon him reproachfully."

At length a friend procures for Maynard the office of secretary to Sir George Kingston, one of the gallant wits of the day. Servitude he could submit to, but not to dishonour. His whole nature recoils from the mean deceit he was expected to countenance. He is again thrown destitute on the world with fast-declining health, and with no resources but his own wearied mind and exhausted energies. Remembering his first mean lodging when he came to London, as a cheap, out-of-the-way place, he repaired thither to die uncared for and unknown.

We cannot so explain all the intermediate scenes as to impart to this brief summary the touching interest attached to the visit of Maynard's earliest and dearest friends to his dying bed. Suffice it to say, that they who were the first companions of his youthful dreams were by his side in his last moments, sympathizing in his mournful situation, and gathering many a lesson of wisdom from his dying regrets and self-accusations.

" 'I cannot bear,' said Walter, at one time, 'to be here thinking over thoughts that fret my very life away. Alas! how I pine over all that was yet stored in my mind! Do you know,' continued he, with the eagerness of slight delirium, 'I am far cleverer than

I was? I have felt—have thought so much. Talk of the mind exhausting itself—never! Think of the mass of material which every day accumulates! Then, experience, with its calm, clear light, corrects so many youthful fallacies; every day we feel our greater power and our higher moral responsibilities. What beautiful creations even now rush over me!—but no, no, I am dying,—I shall write no more.’ ***

“ ‘ Deeply do I feel,’ said the poet, on another occasion, ‘ when the scattered thoughts obey my bidding no longer, and the hand once so swift to give them tangible shape lies languid at my side, that I have not done half that I ought to have done. How many hours of wasted time, how many worse than wasted, now rise up in judgment against me! And, oh, my God! have I sufficiently felt the moral responsibility of gifts like my own? Have I not questioned, sometimes too rashly, of what it was never meant mortal mind should measure? Have I not sometimes flung the passing annoyance of a wounded feeling too bitterly on my pages? I repent me of it now. Oh, my Creator!’ exclaimed he, ‘ I am not worthy of the gifts bestowed upon me! Let me not forget, that, though this worn and fevered frame perish, my mind remains behind to influence and to benefit its race! May what was in aught evil of its creations be forgotten; may aught that was good endure to the end!’ ”

“ And so perished, in the flower of his age, in the promise of his mind, the high-minded and gifted Walter Maynard. He died poor, surrounded by the presence of life’s harsh and evil allotment, but the faithful and affectionate spirit kept its own till the last.

“ How many beautiful creations, how many glorious dreams, went with him to the tomb! But the

unfulfilled destiny of genius is a mystery, whose solution is not of earth. It is but one of those many voices wandering in this wilderness of ours that tell us not here is our lot appointed to finish. We are here but for a space and for a season,—for a task and a time,—and the end no man knoweth. The earthly immortality of the mind is but a type of the heavenly immortality of the soul. Peace be to the beating heart and the worn spirit that had just departed—where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest!”

*Excursion with L. E. L., illustrative of
"Ethel Churchill."*

WHEN visiting with Miss Landon our mutual friends, a desire was expressed to see to advantage the banks of the Thames, and become acquainted with the localities so fraught with historical associations; a day was, therefore, fixed for a row down the river.

The day was a thoroughly English one, blending sunshine and shade most capriciously, yet most beautifully.

Frequently did the waterman, who was really a fine specimen of his class, call our attention to some interesting spot. It was evident he had some favourite place to introduce to us. It came at length, and his intelligent countenance grew most animated as he exclaimed, "There! there! that's the very place! You may see the hole in the wall, where the letters and money were deposited. In 'Jacob Faithful,'" I mean, added he; "perhaps the ladies may have read the book?"

"Now," said L. E. L., "this is a bit of true fame. While the warriors whose glory once shone over the river, and the kings who adorned its banks with royal splendor, are at best but coldly remembered, the author who has identified himself with the interests and sympathies of a large portion of his fellow-creatures, how gratefully and admiringly is his name treasured!"

With graceful eloquence, Miss Landon's poetical spirit evoked the beings and scenes of bygone days, and peopled shore and stream with visions called up from the storied past.

Perhaps nothing will convey a better idea of the general character of the conversation than a passage

from "Ethel Churchill," the work Miss Landon was then writing:—

"Unless we except the Tiber, there is no river which has so much history about it as the Thames, and which is so strongly impressed with the characteristics of its nation. There are signs of that commercial activity which has carried the flag of England round the world; there is that cleaving to the past which has preserved those stately churches inviolate—the glorious receptacles of the dead; and there, too, is evidence of that domestic spirit which goes back upon itself for enjoyment, and garners up its best hopes in a little space."*

Many and brilliant also were the poetical remarks elicited by the scenery and other incidental circumstances. A heavy storm at length compelled us to put ashore, and seek shelter among some trees. "I am sure we ought to be very thankful," she gaily said, "for the troubles of life, when they are as picturesque as this shower. The changing lights and shadows of a stormy day are so beautiful, the earth is never so lovely as then; and what would character be without the softening touch of sorrow?"

One regret mingles with that day's pleasures of memory, that we did not go on to Twickenham, as L. E. L. proposed. It would have been a bright association to have visited the site of Pope's favourite villa, with one whose own genius would have added another charm to the spot; and how would it have stamped with living interest the pages devoted to its description in "Ethel Churchill!"

That dreamy evening and its shadowy influences, who could forget? The sun was just setting as we entered our boat to return. Behind us the sky was bright, where day's parting light yet lingered, and bright was its reflection on the waters. For a little while we had over us the crescent moon and one silvery star; before

* Ethel Churchill, vol. ii. p. 218.

us, the river was growing dark, and the trees on shore deepening in hue.

