

a substitute for religion, in destroying or suspending self. Afterwards, in consequence of the extension of the Roman empire, some universal or common spirit became necessary for the conservation of the vast body, and this common spirit was, in fact, produced in Christianity. The causes of the decline of the Roman empire were in operation long before the time of the actual overthrow; that overthrow had been foreseen by many eminent Romans, especially by Seneca. In fact, there was under the empire an Italian and a German party in Rome, and in the end the latter prevailed.

He then proceeded to describe the generic character of the Northern nations, and defined it as an independence of the whole in the freedom of the individual, noticing their respect for women, and their consequent chivalrous spirit in war; and how evidently the participation in the general council laid the foundation of the representative form of government, the only rational mode of preserving individual liberty in opposition to the licentious democracy of the ancient republics.

He called our attention to the peculiarity of their art, and showed how it entirely depended on a symbolical expression of the infinite,—which is not vastness, nor immensity, nor perfection, but whatever cannot be circumscribed within the limits of actual, sensuous being. In the ancient art, on the contrary, every thing was finite and material. Accordingly, sculpture was not attempted by the Gothic races till the ancient specimens were discovered, whilst painting and architecture were of native growth amongst them. In the earliest specimens of the paintings of modern ages, as in those of Giotto and his associates in the cemetery at Pisa, this complexity, variety, and symbolical character are evident, and are more fully developed in the mightier works of Michel Angelo and Raffael. The contemplation of the works of antique art excites a feeling of elevated beauty, and exalted notions of the human self; but the Gothic architecture impresses the beholder with a sense of self-annihilation; he becomes, as it were, a part of the work contemplated. An endless complexity and variety are united into one whole, the plan of which is not distinct from the execution. A Gothic cathedral is the petrefaction of our religion. The only work of truly modern sculpture is the Moses of Michel Angelo.

The Northern nations were prepared by their own previous religion for Christianity; they, for the most part received it gladly, and it took root as in a native soil. The deference to woman, characteristic of the Gothic races, combined itself with devotion in the idea of the Virgin Mother, and gave rise to many beautiful associations.¹

Mr. C. remarked how Gothic an instrument in origin and character the organ was.

He also enlarged on the influence of female character on our education, the first impressions of our childhood being derived from women. Amongst oriental nations, he said, the only distinction was between lord and slave. With the antique Greeks, the will of every one conflicting with the will of all, produced licentiousness; with the modern descendants from the northern stocks, both these extremes were shut out, to reappear mixed and condensed into this principle or temper;—submission, but with free choice, illustrated in chivalrous devotion to women as such, in attachment to the sovereign, &c.

LECTURE II.²

General Character of the Gothic Literature and Art.

IN my last lecture I stated that the descendants of Japhet and Shem peopled Europe and Asia, fulfilling in their distribution the prophecies of Scripture, while the descendants of Ham passed into Africa, there also actually verifying the interdiction pronounced against them. The Keltic and Teutonic nations occupied that part of Europe, which is now France, Britain, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, &c. They were in general a hardy race, possessing great fortitude, and capable of great endurance. The Romans slowly conquered the more southerly portion of their tribes, and succeeded only by their superior arts, their policy, and better discipline. After a time, when the Goths,—to use the name of the noblest and most historical

¹ The reader may compare the last two paragraphs with the first of Schlegel's *Preflections on Dramatic Art and Literature*—Vol. i. pp. 10-16, 2nd edit.—and with Schelling *Ueber das Verhältniss der bildenden Künste*, p. 377; though the resemblance in thought is but general.

² From Mr. William Hammond's note taken at the delivery. *Ed.*

of the Teutonic tribes,—had acquired some knowledge of these arts from mixing with their conquerors, they invaded the Roman territories. The hardy habits, the steady perseverance, the better faith of the enduring Goth rendered him too formidable an enemy for the corrupt Roman, who was more inclined to purchase the subjection of his enemy, than to go through the suffering necessary to secure it. The conquest of the Romans gave to the Goths the Christian religion as it was then existing in Italy ; and the light and graceful building of Grecian, or Roman-Greek order, became singularly combined with the massy architecture of the Goths, as wild and varied as the forest vegetation which it resembled. The Greek art is beautiful. When I enter a Greek Church, my eye is charmed, and my mind elated ; I feel exalted, and proud that I am a man. But the Gothic art is sublime. On entering a cathedral, I am filled with devotion and with awe ; I am lost to the actualities that surround me, and my whole being expands into the infinite ; earth and air, nature and art, all swell up into eternity, and the only sensible impression left, is ‘that I am nothing !’ This religion, while it tended to soften the manners of the Northern tribes, was at the same time highly congenial to their nature. The Goths are free from the stain of hero worship. Gazing on their rugged mountains, surrounded by impassable forests, accustomed to gloomy seasons, they lived in the bosom of nature, and worshipped an invisible and unknown deity. Firm in his faith, domestic in his habits, the life of the Goth was simple and dignified, yet tender and affectionate.

The Greeks were remarkable for complacency and completion ; they delighted in whatever pleased the eye ; to them it was not enough to have merely the idea of a divinity, they must have it placed before them, shaped in the most perfect symmetry, and presented with the nicest judgment : and if we look upon any Greek production of art, the beauty of its parts, and the harmony of their union, the complete and complacent effect of the whole, are the striking characteristics. It is the same in their poetry. In Homer you have a poem perfect in its form, whether originally so, or from the labour of after critics, I know not ; his descriptions are pictures brought vividly before you, and as far as the eye and understanding are concerned, I am indeed gratified. But if I wish my feelings

to be affected, if I wish my heart to be touched, if I wish to melt into sentiment and tenderness, I must turn to the heroic songs of the Goths, to the poetry of the middle ages. The worship of statues in Greece had, in a civil sense, its advantage, and disadvantage; advantage, in promoting statuary and the arts; disadvantage, in bringing their gods too much on a level with human beings, and thence depriving them of their dignity, and gradually giving rise to scepticism and ridicule. But no statue, no artificial emblem, could satisfy the Northman's mind; the dark wild imagery of nature which surrounded him, and the freedom of his life, gave his mind a tendency to the infinite, so that he found rest in that which presented no end, and derived satisfaction from that which was indistinct.

We have few and uncertain vestiges of Gothic literature till the time of Theodoric, who encouraged his subjects to write, and who made a collection of their poems. These consisted chiefly of heroic songs, sung at the Court; for at that time this was the custom. Charlemagne, in the beginning of the ninth century, greatly encouraged letters, and made a further collection of the poems of his time, among which were several epic poems of great merit; or rather in strictness there was a vast cycle of heroic poems, or minstrelsies, from and out of which separate poems were composed. The form of poetry was, however, for the most part, the metrical romance and heroic tale. Charlemagne's army, or a large division of it, was utterly destroyed in the Pyrenees, when returning from a successful attack on the Arabs of Navarre and Arragon; yet the name of Roncesvalles became famous in the songs of the Gothic poets. The Greeks and Romans would not have done this; they would not have recorded in heroic verse the death and defeat of their fellow-countrymen. But the Goths, firm in their faith, with a constancy not to be shaken, celebrated those brave men who died for their religion and their country! What, though they had been defeated, they died without fear, as they had lived without reproach; they left no stain on their names, for they fell fighting for their God, their liberty, and their rights; and the song that sang that day's reverse animated them to future victory and certain vengeance.

I must now turn to our great monarch, Alfred, one of the most august characters that any age has ever produced;

and when I picture him after the toils of government and the dangers of battle, seated by a solitary lamp, translating the holy scriptures into the Saxon tongue,—when I reflect on his moderation in success, on his fortitude and perseverance in difficulty and defeat, and on the wisdom and extensive nature of his legislation, I am really at a loss which part of this great man's character most to admire. Yet above all, I see the grandeur, the freedom, the mildness, the domestic unity, the universal character of the middle ages condensed into Alfred's glorious institution of the trial by jury. I gaze upon it as the immortal symbol of that age;—an age called indeed dark;—but how could that age be considered dark, which solved the difficult problem of universal liberty, freed man from the shackles of tyranny, and subjected his actions to the decision of twelve of his fellow-countrymen? The liberty of the Greeks was a phenomenon, a meteor, which blazed for a short time, and then sank into eternal darkness. It was a combination of most opposite materials, slavery and liberty. Such can neither be happy nor lasting. The Goths on the other hand said, You shall be our Emperor; but we must be Princes on our own estates, and over them you shall have no power! The Vassals said to their Prince, We will serve you in your wars, and defend your castle; but we must have liberty in our own circle, our cottage, our cattle, our proportion of land. The Cities said, We acknowledge you for our Emperor; but we must have our walls and our strong holds, and be governed by our own laws. Thus all combined, yet all were separate; all served, yet all were free. Such a government could not exist in a dark age. Our ancestors may not indeed have been deep in the metaphysics of the schools; they may not have shone in the fine arts; but much knowledge of human nature, much practical wisdom must have existed amongst them, when this admirable constitution was formed; and I believe it is a decided truth, though certainly an awful lesson, that nations are not the most happy at the time when literature and the arts flourish the most among them.

The translations I had promised in my syllabus I shall defer to the end of the course, when I shall give a single lecture of recitations illustrative of the different ages of poetry. There is one Northern tale I will relate, as it is one from which Shakspeare derived that strongly marked

and extraordinary scene between Richard III. and the Lady Anne. It may not be equal to that in strength and genius, but it is, undoubtedly, superior in decorum and delicacy.

A Knight had slain a Prince, the lord of a strong castle, in combat. He afterwards contrived to get into the castle, where he obtained an interview with the Princess's attendant, whose life he had saved in some encounter; he told her of his love for her mistress, and won her to his interest. She then slowly and gradually worked on her mistress's mind, spoke of the beauty of his person, the fire of his eyes, the sweetness of his voice, his valour in the field, his gentleness in the court; in short, by watching her opportunities, she at last filled the Princess's soul with this one image; she became restless; sleep forsook her; her curiosity to see this Knight became strong; but her maid still deferred the interview, till at length she confessed she was in love with him;—the Knight is then introduced, and the nuptials are quickly celebrated.

