

the happiness of the individual to entertain in such a degree, as to render it impossible for him to prefer an act of vice for its separate advantage?

No philosopher has ever yet ventured to point out such a disposition. Till it be named, we must contend that the point where interest universally coincides with virtue, and where public and private happiness are identified, is discovered—not indeed in single actions, but in those habitual dispositions from which actions flow—it never can be supposed that these principles of general and personal utility, and their co-operation in this manner, are not most momentous parts of an ethical system. Whether they alone are sufficient to afford a moral theory of actions, may still be a proper subject of discussion; but no theory can be formed exclusive of them. Their truth and their importance are perfectly independent of any system respecting the nature and origin of moral approbation, or disapprobation. Though utility should be the criterion of the morality of actions, it by no means follows that moral sentiment should consist only in a perception of that utility. The nature of moral sentiment is a matter of fact to be determined by separate inquiry. The doctrine of utility may be equally applied to actions and dispositions, whether we consider conscience as a modification of reason or of feeling; whether we believe it to be implanted originally in our nature, or only the necessary produce of the action of circumstances common to all men upon the structure of every human mind.

But though the doctrine of utility be perfectly reconcilable with the principles and sentiments of the most disinterested virtue—though the loftiest visions of Plato, and the sternest precepts of Zeno, may be justified by, and even deduced from, the elements of the theory of Epicurus; yet it must not be denied, that in practice there is a hostility hitherto unappeased, between these different regions of the moral world; and that this hostility has been the most powerful, though often the secret cause of the diversity of moral systems.

Those who are accustomed most strongly to feel the necessity of sacrificing advantage to duty in the course of life, naturally, however unreasonably, feel a repugnance to acknowledge, that the rules of duty are founded on any species of advantage, even the most general and refined. Those who constantly contemplate the theoretical dependence of moral rules upon public advantage, may feel a disposition inconsistent with their principles, but favoured by their habits of thinking, to believe that the consideration of advantage may safely impel and guide their actions. The disinterested sentiments of practical virtue seek to establish themselves in the territory of speculation. They are impatient of superiority, though without their own province; and they tend to substitute magnificent names for intelligible principles in scientific morals. On the other hand, it is the natural tendency of the principle of utility, to pass the frontier of theory, within which its dominion is legitimate; and to pervert human life, by substituting a

calculation of the consequences of each action, instead of the inviolable authority of moral rules, and the habitual ardour of virtuous affections.

This warfare perhaps will never be terminated. Opinions, apparently repugnant, may be shown to be consistent; but principles of human nature, so powerful and so adverse, are always likely to be embroiled with each other. The difficulty of a pacification is formidably increased by the very technical terms in every modification of Epicurean ethics. Pleasure, enjoyment, interest, even happiness, are terms which, in their popular import, have a reference to self, and some of them to the lowest portion of self. They have associations with sensuality and sordidness, from which no philosophical definition can purify them. They are used a thousand times in their vulgar sense, for once that they are employed by the refined epicurean. The habits of the mind are necessarily framed according to the most frequent usage. The gross acceptation of the terms steals on the most abstract reasoner, and insensibly affects his views. Hence one class of moralists recoil from the theory, which they find contaminated by such degrading ideas; and another suffer themselves unconsciously to be influenced in their moral sentiments, by the foreign impurities with which the accidents of language have encrusted their elementary notions. If ever a peace should be accomplished between these conflicting principles, it must be by a powerful, and comprehensive, and impartial representation of the whole moral system;—in which the morality of actions, the

motives of conduct, and the nature of moral approbation, are perfectly distinguished from each other ;—in which a broad line of demarcation separates theory from practice ;—which exhibits general utility, ascertained by calculation, as the basis of moral rules, and the test of virtuous sentiments ; but leaves every action to be impelled by sentiment, and controlled by rule, without the toleration of any appeal to utility ;—where theoretical principles are expounded with precise simplicity, and active sentiments represented in their natural force and ardour ; where every part of human nature is alike exercised and invigorated, where the understandings of philosophers are satisfied, and the hearts of virtuous men moved ; where science is protected from being disturbed by enthusiasm, and generous feeling guarded with still greater care from the freezing power of misplaced calculation. All the parts of so noble a representation probably exist in the works of ancient and modern philosophers. But many ineffectual attempts must precede the construction of the magnificent edifice in some distant generation, by a firm and vigorous hand, uninfluenced by the prejudices of speculation or of practice, of sect or of age ; and as far as human infirmity will allow, even by the still more subtle and indelible prejudices of personal character.

Of a nature very analogous to this moral contest, is the struggle between prudence and enthusiasm, which pervades human life, and of which one side is maintained in the three last chapters of this work, with affecting and persuasive eloquence. In public

and private life, in literature and art, in legislation and even in religion itself, this dispute is every day reproduced under new forms and names. On this subject, a good understanding between the contending parties is more attainable, though a coincidence between persons of a different temperament and character could never be more than verbal. Madame de Stael herself confounds a calm regard to happiness with that gross selfishness, which, as a vice most destructive to happiness, it is the office of the guardian principle of prudence to eradicate. On the other hand, it is among the calmest suggestions of reason, that wherever great obstacles are to be conquered, a great power must be created. There must therefore be many cases where prudence justifies the cultivation of enthusiasm. It is evident that no prudence could ever produce heroic sacrifices. It never was the interest of the private soldiers of an army to march into a field of battle. It may, indeed, be their duty. But it would be a strange policy, which would prefer a sense of duty in an army, to the enthusiasm of honour or of patriotism. In those ordinary actions of human life which presuppose deliberation, the regard to interest may be generally relied on. In the regular movements of great bodies of men it will maintain its average influence. In whatever must be subjected to uniform rules, it must be extremely considered, because its regularity compensates for its weakness. Other passions overcome or suspend its power; but their return and movements cannot be foreseen or calculated. Prudence is

ever in some degree present, and fills up the vacant place of every exhausted passion. The movements of this principle in pursuit of subsistence and wealth, are so regular, that they have bestowed on political economy the character of an exact science. Its uniform presence, as much as its force, obliges the penal lawgiver to found his sanctions upon it.¹ To this important principle has nature entrusted the protection of society from disorder, and of individuals from daily and hourly waste of their happiness. It guards against evil. To sensibility belongs the privilege of producing what is beautiful and good. From her spring all the affections that sweeten life ;—all the sublime exertions of genius ;—all the lofty virtues which shed a glory round human nature. Without the one, society could not be preserved ;—without the other, it would not be worth preserving. Both are

¹ Probably Madame de Stael has not enough considered those profound and original speculations of Mr. Bentham, which she incidentally controverts. Notwithstanding the unrivalled talent of the editor for clear and lively exposition, they require patient attention. They are the first considerable attempt, to lay the foundations of a system of philosophical jurisprudence. That such a work should be begun and completed by the same man, is not consistent with the slow march of the human understanding. They have, in truth, no connection with the selfish system ; nor do they exclude the most disinterested and the most ardent affections from influence over conduct. But upon all possible systems, the lawgiver must calmly regard the general interest of society. The most specious objections to Mr. Bentham have arisen from losing sight of his object, which is to present a calculation of pleasures and pains (from whatever source) as the basis of general rules of law, not as a guide in the deliberation of an individual concerning the morality of each single action.—(See *Edinburgh Review*, vol. iv. p. 13.)

equally indispensable, though not equally dignified parts of the moral order of the world. But, as a coarse and brutish selfishness is the natural vice of the vast majority of men, it seems to be evident, that, in all ordinary circumstances, the excess of prudence is more to be dreaded than that of sensibility. The principles of interest and prudence, have some analogy to those forces in the material world, which are rendered subservient to human skill, because they can be ascertained with absolute precision,—and to those simple laws which govern the regular movements of the grandest bodies in nature.

Those of sentiment and enthusiasm have more analogy to the mighty agents, undiscoverable in their nature, conspicuous and tremendous in their effects, invisible and impalpable, which can neither be numbered, weighed, nor measured ;—of which no man can tell whence they come, or whether they go ; but which produce the most terrible appearances, and preserve the most beneficial conditions of the material universe ;—like the electric power, when its incalculable accumulation and redundance shake the heavens and the earth with tempests ; or like the element, the quality, or the energy which is the unknown cause of heat, which expands matter into those vast bodies of fluid and vapour, which qualify the world to be the habitation of life.

The contest between Scepticism and Dogmatism has a close connection with one of the most interesting parts of this philosophical and eloquent work. The system of *Kant* was one of the efforts of philosophy to

expel the poison of scepticism which Hume had infused into it. That great speculator had not amused himself like Bayle, with dialectical exercises, which only inspire a disposition towards doubt, by displaying the uncertainty of the opinions most generally received. He aimed at proving, not that nothing had been known, but that nothing could be known; and that, from the very structure of the understanding, we were destined to remain in absolute and universal ignorance. It is true, that a system of universal scepticism can never be more than a mere intellectual amusement; an exercise of subtlety, not without its use in humbling the pride of dogmatism. As the dictates of experience, which regulate conduct, must be the object of belief, all objections which attack them in common with the principles of reasoning, must be utterly ineffectual. Whatever attacks every principle of belief, can destroy none. As long as the principles of science are allowed to remain on the same level (be it called certainty or uncertainty) with the maxims of life, the whole system of human conviction must continue undisturbed. When the sceptic boasts of having involved the results of experience, and the elements of geometry, in the same ruin with the doctrines of religion, or the principles of philosophy, he may be answered, that no dogmatist ever claimed more than the same degree of certainty for these various opinions or convictions, and that his scepticism leaves them in that condition. In plain sense, the answer admits no reply. But the system of Kant, and the works of Reid, dissimilar as they are in their form

and spirit, were contemporary and independent attempts to defeat scepticism, by weapons more apparently philosophical. Both these philosophers, in the retirement of Northern Universities, began their scientific labours nearly in the same year, by a discussion of the same question that was agitated between the Leibnitzians and Newtonians about force. In a country like Germany, where the use of a dead language, and the separation of the learned class from society, long preserved the scholastic character and style in philosophy, Kant made a premature attempt to trace every part of science to common principles in the human understanding, with the usual destiny of being often compelled to hide in magnificent expressions an ignorance which ought to be acknowledged; but with prodigious comprehension of mind, and extent of accurate knowledge; with the authoritative and dogmatic tone of a discoverer; with a technical nomenclature, extensive enough to form a new language;—in his moral writings, distinguished by an austere eloquence becoming a teacher of virtue;—in his metaphysical works, characterised by an obscurity which seems, in original thinkers, sometimes to arise from the crowd of ideas struggling for issue;—and, above all, remarkable perhaps beyond any man since Aristotle, for that genius of system which maintains simplicity of principle amidst the greatest variety of matters, and preserves symmetry and correspondence between the most remote parts of the intellectual edifice. In Scotland, where Hutcheson had revived speculative philosophy in a more elegant and popular

form, Reid, a patient observer, and an accurate thinker, with an amiable prepossession in favour of useful and revered opinions, with singular caution, modesty, perspicuity, and elegance, composed his *Inquiry*, on which his fame among philosophers depends; and which is more distinguished, both by originality and error, than his later writings. His language has an unfortunate appearance of appealing to the multitude on the most abstruse subjects of human meditation. He has contributed to render the philosophy of thought more considered as a science of observation. But neither he nor his illustrious followers have sufficiently remembered, that to philosophise is to generalise; that the perfection of science is proportioned to the simplicity of its principles; and that a multiplication of general laws is an avowal of imperfection only better than a groundless boast of perfection. No two writers were ever more unlike; and the disciples of both philosophers will be equally scandalised at the comparison. Yet both were actuated by the same impulse, and aimed at the same end. Long before the appearance of either, a grand defect of the prevalent philosophy had been found by Leibnitz, who of all writers since Bacon most abounds in those fruitful thoughts which arise from a comprehensive glance over the principles of knowledge. The ancient maxim, of which it seems impossible to trace the author, is, "*that there is nothing in the understanding which was not previously in the sense.*" Leibnitz proposed to add to this maxim, "except the understanding itself;—and by

this short addition he spread a new light over intellectual philosophy.—The system of Gassendi, of Hobbes, and of Locke, by the unhappy comparison of the original state of the mind, to blank paper, led its followers to see nothing in the understanding but what came from without.—They did not enough consider, if they considered at all, that the very capacity of receiving impressions must be subject to ascertainable rules ; that the human understanding has a structure and functions, and laws of action, which must regulate its perceptions, and render it capable of experience and of reasoning. These laws of the percipient and intellectual nature must plainly be ultimate, and never can be questioned in discussion, because all discussion is founded upon them. The neglect of them opened the way to scepticism. The extensive technical language of Kant, and the unfortunate term *Common Sense*, adopted by Reid, both denote the same ultimate laws of thought which mark the boundaries of reasoning, and against which all disputation is a vain mockery. The number of such laws, and the criterion which distinguishes them, are subjects of important disquisition. But all theories of the understanding must either imply or express their existence. That of Hartley and Condillac attempts to reduce them to *one*,—certainly without success in the present state of knowledge. But if they were reduced to one, that one must be a fact, for the existence of which no proof could be given, and of the nature of which no explanation could be attempted. Whether they were one or a

thousand, the controversy between the Dogmatist and the Sceptic would be precisely of the same nature. Universal scepticism involves a contradiction in terms. It is a belief that there can be no belief. It is an attempt of the mind to act without its structure, and by other laws than those to which nature has subjected its operations. No man can be allowed to be an opponent in reasoning who does not admit those principles, without which, all reasoning is impossible.¹ It is indeed a puerile play, to attempt by argument to establish or confute principles, which every step of the argument necessarily presupposes.—He who labours to establish them, must fall into a vicious circle; and he who attempts to impugn them, into irreconcilable contradiction.