“Ah!” said L. E. L., “this is just like life. We leave our youth behind us, like yonder crimson and glowing light; as we advance, all things assume a colder and gloomier aspect. Well! we are going home.” Then, in a livelier tone, she quoted, as perfectly descriptive of the scene,—

“The moon is up, and yet it is not night;
Sunset divides the sky with her. * * *

* * * * *
A single star is at her side, and reigns
With her o'er half the lovely heaven.” * *

Gradually the soothing influence of the hour and scene filled the heart, while over sky, earth and wave silence folded its brooding wings, undisturbed, save by the measured plashing of the oars, and the faint echo of some far-off sound; and night came gently on. Darker and darker grew the sky; deeper and deeper gathered the shadows over bank and stream; till numberless stars shone forth on the heavens, and light after light glimmered out on the distant shore. We talked of the singular effects of light and shade. How strangely the river looked, as if it were of immense width, and parted into long avenues, which might perchance be regions of beauty; and how like was this illusion to the prospects of Hope, which seem in the distance to spread far and wide, but when we approach, we find them restricted to the narrow current of life, and bounded by circumstance and necessity.

Solemnly, as a spirit's voice, came over the waters the toll of the bell from Westminster Abbey, reminding us that hope would be indeed limited, if this life were all; but that time is only the shore, whence we may gain prospects of the future, commensurate with our high and eternal destinies.

As we approached the bridge, it seemed literally coming down upon us. “I do believe,” said L. E. L., as we landed, “that what we fancy difficulties are only such

apparently ; and, while we imagine some great obstacle is in our way, we have only to go boldly on, and, like the princess in the fairy tale, we shall find the black marble yield to our touch."

And now, in turning over the pages bright with the genius of the gifted one, how do her descriptions of "the river, whose banks are haunted by memory ;" of Westminster Abbey,—“the altar of the warrior and the grave of the poet, shedding its own sanctity on the atmosphere,”—bring back that charmed day so vividly associated with her living presence !

OBJECTIONABLE PASSAGES IN PROSE WORKS.

IN each of these admirable works there are some exceptions against the generally correct taste and sound judgment of the author.

In "Romance and Reality," the ridiculous capture of Lady Mandeville and Emily, by Signor Guilio, their *ci-devant* hair-dresser, is an incident too ludicrous for admission into aught beside broad comedy. It jars upon our feelings as a dereliction from the principles of true taste.

In "Francesca Carrara," the confusion of Francis, with Robert Evelyn, in consequence of their striking resemblance, is another error of judgment; especially of woman's judgment. If all the world beside had been deceived, Francesca ought not to have mistaken her lover. All the thousand minute peculiarities of character, known only by those who are to *each other as their own soul*, ought to have been sufficient evidence against the fancied identity. It is not a valid excuse for this solecism to urge that Francesca was conscious of a great change in her lover, and of a corresponding change in her own feelings; on no ground can we admit the possibility of a woman ever making such a mistake. The plea, that, had this error been expunged, the whole texture of the work must have been altered, was, perhaps, considered by the author as a sufficient reason for its sufferance; we wish, however, it had been otherwise.

In "Ethel Churchill," the fault proceeds from a yet deeper error of judgment, and occurs in the history of Lady Marchmont. That fearful history, the moral delinquency of whose close, the writer could only shadow forth by the striking supposition,—

“that if ever an evil spirit be allowed to enter our frail tenement, such spirit would have seemed to enter into Henrietta Marchmont.” Well might this tragedy be prefaced with the solemn and prayer-filled lines,—

“God in thy mercy keep us with thy hand !
 Dark are the thoughts that strive within the heart,
 When evil passions rise like sudden storms,
 Fearful and fierce ! Let us not act those thoughts !
 Leave not our course to our unguided will,—
 Left to ourselves all crime is possible ;
 And those who seemed the most removed from guilt
 Have sunk the deepest !”

Leaving this terrible page of human misery and guilt to make its own rightful impression, we have to do critically with Lady Marchmont's long-previous preparation of poison, and that, too, by a chemical process, requiring care and time, as though she were determined to be armed against some foreseen emergency. Now, neither Lady Marchmont's character nor circumstances were at the time such as to justify the introduction of such a strange procedure as her midnight task in her uncle's laboratory. True, in losing that uncle, she had lost the only friend who could sympathize with her feelings; granted, that she was not happy in her marriage, owing to her husband's equal deficiency of head and heart; but then her own character was a genial one, her spirits were buoyant, and she found ample amusement in general society; her evils were rather negative than positive; we consider her rather as not happy, than as absolutely miserable. Her strongest feelings yet slumbered in the depths of her heart, yet unawakened by her after guilty attachment to Sir George Kingston, and by the unrelenting injustice of her husband after her expressed repentance.

Setting the moral question aside, then, and considering the circumstance only in relation to the general principles of human nature and action, there was not sufficient *motive* to induce Lady Marchmont to undertake such a deadly task. It was when her strongest feelings had been aroused,—when her heart's only treasure of love had been wrecked by treachery and deception,—when hate and scorn took the place of that love,—when her timely repentance and true humiliation were harshly rejected by her husband,—when the fearful elements of crime were thus evoked, and gathered themselves into passion's blackness of darkness,—it was then, and *not till then*, when the wild tempest of conflicting emotions overwhelmed the soul with agony, that we can fancy a demon of darkness to have seized the helm of reason, and driven with terrible yet momentary impulse the scarcely-conscious spirit to some deed of desperation. We may be wrong, but we think the annals of murder will afford few precedents of deliberate resolve, of thoughtfully conceived and skilfully executed plans, except the agencies in the instigation of the crime have been the cunning of insanity, the diabolical spirit of revenge, or some long-cherished purpose of guilt, originating with characters totally different from that of Lady Marchmont. Her conduct, indeed, in this particular, is so utterly out of keeping, not only with philosophy, but with probability, that it is a matter of wonder the strange anomaly should have been overlooked by the gifted writer, who knew so well the mechanism of human nature, and had observed with so much acumen the varied revealings of its inner impulses and outward actions.