In this age there was a tendency in writers to the droll and the grotesque, and in the little dramas which at that time existed, there were singular instances of these. It was the disease of the age. It is a remarkable fact that Luther and Melancthon, the great religious reformers of that day, should have strongly recommended, for the education of children, dramas, which at present would be considered highly indecorous, if not bordering on a deeper sin. From one which they particularly recommended, I will give a few extracts; more I should not think it right to do. The play opens with Adam and Eve washing and dressing their children to appear before the Lord, who is coming from heaven to hear them repeat the Lord's Prayer, Belief, &c. In the next scene the Lord appears seated like a schoolmaster, with the children standing round, when Cain, who is behindhand, and a sad pickle, comes running in with a bloody nose and his hat on. Adam says, "What, with your hat on!" Cain then goes up to shake hands with the Almighty, when Adam says (giving him a cuff), "Ah, would you give your left hand to the Lord?" At length Cain takes his place in the class, and it becomes his turn to say the Lord's Prayer. At this time the Devil (a constant attendant at that time) makes his appearance, and getting behind Cain, whispers

in his ear ; instead of the Lord's Prayer, Cain gives it so changed by the transposition of the words, that the meaning is reversed ; yet this is so artfully done by the author, that it is exactly as an obstinate child would answer, who knows his lesson, yet does not choose to say it. In the last scene, horses in rich trappings and carriages covered with gold are introduced, and the good children are to ride in them and be Lord Mayors, Lords, &c. ; Cain and the bad ones are to be made cobblers and tinkers, and only to associate with such.

This, with numberless others, was written by Hans Sachs. Our simple ancestors, firm in their faith, and pure in their morals, were only amused by these pleasantries, as they seemed to them, and neither they nor the reformers feared their having any influence hostile to religion. When I was many years back in the north of Germany, there were several innocent superstitions in practice. Among others at Christmas, presents used to be given to the children by the parents, and they were delivered on Christmas day by a person who personated, and was supposed by the children to be, Christ : early on Christmas morning he called, knocking loudly at the door, and (having received his instructions) left presents for the good and a rod for the bad. Those who have since been in Germany have found this custom relinquished ; it was considered profane and irrational. Yet they have not found the children better, nor the mothers more careful of their offspring ; they have not found their devotion more fervent, their faith more strong, nor their morality more pure.¹

LECTURE III.

The Troubadours—Boccaccio—Petrarch—

Pulci—Chaucer—Spenser.

THE last Lecture was allotted to an investigation into the origin and character of a species of poetry, the least influenced of any by the literature of Greece and Rome,—that in which the portion contributed by the Gothic conquerors,

¹ See this custom of Knecht Rupert more minutely described in Mr. Coleridge's own letter from Germany, published in the 2nd vol. of the *Friend*, p. 320. *Ed.*

the predilections and general tone or habit of thought and feeling, brought by our remote ancestors with them from the forests of Germany, or the deep dells and rocky mountains of Norway, are the most prominent. In the present Lecture I must introduce you to a species of poetry, which had its birth-place near the centre of Roman glory, and in which, as might be anticipated, the influences of the Greek and Roman muse are far more conspicuous,—as, great, indeed, as the efforts of intentional imitation on the part of the poets themselves could render them. But happily for us and for their own fame, the intention of the writers as men is often at complete variance with the genius of the same men as poets. To the force of their intention we owe their mythological ornaments, and the greater definiteness of their imagery; and their passion for the beautiful, the voluptuous, and the artificial, we must in part attribute to the same intention, but in part likewise to their natural dispositions and tastes. For the same climate and many of the same circumstances were acting on them, which had acted on the great classics, whom they were endeavouring to imitate. But the love of the marvellous, the deeper sensibility, the higher reverence for womanhood, the characteristic spirit of sentiment and courtesy,—these were the heir-looms of nature, which still regained the ascendant, whenever the use of the living mother-language enabled the inspired poet to appear instead of the toilsome scholar.

From this same union, in which the soul (if I may dare so express myself) was Gothic, while the outward forms and a majority of the words themselves, were the reliques of the Roman, arose the Romance, or romantic language, in which the Troubadours or Love-singers of Provence sang and wrote, and the different dialects of which have been modified into the modern Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese; while the language of the Trouveurs, Trouveres, or Norman-French poets, forms the intermediate link between the Romance or modified Roman, and the Teutonic, including the Dutch, Danish, Swedish, and the upper and lower German, as being the modified Gothic. And as the northernmost extreme of the Norman-French, or that part of the link in which it formed on the Teutonic, we must take the Norman-English minstrels and metrical romances, from the greater predominance of the Anglo-

Saxon Gothic in the derivation of the words. I mean, that the language of the English metrical romance is less romanized, and has fewer words, not originally of a northern origin, than the same romances in the Norman-French ; which is the more striking, because the former were for the most part translated from the latter ; the authors of which seem to have eminently merited their name of Trouveres, or inventors. Thus then we have a chain with two rings or staples :—at the southern end there is the Roman, or Latin ; at the northern end the Keltic, Teutonic, or Gothic ; and the links beginning with the southern end, are the Romance, including the Provençal, the Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, with their different dialects, then the Norman-French, and lastly the English.

My object in adverting to the Italian poets, is not so much for their own sakes, in which point of view Dante and Ariosto alone would have required separate Lectures, but for the elucidation of the merits of our countrymen, as to what extent we must consider them as fortunate imitators of their Italian predecessors, and in what points they have the higher claims of original genius. Of Dante, I am to speak elsewhere. Of Boccaccio, who has little interest as a metrical poet in any respect, and none for my present purpose, except, perhaps, as the reputed inventor or introducer of the octave stanza in his *Teseide*, it will be sufficient to say, that we owe to him the subjects of numerous poems taken from his famous tales, the happy art of narration, and the still greater merit of a depth and fineness in the workings of the passions, in which last excellence, as likewise in the wild and imaginative character of the situations, his almost neglected romances appear to me greatly to excel his far famed *Decameron*. To him, too, we owe the more doubtful merit of having introduced into the Italian prose, and by the authority of his name and the influence of his example, more or less throughout Europe, the long interwoven periods, and architectural structure which arose from the very nature of their language in the Greek writers, but which already in the Latin orators and historians, had betrayed a species of effort, a foreign something, which had been superinduced on the language, instead of growing out of it ; and which was far too alien from that individualizing and confederating, yet not blending, character of the North, to become

permanent, although its magnificence and stateliness were objects of admiration and occasional imitation. This style diminished the control of the writer over the inner feelings of men, and created too great a chasm between the body and the life; and hence especially it was abandoned by Luther.

But lastly, to Boccaccio's sanction we must trace a large portion of the mythological pedantry and incongruous paganisms, which for so long a period deformed the poetry, even of the truest poets. To such an extravagance did Boccaccio himself carry this folly, that in a romance of chivalry he has uniformly styled God the Father Jupiter, our Saviour Apollo, and the Evil Being Pluto. But for this there might be some excuse pleaded. I dare make none for the gross and disgusting licentiousness, the daring profaneness, which rendered the Decameron of Boccaccio the parent of a hundred worse children, fit to be classed among the enemies of the human race; which poisons Ariosto—(for that I may not speak oftener than necessary of so odious a subject, I mention it here once for all)—which interposes a painful mixture in the humour of Chaucer, and which has once or twice seduced even our pure-minded Spenser into a grossness, as heterogeneous from the spirit of his great poem, as it was alien to the delicacy of his morals.

PETRARCH.

Born at Arezzo, 1304.—Died 1374.

Petrarch was the final blossom and perfection of the Troubadours. See Biog. Lit. vol. ii. p. 27, &c.

NOTES ON PETRARCH'S¹ SONNETS, CANZONES, &c.

VOL. I.

Good.

SONNET. 1. Voi, ch' ascoltate, &c.

7. La gola, e 'l sonno, &c.

11. Se la mia vita, &c.

12. Quando fra l'altre, &c.

¹ These notes, by Mr. C., are written in a Petrarch in my possession, and are of some date before 1812. It is hoped that they will not seem ill placed here. *Ed.*

18. Vergognando talor, &c.
 25. Quanto più m' avvicino, &c.
 28. Solo e pensoso, &c.
 29. S' io credessi, &c.
 CANZ. 14. Sì è debile il filo, &c.

Pleasing.

- BALL. 1. Lassare il velo, &c.
 CANZ. 1. Nel dolce tempo, &c.

This poem was imitated by our old Herbert;¹ it is ridiculous in the thoughts, but simple and sweet in diction.

Dignified.

- CANZ. 2. O aspettata in ciel, &c.
 9. Gentil mia Donna, &c.

The first half of this ninth canzone is exquisite; and in canzone 8, the nine lines beginning

O poggi, o valli, &c.

to *cura*, are expressed with vigour and chastity.

- CANZ. 9. Daquel dì innanzi a me medesimo piacqui,
 Empiendo d'un pensier' alto, e soave
 Quel core, ond' hanno i begli occhi la chiave.

Note. O that the Pope would take these eternal keys, which so for ever turn the bolts on the finest passages of true passion!

VOL. II.

- CANZ. 1. Che debb' io far? &c.

Very good; but not equal, I think, to Canzone 2,

Amor, se vuoi ch' i' torni, &c.

though less faulty. With the omission of half-a-dozen conceits and Petrarchisms of *hooks*, *baits*, *flames*, and *torches*, this second canzone is a bold and impassioned lyric, and leaves no doubt in my mind of Petrarch's having possessed a true poetic genius. *Utinam deleri possint sequentia* :—

- L. 17—19. ————— e la soave fiamma
 Ch' ancor, lasso! m' infiamma
 Essendo spenta, or che fea dunque ardendo?

¹ If George Herbert is meant, I can find nothing like an imitation of this canzone in his poems. *Ed.*

L. 54—56. ——— ov' erano a tutt' ore
 Disposti gli ami ov' io fui preso, e l' esca
 Ch' i' bramo sempre.

L. 76—79. ——— onde l' accese
 Saette uscivan d' invisibil foco,
 E ragion temean poco ;
 Chè contra 'l ciel non val difesa umana.

And the lines 86, 87.

Poser' in dubbio, a cui
 Devesse il pregio di più laude darsi—

are rather flatly worded.

LUIGI PULCI.

Born at Florence, 1431.—Died about 1487.