The reasonings of the Pyrrhonians and the Dogmatists, are balanced in a noble passage of Pascal, whose philosophical genius often shines forth with momentary splendour from the thick clouds which usually darkened his great mind. “L’unique fort des Dogmatistes, c’est qu’en parlant de bonne foi et sincèrement, on ne peut douter des principes naturels.”—“Les principes se sentent, les propositions se concluent.”—“Il n’y a jamais eu de Pyrrhonien effectif et parfait.”—“La nature soutient la raison impuissante.”

He concludes with an observation so remarkable for range of mind, and weight of authority, that it

¹ This is significantly expressed in the quaint title of an old and rare book, “*Sciri sive Sceptices et Scepticorum a jure disputationis Exclusio*,” by Thomas White, a personage of some consideration in the history of English philosophy.

seems to us to have a higher character of grandeur than any passage in human composition which has a mere reference to the operations of the understanding.—“La nature confond les Pyrrhoniens, et la Raison les Dogmatistes.”

The Edinburgh Review, November 1814.

WAVERLEY; OR, 'TIS SIXTY YEARS
SINCE.

*In three Volumes, 12mo, 1112 pp. Third Edition. Edinburgh,
1814.*

IT is wonderful what genius and adherence to nature will do, in spite of all disadvantages. Here is a thing obviously very hastily, and, in many places, very unskilfully written—composed, one-half of it, in a dialect unintelligible to four-fifths of the reading population of the country—relating to a period too recent to be romantic, and too far gone by to be familiar—and published, moreover, in a quarter of the island where materials and talents for novel-writing have been supposed to be equally wanting; and yet, by the mere force, and truth, and vivacity of its colouring, already casting the whole tribe of ordinary novels into the shade, and taking its place rather with the most popular of our modern poems, than with the rubbish of provincial romances.

The secret of this success, we take it, is merely that the author is a person of genius; and that he has, notwithstanding, had virtue enough to be true to nature throughout, and to content himself, even in

the marvellous parts of his story, with copying from actual existences, rather than from the phantasms of his own imagination. The charm which this communicates to all works that deal in the representation of human actions and characters is more readily felt than understood, and operates with unfailing efficacy even upon those who have no acquaintance with the originals from which the picture has been borrowed. It requires no ordinary talent, indeed, to choose such realities as may outshine the bright imaginations of the inventive, and so to combine them as to produce the most advantageous effect; but when this is once accomplished, the result is sure to be something more firm, impressive, and engaging, than can ever be produced by mere fiction. There is a consistency in nature and truth, the want of which may always be detected in the happiest combinations of fancy; and the consciousness of their support gives a confidence and assurance to the artist, which encourages him occasionally to risk a strength of colouring, and a boldness of drawing, upon which he would scarcely have ventured in a sketch that was purely ideal. The reader, too, who by these or still finer indications, speedily comes to perceive that he is engaged with scenes and characters that are copied from existing originals, naturally lends a more eager attention to the story in which they are unfolded, and regards with a keener interest what he no longer considers as a bewildering series of dreams and exaggerations—but an instructive exposition of human actions and energies, and of all the singular modifications which

our plastic nature receives from the circumstances with which it is surrounded.

The object of the work before us, was evidently to present a faithful and animated picture of the manners and state of society that prevailed in this northern part of the island, in the earlier part of last century; and the author has judiciously fixed upon the era of the Rebellion in 1745, not only as enriching his pages with the interest inseparably attached to the narration of such occurrences, but as affording a fair opportunity for bringing out all the contrasted principles and habits which distinguished the different classes of persons who then divided the country, and formed among them the basis of almost all that was peculiar in the national character. That unfortunate contention brought conspicuously to light, and for the last time, the fading image of feudal chivalry in the mountains, and vulgar fanaticism in the plains; and startled the more polished parts of the land with the wild but brilliant picture of the devoted valour, incorruptible fidelity, patriarchal brotherhood, and savage habits, of the Celtic clans on the one hand,—and the dark, untractable, and domineering bigotry of the Covenanters on the other. Both forms of society had indeed been prevalent in the other parts of the country,—but had there been so long superseded by more peaceable habits, and milder manners, that their vestiges were almost effaced, and their very memory nearly forgotten. The feudal principalities had been extinguished in the south for near three hundred years,—and the dominion of the Puritans from the

time of the Restoration. When the glens of the central Highlands, therefore, were opened up to the gaze of the English, it seemed as if they were carried back to the days of the Heptarchy;—when they saw the array of the west-country Whigs, they might imagine themselves transported to the age of Cromwell. The effect, indeed, is almost as startling at the present moment; and one great source of the interest which the volumes before us undoubtedly possess, is to be sought in the surprise that is excited by discovering that in our own country, and almost in our own age, manners and characters existed, and were conspicuous, which we had been accustomed to consider as belonging to remote antiquity or extravagant romance.

The way in which they are here represented must satisfy every reader, we think, by an inward *tact* and conviction, that the delineation has been made from actual experience and observation;—experience and observation employed perhaps only on a few surviving relics and specimens of what was familiar a little earlier—but generalised from instances sufficiently numerous and complete, to warrant all that may have been added to the portrait.—And indeed the records and vestiges of the more extraordinary parts of the representation are still sufficiently abundant, to satisfy all who have the means of consulting them, as to the perfect accuracy of the picture. The great traits of clannish dependence, pride, and fidelity may still be detected in many districts of the Highlands, though they do not now

adhere to the chieftains when they mingle in general society; and the existing contentions of Burghers, and, Antiburghers and Cameronians, though shrunk into comparative insignificance, and left indeed without protection to the ridicule of the profane, may still be referred to as complete verifications of all that is here stated about Gifted Gilfillan or Ebenezer Cruickshank. The traits of Scottish national character in the lower ranks can still less be regarded as antiquated or traditional; nor is there anything in the whole compass of the work which gives us a stronger impression of the nice observation and graphical talents of the author, than the extraordinary fidelity and felicity with which all the inferior agents in the story are represented. No one who has not lived extensively among the lower orders of all descriptions, and made himself familiar with their various tempers and dialects, can perceive the full merit of those rapid and characteristic sketches; but it requires only a general knowledge of human nature to feel that they must be faithful copies from known originals; and to be aware of the extraordinary facility and flexibility of hand which has touched, for instance, with such discriminating shades, the various gradations of the Celtic character, from the savage imperturbability of Dugald Mahony, who stalks grimly about with his battle-axe on his shoulder without speaking a word to anybody,—to the lively unprincipled activity of Callum Beg,—the coarse, unreflecting hardihood and heroism of Evan Maccombich,—and the pride,

gallantry, elegance and ambition of Fergus himself. In the lower class of the Lowland characters, again, the vulgarity of Mrs. Flockhart and of Lieutenant Jinker is perfectly distinct and original;—as well as the puritanism of Gilfillan and Cruickshank—the atrocity of Mrs. Mucklewrath—and the slow solemnity of Alexander Saunderson. The Baron of Bradwardine, and Bailie Macwheeble, are caricatures no doubt, after the fashion of the caricatures in the novels of Smollett,—or pictures, at the best, of individuals who must always have been unique and extraordinary: but almost all the other personages in the history are fair representatives of classes that are still existing, or may be remembered at least to have existed, by many whose recollections do not extend quite so far back as to the year 1745. We are speaking, however, of the book, as if our readers were already familiar with its contents—and its great popularity perhaps entitles us to do so. But it will be safer, and more decorous, at all events, to preface the extracts we propose to make from it, with a short account of the story.

It is not very skilfully adjusted—though narrated with so much ease and rapidity as to be on the whole very interesting.

Though in these extracts we have greatly exceeded the limits we usually impose on ourselves with regard to performances of this description,—and trespassed indeed considerably on space which we had reserved for more weighty matters, we have, after all, afforded

but an imperfect specimen of the variety which this work contains.—The gay scenes of the Adventurer's court,—the breaking up of his army from Edinburgh,—the battle of Preston,—and the whole process of his disastrous advance and retreat from the English provinces, are given with the greatest brilliancy and effect;—as well as the scenes of internal disorder and rising disunion that prevail in his scanty army,—the quarrel with Fergus,—and the mystical visions by which that devoted chieftain foresees his disastrous fate. The lower scenes again with Mrs. Flockhart, Mrs. Nosebag, Callum Beg, and the Cumberland peasants, though to some fastidious readers they may appear coarse and disgusting, are painted with a force and a truth to nature, which equally bespeak the powers of the artist, and are incomparably superior to anything of the sort which has been offered to the public for the last sixty years. There are also various copies of verses scattered through the work, which indicate poetical talents of no ordinary description,—though bearing, perhaps still more distinctly than the prose, the traces of considerable carelessness and haste.

The worst part of the book by far is that portion of the first volume which contains the history of the hero's residence in England,—and next to it is the laborious, tardy, and obscure explanation of some puzzling occurrences in the story, which the reader would, in general, be much better pleased to be permitted to forget,—and which are neither well explained after all, nor at all worth explaining. The passages

in which the author speaks in his own person, and assumes the smart and flippant style of modern makers of paragraphs, are also considerably below mediocrity,—and form a strange and humiliating contrast with the force and freedom of his manner when engaged in those dramatic or picturesque representations to which his genius so decidedly inclines.

There has been much speculation, at least in this quarter of the island, about the author of this singular performance,—and certainly it is not easy to conjecture why it is still anonymous.—Judging by internal evidence, to which alone we pretend to have access, we should not scruple to ascribe it to the highest of those authors to whom it has been assigned by the sagacious conjectures of the public;—and this at least we will venture to say, that if it be indeed the work of an author hitherto unknown, Mr. Scott would do well to look to his laurels, and to rouse himself for a sturdier competition than any he has yet had to encounter.

FRANCIS JEFFREY.

The Edinburgh Review, June 1818.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE.

CANTO THE FOURTH.

By LORD BYRON. 8vo, 257 pp. London, 1818.

THERE are two writers, in modern literature, whose extraordinary power over the minds of men, it may be truly said, has existed less in their works than in themselves,—Rousseau and Lord Byron. They have other points of resemblance. Both are distinguished by the most ardent and vivid delineations of intense conception, and by an intense sensibility of passion, rather than of affection. Both, too, by this double power, have held a dominion over the sympathy of their readers, far beyond the range of those ordinary feelings which are usually excited by the mere efforts of genius. The impression of this interest still accompanies the perusal of their writings. But there is another interest of more lasting, and far stronger power, which the one has possessed, and the other now possesses,—which lies in the continual embodying of the individual character,—it might almost be said, of the very person of the writer. When we speak or think of Rousseau or Byron, we are not conscious of speaking or thinking of an author. We have a vague

but empassioned remembrance of men of surpassing genius, eloquence, and power,—of prodigious capacity both of misery and happiness. We feel as if we had transiently met such beings in real life, or had known them in the dim and dark communion of a dream. Each of their works presents, in succession, a fresh idea of themselves; and, while the productions of other great men stand out from them, like something they have created, theirs, on the contrary, are images, pictures, busts of their living selves,—clothed, no doubt, at different times in different drapery, and prominent from a different background, — but uniformly impressed with the same form, and mien, and lineaments, and not to be mistaken for the representations of any other of the children of men.