There is yet a deeper fault visible on some of L. E. L.'s pages, which it were a crime against our conscience to pass over in silence. We allude to her

occasional introduction of fate, or inevitable necessity, to whose irresistible decrees and uncontrollable influence she often erroneously ascribes the conduct of her characters, and the consequences of that conduct. True, it might be that her mind, enamoured of the poetical and shadowy agency that pervades the poetry, philosophy and mythology of the ancients, borrowed the idea only to give a classical colouring to her works. It must be lamented, however, that any talented author should aid in perpetuating, in a yet more tangible form, a creed of so dangerous a tendency as fatalism. In the dark ages of paganism, men, vainly seeking by their own reason to discover the efficient Cause of things, both in the material and moral world, imagined for themselves superhuman agents in these different departments, and invested them with the attribute of uncontrollable power; to the one they gave the name of Nature, to the other that of Fate; in both cases, with the blindness of unassisted reason, did they mistake the effect for the cause, so that when they traced even the footsteps of God in His visible manifestations, "yet they glorified Him not as God." But shall the more privileged minds of later days, before whose eye the light of revelation has dispersed the darkness of conjecture, still dare to turn reason back to where dimly hovers a blind and imaginary fate, instead of bidding faith look upward, whence shines forth, in all the proceedings and events of this world, a Divine Providence, interfering not with the free will of His creatures, but overruling all things with infinite wisdom and gracious mercy, and even—

" From seeming evil still educing good ?"

While sincerity has thus compelled us to notice with regret that one sentiment of error should leave the

slightest shadow on one page of so interesting a writer, yet we do rejoice to find ample testimony throughout her works, especially her latest ones, that the light of truth was predominant in L. E. L.'s own mind, and thence almost invariably reflected on her productions.

L. E. L.'s LAST WRITINGS.

WE cannot bring our observations to a close without briefly noticing the latest writings of L. E. L., viz., those papers published since her death, in the second volume of Mr. Blanchard's interesting memoirs. The first of these is her tragedy completed just before her departure from England. This is founded on the character and career of Castruccio Castrucani, the patriot of Lucca. We are not competent to judge of its professional capabilities as an acting drama, though surely, in many of its scenes, it must gratify the taste, and in all its sentiments interest the sympathies, of a worthy British audience. As a work of art, it certainly commands admiration. The fine and well-sustained characters, with the exquisitely-adapted circumstances of action, the dramatic situations and effects, the noble strain of thought, the vigorous expression of that thought, the concentration of interest in Castruccio, and yet the unflagging sympathy attracted by every circumstance connected with him,—each scene in fact bearing upon and linked with the final interest of the whole tragedy;—such characteristics as these must secure its rightful place among the highest dramatic productions of the age. As an intellectual work, it is manifestly superior to many of L. E. L.'s own former poems. Not only is it gemmed with the pearls of fancy, but richly strewn with the cultured harvest of thought. Language, style and sentiment are alike vigorous and impressive. Its moral tone is earnest, truthful, and, in the best sense of the word, high-minded. No petty, mean motives, no selfish, unworthy ends, dis-

figure the conduct of the hero; but he is throughout distinguished by a true patriot's disinterested love for his country, and chivalrous devotedness to its welfare;—a noble example of one who esteemed no sacrifice of personal ease, feeling or interest, too costly to offer on the altar of the public good,—one who leaves on the mind the certain conviction that patriotism is indeed something more than a name, whenever it finds a shrine in such characters as Castuccio Castrucani.

A series of papers, on several of the female characters in Sir Walter Scott's works, were sent over from Cape Coast Castle. Not only are these papers invested with the deep interest of being the depositories of some of their gifted writer's latest recorded sentiments, but their own intrinsic value, derived both from their intellectual and moral tone of thought and feeling, increases even the above-mentioned mournful charm. They are, indeed, what could be wished for the author's own sake;—they are what might be gladly accepted as earnest of the innate and growing strength of her mental character,* left to its own resources and solitude of thought; they are also evidences of the gradual inclination of her moral judgment to a higher standard of right and wrong, both in feeling and conduct, than is to be

* Of the progressive change in her mental tastes and habits of thought, L. E. L. herself remarks, in comparing her former with her present perusal of Scott's works: "I can remember I devoured the story keenly, dwelt on all that partook of sentiment, and never questioned the depth of any remark. I now find I take chief interest in what brings out character, * * * and am every now and then tempted to analyze the truth of a deduction. I think more over what I am reading, and delight more in connecting the world of fiction with that of reality."—*Blanchard's Life of L. E. L.*, vol. ii.

learned amid the sophistries of the world, or than is required for success in the gay lists of mere fashionable literature.

In reading over these comments on the creations of another, one must be struck with the pervading influence of a predominant characteristic of L. E. L.'s mind,—an extensive knowledge of human nature, with a keen perception of individual character. Here, also, is strongly evinced her peculiar facility of originating the ideal even from the actual, of fusing and blending the fine gold of thought and sentiment with the coarser metal of circumstance and fortune.

Thus the clandestine attachment in the history of Julia Mannering, which quickly yields to her inherent good feeling and sense of propriety, gives rise to the important sentiment: "Deception is always an evil, but in youth—youth whose very faults should be open-hearted and impetuous—it lays the foundation of the worst possible faults of character." We hail with grateful sympathy the gentle apology that is made for the occasional caprice of Monkbarns, whose disappointment and regret have closed all the avenues of warmer affections,—who has suffered too much to risk such suffering again,—yet whose kindness peeps out in spite of indulged humorous oddities and a system of callousness. This we are reminded is a true picture: "How often, among our acquaintance, have we met some individual whose crabbed temper has provoked our irritability, or whose peculiarities have awakened our mirth! Could we look into the early history of that individual, and trace the causes that have led sorrow to mask itself with eccentricity, we should feel only wonder and pity: but the waters of life are for ever flowing onwards, and little trace do they bear of what clouds have darkened or reddened the

waves below as they floated by." Again, the history of Diana Vernon, whose purity and loftiness of character has been formed by hardships and difficulties, elicits some just and beautiful reflections on the trials and temptations of various kinds which they must encounter whose lot it is to struggle with the world: "How often," is the forcible concluding remark, "will the right and the expedient contend together, while the faults of others seem to justify our own, and the low but distinct voice within us be half lost while listening to the sophistry of temptation justifying itself by example! Yet how many nobly support the trial, while they have learned of difficulties to use the mental strength which overcomes them, and have been taught by errors to rely more decidedly on the instinctive sense of right, which at once shrinks from their admission!" Applying this truth to the history of Diana Vernon, "what," it is asked, "were to her the difficulties around her path, but as so many steps towards forming a character high-minded, steadfast, generous and true,—a lovely and lonely flower over which the rough winds have passed, leaving behind only the strength taught by resistance, and keeping fresh the fairness, blessing even the earth with its sweet and healthy presence."