Pulci was of one of the noblest families in Florence, reported to be one of the Frankish stocks which remained in that city after the departure of Charlemagne :—

*Pulcia Gallorum soboles descendit in urbem,
 Clara quidem bello, sacris nec inhospita Musis.
 Verino de illustrat. Cort. Flor. III. v. 118.*

Members of this family were five times elected to the Priorate, one of the highest honours of the republic. Pulci had two brothers, and one of their wives, Antonia, who were all poets :—

*Carminibus patriis notissima Pulcia proles ;
 Quis non hanc urbem Musarum dicat amicam,
 Si tres producat fratres domus una poetas ?
 Ib. II. v. 241.*

Luigi married Lucrezia di Uberto, of the Albizzi family, and was intimate with the great men of his time, but more especially with Angelo Politian, and Lorenzo the Magnificent. His *Morgante* has been attributed, in part at least,¹ to the assistance of Marsilius Ficinus, and by others the whole has been attributed to Politian. The first conjecture is utterly improbable ; the last is possible, indeed, on account of the licentiousness of the poem ; but there are no direct grounds for believing it. The *Morgante Maggiore* is the first proper romance ; although, perhaps, Pulci had the *Teseide* before him. The story is taken from the fabulous history of Turpin ; and if the author had any

¹ Meaning the 25th canto. *Ed.*

distinct object, it seems to have been that of making himself merry with the absurdities of the old romancers. The Morgante sometimes makes you think of Rabelais. It contains the most remarkable guess or allusion upon the subject of America that can be found in any book published before the discovery.¹ The well known passage in the tragic Seneca is not to be compared with it. The *copia verborum* of the mother Florentine tongue, and the easiness of his style, afterwards brought to perfection by Berni, are the chief merits of Pulci; his chief demerit is his heartless spirit of jest and buffoonery, by which sovereigns and their courtiers were flattered by the degradation of nature, and the *impossibilification* of a pretended virtue.

¹ The reference is, of course, to the following stanzas:—

Disse Astarotte: un error lungo e fioco
Per molti secol non ben conosciuto,
Fa che si dice d' Ercol le colonne,
E che più là molti periti sonne.

Sappi che questa opinione è vana;
Perchè più oltre navicar si puote,
Però che l' acqua in ogni parte è piana,
Benchè la terra abbi forma di ruote:
Era più grossa allor la gente humana;
Talche potrebbe arrosirne le gote
Ercule ancor d' aver posti que' segni,
Perchè più oltre passeranno i legni.

E puossi andar giù ne l' altro emisperio,
Però che al centro ogni cosa reprime;
Sì che la terra per divin misterio
Sospesa sta fra le stelle sublime,
E là giù son città, castella, e imperio;
Ma nol cognobbon quelle genti prime:
Vedi che il sol di camminar s' affretta,
Dove io ti dico che là giù s' aspetta.

E come un segno surge in Oriente,
Un altro cade con mirabil arte,
Come si vede qua ne l' Occidente,
Però che il ciel giustamente comparte;
Antipodi appellata è quella gente;
Adora il sole e Jupiterre e Marte,
E piante e animal come voi hanno,
E spesso insieme gran battaglie fanno.

C. XXV. st. 228, &c.

The Morgante was printed in 1488. *Ed.* Another very curious anticipation, said to have been first noticed by Amerigo Vespucci, occurs in Dante's *Purgatorio*:

I mi volsi a man destra e posi mente
All' altro polo: e vidi quattro stelle
Non viste mai, fuor ch' alla prima gente.

C. L. I. 22-4.

CHAUCER.

Born in London, 1328.—Died 1400.¹

Chaucer must be read with an eye to the Norman-French Trouveres, of whom he is the best representative in English. He had great powers of invention. As in Shakspeare, his characters represent classes, but in a different manner; Shakspeare's characters are the representatives of the interior nature of humanity, in which some element has become so predominant as to destroy the health of the mind; whereas Chaucer's are rather representatives of classes of manners. He is therefore more led to individualize in a mere personal sense. Observe Chaucer's love of nature; and how happily the subject of his main work is chosen. When you reflect that the company in the Decameron have retired to a place of safety, from the raging of a pestilence, their mirth provokes a sense of their unfeelingness; whereas in Chaucer nothing of this sort occurs, and the scheme of a party on a pilgrimage, with different ends and occupations, aptly allows of the greatest variety of expression in the tales.

SPENSER.

Born in London, 1553.—Died 1599.

There is this difference, among many others, between Shakspeare and Spenser:—Shakspeare is never coloured by the customs of his age; what appears of contemporary character in him is merely negative; it is just not something else. He has none of the fictitious realities of the classics, none of the grotesquenesses of chivalry, none of the allegory of the middle ages; there is no sectarianism either of politics or religion, no miser, no witch,—no common witch,—no astrology—nothing impermanent of however long duration; but he stands like the yew tree in Lorton vale, which has known so many ages that it belongs to none in particular; a living image of endless self-reproduction, like the immortal tree of Malabar. In Spenser the spirit of

¹ From Mr. Green's note. *Ed.*

chivalry is entirely predominant, although with a much greater infusion of the poet's own individual self into it than is found in any other writer. He has the wit of the southern with the deeper inwardness of the northern genius.

No one can appreciate Spenser without some reflection on the nature of allegorical writing. The mere etymological meaning of the word, allegory,—to talk of one thing and thereby convey another,—is too wide. The true sense is this,—the employment of one set of agents and images to convey in disguise a moral meaning, with a likeness to the imagination, but with a difference to the understanding,—those agents and images being so combined as to form a homogeneous whole. This distinguishes it from metaphor, which is part of an allegory. But allegory is not properly distinguishable from fable, otherwise than as the first includes the second, as a genus its species; for in a fable there must be nothing but what is universally known and acknowledged, but in an allegory there may be that which is new and not previously admitted. The pictures of the great masters, especially of the Italian schools, are genuine allegories. Amongst the classics, the multitude of their gods either precluded allegory altogether, or else made every thing allegory, as in the Hesiodic Theogonia; for you can scarcely distinguish between power and the personification of power. The Cupid and Psyche of, or found in, Apuleius, is a *phænomenon*. It is the Platonic mode of accounting for the fall of man. The Battle of the Soul¹ by Prudentius is an early instance of Christian allegory.

Narrative allegory is distinguished from mythology as reality from symbol; it is, in short, the proper inter-medium between person and personification. Where it is too strongly individualized, it ceases to be allegory; this is often felt in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, where the characters are real persons with nicknames. Perhaps one of the most curious warnings against another attempt at narrative allegory on a great scale, may be found in Tasso's account of what he himself intended in and by his *Jerusalem Delivered*.

As characteristic of Spenser, I would call your particular attention in the first place to the indescribable sweetness and fluent projection of his verse, very clearly distinguishable from the deeper and more inwoven harmonies of

¹ *Psychomachia*. Ed.

Shakspeare and Milton. This stanza is a good instance of what I mean :—

Yet she, most faithfull ladie, all this while
Forsaken, wofull, solitarie mayd,
Far from all peoples preace, as in exile,
In wildernesses and wastfull deserts strayd
To seeke her knight ; who, subtilly betrayd
Through that late vision which th' enchaunter wrought,
Had her abandond ; she, of nought affrayd,
Through woods and wastnes wide him daily sought,
Yet wished tydings none of him unto her brought.

F. Qu. B. I. c. 3. st. 3.

2. Combined with this sweetness and fluency, the scientific construction of the metre of the Faery Queene is very noticeable. One of Spenser's arts is that of alliteration, and he uses it with great effect in doubling the impression of an image :—

In wildernesses and wastfull deserts,—
Through woods and wastnes wilde,—
They passe the bitter waves of Acheron,
Where many soules sit wailing woefully,
And come to fiery flood of Phlegeton,
Whereas the damned ghosts in torments fry,
And with sharp shrilling shrieks doth bootlesse cry,—&c.

He is particularly given to an alternate alliteration, which is, perhaps, when well used, a great secret in melody :—

A ramping lyon rushed suddenly,—
And sad to see her sorrowful constraint,—
And on the grasse her daintie limbes did lay,—&c.

You cannot read a page of the Faery Queene, if you read for that purpose, without perceiving the intentional alliterativeness of the words ; and yet so skilfully is this managed, that it never strikes any unwarned ear as artificial, or other than the result of the necessary movement of the verse.

3. Spenser displays great skill in harmonizing his descriptions of external nature and actual incidents with the allegorical character and epic activity of the poem. Take these two beautiful passages as illustrations of what I mean :—

By this the northerne wagoner had set
His sevenfol teme behind the stedfast starre
That was in ocean waves yet never wet,
But firme is fixt, and sendeth light from farre

To all that in the wide deepe wandring arre ;
 And chearefull chaunticlere with his note shrill
 Had warned once, that Phœbus' fiery carre
 In hast was climbing up the easterne hill,
 Full envious that Night so long his roome did fill ;

When those accursed messengers of hell,
 That feigning dreame, and that faire-forged spright
 Came, &c. B. I. c. 2. st. 1.

*

*

*

At last, the golden orientall gate
 Of greatest Heaven gan to open fayre ;
 And Phœbus, fresh as brydegrome to his mate,
 Came dauncing forth, shaking his deawie hayre ;
 And hurld his glistring beams through gloomy ayre.
 Which when the wakeful Elfe perceiv'd, streightway
 He started up, and did him selfe prepayre
 In sunbright armes and battailons array ;
 For with that Pagan proud he combat will that day.

Ib. c. 5. st. 2.

Observe also the exceeding vividness of Spenser's descriptions. They are not, in the true sense of the word, picturesque ; but are composed of a wondrous series of images, as in our dreams. Compare the following passage with any thing you may remember *in pari materia* in Milton or Shakspeare :—

His haughtie helmet, horrid all with gold,
 Both glorious brightnesse and great terrour bredd ;
 For all the crest a dragon did enfold
 With greedie pawes, and over all did spredd
 His golden winges ; his dreadfull hideous hedd,
 Close couched on the bever, seemd to throw
 From flaming mouth bright sparkles fiery redd,
 That suddeine horror to faint hartes did show ;
 And scaly tayle was stretcht adowne his back full low.