But this view of the subject, though universally felt to be a true one, requires perhaps a little explanation. The personal character of which we have spoken, it should be understood, is not, altogether, that on which the seal of life has been set,—and to which, therefore, moral approval or condemnation is necessarily annexed, as to the language or conduct of actual existence. It is the character, so to speak, which is prior to conduct, and yet open to good and to ill,—the constitution of the being, in body and in soul. Each of those illustrious writers has, in this light, filled his works with expressions of his own character,—has unveiled to the world the secrets of his own being,—the mysteries of the framing of man. They have gone down into those depths which every man may sound for himself, though not for another,

and they have made disclosures to the world of what they beheld and knew there,—disclosures that have commanded and enforced a profound and universal sympathy, by proving that all mankind, the troubled and the untroubled, the lofty and the low, the strongest and the frailest, are linked together by the bonds of a common but inscrutable nature.

Thus, each of these wayward and richly-gifted spirits has made himself the object of profound interest to the world,—and that too, during periods of society when ample food was everywhere spread abroad for the meditations and passions of men. What love and desire,—what longing and passionate expectation hung upon the voice of Rousseau, the idol of his day!—That spell is broken. We now can regard his works in themselves, in great measure free from all the delusions and illusions that, like the glories of a bright and vapoury atmosphere, were for ever rising up and encircling the image of their wonderful creator. Still is the impression of his works vivid and strong. The charm which cannot pass away is there,—life breathing in dead words,—the pulses of passion,—the thrilling of the frame,—the sweet pleasure stealing from senses touched with ecstasy into sounds which the tongue frames, and the lips utter with delight. All these still are there the fresh beauty the undimmed lustre,—the immortal bloom and verdure and fragrance of life. These, light and vision-like as they seem, endure as in marble. But that which made the spirits of men, from one end of Europe to the other, turn to the name of Rousseau,—

that idolising enthusiasm which we can now hardly conceive, was the illusion of one generation, and has not survived to another. And what was the spell of that illusion? Was it merely that bewitching strain of dreaming melancholy which lent to moral declamation the tenderness of romance? Or that fiery impress of burning sensibility which threw over abstract and subtle disquisitions all the colours of a lover's tale? These undoubtedly,—but not these alone. It was that continual impersonation of himself in his writings, by which he was for ever kept brightly present before the eyes of men. There was in him a strange and unsated desire of depicting himself, throughout all the changes of his being. His wild temper only found ease in tracing out, in laying bare to the universal gaze, the very ground-work, the most secret paths, the darkest coverts of one of the most wayward and unimaginable minds ever framed by nature. From the moment that his first literary success had wedded him to the public, this was his history,—and such his strange, contradictory, divided life. Shy, and shunning the faces of men in his daily walks, yet searching and rending up the inmost recesses of his heart for the inspection of that race which he feared or hated. As a man, turning from the light, as from something unsupportably loathsome, and plunging into the thickest shades. Yet, in that other existence which he held from imagination, living only in the presence of men,—in the full broad glare of the world's eye,—and eagerly, impetuously, passionately, unsparingly seizing on all his own most hidden

thoughts,—his loneliest moods,—his most sacred feelings,—which had been cherished for the seclusion in which they sprung,—for their own still deep peace,—and for their breathings of unbeheld communions, seizing upon all these, and flinging them out into the open air, that they might feed the curiosity of that eager, idle, frivolous world from which he had fled in misanthropical disgust,—that he might array an exhibition to their greedy gaze,—and that he, the morbid and melancholy lover of solitude, might act a conspicuous and applauded part on the crowded theatre of public fame.

It might, on a hasty consideration, seem to us, that such undisguised revelation of feelings and passions, which the becoming pride of human nature, jealous of its own dignity, would, in general, desire to hold in unviolated silence, could produce in the public mind only pity, sorrow, or repugnance. But, in the case of men of real genius, like Rousseau or Byron, it is otherwise. Each of us must have been aware in himself of a singular illusion, by which these disclosures, when read with that tender or high interest which attaches to poetry, seem to have something of the nature of private and confidential communications. They are not felt, while we read, as declarations published to the world,—but almost as secrets whispered to chosen ears. Who is there that feels, for a moment, that the voice which reaches the inmost recesses of his heart is speaking to the careless multitudes around him? Or, if we do so remember, the words seem to pass by others like air, and to find

their way to the hearts for whom they were intended,—kindred and sympathising spirits, who discern and own that secret language, of which the privacy is not violated though spoken in hearing of the uninitiated,—because it is not understood. There is an unobserved beauty that smiles on us alone; and the more beautiful to us, because we feel as if chosen out from a crowd of lovers. Something analogous to this is felt in the grandest scenes of Nature and Art. Let a hundred persons look from a hill-top over some transcendent landscape. Each will select from the widespread glory at his feet, for his more special love and delight, some different glimpse of sunshine,—or solemn grove,—or embowered spire,—or brown mouldering ruin,—or castellated cloud. During their contemplation, the soul of each man is amidst its own creations, and in the heart of his own solitude;—nor is the depth of that solitude broken, though it lies open to the sunshine, and before the eyes of unnumbered spectators. It is the same in great and impressive scenes of art,—for example in a theatre. The tenderest tones of acted tragedy reach our hearts with a feeling as if that inmost soul which they disclose revealed itself to us alone. The audience of a theatre forms a sublime unity to the actor; but each person sees and feels with the same incommunicated intensity, as if all passed only before his own gifted sight. The publicity which is before our eyes is not acknowledged by our minds; and each heart feels itself to be the sole agitated witness of the pageant of misery.

But there are other reasons why we read with complacency writings which, by the most public declaration of most secret feelings, ought, it might seem, to shock and revolt our sympathy. A great poet may address the whole world in the language of intensest passion, concerning objects of which, rather than speak, face to face, with any one human being on earth, he would perish in his misery. For it is in solitude that he utters what is to be wafted by all the winds of heaven. There are, during his inspiration, present with him only the shadows of men. He is not daunted, or perplexed, or disturbed, or repelled by real living breathing features. He can updraw just as much as he chooses of the curtain that hangs between his own solitude and the world of life. He thus pours his soul out, partly to himself alone,—partly to the ideal abstractions, and impersonated images that float round him at his own conjuration,—and partly to human beings like himself, moving in the dark distance of the every-day world. He confesses himself, not before men, but before the Spirit of Humanity. And he thus fearlessly lays open his heart,—assured that nature never prompted unto genius that which will not triumphantly force its wide way into the human heart. We can thus easily imagine the poet whom, in real life, the countenances and voices of his fellow-men might silence into shame, or fastidiousness, or timidity, or aversion, or disdain,—yet kindling in his solitude into irrepressible passion and enthusiasm towards human nature and all its transitory concerns,—anxiously moulding himself into

the object of men's most engrossing and vehement love or aversion,—identifying his own existence with all their strongest and profoundest passions,—claiming kindred with them, not in their virtues alone, but in their darkest vices and most fatal errors ;—yet, in the midst of all this, proudly guarding his own prevailing character, so that it shall not merge in the waves of a common nature, but stand “in shape and gesture proudly eminent,” contemplated with still-increasing interest by the millions that, in spite of themselves, feel and acknowledge its strange and unaccountable ascendancy.

The reasons then are obvious, why a writer of very vivid sensibilities may, by impassioned self-delineation, hold a wondrous power over the entranced minds of his readers. But this power is in his living hands ; and, like the wand of the magician, it loses its virtue on its master's death. We feel chiefly the influence of such a writer, while he lives,—our cotemporary,—going with us a fellow-voyager on the stream of life, and from time to time flashing towards us the emanations of his spirit. Our love,—our expectation follow the courses of his mind, and, if his life repel us not, the courses of his life. It was the strange madness of Rousseau to pour the blaze of his reputation over the scandals of his life. But this was later in his career ; and his name for a long time in Europe was that of a hermit-sage, a martyr of liberty and virtue,—a persecuted good man loving a race unworthy of him, and suffering alike from their injustice and from the excess of his own spirit. He

made a character for himself;—and whatever he had made it, it might have been believed. It was an assumed ideal impersonation of a character of literary and philosophical romance. At last, indeed, he broke up his own spell. But if he could have left the delusion behind him, he could not have left the power;—for the power hangs round the living man: it does not rest upon the grave.

When death removes such a writer from our sight, the magical influence of which we have spoken gradually fades away; and a new generation, free from all personal feelings towards the idol of a former age, may perhaps be wearied with that perpetual self-reference which to them seems merely the querulousness or the folly of unhappy or diseased egoism. It is even probable, that they may perversely withhold a portion of just admiration and delight from him who was once the undisputed sovereign of the soul, and that they may show their surprise at the subjection of their predecessors beneath the tyrannical despotism of genius, by scorning themselves to bow before its power, or acknowledge its legitimacy. It is at least certain, that by the darkness of death such luminaries, if not eclipsed, are shorn of their beams. So much, even in their works of most general interest, derives its beauty and fascination from a vivid feeling, in the reader's mind, of its being a portraiture of one with whom he has formed a kind of strange, wild, and disturbed friendship, that they who come after, and have never felt the sorcery of the living man, instead of being kindled up by such pictures into impassioned

wonder and delight, may gaze on them with no stronger emotion than curiosity, and even turn from them with indifference. Such must be more or less the fate of all works of genius, however splendid and powerful, of which the chief interest is not in universal truth, so much as in the intensity of individual feeling, and the impersonation of individual character.

It would, indeed, be in most violent contradiction to all we have formerly written of Lord Byron, were we to say that he stands in this predicament. Yet, there is a certain applicability of our observations even to him, as well as to Rousseau, with whom, perhaps too fancifully, we have now associated his nature and his name. Posterity may make fewer allowances for much in himself and his writings, than his contemporaries are willing to do; nor will they, with the same passionate and impetuous zeal, follow the wild voice that too often leads into a haunted wilderness of doubt and darkness. To them, as to us, there will always be something majestic in his misery,—something sublime in his despair. But they will not, like us, be withheld from sterner and severer feelings, and from the more frequent visitings of moral condemnation, by that awful commiseration and sympathy which a great poet breathes at will into all hearts, from his living agonies,—nor, by that restless, and watchful, and longing anxiety, to see again and again the princely sufferer rising up with fresh confessions of a still more magnificent sorrow,—nor, by that succession of affecting appeals to the frailties and troubles of our own hearts, which now

keeps him vividly, and brightly, in our remembrance, wherever his soul, tempest-like, may have driven him over earth and sea,—nor, above all, by the cheering and lofty hope now felt by them who wish to see genius the inseparable companion of virtue,—that he whose inspiration holds us always in wonder, and so often in delight, may come ere long to breathe a serener atmosphere of thought,—and, after all his wanderings, and all his woes,—with subsided passions, and invigorated intellect, calmly rest at last in the collected majesty of his power.

We are not now writing a formal critique on the genius of Byron, but rather expressing our notions of the relation in which he stands with the lovers of poetry. There is felt to be between him and the public mind a stronger personal bond than ever linked its movements to any other living poet. And we think that this bond will in future be still more closely riveted. During the composition of the first cantos of *Childe Harold*, he had but a confused idea of the character he wished to delineate,—nor did he perhaps very distinctly comprehend the scope and tendencies of his own genius. Two conceptions, distinct from each other, seem therein to be often blended,—one, of ideal human beings, made up of certain troubled powers and passions,—and one, of himself ranging the world of Nature and Man in wonder, and delight, and agitation, in his capacity of a poet. These conceptions, which frequently jostled and interfered with each other, he has since more distinctly unfolded in separate poems. His troubled imaginary beings,—possessing much of

himself, and far more not of himself—he has made into Giaours, Conrads, Laras, and Alps,—and his conception of himself has been expanded into Childe Harold, as we now behold him on that splendid pilgrimage. It is not enough to say that the veil is at last thrown off. It is a nobler creature who is before us. The ill-sustained misanthropy, and disdain of the two first cantos, more faintly glimmer throughout the third, and may be said to disappear wholly from the fourth, which reflects the high and undisturbed visions of earthly glory, as a dark swollen tide images the splendours of the sky in portentous colouring, and broken magnificence.