As the character of Rebecca, the Jewess, "stands pre-eminent amid Scott's finest conceptions," so does it kindle into their truest eloquence the thoughts and feelings of L. E. L. "If there be one thing," she observes, "which redeems our fallen nature, which attests that its origin was from heaven, and its early home in paradise, it is the generous sympathy that, even in the most hardened and worldly, warms in the presence of the good and the beautiful. There must have been, even in those whose course has darkened into crime, an innocent and hopeful time; and the

light of that hour, however perverted and shadowed, is never quite extinguished. Enough remains to kindle, if but for a moment, the electric admiration, whose flash, like the lightning, is from above.

* * * * We are tempted, and we fall; we lack resolution to act upon the promptings of our better and inward self; the wings of our nobler aspirations melt in the heat of exertion; the dust of the highway chokes our finer breathing; and if at any time we pause and commune with ourselves, alas! what do we find ourselves to be?—low, weak, selfish and old; how different from what we once hoped to be! But nature is never quite subdued to what she works in: and hence the homage, that is of love, rises to that which is above us—to beauty and to truth.”

Many valuable truths and fine moral lessons does L. E. L. beautifully suggest to our minds from her own impression of Scott's interesting narrative of the Jewess. “The characteristic of Rebecca is high-mindedness born of self-reliance. From a very infant she must have been a ‘being breathing thoughtful breath.’ * * * From her infancy she must have learnt to be alone. Solitude, which enervates the weak, feeds and invigorates the strong, mind. Skilled in the art of healing, she knew the delight of usefulness; and she learnt to pity, because familiar with suffering. No one, not even the most careless, can stand beside the bed of sickness and death without learning their sad and solemn lessons. Within her home she was surrounded by luxury, and that refinement which is the poetry of riches; but she knew that Danger stood at the threshold, and that Fear was the unbidden guest who peered through their silken hangings. * * * History offers no picture more extraordinary than the condition of the Jews during the middle ages. Their torture and

their destruction was deemed an acceptable sacrifice to that Saviour who was born of their race, and whose Sermon on the Mount taught no lessons save those of peace and love. When Madame Roland went to execution, she turned towards the statue of that power, then adored with such false worship, and exclaimed, 'Oh, Liberty! what crimes are wrought in thy name!' The Christian might say the same of his faith; but different, indeed, is the religion which is of God and that which is of man!"

Rebecca is left to suffer from an unhappy attachment; but her nobleness of character forsakes her not. L. E. L. reminds us, in a concluding remark of touching beauty, that care for her father's old age, kindness to the poor and the suffering, and the workings of a mind strong in endurance, would bring tranquillity, if not happiness, till the hand might be pressed to the subdued heart without crying "Peace, peace, where was no peace."

In the comment on the history of Marmion's Constance, having referred to the low and degrading estimate of women by the classic writers of antiquity, L. E. L. observes: "But Christianity brought its own heaven to the things of earth: every passion was refined, and every affection exalted. Only under the purifying influence of that inward world to which it gave light could sentiment have had its birth; and sentiment is the tenth Muse and fourth Grace of modern poetry."

How much of discriminating judgment and deep thought are embodied in the following sentences! "In the description of Constance there is that strong perception of the actual, which is Scott's most marked characteristic. He paints her exactly what in all probability she would have been: he works out the severe lesson of retribution and degradation. * *

“It is the strangest problem of humanity,—one too for which the closest investigation can never quite account,—to trace the progress by which innocence becomes guilt, and how those who formerly trembled to think of crime are led on to commit that at which they once shuddered. The man the most steeped in wickedness must have had his innocent and his happy moments ; a child, he must have played in the sunshine with spirits as light as the golden curls that toss on the wind. His little hands must have been clasped in prayer at his mother’s knee ; he must, during some moment of youth’s generous warmth, have pitied human suffering, and wondered how man’s blood could ever be shed by man ; and if this holds good of man, how much more so of woman ! But that it is one of those stern truths which experience forces us to know, we never could believe in murder as a feminine crime.” * * * * “We can trace the degradation of Constance step by step ; we see how the timid has grown hardened—the resolute reckless—and the affectionate only passionate. Constant contact with coarser natures has seared the finer perceptions, and the sense of right and wrong is deadened by hardship, suffering and evil communion. The character so formed is worked upon by the most fearful passion which can agitate the human heart, that which is strong as death and cruel as the grave—the passion of jealousy. * * * Scott deprecates censure on him who

‘died a gallant knight
With sword in hand for England’s right ;’

still more might we deprecate it for her who died in ‘Holy Isle.’ The morality of pity is deeper and truer than that of censure. The sweetest and best qualities of our nature may be turned to evil by the

strong force of circumstance and temptation. * * *
Remorse, unattended by repentance, always works for evil,—it adds bitterness and anger to error.”

But we must pass on to the one portrait of deepest interest in the whole series—Jeannie Deans. We thus distinguish it, partly for its own sake, for the fine moral lesson it embodies, and partly for its association with a personal characteristic of L. E. L.,—a characteristic which essentially belongs to an enlarged and generous mind, viz., openness to conviction, with a candid acknowledgment of error. It is the ignorant and narrow mind, with its shortsighted and one-sided view of things, that is ever the blinded slave of prejudice, and the obstinate assertor of its own infallibility. The enlightened and expanded mind, on the contrary, as it proceeds on its ever-widening way, sees how much more knowledge there is to be acquired than was at first deemed to exist, and consequently how often previously-formed opinions must stand corrected by sources of judgment continually opening up in its progress; and while the intellect in such a nature is quick to discern its own errors, the heart is equally prompt to confess the wrong and acknowledge the right. Thus was it with Miss Landon. Not the least arrogance ever marked her expressed opinions, although sometimes, in the excitement of conversation, she would throw out sentiments which she found after reflection or further information would not defend; then with the utmost frankness was the former assertion immediately retracted. Of this her comment on Jeannie Deans is a delightful exemplification. The whole passage is peculiarly interesting. After observing, that “although we are continually hearing of evil in the world, yet how should we be startled to find crime had been committed by one dear to