Upon the top of all his loftie crest
 A bouch of haire discoloured diversly,
 With sprinkled pearle and gold full richly drest,
 Did shake, and seemd to daunce for jollitie ;
 Like to an almond tree ymounted hye
 On top of greene Selinis all alone,
 With blossoms brave bedecked daintily,
 Whose tender locks do tremble every one
 At everie little breath that under heaven is blowne.

Ib. c. 7. st. 31-2.

4. You will take especial note of the marvellous independence and true imaginative absence of all particular space or time in the Faery Queene. It is in the domains neither of history or geography ; it is ignorant of all artificial boundary, all material obstacles ; it is truly in land of

Faery, that is, of mental space. The poet has placed you in a dream, a charmed sleep, and you neither wish, nor have the power, to inquire where you are, or how you got there. It reminds me of some lines of my own :—

Oh ! would to Alla !
The raven or the sea-mew were appointed
To bring me food !—or rather that my soul
Might draw in life from the universal air !
It were a lot divine in some small skiff
Along some ocean's boundless solitude
To float for ever with a careless course
And think myself the only being alive !

Remorse, Act iv. sc. 3.

Indeed Spenser himself, in the conduct of his great poem, may be represented under the same image, his symbolizing purpose being his mariner's compass :—

As pilot well expert in perilous wave,
That to a stedfast starre his course hath bent,
When foggy mistes or cloudy tempests have
The faithfull light of that faire lampe yblent,
And coverd Heaven with hideous dreriment ;
Upon his card and compas firmes his eye,
The maysters of his long experiment,
And to them does the steddly helme apply,
Bidding his winged vessell fairely forward fly.

B. II. c. 7. st. 1.

So the poet through the realms of allegory.

5. You should note the quintessential character of Christian chivalry in all his characters, but more especially in his women. The Greeks, except, perhaps, in Homer, seem to have had no way of making their women interesting, but by unsexing them, as in the instances of the tragic Medea, Electra, &c. Contrast such characters with Spenser's Una, who exhibits no prominent feature, has no particularization, but produces the same feeling that a statue does, when contemplated at a distance :—

From her fayre head her fillet she undight,
And layd her stole aside : her angels face,
As the great eye of Heaven, shyned bright,
And made a sunshine in the shady place ;
Did never mortal eye behold such heavenly grace.

B. I. c. 3. st. 4.

6. In Spenser we see the brightest and purest form of that nationality which was so common a characteristic of

our elder poets. There is nothing unamiable, nothing contemptuous of others, in it. To glorify their country—to elevate England into a queen, an empress of the heart—this was their passion and object; and how dear and important an object it was or may be, let Spain, in the recollection of her Cid, declare! There is a great magic in national names. What a damper to all interest is a list of native East Indian merchants! Unknown names are non-conductors; they stop all sympathy. No one of our poets has touched this string more exquisitely than Spenser; especially in his chronicle of the British Kings (B. II. c. 10), and the marriage of the Thames with the Medway (B. IV. c. 11), in both which passages the mere names constitute half the pleasure we receive. To the same feeling we must in particular attribute Spenser's sweet reference to Ireland:—

Ne thence the Irishe rivers absent were;
Sith no lesse famous than the rest they be, &c. Ib.

* * * *

And Mulla mine, whose waves I whilom taught to weep.
Ib.

And there is a beautiful passage of the same sort in the Colin Clout's Come Home Again:—

“One day,” quoth he, “I sat, as was my trade,
Under the foot of Mole,” &c.

Lastly, the great and prevailing character of Spenser's mind is fancy under the conditions of imagination, as an ever present but not always active power. He has an imaginative fancy, but he has not imagination, in kind or degree, as Shakspeare and Milton have; the boldest effort of his powers in this way is the character of Talus.¹ Add to this a feminine tenderness and almost maidenly purity of feeling, and above all, a deep moral earnestness which produces a believing sympathy and acquiescence in the reader, and you have a tolerably adequate view of Spenser's intellectual being.

¹ B. 5. Legend of Artegall. *Ea.*

LECTURE VII.

*Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and
Massinger.*

A CONTEMPORARY is rather an ambiguous term, when applied to authors. It may simply mean that one man lived and wrote while another was yet alive, however deeply the former may have been indebted to the latter as his model. There have been instances in the literary world that might remind a botanist of a singular sort of parasite plant, which rises above ground, independent and unsupported, an apparent original; but trace its roots, and you will find the fibres all terminating in the root of another plant at an unsuspected distance, which, perhaps, from want of sun and genial soil, and the loss of sap, has scarcely been able to peep above the ground.—Or the word may mean those whose compositions were contemporaneous in such a sense as to preclude all likelihood of the one having borrowed from the other. In the latter sense I should call Ben Jonson a contemporary of Shakspeare, though he long survived him; while I should prefer the phrase of immediate successors for Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger, though they too were Shakspeare's contemporaries in the former sense.

BEN JONSON.¹

Born, 1574.—Died, 1637.

Ben Jonson is original; he is, indeed, the only one of the great dramatists of that day who was not either directly produced, or very greatly modified, by Shakspeare. In truth, he differs from our great master in every thing—in form and in substance—and betrays no tokens of his proximity. He is not original in the same way as Shakspeare is original; but after a fashion of his own, Ben Jonson is most truly original.

The characters in his plays are, in the strictest sense of the term, abstractions. Some very prominent feature is

¹ From Mr. Green's note. *Ed.*

taken from the whole man, and that single feature or humour is made the basis upon which the entire character is built up. Ben Jonson's *dramatis personæ* are almost as fixed as the masks of the ancient actors ; you know from the first scene—sometimes from the list of names—exactly what every one of them is to be. He was a very accurately observing man ; but he cared only to observe what was external or open to, and likely to impress, the senses. He individualizes, not so much, if at all, by the exhibition of moral or intellectual differences, as by the varieties and contrasts of manners, modes of speech and tricks of temper ; as in such characters as Puntarvolo, Bobadill, &c.

I believe there is not one whim or affectation in common life noted in any memoir of that age which may not be found drawn and framed in some corner or other of Ben Jonson's dramas ; and they have this merit, in common with Hogarth's prints, that not a single circumstance is introduced in them which does not play upon, and help to bring out, the dominant humour or humours of the piece. Indeed I ought very particularly to call your attention to the extraordinary skill shown by Ben Jonson in contriving situations for the display of his characters.¹ In fact, his care and anxiety in this matter led him to do what scarcely any of the dramatists of that age did—that is, invent his plots. It is not a first perusal that suffices for the full perception of the elaborate artifice of the plots of the *Alchemist* and the *Silent Woman* ;—that of the former is absolute perfection for a necessary entanglement, and an unexpected, yet natural, evolution.

Ben Jonson exhibits a sterling English diction, and he has with great skill contrived varieties of construction ; but his style is rarely sweet or harmonious, in consequence of his labour at point and strength being so evident. In all his works, in verse or prose, there is an extraordinary opulence of thought ; but it is the produce of an amassing power in the author, and not of a growth from within. Indeed a large proportion of Ben Jonson's thoughts may be traced to classic or obscure modern writers, by those who are learned and curious enough to follow the steps of this robust, surly, and observing dramatist.

¹ "In Jonson's comic inventions," says Schlegel, "a spirit of observation is manifested more than fancy." Vol. 4, p. 93.

BEAUMONT. Born, 1586.¹—Died, 1615-16.

FLETCHER. Born, 1579.—Died, 1625.

Mr. Weber, to whose taste, industry, and appropriate erudition, we owe, I will not say the best, (for that would be saying little,) but a good, edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, has complimented the *Philaster*, which he himself describes as inferior to the *Maid's Tragedy* by the same writers, as but little below the noblest of Shakspeare's plays, *Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, &c. and consequently implying the equality, at least, of the *Maid's Tragedy*;—and an eminent living critic,—who in the manly wit, strong sterling sense, and robust style of his original works, had presented the best possible credentials of office, as *chargé d'affaires* of literature in general,—and who by his edition of Massinger—a work in which there was more for an editor to do, and in which more was actually well done, than in any similar work within my knowledge—has proved an especial right of authority in the appreciation of dramatic poetry, and hath potentially a double voice with the public in his own right and in that of the critical synod, where, as *princeps senatus*, he possesses it by his prerogative,—has affirmed that Shakspeare's superiority to his contemporaries rests on his superior wit alone, while in all the other, and, as I should deem, higher excellencies of the drama, character, pathos, depth of thought, &c. he is equalled by Beaumont and Fletcher, Ben Jonson, and Massinger! ²

Of wit I am engaged to treat in another Lecture. It is a genus of many species; and at present I shall only say, that the species which is predominant in Shakspeare, is so completely Shakspearian, and in its essence so interwoven with all his other characteristic excellencies, that I am equally incapable of comprehending, both how it can be detached from his other powers, and how, being disparate in kind from the wit of contemporary dramatists, it can be compared with theirs in degree. And again—the

¹ Mr. Dyce thinks that "Beaumont's birth ought to be fixed at a somewhat earlier date," because, in the Funeral Certificate on the decease of his father, dated 22nd April, 1598, he is said to be *of the age of thirteen years or more*; and because "at the age of twelve, 4th February, 1596-7," according to Wood's *Ath. Oxon*, "he was admitted a gentleman-commoner of Broadgates Hall."

² See Mr. Gifford's introduction to his edition of Massinger. *Ed.*

detachment and the practicability of the comparison being granted—I should, I confess, be rather inclined to concede the contrary ;—and in the most common species of wit, and in the ordinary application of the term, to yield this particular palm to Beaumont and Fletcher, whom here and hereafter I take as one poet with two names,—leaving undivided what a rare love and still rarer congeniality have united. At least, I have never been able to distinguish the presence of Fletcher during the life of Beaumont, nor the absence of Beaumont during the survival of Fletcher.

But waiving, or rather deferring this question, I protest against the remainder of the position *in toto*. And indeed, whilst I can never, I trust, show myself blind to the various merits of Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger, or insensible to the greatness of the merits which they possess in common, or to the specific excellencies which give to each of the three a worth of his own,—I confess, that one main object of this Lecture was to prove that Shakspeare's eminence is his own, and not that of his age ;—even as the pine-apple, the melon, and the gourd may grow on the same bed ;—yea, the same circumstances of warmth and soil may be necessary to their full development, yet do not account for the golden hue, the ambrosial flavour, the perfect shape of the pine-apple, or the tufted crown on its head. Would that those, who seek to twist it off, could but promise us in this instance to make it the germ of an equal successor !