We have admitted that much of himself is depicted in all his heroes ; but when we seem to see the poet shadowed out in all those states of disordered being which such heroes exhibit, we are far from believing that his own mind has gone through those states of disorder, in its own experience of life. We merely conceive of it as having felt within itself the capacity of such disorders, and therefore exhibiting itself before us in possibility. This is not general,—it is rare with great poets. Neither Homer, nor Shakespeare, nor Milton, ever so show themselves in the characters which they portray. Their poetical personages have no reference to themselves ; but are distinct, independent creatures of their minds, produced in the full freedom of intellectual power. In Byron there does not seem this freedom of power. There is little appropriation of character to events. Character is first, and all in all. It is dictated,—compelled by

some force in his own mind necessitating him,—and the events obey. These poems, therefore, with all their beauty and vigour, are not, like Scott's poems, full and complete narrations of some one definite story, containing within itself a picture of human life. They are merely bold, confused, and turbulent exemplifications of certain sweeping energies and irresistible passions. They are fragments of a poet's dark dream of life. The very personages, vividly as they are pictured, are yet felt to be fictitious; and derive their chief power over us from their supposed mysterious connection with the poet himself, and, it may be added, with each other. The law of his mind is, to embody his own peculiar feelings in the forms of other men. In all his heroes we accordingly recognise, though with infinite modifications, the same great characteristics, a high and audacious conception of the power of the mind,—an intense sensibility of passion,—an almost boundless capacity of tumultuous emotion,—a haunting admiration of the grandeur of disordered power,—and, above all, a soul-felt, blood-felt delight in beauty,—a beauty which, in his wild creations, is often scared away from the agitated surface of life by stormier passions, but which, like a bird of calm, is for ever returning on its soft, silvery wings, before the black swell has finally subsided into sunshine and peace.

It seems to us, that this exquisite sense of beauty has of late become still more exquisite in the soul of Byron. *Parasina*, the most finished of all his poems, is full of it to overflowing;—it breathes from every

page of the *Prisoners of Chillon* ;—but it is in *Manfred* that it riots and revels among the streams and waterfalls, and groves, and mountains, and heavens. Irrelevant and ill-managed as many parts are of that grand drama, there is in the character of *Manfred* more of the self-might of Byron than in all his previous productions. He has therein brought, with wonderful power, metaphysical conceptions into forms,—and we know of no poem in which the aspect of external nature is throughout lighted up with an expression at once so beautiful, solemn, and majestic. It is the poem, next to *Childe Harold*, which we should give to a foreigner to read, that he might know something of Byron. Shakespeare has given to those abstractions of human life and being which are truth in the intellect, forms as full, clear, glowing as the idealised forms of visible nature. The very words of Ariel picture to us his beautiful being. In *Manfred*, we see glorious but immature manifestations of similar power. The poet there creates, with delight, thoughts and feelings and fancies into visible forms, that he may cling and cleave to them, and clasp them in his passion. The beautiful Witch of the Alps seems exhaled from the luminous spray of the Cataract,—as if the poet's eyes, unsated with the beauty of inanimate nature, gave spectral apparitions of loveliness to feed the pure passion of the poet's soul.

We speak of *Manfred* now, because it seems to us to hold a middle place between the Tales of Byron, and *Childe Harold*, as far as regards the Poet himself. But we likewise do so, that we may have an

opportunity of saying a few words on the moral of this poem, and a few words on a subject that may scarcely seem to fall under the legitimate province of the critic, but which, in the case of this great writer, forms so profoundly interesting a part of his poetical character,—we mean, his scepticism.

The moral character of Byron's poetry has often been assailed, and we have ourselves admitted that some strong objections might be urged against it. But we think that his mind is now clearing up, like noon-day, after a stormy and disturbed morning;—and when the change which we anticipate has been fully brought about, the moral character of his poetry will be lofty and pure. Over this fine drama, a moral feeling hangs like a sombrous thunder-cloud. No other guilt but that so darkly shadowed out could have furnished so dreadful an illustration of the hideous aberrations of human nature, however noble and majestic, when left a prey to its desires, its passions and its imagination. The beauty, at one time so innocently adored, is at last soiled, profaned, and violated. Affection, love, guilt, horror, remorse and death come in terrible succession, yet all darkly linked together. We think of Astarte as young, beautiful, innocent,—guilty,—lost,—murdered,—buried,—judged,—pardoned; but still, in her permitted visit to earth, speaking in a voice of sorrow, and with a countenance yet pale with mortal trouble. We had but a glimpse of her in her beauty and innocence; but, at last she rises up before us in all the mortal silence of a ghost, with fixed, glazed, and passionless

eyes, revealing death, judgment, and eternity. The moral breathes and burns in every word,—in sadness, misery, insanity, desolation and death. The work is “instinct with spirit,”—and in the agony and distraction, and all its dimly imagined causes, we behold, though broken up, confused and shattered, the elements of a purer existence.

On the other point, namely, the dark and sceptical spirit prevalent through the works of this poet, we shall not now utter all that we feel, but rather direct the notice of our readers to it as a singular phenomenon in the poetry of the age. Whoever has studied the spirit of Greek and Roman literature, must have been struck with the comparative disregard and indifference wherewith the thinking men of these exquisitely polished nations, contemplated those subjects of darkness and mystery which afford, at some period or other of his life, so much disquiet,—we had almost said so much agony, to the mind of every reflecting modern. It is difficult to account for this in any very satisfactory, and we suspect altogether impossible to do so in any strictly logical, manner. In reading the works of Plato and his interpreter Cicero, we find the germs of all the doubts and anxieties to which we have alluded, so far as these are connected with the workings of our reason. The singularity is, that those clouds of darkness, which hang over the intellect, do not appear, so far as we can perceive, to have thrown at any time any very alarming shade upon the feelings or temper of the ancient sceptic. We should think a very great deal

of this was owing to the brilliancy and activity of his southern fancy. The lighter spirits of antiquity, like the more mercurial of our moderns, sought refuge in mere *gaieté du cœur* and derision. The graver poets and philosophers,—and poetry and philosophy were in those days seldom disunited,—built up some airy and beautiful system of mysticism, each following his own devices, and suiting the erection to his own peculiarities of hope and inclination; and this being once accomplished, the mind appears to have felt quite satisfied with what it had done, and to have reposed amidst the splendours of its sand-built fantastic edifice, with as much security as if it had been grooved and riveted into the rock of ages. The mere exercise of ingenuity in devising a system, furnished consolation to its creators or improvers. Lucretius is a striking example of all this; and it may be averred that, down to the time of Claudian, who lived in the fourth century of our era, in no classical writer of antiquity do there occur any traces of what moderns understand by the restlessness and discomfort of uncertainty as to the government of the world, and the future destinies of Man.

There are three only, even among the great poets of modern times, who have chosen to depict, in their full shape and vigour, those agonies to which great and meditative intellects are, in the present progress of human history, exposed by the eternal recurrence of a deep and discontented scepticism. But there is only one who has dared to represent himself as the victim of these nameless and undefinable sufferings.

Goethe chose for his doubts and his darkness the terrible disguise of the mysterious Faustus. Schiller, with still greater boldness, planted the same anguish in the restless, haughty, and heroic bosom of Wallenstein. But Byron has sought no external symbol in which to embody the inquietudes of his soul. He takes the world, and all that it inherit, for his arena and his spectators; and he displays himself before their gaze, wrestling unceasingly and ineffectually with the demon that torments him. At times there is something mournful and depressing in his scepticism; but oftener, it is of a high and solemn character, approaching to the very verge of a confiding faith. Whatever the poet may believe, we his readers always feel ourselves too much ennobled and elevated even by his melancholy, not to be confirmed in our own belief by the very doubts so majestically conceived and uttered. His scepticism, if it ever approaches to a creed, carries with it its refutation in its grandeur. There is neither philosophy nor religion in those bitter and savage taunts which have been cruelly thrown out, from many quarters, against those moods of mind which are involuntary, and will not pass away;—the shadows and spectres which still haunt his imagination, may once have disturbed our own;—through his gloom there are frequent flashes of illumination;—and the sublime sadness which, to him, is breathed from the mysteries of mortal existence, is always joined with a longing after immortality, and expressed in language that is itself divine.

But it is our duty now to give our readers an

analysis of the concluding Canto of *Childe Harold*; and as it is, in our opinion, the finest of them all, our extracts shall be abundant. The poem which it brings to an end is perhaps the most original in the language, both in conception and execution. It is no more like Beattie's *Minstrel* than *Paradise Lost*,—though the former production was in the noble author's mind when first thinking of *Childe Harold*. A great poet, who gives himself up free and unconfined to the impulses of his genius, as Byron has done in the better part of this singular creation, shows to us a spirit as it is sent out from the hands of Nature, to range over the earth and the societies of men. Even Shakespeare himself submits to the shackles of history and society. But here Byron traverses the whole earth, borne along by the whirlwind of his own spirit. Wherever a forest frowns, or a temple glitters,—there he is privileged to bend his flight. He may suddenly start up from his solitary dream by the secret fountain of the desert, and descend at once into the tumult of peopled, or the silence of desolated cities. Whatever lives now,—has perished heretofore,—or may exist hereafter,—and that has within in it a power to kindle passion, may become the material of his all-embracing song. There are no unities of time or place to fetter him,—and we fly with him from hill-top to hill-top, and from tower to tower, over all the solitude of nature, and all the magnificence of art. When the past pageants of history seem too dim and faded, he can turn to the splendid spectacles that have dignified our own days;

and the images of kings and conquerors of old may give place to those yet living in sovereignty or exile. Indeed, much of the power which Harold holds over us is derived from this source. He lives in a sort of sympathy with the public mind,—sometimes wholly distinct from it,—sometimes acting in opposition to it,—sometimes blending with it,—but at all times,—in all his thoughts and actions having a reference to the public mind. His spirit need not go back into the past,—though it often does so,—to bring the objects of its love back to earth in more beautiful life. The existence he paints is,—now. The objects he presents are marked out to him by men's present regards. It is his to speak of all those great political events which have been objects of such passionate sympathy to the nation. And when he does speak of them, he either gives us back our own feelings, raised into powerful poetry, or he endeavours to displace them from our breasts, and to substitute others of his own. In either case, it is a living speaker standing up before us, and ruling our minds. But chiefly he speaks of our own feelings, exalted in thought, language, and passion. The whole substance and basis of his poem is therefore popular. All the scenes through which he has travelled, were, at the very moment, of strong interest to the public mind, and that interest still hangs over them. His travels were not, at first, the self-impelled act of a mind severing itself in lonely roaming from all participation with the society to which it belonged, but rather obeying the general motion of the mind of that society. The southern

regions of Europe have been like a world opening upon us with fresh and novel beauty, and our souls have enjoyed themselves there, of late years, with a sort of romantic pleasure. This fanciful and romantic feeling was common to those who went to see those countries, and to those who remained at home, to hear the narrations of the adventurers,—so that all the Italian, Grecian, Peninsular, Ionian, and Ottoman feeling which pervades *Childe Harold*, singularly suited as it is to the genius of Byron, was not first brought upon the English mind by the power of that genius, but was there already in great force and activity.

There can be no limits set to the interest that attaches to a great poet thus going forth, like a spirit, from the heart of a powerful and impassioned people, to range among the objects and events to them most pregnant with passion,—who is, as it were, the representative of our most exalted intellect,—and who often seems to disclose within ourselves the splendour with which he invests our own ordinary conceptions. The consciousness that he is so considered by a great people, must give a kingly power and confidence to a poet. He feels himself entitled, and, as it were, elected to survey the phenomena of the times, and to report upon them in poetry. He is the speculator of the passing might and greatness of his own generation. But though he speaks to the public, at all times, he does not consider them as his judges. He looks upon them as sentient existences that are important to his poetical existence,—but, so

that he command their feelings and passions, he cares not for their censure or their praise,—for his fame is more than mere literary fame; and he aims in poetry, like the fallen chief whose image is so often before him, at universal dominion, we had almost said, universal tyranny, over the minds of man.

