such varied regions, found and filled, or made and inspired so many characters, imbibed the spirit, talked the language, and reproduced the soul of so many times,—must be a great man, whether we call him or not a *great* poet.

One element of poetic power he unquestionably has: he is impersonal; and, on the whole, very little of an egotist. In *Pelham*, indeed, and one or two more of his earlier novels, while he was yet trifling with his pen, and had not taken any full or calm aim at his object, he seemed often to be glancing obliquely at his own image in the mirror of self-conceit, partly from a wish to reassure his confidence in himself, and partly from that spirit of indolent vacancy which often falls upon a writer, who is only half-hearted in his task; and who must stir himself to renewed action by the spur of vanity. But latterly, he has risen to a higher region, and has contrived while " shooting his soul " into a thousand personages, fictitious or real, high and low, wicked and good, commonplace and romantic, to forget his own elegant and *recherché* person—his own fastidious habits and tastes, his own aristocratic birth and training; and to remember nothing save the subject or idea which has entered, filled, and transfigured him. For example, Eugene Aram, though a monster, is not a mere distorted shadow of the author; Rienzi is not Bulwer, nor is Walter Montreal, nor is Harold the last of the Saxon kings, nor is Warwick the king-maker. These, and many of his other heroes, are not projections of the writer's image; but are either bold individual creations, or sternly true to the truth of history. Wordsworth has accused even Goethe of multiplying his own image under Protean disguises; and of being an egotist under the semblance of an absolute and colourless catholicity; and on this account most justly ranks him beneath Shakspere, who can become and is delighted to become everybody except himself. Bulwer, on the contrary, has often approached the Shaksperean method, with this difference, that while the novelist passes from soul to soul with labour dire and weary woe, and, like the magician in the story of Fadlallah, has to die in agony out of his own idiosyncracy, ere he is born in joy and exultation into that of others, Shakspere melts into the being of all other men as softly as snow into a river, and as easily as one dream slides within and becomes a part and portion in another or another series of dreams. But the power in the novelist, as well as in the world-poet *is* magical, and of itself suffices to prove him a writer of genius.

His dramatic quality is in fact only a form or *alias* of his great

width and the impersonal habit of his mind, and need not be dilated on. We prefer to say something about the power he has of rising to the level of most of the great critical points in the stories which he narrates. It is, we grant again, often by effort, by a sweat like that of Sisyphus, that he gets his big stone to the top of the hill, but once there, it remains a triumphal mark—a far-seen trophy of perseverance and power. We grant him, in his general style, too uniformly lively and brilliant. He is like those writers of whose works it has been said "the whole is not always a poem, while every sentence is poetry." He is at times so brilliant that you weary for a single plain sober passage, and would "dig for dulness as for hid treasure." But, first, this is complimentary to his powers, few are so Australian in their intellectual wealth; and, were, secondly, the charge pressed, Bulwer might reply as a student is said once to have done—"Your papers are all equally excellent," said his professor. "Then," replied he, "I'll take care that in my next some parts shall be *divine*." And thus sometimes our author does answer in this matter. He approaches great and noble topics, each one like the brethren of Jerubbaal "resembling the son of a king;" he girds up his loins to mate with their majesty; he effects his purpose; and what Hazlitt says of Milton becomes *nearly* true of him; "He is always striving to say the finest things in the world, and he does say them." Effort, when united with weakness, and ending in the fate of the frog in the fable, is a pitiable spectacle; but not so that effort which is prompted by manly ambition, which is sustained by genuine and growing strength, and which, when it has gained the success it deserves, appears only less wonderful and less sublime than that perfect ease of nature with which another very rare class of writers work their still mightier works. We have specified already a few of those superb passages by which Bulwer has made out his claim to be the Milton, while Scott is the Shakespere, of novelists. Even Scott has seldom surpassed the death of Walter Montreal, or the picture of Vesuvius drunk with devouring fire, and staggering in his terrible vomit.

What is Genius?—is a question to which many answers have been returned. It is, says De Quincey, "mind steeped and saturated in the genial nature." It is, say others, "impassioned truth—thought become phosphorescent!" It is, say others, "original imagination united with constructive power." Without discussing these definitions we are tempted to propound one of our own,—*Genius is Growth.* A man of genius is simply a

man of limitless growth, with a soul smitten with a passion for growth, and open to every influence which promotes it—one who grows always like a tree, by day and by night, in calm and in storm, through opposition and through applause, in difficulty and in despair,—nay, on the chill deathbed itself the soul of the man of genius continues to grow, and never more rapidly than there, when he sometimes says with the dying Schiller, "Many things are becoming plain and clear to me." It is this which, perhaps, proves best his greatness and his relation to the Infinite. The man of talent grows to a certain point and there stops: Genius knows of no stops, and no periods. Even the wings of eagles "knitting," though they do, the mountain with the sky, have their severe limit fixed in the far ether; but the wings of angels have none. Emerson speaks of nature as saying, in answer to all doubts and difficulties, "I grow, I grow." So there hums through the being of a true poet, the low everlasting melody (truer than that fabled of nature, since the growth of matter is only temporary while that of mind is eternal) "I also grow, and shall grow for ever." This growth may sometimes seem to retrograde, just as there are, it is said, certain plants which grow downwards, but downwards in *search of light;* and so the poet-soul, when it stoops, is only stooping to see, and when it turns is only turning to conquer. This growth may sometimes be lost sight of amid the darkness of neglect, or covered up in the night of calamity, or buried in foliage produced by its own vigour; but even as fairies were said to hear the flowers growing, there are ears of fairy fineness, which never cease to be aware of the musical growth of men of the true and sovereign seed, springing up like flowers to everlasting life—arising in harmony and in incense toward the heavens of God.

Yes! For this growth is often, if not always, holy and celestial as well as poetical and harmonious. The man who really grows, grows in wisdom, love, and purity, as well as in genius and artistic excellence. It is as a whole that he grows, it is in God and toward God that his being develops itself. Not a few gifted persons, indeed, have been arrested in their career by early death or by dissipation, and appear now in stunted or blasted forms along the horizon of history. But it is a remarkable fact that most men of genius who have been permitted to outlive the dangerous period of the passions, and to attain the majestic noon of middle life or the still evening of old age, have become either pious, or at least moral mild-tempered, and exemplary men. We need only name Young, Johnson, Southey,

Coleridge, Goethe, even Moore in some measure, Shelley (who became old, serious in spirit and well regulated in life at an age when many are only beginning to sow their wild oats), and, so far as we can ascertain, Shakspere himself in proof of this. Time which so often freezes and contracts men of more prosaic mould into a shrivelled selfishness, which seems chiller than death itself, in the case of those whose minds had originally burned like a furnace, only modifies the flame, mingles with it the salt of common sense, if not the frankincense of piety, and renders it more kindly in its outgoings to men, if it does not turn it upward in tongues of sacrifice and worship to the great Fountain of Light, and Father of Spirits. And when piety mingles with the maturity of genius in any gifted soul, it becomes a sight more beautiful than any that this fair creation can show us. The man, then, instead of standing with the mere moralist, and the mere cold speculator, on the outside of things, becomes a "partaker of the Divine nature,"—does not with others discern with lack lustre eye merely the fiery fences and outward semblances of the Infinite, but sees and swims and grows *in* that holy and boundless element itself.

That Bulwer has as yet attained the consummation so devoutly to be wished, which our last sentence describes, we dare not affirm. But certainly he has grown, and his growth has been of a total and vital sort. His first two or three works were distinguished chiefly by sentimentalism and cleverness—a sentimentalism scarcely amounting to genius, and a cleverness hardly attaining to wit. In *Eugene Aram* he displayed a morbid and melodramatic earnestness, strongly characteristic of that uneasy and thick-sighted mood of mind, which was his at the time, and which he was increasing by the study of the French "school of Desperation." In the *Last Days of Pompeii* and *Rienzi*, you saw him throwing out his mind upon subjects which carried him as far as possible away from his own unsatisfied reason, torturing doubts, and agitating passions. Then, in *Zanoni*, the strong spirit was heard beating against the bars of its misery—and its life; and asking in its despair awful and unanswered questions at Destiny and the World unseen. Then, in his *Ernest Maltravers*, his *Alice*, and his *New Timon*, he seemed backing out of spiritual speculations into a certain sneering voluptuousness worthy of Wieland, of Byron, or of Voltaire. And lastly, in his *Caxtons* and *My Novel*, there seems to have risen on his path, what the Germans would call an "aftershine" of Christianity—a mild, belated, but divine-

seeming day, in which he is walking on still, and which he doubtless deeply regrets had not sooner gleamed over his chequered way. His allusions to the experiences of Robert Hall, and to the benignant influence of the Christian faith in soothing the woes of humanity, which abound in the *Caxtons* especially, are exceedingly beautiful, and have opened to Bulwer's genius the doors of many a heart that were obstinately shut against him before. The moral tone of these latter novels, too, is much sweeter, healthier, and purer than that of his earlier tales. Their artistic execution is not only equal, but we think in many respects superior. If there is in them less artifice, there is more real art; and if they have less of the glare and bustle of rhetoric, they have more of the soul of poetry. If they dazzle and astonish less, they are infinitely more pleasing, and if they abound not in rapid adventures, thrilling situations, and romantic interest, they idealise common life, and show poetic beauty as well as the soul of goodness, which are found amongst the middle classes of society. One character in his last novel is perhaps the finest of all his creations, —we mean, of course, Burley. In the very daring implied in taking up the *name* of the most original character Scott ever drew, old John Balfour, the stern homicide of Magus Muir, and connecting it with the most novel and striking character Bulwer ever depicted, there was genius. Who would venture even to *call* the hero of a new play Macbeth, or Lear, or Hamlet? Unless the play were of transcendent merit, the very name so presumptuously assumed, would condemn it as assuredly as John Galt's *Lady Macbeth* was condemned. But in spite of this preliminary prejudice, Bulwer's Burley is not only as entirely different from Scott's, as a rough literary man of the nineteneth century must be from a rough soldier of the seventeenth; but as a picture of a strange, wild, half-mad man of genius, full, nevertheless, of the milk of human kindness, and of the warmest and noblest feelings, it is almost perfect, and of itself sufficient to immortalise the author.

In contemplating Bulwer's career we are impressed, in fine, with one or two reflections of a somewhat interesting and important kind. It teaches us the might and worth which lie in determined struggle and invincible perseverance. We do not by any means dislike those splendid *coup de mains* of literary triumph we find in such cases as Byron, Macaulay, Charles Dickens, and Alexander Smith, all of whom "arose one morning and found themselves famous." Nay, we glory in

them as proofs of the power of the human mind, and as auguries of the more illustrious successes reserved for yet brighter and purer spirits in the future. They show what man can do, and hint what man yet *may* do. But we love still better to see a strong Titan, slowly urging his way against opposition, often driven back but never discouraged, often perplexed but never in despair, often cast down but never destroyed, often falling but never fallen, and at last gaining a victory as undeniable as that of a jubilant summer sun. Such was Milton, such Johnson, such Burke, such Wordsworth, such D'Israeli, and such Bulwer. The success of these men looks less like the result of accident, or of popular caprice, or of magic, and more like the just and lawful although late reward of that high merit which unites moral energy with intellectual prowess, and becomes thus far more useful as an example and a stimulus to others. Not one in a hundred millions can expect such a tropical sunrise of success as befell Byron; but any one who unites a considerable degree of capacity with indomitable determination, may become if not a Bulwer, yet in his own department an eminent and influential man.

We are still more struck with this perseverance, when we remember Bulwer's position in society. Possessed of rank and ample fortune, he has laboured as hard as any bookseller's hack in the empire; proving thus that his love for literature was as sincere as his ideal of it was high, and redeeming it from a certain shade of contempt which has of late, justly or unjustly, rested upon it. It cannot be denied that various causes, such as the poverty of many of our authors, and the mean shifts to which it has often reduced them; the dissipation and black-guardism of a few others; the envious spirit and quarrelsome disposition of a third class; the vast amount of mediocre writing which now pours from the press; the number of pretenders whom the hot and sudden sunlight of advancing knowledge has prematurely quickened into reptile life; not to speak of the engrossment of the public mind with commercial speculation and politics, and the contemptuous indifference of many of our aristocracy and many of our clergy to literary things and literary men, have all combined rather to lower Polite Letters in the eyes of the public. And nothing, on the other hand, can tend, or has tended more to reinstate it in its proper place of estimation than the fact, that not a few, distinguished and successful in other professions, in arts or in arms, at the bar or in the pulpit, have gloried in casting in their lot with this

despised profession,—have submitted to its drudgeries, borne its burdens, and aimed at and gained its laurels. Eminent sheriffs have become historians. Eminent officers have become writers of travels. Eminent clergymen have become editors of periodicals and authors of scientific treatises. Eminent physicians, men of fashion, barristers, lords of session, and even peers of the realm, have all aspired to the honour connected with the name of poet. And Bulwer has brought this to a bright climax, by blending the lustre of rank and riches with the distinctions of the highest literary celebrity. We fear that literature, as a profession, will never thrive to any great extent in this country. The gains of authors are becoming smaller and smaller in each section of the century; and the fact that all our literature threatens soon to be afloat in the great gulf-stream of cheapness, will probably, *we* at least think, reduce them farther still. In this case we must depend more than ever upon the supplies from non-professional men, non-commissioned officers, shall we call them? in the great literary army. Nor need we fear that this will at all deteriorate the value of literary productions. It will have, we think, precisely the opposite effect. Professional litterateurs are often forced by necessity to put to press productions totally unworthy of their talents, and in general to dilute and weaken by diffusion their powers. It is obvious that those who write only when leisure permits, and the spur of impulse excites, are less liable to this temptation. And looking both to the past and present, we find that the greatest and best, on the whole, of our writers have not been authors by profession. Shakspere's profession was not authorship, but the stage. Milton was a schoolmaster and a secretary. Addison, too, was a secretary of state. Pope was a man of private fortune. Fielding was a justice. Richardson kept a shop,—so did Godwin. Cowper lived on his patrimony and on gifts from his relatives. Wordsworth was a stampmaster. Croly is a rector. John Wilson was a professor. Shelley was a gentleman of fortune and heir to a baronetcy. Byron was a peer. Carlyle has an estate. Browning is a man of fortune and family. Of Jeffrey, Macaulay, Sidney Smith, Hall, and Foster, we need not speak. And our present hero is the proprietor of Knebworth, as well as a scholar, orator, wit, novelist, and poet.

We close this paper by expressing our very hearty congratulations to Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer on his recent reception and appearances in Edinburgh; our warm gratitude for the hours of pleasure and profit his numerous works have given us;

and an ardent wish that the evening of his life, now approaching, may be calm and bright; and that the current of thought and feeling, in his future works may take, still more decidedly than of late, a practical and a Christian course; and catch on its last waves the hues of heaven's light, blended with the tints of fancy and of poetry!

SATIRE AND SATIRISTS[1]

It has sometimes been questioned whether satire belongs to the region of poetry. To settle this question would require us to enter more at large into the nature of poetry than our space at present permits. If we limit poetry to the ideal, the imaginative and the pure, then much satire, it is obvious, must be excluded from its province; ordinary satire seldom approaches any ideal except that of ugliness—its pictures are generally those of the disgusting and the foul, sometimes edged into interest by a touch of imagination. But if we look simply to power and the possibility of producing great effects on the human mind, then satire must be admitted to belong to a secondary but decided order of the poetic. And, whenever satire over-soars the petty and the personal and rises into the region of moral indignation, or into broad general accusations, not of men but of man, it is, as it were, transfigured into poetry. The satirist voluntarily, indeed, assumes the ape-form, and ape-attitudes; he sets himself to sneer and flout at, and pelt humanity, but he will sometimes feel surprised and elevated by the power of righteous wrath into a genuine man and poet.