our inmost hearts! What a moral revolution would such a discovery produce! how weak we should find ourselves under such a trial! how soon we should begin to disconnect the offender and the offence! then for the first time we should begin to understand the full force of temptation, and to allow for its fearful strength; and should we not begin to excuse what had never before seemed capable of palliation? Jeannie Deans's refusal to save her sister—so young, so beloved, so helpless,—at the expense of perjury, has always seemed to me the noblest effort in which principle was ever sustained by religion. How well I remember (at such a distance from England I may perhaps be pardoned for clinging to every recollection of the past) a discussion between some friends and myself, as to whether Jeannie Deans should have saved her sister's life—even with a lie, I am afraid, I rather argued—and for a great right do a little wrong—that, to save one whom I loved, I must have committed the sin of perjury, and said, 'On my soul be the guilt:' that, if even to refuse a slight favour was painful, who could bear to say 'No!' when on that 'no!' hung a fellow-creature's life—that fellow-creature most tenderly beloved! *But I was in error—that worst error, which cloaks itself in a good intention, and would fain appear only an amiable weakness.*"

How truthfully and impressively, too, does L. E. L. account for the moral sublime of Jeannie Deans's conduct! "She could not have laid the sin of perjury upon her soul: she had been brought up with the fear of God before her eyes: she could not—dared not—take His name in vain. Many a still and solemn Sabbath, by the lingering light of the sunset sky, or with the shadow of the lamp falling around

his grey hairs, must she have heard her father read the tale of how Ananias and Sapphira his wife were struck dead with a lie upon their lips;—dared she go and do likewise? To her the court of justice with its solemnities, and the awful appeal of its oath, must have seemed like a mighty temple. It was impossible that she could call upon that Book, which from the earliest infancy had been the object of her deepest reverence, to witness to the untruth. Yet with what more than Roman fortitude she prepares herself for suffering, toil, danger,—any thing, so that she may but save her young sister! With what perfect simplicity she perseveres even unto the end! The kindness she meets with takes her by surprise; and worldly fortune leaves her the same kind, affectionate, and right-minded creature. Well may it be said that Jeannie Deans is a heroine in the highest and best sense of the word. * * * Scott seems to have delighted in scorning the usual accessories of interest, and yet how strongly is the interest excited!—it is the very triumph of common sense and rigid principle.

‘ We recognize
A grandeur in the beating of her heart,’

though that heart beat neither for love, fame, nor ambition.”

We must linger yet a moment over the last poems of L. E. L. One of these, written just before her departure from England, was addressed to a long-proved and invaluable friend,—one who, while appreciating her genius with the warmth of a judicious admirer, watched over her welfare with the care of a tender mother. The friendship of this lady and her family was indeed esteemed by Miss Landon as one of her greatest blessings. They were friends whose

deep and true interest shone with the light of sympathy for years around her life-path. By them she was understood in all her varying moods. To them, in changing circumstances, prosperous or perplexing, she turned from the factitious throng of outward flatterers, and found in hearts that knew no guile, and voices that never breathed unkindness, the relief and support she required. Their homes were the green and sunny spots where her spirit sought for rest, when worn in the crowded highways of the world. Their generous kindness and protecting care were around her during the last few months she dwelt in her native land, securing her comfort, shielding her from anxiety, and brightening with the sunshine of long-tried affection the wings of Hope already spread for the far-off golden shore. Truly do they, the disinterested and faithful-hearted, possess in the memory of these things their own rich reward! Such friendships, in sooth, like the tree cast into the waters of Marah, may gently infuse sweetness and calm through the sometimes bitter and troubled current of a literary life. A stanza or two from this poem will show how this was verified in the present instance :

* * * * *

“ How often shall I think of thee
 In many a future scene !
 How can affection ever be
 To me what thine has been !

How many words scarce noticed now
 Will rise upon my heart,
 Touched with a deeper tenderness
 When we are far apart !

* * * * *

I met thee when my childish thoughts
 Were fresh from childhood's hours ;—
 That pleasant April time of life,
 Half fancies and half flowers.

Since then how many a change and shade,
 In life's web have been wrought !—
 Change has in every feeling been,
 And change in every thought.

But there has been no change in thee
 Since to thy feet I came,
 In joy or sorrow's confidence,
 And still thou art the same.

Farewell ! my own beloved friend,
 A few years soon pass by ;—
 And the heart makes its own sweet home
 Beneath a stranger sky ;—

A home of old remembrances,
 Where old affections dwell ;
 While Hope that looks to other days,
 Soothes even this farewell."

* * * * *

How abiding were these feelings is touchingly evinced in the yearning tenderness of the two poems written during her voyage to Cape Coast, and which are the last recorded melodies of the Poet's heart and memory. Most vividly did home associations rise on her mind as, gazing on the polar star, she breathed the impassioned wish,—

* * " Oh ! would to me were given
 A power upon thy light ;
 What words upon our English heaven
 Thy loving rays should write !
 Kind messages of love and hope
 Upon thy rays should be ;
 Thy shining orbit would have scope
 Scarcely enough for me !"

And, again, in her picture of "Night at Sea," how are her vivid descriptions linked with her deep

emotions ! how does the feeling of present loneliness,
 blending with the fond remembrances of absent
 friends, appeal to our dearest sympathies !—

* * * * *

“ The very stars are strangers as I catch them
 Athwart the shadowy sails that swell above ;
 I cannot hope that other eyes will watch them
 At the same moment with a mutual love.
 They shine not there as here they now are shining,
 The very hours are changed—ah ! do ye sleep ?
 O'er each lone pillow midnight is declining ;—
 May some kind dream at least my image keep !
 My friends, my absent friends !
 Do you think of me as I think of you ?

* * * * *

Bearing upon its wings the hues of morning,
 Up springs the flying fish, like life's false joy,
 Which of the sunshine asks that frail adorning
 Whose very light is fated to destroy !
 Ah ! so doth genius on its rainbow pinion,
 Spring from the depths of an unkindly world ;
 So spring sweet fancies from the heart's dominion,—
 Too soon in death the scorched-up wing is furled.
 My friends, my absent friends !
 Whate'er I see is linked with thoughts of you.