The *Pilgrimage of Childe Harold* has now been brought to its close; and of his character there remains nothing more to be laid open to our view. It is impossible to reflect on the years which have elapsed since this mysterious stranger was first introduced to our acquaintance, without feeling that our own spirits have undergone in that time many mighty changes,—sorrowful in some it may be, in others happy changes. Neither can we be surprised, knowing as we well do who Childe Harold is, that he also has been changed. He represented himself, from the beginning, as a ruin; and when we first gazed upon him, we saw indeed in abundance the black traces of recent violence and convulsion. The edifice has not been rebuilt; but its hues have been sobered by the passing wings of time, and the calm slow ivy has had leisure to wreath the soft green of its melancholy among the fragments of the decay. In so far, the Pilgrim has become wiser. He seems to think more of others, and with a greater spirit of humanity. There was something tremendous, and almost fiendish, in the air with which he surveyed the first scenes of his wanderings; and no proof of the strength of genius was ever exhibited so strong and unquestionable,

as the sudden and entire possession of the minds of Englishmen by such a being as he then appeared to be. He looked upon a bull-fight, and a field of battle, with no variety of emotion. Brutes and men were, in his eyes, the same blind, stupid victims of the savage lust of power. He seemed to shut his eyes to everything of that citizenship and patriotism which ennoble the spirit of the soldier, and to delight in scattering the dust and ashes of his derision over all the most sacred resting-places of the soul of man.

Even then, we must allow, the original spirit of the Englishman and the poet broke triumphantly, at times, through the chilling mist in which it had been spontaneously enveloped. In Greece, above all, the contemplation of Athens, Salamis, Marathon, Thermoplæ and Plataea, subdued the prejudices of him who had gazed unmoved upon the recent glories of Trafalgar and Talavera. The nobility of manhood appeared to delight this moody visitant; and he accorded, without reluctance, to the shades of long-departed heroes that reverent homage, which, in the strange mixture of envy and scorn wherewith the contemplative so often regard active men, he had refused to the living, or to the newly dead.

At all times, however, the sympathy and respect of Childe Harold,—when these have been excited by any circumstances external to himself,—have been given almost exclusively to the intellectual, and refused to the moral greatness of his species. There is certainly less of this in his last Canto. Yet we think that the ruins of Rome might have excited within him not a

few glorious recollections, quite apart from those vague lamentations and worshippings of imperial power, which occupy so great a part of the conclusion of his pilgrimage. The stern purity and simplicity of domestic manners,—the devotion of male and female bosoms,—the very names of Lucretia, Valeria, and the mother of the Gracchi, have a charm about them at least as enduring as any others, and a thousand times more delightful than all the iron memories of conquerors and consuls.—But the mind must have something to admire,—some breathing-place of veneration,—some idol, whether of demon or of divinity, before which it is its pride to bow. Byron has chosen too often to be the undoubting adorer of Power. The idea of tyrannic and unquestioned sway seems to be the secret delight of his spirit. He would pretend, indeed, to be a republican,—but his heroes are all stamped with the leaden signet of despotism; and we sometimes see the most cold, secluded, immitigable tyrant of the whole, lurking beneath the “scallop-shell and sandal-shoon” of the Pilgrim himself.

In every mien and gesture of this dark being, we discover the traces of one that has known the delights, and sympathised with the possessors of intellectual power; but too seldom any vestiges of a mind that delights in the luxuries of quiet virtue, or that could repose itself in the serenity of home. The very possession of purity would sometimes almost seem to degrade, in his eyes, the intellectual greatness with which it has been sometimes allied. He speaks of

Pompey with less reverence than Cæsar; and, in spite of many passing visitings of anger and of scorn, it is easy to see that, of all cotemporary beings, there is ONE only with whom he is willing to acknowledge mental sympathy,—one only whom he looks upon with real reverence,—one only whose fortunes touch the inmost sanctuaries of his proud soul,—and that this one is no other than that powerful, unintelligible, unrivalled spirit, who, had he possessed either private virtue or public moderation, might still have been in a situation to despise the offerings of even such a worshipper as Harold.

But there would be no end of descanting on the character of the Pilgrim, nor of the moral reflections which it awakens. Of the poet himself, the completion of this wonderful performance inspires us with a lofty and magnificent hope. It is most assuredly in his power to build up a work that shall endure among the most august fabrics of the genius of England. Indeed, the impression which the collective poetry of our own age makes upon our minds, is, that it contains great promise of the future; and that, splendid as many of its achievements have been, some of our living poets seem destined still higher to exalt the imaginative character of their countrymen. When we look back and compare the languid, faint, cold delineations of the very justest and finest subjects of inspiration, in the poetry of the first half of the last century, with the warm, life-flushed and life-breathing pictures of our own, we feel that a great accession has been made to the literature of our day,—an accession

not only of delight, but of power. We cannot resist the persuasion, that if literature, in any great degree, impresses and nourishes the character of a people,—then this literature of ours, pregnant as it is with living impressions,—gathered from Nature in all her varieties of awfulness and beauty,—gathered too from those high and dread passions of men, which our ordinary life scarcely shows, and indeed could scarcely bear, but which, nevertheless, have belonged, and do belong, to our human life,—and held up in the powerful representations of the poets to our consciousness at times, when the deadening pressure of the days that are going by might bereave us of all genial hope and all dignified pride,—we say it is impossible for us to resist the belief that such pregnant, glowing, powerful poetry, must carry influences into the heart of this generation, even like those which are breathed from the heart of Nature herself,—or like those which lofty passions leave behind them in bosoms which they have once possessed. The same spirit of poetical passion which so uniformly marks the works of all our living poets, must exist very widely among those who do not aspire to the name of genius; it must be very widely diffused throughout the age, and, as we think, must very materially influence the reality of life. Yet highly as we estimate the merits of our modern poetry, it is certain, that the age has not yet produced any one great epic or tragic performance. Vivid and just delineations of passion there are in abundance,—but of moments of passions,—fragments of representation. The giant grasp of thought, which

conceives, and brings into full and perfect life, full and perfect passion,—passion pervading alike action and character, through a majestic series of events, and at the same time cast in the mould of grand imagination,—this seems not to be of our age. In the delineation of external nature, which, in a poet's soul, requires rather moral beauty than intellectual strength, this age has excelled. But it has produced no poem gloriously illustrative of the agencies, existences, and events, of the complex life of man. It has no Lear,—no Macbeth,—no Othello. Some such glory as this Byron may yet live to bring over his own generation. His being has in it all the elements of the highest poetry. And that being he enjoys in all the strength of its prime. We might almost say, that he needs but to exercise his will to construct a great poem. There is, however, much for him to alter in what may be called his Theory of Imagination respecting Human Life. Some idols of his own setting-up he has himself overthrown. There are yet some others, partly of gold, and partly of clay, which should be dashed against the floor of the sanctuary. We have already spoken of his personal character, as it shines forth in his poetry. This personal character exists in the nature of his imagination and may therefore be modified,—purified,—dignified by his own will. His imagination does, to his own eyes, invest him with an unreal character. Purposes, passions, loves, deeds, events, may seem great and paramount in imagination, which have yet no power to constrain to action: and those which perhaps may govern our actions, vanish

altogether from our imagination. There is a region,—a world,—a sphere of being in imagination, which, to our real life, is no more than the world of a dream ; yet, long as we are held in it by the transport of our delusion, we live, not in delight only, but in the conscious exaltation of our nature. It is in this world that the spirit of Byron must work a reformation for itself. He knows, far better than we can tell him, what have been the most hallowed objects of love and of passion to the souls of great poets in the most splendid eras of poetry,—and he also knows well, that those objects, if worshipped by him with becoming and steadfast reverence, will repay the worship which they receive, by the more fervent and divine inspiration which they kindle.

The Edinburgh Review, July 1832.

CORN-LAW RHYMES.

1. Third Edition, 8vo. London, 1831.
2. Love: a Poem. By the Author of Corn-Law Rhymes. Third Edition, 8vo. London, 1831.
3. The Village Patriarch: a Poem. By the Author of Corn-Law Rhymes. 12mo. London, 1831.

SMELFUNGUS REDIVIVUS, throwing down his critical assaying-balance, some years ago, and taking leave of the Belles-Lettres function, expressed himself in this abrupt way: "The end having come, it is fit that we end. Poetry having ceased to be read, or published, or written, how can it continue to be reviewed? With your Lake Schools, and Border-Thief Schools, and Cockney, and Satanic Schools, there has been enough to do; and now, all these Schools having burnt or smouldered themselves out, and left nothing but a widespread wreck of ashes, dust, and cinders, —or perhaps dying embers, kicked to and fro under the feet of innumerable women and children in the Magazines, and at best blown here and there into transient sputters, with vapour enough, so as to form what you might name a boundless Green-sick, or

New-Sentimental, or Sleep-Awake School, — what remains but to adjust ourselves to circumstances? Urge me not," continues the able Editor, suddenly changing his figure, "with considerations that Poetry, as the inward voice of Life, must be perennial, only dead in one form to become alive in another; that this still abundant deluge of Metre, seeing there must needs be fractions of Poetry floating scattered in it, ought still to be net-fished, at all events, surveyed and taken note of: the survey of English Metre, at this epoch, perhaps transcends the human faculties; to hire out the reading of it, by estimate, at a remunerative rate per page, would, in few quarters, reduce the cash-box of any extant Review to the verge of insolvency."

What our distinguished contemporary has said remains said. Far be it from us to censure or counsel any able Editor; to draw aside the Editorial veil, and, officiously prying into his interior mysteries, impugn the laws he walks by! For Editors, as for others, there are times of perplexity, wherein the cunning of the wisest will scantily suffice his own wants, say nothing of his neighbour's.

To us, on our side, meanwhile, it remains clear that Poetry, or were it but Metre, should nowise be altogether neglected. Surely it is the Reviewer's trade to sit watching, not only the tillage, crop-rotation, marketings, and good or evil husbandry of the Economic Earth, but also the weather-symptoms of the Literary Heaven, on which those former so much depend: if any promising or threatening

meteoric phenomenon make its appearance, and he proclaim not tidings thereof, it is at his peril. Further, be it considered how, in this singular poetic epoch, a small matter constitutes a novelty. If the whole welkin hang overcast in drizzly dinginess, the feeblest light-gleam, or speck of blue, cannot pass unheeded.

The Works of this Corn-Law Rhymers we might liken rather to some little fraction of a rainbow: hues of joy and harmony, painted out of troublous tears. No round full bow, indeed; gloriously spanning the Heavens; shone on by the full sun; and, with seven-striped, gold-crimson border (as is in some sort the office of Poetry) dividing Black from Brilliant: not such; alas, still far from it! Yet, in very truth, a little prismatic blush, glowing genuine among the wet clouds; which proceeds, if you will, from a sun cloud-hidden, yet indicates that a sun does shine, and above those vapours a whole azure vault and celestial firmament stretch serene.

Strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that here we have once more got sight of a Book calling itself Poetry, yet which actually is a kind of Book, and no empty pasteboard case, and simulacrum or "ghost-defunct" of a Book, such as is too often palmed on the world, and handed over Booksellers' counters, with a demand of real money for it, as if it too were a reality. The speaker here is of that singular class, who have something to say; whereby, though delivering himself in verse, and in these days, he does not deliver himself wholly in jargon, but

articulately, and with a certain degree of meaning, that has been *believed*, and therefore is again believable.

To some the wonder and interest will be heightened by another circumstance: that the speaker in question is not school-learned, or even furnished with pecuniary capital; is, indeed, a quite unmonied, russet-coated speaker; nothing or little other than a Sheffield worker in brass and iron, who describes himself as "one of the lower, little removed above the lowest class." Be of what class he may, the man is provided, as we can perceive, with a rational god-created soul; which too has fashioned itself into some clearness, some self-subsistence, and can actually see and know with its own organs; and in rugged substantial English, nay, with tones of poetic melody, utter forth what it has seen.

It used to be said that lions do not paint, that poor men do not write; but the case is altering now. Here is a voice coming from the deep Cyclopean forges, where Labour, in real soot and sweat, beats with his thousand hammers "the red son of the furnace," doing personal battle with Necessity, and her dark brute Powers, to make them reasonable and serviceable; an intelligible voice from the hitherto Mute and Irrational, to tell us at first hand how it is with him, what in very deed is the theorem of the world and of himself, which he, in those dim depths of his, in that wearied head of his, has put together. To which voice, in several respects significant enough, let good ear be given.