What had a grammatical and logical consistency for the ear,—what could be put together and represented to the eye—these poets took from the ear and eye, unchecked by any intuition of an inward impossibility ;—just as a man might put together a quarter of an orange, a quarter of an apple, and the like of a lemon and a pomegranate, and made it look like one round diverse-coloured fruit. But nature, which works from within by evolution and assimilation according to a law, cannot do so, nor could Shakspeare ; for he too worked in the spirit of nature, by evolving the germ from within by the imaginative power according to an idea. For as the power of seeing is to light, so is an idea in mind to a law in nature. They are correlatives, which suppose each other.

The plays of Beaumont and Fletcher are mere aggrega-

tions without unity ; in the Shakspearian drama there is a vitality which grows and evolves itself from within,—a key-note which guides and controls the harmonies throughout. What is Lear?—It is storm and tempest—the thunder at first grumbling in the far horizon, then gathering around us, and at length bursting in fury over our heads,—succeeded by a breaking of the clouds for a while, a last flash of lightning, the closing in of night, and the single hope of darkness ! And Romeo and Juliet?—It is a spring day, gusty and beautiful in the morn, and closing like an April evening with the song of the nightingale ;¹—whilst Macbeth is deep and earthy,—composed to the subterranean music of a troubled conscience, which converts every thing into the wild and fearful !

Doubtless from mere observation, or from the occasional similarity of the writer's own character, more or less in Beaumont and Fletcher, and other such writers, will happen to be in correspondence with nature, and still more in apparent compatibility with it. But yet the false source is always discoverable, first by the gross contradictions to nature in so many other parts, and secondly, by the want of the impression which Shakspeare makes, that the thing said not only might have been said, but that nothing else could be substituted, so as to excite the same sense of its exquisite propriety. I have always thought the conduct and expressions of Othello and Iago in the last scene, when Iago is brought in prisoner, a wonderful instance of Shakspeare's consummate judgment :—

Oth. I look down towards his feet ;—but that's a fable.
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.

Iago. I bleed, Sir ; but not kill'd.

Oth. I am not sorry neither.

Think what a volley of execrations and defiances Beaumont and Fletcher would have poured forth here !

Indeed Massinger and Ben Jonson are both more perfect in their kind than Beaumont and Fletcher ; the former in the story and affecting incidents ; the latter in the exhibition of manners and peculiarities, whims in language, and vanities of appearance.

There is, however, a diversity of the most dangerous

¹ Was der Duft eines südlichen Frühlings berauschendes, der Gesang der Nachtigall sehnsüchtiges, das erste Aufblühung der Rose wollüstiges hat, das athmet aus diesem Gedicht. Schlegel's *Dram. Vorlesungen*, Vol. iii. p. 107.

kind here. Shakspeare shaped his characters out of the nature within ; but we cannot so safely say, out of his own nature as an individual person. No ! this latter is itself but a *natura naturata*,—an effect, a product, not a power. It was Shakspeare's prerogative to have the universal, which is potentially in each particular, opened out to him, the *homo generalis*, not as an abstraction from observation of a variety of men, but as the substance capable of endless modifications, of which his own personal existence was but one, and to use this one as the eye that beheld the other, and as the tongue that could convey the discovery. There is no greater or more common vice in dramatic writers than to draw out of themselves. How I—alone and in the self sufficiency of my study, as all men are apt to be proud in their dreams—should like to be talking *king* ! Shakspeare, in composing, had no *I*, but the *I* representative. In Beaumont and Fletcher you have descriptions of characters by the poet rather than the characters themselves : we are told, and impressively told, of their being ; but we rarely or never feel that they actually are.

Beaumont and Fletcher are the most lyrical of our dramatists. I think their comedies the best part of their works, although there are scenes of very deep tragic interest in some of their plays. I particularly recommend Monsieur Thomas for good pure comic humour.

There is, occasionally, considerable license in their dramas ; and this opens a subject much needing vindication and sound exposition, but which is beset with such difficulties for a Lecturer, that I must pass it by. Only as far as Shakspeare is concerned, I own, I can with less pain admit a fault in him than beg an excuse for it. I will not, therefore, attempt to palliate the grossness that actually exists in his plays by the customs of his age, or by the far greater coarseness of all his contemporaries, excepting Spenser, who is himself not wholly blameless, though nearly so ;—for I place Shakspeare's merit on being of no age. But I would clear away what is, in my judgment, not his, as that scene of the Porter¹ in Macbeth, and many other such passages, and abstract what is coarse in manners only, and all that which from the frequency of our own vices, we associate with his words. If this were truly done, little that could be justly reprehensible would remain.

¹ Act ii. sc. 3.

Compare the vile comments, offensive and defensive, on Pope's

Lust thro' some gentle strainers, &c.

with the worst thing in Shakspeare, or even in Beaumont and Fletcher ; and then consider how unfair the attack is on our old dramatists ; especially because it is an attack that cannot be properly answered in that presence in which an answer would be most desirable, from the painful nature of one part of the position ; but this very pain is almost a demonstration of its falsehood !

MASSINGER.

Born at Salisbury, 1584.—Died, 1640.

With regard to Massinger, observe,

1. The vein of satire on the times ; but this is not as in Shakspeare, where the natures evolve themselves according to their incidental disproportions, from excess, deficiency, or mislocation, of one or more of the component elements ; but is merely satire on what is attributed to them by others.

2. His excellent metre—a better model for dramatists in general to imitate than Shakspeare's,—even if a dramatic taste existed in the frequenters of the stage, and could be gratified in the present size and management, or rather mismanagement, of the two patent theatres. I do not mean that Massinger's verse is superior to Shakspeare's or equal to it. Far from it ; but it is much more easily constructed, and may be more successfully adopted by writers in the present day. It is the nearest approach to the language of real life at all compatible with a fixed metre. In Massinger, as in all our poets before Dryden, in order to make harmonious verse in the reading, it is absolutely necessary that the meaning should be understood ;—when the meaning is once seen, then the harmony is perfect. Whereas in Pope, and in most of the writers who followed in his school, it is the mechanical metre which determines the sense.

3. The impropriety, and indecorum of demeanour in his favourite characters, as in Bertoldo in the Maid of Honour,

who is a swaggerer, talking to his sovereign what no sovereign could endure, and to gentlemen what no gentlemen would answer without pulling his nose.

4. Shakspeare's Ague-cheek, Osric, &c. are displayed through others, in the course of social intercourse, by the mode of their performing some office in which they are employed; but Massinger's *Sylli* come forward to declare themselves fools *ab arbitrium auctoris*, and so the diction always needs the *subintelligitur* ('the man looks as if he thought so and so,') expressed in the language of the satirist, and not in that of the man himself:—

Sylli. You may, madam,
Perhaps, believe that I in this use art
To make you dote upon me, by exposing
My more than most rare features to your view;
But I, as I have ever done, deal simply,
A mark of sweet simplicity, ever noted
In the family of the *Syllis*. Therefore, lady,
Look not with too much contemplation on me;
If you do, you are in the suds.

Maid of Honour, Act i. sc. 2.

The author mixes his own feelings and judgments concerning the presumed fool; but the man himself, till mad, fights up against them, and betrays, by his attempts to modify them, that he is no fool at all, but one gifted with activity and copiousness of thought, image and expression, which belong not to a fool, but to a man of wit making himself merry with his own character.

5. There is an utter want of preparation in the decisive acts of Massinger's characters, as in *Camiola* and *Aurelia* in the *Maid of Honour*. Why? Because the *dramatis personæ* were all planned each by itself. Whereas in Shakspeare, the play is *syngenesia*; each character has, indeed, a life of its own, and is an *individuum* of itself, but yet an organ of the whole, as the heart in the human body. Shakspeare was a great comparative anatomist.

Hence Massinger and all, indeed, but Shakspeare, take a dislike to their own characters, and spite themselves upon them by making them talk like fools or monsters; as *Fulgentio* in his visit to *Camiola*, (Act ii. sc. 2.). Hence too, in Massinger, the continued flings at kings, courtiers, and all the favourites of fortune, like one who had enough of intellect to see injustice in his own inferiority in the share of the good things of life, but not genius enough to rise

above it, and forget himself. Beaumont and Fletcher have the same vice in the opposite pole, a servility of sentiment and a spirit of partizanship with the monarchical faction.

6. From the want of a guiding point in Massinger's characters, you never know what they are about. In fact they have no character.

7. Note the faultiness of his soliloquies, with connectives and arrangements that have no other motive but the fear lest the audience should not understand him.

8. A play of Massinger's produces no one single effect, whether arising from the spirit of the whole, as in the *As You Like It*; or from any one indisputably prominent character, as *Hamlet*. It is just "which you like best, gentlemen!"

9. The unnaturally irrational passions and strange whims of feeling which Massinger delights to draw, deprive the reader of all sound interest in the characters;—as in *Mathias* in the *Picture*, and in other instances.

10. The comic scenes in Massinger not only do not harmonize with the tragic, not only interrupt the feeling, but degrade the characters that are to form any part in the action of the piece, so as to render them unfit for any tragic interest. At least, they do not concern, or act upon, or modify, the principal characters. As when a gentleman is insulted by a mere blackguard,—it is the same as if any other accident of nature had occurred, a pig run under his legs, or his horse thrown him. There is no dramatic interest in it.

I like Massinger's comedies better than his tragedies, although where the situation requires it, he often rises into the truly tragic and pathetic. He excels in narration, and for the most part displays his mere story with skill. But he is not a poet of high imagination; he is like a Flemish painter, in whose delineations objects appear as they do in nature, have the same force and truth, and produce the same effect upon the spectator. But Shakspeare is beyond this; he always by metaphors and figures involves in the thing considered a universe of past and possible experiences; he mingles earth, sea and air, gives a soul to every thing, and at the same time that he inspires human feelings, adds a dignity in his images to human nature itself:—

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye;

Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchymy, &c.

33rd Sonnet.

NOTES ON MASSINGER.