* * * * *

Sunshine is ever cheerful, when the morning
 Wakens the world with cloud-dispelling eyes ;
 The spirits mount to glad endeavour, scorning
 What toil upon a path so sunny lies.
 Sunshine and hope are comrades, and their weather
 Calls into life an energy like spring's ;
 But memory and moonlight go together,
 Reflected by the light that either brings.
 My friends, my absent friends !
 Do you think of me then ? I think of you.”

Long will these poems of truthful affection and earnest appeal linger on the heart's memory of all who knew and loved their author. To those who had not that privilege, they will yet possess the charm of poetic beauty, wrought from the suggestive influences of the outward world upon the Poet's inmost soul. The interest of moral feeling also pervades these verses, in their revealings of the depths of kindness and grateful attachment that blended with the high intellectual powers of L. E. L.

CONCLUDING REMARKS :

L. E. L.'s Knowledge of the World, and Representations of Human Life.

THE Extracts we have interspersed through these Essays, though necessarily few and detached, are, we trust, sufficient proofs of the truth of our own imperfect observations, founded on a careful analysis of L. E. L.'s Poetical and Prose writings. They will also afford evidence, where such may be needed, of her rich dower of genius, and its varied manifestations. From the whole survey arises the conviction, that the distinguishing feature of her works is the extensive knowledge of human nature, whether in its more ideal forms, or in its ordinary developments of everyday life and character. The chambers of imagery in her own mind were evidently peopled with the varied creations that spring from and bear the impress of life's vicissitudes—of fiery trial, or wearying endurance—of the heart's deep emotions, with the soul's lofty aspirings and immortal hopes. These, transferred to her pages of thoughtful beauty, come home to our sympathies, and present some congenial object suited to almost every varying mood of an intelligent and sensitive spirit.

If we might be allowed here to make a personal allusion, we should say, that this knowledge of human nature and life was peculiarly conspicuous in Miss Landon's own social character. When her genius folded its wings, and walked forth in the usual garb of society, that genius might be still recognized in the courteous and nicely-fitting compliment, the piquant remark, the brilliant repartee, and sometimes

in the full flow of eloquence. By her graceful and kindly politeness, her ready wit, the almost intuitive tact with which she adapted her varied conversational powers to the peculiar dispositions, personal tastes and interests of those with whom the chances of society might bring her into contact ;— all this being expressed with an irresistible fascination of manner very gratifying to the feelings of the individuals concerned, and by which she invariably became the centre and charm of every circle graced with her presence.* It will be said,

* After all, perhaps, little can one judge of real character from the superficial view only which general society presents, least of all of such beings as L. E. L. Perhaps if twenty persons who had spent the same evening with her had been asked their opinion, each would have given a different one. Her society-character did in truth resemble the disputed colour of the chameleon, changing its hues with the changeful lights around. In all her varying moods, however, there was an obvious regard to the feelings of others, so that prejudice itself was disarmed, and indifference won over to admiration. That her real nature should sometimes have been misunderstood, is not to be wondered at. The ancient philosophers possessed an outer and inner philosophy, the one for their own refined and cultivated understandings, the other for the obtuser perceptions of the multitude. Is there not, in like manner, belonging to the genius-gifted few, an outer and inner character, the relative proportions and consequent development of which depend on the individual's natural and intellectual temperament, and on the varying circumstances by which it is necessarily influenced? Not that such persons seek beneath a mask to impose upon others. Their manner and its interpretation, to the wise and appreciating, are, under all changes, perfectly intelligible. But not more likely were the uninitiated to understand the refined mysteries and subtle distinctions of the inner doctrines of ancient philosophy, than are now the frivolous, worldly-minded and cold-hearted of our species to comprehend the lofty thoughts and deep feelings of superior natures. Therefore it is necessary, before mixing in the crowd, for genius to veil the earnest brow, the kindling eye, the soul-fraught expression, beneath the measured smiles of courtesy and the ready common-places of conventional

perhaps, this was owing, in conjunction with her attractive talents, to her knowledge of the world, rather than to any philosophical views of human nature. What is knowledge of the world but knowledge of the human mind in some of its most striking aspects, brought out by actual circumstances? True politeness itself has also been defined as "the knowledge of the human mind directing general benevolence." It is thus the art of giving pleasure, by raising such ideas and feelings in the minds of others as will afford the most pleasure, and averting as much as possible every idea which may lead to pain. It implies, therefore, a fine knowledge of the natural series of thoughts; and this foresight, acquired by attentive observation of the various characters of mankind, in a long intercourse with society, is the true knowledge

politeness. Besides, this may be necessary also for the individual's own sake. "There is," observes L. E. L. "in mental exertion an absolute necessity for reaction. * * * To this may be ascribed the difference that often exists between the writings and the conversations of genius. In the first is embodied the moral truth of their being worked out by strong belief and deep feeling; the other contains all that is sceptical and careless,—it is the glitter of the waters when not at rest. The thousand paradoxes that spring up are thrown off for amusement and for relief, and recklessly flung aside by the utterer, who never means them to be taken as the creed of his real sentiments, or of his more earnest thoughts."

As akin to these reflections occurs to us a conversational remark of L. E. L. One evening she observed to us, in connexion with this very subject: "It ever seems so strange to me that people should mistake the semblance of excessive cheerfulness, when it is assumed only as a mask to conceal the real features of the wearer. When mirth takes a sarcastic form, it always gives me an idea of the speaker's own internal wretchedness; for when does the foam mantle highest on the wave and sparkle brightest in the sunshine?—is it not when that wave is passing over the jagged rock, and the rugged stone lurking beneath?"

of the world. "He who knows the world must have studied the mind of man. He is a practical philosopher, and therefore a speculative one also, since he must have founded his rules of action on certain principles,—the results of his own observation and reflection."*

As we have seen that this practical knowledge was exemplified in Miss Landon's social character, so likewise is the philosophical knowledge which it implies manifested in her writings.