Satire had its origin in Rome. Among the Greeks, indeed, as in all nations, its elements existed; but they were scattered throughout comedies, fables, and burlesque epics; they were not concentrated into any distinct and separate mode of composition. In the poetry of the Hebrews we find some touches of the satirical superior to anything in literature, reminding you of the light and sportful strokes of the lightning, withering and blasting all it meets, with such freedom from malice, and such sovereign ease—of this sort are the address of Elijah on Carmel to the prophets of Baal, the pictures by Solomon of the sluggard, the drunkard, the simple youth deceived by the strange woman, and many passages in the Prophets, such as Isaiah's description of the construction of an idol. But the Hebrew writers are too high wrought in their imaginations, and too stern and earnest in their feelings, to indulge much in a satiric vein; their satire is perpetually darkening into dread invective, or springing

[1] From the *Scottish Review*, January 1856.

upwards into sublime poetry. It was reserved for the more artificial genius of the Romans to create satire as a didactic art.

Indeed, satire, regarded as a separate form of composition, presupposes an age somewhat late, in which refinement is beginning to sink into the arms of luxury. It is in such an age that it finds most appropriate and abundant food, furnished by absurdities of character, or peculiarities of manners as well as by moral delinquences. The customs of the Hebrews and of all primitive nations were too uniform for the purposes of the satirist. The sight of a single bearded Israelite used to provoke laughter among us; but the whole nation which crossed the Red Sea, and which trembled before a trembling Sinai, wore beards, and thus escaped the possibility of derision. The general polish and exquisite grace of the Grecian manners left less room for those eccentricities and *outré* oddities on which the satirist is so prone to fasten, and even their vices wore a garb so graceful that it was difficult to turn them into ridicule. But in Rome there were less refinement and equal pollution; a larger metropolis, too, attracted a greater variety of characters; the Roman mind itself, being of a saturnine cast, inclined more to keen satire than to light comic raillery; and in the "hooked nose," common to the race, lay, as it were, a natural adaptation for, and a silent prophecy of, this species of composition. It is, perhaps, only in such ages as when it flourished in Rome that satire *can* fulfil its mission in the moral history of mankind. *That* is, to show vice its own image—to scourge impudent imposture—to expose hypocrisy—to laugh down solemn quackery of every kind—to create blushes on brazen brows, and fears of scorn in hollow hearts—to make iniquity, as ashamed, hide its face—to apply caustic, nay, cautery, to the wounds of society, and to destroy sin by showing both the ridicule which attaches to its progress, and the wretched consequences which are its end. But ere this purpose (a purpose, we grant, which the satirist has too seldom faithfully fulfilled) can be accomplished, society must be in a degenerate and unnatural condition; ere satire can apply the torch, the vices and absurdities of mankind must have reared the pile.

The first regular satirist in Rome was Caius Ennius Lucilius, a Roman knight, grand-uncle of Pompey the Great, and an intimate friend of Scipio Africanus, under whom he served in the siege of Numantia. He was born at Suessa in 149, B.C., and died at Naples in 103, B.C. He wrote thirty satires, which were very popular in their day, although only a few fragments

of them have been preserved. He improved greatly on the rough models of Ennius and Pacavius, and, as a satirist, he gave the first specimen of that species of verse which was afterwards brought to perfection by Horace, Persius, and Juvenal. Horace has compared Lucilius to a river which carries along precious gold dust with mere rubbish, and his fourth and tenth satires are filled with depreciatory, but probably just, criticism on that satirist, whom he describes dictating his verses, "standing on one foot," who, according to him, exhibits not even "shreds of a poet," and whose lines he asserts to run "with staggering step." Horace seems to have been suspected of jealousy of Lucilius, and was at some pains to substantiate his critical objections.

Horace's own merits as a satirist are of a high order. His versification is the hexameter, and he uses it with a grace and an ease which, considering its somewhat unwieldy and monotonous structure, are wonderful. It is interesting to compare the sounding and lofty measures of Virgil with the slipshod, yet elegant, lines of Horace. You can hardly believe that they use the same rhythm or the same language. Horace was distinguished by his versatility. He was a poet, a critic, a voluptuary, a man of the world. His poetry is found inspiring his Odes or Carmina. His critical acumen is discovered in his *De Arte Poetica*, which is one mass of brilliant æsthetic aphorisms. His voluptuousness colours slightly all his writings; but is most apparent in his *Epistolæ*. His tact and knowledge of life are chiefly displayed in his *Satyræ*. In these there is very little indeed of that fine chastened fire which breathes in his odes, and which has rendered some of them, with perhaps the exception of a few of Schiller's and Campbell's, the most delicately finished and the most classically bold lyrics in the world. Nor do we find in them any of that deep earnest and solemn spirit which burns in the highest species of satire. Horace sits in the full view of vice and crime, leaning on his left elbow, with a slight sneer blended with a quiet smile on his lips, and with the forefinger of his right hand pointing them out to ridicule—he never leaps up indignantly to stop, or to protest against their commission. He finds in folly a more congenial theme for his satirical muse than in vice; and even it he rather touches lightly with the lash, than scourges to shreds. He rather supplies *reasons* for at once laughing at and loathing what is wrong, than makes you loathe or laugh at it. He is too sensible, too easy-minded; his own vice has never transcended a languid self-

indulgent and epicurean habit; he is not a good hater and seems to think it scarcely worth while to be greatly angry, and inconsistent with his decorum and his personal comfort to laugh aloud. Hence a subdued tone in all his satires, and he seems always to be fondling the objects of his derisive mirth. Hence he seldom makes us very merry, and even the effect of that inimitable picture of a bore in the ninth satire of the first book, is to create only on the cheek of his reader a calm, complacent smile.

Persius was born A.D. 34, at Volterra, in Etruria, and died in 62, aged twenty-eight. He was of the equestrian rank, mingled familiarly with the first men of the day, and was much esteemed and loved for his pure and amiable manners. He had studied under the Stoics; and one of his early teachers, named Cornutus, published his six satires after the author's death. In morality, these are sufficiently strict and stern; but their style is abrupt and obscure. His points are almost all sheathed through the remoteness of his allusions and the perplexity of his diction. Hazlitt says, that Bentham might have wrapt up high treason in one of his enormous periods, and it never would have found its way into Westminster Hall. So Persius seems to be very furious, very bitter, and very personal, but few of his hits tell. He is like a man swearing at an Englishman in Hindoostanee, —it is pointless fury, boltless thunder. You *should* be, but are not injured. This, of course, is fatal to the effect of his satires. It is not, but it seems to be, weakness, and a weak satirist is the most helpless of beings. Persius indulges, too, in frequent interrogations, a custom which, unless exceedingly well managed, gives an air of uneasiness, and furious feebleness to writing, and disturbs our attention by a kind of irregular, starting, jolting motion. A question of contempt asked in the ear of a fallen foe is often very powerful in its withering effect, but the foe should first be fallen. Persius omits to fell his opponent before he assails him with what must be impotent scorn. In his satires, altogether, you see more of the willingness to wound, than of the power to strike.

It is very much otherwise with Decius Junius Juvenal. This most powerful of all satirists, flourished in the age of Rome's deepest degeneracy, and under the reign of that terrible succession of tyrants, who appeared like the monsters of geology—the megatherium, mammoth, mastodon—each more hideous and ferocious than his fellow—Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Domitian; and he seemed created for the very purpose of extracting, from

that heaven-abandoned period, the materials of his impassioned and indignant song. He had been banished by Domitian, under pretence of an appointment, to the extremity of Egypt, and there his vemon had time to "swelter," like that of the toad, under the pressure of the "cold stone,"—nor did he return to Rome till the reign of Trajan, when he was eighty-one years of age. One wonders how, with such fierce passions and chagrins burning in his breast, he contrived to live so long. There are few constitutions that can, like Mithridates, thrive on poisons. But to do Juvenal justice, there were better things in him than mere vindictive venom. His disgust at the follies and vices of his country is so often and so eloquently and so earnestly expressed, as to leave a profound impression of his sincerity. He reminds us not unfrequently of the stern Ezekiel. Like him, he smites with his hand, and tears his hair, and stamps with his foot, in his indignation at the evils which are around him. Like him, too, in his exposure of these evils, he becomes so literal and photographic, as to border on the repulsive,—his pictures of sin show it in all its grossness; and he makes it rather loathsome than ridiculous. That terrible Hebrew—the incarnation of Divine wrath, exclaims (Ezekiel xxii. 30), "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none." Juvenal, in his thirteenth satire, says:—

Rari quippe boni; numerus vix est totidem quot
Thebarum portæ vel divitis ostia Nili.

How exquisitely satirical this sudden coming down from the supposed number of a hundred good men like the hundred gates of Thebes, who might possibly be found in the city, to that of seven, like the seven mouths of the Nile! Juvenal is remarkable for the concentration of his style, and for his *exhaustive* genius. He has the memory as well as the *animus* of an accusing angel. No folly, and no vice of high or low, rich or poor, is omitted in his canvas. Perjury, simony, drunkenness, bribery, luxury, foppery, fornication, adultery, unnatural crimes and their consequences, religious hypocrisy, legalised murder and misgovernment, are all represented by this dreadfully impartial artist. His satires in this point, as well as in coarse and literal accuracy, resemble the pictures of Hogarth,—they are daguerreotypes of every smallest, disgusting, and abominable feature in their subjects; and, hence, many have shrunk away from, instead of being attracted by, them.

In later days have appeared such distinguished satirists

as, among the Italians, Ariosto, Salvator Rosa, Gasparo Gozzi, and Alfieri,—among the Spaniards, Cervantes, Saavedra and Quevedo,—among the French, Regnier, Boileau, Voltaire and Berenger,—among the Germans, Falk, Haller, Wieland, Schiller, Goethe, Heyne, etc. We propose, however, confining the rest of this paper to a few remarks on some of the leading British masters of this art.

Donne's and Hall's satires are both now obsolete, although there is infinite ingenuity in the former, and although the latter were of material use to Pope in the construction of his verse. Donne was as great in prose as in poetry. De Quincey says of him, "Few writers have shown a more extraordinary compass of powers than Donne; for he combined what no other man has ever done,—the last sublimation of dialectical subtlety and address, with the most impassioned majesty. Massive diamonds compose the very substance of his poem on the Metempsychosis —thoughts and descriptions which have the fervent and gloomy sublimity of Ezekiel or Æschylus, whilst a diamond dust of rhetorical brilliances is strewed over the whole of his occasional verses and his prose."

Rochester may be signalised as the first thoroughly depraved and vicious person—so far as we remember—who assumed the office of the satirist; the first, although not, alas! the last, human imitator of "Satan accusing Sin." Some satirists before him had been faulty characters, while rather inconsistently assailing the faults of others; but here, for the first time, was a man with no virtue, or belief in virtue whatever, and whose life was one mass of wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores, a naked satyr who gloried in his shame, becoming a severe castigator of public morals and of private character. Even that low and lewd age shrank from the gross anomaly implied in this; and ours has shovelled the memory of the satires, clever as they were, along with that of the life of the man (his death, as told by Burnet, still continues to edify) out of sight for ever.

Samuel Butler had his errors too; but these were principally owing to his age; and the vices which he chiefly satirised were certainly not *his*. He was no hypocrite, no pedant, no sciolist, no pretender to anything which he did not possess. As a satirist, he had unbounded learning to furnish him with grotesque illustrations—a keen sense of the ridiculous—wit unequalled in its abundance and point—a vast assortment of ludicrous fancies and language—and a form of versification which seemed shaped by the very genius of satire for his own purposes, and which

resembles heroic rhyme broken off in the middle with shouts of laughter. He wanted, however, one or two elements found in satirists generally. He had little malignity, and he had no high moral indignation. He seems scarcely to hate, although he despises the Puritans. When seeking to make them ridiculous, he succeeds; but when he tries towards the end of *Hudibras* to make them loathsome, he fails, and this because he does not sufficiently loathe them himself. Nor was there anything in the conduct of that party which could justify lofty moral indignation; and besides, we doubt if Butler possessed sufficient imagination or heart to enkindle in him such a feeling. He was a giant of intellect, learning, and wit; but he was as cold as he was colossal, comparable to his own "Elephant in the moon," —an object prodigiously large, but surrounded by a pale and chilly atmosphere: he was enfeebled, even as a satirist, by his want of passion, and as a poet by his want of imagination.

Dryden comes next; and many will be disposed to rank him at the very head of the list of British satirists, although he must take a secondary rank among our British poets. His warm admirers, we know, think that he stooped to the satirist—that he—

> Born for the universe, narrowed his mind,
> And for party gave up what was meant for mankind.

but we beg leave to doubt, if without the infusion of certain elements which he possessed not, such as conscientiousness, piety, and true affection, he could ever have been much higher than a satirical writer, not to speak of his want of dramatic skill, constructive power, and poetic imagination in the proper sense of that word. His dramas, as a whole, are elaborate piles of pollution, libels on human nature, as disgraceful to the author as they are false in themselves, satires in all but wit, truth, and moral feeling. His didactic poems are eloquent evasions of the questions they profess to discuss; they show more power than probity, more learning than earnestness. His descriptive pieces, prologues, etc., are mere rubbish gilded by an imagination cold as winter moonlight. His odes and songs seem rather the transient breathings of some passing geni over the instrument of his mind, than its native utterances. His fables are powerful translations of greater poets. But in his satires, Dryden is intensely himself. There are various things which distinguish the monkey from the man, such as generalising power, enthusiasm, love, etc.; but, perhaps, nothing more marks the differential quality of humanity than the reasonableness, depth, and

duration of its aversions,—no better proof of the existence of *anima* (or soul) than the peculiar nature of *animus* or animosity. Dryden disgusting in his loves, false in his panegyrics, feeble in his pictures, and factitious in his enthusiasms—is in his abuse, invective, and derision thoroughly true and manlike. He not only throws his whole heart but his whole understanding into his anger. He not only hates, but gives substantial grounds for his hatred; and proves thus that his is no capricious flame like that of an ape, or that of an infant, but the strong steady ire of an enlightened man. In three points only do we deem him inferior to Juvenal, first in that compression of language in which the Latin poet so excels, and in which now and then he almost rivals the sublime cypher of Tacitus, his contemporary; secondly, in that deep impression which Juvenal leaves on you, that his hatred of vice is as habitual as is his contempt for meanness or folly, and that he is not only a man, but a good man angry; and thirdly, in the strain of general accusation into which the Roman more frequently than the Englishman is hurried, and which converts his satires from clever party diatribes into broad moral pictures. Dryden, on the other hand, excels Juvenal and all satirists in the ease and the masterly force of his satirical dissections, as well as in a vein of humour, which is stealthily visible at times, in the intervals of his wrathful mood. In certain passing and profound touches, like the fires of Egypt which ran along the ground, scorching all things while they pursued their unabated speed, the two are nearly on a level.

