

spirit rebelled against that authority to which everything else in France bowed down. He had the spirit to tell Louis XIV. firmly, and even rudely, that his Majesty knew nothing about poetry, and admired verses which were detestable. What was there in Addison's position that could induce the satirist, whose stern and fastidious temper had been the dread of two generations, to turn sycophant for the first and last time? Nor was Boileau's contempt of modern Latin either injudicious or peevish. He thought, indeed, that no poem of the first order would ever be written in a dead language. And did he think amiss? Has not the experience of centuries confirmed his opinion? Boileau also thought it probable that, in the best modern Latin, a writer of the Augustan age would have detected ludicrous improprieties. And who can think otherwise? What modern scholar can honestly declare that he sees the smallest

Difficulty of impurity in the style of attaining Livy? Yet is it not certain purity of style. that, in the style of Livy, Pollio, whose taste had been formed on the banks of the Tiber, detected the inelegant idiom of the Po? Has any modern scholar understood Latin better than Frederic the Great understood French? Yet is it not notorious that Frederic the Great, after reading, speaking, writing French, and nothing but French, during more than half a century—after unlearning his mother tongue in order to learn French, after living familiarly during many years with French associates—could not, to the last, compose in French, without imminent risk of committing some mistake which would have moved a smile in the literary circles of Paris? Do we believe that Erasmus and Fracastorius wrote Latin as well as Dr. Robertson and Sir Walter Scott wrote English? And are there not in the Dissertation on India (the last of Dr. Robertson's works), in Waverley, in Marmion, Scotticisms at which a London apprentice would laugh? But does it follow, because we think thus, that we can find nothing to admire in the noble alcaics of Gray, or in the playful elegiacs of Vincent Bourne? Surely not. Nor was Boileau so ignorant

Boileau's appreciation of good modern Latin. or tasteless as to be incapable of appreciating good modern Latin. In the very letter to which John-

son alludes, Boileau says—"Ne croyez pas pourtant que je veuille par là blâmer les vers Latins que vous m'avez envoyés

d'un de vos illustres académiciens. Je les ai trouvés fort beaux, et dignes de Vida et de Sannazar, mais non pas d'Horace et de Virgile." Several poems, in modern Latin, have been praised by Boileau quite as liberally as it was his habit to praise anything. He says, for example, of the Père Fraguier's epigrams, that Catullus seems to have come to life again. But the best proof that Boileau did not feel the undiscerning contempt for modern Latin verses which has been imputed to him, is, that he wrote and published Latin verses in several metres. Indeed it happens, curiously enough, that the most severe censure ever pronounced by him on modern Latin is conveyed in Latin hexameters. We allude to the fragment which begins—

"Quid numeris iterum me balbutire Latinis,  
Longe Alpes citra natum de patre Sicambro,  
Musa, jubes?"

For these reasons we feel assured that the praise which Boileau bestowed on the *Machinæ Gesticulantes* and the *Gerano-Pygmæomachia* was sincere. He certainly opened himself to Addison with a freedom which was a sure indication of esteem. Literature was the chief subject of conversation. The old man talked on his favourite theme much and well; indeed, as his young hearer thought, incomparably well. Boileau had undoubtedly some of the qualities of a great critic. He wanted imagination; but he had strong sense. His literary code was formed on narrow principles; but in applying it he showed great judgment and penetration. In mere style, abstracted from the ideas of which style is the garb, his taste was excellent. He was well acquainted with the great Greek writers; and, though unable fully to appreciate their creative genius, admired the majestic simplicity of their manner, and had learned from them to despise bombast and tinsel. It is easy, we think, to discover, in the *Spectator* and the *Guardian*, traces of the influence, in part salutary and in part pernicious, which the mind of Boileau had on the mind of Addison.