But some will contend that L. E. L. does not give a correct view of human nature; she sets (to use a quaint phrase from the critique already quoted) "man's *worst* foot foremost;" she forsakes the sunny, and lingers only on the dark, side of life.

We have already considered this objection at some length; yet, as it involves some important principles, a few additional remarks may be offered.

We say, then, bring all L. E. L.'s representations to the proof. Let the most keen-sighted observation of the external world,—let the deepest scrutiny of man's inner being,—bring the result of their researches to the judgment of calm reflection—of sound reason—and we believe that Truth will give its verdict on the author's side.

What, then, it will be asked, is there no such thing as happiness in the world? Read these works thoughtfully, and what is the reply? Affection, intellect, pleasure, prosperity, the generally acknowledged elements and sources of earthly happiness, are pourtrayed in their richest colouring; and yet weariness, dissatisfaction, sadness and suffering, track them so nearly, blend with them so

* Dr. T. Brown.

closely, that the very atmosphere of life is darkened by these gathering clouds.

But this, it may again be urged, is an exaggerated picture, sketched by a poet's fancy, and shadowed by a poet's morbid feeling.

The wisest of men who had experimentally tried every possible source of gratification, and that, too, in the highest degree and widest latitude, turned from all, to record his conviction, attested by the seal of inspired truth—"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!"

Ask the votary of Pleasure if he be happy? He will confess he is weary—wary of himself, and weary of the time that must elapse between one scene of excitement and another;—and then weary of the very scene for which he had craved.

Ask the Prosperous man if he be happy? He will tell you of anxious nights and toilsome days,—of ever-growing restlessness, and of ever-increasing dissatisfaction.

Ascend a step higher, and ask the individuals to whom Affection has become a world,—who have made one fellow-being the lode-star, the centre of their soul,—if they be happy? They will turn pale, as they tell you of the fear of separation, of the dread of losing the object who has become *as the very life of their life*.

Or go on to the lofty Intellectual natures who hold alone dominion far above their kind,—who would fain believe, and make others believe, that their imaginings and pursuits are self-sufficing,—if they be happy? Appeal to such an one,—not in the regal hour of inspiration, when his spirit evokes to minister around its throne all lovely and glorious forms,—not in the hour of gentler musing, when his whole being seems like a surgeless lake in its rich and radiant repose,—not when he is enchanted

by the syren song of Fame alluring him on and yet on by its spirit-stirring tones,—but in the hour of visionless solitude—of mental exhaustion—in the hour of stern retrospection—of fearful foreboding—when the nothingness of the world and the world's pursuits—the nothingness of what he himself has pursued and idolized—is forced upon his startled conviction,—in the hour of disgust with the frivolity of his fellow-creatures, and his own unworthy littleness in ministering to the folly which he despises,—in the hour when his inmost soul yearns for companionship, for confidence, for sympathy, for affection—when he keenly feels that his minstrel's crown is entwined with thorns;—then appeal to such an one for the reality of his happiness. He will tell you that the few and feverish hours of intellectual excitement but ill compensate for the increased sensitiveness of nerves unsheathed, as it were, by his own mind's workings,—for the languid pulses of reaction wearied by his too long-sustained efforts,—that his loftiest imaginings place him not above the reach of the cruel shafts of envy and malevolence,—that his deep feelings shield him not from the impertinence of the curious—the sneers of the ignorant—the coldness of the unappreciating,—all of which evils enter as iron into his soul. He will tell you that his wasted gifts and neglected responsibilities haunt his dying hour as so many ministers of vengeance.

It is thus, we believe, that experience would verify the truths of what are frequently termed Miss Landon's melancholy views of the world. Admitting their truth, however, there is one other admission necessary, that all her gloomy representations belong to human nature in its unchanged state, destitute of the light of Christianity to brighten and

bless. Her views and estimate of life, with its affections and pursuits, are correct, inasmuch as she represents life unsanctified by religion,—affections whose element is earthliness, and pursuits unredeemed by the hope and prospect of eternity. And we know that a far higher Authority than any human voice has warned us, that temporal happiness consists only of evanescent pleasures and flattering anticipations, which, if not absolutely delusive, if occasionally partially realized, are yet not connected vitally and permanently with our inmost being. We are taught, ay, and often made to feel, by bitter experience, that all which claims the name of enjoyment is only a glittering tracery on the sands of our present position, which the next wave of time may sweep for ever from our sight. Desirous as we may be to shrink from hearing these truths, they may not the less be verified in our own life's history.

L. E. L. has chiefly shown us what the world is at its best estate, *without* Christian principle; how could she then faithfully represent it otherwise than as melancholy, destitute of the joy-giving, healing and perpetuating influences of the leaves of the Tree of Life, without which, the very next moment may turn each source of pleasure into a cause of misery. How beautifully and instructively might she have given in contrast what life becomes when it is guided and governed, elevated and blessed, by true religion! Of this we have a few glimpses in one or two of her characters,—in the hallowed influence which is represented as comforting and strengthening Beatrice under all her dangers and duties, as supporting Francesca in all her varied trials, and as enabling Constance Courtenaye calmly to die in peace and hope through that divine belief whose trust is immortal, and to which the Bible had been her guide.

L. E. L.'s own words have told us that "nothing more truly proves that life is but a trial than the pleasures which depart, the sense of enjoyment which deadens, and the disappointments which spring up at every step in our pilgrimage. Could life preserve its illusions, who would be fit to die? Vanity of vanities is written on this side of the grave but that we may more clearly discern that on the other shines the hope of immortality."*

From her high intellectual eminence might L. E. L. have turned yet more frequently from the darkly-shadowed landscape of worldliness, to a region bright with immortal hope, fresh as with the gales of paradise, and serene as the crystal firmament. For life has a brightness which no cloud can dim, when life's scenes, characters and pursuits reflect—as the mountain heights the morning rays—the beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

We have often thought how impressively and beautifully L. E. L. would have delineated life under this aspect. How would the characters thus hallowed rise in dignity, usefulness and happiness!—how would all circumstances call forth the noble self-denial, the generous sacrifice, the voluntary assistance!—how would trials be represented as patiently endured, blessings as thankfully enjoyed!—how would all the aspirations of the soul be moulded into beneficial influences, and the poet's dying hour become irradiated with thankfulness, and a hope full of immortality!