Have I not over-rated Gifford's edition of Massinger?—Not,—if I have, as but just is, main reference to the restitution of the text; but yes, perhaps, if I were talking of the notes. These are more often wrong than right. In the *Maid of Honour*, Act i. sc. 5. Astutio describes Fulgentio as “A gentleman, yet no lord.” Gifford supposes a transposition of the press for “No gentleman, yet a lord.” But this would have no connection with what follows; and we have only to recollect that “lord” means a lord of lands, to see that the after lines are explanatory. He is a man of high birth, but no landed property;—as to the former, he is a distant branch of the blood royal;—as to the latter, his whole rent lies in a narrow compass, the king's ear! In the same scene the text stands:

Bert. No! they are useful
For your *imitation*;—I remember you, &c.;—

and Gifford condemns Mason's conjecture of ‘initiation’ as void of meaning and harmony. Now my ear deceives me if ‘initiation’ be not the right word. In fact, ‘imitation’ is utterly impertinent to all that follows. Bertoldo tells Antonio that he had been initiated in the manners suited to the court by two or three sacred beauties, and that a similar experience would be equally useful for his initiation into the camp. Not a word of his imitation. Besides, I say the rhythm requires ‘initiation,’ and is lame as the verse now stands.

¹ Two or three tales, each in itself independent of the others, and united only by making the persons that are the agents in the story the *relations* of those in the other, as when a bind-weed or thread is twined round a bunch of flowers, each having its own root—and this novel narrative in *dialogue*—such is the *character* of Massinger's plays—That the juxta-position and the tying together by a common thread, which goes round this and round that,

¹ The notes on Massinger which follow were transcribed from a copy of that dramatist's works, belonging to Mr. Gillman. I do not know whence the first was taken by the original editor.

and then round them all, twine and intertwine, are contrived ingeniously—that the component tales are well chosen, and the whole well and conspicuously told; so as to excite and sustain the mind by kindling and keeping alive the curiosity of the reader—that the language is most pure, equally free from bookishness and from vulgarity, from the peculiarities of the School, and the transiencies of fashion, whether fine or coarse; that the rhythm and metre are incomparably good, and form the very model of dramatic versification, flexible and seeming to rise out of the passions, so that whenever a line sounds immetrical, the speaker may be certain he has recited it amiss, either that he has misplaced or misproportioned the emphasis, or neglected the acceleration or retardation of the voice in the pauses (all which the mood or passion would have produced in the real Agent, and therefore demand from the Actor or {^{translator}_{emulator}}) and that read aright the blank verse is not less smooth than varied, a rich harmony, puzzling the fingers, but satisfying the ear—these are Massinger's characteristic merits.

Among the varieties of blank verse Massinger is fond of the anapæst in the first and third foot, as :

“Tõ yoŭr mōre | thăn mā | scŭlině reā | sōn
thāt | coſmānds 'ēm || —”¹

The Guardian, Act i. sc. 2.

Likewise of the second Pæon (υ — υυ) in the first foot followed by four trochees (— υ) as :

“Sō greēdily | lōng fōr, | knōw thēir |
titill | ātiōns.” Ib. ib.

The emphasis too has a decided influence on the metre, and, contrary to the metres of the Greek and Roman classics, at least to all their more common sorts of verse, as the hexameter and hex and pentameter, Alchaic, Sapphic, &c. has an essential agency on the character of the feet and power of the verse. One instance only of this I recollect in Theocritus :

τα μῆ κάλᾳ κάλᾳ πέφανται,

¹ Gifford divides the lines in question thus :

“Command my sensual appetites.

Calip.

As vassals to

Your more than masculine reason, that commands them.”

But it is obviously better to make the first line end with “vassals,” so as to give it only the one over-running syllable, which is so common in the last foot.

unless Homer's "Ἀρες," Ἀρες, may (as I believe) be deemed another — For I cannot bring my ear to believe that Homer would have perpetrated such a cacophony as "Ἦρες," Ἀρες.

"In feār | my chaasteetee | may be | sus-
pected." | Ib. ib.

In short, musical notes are required to explain Massinger — metres in addition to prosody. When a speech is interrupted, or one of the characters speaks aside, the last syllable of the former speech and first of the succeeding Massinger counts but for one, because both are supposed to be spoken at the same moment.

"And felt the sweetness of't."

"How her mouth runs over."

Ib. ib.

Emphasis itself is twofold, the *rap* and the *drawl*, or the emphasis by quality of sound, and that by quantity—the hammer, and the spatula—the latter over 2, 3, 4 syllables or even a whole line. It is in this that the actors and speakers are generally speaking defective, they cannot equilibrate an emphasis, or spread it over a number of syllables, all emphasized, sometimes equally, sometimes unequally.

LECTURE VIII.

Don Quixote.

CERVANTES.

BORN at Madrid, 1547 ;—Shakspeare, 1564 ; both put off mortality on the same day, the 23rd of April, 1616,—the one in the sixty-ninth, the other in the fifty-second, year of his life. The resemblance in their physiognomies is striking, but with a predominance of acuteness in Cervantes, and of reflection in Shakspeare, which is the specific difference between the Spanish and English characters of mind.

I. The nature and eminence of Symbolical writing ;—

II. Madness, and its different sorts, (considered without pretension to medical science) ;—

To each of these, or at least to my own notions respecting them, I must devote a few words of explanation, in order to render the after critique on Don Quixote, the master work of Cervantes' and his country's genius, easily and throughout intelligible. This is not the least valuable, though it may most often be felt by us both as the heaviest and least entertaining portion of these critical disquisitions: for without it, I must have foregone one at least of the two appropriate objects of a Lecture, that of interesting you during its delivery, and of leaving behind in your minds the germs of after-thought, and the materials for future enjoyment. To have been assured by several of my intelligent auditors that they have reperused Hamlet or Othello with increased satisfaction in consequence of the new points of view in which I had placed those characters—is the highest compliment I could receive or desire; and should the address of this evening open out a new source of pleasure, or enlarge the former in your perusal of Don Quixote, it will compensate for the failure of any personal or temporary object.

I. The Symbolical cannot, perhaps, be better defined in distinction from the Allegorical, than that it is always itself a part of that, of the whole of which it is the representative.—“Here comes a sail,”—(that is, a ship) is a symbolical expression. “Behold our lion!” when we speak of some gallant soldier, is allegorical. Of most importance to our present subject is this point, that the latter (the allegory) cannot be other than spoken consciously;—whereas in the former (the symbol) it is very possible that the general truth represented may be working unconsciously in the writer's mind during the construction of the symbol;—and it proves itself by being produced out of his own mind,—as the Don Quixote out of the perfectly sane mind of Cervantes; and not by outward observation, or historically. The advantage of symbolical writing over allegory is, that it presumes no disjunction of faculties, but simple predominance.

II. Madness may be divided as—

1. hypochondriasis; or, the man is out of his senses.
2. derangement of the understanding; or, the man is out of his wits.
3. loss of reason.
4. frenzy, or derangement of the sensations.

Cervantes's own preface to Don Quixote is a perfect model of the gentle, every where intelligible, irony in the best essays of the Tatler and the Spectator. Equally natural and easy, Cervantes is more spirited than Addison; whilst he blends with the terseness of Swift, an exquisite flow and music of style, and above all, contrasts with the latter by the sweet temper of a superior mind, which saw the follies of mankind, and was even at the moment suffering severely under hard mistreatment;¹ and yet seems every where to have but one thought as the under-song—"Brethren! with all your faults I love you still!"—or as a mother that chides the child she loves, with one hand holds up the rod, and with the other wipes off each tear as it drops!

Don Quixote was neither fettered to the earth by want, nor holden in its embraces by wealth;—of which, with the temperance natural to his country, as a Spaniard, he had both far too little, and somewhat too much, to be under any necessity of thinking about it. His age too, fifty, may be well supposed to prevent his mind from being tempted out of itself by any of the lower passions;—while his habits, as a very early riser and a keen sportsman, were such as kept his spare body in serviceable subjection to his will, and yet by the play of hope that accompanies pursuit, not only permitted, but assisted, his fancy in shaping what it would. Nor must we omit his meagreness and entire featureliness, face and frame, which Cervantes gives us at once: "It is said that his surname was *Quixada* or *Quesada*," &c.—even in this trifle showing an exquisite judgment;—just once insinuating the association of *lantern-jaws* into the reader's mind, yet not retaining it obtrusively like the names in old farces and in the Pilgrim's Progress,—but taking for the regular appellative one which had the no meaning of a proper name in real life, and which yet was capable of recalling a number of very different, but all pertinent, recollections, as old armour, the precious metals hidden in the ore, &c. Don Quixote's leanness and featureliness are happy exponents of the excess of the formative or imaginative in him, contrasted

¹ *Bien como quien se engendrò en una carcel, donde toda incomodidad tiene su assiento, y todo triste ruido hace su habitacion.* Like one you may suppose born in a prison, where every inconvenience keeps its residence, and every dismal sound its habitation. Pref. Jarvis's Tr. Ed.

with Sancho's plump rotundity, and reciprocity of external impression.

He has no knowledge of the sciences or scientific arts which give to the meanest portions of matter an intellectual interest, and which enable the mind to decypher in the world of the senses the invisible agency—that alone, of which the world's phenomena are the effects and manifestations,—and thus, as in a mirror, to contemplate its own reflex, its life in the powers, its imagination in the symbolic forms, its moral instincts in the final causes, and its reason in the laws of material nature: but—estranged from all the motives to observation from self-interest—the persons that surround him too few and too familiar to enter into any connection with his thoughts, or to require any adaptation of his conduct to their particular characters or relations to himself—his judgment lies fallow, with nothing to excite, nothing to employ it. Yet,—and here is the point, where genius even of the most perfect kind, allotted but to few in the course of many ages, does not preclude the necessity in part, and in part counterbalance the craving by sanity of judgment, without which genius either cannot be, or cannot at least manifest itself,—the dependency of our nature asks for some confirmation from without, though it be only from the shadows of other men's fictions.

Too uninformed, and with too narrow a sphere of power and opportunity to rise into the scientific artist, or to be himself a patron of art, and with too deep a principle and too much innocence to become a mere projector, Don Quixote has recourse to romances:—

His curiosity and extravagant fondness herein arrived at that pitch, that he sold many acres of arable land to purchase books of knight-errantry, and carried home all he could lay hands on of that kind! C. I.