Swift might be described as consisting originally of two parts —sense, and selfish passion, which was sure, in certain circumstances, to ferment into a spirit of satire, "strong as death, and cruel as the grave." Born without much natural benevolence, with no purely poetic imagination, with furious passions, and unbounded ambition, he was entirely dependent, for his peace of mind, upon success. Had he become as he was by his talents entitled to be, the Prime Minister of his day, he would have figured as a greater tyrant in the Cabinet than even Chatham. But as he was prevented from becoming the first statesman, he became the first satirist of his time. From vain efforts at supremacy for himself and his party, he retired growling to his Dublin-den, and there, as Haman thought scorn to lay his hand on Mordecai, but extended his murderous purpose to all the people of the Jews, and as Nero wished that all Rome had one neck that he might destroy it at a blow, so Swift dared,

to rear himself so to speak, on the back of his own personal disappointment, and to hurl out scorn at man and suspicion at his Maker. It was not, it must be noticed, enmity at the evil which is in man, which excited his hatred and contempt, it was man himself. He was not merely as many are, disgusted with the selfish and malignant elements which are mingled in man's nature and character, and disposed to trace them to any cause save a Divine will, but he believed man to be as a whole, the work and child of the devil, and he told the imaginary creator and creature to their face what he thought the truth, "The devil is an ass." His was the very madness of Manicheanism. That heresy untruly held, that the devil was one of two aboriginal creative powers, but Swift believed him to be the only God. From a Yahoo man it was inevitable to infer a demon deity. It is very laughable to find writers in *Blackwood* and elsewhere, striving to prove Swift a Christian, as if, whatever were his professions and however sincere even he might be in these at times, the whole tendency of his writings, his perpetual and unlimited abuse of man's body and soul, his denial of every human virtue, the filth he pours upon every phase of human nature, and the doctrine he so often insinuates that man has fallen indeed, but fallen not from the angel, but from the animal, or rather is just a bungled brute, were not enough to show that either his notions were grossly erroneous and perverted, or that he himself deserved like another Nebuchadnezzar, to be driven from men, and to have a beast's heart given to him. After all this it were ridiculous to praise his powers of satire. He was not a satirist but a minor Satan, who surprised man naked and asleep, looked at him with microscopic eyes, ignored all his peculiar marks of fallen dignity and of incipient godhood, and in heartless rhymes reported accordingly.

Pope belonged in some measure to the same school as Swift, but the *feminine* element which was in him, mellowed and modified his feelings. He had little truth of nature, but he had some tenderness of heart. He was also more successful, (according to his idea of success) and a happier man than Swift. He was very much smaller too in soul as well as in body, and his gall organ was proportionable. Swift's feeling to humanity was a black malignity, Pope's a tiny malice. Swift was a man, nay a monster of misanthropy. Pope always reminds us of an injured and pouting hero of Lilliput, "doing well to be angry" under the gourd of a pocket-flap, or squealing out his griefs from the centre of an empty snuff-box. In minute and micro-

scopic vision of human infirmities, Pope excels even Swift, but then you always conceive Swift leaning down—a giant, although a gnarled stature—to behold them, while Pope is on their level, and has only to look straight before him. It is curious to notice how both are stung by their very different degrees of satirical feeling into poetry. But how different the poetry of Swift from that of Pope! Swift's, which comes out only in his most vehement prose, is more fierce and terrible than even Juvenal's, it is, "black fire and horror,"—think of his description of war and of statesmanship in the last parts of Gulliver's travels—descriptions in which, working with the barest and coldest words, he produces the effects of poetry, as though a hot furnace should be fuelled with snow. Pope, again, never waxes so lofty and so poetical as when he has lashed himself, with long struggle, and after many unsuccessful efforts, into an enthusiasm of moral fury. Whether this be simulated or not, and we are afraid it often is, it is then and then only that he soars above the mere satirist and artist, and becomes the poet. In polish and delicate strokes, in damning hints and annihilating whispers, where "more is meant than meets the ear," Pope excels all satirists.

Young, of the *Night Thoughts*, has written one very vigorous satire, *The Universal Passion*, in which, however, there is far too much point. There is more energy, but less refinement than in Pope, and he does not take high enough, that is Christian ground, in denouncing the undue love of fame. He amends this error in the *Night Thoughts*, which, besides, contain a number of satirical touches, superior, we think, to anything in his professed satires. Blair's *Grave*, too, abounds in bold and poignant satire,—indeed it might almost have been entitled *The Sepulchre, a Satirical Poem.*

In reference to Churchill, we coincide with the editor of Mr. Nichol's edition, and may quote his words: "He was emphatically a John Bull, sublimated. He rushed into the poetic arena more like a pugilist than a poet, laying about him on all sides, giving and taking strong blows, and appearing himself, in the language of 'the fancy,' game to the back-bone. His faults, besides those incident to most satirists, such as undue severity, intrusion into private life, anger darkening into malignity, and spleen fermenting into venom, were carelessness of style, inequality, and want of condensation; Dryden was his favourite model, and although he has written no such condensed masterpieces of satire, as the characters of Shaftesbury and Buckingham, yet his works as a whole are not much inferior, and justify the

idea that, had his life been spared, he might have risen to the level of 'Glorious John.' His versification, too, is decidedly of the Drydenic type. It is a free, fierce, rushing, sometimes staggering race across meadow, moor, and mountain, dreading nothing except repose and languor, the lines chasing, and sometimes *tumbling over each other in their haste*, like impatient hounds at a fox-hunt. But more than Dryden, we think, has Churchill displayed the genuine poetic faculty, as well as a higher species of moral indignation."

Johnson, strong in all things, although clumsy in many, was peculiarly strong in satire, and more adroit and polished in that field than in any other. *London* is more powerful and scarcely less elegant than the best of Pope's satires, and both it and the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, have a solemn dignity characteristic of the *Rambler*. Johnson *might* have been the greatest satirist that ever lived. He possessed all the mental and all the moral qualities necessary for perfection in the art, and was free from many of the drawbacks and disqualifications of ordinary satirists. He could hate but not loathe, his enmity did not amount to malice; a man of sterling honesty and worth, he would have disdained to attack errors which were his own; possessed of prodigious power of crushing contempt, he would have applied it only to objects and persons who deserved it, and he would never have lost sight of grand moral purposes. In verse, too, his thought was generally more precise and his language more pointed and condensed than in prose. How by a few more *Londons*, written in the full maturity of his powers he could have blasted the Bolingbrokes, Malletts, Humes, and Voltaires, as well as exposed the frivolities, affectations, political follies and moral delinquencies of his day! How one would like to have seen such dragon-flies as Churchill, Horne, and Wilkes, preserved in his amber, and to have beheld the shadowy form of Junius reflected on the clear, stern, and masculine current of his verse!

Junius and Burke possessed the elements of splendid satirists, although neither of them wrote in verse. Junius might be called the Pope, and Burke the Juvenal of prose satirists. The sting of Junius is polished to the last degree of perfection, and actually glitters; the poison he administers is sweet—it is sugar of lead. You think as you compare the *animus* of the man with the elegance and coolness of his language, of the lines:—

> The ground burns frore,
> And cold performs the effect of fire.

Burke is incomparably more fervent and poetical, and is more

frequently exasperated into invective, but has touches of sarcasm quite as powerful and as delicate as anything in Junius. In fact, like Minerva from the brain of Jove, Junius might have issued from a corner of Burke's capacious and all-sided mind, and we are not singular in thinking, that many of the best things in his letters actually did.

In Cowper we see the greatest of all *Christian* satirists. That the spirit of Christianity could form any compromise with that of satire or invective had been doubted, although the perusal of the last chapter of 2 Peter and of Jude might have rendered the doubt unnecessary. Cowper by his poetry completed the proof. In his satires and in portions of his task, we see the tenderness of a lover united to the terrible wrath of an ancient prophet. The "red and burning" flower of his anger is rooted in the soil of love. The cries of a mother to a child whom she sees approaching the brink of a torrent are often fierce, nay frantic, and so with the *Expostulations* of Cowper. In milder and more playful moods how admirably has he shown off the fopperies and follies, and minor vices of his age! And although a melancholy-haunted man, it is singular that not a drop of *venom* flows either in his prose or his poetry.

Peter Pindar, or Dr. Wolcot, was once a most popular satirist. Robert Chambers in his *Life of Burns*, speaks of him, we think, with too much contempt, as if he had been an overrated, and were now a detected and forgotten quack. Now whatever Wolcot might be, —coarse, savage, sensual, and unprincipled, an impostor certainly he was not any more than was William Cobbett. He was no poet, but his smaller pieces show an infinite fund of coarse wit and humour, and his intellect was evidently of a powerful order. His *Lousiad* is now deservedly doomed to oblivion and contempt, but his *Bozzy and Pozzi* shall remain as a very clever specimen of the literary satire, and his conduct to Opie the painter, showed that under a very rough exterior there beat a heart.

Burns, in satire as in every other species of poetry, proved the unbounded resources of his genius as well as the defects of his education and the coarseness of his taste. There is more malice in some of his satirical pieces than one would have expected from the lover of "the silly sheep and the owrie cattle," and the author of "Poor Mailie's Elegy." Those ladies who dote on lapdogs and those men who fancy goats, are not generally the most benevolent. Naturally Burns had a warm heart, but his unfortunate circumstances and ill-regulated passions prematurely

soured him at life. In one thing he deserves praise. He has not affected any more morality than he had, he sometimes deplores in himself, but he seldom attacks in others the sins which "did more easily beset him," for it is obvious, that the vices of such a man as "Holy Willie," could not, considering his professions, etc., be ranked under the same category as those of "Rob the Ranter." In all Burns's satirical pieces you see the genuine spirit, and hear the tongue of a *caird*, as well as of a poet, they contain an equal mixture of *jaw* and genius.

It is many years since we read old Mathias's *Pursuits of Literature*, and we dare hardly, at this distance of time, pronounce upon its merits. Its lines seemed massive, but dull, and many of them were mere pegs on which to hang copious and learned exercitations, crossed by deep dashes of malice, in the shape of notes. The book is now for ever shelved, and so too, we suspect, are the *Baviad and Maviad*, those once famous masterpieces of Gifford.

In Crabbe, as a satirist, we notice this peculiarity, he is one of the first, of our country at least, who has interwoven the didactic satire with the narrative poem. He shows vice, not sitting still for its picture, but moving briskly along—folly, not stationary at its mirror, but "footing it on the light fantastic toe" in the mazy circles of a life-long dance,—wickedness and absurdity, not in the abstract, but in the concrete. His satires are all more or less stories. This has given them freshness and blood-warmth, and made them hover between the satirical novel and the satirical poem. His vein is sufficiently caustic, and his descriptions are as usual with him, literally and sternly true; but, like Cowper, kindness and pity are half-seen skulking behind the severities of the strain. Individuals he seldom assails, his castigations are in general those of classes of men, and he evidently is constrained to this work by sheer necessity of nature, or by stress of situation and circumstances, not by inclination or elaborate purpose. A mirror must equally act as a mirror in pandemonium or in paradise.

Byron had two phases in his satirical career, first in his "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," and secondly, in his "Don Juan" and "Vision of Judgment." In the first he was just Pope in a passion and a hurry, there was more spirit than refinement, more effort than edge, he seldom rose above clever Billingsgate; in the second, he had found the fountains of another Acheron, and dark and terrible were the outpourings.

He wrote besides a secret series of libels against personal friends which attained to the measure of the "Legion Club," but only some of which have been printed. Every one who has read, must remember his lines on Rogers, beginning with—

> Nose and lips would shame a knocker—

—going over in language of the fiercest ribaldry, the whole man from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, and closing the diatribe with the words:—

> For his merits wouldst thou know 'em,
> Once he wrote a pretty poem.

He had indited a gallery of such things, besides a dictionary of all the names of his friends with the bitterest satirical commentary annexed to each. How much this was owing to despair, or to madness, or to drunkenness, or to the mere love of mischief, we cannot determine; but sometimes, when thinking of them, we are reminded of the words of Hatteraick to Glossin, when jumping up and surveying him from head to heel, he cried, "I don't see the goat's (cloven) foot, and yet he is the very devil!" It should never be forgotten, that although himself perpetually on the border of madness and of suicide, Byron wrote some epigrams insulting the melancholy close of Castlereagh's unfortunate career. These are, in his own words, deeds that "must not away." They cast a fearful light on the state of a heart which infidelity had combined with a thousand selfish passions to make as hard as the nether millstone. It is sadder still to remember that his genius never exerted itself so powerfully as in the service of the worst feelings of his nature.

Moore has not sinned in his satire after the same fashion, or to the same extent as Byron. Nor has he displayed a tithe of the same power. He has unloosened against his enemies a fearful flight of needles and pins, the brightest pins and needles which Birmingham or Sheffield ever bore. Such flights are his "Two-penny Post-bag," his "Fudge Family," his "Cash, Corn, Currency, and Catholics." What smartness! what sparkle! what tiny splendour! what minnikin speed! But not even a child could suffer any serious consequences from them. To Pope, Moore is inferior, not in his brilliance or point, but solely in *animus*. Pope has the malignity of the famous Lilliputian (we forget his name) who was the means of ostracising Gulliver from that matchless empire. Moore is mustard-seed in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, very sharp, but better

at tickling the ears than piercing to the hearts of the Bottoms of the day.

Coleridge, amidst all his wonderful doings, has seldom done anything more wonderful than such little copies of satirical or abusive verse as "The Two Round Spaces," and "Fire, Famine, and Slaughter." In the first of these he has, for the nonce, raised the spirit of Swift from his grave, and made him curse MacIntosh by his gods. A line more infernal does not exist in literature than the following:—

> I trust he lies in his grave awake!

And yet Coleridge was, even when writing this, an amiable as well as a gifted man. It was entirely an act of poetical simulation. And so was that higher mood in which he commissioned the hags of famine, fire, and slaughter, to hold a consultation on the best means of avenging the cause of liberty on the head of William Pitt, and when one of them exclaimed:—

> O thankless beldames and untrue,
> And is this all that ye can do?
> I alone am faithful, I
> Cling to him everlastingly.

Shelley, except in "Peter Bell the Third," has written no satire, and that, sooth to say, is more remarkable for emasculated blasphemy than for power. Wordsworth has here and there a satirical touch worthy of any master of the art, as when he says:—

> Philosopher—a fingering slave,
> One that would peep and botanise
> Upon his mother's grave.

Leigh Hunt is often peculiarly graceful and felicitous in his versified sarcasms. Bulwer's *New Timon* was an experiment which has not been so successful as to have induced him to repeat it. Tennyson, in his "Vision of Sin," and Bailey, in some parts of *Festus*, have given good specimens of a kind of Mephistophilean satire. In prose satire this age is rich, as *Punch*, and the novels of Thackeray, Bulwer, and Dickens, the speeches of Andrew Thomson, Brougham, and D'Israeli, and the criticisms of Jeffrey, Lockhart, and Wilson have proved. Cobbett and Christopher North have been perhaps the most powerful satirists of their day, although in very different styles; the satire of the one resembling the rich, quiet, out-flow of some oil of death; that of the other, an uproarious ocean wave, dashing and drowning all before it, in its salt spray and fierce resounding surges.

Of the *pros* and *cons* of satire, and the question, how far it might be useful to the progress of society, we cannot enlarge. Much might be, and has been said on both sides. Dryden has said:—

> Most satirists are indeed a public scourge,
> Their mildest medicine is a farrier's purge!

two lines which John Struthers of the "Poor Man's Sabbath" took for the motto of a most vigorous and eloquent onslaught on satire which appeared in 1817, in an interesting but forgotten Glasgow periodical called *The Student*. We think, that as satire has often been written, it has done very little good, either to individuals or the community, having been too frequently, either the mere outlet of spleen, or the instrument of party feeling, or an ostentatious display of mental power. But it might have been otherwise, it has sometime been otherwise, and it may be always otherwise by and by. Why should the devil and the devil-inspired have all the laughter to themselves? Why should not a ridicule arise, that might become in reality the test of truth? Why should not men who are at once sons of genius and of God, who at once pity and laugh at folly, hate the sin, and love the sinner, while they scourge both, appear in our literary horizon, and create a species of sublimer satire than the pages even of a Juvenal, or a Cowper, or a Pascal have yet displayed. Should this hope be realised, we are certain that the world would welcome a regenerated and reformed satire, and would rank it amongst the very brightest and noblest varieties of poetry.