While Addison was at Paris an event took place which made that capital a disagreeable residence for an Englishman and a Whig. Philip of Anjou becomes King Charles, second of the name, King of Spain, died, and bequeathed his dominions to Philip, Duke of Anjou, a younger son of the Dauphin. The King of France, in direct violation of

His merits as a critic.



his engagements both with Great Britain and with the States-General, accepted the bequest on behalf of his grandson. The house of Bourbon was at the summit of human grandeur. England had been outwitted, and found herself in a situation at once degrading and perilous. The people of France, not presaging the calamities by which they were destined to expiate the perfidy of their sovereign, went mad with pride and delight. Every man looked as if a great estate had just been left him. "The French conversation," said Addison, "begins to grow insupportable; that which was before the vainest nation in the world is now worse than ever." Sick of the arrogant exultation of the Parisians, and probably foreseeing that the peace between France and England could not be of long duration, he set off for Italy.

In December, 1700,\* he embarked at Marseilles. As he glided along the

Addison's Ligurian coast he was voyaged on the delighted by the sight of Mediterranean myrtles and olive-trees, which retained their verdure under the winter solstice. Soon, however, he encountered one of the black storms of the Mediterranean. The captain of the ship gave up all for lost, and confessed himself to a capuchin who happened to be on board. The English heretic, in the meantime, fortified himself against the terrors of death with devotions of a very different kind. How strong an impression this perilous voyage made on him, appears from the ode—"How are thy servants blest, O Lord!" which was long after published in the *Spectator*. After some days of discomfort and danger Addison was glad to land at Savona, and to make his way, over mountains where no road had yet been hewn out by art, to the city of Genoa.

At Genoa, still ruled by her own Doge, and by the nobles whose names were inscribed on her Book of Gold, Addison made a short stay. He admired the narrow streets overhung by long lines of towering palaces, the walls rich with frescoes, the gorgeous temple of the Annunciation, and the tapestries whereon were recorded the long glories of the house of Doria. Thence he hastened to Milan,

In Venice; Addison made a first idea of "Cato." He admired the narrow streets overhung by long lines of towering palaces, the walls rich with frescoes, the gorgeous temple of the Annunciation, and the tapestries whereon were recorded the long glories of the house of Doria. Thence he hastened to Milan,

\* It is strange that Addison should, in the first line of his travels, have misdated his departure from Marseilles by a whole year, and still more strange that this slip of the pen, which throws the whole narrative into inextricable confusion, should have been repeated in a succession of editions, and never detected by Tickell or by Hurd.

where he contemplated the Gothic magnificence of the cathedral with more wonder than pleasure. He passed Lake Benacus while a gale was blowing, and saw the waves raging as they raged when Virgil looked upon them. At Venice, then the gayest spot in Europe, the traveller spent the Carnival, the gayest season of the year, in the midst of masques, dances, and serenades. Here he was at once diverted and provoked by the absurd dramatic pieces which then disgraced the Italian stage. To one of those pieces, however, he was indebted for a valuable hint. He was present when a ridiculous play on the death of Cato was performed. Cato, it seems, was in love with a daughter of Scipio. The lady had given her heart to Cæsar. The rejected lover determined to destroy himself. He appeared seated in his library, a dagger in his hand, a Plutarch and a Tasso before him; and in this position he pronounced a soliloquy before he struck the blow. We are surprised that so remarkable a circumstance as this should have escaped the notice of all Addison's biographers. There cannot, we conceive, be the smallest doubt that this scene, in spite of its absurdities and anachronisms, struck the traveller's imagination, and suggested to him the thought of bringing Cato on the English stage. It is well known that about this time he began his tragedy, and that he finished the first four acts before he returned to England.

On his way from Venice to Rome he was drawn some miles out of the beaten road by a wish to see the smallest independent state in Europe. On a rock where the snow still lay, though the Italian spring was now far advanced, was perched the little fortress of San Marino. The roads which led to the secluded town were so bad that few travellers had ever visited it, and none had ever published an account of it. Addison could not suppress a good-natured smile at the simple manners and institutions of this singular community. But he observed, with the exultation of a Whig, that the rude mountain tract which formed the territory of the republic, swarmed with an honest, healthy, and contented peasantry; while the rich plain which surrounded the metropolis of civil and spiritual tyranny was scarcely less desolate than the uncleared wilds of America.