The more remote these romances were from the language of common life, the more akin on that very account were they to the shapeless dreams and strivings of his own mind;—a mind, which possessed not the highest order of genius which lives in an atmosphere of power over mankind, but that minor kind which, in its restlessness, seeks for a vivid representative of its own wishes, and substitutes the movements of that objective puppet for an exercise of actual power in and by itself. The more wild and improbable

these romances were, the more were they akin to his will, which had been in the habit of acting as an unlimited monarch over the creations of his fancy! Hence observe how the startling of the remaining common sense, like a glimmering before its death, in the notice of the impossible-improbable of Don Belianis, is dismissed by Don Quixote as impertinent—

*He had some doubt*¹ as to the dreadful wounds which Don Belianis gave and received: for he imagined, that notwithstanding the most expert surgeons had cured him, his face and whole body must still be full of seams and scars. *Nevertheless*² he commended in his author the concluding his book with a promise of that unfinishable adventure! C. I.

Hence also his first intention to turn author; but who, with such a restless struggle within him, would content himself with writing in a remote village among apathists and ignorants? During his colloquies with the village priest and the barber surgeon, in which the fervour of critical controversy feeds the passion and gives reality to its object—what more natural than that the mental striving should become an eddy?—madness may perhaps be defined as the circling in a stream which should be progressive and adaptive; Don Quixote grows at length to be a man out of his wits; his understanding is deranged; and hence without the least deviation from the truth of nature, without losing the least trait of personal individuality, he becomes a substantial living allegory, or personification of the reason and the moral sense, divested of the judgment and the understanding. Sancho is the converse. He is the common sense without reason or imagination; and Cervantes not only shows the excellence and power of reason in Don Quixote, but in both him and Sancho the mischiefs resulting from a severance of the two main constituents of sound intellectual and moral action. Put him and his master together, and they form a perfect intellect; but they are separated and without cement; and hence each having a need of the other for its own completeness, each has at times a mastery over the other. For the common sense, although it may see the practical inapplicability of the dictates of the imagination or abstract reason, yet cannot help submitting to them. These two characters possess the world, alternately and interchange-

¹ *No estaba muy bien con.* Ed.

² *Pero con todo.* Ed.

ably the cheater and the cheated. To impersonate them, and to combine the permanent with the individual, is one of the highest creations of genius, and has been achieved by Cervantes and Shakspeare, almost alone.

Observations on particular passages:

B. I. c. 1. But not altogether approving of his having broken it to pieces with so much ease, to secure himself from the like danger for the future, he made it over again, fencing it with small bars of iron within, in such a manner, *that he rested satisfied of its strength ; and without caring to make a fresh experiment on it, he approved and looked upon it as a most excellent helmet.*

His not trying his improved scull-cap is an exquisite trait of human character, founded on the oppugnancy of the soul in such a state to any disturbance by doubt of its own broodings. Even the long deliberation about his horse's name is full of meaning ;—for in these day-dreams the greater part of the history passes and is carried on in words, which look forward to other words as what will be said of them.

Ib. Near the place where he lived, there dwelt a very comely country lass, with whom he had formerly been in love ; though, as it is supposed, she never knew it, nor troubled herself about it.

The nascent love for the country lass, but without any attempt at utterance, or an opportunity of knowing her, except as the hint—the $\delta\tau\iota$ $\epsilon\sigma\tau\iota$ —of the inward imagination, is happily conceived in both parts ;—first, as confirmative of the shrinking back of the mind on itself, and its dread of having a cherished image destroyed by its own judgment ; and secondly, as showing how necessarily love is the passion of novels. Novels are to love as fairy tales to dreams. I never knew but two men of taste and feeling who could not understand why I was delighted with the Arabian Nights' Tales, and they were likewise the only persons in my knowledge who scarcely remembered having ever dreamed. Magic and war—itself a magic—are the day-dreams of childhood ; love is the day-dream of youth, and early manhood.

C. 2. “ Scarcely had ruddy Phœbus spread the golden tresses of his beauteous hair over the face of the wide and spacious earth ; and scarcely had the little painted birds, with the sweet and melli-

fluorous harmony of their forked tongues, saluted the approach of rosy Aurora, who, quitting the soft couch of her jealous husband, disclosed herself to mortals through the gates of the Mauchegan horizon; when the renowned Don Quixote," &c.

How happily already is the abstraction from the senses, from observation, and the consequent confusion of the judgment, marked in this description! The knight is describing objects immediate to his senses and sensations without borrowing a single trait from either. Would it be difficult to find parallel descriptions in Dryden's plays and in those of his successors?

C. 3. The host is here happily conceived as one who from his past life as a sharper, was capable of entering into and humouring the knight, and so perfectly in character, that he precludes a considerable source of improbability in the future narrative, by enforcing upon Don Quixote the necessity of taking money with him.

C. 3. "Ho, there, whoever thou art, rash knight, that approachest to touch the arms of the most valorous adventurer that ever girded sword," &c.

Don Quixote's high eulogiums on himself—"the most valorous adventurer!"—but it is not himself that he has before him, but the idol of his imagination, the imaginary being whom he is acting. And this, that it is entirely a third person, excuses his heart from the otherwise inevitable charge of selfish vanity; and so by madness itself he preserves our esteem, and renders those actions natural by which he, the first person, deserves it.

C. 4. Andres and his master.

The manner in which Don Quixote redressed this wrong, is a picture of the true revolutionary passion in its first honest state, while it is yet only a bewilderment of the understanding. You have a benevolence limitless in its prayers, which are in fact aspirations towards omnipotence; but between it and beneficence, the bridge of judgment—that is, of measurement of personal power—intervenes, and must be passed. Otherwise you will be bruised by the leap into the chasm, or be drowned in the revolutionary river, and drag others with you to the same fate.

C. 4. Merchants of Toledo.

When they were come so near as to be seen and heard, Don Quixote raised his voice, and with arrogant air cried out: "Let

the whole world stand ; if the whole world does not confess that there is not in the whole world a damsel more beautiful than," &c.

Now mark the presumption which follows the self-complacency of the last act ! That was an honest attempt to redress a real wrong ; this is an arbitrary determination to enforce a Brissotine or Rousseau's ideal on all his fellow creatures.

Let the whole world stand !

"If there had been any experience in proof of the excellence of our code, where would be our superiority in this enlightened age ?"

"No ? the business is that without seeing her, you believe, confess, affirm, swear, and maintain it ; *and if not, I challenge you all to battle.*"¹

Next see the persecution and fury excited by opposition however moderate ! The only words listened to are those, that without their context and their conditionals, and transformed into positive assertions, might give some shadow of excuse for the violence shown ! This rich story ends, to the compassion of the men in their senses, in a sound rib-roasting of the idealist by the muleteer, the mob. And happy for thee, poor knight ! that the mob were against thee ! For had they been with thee, by the change of the moon and of them, thy head would have been off.

C. 5, first part. The idealist recollects the causes that had been necessary to the reverse and attempts to remove them—too late. He is beaten and disgraced.

C. 6. This chapter on Don Quixote's library proves that the author did not wish to destroy the romances, but to cause them to be read as romances—that is, for their merits as poetry.

C. 7. Among other things, Don Quixote told him, he should dispose himself to go with him willingly ;—for some time or other such an adventure might present, that an island might be won, in the turn of a hand, and he be left governor thereof.

At length the promises of the imaginative reason begin to act on the plump, sensual, honest common sense accomplice,—but unhappily not in the same person, and without the *copula* of the judgment,—in hopes of the substantial good

¹ *Donde no, conmigo sois en battalla, gente descomunal!* Ed.

things, of which the former contemplated only the glory and the colours.

C. 7. Sancho Panza went riding upon his ass, like any patriarch, with his wallet and leathern bottle, and with a vehement desire to find himself governor of the island which his master had promised him.

The first relief from regular labour is so pleasant to poor Sancho !

C. 8. " I no gentleman ! I swear by the great God, thou liest, as I am a Christian. Biscainer by land, gentleman by sea, gentleman for the devil, and thou liest : look then if thou hast any thing else to say."

This Biscainer is an excellent image of the prejudices and bigotry provoked by the idealism of a speculator. This story happily detects the trick which our imagination plays in the description of single combats : only change the preconception of the magnificence of the combatants, and all is gone.

B. II. c. 2. " Be pleased, my lord Don Quixote, to bestow upon me the government of that island," &c.

Sancho's eagerness for his government, the nascent lust of actual democracy, or isocracy !

C. 2. " But tell me, on your life, have you ever seen a more valorous knight than I, upon the whole face of the known earth ? Have you read in story of any other, who has, or ever had, more bravery in assailing, more breath in holding out, more dexterity in wounding, or more address in giving a fall ?"—" The truth is," answered Sancho, " that I never read any history at all ; for I can neither read nor write ; but what I dare affirm is, that I never served a bolder master," &c.

This appeal to Sancho, and Sancho's answer are exquisitely humorous. It is impossible not to think of the French bulletins and proclamations. Remark the necessity under which we are of being sympathized with, fly as high into abstraction as we may, and how constantly the imagination is recalled to the ground of our common humanity ! And note a little further on, the knight's easy vaunting of his balsam, and his quietly deferring the making and application of it.

C. 3. The speech before the goatherds :

" Happy times and happy ages," &c.¹

¹ *Dichosa edad y siglos dichosos aquellos, &c.* Ed.

Note the rhythm of this, and the admirable beauty and wisdom of the thoughts in themselves, but the total want of judgment in Don Quixote's addressing them to such an audience.

B. III. c. 3. Don Quixote's balsam, and the vomiting and consequent relief; an excellent hit at *panacea nostrums*, which cure the patient by his being himself cured of the medicine by revolting nature.

C. 4. "Peace! and have patience; the day will come," &c.

The perpetual promises of the imagination!

Ib. "Your Worship," said Sancho, "would make a better preacher than knight errant!"

Exactly so. This is the true moral.

C. 6. The uncommon beauty of the description in the commencement of this chapter. In truth, the whole of it seems to put all nature in its heights, and its humiliations, before us.

Ib. Sancho's story of the goats:

"Make account, he carried them all over," said Don Quixote, "and do not be going and coming in this manner; for at this rate, you will not have done carrying them over in a twelvemonth." "How many are passed already?" said Sancho, &c.