THE LATE DR. SAMUEL BROWN[1]

THERE is nothing in the history of this strange world more mysterious than the records it contains of the early deaths, or more painful still, the abortive lives of the gifted. What *can* be the reason that so many princely-seeming streams, which began their course among the hills, wantoning in their strength, and yet with arrowy eagerness and directness seeking the main, are swallowed up in sand, or go down like that river in the Happy Valley of Rasselas, into a dark gulf, where, after a few bubbling groans, and reluctant struggles, their voice is heard no more, without reaching the ocean—that so many orbs, glorifying the evening east, and promising a far more excelling glory in the course of their progress, are eclipsed and darkened ere the zenith is reached, and leave, on the spectators, a bitterness of disappointment, proportioned to the exaltation of their hopes, and the eloquence of their uttered anticipations as to their future career? Dew-drops, roses, foam-bells, you do not expect to remain—their brilliancy and their brevity are identical; but in stars—the sons of the morning—you look for a career as long as the horizon of heaven; for a rising, culmination, and declinature; a beginning, middle, and end; but how often, alas! you look in vain, and see the end ere the full beginning. Why is this? Is it from mere chance—the blind Fury with the abhorred shears? Or, is it from that envious wrath of Apollo, of which the Pagans speak, which will not suffer the gifted to become the god-like, nor the beautiful the perfect, nor the strong the omnipotent, nor the lofty to reach the clouds? Or, is it from the weakness of bodily constitution, which is often connected with, or produced by great intellectual energy? Or, is it from an unwise expenditure of early strength in study, blended with an undue indulgence of a thirst for pleasure? Or, is it from the coldness, neglect, and persecution which all rising spirits encounter, and under which, many succumb? Or, is it from a combination of some or all of these causes? Whatever the reason be, the fact is certain; and we need not quote the familiar names of Burns, Byron, Chatterton, Keats, Kirke White, and

[1] From the *Scottish Review*, October 1857.

Shelley, while our own times abound with such painful and numerous instances.

But far more melancholy, as we have just said, an abortive life than an early death. Our readers remember Browning's poem, "The Lost Leader," and the meaning of it. How many "Lost Leaders"—men who aimed at guiding the march of society, and possessed adequate powers for the task—have in this age wearied in the greatness of their way, or stepped aside into some by-path of evil, or turned right round on a retrograde course, or have been simply baffled in some mighty undertaking they had proposed for themselves, and found, when too late, that they had mistaken their work, and confounded aspiration with aptitude! It is with deep pain that we must rank among this class, the brilliant, accomplished, and eloquent person whose name we have prefixed to this article—one who had created the very highest expectations, but who, recently cut off in the prime of life, united, in his unfortunate story, *both* the mysterious malconditions mentioned above. He died prematurely, and he died a defeated man; although in an attempt so bold, that his very failure in it is fame.

About seventeen years ago, there was a very remarkable cluster of youths attending the University of Edinburgh, and well known on its streets and public walks. Three of them were especially prominent, and were often seen together. One was a tall, fair-complexioned young man, with a somewhat stooping gait, long yellow hair hanging over his shoulders, in the style of ancient pictures, and dull and downcast, but thoughtful eyes. Arm-in-arm with him there often walked a thinner youth, with hair as dark as the raven's wing, floating down in masses, and forming a piquant contrast to the bright locks of his companion, a pale, long face, nose slightly hooked, high, well-arched forehead, and searching, rather than brilliant eyes. The opinions of the street were considerably divided about this singular pair. Many set them down as intolerable and empty coxcombs. Others stamped them as irredeemable and impudent young scamps. The better informed, however, knew, that along with, probably, a considerable dash of both the puppy and the roué, they were among the ablest of the rising savants of the Modern Athens; and were inclined to hope, that when their wild oats were fairly sown, they would reach very high distinction. Often, but not habitually, there appeared in their company another, less ostentatiously singular in his appearance, about the middle

size in height; his dark hair not quite so Absalomic in its longitude, his aspect simply that of an ordinary clever student, save for a certain rapt expression which glimmered in his grey eye, and over his thin, pale visage; his gait elastic, and his air joyous. Such was the trinity of Edinburgh scientific genius in the years 1838-9-40. The name of the first was Cunningham, who promised to become one of the first geologists of the day, but who died early, without having done anything to justify the estimation of his friends. The second was Edward Forbes, the recently-removed and deeply-lamented Professor of Natural History in Edinburgh; and the third was Samuel Brown.

Edward Forbes and Brown, besides belonging to a society called the "Order of Truth"—the badge of which lay in a silver triangle, suspended by a red riband—delivered a course of lectures together in Edinburgh, 1840, which were much admired by the select few who attended them. Let us treasure up a few reminiscences of the only time we ever met the first of these, before coming to a somewhat enlarged estimate of the second.

We had been invited by a common friend to meet Edward Forbes, at a quiet dinner-party in Edinburgh, in November 1839, but owing to some other engagement, he did not appear. In two months afterwards, however, he came to a festival in Dundee, then held annually on the birthday of James Watt. At this time he was comparatively little known, except as the editor of *Yarrel's British Fishes*. Our friend had forewarned us to expect a man of almost universal accomplishments; a naturalist, an artist, a writer, and a speaker, as well as of wondrous original promise in the path of scientific discovery. Ere the meeting began, in which we were also to take some part, we were introduced to him. He was about twenty-five years of age, although a certan quiet and settled air might have augured another lustrum. He had no undue gravity, or severity about his aspect, but although not pensive—

Thoughtful seemed the boy for one so young.

He looked older at twenty-five than Samuel Brown afterwards did, when we last saw him, at thirty-four. His manner was easy and agreeable, but wanted that buoyant frankness, and beaming cordiality which, in his happier moods, distinguished Brown above all men we ever knew. In select social society, however, and when perfectly at home, Forbes, we have heard, became a most genial and even joyous being. Sitting with a chairman of considerable bulk between us, we could not pursue

any consecutive stream of talk, or do more than telegraph across the human continent, a few scattered observations about the able and worthy friend, W. Bridges, now of London, who had made us acquainted, and about the genius of Coleridge,—some lines of whose poetry Forbes had quoted in his speech. It was, we think, the beautiful verse—

> He prayeth well who loveth well
> Both men, and bird, and beast;
> He prayeth best who loveth best
> All things, both great and small,
> For the dear God who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all.

Forbes' speech was a very fine one. It was not eloquent, emphatic, or fluent; but there was a scientific elegance, a distinctness and definitude about it, and a quiet enthusiasm in its delivery, which made it very effective. All we remember of it was, that he represented himself that morning, while waiting for the coach, pausing beside a little pool, and thinking to himself, what an interesting book might be written on the natural history of that little pool! It is our deep regret that we never saw the gifted naturalist again. Shortly after this, he sailed up the Mediterranean, on a voyage of natural observation; and on his return was appointed Professor of Natural History in King's College, London. Thence he came to Edinburgh, where he was cut off suddenly in 1854, in his fortieth year, death disappointing thus the highest hopes of the scientific world. Brown, who always talked of Forbes as a Cuvier in the germ, was lying on his long seven years' deathbed, when he heard of his friend's departure. He took up his pen, and inscribed in his journal, an exquisitely beautiful tribute to his memory, which has recently been published in the *North British Review*. He speaks of him there as another Humboldt in tendency and capacity of mind, although not in actual achievement. He unfortunately resembled Humboldt, too, in ignoring religion. He was never, indeed, an infidel, nor even a sceptic, but simply had shunned the subject; and while a great natural philosopher, was also a specimen of the natural man. Seldom has Naturalism nourished such a true and fine spirit as that of Edward Forbes.

We have no purpose of writing the life of Samuel Brown, or even of chronicling completely the leading events of his history. The amiable and able relation of his, who indited the late beautiful paper in the *North British Review*, is, we understand, to collect his remains, correspondence, etc., and to prefix to

them a memoir. Our purpose in this paper is, to trace his life from the point where we first came in contact with him; and then shortly to sum up our impressions of his character and genius.

We first met Samuel Brown in Edinburgh, in the spring of 1841. We were much struck with his pale and vivid face, his alert and nimble intellect, his lively conversation, and the enthusiasm which seemed a blood within his blood, the soul of his soul, the heart of his heart. We remember the delight with which he listened to a recitation of Aird's "Devil's Dream on Mount Acksbeck,"—a poem he had never met nor heard of before. One line in it especially struck him, and continued, he told us afterwards, to haunt him for years, while pursuing his "dim and perilous way" through the abyss of scientific research—

The *silent magnanimity* of Nature and her God.

"I should love," he wrote us, "the man, although he had never written another line." In July the same year, accompanied by a devoted friend, who sacrificed his all in life to his aid in research, Brown visited our dwelling, and we spent some of the most delightful days of our life in their society. We visited with him Glammis Castle—that huge pile of antique masonry, lying amidst its ancestral trees, and commanding, from its leaden roof, a view of the magnificent valley of Strathmore; and Dunkeld, which latter place was dearer to him, because he had, some years before, spent several summer weeks there, in company with his father, who was now dead. How vividly we remember our walk to the hermitage, along the banks of the Tay, sparkling in the bright summer noon, under its umbrageous canopy of tall trees,—the view of the braes of Athole,—yellowing towards harvest—at which we "gazed ourselves away"; the return by Invar; our entering the inn where Dr. Thomas Brown used to spend his vacations; our inquiring at the landlord if he had any recollection of such a man—he had never heard of him! Samuel Brown admired his namesake more then than he did afterwards. We noticed, in reference to his admiration of nature, that it was rather critical and æsthetic, than warm, gushing, and boy-like. He did not clap his hands, or utter exclamations of delight while gazing at a beautiful scene; and he seemed rather to be thinking how such and such a cloud, or mountain, or bit of sky would tell in a painting, than surrendering his spirit to its fascination. His

enthusiasm for nature was rather that of the painter than of the poet. We found then, and often afterwards, that his knowledge and love of literature and art were not inferior to his mastery over science. Indeed, we doubted then, and doubt still, if his true calling had not been to some one or other of the fields lying more immediately under the domain of the Beautiful or Artistic. Perhaps oratory, or poetry, or literary criticism, owes a deep grudge to that sterner science which carried him off, and gave him more blows than rewards. His delight in original poetry was very intense; and we recollect how, when he heard repeated, at the top of the Law of Dundee, Blake's "Lines to a Tiger,"—

> Tiger, tiger, burning bright,
> In the forest of the night, etc.

which, strange to tell, he had never heard or seen before, he almost shook with emotion. We may here mention that he himself was one of the best readers of poetry we ever heard. His voice had not the deep tones, the lingering cadences, or the wild and wailing pathos of Wilson, nor the tremulous, subdued enthusiasm, the thin and thrilling energy, as of a spirit's tongue, which mark the recitation of De Quincey—but in grace, variety of intonation, and a certain yearning earnestness of utterance, he stood alone. We heard a celebrated Scotch professor recently give a public reading from Shakspere, in which he effectually avenged the murder of Duncan by murdering *Macbeth*; and we thought, at the time, how differently would it have been read by Samuel Brown! He read especially well those passages which seek to express the higher aspects of science and philosophy in poetry; such as the lines in *Faust*, so admirably rendered by Dr. Anster—

> Oh! how the spell before my sight
> Brings nature's hidden ways to light.
> See all things with each other blending—
> Each to all its being lending;
> All on each in turn depending:
> Heavenly ministers descending,
> And again to heaven up-tending—
> Floating, mingling, interweaving,
> Rising, sinking, and receiving;
> Each for each, while each is giving
> On to each, and each relieving:
> Each the pails of gold, the living
> Current through the air is heaving;
> Breathing blessings: see them bending
> Balanced worlds from change defending,
> While everywhere diffused is harmony unending.

or, some verses, written by a relation of his own, and founded on a passage in one of his lectures, beginning—

> A Power and a Glory of silence lay
> O'erbrooding the lonely primeval Day,
> Ere yet unwoven the veil of Light
> Through which shineth forth the Eternal Might.
> When the Will on the infinite void went forth,
> And stirred it with pangs of god-like birth,
> And forth sprung the Twain, in which doth lie
> Infolded, all being of earth and sky.
> Then rested the Will, for his work was done.

These words, which embody his notion that God originally created two atoms, which by incessant increment, opposition to, yet circulation round each other, produced in due time the stupendous phenomenon of the universe,—when read in his "sable, silvered" tones to a London audience, thrilled them to the inmost soul, and many inquired if they were not translated from Goethe.

Toward the close of 1841, Brown repaired to London, and delivered at the City of London Institution a course of chemical lectures, with marked *éclat*. He was meanwhile pursuing his experiments, with a view to prove that all forms of matter are transformable into each other; and meeting with many startling results, especially in reference to the apparent isomerism of carbon and silicon, and of iron and rhodium. In order to save himself from the distractions of society, we have been told that he and his two associates, one a brother, and the other a friend, while living on bread and water, actually *shaved their heads;* and found, in this monkish nudity, a pretext for prosecuting their studies night and day. This year also, he issued his first "Lay Sermon, by Victorious Analysis, Christ Church;" which was followed early in 1842 by the second. They were not generally popular, but they won their way to the esteem of not a few true-hearted and inquiring spirits. Both were objectionable in point of style, which was far too slavishly modelled on that of Carlyle; nor was the sentiment entirely unexceptionable. But few writers of the age have equalled some of their passages; such as the description in the first, of the faith of Abraham, with his "strong heart, fit to be the first strong heart of a people;" or, "the proclamation of the infinitude of Duty;" and in the second, the inimitable description of his father's appearance, his manner of life, and the tender instructions he was wont to convey to his children—pointing out marks of design

to them in the large blue branching veins of his right hand,—"blessed characters that they were"—or drawing with his staff sand orreries upon the beach. If the public generally treated these sermons coldly, and if a powerful, but generous mastiff flew at the throat of the author, in the *United Secession Magazine*, Brown was consoled by the approbation of the Cambridge students, who bought up a large remainder of the second sermon, which had been lying like a dead stock on the publishers' hands; and by a letter from Carlyle, which ran to the following effect:—"If Victorious Analysis choose to preach again, he may depend on me as an auditor for one. Even although it should appear that he is not preaching in Christ Church, or in any church as yet named, or nameable among men, let him not be discouraged. Immensity itself is a temple, and the blue dome of heaven a nobler one than St. Paul's at the top of Ludgate Hill. V. A. seems to me an earnest, gifted young man; perhaps with a long, hard struggle before him, but not without victory at the end of it, and in the course of it."—T. C.

This summer he visited his then idol, at Chelsea; and on coming home, sat down and wrote us a most eloquent letter, which we keenly regret having lost, describing the interview. What his ultimate views of *Carlyle* were we know not; but his religious opinions seem ultimately to have diverged *toto coelo* from *Carlyleism*. In 1842, however, the Chelsea Prophet seemed to him the greatest of men, and his system, or rather negation of all systems, was hailed as a token for good to the distracted time.