At Rome, Addison remained on his first visit only long enough to catch a glimpse



of St. Peter's and of the Pantheon. His haste is the more extraordinary because the Holy Week was close at hand. He has given no hint which can enable us to pronounce why he chose to fly from a spectacle which every year allures from distant regions persons of far less taste and sensibility than his. Possibly, travelling, as he did, at the charge of a Government distinguished by its enmity to the Church of Rome, he may have thought that it would be imprudent in him to assist at the most magnificent rite of that church. Many eyes would be upon him, and he might find it difficult to behave in such a manner as to give offence neither to his patrons in England, nor to those among whom he resided. Whatever his motives may have been, he turned his back on the most august and affecting ceremony which is known among men, and posted along the Appian way to Naples.

Naples was then destitute of what are now, perhaps, its chief attractions. The lovely bay and the awful mountain were indeed there. But a farmhouse stood on the theatre of Herculaneum, and rows of vines grew over the streets of Pompeii. The temples of Pæstum had not indeed been hidden from the eye of man by any great convulsion of nature; but, strange to say, their existence was a secret even to artists and antiquaries. Though situated within a few hours' journey of a great capital, where Salvator had not long before painted, and where Vico was then lecturing, those noble remains were as little known to Europe as the ruined cities overgrown by the forests of Yucatan. What was to be seen at Naples, Addison saw. He climbed Vesuvius, explored the tunnel of Posilipo, and wandered among the vines and almond-trees of Capræ. But neither the wonders of nature, nor those of art, could so occupy his attention as to prevent him from noticing, though cursorily, the abuses of the government and the misery of the people. The great kingdom which had just descended to Philip V. was in a state of paralytic dotage. Even Castile and Arragon were sunk in wretchedness. Yet, compared with the Italian dependencies of the Spanish crown, Castile and Arragon might be called prosperous. It is clear that all the observations which Addison made in Italy tended to confirm him in the political opinions which he had adopted at home. To the last he always spoke of foreign travel as the best cure for Jacobit-

ism. In his *Freeholder*, the Tory fox-hunter asks what travelling is good for, except to teach a man to jabber French, and to talk against passive obedience.

From Naples, Addison returned to Rome by sea, along the coast which his favourite Virgil had celebrated. The felucca passed the headland where the oar and trumpet were placed by the Trojan adventurers on the tomb of Misenus, and anchored at night under the shelter of the fabled promontory of Circe. The voyage ended in the Tiber, still overhung with dark verdure, and still turbid with yellow sand, as when it met the eyes of Æneas. From the ruined port of Ostia, the stranger hurried to Rome; and at Rome he remained during those hot and sickly months when, even in the Augustan age, all who could make their escape fled from mad dogs and from streets black with funerals, to gather the first figs of the season in the country. It is probable that when he, long after, poured forth in verse his gratitude to the Providence which had enabled him to breathe unhurt in tainted air, he was thinking of the August and September which he passed at Rome.

It was not till the latter end of October that he tore himself away from the masterpieces of ancient and modern art, which are collected in the city so long the mistress of the world. He then journeyed northward, passed through Sienna, and for a moment forgot his prejudices in favour of classic architecture as he looked on the magnificent cathedral. At Florence he spent some days with the Duke of Shrewsbury, who, cloyed with the pleasures of ambition, and impatient of its pains, fearing both parties, and loving neither, had determined to hide in an Italian retreat, talents and accomplishments which, if they had been united with fixed principles and civil courage, might have made him the foremost man of his age. These days, we are told, passed pleasantly; and we can easily believe it. For Addison was a delightful companion when he was at his ease; and the Duke, though he seldom forgot that he was a Talbot, had the invaluable art of putting at ease all who came near him.