Observe the happy contrast between the all-generalizing mind of the mad knight, and Sancho's all-particularizing memory. How admirable a symbol of the dependence of all *copula* on the higher powers of the mind, with the single exception of the succession in time and the accidental relations of space. Men of mere common sense have no theory or means of making one fact more important or prominent than the rest; if they lose one link, all is lost. Compare Mrs. Quickly and the Tapster.¹ And note also Sancho's good heart, when his master is about to leave him. Don Quixote's conduct upon discovering the fulling-hammers, proves he was meant to be in his senses. Nothing can be better conceived than his fit of passion at Sancho's laughing, and his sophism of self-justification by the courage he had shown.

Sancho is by this time cured, through experience, as far as his own errors are concerned; yet still is he lured on by

¹ See the Friend, vol. iii. p. 138. Ed.

the unconquerable awe of his master's superiority, even when he is cheating him.

C. 8. The adventure of the Galley-slaves. I think this is the only passage of moment in which Cervantes slips the mask of his hero, and speaks for himself.

C. 9. Don Quixote desired to have it, and bade him take the money, and keep it for himself. Sancho kissed his hands for the favour, &c.

Observe Sancho's eagerness to avail himself of the permission of his master, who, in the war sports of knight-errantry, had, without any selfish dishonesty, overlooked the *meum* and *tuum*. Sancho's selfishness is modified by his involuntary goodness of heart, and Don Quixote's flighty goodness is debased by the involuntary or unconscious selfishness of his vanity and self-applause.

C. 10. Cardenio is the madman of passion, who meets and easily overthrows for the moment the madman of imagination. And note the contagion of madness of any kind, upon Don Quixote's interruption of Cardenio's story.

C. 11. Perhaps the best specimen of Sancho's proverbializing is this :

"And I (Don Q.) say again, they lie, and will lie two hundred times more, all who say, or think her so." "I neither say, nor think so," answered Sancho; "let those who say it, eat the lie, and swallow it with their bread: whether they were guilty or no, they have given an account to God before now: I come from my vineyard, I know nothing; I am no friend to inquiring into other men's lives; for he that buys and lies shall find the lie left in his purse behind; besides, naked was I born, and naked I remain; I neither win nor lose; if they were guilty, what is that to me? Many think to find bacon, where there is not so much as a pin to hang it on: but who can hedge in the cuckoo? Especially, do they spare God himself?"

Ib. "And it is no great matter, if it be in another hand; for by what I remember, Dulcinea can neither write nor read," &c.

The wonderful twilight of the mind! and mark Cervantes's courage in daring to present it, and trust to a distant posterity for an appreciation of its truth to nature.

P. II. B. III. c. 9. Sancho's account of what he had seen on Clavileno is a counterpart in his style to Don Quixote's adventures in the cave of Montesinos. This last is the only impeachment of the knight's moral character; Cervantes just gives one instance of the veracity failing before the strong cravings of the imagination for something real and

external ; the picture would not have been complete without this ; and yet it is so well managed, that the reader has no unpleasant sense of Don Quixote having told a lie. It is evident that he hardly knows whether it was a dream or not ; and goes to the enchanter to inquire the real nature of the adventure.

SUMMARY OF CERVANTES.

A Castilian of refined manners ; a gentleman, true to religion, and true to honour.

A scholar and a soldier, and fought under the banners of Don John of Austria, at Lepanto, lost his arm and was captured.

Endured slavery not only with fortitude, but with mirth ; and by the superiority of nature, mastered and overawed his barbarian owner.

Finally ransomed, he resumed his native destiny, the awful task of achieving fame ; and for that reason died poor and a prisoner, while nobles and kings over their goblets of gold gave relish to their pleasures by the charms of his divine genius. He was the inventor of novels for the Spaniards, and in his *Persilis* and *Sigismunda*, the English may find the germ of their *Robinson Crusoe*.

The world was a drama to him. His own thoughts, in spite of poverty and sickness, perpetuated for him the feelings of youth. He painted only what he knew and had looked into, but he knew and had looked into much indeed ; and his imagination was ever at hand to adapt and modify the world of his experience. Of delicious love he fabled, yet with stainless virtue.

LECTURE IX.

On the Distinctions of the Witty, the Droll, the Odd, and the Humourous ; the Nature and Constituents of Humour ; —Rabelais—Swift—Sterne.

I.

PERHAPS the most important of our intellectual operations are those of detecting the difference in similar, and the identity in dissimilar, things. Out of the latter operation

it is that wit arises ; and it, generically regarded, consists in presenting thoughts or images in an unusual connection with each other, for the purpose of exciting pleasure by the surprise. This connection may be real ; and there is in fact a scientific wit ; though where the object, consciously entertained, is truth, and not amusement, we commonly give it some higher name. But in wit popularly understood, the connection may be, and for the most part is, apparent only, and transitory ; and this connection may be by thoughts, or by words, or by images. The first is our Butler's especial eminence ; the second, Voltaire's ; the third, which we oftener call fancy, constitutes the larger and more peculiar part of the wit of Shakspeare. You can scarcely turn to a single speech of Falstaff's without finding instances of it. Nor does wit always cease to deserve the name by being transient, or incapable of analysis. I may add that the wit of thoughts belongs eminently to the Italians, that of words to the French, and that of images to the English.

II. Where the laughable is its own end, and neither inference, nor moral is intended, or where at least the writer would wish it so to appear, there arises what we call drollery. The pure, unmixed, ludicrous or laughable belongs exclusively to the understanding, and must be presented under the form of the senses ; it lies within the spheres of the eye and the ear, and hence is allied to the fancy. It does not appertain to the reason or the moral sense, and accordingly is alien to the imagination. I think Aristotle has already excellently defined¹ the laughable, τὸ γελοῖον, as consisting of, or depending on, what is out of its proper time and place, yet without danger or pain. Here the *impropriety*—τὸ ἄτοπον—is the positive qualification ; the *dangerlessness*—τὸ ἀκίνδυνον—the negative. Neither the understanding without an object of the senses, as for example, a mere notional error, or idiocy ;—nor any external object, unless attributed to the under-

¹ He elsewhere commends this Def.: "To resolve laughter into an expression of contempt is contrary to fact, and laughable enough. Laughter is a convulsion of the nerves, and it seems as if nature cut short the rapid thrill of pleasure on the nerves by a sudden convulsion of them to prevent the sensation becoming painful—*Aristotle's Def. is as good as can be.* Surprise at perceiving anything out of its usual place when the unusualness is not accompanied by a sense of serious danger. *Such surprise is always pleasurable, and it is observable that surprise accompanied with circumstances of danger becomes Tragic. Hence Farce may often border on Tragedy ; indeed Farce is nearer Tragedy in its Essence than Comedy is.*"

standing, can produce the poetically laughable. Nay, even in ridiculous positions of the body laughed at by the vulgar, there is a subtle personification always going on, which acts on the, perhaps, unconscious mind of the spectator as a symbol of intellectual character. And hence arises the imperfect and awkward effect of comic stories of animals; because although the understanding is satisfied in them, the senses are not. Hence too, it is, that the true ludicrous is its own end. When serious satire commences, or satire that is felt as serious, however comically drest, free and genuine laughter ceases; it becomes sardonic. This you experience in reading Young, and also not unfrequently in Butler. The true comic is the blossom of the nettle.

III. When words or images are placed in unusual juxtaposition rather than connection, and are so placed merely because the juxtaposition is unusual—we have the odd or the grotesque; the occasional use of which in the minor ornaments of architecture, is an interesting problem for a student in the psychology of the Fine Arts.

IV. In the simply laughable there is a mere disproportion between a definite act and a definite purpose or end, or a disproportion of the end itself to the rank or circumstances of the definite person; but humour is of more difficult description. I must try to define it in the first place by its points of diversity from the former species. Humour does not, like the different kinds of wit, which is impersonal, consist wholly in the understanding and the senses. No combination of thoughts, words, or images will of itself constitute humour, unless some peculiarity of individual temperament and character be indicated thereby, as the cause of the same. Compare the comedies of Congreve with the Falstaff in Henry IV. or with Sterne's Corporal Trim, Uncle Toby, and Mr. Shandy, or with some of Steele's charming papers in the Tatler, and you will feel the difference better than I can express it. Thus again (to take an instance from the different works of the same writer), in Smollett's Strap, his Lieutenant Bowling, his Morgan the honest Welshman, and his Matthew Bramble, we have exquisite humour,—while in his Peregrine Pickle we find an abundance of drollery, which too often degenerates into mere oddity; in short, we feel that a number of things are put together to counterfeit humour,

but that there is no growth from within. And this indeed is the origin of the word, derived from the humoral pathology, and excellently described by Ben Jonson :

So in every human body,
The choler, melancholy, phlegm, and blood,
By reason that they flow continually
In some one part, and are not continent,
Receive the name of humours. Now thus far
It may, by metaphor, apply itself
Unto the general disposition :
As when some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
All his effects, his spirits, and his powers,
In their confluences, all to run one way,
This may be truly said to be a humour.¹

Hence we may explain the congeniality of humour with pathos, so exquisite in Sterne and Smollett, and hence also the tender feeling which we always have for, and associate with, the humours or hobby-horses of a man. First, we respect a humourist, because absence of interested motive is the groundwork of the character, although the imagination of an interest may exist in the individual himself, as if a remarkably simple-hearted man should pride himself on his knowledge of the world, and how well he can manage it :—and secondly, there always is in a genuine humour an acknowledgment of the hollowness and farce of the world, and its disproportion to the godlike within us. And it follows immediately from this, that whenever particular acts have reference to particular selfish motives, the humourous bursts into the indignant and abhorring ; whilst all follies not selfish are pardoned or palliated. The danger of this habit, in respect of pure morality, is strongly exemplified in Sterne.

This would be enough, and indeed less than this has passed, for a sufficient account of humour, if we did not recollect that not every predominance of character, even where not precluded by the moral sense, as in criminal dispositions, constitutes what we mean by a humourist, or the presentation of its produce, humour. What then is it ? Is it manifold ? Or is there some one humorific point common to all that can be called humorous ?—I am not prepared to answer this fully, even if my time permitted ; but I think there is ;—and that it consists in

¹ Every Man Out Of His Humour. Prologue.