In the autumn of this year he returned to Scotland, and took up his dwelling in that strange place in Portobello, which his friend in the *North British* has so picturesquely described. It was one of the queerest abodes which eccentric genius ever selected for itself. On the outer-door was inscribed the mystic word, "Hades." On entering you found yourself in a cold kitchen, without a spark of fire, or a single piece of furniture. Climbing a dark and winding stair, you came to two apartments —one a sleeping-room, library, and larder all in one—the other, the laboratory: both teeming with cups and bottles of divers kinds. Crosses, devices, mottoes, such as, "Perfect through suffering," "Laborare est orare," etc., garnished the otherwise cold and cheerless walls. The beds were (Scottice) *shake-downs*, with the exception of one in a closet, reserved for any chance guest, and in which we frequently reposed. On the floor of the room lay an enormous chest full of letters. The books were fit

and few—Coleridge, Humphrey Davy, a few mathematical and physical treatises, a huge folio copy of the entire works of Paracelsus, which had been presented our friend by Sir William Hamilton; mixed with a number of fragmentary and mysterious seeming MSS., being portions of lectures, essays, etc., from his pen. Such a den of genius! And then, as you entered it, there was the wizard himself, with his worn, thoughtful, yet mildly-radiant face, his frank, easy manners, and his plain, working attire, surmounted by a cap, on which were inscribed the signs of the Zodiac! And after the hours of labour were over, came those consecrated to friendship, and to fun. What talks then took place, what speculations were broached, what wild laughter echoed through, and peopled with ecstasy, the comfortless rooms! The fare generally consisted of mutton pies, washed down by *jugs* of tea, and perfumed by clouds of tobacco smoke. There were other occasions when some of the rising literati and savants of Edinburgh,—such as the two Russells, David Masson, Alexander Ross, Ruffini, Dr. John Brown *junior*, etc.,—came down to hear little lectures on atomics, and learn their dim laws at the eloquent lips of the inhabitant of "Hades." Sometimes, alas! instead of spending the evening of his days of hard toil in cheerful society, or refreshing repose, the fire in the alchymist's laboratory, or the lamp in his study, burned all night long—testifying, either that he was watching the result of long and perilous processes, or that he was yearning and wrestling over the composition of those wild, unrhymed magnificent odes to Nature, which most of his essays and lectures essentially were. There can be little doubt that his health was materially injured by his continued residence amidst the discomforts, the hard work, and night watchings of his Portobello hermitage.

On October 5, 1842, Samuel Brown came over to Dundee, to deliver a short course of lectures at the Watt Institution; and on that evening we first heard him address a public assembly. "Come back into memory," says Charles Lamb, "as thou wert in the spring-time of thy fancies, while hope still rose before thee like a fiery column, the dark side not yet turned, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, logician, metaphysician, bard." Come back to our memory as thou wert in *thy* hot youth, thy heart boiling with enthusiasm, thy brain throbbing with bright and new imaginations, thy tongue touched with fire, as always when "men gathered around thee, and the stars came out," Samuel Brown, chymist, philosopher, orator, and poet! and let us hear

again thy beautiful accents, soft as woman's, yet strong in the vigour of manly youth; warbling their wondrous story through the deepening shadows, and the solemn starry silence of these charmed autumnal eves! Brown came to Dundee a stranger to all but ourselves; but won golden opinions as fast and plentifully as if the soil had been Australia the fiery red, instead of Angus-shire the frigid. His eloquence was then, we think, more simply and enthusiastically powerful than it became afterwards. There was less art, but more nature—less looking in his style and manner to the audience, and more into the dim depths of the atom-universe, as if he felt himself standing immediately between it and God. Notes he then had none; nay, as soon almost conceive of Paul speaking from one of his "parchments" before King Agrippa, while his honour and life were hanging in suspense! His style and language were those of a young enthusiast, who had come before his companions to the brink of a precipice, overhanging a glorious prospect; and who, half turning back, and half looking down, was telling them, with cries and gestures, and flashing eyes, what lay below. This was especially true of the last lecture of the series, where he described the scale of elements under the image of a lyre—the various strings of which were constructed of one silver chord, and whose united melody was that one, yet manifold strain, resounding from all nature, of Glory to God in the highest; and in the close of which he so painted the possible annihilation of all things, that, when he stopped, the cessation of his voice, which had trembled under its images as it went on, seemed for a moment a pause in Nature's giant wheels; and we were tempted to look up to see if he had left Arcturus and the Great Bear still burning. Hundreds besides us can never forget the height to which he raised his audience that evening; even artisans and mechanics came home literally dancing with delight; and some were surprised into that "strange joy which they shall recognise in higher stages of their existence."

In private, on this occasion, we saw a great deal of him in his happiest moods; and he who had been electrifying large and motley audiences, by his sublime enthusiasm, no less delighted little circles on his return to the fireside, by his wit, humour, anecdotical vein, and thoroughly genial qualities. In the end of this year he revisited London; partly to lecture, and partly to submit his experiments to the tests of some eminent chymists, who all, however, declined. On his return to Edinburgh, Professor Gregory, then in Aberdeen, generously offered

to overlook his experiments, and attest them, if he found them successful; and Brown was preparing to journey northward, when the friendly professor was seized with severe and lengthened fever, and the purpose was indefinitely delayed.

In the spring of 1843, the chair of chemistry being about to become vacant, he was persuaded to deliver a course of critical lectures, four in number, and extending over four Saturdays. The audience was one of the most select ever assembled there. Chalmers, Sir W. Hamilton, Ferrier, Dr. John Brown, Christison, MacDougall, Simpson, John Cairns, are a few of those who sat in admiring wonder, listening to this youth of twenty-six, descanting on the "silent magnanimity of Nature and her God," as exhibited in the marvellous combinations, astounding surprises, subtle windings, and perpetual revolutions of chemistry's lowly, unseen, but real and awful world. At the close of the lectures, Chalmers, with even more than his usual glowing earnestness, returned the lecturer, amid acclamations, a vote of thanks; and saluted him as the Coleridge of Physicists. The delivery of this series, a series distinguished by a depth of thought, a philosophic calm of spirit, and a severe grandeur of language—such as he had never exhibited before in his lectures—was deemed a high step on his progress to the Edinburgh chair of chemistry; and formed, probably, the culmination alike of his popularity and his genius.

In the close of the year he stood as candidate for the vacant chair of chemistry. His friend in the *North British* has given a detail of some of the circumstances connected with this painful matter—a matter involving the great error of his life, or rather, a series of errors, from the effects of which he never fully recovered. In the first place, he was wrong in staking his claim to the chair, not on his general reputation, but on a special point, which he had not fully made out. Secondly, he erred in publishing an account of crude and incomplete experiments; so unsatisfactory, indeed, that his enemies alleged that some of them were mere myths. And thirdly, although his visit to Ireland, to have his experiments attested by Kane, thoroughly vouches for his integrity—for what man in his senses would have subjected merely imaginary or fraudulent results, to the eye of a profound and practised chymist?—yet his failure there was total; and instead of returning, as he and his friends expected, triumphant, he came back to resign his pretensions to the chair. We remember well the sickness of heart, and sorrow, with which we read the words of a correspondent:—

"The Alchymist has returned from Dublin, but *not*, alas! in triumph." On himself the discomfiture did not, apparently, produce much impression. Eminently buoyant in spirits, in the habit of thinking, if not of saying "The greatest of these is *Hope!*" he resumed his studies and experiments. We sigh still, as we think of his failure in obtaining the chair. Had he succeeded, he would probably have been yet alive—by far the brightest ornament of Edinburgh University; sustaining in his single self, the old prestige that university had acquired by the names of Robinson, Playfair, Stewart, Thomas Brown, Leslie, Chalmers, and Wilson; and hundreds flocking from every quarter of the land, to listen to his glowing lips, and to hear the deepest secrets of Nature revealed in the highest eloquence of Art. *Dîs aliter visum est.*

In 1844 he continued working at his laboratory. We visited him in the course of the summer, and found him in "Hades," quietly preparing a paper on Sir Humphrey Davy, for the *North British Review*. He became intimate about this time with David Scott; and we called in his company, and often after, at the painting-room of that pale, spectral-seeming man, with his cold aspect and warm grasp of the hand—with the snow-surrounded volcano of his heart, and his strange, dreamy, unearthly genius. It was interesting to contrast the dull fire of David Scott's inspiration with the brilliant, sparkling flame of Brown's. Scott sat and listened to his lively friend, as Danton used to listen to Camille Desmoulins, "for hours together, and liked nothing so well." In conversation, Samuel Brown seldom said striking or memorable things; but a constant flow of felicitous expression, an apparent mastery of every subject he handled, an elasticity of movement, a distinctness and beauty of enunciation, a blending of ease and earnestness, of philosophy and fun, of the savant, the man of the world, and the poetic thinker, rendered his talk exceedingly charming. It was not like Carlyle's, a strong, rapid, but low-voiced torrent of burning images; nor like De Quincey's, a slow-welling, but perpetual fount of wisdom, gently touched with imagination, and softly rippled with humour; nor like Wilson's, a large, broad, lipful river of eloquent and musical speech; nor like Aird's, a pastoral burn, cheerfully chanting to its hazel shaws, grey rocks, and scattered pine trees—it resembled rather a fine, fluent hill-stream *diverted* into a gentleman's grounds, reflecting shaven lawns, enriching gardens, starred by fallen rose leaves and lily stalks, and yet retaining a portion of the original force and

freedom wherewith it had bickered and brawled amongst its native mountains.

In the close of 1844, appeared, in the glare of great expectation, the paper on Sir Humphrey Davy, and was generally adjudged to be worthy, but scarcely more than worthy of its author's genius. It contained many eloquent passages, and a just, if not a very enthusiastic estimate of Davy. Brown complained bitterly that worthy David Welsh, then editor of the *North British Review*, had sadly mutilated it by leaving out a large passage on Davy's religious opinions, which he thought by far the best in the paper, but which did not square with the editor's views, or with the shibboleth of the periodical. Brown's style in this article, as well as in the others he contributed to the same *Review*, to *Lowe's Magazine*, to the *Eclectic*, *Hogg's*, the *Massachussetts Quarterly*, was peculiar, and was not popular with the mass of readers. It was brilliant, but too laboured, abounding in recondite terms, lengthened and labyrinthine periods, in a sweeping confidence of statement, which bordered on dogmatism, and intermixed with the most serious passages, there was often a vein of smartness approaching flippancy. These were its faults, and lay on the surface—the depth and originality of the thinking, the ingenuity of the illustration, the catholicity of the spirit, and the glossy splendour of the better passages were less obvious, except to more perspicacious eyes. Had he completed the treatise he meditated, upon theology, or enlarged the critical lectures he delivered in Edinburgh into a volume, he must have greatly simplified and strengthened his style, which suited the lecture room rather than the closet, and which told far better when read in his charming tones, and accompanied by the glances of his eye, and that pale fire which shone out of his countenance, as he warmed in his theme, and made his face as it were the face of an angel, than when it appeared in cold, disenchanting print. This was remarkably exemplified in the case of his *Tragedy of Galileo*. He read passages of it to various friends, who were so delighted with his style of reading, that they unconsciously transferred the delight to the thing read, and advised him to publish it. When they saw the same passages in print they could hardly believe the identity. Brown was ill and in bed when he showed us his tragedy; we consequently read it directly in the MS., free from the illusory charm of his matchless elocution, and were considerably disappointed, and did not expect it to be even so good as after its publication we found it.

He wrote *Galileo* while confined to the house with a slight illness, in the summer of 1848, and published it about the close of the next year. While all admitted the beauty of the prologue, and the merit of many of the separate passages, the play was generally thought very imperfect, here and there even poor and silly; and the initiated deemed they saw in it a myth, too transparent, of the story of his own fortunes. Self-reference was a weakness from which he was not always exempt. In a speech delivered at the great Edinburgh Philosophical Soiree in 1846, he appeared, whether truly or not, to many in the audience, while speaking of the failure of Cavendish, to be covertly alluding to himself; and hence the frigid reception he met with, being in fact stopped in the delivery of a magnificent oration, the closing part of which, as we find it printed, resembles Lord Bacon in expansive thought, and Burke in eloquent and imaginative diction. He felt this check keenly, and his friends felt it still more; but enjoyed, in after years, a noble revenge in becoming one of the first favourites as a lecturer on the platform of that very institution.

During this period, while amusing himself with occasional reviews, lectures, etc., he was steadily prosecuting his chemical researches; although he had now left "Hades" for ever, and was residing in Edinburgh. He considered himself, as he often said, "consecrated to pure investigation," and that not literature, or art, or philosophy, but the atomic world was the true field for his genius. In 1849 he married, and took up his abode again in his beloved Portobello. This summer the disease, which ultimately carried him off, began to appear. When we visited him in September, we found him on a bed of languishing, pale, enfeebled, and we left him with a foreboding that we should never see him more. He rallied, however, during the winter, and delivered a brilliant and highly popular course of lectures, to the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution. This spring, a paper of his, in the *Eclectic*, on Gilfillan's *Second Gallery of Literary Portraits*, created against him a rather formidable opposition. He had used some unguarded expressions about "Man's happiness having no connection with his nearness to God," on which our noble friend, late of the *British Banner*, pounced upon him and accused him of heterodoxy. As generally happens in keenly-contested points, the truth lay between the contending parties. That the good alone enjoy true happiness in kind, seems abundantly obvious. But that their happiness is imperfect in degree, nay, that they are exposed to

doubts, fears, and miseries, peculiar to themselves, and often exquisitely agonising, is equally certain. Just as Genius has pleasures with which no stranger can intermeddle, but also pains and disquietudes which its own heart only knoweth, and is truly said to be

> Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
> The love of love,

so with goodness; and the true Christian may be called both the happiest and the most miserable of men. Thus Paul, at one time, is caught up to heaven, and at another cries out "O, wretched man that I am!" Nor does the good man's misery always proceed from his remaining sin, but often simply from his temperament, and his position. God has taken him up to a high mountain, nearer himself, but this elevation has its penalties as well as its pleasures, and the Christian may cry as well as the poet,

> He that ascends to mountain tops, will find
> The highest peaks most-wrapped in clouds and snow.
> He that surpasses, or subdues mankind,
> Must look down on the hate of those below,
> Though high above the sun of glory glow,
> And far beneath the earth and ocean spread,
> Round him are icy rocks, and loudly blow
> Contending tempests on his naked head,
> And thus reward the toils which to these summits led.

Brown's error lay in the unguarded universality of his statement, "that a man's happiness has *nothing* to *do* with his nearness to God;" and the error of the other, in admitting no elements of discord in a man's mind apart from his quarrel with his Maker. This controversy, and some of its consequences, greatly annoyed poor Samuel Brown—the more, as a delicate state of health rendered him unusually sensitive.