Truly the principles and destinies which Christianity unfolds are worthy of being depicted by the noblest intellect, and of filling the sympathies of the most expanded heart; for "Wisdom, in that she is conversant with God, magnifieth her nobility."

* Francesca Carrara, vol. i. p. 203.

Let not religion be spoken of as melancholy ; for how can that be a melancholy influence, which, while it elevates, satisfies every power, and breathes into every deep and true enjoyment the breath of immortal life ! Existence, destitute of this influence, must be indeed necessarily and essentially melancholy ; but admit religion, and you admit what will raise and brighten human nature with all its powers and susceptibilities, its deepest sources of interest and its dearest objects of affection.

Admit religion as the guide of life, and it will gently lead through ways of pleasantness and paths of peace, amid green pastures and beside still waters. Admit religion to the intellectual dominion, and it will give to literature a depth of interest, while heightening its grace and splendor ; it will pervade the spirit with the influences of the wisdom that cometh from above ; it will open up, in bright perspective, visions of glory and loveliness far surpassing what the unenlightened mind of man could otherwise conceive ; and it will clear and strengthen the eye of faith to look beyond the dim horizon of earthly renown, to heaven's star-wrought firmament, where the gifted among men who have rightly used their talents shall shine in eternal honour.

Admit religion into the heart, and it will deepen and strengthen every right feeling and affection, expand and refine every sympathy, while it will wrap around the objects of our soul's love the imperishable heaven-woven mantle of the future's hope, preserving them through all the vicissitudes of this life, until we meet them in our Father's home on high.

Religion, indeed, does not promise exemption from the ordinary lot of existence, but it offers, amid all

changing circumstances, an unfailing refuge. If the waves of life's troubled ocean be sometimes tempest-tossed, there yet rise around us, in the wide waste, isles of sunny richness and sweet repose,—

“ Where silverly the echoes run,—
Thy will be done ! Thy will be done ! ”

If the shadows of earthly sorrow may sometimes deepen into midnight gloom, to the Christian there ever ariseth light in darkness, for he sees already dawning above the horizon the bright and morning star which shall guide him to the regions of cloudless and everlasting day.

Religion can alone fill the heart here with a peace which, as the world cannot give, so neither can it take away, and prepare its possessor for that future state where there is a fulness of joy,—for that divine inheritance where there are pleasures for evermore.

Such, then, are the prospects of life when religion is there ; and such, therefore, are the rightful contrasts to the opposite pictures of life as destitute of Christian principle.

Would that L. E. L.'s own gifted hand had also embodied some of these contrasts ! Alas ! the silver cord of her life has been too early loosed,—the golden bowl of her rich imaginings is broken at the fountain,—the daughter of music is brought low, and the sweet voice of her soul's eloquence is hushed in death !

With far different feelings must we close this part of our essay to those which dictated the parting good wishes of the former. At that time the genius of L. E. L. was shedding its full light on the literary world, and years of happiness seemed before her. A few short months, and suddenly, as the departing

splendor of the sun from eastern skies which know no twilight, has her life's sun gone down while it was yet day.

How often, gently and mournfully, in the lonely hour, or amid the circles once graced by her living presence, will the evening breeze waft from ocean solitudes the last recorded strains of her spirit's music!—

“Do ye think of me, my friends! do ye think of me?”

—while, as often, borne on the wing of bright remembrance to the far-off golden shore, our hearts will mourn beside the lonely grave of the lamented L. E. L., and to her touching appeal will indeed earnestly, though sadly respond—

We mourn for thee, we mourn for thee,
 Daughter of Genius, crown'd Queen of Song!
 Poet's and woman's birthright did belong
 Alike to thee; the empire of the mind,
 With the heart's gentler sway, thy power combined.
 Farewell, oh, mournfully farewell!

We think of thee, we think of thee,
 The richly-dowered in genius-haunted home,
 Where radiant visions ministering would come;
 While thou didst win from all some charmed reply,
 Tuned to the soul's most touching melody.
 Farewell, oh, mournfully farewell!

We think of thee, we think of thee,
 In lighted halls, at social evening-tide,
 When thou of those fair circles wert the pride ;
 As summer lightning, playing 'mid the clouds,
 Thy wit illumined Fashion's dullest crowds.
 And now, farewell,—alas, farewell !

We think of thee, we think of thee,
 Bright monarch, in thy spirit's regal mood,
 When round thy throne Thought rolled its sparkling
 flood,
 Gay with Imagination's sunny beam,
 Or darklier touched by Sadness' moonlight gleam.
 Farewell, oh, mournfully farewell !

We think of thee, we think of thee,
 Sweet Ladye, in dear Friendship's genial hours,
 When, like refreshing dew, that gems the lovely
 flowers,
 Thy kindness gave new grace to every deed and word,
 Calling fresh fragrance from each treasured hoard.
 Farewell to thee,—alas, farewell !

We think of thee, we think of thee ;
 Thy brow the minstrel's crown might well adorn,
 Tho' oft for woman's heart it bears a thorn ;
 So to thy sight while fairest prospects glowed,
 Wert thou not doomed to tread a painful road ?
 Farewell, now gently fare thee well !

We think of thee, we think of thee,
 When Hope's white flag, a flatterer, to beguile,
 Waved o'er the bark that bore from us thy smile ;
 Thine, who then veiled thy glowing light of fame
 In the soft shade of trusting woman's claim.
 Farewell, oh, mournfully farewell !

We think of thee, we think of thee,—
 Ay, sadly think of thy brief exile state;
 Thou, thou art gone, thy place left desolate.
 Oh! Africa, would that your golden shore,
 Our lost, our radiant treasure might restore!
 Bright one, farewell,—alas, farewell!

We'll think of thee, we'll think of thee;
 Thou hast a shrine in every beauteous thought
 And feeling deep within thy Pages wrought;
 Thou hast a home in Friendship's fond regret;
 Bright Star, on memory's sky thou ne'er shalt set!
 Farewell, oh, sadly fare thee well!

THE END.

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