Here too be it premised, that nowise under the

Very fine

category of "Uneducated Poets," or in any fashion of dilettante patronage, can our Sheffield friend be produced. His position is unsuitable for that; so is ours. Genius, which the French lady declared to be of no sex, is much more certainly of no rank; neither when "the spark of Nature's fire" has been imparted, should Education take high airs in her artificial light,—which is too often but phosphorescence and putrescence. In fact, it now begins to be suspected here and there, that this same aristocratic recognition, which looks down with an obliging smile from its throne, of bound Volumes and gold Ingots, and admits that it is wonderfully well for one of the uneducated classes, may be getting out of place. There are unhappy times in the world's history, when he that is the least educated will chiefly have to say that he is the least perverted; and with the multitude of false eye-glasses, convex, concave, green, even yellow, has not lost the natural use of his eyes. For a generation that reads Cobbett's Prose, and Burns's Poetry, it need be no miracle that here also is a man who can handle both pen and hammer like a man.

Nevertheless, this serene-highness attitude and temper is so frequent, perhaps it were good to turn the tables for a moment, and see what look it has under that reverse aspect. How were it if we surmised, that for a man gifted with natural vigour, with a man's character to be developed in him, more especially if in the way of Literature, as Thinker and Writer, it is actually, in these strange days, no special misfortune to be trained up among the Uneducated

classes, and not among the Educated ; but rather of two misfortunes the smaller ?

For all men doubtless obstructions abound ; spiritual growth must be hampered and stunted, and has to struggle through with difficulty, if it do not wholly stop. We may grant too that, for a mediocre character, the continual training and tutoring, from language-masters, dancing-masters, posture-masters of all sorts, hired and volunteer, which a high rank in any time and country assures, there will be produced a certain superiority, or at worst, air of superiority, over the corresponding mediocre character of low rank : thus we perceive, the vulgar Do-nothing, as contrasted with the vulgar Drudge, is in general a much prettier man ; with a wider perhaps clearer outlook into the distance ; in innumerable superficial matters, however it may be when we go deeper, he has a manifest advantage. But with the man of uncommon character, again, in whom a germ of irrepressible Force has been implanted, and *will* unfold itself into some sort of freedom,—altogether the reverse may hold. For such germs, too, there is, undoubtedly enough, a proper soil where they will grow best, and an improper one where they will grow worst. True, also, where there is a will, there is a way ; where a genius has been given, a possibility, a certainty of its growing is also given. Yet often it seems as if the injudicious gardening and manuring were worse than none at all ; and killed what the inclemencies of blind chance would have spared. We find accordingly that few Fredericks or Napoleons, indeed none since the

Great Alexander, who unfortunately drank himself to death too soon for proving what lay in him, were nursed up with an eye to their vocation ; mostly with an eye quite the other way, in the midst of isolation and pain, destitution and contradiction. Nay, in our own times, have we not seen two men of genius, a Byron and a Burns : they both, by mandate of Nature, struggle and must struggle towards clear Manhood, stormfully enough, for the space of six-and-thirty years ; yet only the gifted Ploughman can partially prevail therein ; the gifted Peer must toil, and strive, and shoot out in wild efforts, yet die at last in Boyhood, with the promise of his Manhood still but announcing itself in the distance. Truly, as was once written, "It is only the artichoke that will not grow except in gardens : the acorn is cast carelessly abroad into the wilderness, yet on the wild soil it nourishes itself, and rises to be an oak." All woodmen, moreover, will tell you that fat manure is the ruin of your oak ; likewise that the thinner and wilder your soil, the tougher, more iron-textured is your timber,—though, unhappily, also the smaller. So too with the spirits of men : they become pure from their errors by suffering for them ; he who has battled, were it only with Poverty and hard toil, will be found stronger, more expert, than he who could stay at home from the battle, concealed among the Provision-waggons, or even not unwatchfully "abiding by the stuff." In which sense, an observer, not without experience of our time, has said : "Had I a man of clearly developed character (clear, sincere within its limits), of insight,

courage, and real applicable force of head and of heart, to search for; and not a man of luxuriously distorted character, with haughtiness for courage, and for insight and applicable force, speculation and plausible show of force,—it were rather among the lower than among the higher classes that I should look for him.”

A hard saying, indeed, seems this same: that he, whose other wants were all beforehand supplied; to whose capabilities no problem was presented except even this, How to cultivate them to the best advantage, should attain less real culture than he whose first grand problem and obligation was nowise spiritual culture, but hard labour for his daily bread! Sad enough must the perversion be, where preparations of such magnitude issue in abortion; and a so sumptuous Art with all its appliances can accomplish nothing, not so much as necessitous Nature would of herself have supplied! Nevertheless, so pregnant is Life with evil as with good; to such height in an age rich, plethorically overgrown with means, can means be accumulated in the wrong place, and immeasurably aggravate wrong tendencies, instead of righting them, this sad and strange result may actually turn out to have been realised.

But what, after all, is meant by *uneducated*, in a time when Books have come into the world; come to be household furniture in every habitation of the civilised world? In the poorest cottage are Books; is one BOOK, wherein for several thousands of years the spirit of man has found light, and nourishment,

and an interpreting response to whatever is Deepest in him ; wherein still, to this day, for the eye that will look well, the Mystery of Existence reflects itself, if not resolved, yet revealed, and prophetically emblemed ; if not to the satisfying of the outward sense, yet to the opening of the inward sense, which is the far grander result. "In Books lie the creative Phoenix-ashes of the whole Past." All that men have devised, discovered, done, felt or imagined, lies recorded in Books ; wherein whoso has learned the mystery of spelling printed letters, may find it, and appropriate it.

Nay, what indeed is all this ? As if it were by universities, and libraries, and lecture-rooms, that man's Education, what we can call Education, were accomplished ; solely, or mainly, by instilling the dead letter and record of other men's Force, that the living Force of a new man were to be awakened, enkindled, and purified into victorious clearness ! Foolish Pedant, that sittest there compassionately descanting on the Learning of Shakespeare ! Shakespeare had penetrated into innumerable things ; far into Nature with her divine Splendours and infernal Terrors, her Ariel Melodies and mystic mandragora Moans ; far into man's workings with Nature, into man's Art and Artifice : Shakespeare knew (*kenned*, which in those days still partially meant can-ned) innumerable things ; what men are, and what the world is, and how and what men aim at there, from the Dame Quickly of modern Eastcheap to the Cæsar of ancient Rome, over many countries, over many centuries ; of all this he

had the clearest understanding and constructive comprehension ; all this was his Learning and Insight ; what now is thine ? Insight into none of those things ; perhaps strictly considered, into no thing whatever ; solely into thy own sheepskin diplomas, fat academic honours, into vocables and alphabetic letters, and but a little way into these !—The grand result of schooling is a mind with just vision to discern, with free force to do : the grand schoolmaster is Practice.

And now, when *kenning* and *can-ning* have become two altogether different words ; and this, the first principle of human culture, the foundation-stone of all but false imaginary culture, That men must, before every other thing, be trained to *do* somewhat, has been, for some generations, laid quietly on the shelf, with such result as we see,—consider what advantage those same uneducated Working classes have over the educated Unworking classes, in one particular : herein, namely, that they *must* work. To work ! What incalculable sources of cultivation lie in that process, in that attempt ; how it lays hold of the whole man, not of a small theoretical calculating fraction of him, but of the whole practical, doing, and daring, and enduring man ; thereby to awaken dormant faculties, root out old errors, at every step ! He that has done nothing has known nothing. Vain is it to sit scheming and plausibly discoursing : up and be doing ! If thy knowledge be real, put it forth from thee : grapple with real Nature ; try thy theories there, and see how they hold out. *Do* one thing, for the first time in thy life do a thing ; a new light will

rise to thee on the doing of all things whatsoever. Truly, a boundless significance lies in work : whereby the humblest craftsman comes to attain much, which is of indispensable use, but which he who is of no craft, were he never so high, runs the risk of missing. Once turn to Practice, Error and Truth will no longer consort together : the result of Error involves you in the square-root of a negative quantity ; try to *extract* it, or any earthly substance or sustenance from it, if you will ! The honourable Member can discover that "there is a reaction," and believe it, and wearisomely reason on it, in spite of all men, while he so pleases, for still his wine and his oil will not fail him : but the sooty Brazier, who discovered that brass was green-cheese, has to act on his discovery ; finds therefore that, singular as it may seem, brass cannot be masticated for dinner, green-cheese will not beat into fire-proof dishes ; that such discovery, therefore, has no legs to stand on, and must even be let fall. Now, take this principle of difference through the entire lives of two men, and calculate what it will amount to ! Necessity, moreover, which we here see as the mother of Accuracy, is well known as the mother of Invention. He who wants every thing, must know many things, do many things, to procure even a few : different enough with him, whose indispensable knowledge is this only, that a finger will pull the bell !

So that, for all men who live, we may conclude, this Life of Man is a school, wherein the naturally foolish will continue foolish though you bray him in a mortar, but the naturally wise will gather wisdom under

every disadvantage. What, meanwhile, must be the condition of an Era, when the highest advantages there become perverted into drawbacks ; when, if you take two men of genius, and put the one between the handles of a plough, and mount the other between the painted coronets of a coach-and-four, and bid them both move along, the former shall arrive a Burns, the latter a Byron : two men of talent, and put the one into a Printer's chapel, full of lamp-black, tyrannous usage, hard toil, and the other into Oxford universities, with lexicons and libraries, and hired expositors and sumptuous endowments, the former shall come out a Dr. Franklin, the latter a Dr. Parr !

However, we are not here to write an Essay on Education, or sing *misereres* over a "world in its dotage : " but simply to say that our Corn-Law Rhymer, educated or uneducated as Nature and Art have made him, asks not the smallest patronage or compassion for his Rhymes, professes not the smallest contrition for them. Nowise in such attitude does he present himself ; not supplicatory, deprecatory, but sturdy, defiant, almost menacing. Wherefore, indeed, should he supplicate or deprecate ? It is out of the abundance of the heart that he has spoken ; praise or blame cannot make it truer or falser than it already is. By the grace of God this man is sufficient for himself ; by his skill in metallurgy can beat out a toilsome but a manful living, go how it may ; has arrived too at that singular audacity of believing what he knows, and acting on it, or writing on it, or thinking on it, without leave asked of any one : there shall he stand,

and work, with head and with hand, for himself and the world; blown about by no wind of doctrine; frightened at no Reviewer's shadow; having, in his time, looked substances enough in the face, and remained unfrightened.

What is left, therefore, but to take what he brings, and as he brings it? Let us be thankful, were it only for the day of small things. Something it is that we have lived to welcome once more a sweet Singer wearing the likeness of a Man. In humble guise, it is true, and of stature more or less marred in its development; yet not without a genial robustness, strength and valour built on honesty and love; on the whole, a genuine man, with somewhat of the eye, and speech, and bearing that beseems a man. To whom all other genuine men, how different soever in subordinate particulars, can gladly hold out the right hand of fellowship.

The great excellence of our Rhymer, be it understood then, we take to consist even in this, often hinted at already, that he *is genuine*. Here is an earnest, truth-speaking man; no theoriser, sentiment-aliser, but a practical man of work and endeavour, man of suffrance and endurance. The thing that he speaks is not a hearsay, but a thing which he has himself known, and by experience become assured of. He has used his eyes for seeing; uses his tongue for declaring what he has seen. His voice, therefore among the many noises of our Planet, will deserve its place better than the most; will be well worth some attention. Whom else should we attend to but such?

The man who speaks with some half shadow of a Belief, and supposes, and inclines to think; and considers not with undivided soul, what is true, but only what is plausible, and will find audience and recompense; do we not meet him at every street-turning, on all highways and byways; is he not stale, unprofitable, ineffectual, wholly grown a weariness of the flesh? So rare is his opposite in any rank of Literature, or of Life, so very rare, that even in the lowest he is precious. The authentic insight and experience of any human soul, were it but insight and experience in hewing of wood and drawing of water, is real knowledge, a real possession and acquirement, how small soever: *palabra*, again, were it a supreme pontiff's, is wind merely, and nothing, or less than nothing. To a considerable degree, this man, we say, has worked himself loose from cant, and conjectural halfness, idle pretences and hallucinations, into a condition of Sincerity. Wherein perhaps, as above argued, his hard social environment, and fortune to be "a workman born," which brought so many other retardations with it, may have forwarded and accelerated him.