The same cause somewhat lessened our pleasure in his visit to Dundee in the spring of 1850—his last, as it turned out, athough "little thought we 'twas his last." The old buoyancy of his spirit was considerably impaired, and his temper had suffered in some measure along with it. Indeed we wonder, on reflection, that it was not acerbated to a far keener degree. The savage onset of some of the Evangelical journals, the failure of Galileo, and the hope deferred of his incomplete and tantalising experiments—all combined with the incurable malady which had begun to prey on his vitals, to crush him to the dust, and nothing but his amazing elasticity and hopefulness, combined with the

fact that he had now a kind and soothing female companion—and that

> No more alone through the world's wilderness,
> Although he trod the paths of high intent
> He journeyed now; no more companionless,
> Where solitude is like despair, he went—

served to support him. He delivered in March the series of lectures he had given during the winter in Edinburgh to a select and enthusiastic audience in Dundee. It was on the History of Chemistry, and included lively sketches of the alchymists, and especially of that most brilliant of philosophical vagabonds—that magnificent impostor—parcel charlatan, parcel maniac, parcel genius—Paracelsus; of the early chymists, Becher and Stâhl, and of the later discoverers in the science, Lavoisier and Dalton. His manner in these lectures was more subdued than on former occasions—his language chaster, and his thought more matured—but the use of notes, to which the physicians had advised him, to keep down excitement, somewhat lessened the effect. In one lecture (on the atomic theory) he threw aside his MS., and gained a high triumph by the clearness, eloquence, energy, and grace with which he expounded a most complex and tenebrious theme. By his rapid manipulations, animated gestures, lively movements, explicit statements, and thrilling tones, he made the dry bones of an abstruse theory to live, and move, and dance in our sight, and extracted poetry as well as life from what in all other hands had been dull, if not disgusting. At the close of the last lecture, which was on Dalton, we recognised again the daring annihilator of the universe, as we had heard him on Friday the 7th of October, 1842. Seldom did we listen to such a peroration. The very pulse of the audience seemed suspended as he represented "*God literally creating the universe every moment.*" There was in all that lecture, too—at least to us, on reflection, there *seems* to have been—a certain pathetic tone, as if he were half conscious that he was to appear in this scene of his many triumphs no more, and as if some supernatural voice was sounding through his soul the words,

> Moriturus hos salutas.

He had probably many more intelligent audiences in other places than in Dundee, but by none was he welcomed with more uniform and unbounded enthusiasm. This he felt deeply, and used to say that he was never so proud of any approbation as of that of an humble mechanic, who had been noticed, as he was describ-

ing the annihilation of the universe, "to get pale and then flush, and then get pale and then flush again."

On, we think, Saturday, March 23, 1850, Brown left Dundee, as it proved, for ever, and, save for one night at Haddington, next September, where we heard him deliver a splendid speech on astronomy, and another night at Portobello in June, 1851, we never met him again. Of his later years we cannot speak, therefore, save by hearsay. They were years of great pain—of much spiritual and mental anxiety—of fitful literary effort—but years during which he seemed, it is said, "drawing nearer and nearer to God," and in which he became permanently what he had been at times in his life before, "a weaned child," submitting cheerfully, and not compulsorily, to the will of his Heavenly Father. Poor fellow! his was a sad fate. Stretched in midtime of his days on a bed of long-continued and hopeless anguish—death alone opening a gloomy gate for his egress—a thousand contemplated literary and scientific schemes surrounding his couch, and crying, "We be idle in the market-place, waiting for *thee* to hire us, for no one else has or can,"—it may seem wonderful that he did not curse the sun, and die, and it was only the divine grace which had stolen in through the rents of pain and disappointment, into his inmost being, which cheered and upheld him. What his ultimate creed as to its precise form was, we know not; but in spirit, and in the main elements of his belief, he became and he died a Christian. In his heart, we trust, he was always sound, although he had wandered far in intellect and imagination from the faith of his boyhood. He came back at last like a wearied sea-bird to his native nest, and slept in Jesus. It was on Saturday, September 20, 1856, that his deeply-exercised soul was dismissed from his sorely-wasted frame. He was in his fortieth year. It was one of the loveliest days of autumn, a day so beautiful that one might have desired to die on it, and breathed the wish, "O! that I had wings like a dove, that I might—along with the departing pinions of this glorious evening—flee away and be at rest," nay, that seemed fit to have been the last evening of earth's last autumn! Little thought we while taking our wonted Saturday afternoon stroll around the Law of Dundee, and enjoying a prospect *he* had often contemplated with delight along with us—the Firth of Tay, stretching from Carnoustie to Newburgh, and shining this day like a sea of glass mingled with fire—the cottages and sands of Broughty Ferry gleaming like silver—the fair valley of the Dighty winding up to meet the Carse of Gowrie

the fields of both being white unto harvest, and spotted here and there with sheaves—the bold Seidlaw summits on the north and north-east, and on the south and west the Lomonds of Fife, shooting up like columns of black marble into the glowing sky; —that sky itself, reposing over the scene like a variegated curtain of red and blue, and purple and yellow, with shafts of sunfire piercing masses of azure and gold, and falling like angelic smiles upon this and the other favoured spot; little thought we while gazing at this exquisite revelation of the loveliness of Nature, that our ancient friend, one of Nature's warmest worshippers and most fearless explorers, had that morning left the material universe behind him, and entered within its veil. The darkness of that night shut at once over Samuel Brown's deathbed, and over the prospects of the Scottish harvest—which became, like his sanguine hopes, a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow; and the rain of the next fortnight might, to a fanciful mind, seem tears for his death, and the wild and furious blasts of the equinox which followed, to be wailings for his early and inestimable loss.

Samuel Brown was certainly the most all-sided, ambidexter, elastic, Alcibiadean man we ever knew. Not the strongest or profoundest of men, he was one of the subtlest, and swiftest. There was a suppleness even in the movements of his body, particularly when performing his lecturing manipulations; you thought almost he was flying, or could do so if he had a mind. Certainly his soul and his lips had wings alike soft and vigorous. Some said, "He gives you the impression of a man who can do anything;" others, looking perhaps to the dispersion and uncertainty of his numerous faculties, and to his want of direct, masculine, Titanic force, whispered,—"He is the cleverest of men, but will never do anything very great." Both have been right,—the first class potentially, the other really; yet, if we grant that he has not effected any revolution in chemistry, or written any literary work worthy of the name, let us remember his painful obstructions, through poverty, non-appreciation, the prejudices of the scientific, and at one time, of the religious classes, his long ill-health, and premature removal. His native faculties were almost universal in their range. He had a comprehensive and keenly penetrating intellect, a brilliant imagination, great command, if not thorough compactness of language, lively wit, gleams of racy humour, wide sympathies, and warm enthusiasm. His culture was rather extensive than profound; and yet, no subject could be introduced on which he

seemed quite at fault. This arose, not so much from his reading as from the happy instinctive art by which he perceived the *relations* of all branches of knowledge to each other, and by knowing one or two intimately, learned to know all the rest well. There was probably, in his mind, a tendency to hasty generalisation, and too often has it been said, he seemed in his chemical researches to twist his facts into accommodation to the "foregone conclusion" of his hypothesis. Great as was the disparity in size and strength, both of body and mind, between him and Professor Wilson, there were certain resemblances, especially in their combination of originality and mimetic power, of sincerity, and of subtlety, of an enthusiasm ever threatening to faint away in the arms of fun, and of a fun ever ready to stretch out the wings of enthusiasm, of an earnestness which was sometimes mistaken for jest, and of a jest which sometimes ended, if it did not begin in earnest. To Goethe, also, he bore a certain resemblance, in multiplicity of powers and accomplishments; and in the manner in which, as he himself says of the German, "he *wrestled* with every branch of human knowledge," and said to it, as Jacob to the angel, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me,"—but was of a far warmer, franker, more genial and more religious temperament.

His versatility did him harm as well as good. In the first place it sometimes threatened to disturb the entireness of his consecration to scientific research. He had not, after all, given his *whole* soul, and mind, and strength to chemistry; and seemed at times haunted with suspicions that it was not his real vocation, although he chased these away, and chained himself to the crucible more firmly than ever. It led him, secondly, to be accused of levity, or insincerity, of *being* the actor, and only putting *on* the prophet and the poet. And he had at times, about him, a motley garb and a light mimetic aspect, but there was a deep enthusiasm behind it. He might, like Pan of old, wear a leopard-skin, which, till ill-health came, he was not able or willing to change; but was it not like Pan's, "powdered with stars?" Had he been a mere mimic, why did he not become an actor or rhetorical preacher, or fashionable novelist, instead of seeking the favours of science, the severest mistress on earth? No! playful as the aurora, he was earnest as the stars!

Whatever may be thought of Brown's success, or even of his capabilities for scientific discovery, let us admit the grandeur of his idea, and the sincerity of the effort he made to realise it. He strove to unite the fidianistic and poetic qualities of the *genuine*

alchymists, with the analytic sagacity, the patient and loyal *subjection* to Nature distinguishing our modern chymists. He thought, that in ancient alchymy, like lightning in vapour, there lurked a deep-piercing and far-pervading truth. He was an ardent searcher into the abyss of Nature; he strove to take her in her *form*. He followed her into those dim points which shoot out like promontories upon the blind ocean of Nothing. He tried to compel speech from her atoms, and make them assert their dignity, beside their overgrown brethren, the stars. He sought to *produce* and expand the unity of the atom-point, till it included in it, all substances and sciences, all worlds and firmaments. Others have aspired to look at Being from above —from the centre—from the great *Throne*; he tried to look at it from below—from the tiny *footstool* of the minutest sub-division of dust.

Whether the path he opened up in this direction shall be successfully followed by others is doubtful. Perhaps it is an attempt too high for man, an attempt to stand behind the great Demiurge at his work. Perhaps, even were the object gained, it might teach us very little spiritual truth. Nature seems, on such subjects, leaning down in despair and murmuring, "It is not in me," like a beautiful female holding to the thirsty traveller an emptied water-urn. We have a more sure word of prophecy in the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and had Brown lived he might have done more good by his testimony to its truth, than by either his researches into science, or by his achievements in literature. We have, in the above remarks, more or less fully spoken of Brown as a writer, lecturer, conversationist, chemist, and man; there is just one other aspect in which we would glance a moment at him ere we close—it is as a correspondent. His letters were delightful outcomes of his mind and genius, free, fluent, easy, varied, funny, riotous even at times; and yet how eloquent in their earnestness, how bold in their speculations, how vivid in their descriptions, how wise in their counsels, and how warm and friendly in their spirit! They were just his conversation in its happiest vein, transferred to note-paper, and in looking at those letters of his we possess, we seem to see at our feet handfuls of a heart, which is now cold in the sepulchre, and we cannot refrain from moistening them with tears.

We linger as we quit the theme, the treatment of which has given us great, though pensive, pleasure. We can hardly, at times, realise the fact that Samuel Brown is dead. We had not

seen him for five years, and then he seemed so full of life. And can it be that that bounding step, that animated eye, those quivering, talking, laughing lips, that bearing so springy, that tongue so eloquent, are now all massed up in a little heap of dust, and for ever crippled and quenched? No! not for ever. "We shall meet again," in some "mild sphere;" let us trust to renew an intimacy that was interrupted, although not destroyed, and to mingle joys rarer than any even of those exquisite pleasures which we derived from friendship, mutual confidence, and an admiration common to both, of Nature, literature, eloquence, and poetry.

THOMAS CARLYLE[1]

THOMAS CARLYLE is the truest Diogenes of these times. Pushed aside by the strong hand of a peculiar genius into a corner, he has thence marked and remarked strangely, angularly, yet truly, upon man and the universe; and to that corner men are now beginning to flock, and the tub is towering into an oracle, and those rugged flame-words are fast becoming law! In the course of his career, his mind has gone through two different phases. In the first, he was little more than the chief interpreter between the German and the English mind; in the second, he has "shot upwards like a pyramid of fire," into a gigantic original. In the first, he was only a distinguished member of the *corps literaire;* in the second, he has started from the ranks, and become a separate and independent principality in the kingdom of letters. We propose to include both those aspects in our notice.

It is a well-known saying of Jean Paul Richter, that, while the French have the dominion of the land, and the English of the sea, to the Germans belongs the empire of the air; they inhabit "cloudland, gorgeous land." Repelled from earth by the flat and dreary prospects of their country, they have taken refuge, now in the abysses of infinity, and now in the abysses of their own strange and speculative intellects. Their poetry, their philosophy, and their religion are all dreams; scientifically constructed, indeed, and gorgeously coloured, but still dreams of the wildest and most mystic character. These peculiarities they have carried, not merely into their romances, epics, and psychological treatises, but into their books of science; their practical works, nay, for aught we know, their very spelling-books are tinged by the same hue, and, perhaps, like the primer of the unfortunate schoolmaster, commemorated by Dr. Johnson, dedicated to the universe! Intermixed with such singularities, which stamp a cloudy character upon the literature of Germany, we need not, at this time of day, dilate upon its conspicuous merits; its depths, its truth, its splendour of imagination; its fine blending of the romantic and the every-day in sentiment, and of grandeur and simplicity in style; its

[1] From *A Third Gallery of Literary Portraits*, 1845.

reverent fearlessness, or its infinite variety. Nor need we enlarge on its principal writers: the strong simplicity of Lessing; the "burning frore" of Bürger; the mellow diffusion of Klopstock; the voluptuous grace and laughing devil of Wieland; Schlegel's aspiring æsthetics; Schiller's high-wrought enthusiasm; Goethe's profound calm, like the light of sculpture, or of snow; and the tumultuous glories of style and image, the warmth of all-embracing charity, the soft, cheerful piety, the boundless fancy, the rambling, riotous energy, which glistened in the eye, reigned in the heart, and revelled on the page, of Jean Paul Richter, that German of the Germans, the most perfect specimen of the powers and peculiarities of that country, which he loved so dearly.

There was a time when, if simple and humble folks like ourselves had talked in this style, we should instantly have been ranked with the Germans themselves, at the foot of the gamut of existence, or rather, on the frontier line which separates the reasonable from the insane. Who has *changé tout cela?* Who has redeemed Germans, and the admirers of the German mind, from the coarse stigmas which had been so long affixed to their names? Who has bridged across the gulf which divided us from the huge continent of their literature? Thomas Carlyle, in his first character as translator and illustrator of the German poetic sages. Not that he did it by his single arm: he was anticipated by Coleridge, and strongly backed, if not preceded by De Quincey, Moir, and others; but, notwithstanding, that German literature is no longer a sealed book, but an open fountain, and that German intellect has been at length fairly appreciated among us, we believe to be mainly owing to his persevering and undaunted efforts. And to this end, his very errors, and exaggerations, and over-estimates, and too obvious emulation of some of the faults of his favourites, have contributed.

Carlyle is a Scottish German: he has grafted on a strong original stock of Scottish earnestness, simplicity, shrewdness, and humour, much of the mysticism, exaggeration, and eccentricity of his adopted country. Even though he had never read a page of the Teutonic grammar, he would have been distinguished as a man of original powers, profound sincerity, and indomitable perseverance. But, having studied and swam, for years together, in the sea of German learning, like a leviathan, he has become a kind of literary monster, German above and Scottish below. The "voice is Jacob's, the hands are Esau's." He is a hybrid. The main tissue of his mind is homely worsted;

but he has dyed it in the strangest colours, derived from Weimar and Bayreuth. Endued by nature with a "strong in-kneed soul," and fitted to be a prose Burns, he has become a British Richter. We have sometimes doubted if he did not *think in German.* Assuredly, he writes in it, uses its idioms, practises its peculiarities of construction; not merely defends, but exemplifies its most daring liberties, and spreads his strong wing over its glaring defects. Although possessed of undoubted originality, he long contented himself with being a gigantic echo-cliff to the varied notes of the German lyre, rendering back its harsh discords, as well as its soft and soul-like sounds. And here lies at once the source of his defects and his merits. One who is unacquainted with German authors, reads Carlyle with the utmost amazement: he is so utterly different from every other writer; his unmeasured sentences; his irregular density; his electric contrasts; his startling asseverations; his endless repetitions; the levity in which his most solemn and serious statements seem to swim; the air of mild, yet decisive scorn, with which he tosses about his thoughts, and characters, and the incidents of his story; the unearthly lustre at which he shows his shifting panoramas; his peculiar, and patched-up dialect; the singular terms and terminations which he uses, in unscrupulous abundance; the far and foreign strain of his allusions and associations; the recondite profundity of his learning; and those bursts of eloquent mysticism which alternate with yet wilder bursts of uncontrollable mirth and fuliginous irony,—reproduce an "alto-getherness" of impression exceedingly startling. But, to one acquainted with German, the mystery is explained. Some, at least, of the peculiarities we have mentioned, are seen to be those of a whole literature, not of a solitary *littérateur;* and he who laughs at Carlyle must be prepared to extend his derision to the sum and substance of German genius. Still we doubt, along with Johnson, Foster, and critics of equal name, if any human understanding has a right to form, whether by affectation, or imitation, or translation, a dialect entirely and ostentatiously singular. A peculiar diction, it is true, has been considered by some one of the immunities of intellectual sovereignty; but he who adopts a uniformly uncommon mode of enunciating his ideas, and, still more, he who transplants his style from a foreign country, does it at his peril, subjects himself to ugly and unjust charges, injures his popularity and influence, and must balance the admiration of the initiated few, with the neglect or disgust of the ignorant or malignant many.