Addison gave some time to Florence, and especially to the sculptures in the Museum, which he preferred even to those of the Vatican. He then pursued his journey through a country in which



the ravages of the last war were still discernible, and in which war with all men were looking forward with dread to a still fiercer conflict. Eugene had already descended from the Rhætian Alps to dispute with Catinat the rich plain of Lombardy. The faithless ruler of Savoy was still reckoned among the allies of Louis. England had not yet actually declared war against France. But Manchester had left Paris; and the negotiations which produced the Grand Alliance against the house of Bourbon were in progress. Under such circumstances it was desirable for an English traveller to reach neutral ground without delay. Addison resolved to cross Mont Cenis. It was December; and the road was very different from that which now reminds the stranger of the power and genius of Napoleon. The winter, however, was mild, and the passage was, for those times, easy. To this journey Addison alluded when, in the ode which we have already quoted, he said that for him the Divine Goodness had "warmed the hoary Alpine hills."

It was in the midst of the eternal snow that he composed his Epistle to his friend Poetic epistle Montagu, now Lord Halifax. That Epistle, once widely renowned, is now known only to curious readers, and will hardly be considered by those to whom it is known as in any perceptible degree heightening Addison's fame. It is, however, decidedly superior to any English composition which he had previously published. Nay, we think it quite as good as any poem in heroic metre which appeared during the interval between the death of Dryden and the publication of the "Essay on Criticism." It contains passages as good as the second-rate passages of Pope, and would have added to the reputation of Parnell or Prior.

But, whatever be the literary merits or defects of the Epistle, it undoubtedly does honour to the attachment of ciples and spirit of the Addison. author. Halifax had now nothing to give. He had fallen from power, had been held up to obloquy, had been impeached by the House of Commons; and, though his Peers had dismissed the impeachment,\* had, as it

\* Miss Aikin says (i. 121) that the Epistle was written before Halifax was justified by the Lords. This is a mistake. The Epistle was written in December, 1701; the impeachment had been dismissed in the preceding June.

seemed, little chance of ever again filling high office. The Epistle, written at such a time, is one among many proofs that there was no mixture of cowardice or meanness in the suavity and moderation which distinguished Addison from all the other public men of those stormy times.

At Geneva the traveller learned that a partial change of ministry had taken place in England, and that Addison's the Earl of Manchester prospects had become Secretary of State.† Manchester exerted himself to serve his young friend. It was thought advisable that an English agent should be near the person of Eugene in Italy; and Addison, whose diplomatic education was now finished, was the man selected. He was preparing to enter on his honourable functions, when all his prospects were for a time darkened by the death of William III.

Anne had long felt a strong aversion, personal, political, and religious, to the Whig party. That aversion appeared in the first measures of her reign. on "Medals." Manchester was deprived of the seals after he had held them only a few weeks. Neither Somers nor Halifax was sworn of the Privy Council. Addison shared the fate of his three patrons. His hopes of employment in the public service were at an end; his pension was stopped; and it was necessary for him to support himself by his own exertions. He became tutor to a young English traveller, and appears to have rambled with his pupil over great part of Switzerland and Germany. At this time he wrote his pleasing treatise on "Medals." It was not published till after his death; but several distinguished scholars saw the manuscript, and gave just praise to the grace of the style, and to the learning and ingenuity evinced by the quotations.

From Germany Addison repaired to Holland, where he learned the melancholy news of his father's death. After passing some months in the United Provinces, he returned about the close of the year 1703 to England. He was there cordially received by his friends, and introduced by them into the Kit-Cat Club—a society in which were collected all the various talents and accomplishments which then gave lustre to the Whig party.

† Miss Aikin misdates this event by a year (i. 93).