That a man, Workman or Idleman, encompassed, as in these days, with persons in a state of willing or unwilling Insincerity, and necessitated, as man is, to learn whatever he does traditionally learn by *imitating* these, should nevertheless shake off Insincerity, and struggle out from that dim pestiferous marsh-atmosphere, into a clearer and purer height,—betokens in him a certain originality; in which rare gift Force of all kinds is pre-supposed. To our

Rhymer, accordingly, as hinted more than once, vision and determination have not been denied; a rugged, home-grown understanding is in him; whereby, in his own way, he has mastered this and that, and looked into various things, in general honestly and to purpose, sometimes deeply, piercingly, and with a Seer's eye. Strong thoughts are not wanting, beautiful thoughts; strong and beautiful expressions of thought. As traceable for instance in this new illustration of an old argument, the mischief of Commercial Restrictions:

“ These, O ye quacks, these are your remedies :
 Alms for the Rich, a bread-tax for the Poor !
 Soul-purchased harvests on the indigent moor !—
 Thus the winged victor of a hundred fights,
 The warrior Ship, bows low her banner'd head,
 When through her planks the seaborne reptile bites
 Its deadly way ;—and sinks in ocean's bed,
 Vanquish'd by worms. What then ? The worms were fed.—
 Will not God smite thee black, thou whited wall ?
 Thy life is lawless, and thy law a lie,
 Or Nature is a dream unnatural :
 Look on the clouds, the streams, the earth, the sky ;
 Lo, all is interchange and harmony !
 Where is the gorgeous pomp which, yester morn,
 Curtain'd yon Orb, with amber, fold on fold ?
 Behold it in the blue of Rivelin, borne
 To feed the all-feeding sea ! the molten gold
 Is flowing pale in Loxley's waters cold,
 To kindle into beauty tree and flower,
 And wake to verdant life hill, vale, and plain.
 Cloud trades with river, and exchange is power :
 But should the clouds, the streams, the winds disdain
 Harmonious intercourse, nor dew nor rain

Would forest-crown the mountains : airless day
 Would blast on Kinderscout the heathy glow;
 No purply green would meeken into grey
 O'er Don at eve; no sound of river's flow
 Disturb the Sepulchre of all below."

Nature and the doings of men have not passed by this man unheeded, like the endless cloud-rack in dull weather; or lightly heeded, like a theatric phantasmagoria: but earnestly enquired into, like a thing of reality; reverently loved and worshipped, as a thing with divine significance in its reality, glimpses of which divineness he has caught and laid to heart. For his vision, as was said, partakes of the genuinely Poetical; he is not a Rhymers and Speaker only, but, in some genuine sense, something of a Poet.

Further we must admit him, what indeed is already herein admitted, to be, if clear-sighted, also brave-hearted. A troublous element is his; a Life of painfulness, toil, insecurity, scarcity, yet he fronts it like a man; yields not to it, tames it into some subjection, some order: its wild fearful dinning and tumult, as of a devouring Chaos, becomes a sort of wild war-music for him; wherein too are passages of beauty, of melodious softness, of lightness and briskness, even of joy. The stout heart is also a warm and kind one; Affection dwells with Danger, all the holier and the lovelier for such stern environment. A working man is this; yet, as we said, a man: in his sort, a courageous, much-loving, faithfully enduring and endeavouring man.

What such a one, so gifted and so placed, shall say

to a Time like ours, how he will fashion himself into peace, or war, or armed neutrality, with the world and his fellow-men, and work out his course in joy and grief, in victory and defeat, is a question worth asking; which in these three little Volumes partly receives answer. He has turned, as all thinkers up to a very high and rare order in these days must do, into Politics; is a Reformer, at least a stern Complainer, Radical to the heart: his poetic melody takes an elegiaco-tragical character; much of him is converted into Hostility, and grim, hardly-suppressed Indignation, such as Right long denied, Hope long deferred, may awaken in the kindest heart. Not yet as a rebel against anything does he stand; but as a free man, and the spokesman of free men, not far from rebelling against much; with sorrowful appealing dew, yet also with incipient lightning, in his eyes; whom it were not desirable to provoke into rebellion. He says, in Vulcanic dialect, his feelings have been *hammered* till they are *cold-short*; so they will no longer bend; "they snap, and fly off,"—in the face of the hammerer. Not unnatural, though lamentable! Nevertheless, under all disguises of the Radical, the Poet is still recognisable; a certain music breathes through all dissonances, as the prophecy and ground-tone of returning harmony; the man, as we said, is of a poetical nature.

To his Political Philosophy there is perhaps no great importance attachable. He feels, as all men that live must do, the disorganisation, and hard-grinding unequal pressure of the Social Affairs; but

sees into it only a very little further than far inferior men do. The frightful condition of a Time, when public and private Principle, as the word was once understood, having gone out of sight, and Self-interest being left to plot, and struggle, and scramble, as it could and would, Difficulties had accumulated till they were no longer to be borne, and the Spirit that should have fronted and conquered them seemed to have forsaken the world;—when the Rich, as the utmost they could resolve on, had ceased to govern, and the Poor, in their fast-accumulating numbers, and ever-widening complexities, had ceased to be able to do without governing; and now the plan of "*Competition*" and "*Laissez-faire*" was, on every side, approaching its consummation; and each bound up in the circle of his own wants and perils, stood grimly distrustful of his neighbour, and the distracted Common-weal was a Common-woe, and to all men it became apparent that the end was drawing nigh:—all this black aspect of Ruin and Decay, visible enough, experimentally known to our Sheffield friend, he calls by the name of "Corn-Law," and expects to be in good part delivered from, were the accursed Bread-tax repealed.

In this system of political Doctrine, even as here so emphatically set forth, there is not much novelty. Radicals we have many; loud enough on this and other grievances; the removal of which is to be the one thing needful. The deep, wild flood of Bitterness, and Hope becoming hopeless, lies acrid, corrosive in every bosom; and flows fiercely enough through any

orifice Accident may open: through Law Reform, Legislative Reform, Poor Laws, want of Poor Laws, Tithes, Game Laws, or, as we see here, Corn Laws. Whereby indeed only this becomes clear, that a deep, wide flood of evil does exist and corrode; from which, in all ways, blindly and seemingly, men seek deliverance, and cannot rest till they find it; least of all till they know what part and proportion of it is to *be* found. But with us foolish sons of Adam this is ever the way; some evil that lies nearest us, be it a chronic sickness, or but a smoky chimney, is ever the acme and sum-total of all evil; the black hydra that shuts us out from a Promised Land: and so, in poor Mr. Shandy's fashion, must we "shift from trouble to trouble, and from side to side; button up one cause of vexation, and unbutton another."

Thus for our keen-hearted singer, and sufferer, has "the Bread-tax," in itself a considerable but no immeasurable smoke-pillar, swoln out to be a world-embracing Darkness, that darkens and suffocates the whole Earth, and has blotted out the heavenly stars. Into the merit of the Corn Laws, which has often been discussed, in fit season, by competent hands, we do not enter here; least of all in the way of argument, in the way of blame, towards one who, if he read such merit with some emphasis "on the scantier trenchers of his children," may well be pardoned. That the "Bread-tax," with various other taxes, may ere long be altered and abrogated, and the Corn Trade become as free as the poorest "bread-taxed drudge" could wish it, "or the richest satrap bread-tax-fed" could

fear it, seems no extravagant hypothesis: would that the mad Time could, by such simple hellebore-dose, be healed! Alas, for the diseases of a "world lying in wickedness," in heart-sickness and atrophy, quite another alcahest is needed;—a long, painful course of medicine and regimen, surgery and physic, not yet specified or indicated in the Royal-College Books!

But if there is little novelty in our friend's Political Philosophy, there is some in his political Feeling and Poetry. The peculiarity of this Radical is, that with all his stormful destructiveness, he combines a decided loyalty and faith. If he despise and trample under foot on the one hand, he exalts and reverences on the other: the "landed pauper in his coach-and-four" rolls all the more glaringly, contrasted with the "Rockinghams and Savilles" of the past, with "the Lansdowns and Fitzwilliams," many a "Wentworth's lord," still "a blessing" to the present. This man, indeed, has in him the root of all reverence,—a principle of Religion. He believes in a Godhead, not with the lips only, but apparently with the heart; who, as has been written, and often felt, "reveals Himself in Parents, in all true Teachers, and Rulers,"—as in false Teachers and Rulers quite Another may be revealed! Our Rhymers, it would seem, is no Methodist: far enough from it. He makes "the Ranter," in his hot-headed way, exclaim over

"The Hundred Popes of England's Jesuitry;"

and adds, by way of note, in his own person, some still stronger sayings: How "this baneful corporation,"

"dismal as its Reign of Terror is, and long-armed its Holy Inquisition, must condescend to learn and teach what is useful, or go where all nuisances go." As little perhaps is he a Churchman; the "Cadi-Dervish" being nowise to his mind. Scarcely, however, if at all, does he show aversion to the Church as Church; or, among his many griefs, touch upon Tithes as one. But, in any case, the black colours of Life, even as here painted, and brooded over, do not hide from him that a God is the Author and Sustainer thereof; that God's world, if made a House of Imprisonment, can also be a House of Prayer; wherein for the weary and heavy-laden, Pity and Hope are not altogether cut away.

It is chiefly in virtue of this inward temper of heart, with the clear disposition and adjustment which for all else results therefrom, that our Radical attains to be Poetical; that the harsh groanings, contentions, upbraidings, of one who unhappily has felt constrained to adopt such mode of utterance, become ennobled into something of music. If a land of bondage, this is still his Father's land, and the bondage endures not for ever. As worshipper and believer, the captive can look with seeing eye: the aspect of the Infinite Universe still fills him with an Infinite feeling; his chains, were it but for moments, fall away; he soars free aloft, and the sunny regions of Poesy and Freedom gleam golden afar on the widened horizon. Gleamings, we say, prophetic dawnings from those far regions, spring up for him; nay, beams of actual radiance. In his ruggedness, and dim contractedness

(rather of place than of organ), he is not without touches of a feeling and vision, which even in the stricter sense, is to be named poetical.

One deeply poetical idea, above all others, seems to have taken hold of him: the idea of Time. As was natural to a poetic soul, with few objects of Art in its environment, and driven inward, rather than invited outward, for occupation. This deep mystery of ever-flowing Time; "bringing forth," and as the Ancients wisely fabled, "devouring" what it has brought forth; rushing on, on, *in* us, yet above us, all uncontrollable by us; and under it, dimly visible athwart it, the bottomless Eternal;—this is, indeed, what we may call the primary idea of Poetry; the first that introduces itself into the poetic mind. As here:

"The bee shall seek to settle on his hand,
But from the vacant bench haste to the moor,
Mourning the last of England's high-soul'd Poor,
And bid the mountains weep for Enoch Wray.
And for themselves,—albeit of things that last
Unalter'd most; for they shall pass away
Like Enoch, though their iron roots seem fast,
Bound to the eternal future as the past:
The Patriarch died; and they shall be no more!
Yes, and the sailless worlds, which navigate
The unutterable Deep that hath no shore,
Will lose their starry splendour soon or late,
Like tapers, quench'd by Him, whose will is fate!
Yes, and the Angel of Eternity,
Who numbers worlds and writes their names in light,
One day, O Earth, will look in vain for thee,
And start and stop in his unerring flight,
And with his wings of sorrow and affright,
Veil his impassion'd brow and heavenly tears!"

And not the first idea only, but the greatest, properly the parent of all others. For if it can rise in the remotest ages, in the rudest states of culture, wherever an "inspired thinker" happens to exist, it connects itself with all great things; with the highest results of new Philosophy, as of primeval Theology; and for the Poet, in particular, is as the life-element wherein alone his conceptions can take poetic form, and the whole world become miraculous and magical.

"We are such stuff
As Dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a Sleep!"

Figure that, believe that, O Reader; then say whether the *Arabian Tales* seem wonderful!—"Rounded with a sleep (*mit Schlaf umgeben*)" says Jean Paul; "these three words created whole volumes in me."