But the defects to which we have referred, being chiefly of style and manner, rarely of substance, and never of spirit, form but a feeble counterpoise to his merits; his "pictorial omnipotence;" his insight into the motives and minds of men; his art of depicting character, often by one lightning word; his sardonic and savage humour; his intense hatred of the false, and love of the true; his bursts of indignant declamation and spiritual pathos; his sympathies with all power which is genuine; all genius which is unaffected, and all virtue which is merciful; his philosophy, at once mystic and homely,—obscure, indeed, in its premises, but most practical in its results; and, above all, that almost religious earnestness, which casts over all his writings the shadow of deep seriousness. We know not what Carlyle's creed may be, but we honour his reverence for the religious principle in man. No one has a deeper sense of the Infinite and of the Eternal; no one has knelt with more solemn awe, under the soul-quelling shadow of the universe, or looked up with a more adoring eye to the "silent immensity and palace of the Eternal, of which our sun is but a porch-lamp." No one has expressed a higher reverence for the "Worship of Sorrow;" and it was "worth a thousand homilies" to hear him, as we were privileged to do, talking for four miles of moonlit road, with his earnest, sagacious voice, of religion, baring, ever and anon, his head, as if in worship, amid the warm, slumberous August air. His intimacy with such men as Irving, Thomas Erskine, and Scott of Woolwich, is itself a voucher for his sincerity. And who that has read his spiritual autobiography in *Sartor*, whether he adopt or understand his conclusions or not, can resist admiration for the intense fervour, and the awful struggle discovered in that immortal search?

A singular change, indeed, has, within these few years, taken place in the religious sentiments of literary men. Five-and-twenty, or even fifteen years ago, what was the spectacle? Literature and faith at variance; the leading review of the country steeped so strongly in a cold materialistic scepticism, that pious men took it up with hesitation, and laid it down with disgust; the great body of *littérateurs* either the fierce and open enemies, or the secret and insidious assailants of revealed truth; and, on the other hand, the religious public loathing that literature of which Bryon and the Edinburgh reviewers were at the head, anathematising its idols, and carefully excluding its style, and spirit, and sentiment, from the most distant contact with their own productions and periodicals. 'Twas a

divorce, or rather exorcisation; the spirit of religion having been cast out of literature, the religious revenged themselves by casting out the spirit of literature from religion. The consequence was, as might have been foreseen, the production of a brilliant but unbaptised science, a splendid but Satanic poetry, a witty but wicked criticism on the one side, and of a feeble, fanatical, illiberal, intolerant, religious literature on the other. Thus, both parties suffered from their separation; but religion most. Such *was* the case: it is very different now. Advances towards a reconciliation have been made. Men of letters, in general, have dropped their animosities to religion, and, if they have not all yet given in their adherence to any particular form of Christianity, they are seeking truth, and have turned their faces in the proper direction. The reviews now, without exception, speak of religion with affection or respect. That sneering, cold-blooded, Gibbonic style, once the rage, has withered out of our literature. Meanwhile, we admit, that the religious community is not reciprocating good understanding so fully as we would wish. There is still too much of jealousy and fear in the aspect with which they regard the literature and science of the day. Why should it be so? Why should two powers, so similar, not interchange amicable offices? Why should two chords, placed so near in the Æolian harp of creation, not sound in harmony? Why should two sunbeams, both derived from the same bright eternal source, not mingle their radiance?

But to return to Carlyle: the first light in which he appeared before the public, was as a translator. He is more faithful in his versions than Coleridge; but inferior in the resources of style, and in that irrepressible originality which was ever sparkling out from the poet, communicating new charms to the beautiful, new terrors to the dreadful, and adding graces which his author never gave. If Coleridge must be confessed to have plagiarised from the German, it ought not to be forgotten that he returned what he stole with interest, and has, in translating, improved, beautified, and filled up the ideal of Schiller.

Besides *Wilhelm Meister* (a work which, by the way, contains, according to Carlyle and Edward Irving, the best character of Christ ever written), he has published specimens of the German novels, accompanied by critical notices, which, though inferior to his after works in power and peculiarity, are quite equal, we think, to anything he has written, in subtlety of discrimination, and superior in simplicity and idiomatic beauty of language. Carlyle's style was then not so deeply tinged with its idiosyn-

cratic qualities, and in the *mare magnum* of Teutonic literature he had only as yet dipped his shoe. He was then obliged to conform more to the tastes and understandings of his readers. Ever since, although his thinking has been getting more independent and profound, and his eloquence more earnest and overpowering, his diction has certainly not improved.

His "Miscellanies," recently collected, appeared principally in the *Edinburgh, Foreign,* and *Foreign Quarterly Reviews.* Though full of faults, and all a-blaze with the splendid sins of their author's diction, they are nevertheless masterpieces of wit and wisdom, of strength and brilliance; the crushed essence of thought is in them, and the sparkling foam of fancy; and in their truthfulness, enthusiasm, and barbaric vigour, they leave on us the impression of something vast, abysmal, obscure, and formidable. Indeed, were a mountain to speak, or, to use his own bold language, "were the rocks of the sea to burst silence, and to tell what they had been thinking on from eternity," we imagine they would speak in some such rugged and prodigious style. Amid his many papers in *The Edinburgh,* we prefer his first on "Jean Paul," dear, dreaming, delirious Jean Paul, who used to write in the same poor apartment where his mother and sisters cooked, and his pigeons cooed, and they all huddled; who was seldom seen on the street without a flower on his breast; who, when once he visited Schiller, dressed fantastically in green, complained, poor fellow, that he frowned him off from his brow, "as from a precipice;" who taught wisdom after the maddest fashion yet known among men,—now recreating under the "cranium of a giantess," and now selecting from the "papers of the devil," —but whose works are at once the richest and the deepest in the German language, glittering above like the spires of Golconda, and concealing below treasures sumless as the mines of Peru. The article excited at the time (1826) a sensation. Not merely was it a splendid piece of writing, but it was the first which fairly committed the *Review* in favour of that German taste and genius which it had been reviling from its commencement; the first thunderbolt to the old regime of criticism, and the first introduction to the English public of the name and character and writings of one of the most extraordinary men which an age, fertile in real and in pretended prodigies, has hitherto produced.

Next to this we love his panegyric on Burns, written as he sojourned in the neighbourhood of that district which derives its glory and its shame from the memory of the great poet. We

recalled it keenly to memory as, in his own company, we gazed with deep emotion upon Burns's house in Dumfries,—the scene of the dread tragedy which was transacted there while the still gold of an autumnal sunset was gilding its humble roof, and touching the window through which had so often rolled and glowed the ardent eye of the poet—the poet of whom Scotia, while "pale" with grief at his errors, is proud to ecstasy as she repairs to his honoured grave—whose tongue was only a produced heart, and whose heart loved all that he saw, from the sun to the sickle which he grasped in his hot hand; from the star of his Mary to the mousie running from his ploughshare—whose soul, by the side of a sounding wood, "rose to Him that walketh on the wings of the wind"—who, "walking in glory and joy behind his plough upon the mountain side," generally drew that joy from nature, and that glory from song,—whose dust, in its tomb, turns and shivers at the name "drunkard," which mean, or malignant, or prejudiced, or misinformed men have vainly sought to inscribe upon it—over whose follies and sins, all of them occasional, and none habitual or inveterate, let a mantle be drawn, warm as his own heart, bright as his own genius, and ample as his own understanding! Carlyle, like Wilson, always rises above himself when he speaks of Burns. And the secret is, that both see and love the man, as well as admire the poet. Altogether, indeed, Burns has been fortunate in his critics, although Jeffrey did try to trip up his heels, and Wordsworth made but a clumsy attempt to break his fall, forgetting that such an attempt was needless, for, falling at the plough, where could he light but on the fresh, soft, strong earth, and how could he rise but in the attitude of an Antæus?

His paper on the "Signs of the Times," contains an exposition of the difference between a mechanical and a dynamical age—ingenious, but hardly just. We wonder that a man of Carlyle's calibre can chime in with the cant against mechanism, raised by "mechanical salt butter rogues." Men, it is true, nowadays, use more machines than they did, but are they therefore more machines themselves? Was James Watt an automaton? Has the Press become less an object of wonder or fear since it was worked by steam? Imagination, even, and mechanism are good friends. How sublime the stoppage of a mail as the index of rebellion! Luther's Bible was printed by a machine. The organ, as it heaves up earth's only fit reply to the thunder, is but a machine. A mechanical age! What do its steam carriages

convey? Is it not newspapers, magazines, reviews, poems? Are they not in this way the conductors of the fire of intellect and passion? Is not mechanism just the short-hand of poetry? Thomas Carlyle fears that the brood hen will yet be superseded! We deem this fear superfluous, and for our parts, never expect to sup on steam chickens, or breakfast on steam-laid eggs.

His last paper in *The Edinburgh* (save one on Ebenezer Elliott) was entitled "Characteristics," and of its author at least was eminently characteristic. It might, in fact, be proposed as a *Pons Asinorum* to all those who presume to approach the study of this remarkable man. It adds all the peculiarities of his philosophy to all the peculiarities of his style, and the result is a bit of pure unmixed Carlylism, which many of his admirers dote on as a fragment of heaven-born philosophy, and his detractors defame as a slice of chaos, but which we value principally as a revelation of the man. Whatever were its merits, it proved too strong and mystic food for the ordinary readers of *The Edinburgh*, and led, we have heard, to his withdrawal from its arena.

At an earlier date than this appeared his *Life of Schiller*, a stately, rotund, and eloquent composition, of which its author is said now to be a little ashamed. We can see no more reason for this than for the preference which he since habitually gives to Goethe above the author of *The Robbers*.

We retain, too, a lively memory of a paper on Diderot, embodying a severe and masterly dissection of that brilliant charlatan—of another, containing a *con amore* account of Mirabeau—of various articles on Goethe—and of a paper on Sir Walter Scott, where we find his familiar features shown us in a new and strange light, as if in the gleam of an apothecary's evening window.

To *Fraser's Magazine* he has contributed much—among other things, a review of Croker's *Boswell*, *The Diamond Necklace*, etc. In the print of the "Fraserians," his face was not forgotten, though, amid the boisterous revelry, and waggish worldly countenances around, it seemed woefully out of place. We asked ourselves as we gazed, what business has that still, earnest, spiritual face there? And we put the same query still more strongly about two others included in the same scene—Coleridge, with his great gray misty eyes, like an embodied abstraction; and Edward Irving, with his black locks tangled in gorgonic confusion, and in his eye the glare of insanity contending with the fire of coming death!

In *Fraser* also (much to the annoyance of a sapient nobleman, who asked the publisher when that "stupid series of articles by the tailor were to be done?") appeared the first draught of *Sartor Resartus*. We have only of late become acquainted with this singular production, but few books have ever moved us more. It turned up our whole soul like a tempest. It reminded us of nothing so much as of Bunyan's *Autobiography*. With a like dreadful earnestness does Carlyle describe his pilgrimage from the "Everlasting No" of darkness and defiance—his City of Destruction—on to that final Beulah belief, that "Blessedness is better than happiness," which he calls the "Everlasting Yea," and on which, as on a pillow, he seems disposed to rest his head against eternity. In writing it, he has written, not his own life alone, but the spiritual history of many thinking and sincere men of the time. Whoever has struggled with doubts and difficulties almost to strangling—whoever has tossed for nights upon his pillow, and in helpless wretchedness cried out with shrieks of agony to the God of heaven—whoever has covered with his cloak a Gehenna of bitter disappointment and misery, and walked out, nevertheless, firm, and calm, and silent, among his fellow-men—whoever has mourned for "all the oppressions which are done under the sun," and been "mad for the sight of his eyes that he did see"—whoever has bowed down at night upon his pillow, in the belief that he was the most wretched and God-forsaken of mortal men—whoever has felt all the "wanderer in his soul," and a sense of the deepest solitude, even when mingling in the business and the crowded thoroughfares of his kind—whoever at one time has leaned over the precipices of Mount Danger, and at another adventured a step or two on that dreary path of destruction, "which led to a wide field full of dark mountains, where he stumbled and fell, and rose no more;" and at a third, walked a gloom amid the glooms of the valley and the shadow of death—whoever has at last attained, not peace, not happiness, not assurance, but child-like submission, child-like faith, and meek-eyed "blessedness"—let him approach, and study, and press to his breast, and carry to his bed, and bedew with his tears, *Sartor Resartus*, and bless the while its brave and true-hearted author. But whoever has not had a portion of this experience, let him pass on—the book has nothing to say to him, and he has nothing to do with the book. It is above him like a star—it is apart from him like a spirit. Let him laugh at it if he will—abuse it if he will—call it German trash, transcendental Neologism, if he will—only

let him not read it. Its sweet and solemn "Evangel"—its deep pathos—its earnestness—its trenchant and terrible anatomy of not the least singular or least noble of human hearts—its individual passages and pictures, unsurpassed in power and grandeur, as that of the Night Thoughts of Teufelsdrockh, when he sat in his high attic, "alone with the stars" the description of his appearance on the North Cape, "behind him all Europe and Asia fast asleep, and before him the silent immensity and palace of the eternal, to which our sun is but a porch lamp"—the discovery to him of the glories of Nature, as he felt for the "first time that she was his mother and divine" —his wanderings in vain effort to "escape from his own shadow" —the picture of the power and mystery of symbols—with all this, what has he, the reader of *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *The New Monthly* to do? Let him go, however, and chuckle over the sketch of the "worst of all possible universities," Edinburgh, as Carlyle found it, and its picture of the two sects,—of dandies and poor Irish slaves. *These* he may comprehend and enjoy, but the other!—

We like his *Lectures on Heroes and Hero-Worship*, principally as a specimen of his conversational powers. They are just his recorded talk—the eloquent droppings of his mind. To them we could refer all who have never met him, and who would wish to form some idea of his conversation—the richest and strongest essence we ever took in withal. They were delivered to a very select audience, including six bishops, many clergymen, fashionable ladies, and the *élite* of the literature of London. The lecturer appeared at first somewhat timid, irresolute, bowed down, whether before the weight of the subject, or the imposing aspect of the audience, but soon recovered his self-possession; gradually, in the fine old Puritanic phrase, became "enlarged;" and was enabled, in firm, manly, flowing, almost warbling accents, to utter the truth and the feeling which were in him. The lectures themselves contain many "strange matters." How he heats the old mythologies, and expiscates the meaning which lay within their cloudy wrappages! How he paints "Canopus shining down upon the wild Ishmaelitish man, with its blue spiritual brightness, like an eye from the depths of immensity!" What desperate battle he does for that "deep-hearted son of the wilderness, with the black, beaming eyes," Mahomet, till you say with Charles Lamb, who, after listening to a long harangue in defence of him of Mecca, by an enthusiastic youth, asked as they were taking their hats to leave the

house, "Where have you put your turban?" And how thoroughly does he sympathise with the severe and saturnine graces of Dante,—with Shakspere's kind-hearted laughter,—with Johnson's rugged honesty,—with Rousseau's fantastic earnestness,—with Napoleon's apocalyptic revelation of the power and mystery of force—and above all, with Cromwell's iron-handed and robust unity of purpose. The great moral fault of the book is, that he idolises energy and earnestness in themselves, and apart from the motives in which they move, and the ends to which they point.