Addison was, during some months after his return from the Continent, hard State of parties pressed by pecuniary difficulties at beginning of culties. But it was soon Anne's reign. in the power of his noble patrons to serve him effectually. A political change, silent and gradual, but of the highest importance, was in daily progress.\* The accession of Anne had been hailed by the Tories with transports of joy and hope; and for a time it seemed that the Whigs had fallen never to rise again. The throne was surrounded by men supposed to be attached to the prerogative and to the Church; and among these none stood so high in the favour of the Sovereign as the Lord-Treasurer Godolphin and the Captain-General Marlborough.

The country gentlemen and country clergymen had fully expected that the policy of these ministers would be directly opposed to that which had been almost constantly followed by William; that the landed interest would be favoured at the expense of trade; that no addition would be made to the funded debt; that the privileges conceded to Dissenters by the late king would be curtailed, if not withdrawn; that the war with France, if there must be such a war, would, on our part, be almost entirely naval; and that the Government would avoid close connections with foreign powers, and, above all, with Holland.

But the country gentlemen and country clergymen were fated to be deceived, not for the last time. The pre-Necessity of a Whig policy. judices and passions which raged without control in vicarages, in cathedral closes, and in the manor-houses of fox-hunting squires, were not shared by the chiefs of the ministry. Those statesmen saw that it was both for the public interest, and for their own interest, to adopt a Whig policy, at least as respected the alliances of the country and the conduct of the war. But if the foreign policy of the Whigs were adopted, it was impossible to

\* We are sorry to say that, in the account which Miss Aikin gives of the politics of this period, there are more errors than sentences. Rochester was the Queen's uncle; Miss Aikin calls him the Queen's cousin. The battle of Blenheim was fought in Marlborough's third campaign; Miss Aikin says that it was fought in Marlborough's second campaign. She confounds the dispute which arose in 1703, between the two Houses, about Lord Halifax, with the dispute about the Aylesbury men, which was terminated by the dissolution of 1705. These mistakes, and four or five others, will be found within the space of about two pages (i. 156, 166, 167).

abstain from adopting also their financial policy. The natural consequences followed. The rigid Tories were alienated from the Government. The votes of the Whigs became necessary to it. The votes of the Whigs could be secured only by further concessions; and further concessions the queen was induced to make.

At the beginning of the year 1704 the state of parties bore a close analogy to the state of parties in 1826. Analogy between Whig In 1826, as in 1704, there was a Tory ministry position in divided into two hostile 1704 and 1826. sections. The position of Mr. Canning and his friends in 1826 corresponded to that which Marlborough and Godolphin occupied in 1704. Nottingham and Jersey were, in 1704, what Lord Eldon and Lord Westmoreland were in 1826. The Whigs of 1704 were in a situation resembling that in which the Whigs of 1826 stood. In 1704, Somers, Halifax, Sunderland, Cowper, were not in office. There was no avowed coalition between them and the moderate Tories. It is probable that no direct communication tending to such a coalition had yet taken place; yet all men saw that such a coalition was inevitable, nay, that it was already half formed. Such, or nearly such, was the state of things when tidings arrived of the great battle fought at Blenheim on the 13th August, 1704. By the Whigs the news was hailed with transports of joy and pride. No fault, no cause of quarrel, could be remembered by them against the Commander whose genius had, in one day, changed the face of Europe, saved the Imperial throne, humbled the house of Bourbon, and secured the Act of Settlement against foreign hostility. The feeling of the Tories was very different. They could not indeed, without imprudence, openly express regret at an event so glorious to their country; but their congratulations were so cold and sullen, as to give deep disgust to the victorious general and his friends.

Godolphin was not a reading man. Whatever time he could spare from business he was in the habit of spending at Newmarket or at the card-table. But he was not absolutely indifferent to poetry; and he was too intelligent an observer not to perceive that literature was a formidable engine of political warfare, and that the great Whig leaders had strengthened their party, and raised their character, by ex-



tending a liberal and judicious patronage to good writers. He was mortified, and not without reason, by the exceeding badness of the poems which appeared in honour of the battle of Blenheim. One of those poems has been rescued from oblivion by the exquisite absurdity of three lines.