To turn now on our worthy Rhymer, who has brought us so much, and stingily insist on his errors and shortcomings, were no honest procedure. We had the whole poetical encyclopædia to draw upon, and say commodiously, Such and such an item is not here; of which encyclopædia the highest genius can fill but a portion. With much merit, far from common in his time, he is not without something of the faults of his time. We praised him for originality; yet is there a certain remainder of imitation in him; a tang of the Circulating Libraries, as in Sancho's wine, with its key and thong, there was a tang of iron and leather. To be reminded of Crabbe, with his truthful severity of

style, in such a place, we cannot object; but what if there were a slight bravura dash of the fair tuneful Hemans? Still more, what have we to do with Byron, and his fierce vociferous mouthings, whether "passionate," or not passionate and only theatrical? King Cambyses' vein is, after all, but a worthless one; no vein for a wise man. Strength, if that be the thing aimed at, does not manifest itself in spasms, but in stout bearing of burdens. Our Author says, "It is too bad to exalt into a hero the coxcomb who would have gone into hysterics if a tailor had laughed at him." Walk not in his footsteps, then, we say, whether as hero or as singer; repent a little, for example, over somewhat in that fuliginous, blue-flaming, pitch-and-sulphur *Dream of Enoch Wray*, and write the next otherwise.

We mean no imitation in a bad palpable sense; only that there is a tone of such occasionally audible; which ought to be removed;—of which, in any case, we make not much. Imitation is a leaning on something foreign; incompleteness of individual development, defect of free utterance. From the same source, spring most of our Author's faults; in particular, his worst, which after all is intrinsically a defect of manner. He has little or no Humour. Without Humour of character he cannot well be; but it has not yet got to utterance. Thus, where he has mean things to deal with, he knows not how to deal with them; oftenest deals with them more or less meanly. In his vituperative prose Notes, he seems embarrassed; and but ill hides his embarrassment,

under an air of predetermined sarcasm, of knowing briskness, almost of vulgar pertness. He says, he cannot help it ; he is poor, hard-worked, and "soot is soot." True, indeed ; yet there is no connection between Poverty and Discourtesy ; which latter originates in Dulness alone. Courtesy is the due of Man to Man ; not of suit of clothes to suit of clothes. He who could master so many things, and make even Corn-Laws rhyme, we require of him this further thing,—bearing worthy of himself, and of the order he belongs to,—the highest and most ancient of all orders, that of manhood. A pert snappishness is no manner for a brave man ; and then the manner so soon influences the matter ; a far worse result. Let him speak wise things, and speak them wisely ; which latter may be done in many dialects, grave and gay, only in the snappish seldom or never.

The truth is, as might have been expected, there is still much lying in him to be developed ; the hope of which development it were rather sad to abandon. Why, for example, should not his view of the world, his knowledge of what is and has been in the world, indefinitely extend itself ? Were he merely the "uneducated Poet," we should say, he had read largely ; as he is not such, we say, Read still more, much more largely. Books enough there are in England, and of quite another weight and worth than that circulating-library sort ; may be procured too, may be read, even by a hard-worked man ; for what man (either in God's service or the Devil's, as himself chooses it) is not hard-worked ? But here again, where

there is a will there is a way. True, our friend is no longer in his teens ; yet still, as would seem, in the vigour of his years : we hope too that his mind is not finally shut in, but of the improvable and enlargeable sort. If Alfieri (also kept busy enough, with horse-breaking and what not) learned Greek after he was fifty, why is the Corn-Law Rhymers too old to learn ?

However, be in the future what there may, our Rhymers has already done what was much more difficult, and better than reading printed Books ;—looked into the great prophetic-manuscript Book of Existence, and read little passages there. Here, for example, is a sentence tolerably spelled :

“Where toils the Mill by ancient woods embraced,
Hark, how the cold steel screams in hissing fire !
Blind Enoch sees the Grinder’s wheel no more,
Couch’d beneath rocks and forests, that admire
Their beauty in the waters, ere they roar,
Dash’d in white foam the swift circumference o’er.
There draws the Grinder his laborious breath ;
There coughing at his deadly trade he bends :
Born to die young, he fears nor man nor death ;
Scorning the future, what he earns he spends ;
‘ Debauch and riot are his bosom friends.’
Behold his failings ! Hath he virtues too ?
He is no Pauper, blackguard though he be :
Full well he knows what minds combined can do,
Full well maintains his birthright : he is free,
And, frown for frown, outstares monopoly.
Yet Abraham and Elliot both in vain
Bid science on his cheek prolong the bloom :
He will *not* live ! He seems in haste to gain
The undisturb’d asylum of the tomb,
And, old at two-and-thirty, meets his doom !”

Or this, "of Jem, the rogue avowed,

"Whose trade is Poaching! Honest Jem works not,
 Beggars not, but thrives by plundering beggars here.
 Wise as a lord, and quite as good a shot,
 He, like his betters, lives in hate and fear,
 And feeds on partridge because bread is dear.
 Sire of six sons apprenticed to the jail,
 He prowls in arms, the Tory of the night;
 With them he shares his battles and his ale,
 With him they feel the majesty of might,
 No Despot better knows that Power is Right.
 Mark his unpaidish sneer, his lordly frown;
 Hark how he calls the beadle and flunkey liars;
 See how magnificently he breaks down
 His neighbour's fence, if so his will requires,
 And how his strut emulates the squire's!
 Jem rises with the Moon; but when she sinks,
 Homeward with sack-like pockets, and quick heels,
 Hungry as boroughmongering gowl, he slinks.
 He reads not, writes not, thinks not; scarcely feels;
 Steals all he gets; serves Hell with all he steals!"

It is rustic, rude existence; barren moors, with the smoke of Forges rising over the waste expanse. Alas, no Arcadia; but the actual dwelling-place of actual toil-grimed sons of Tubal Cain: yet are there blossoms and the wild natural fragrance of gorse and broom; yet has the Craftsman pauses in his toil; the Craftsman too has an inheritance in Earth; and even in Heaven.

"Light! All is not corrupt, for thou art pure,
 Unchanged and changeless. Though frail man is vile,
 Thou look'st on him, serene, sublime, secure,
 Yet, like thy Father, with a pitying smile.

Even on this wintry day, as marble cold,
Angels might quit their home to visit thee,
And match their plumage with thy mantle roll'd
Beneath God's Throne, o'er billows of a sea,
Whose isles are World's, whose bounds Infinity.
Why then is Enoch absent from my side?
I miss the rustle of his silver hair;
A guide no more, I seem to want a guide,
While Enoch journeys to the house of prayer;
Ah, ne'er came Sabbath-day but he was there!
Lo, how, like him, erect and strong, tho' grey,
Yon village tower tome-touched to God appeals!
And hark! the chimes of morning die away:
Hark! to the heart the solemn sweetness steals.
Like the heart's voice, unfelt by none who feels
That God is Love, that Man is living Dust;
Unfelt by none whom ties of brotherhood
Link to his kind; by none who puts his trust
In naught of Earth that hath survived the flood,
Save those mute charities, by which the good
Strengthen poor worms, and serve their Maker best."

"Hail Sabbath! Day of mercy, peace, and rest!
Thou o'er loud cities throw'st a noiseless spell,
The hammer there, the wheel, the saw molest
Pale Thought no more: o'er Trade's contentious hell
Meek Quiet spreads her wings invisible.
And when thou com'st less silent are the fields,
Thro' whose sweet paths the toil-freed townsman steals
To him the very air a banquet yields.
Envious he watches the poised hawk that wheels
His flight on chainless winds. Each cloud reveals
A paradise of beauty to his eye.
His little Boys are with him, seeking flowers,
Or chasing the too-venturous gilded fly.
So by the daisy's side he spends the hours,
Renewing friendship with the budding bowers:

And while might, beauty, good without alloy,
Are mirror'd in his children's happy eyes,—
In His great Temple offering thankful joy
To Him, the infinitely Great and Wise,
With soul attuned to Nature's harmonies,
Serene and cheerful as a sporting child,—
His *heart* refuses to believe that man
Could turn into a hell the blooming wild,
The blissful country where his childhood ran
A race with infant rivers, ere began"—

—"King-humbling" bread-tax, "blind Misrule," and enough else.

And so our Corn-Law Rhymers play their part. In this wise, does he indite and act his Drama of Life, which for him is all too Domestic-Tragical. It is said, "the good actor soon makes us forget the bad theatre, were it but a barn; while, again nothing renders so apparent the badness of the bad actor as a theatre of peculiar excellence." How much more in a theatre and drama such as these of Life itself! One other item, however, we must note in that ill-decorated Sheffield theatre: the back-scene and bottom-decoration of it all; which is no other than a Workhouse. Alas, the Workhouse is the bourne whither all these actors and workers are bound; whence none that has once passed it returns! A bodeful sound, like the rustle of approaching world-devouring tornadoes, quivers through their whole existence; and the voice of it is, Pauperism! The thanksgiving they offer up to Heaven is, that they are not yet Paupers; the earnest cry of their prayer is, that "God would shield them from the bitterness of Parish Pay."

Mournful enough, that a white European Man must pray wistfully for what the horse he drives is sure of,—That the strain of his whole faculties may not fail to earn him food and lodging. Mournful that a gallant manly spirit, with an eye to discern the world, a heart to reverence it, a hand cunning and willing to labour in it, must be haunted with such a fear. The grim end of it all, Beggary! A soul loathing, what true souls ever loathe, Dependence, help from the unworthy to help; yet sucked into the world-whirlpool,—able to do no other: the highest in man's heart struggling vainly against the lowest in man's destiny! In good truth, if many a sickly and sulky Byron, or Byronlet, glooming over the woes of existence, and how unworthy God's Universe is to have so distinguished a resident, could transport himself into the patched coat and sooty apron of a Sheffield Blacksmith, made with as strange faculties and feelings as he, made by God Almighty all one as he was,—it would throw a light on much for him.

Meanwhile, is it not frightful as well as mournful to consider how the widespread evil is spreading wider and wider? Most persons, who have had eyes to look with, may have verified, in their own circle, the statement of this Sheffield Eye-witness, and “from their own knowledge and observation fearlessly declare that the little master-manufacturer,” that the working man generally, “is in a much worse condition than he was in twenty-five years ago.” Unhappily, the fact is too plain; the reason and scientific necessity of it is too plain. In this state of things, every new man is a

new misfortune; every new market a new complexity; the chapter of chances grows ever more incalculable; the hungry gamesters (whose stake is their life) are ever increasing in numbers; the world-movement rolls on: by what method shall the weak and help-needing, who has none to help him, withstand it? Alas, how many brave hearts, ground to pieces in that unequal battle, have already sunk; in every sinking heart, a Tragedy, less famous than that of the Sons of Atreus; wherein, however, if no "kingly house," yet a manly house, went to the dust, and a whole manly "lineage was swept away." Must it grow worse and worse "till the last brave heart is broken in England; and this same 'brave Peasantry'" has become a kennel of wild-howling ravenous Paupers? God be thanked! There is some feeble shadow of hopes that the change may have begun while it was yet time. You may lift the pressure from the free man's shoulders, and bid him go forth rejoicing; but lift the slave's burden, he will only wallow the more composedly in his sloth: a nation of degraded men cannot be raised up, except by what we rightly name a miracle.

Under which point of view also, these little Volumes, indicating such a character in such a place, are not without significance. One faint symptom perhaps that clearness will return, that there is a possibility of its return. It is as if from that Gehenna of Manufacturing Radicalism, from amid its loud roaring and cursing, whereby nothing became feasible, nothing knowable, except this only, that misery and malady

existed there, we heard now some manful tone of reason and determination, wherein alone can there be profit, or promise of deliverance. In this Corn-Law Rhymers we seem to trace something of the antique spirit; a spirit which had long become invisible among our working as among other classes; which here, perhaps almost for the first time, reveals itself in an altogether modern political vesture. "The Pariahs of the Isle of Woe," as he passionately names them, are no longer Pariahs if they have become Men. Here is one man of their tribe; in several respects a true man; who has abjured Hypocrisy and Servility, yet not therewith trodden Religion and Loyalty under foot; not without justness of insight, devoutness, peaceable heroism of resolve; who, in all circumstances, even in these strange ones, will be found quitting himself like a man. One such that has found a voice: who knows how many mute but not inactive brethren he may have in his own and in all other ranks? Seven thousand that have not bowed the knee to Baal! These are the men, wheresoever found, who are to stand forth in England's evil day, on whom the hope of England rests. For it has been often said, and must often be said again, that all Reform except a moral one will prove unavailing. Political Reform, pressingly enough wanted, can indeed root out the weeds (gross deep-fixed lazy dock-weeds, poisonous obscene hemlocks, ineffectual spurry in abundance); but it leaves the ground *empty*,—ready either for noble fruits, or for new worse tares! And how else is a Moral Reform