Chartism and *Past and Present* are valuable as revealing many of the darker symptoms of our political and social disease. The remedy is nowhere to be found within them. It is characteristic of Carlyle, that he not unfrequently tantalises his reader by glimpses, rather than satisfies him by distinct masses of thought. Does a difficulty occur? He shows every ordinary mode of solution to be false, but does not supply the true. Is a character to be described? He often, after darting scorn upon all common conceptions of it, leaves it to shift for itself, or only indicates his opinion. Why is this? Is he like Horne Tooke, who used to start puzzling questions at the Sunday meetings of his friends, and deferred their solution, that he might have the pleasure of keeping them in suspense till a week had revolved? Or is it, that he is only endowed with an energy of destruction, and is rather a tornado to overturn, than an architect to build? One message, at any rate, has been given him above all other men to deliver,—that of human ignorance. He is the prophet at once of the power and the weakness, the greatness and the littleness of man. Fixing his foot firmly on the extreme limit of what man *kens* and *cans*, he tells him in one oracular voice what he kens and what he kens not, nor ever in this world shall ken—what he cans and what he cans not, nor ever on this side eternity can. "Know thyself! thyself thou wilt never know —know thy work, which were more to the purpose." "Know God! it will take thee, I suspect, to eternity to learn even the rudiments of this awful knowledge; more to the point to know what God bids thee do, and to do it." "Know Nature! never! thou mayest babble about electricity, for instance, but what is it? whence comes it? whither goes it? Thou canst not tell; but thou canst tell how to elevate thy lightning rod, and how to make the terrible thing, though all the while it remain a mystery to thee, to trickle along it tamely, as a woman's tear." Thus we paraphrase the avowed purpose of this prophet of the

"Age of Tools." It is, as with the precision and insight of a visitor from another world, to declare the business of man's life, and to settle the boundaries of man's understanding.

The French Revolution, a History, as his largest, and in every way his greatest work, we have reserved for a more lengthened criticism. We must premise that our remarks concern it merely as a literary production, not as a historical work. We are not qualified to decide as to the accuracy of its matter-of-fact details. But we flatter ourselves that we are not unable to appreciate its merit, as the moralising of a great and peculiar mind on the most singular series of transactions that earth ever saw—the most enormous "world-whirlpool" which ever boiled, and raved, and cast its bloody spray far up into the black hollow of night! The first thing that struck us about it, was the strangeness of the titles of its chapters. All of them are entitled, not, as in the common way, from the principal event recorded therein, but from some one word or phrase in the beginning, middle, or end, which has hit the writer's fancy, and given him an outlet for his peculiar sarcasm, such as "Astræa Redux;" "Astræa Redux without cash;" "Flame Picture;" "Danton no weakness;" "Go down to." If this be affectation, thought we, it is a new and a very clever kind of it. The best way of seeing the force and fun of these titles, is by reading them by themselves right down—no shrinking—from "Louis the Well-beloved" to "Vendemiare." We remember a heroic youth, who stated his intention of reading all Gibbon's notes apart from the text, for the sake of the learning crushed and crammed into them. The task of reading Carlyle's titles were easier, and far more amusing. Our next subject of wonder was the style, which reads as though the writer had sat down deliberately to caricature his former works. It could only be adequately described by itself. Fuliginous-flaming, prose-poetic, mock-heroic-earnest, Germanic-Scotch, colloquial-chaotic, satiric-serious, luminous-obscure—all these epithets are true, and equally true of it, and of it alone. We read part of it to a person the other day, who, at every other sentence, cried out, "The man's mad." We read on, till we shook him soul and body by its power. We noticed, too, concerning this same strange style, that it is a style now, at all events, necessary to the man's mind, and no more affected than Jean Paul's, Johnson's, and Milton's, and like theirs may be called the "hurley-burley nonsense of a giant, not to be used with impunity by any one less"—that it is a style, indeed, defying

imitation, except in its glaring defects—and that on all great occasions it rises above its faults, throws them off as men do garments in a mortal struggle, and reaches a certain purity, and displays a naked nerve, and produces a rugged music. We observed, too, that it is a style in intense keeping with the subject. Deep calleth unto deep. Demogorgon paints chaos. A turbid theme requires a turbid style. To write the story of the French Revolution demanded a pen of a cloudy and colossal character, which should despise petty beauties, and lay iron grasp on the more prominent points. How would the whirling movements, the giddy and dream-like mutations, the gigantic virtues, and the black atrocities of intoxicated France bear to be represented in neat and classical language, in measured and balanced periods, in the style of a state paper, or in the fripperies of brilliant antithesis? Who would like to see the dying gladiator or the Laocoon clothed in the mode of the day? No! show us them naked, or if ornaments be added, let them be severe and stony, in keeping with the terrible original. So Carlyle's style, from its very faults, its mistiness, its repetitions, its savage boldness, its wild humour blent with yet wilder pathos, its encircling air of ridicule, its startling abruptness, itself a revolution, is fitted better than the simple style of Scott, or the brilliant invective of Burke, or the unhealthy heat and laboured splendour of Hazlitt, to mirror in its unequal but broad surface, the scenery and circumstances of the wondrous era. Its great sin as a narrative is, that it presumes too much on the reader's previous acquaintance with the details of the period, and deals more in glancing allusion than in direct statement. We noticed, too, and felt its enthralling interest. Once you are accustomed to the manner and style, you will find no historian who casts stronger ligaments of interest around you. We have heard an instance of this. Sir William Hamilton got hold of the book about three in the afternoon. He began to read, and could not lay it aside till four in the morning—thirteen hours at a stretch. We know nothing like this since the story of Sir Joshua Reynolds reading the *Life of Savage* in a country inn, standing till his arm was stiff, cold, and glued to the mantel-piece. Like the suction of a whirlpool, the book draws you in, whether you will or no. Its very faults, like scars on the face of a warrior, contribute to rivet your attention. And even to those familiar with the events of the period, everything seems new in the glare of Carlyle's savage genius. We noticed, too, its epic character. It has been well called the epic poem, rather than the *History of the*

Revolution. The author, ere writing it, seems to have read over, not Thucydides, but Homer, and truly the old Homeric fire burns in its every chapter. Sometimes it is mock-heroic rather than epic, and reminds us more of Fielding's introductory chapters, or the better parts of Ossian, than of Melesigenes. But its spirit is epic, its figures are epic, its epithets are epic, and above all, its repetitions are quite in Homer's way. The description of Louis's flight is a fine episode, kindling in parts into highest poetry, as when he says, "O Louis, this all around thee is the great slumbering earth, and overhead the great watchful Heaven. But right ahead, the great north-east sends up evermore his gray brindled dawn; from dewy branch, birds here and there, with short deep warble, salute the coming sun. Stars fade out, and galaxies, street lamps in the city of God. The universe, O my brother, is flinging wide its portals for the levee of the great high king." And though the age of epics be gone, yet if histories like those of Carlyle take their place, we can have no reason to mourn their departure. Like Chapman, he "speaks out loud and bold." He tramples upon petty beauties, and the fear of petty blemishes, and the shame of leaving a sentence unpolished, and the pride of rounding off a period, and all the miserable millineries of an artificial style. His strength, as that of every genuine epic poet should, does not lie in the elegance and polish of particular parts, so much as in the grand general result and merit of the whole. One bad or middling line is unpardonable in a sonnet or epigram, but a hundred such cannot hurt the effect of a lengthened poem. So Carlyle, leaving minuteness of finish to the Lilliputians of literature—to the authors of single sermons, short articles, etc. —contents himself with throwing forth from his "fire-bosom" a gigantic *tout ensemble.* Undoubtedly, were he to combine delicacy with energy of execution, Titanic power with Pygmæan polish, he were a far more perfect and popular writer. But how few have exhibited an instance of such a combination. Not Shakspere, not Eschylus, hardly Milton—perhaps, if we except Dante and Goethe, not one. Few great writers are fine writers (understanding this in the sense of finished), and few fine writers are great. They who have much to say care less for the mode of saying it, and though the most perfect specimens of writing, after all, occur in their pages, they occur through a sort of chance—they are there because their writers could not help it, not because they wished to be especially fine. Jeremy Taylor was not a fine writer, nor Burke, nor is Wilson; yet,

who would prefer to them, with all their mannerism and carelessness, the writings of Blair or Alison, though they be, in point of style, almost faultless monsters? We, for our part, prefer soul to style, and like rough diamonds far better than polished pebbles. We noticed, again, its tone of strange charity. This principle, even while passing through the bloody chaos and monster-gallery of the worst period of the Revolution, never forsakes him. Is the brand-mark of universal reprobation on any brow? That brow, be sure, he stoops down and kisses with a pitying and pardoning affection. For Danton he has an enthusiastic admiration; for Robespierre a slight but marked penchant; and even for Marat, a lurking tenderness. The world generally has set these men down for monsters, or, in the mildest point of view, madmen, and classed them in that corner of the moral museum railed in for *lusus naturae*. But here comes Thomas Carlyle to this abhorred and shunned corner, snuffing the tainted air, wondering at the singular formations, nay, reclaiming them to the catalogue of men. "Robespierre's poor landlord, the cabinet-maker in the Rue St. Honoré, loved him; his brother died for him. May God be merciful to him and to us!" Now, for our part, we like this spirit, were it for nothing but its rarity; and, like Carlyle, we are no believers in monstrous births. We believe that millions of respectable and selfish men of the world have in them the elements of Marats, Robespierres, and Neros. We hear every day instances of petty tyranny, and minute and malignant cruelty, which, to our mind, let down a fiercer and farther light into the blackness of our depraved nature than a myriad of massacres done, not in cold, but in boiling blood, amid the heavings of a moral earthquake, and under the canopy of revolutionary night. The longer we live, the less we need extreme cases, to convince us that the heart is desperately wicked, and that he who has sounded the grave, the ocean, the darkest mountain tarn, cannot fathom the bottomless blackness of his own heart. We do not then join with Carlyle's Edinburgh reviewer, in his grave rebuke of his charity; yet, perhaps, it is carried too far sometimes. Perhaps it is expressed in a tone of too much levity, and the *sang froid* he assumes is rather Satanic; perhaps for a mere man too lofty a point of view is assumed; perhaps a hatred of cant, profound as the profound thing itself (cant is abysmal) has seduced him into a minor cantilena of his own. We have amused ourselves in imagining how he would treat some of the Roman emperors; and have fancied him swallowing Nero,

after a considerable gulp; saying civil things of Heliogabalus; and finding a revelation on the tip of Domitian's bodkin, wherewith he amused his *ennui* in transfixing flies! Seriously, however, we like this spirit. It reminds us, not unpleasantly, of Charles Lamb, who, we are told, never thoroughly loved a man till he had been thrown at his door, singed and blackened by the fire of general contempt and execration. This spirit, we cannot help thinking, contrasts well with that of Dr. Croly. In talking of the actors in the French Revolution, he often uses language unworthy of a Christian minister. He speaks of them uniformly in a tone of the most savage and truculent fury. This in a contemporary like Burke, was excusable; but now that the men are dead, and have received their verdict from the lips of Eternal Justice, why do more than add a solemn "Amen" to the sentence, whatever it be, which has fixed their destiny? It may be too much in Carlyle to breathe a sigh over a dead ruffian, who died amid the roar of liberated France, and the curses of mothers and children; but of two extremes it is decidedly the better.

We noticed, too, that his prime favourites, next to Charlotte Corday and Madame Roland, whom every body admires, are Mirabeau and Danton. His style rises whenever he speaks of these gigantic men. Nor do we wonder, for surely they tower titanically above all the actors in that scene of "cinders and blood." Strong and loud must be the steps, which, like theirs, become audible amid an earthquake. Others appear passive in the scene, whirled about like straws in the vortex. But revolution is their element. They alone can ride upon its wild waters; no vulgar democrats are they; no petty, peddling retail revolutionists; they resemble rather the Pandemonian Princes, or the dethroned giants of the Saturnian reign, to whom Jupiter was but a beardless boy. Black as Erebus, ugly as sin, large, lowering, with tones of thunder, and looks of fire, seared consciences, and death-defying, yet death-expecting attitude, they stand up, filling the eye and the imagination, and their huge forms are never lost sight of for a moment, during the wildest turmoil and blackest tempest of the revolution: civilians both, armed only with the bayonets of their eyes, and the artillery of their eloquence, and therefore to us more interesting than the little bustling, bloody Toulon officer, the "name of whom is Napoleon Buonaparte." Of the two, Carlyle prefers Mirabeau; we, with deference, Danton. Of course, the former filled a much larger space, and played a far more conspicuous part on the stage of

history; but we speak of native manhood and capacity; of what Danton was and might have become. Mirabeau was a count, and had not a little of the old noblesse strut; Danton was of "good farmer people," dug out of the fresh ground, "of the earth earthy." Mirabeau was intensely theatrical, an actor, fond of splendid clap-traps, and too conscious of himself; Danton was an earnest, simple barbarian, a modern Maximin, or Milo, and spoke and acted from the fulness of an honest, though miserably mistaken zeal; Mirabeau was movable by a kiss from female majesty; Danton was a tower, with this inscription, "No weakness:" once, indeed, he accepted a sop from the government, and then "walked on his own way." Mirabeau was a plagiarist, a sublime thief, submitted to be examined, primed, loaded by others; Danton's burning sentences were all his own; no friend could have lent them, any more than a quarry an aerolite. Mirabeau is a splendid charlatan; Danton a noble savage. Both spoke in short and striking sentences; but while Mirabeau's were spirit-stirring and electric, Danton's were terribly sublime. The one on his death-bed, pointing to the sun, could say, "If he be not God, he is his cousin-german," the other, "The coalesced kings threaten us: we hurl at them, in gage of battle, the head of a king." Mirabeau was perpetually protruding himself upon public notice. Danton was a "large nature that could rest;" he sat silent in his place on the mountain for weeks, till a case of real emergency occurred, till his country was in danger; and then rose up, uttered from his lion throat a few strong words, and sat down again; his country safe, himself silent as before. The vices of both, like their powers, were gigantic. Those of Mirabeau were profligacy and vanity, which marked him out amid the vainest and most dissolute nation on the face of the earth. Danton's were a lust for gold, and an indifference to blood. Mirabeau died of the consequences of his dissipation. Danton had a grander death, and never did the guillotine shear off a stronger head. Is it fanciful to call the one the Byron, and the other the Burns of the period?

We cannot get out of our mind that last visit of Danton to his native village. We see him visiting, for the last time, Arcis sur Aube, the spot where his mother bore him, "for he, too, had a mother, and lay warm in his cradle like the rest of us"—where his vast form grew up, and the wild dream of liberty first crossed his daring soul. We see him straying along his native stream, in "haunts which knew him when a boy;" leaning down his