"Think of two thousand gentlemen at least,  
And each man mounted on his capering beast;  
Into the Danube they were pushed by shoals."

Where to procure better verses the Treasurer did not know. He understood how to negotiate a loan, or remit a subsidy. He was also well versed in the history of running horses and fighting cocks; but his acquaintance among the poets was very small. He consulted Halifax; but Halifax affected to decline the office of adviser. He had, he said, done his best, when he had power, to encourage men whose abilities and acquirements might do honour to their country. Those times were over. Other maxims had prevailed. Merit was suffered to pine in obscurity; the public money was squandered on the undeserving. "I do know," he added, "a gentleman who would celebrate the battle in a manner worthy of the subject. But I will not name him." Godolphin, who was expert at the soft answer which turneth away wrath, and who was under the necessity of paying court to the Whigs, gently replied, that there was too much ground for Halifax's complaints, but that what was amiss should in time be rectified; and that in the meantime the services of a man such as Halifax had described should be liberally rewarded. Halifax then mentioned Addison, but mindful of the dignity as well as of the pecuniary interest of his friend, insisted that the minister should apply in the most courteous manner to Addison himself; and this Godolphin promised to do.

Addison then occupied a garret up three pair of stairs, over a small shop in the Haymarket. In this humble lodging he was surprised, on the morning which followed the conversation between Godolphin and Halifax, by a visit from no less a person than the Right Honourable Henry Boyle, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and afterwards Lord Carleton.\* This high-born minister had been

sent by the Lord-Treasurer as ambassador to the needy poet. Addison readily undertook the proposed task, a task which, to so good a Whig, was probably a pleasure. When the poem was little more than half finished, he showed it to Godolphin, who was delighted with it, and particularly with the famous similitude of the Angel. Addison was instantly appointed to a Commissionership with about two hundred pounds a-year, and was assured that this appointment was only an earnest of greater favours.

The "Campaign" came forth, and was as much admired by the public as by the minister. It pleases us less Addison's on the whole than the poem, "The Epistle to Halifax." Yet Campaign." it undoubtedly ranks high among the poems which appeared during the interval between the death of Dryden and the dawn of Pope's genius. The chief merit of the "Campaign," we think, is that which was noticed by Johnson—the manly and rational rejection of fiction. The first great poet whose works have come down to us sang of war long before war became a science or a trade. If, in his time, there was enmity between two little Greek towns, each poured forth its crowd of citizens, ignorant of discipline, and armed with implements of labour rudely turned into weapons. On each side appeared conspicuous a few chiefs, whose wealth had enabled them to procure good armour, horses and chariots, and whose leisure had enabled them to practise military exercises. One such chief, if he were a man of great strength, agility, and courage, would probably be more formidable than twenty common men; and the force and dexterity with which he hurled his spear might have no inconsiderable share in deciding the event of the day. Such were probably the battles with which Homer was familiar. But Homer related the actions of men of a former generation—of men who sprang from the Gods, and communed with the Gods face to face—of men, one of whom could with ease hurl rocks which two sturdy hinds of a later period would be unable even to lift. He therefore naturally represented their martial exploits as resembling in kind, but far surpassing in magnitude, those of the stoutest and most expert combatants of his own age. Achilles, clad in celestial armour, drawn by celestial coursers, grasping the spear which none but himself could raise, driving all Troy and Lycia before him, and

\* Miss Aikin says that he was afterwards Lord Orrery. This is a mistake (i. 170).



choking Scamander with dead, was only a magnificent exaggeration of the real Ancient style hero, who, strong, fearless, accustomed to the use of epic; physical prowess of weapons, guarded by a celebrated shield and helmet of the best Sidonian fabric, and whirled along by horses of Thessalian breed, struck down with his own right arm foe after foe. In all rude societies similar notions are found. There are at this day countries where the Life-guardsman Shaw would be considered as a much greater warrior than the Duke of Wellington. Buonaparte loved to describe the astonishment with which the Mamelukes looked at his diminutive figure. Mourad Bey, distinguished above all his fellows by his bodily strength, and by the skill with which he managed his horse and his sabre, could not believe that a man who was scarcely five feet high, and rode like a butcher, was the greatest soldier in Europe.

Homer's descriptions of war had therefore as much truth as poetry requires.

Absurdities of Silius Italicus. But truth was altogether wanting to the performances of those who, writing about battles which had scarcely anything in common with the battles of his times, servilely imitated his manner.

The folly of Silius Italicus, in particular, is positively nauseous. He undertook to record in verse the vicissitudes of a great struggle between generals of the first order; and his narrative is made up of the hideous wounds which these generals inflicted with their own hands. Asdrubal flings a spear which grazes the shoulder of the consul Nero; but Nero sends his spear into Asdrubal's side. Fabius slays Thuris and Butes and Maris and Arses, and the long-haired Adherbes, and the gigantic Thylis, and Sapharus and Monæsus, and the trumpeter Morinus. Hannibal runs Perusinus through the groin with a stake, and breaks the backbone of Telesinus with a huge stone. This detestable fashion was copied in modern times, and continued to prevail down to the age of Addison. Several versifiers had described William turning thousands to flight by his single prowess, and dyeing the Boyne with Irish blood.

Imitated by Nay, so estimable a writer Philips and as John Philips, the author of other writers of the "Splendid Shilling," on Blenheim. represented Marlborough as having won the battle of Blenheim merely by strength of muscle and skill in fence.

The following lines may serve as an example:—

"Churchill, viewing where  
The violence of Tallard most prevailed,  
Came to oppose his slaughtering arm. With speed  
Precipitate he rode, urging his way  
O'er hills of gasping heroes, and fallen steeds  
Rolling in death. Destruction, grim with blood,  
Attends his furious course. Around his head  
The glowing balls play innocent, while he  
With dire impetuous sway deals fatal blows  
Among the flying Gauls. In Gallic blood  
He dyes his reeking sword, and strews the ground  
With headless ranks. What can they do? Or how  
Withstand his wide-destroying sword?"

Addison, with excellent sense and taste, departed from this ridiculous fashion. He reserved his praise for the qualities which made Marlborough truly great—energy, sagacity, military science. But, above all, the poet extolled the firmness of that mind which, in the midst of confusion, uproar, and slaughter, examined and disposed everything with the serene wisdom of a higher intelligence.

Here it was that he introduced the famous comparison of Marlborough to an angel guiding the whirlwind. We will not dispute the general justice of Addison's famous comparison; the Johnson's remarks on this storm of 1703. passage. But we must point out one circumstance which appears to have escaped all the critics. The extraordinary effect which this simile produced when it first appeared, and which to the following generation seemed inexplicable, is doubtless to be chiefly attributed to a line which most readers now regard as a feeble parenthesis—

"Such as, of late, o'er pale Britannia pass'd."

Addison spoke, not of a storm, but of the storm. The great tempest of November, 1703, the only tempest which in our latitude has equalled the rage of a tropical hurricane, had left a dreadful recollection in the minds of all men. No other tempest was ever in this country the occasion of a parliamentary address or of a public fast. Whole fleets had been cast away. Large mansions had been blown down. One prelate had been buried beneath the ruins of his palace. London and Bristol had presented the appearance of cities just sacked. Hundreds of families were still in mourning. The prostrate trunks of large trees and the ruins of houses still attested, in all the southern counties, the fury of the blast. The popularity which the simile of the angel enjoyed among Addison's contemporaries has al-



ways seemed to us to be a remarkable instance of the advantage which, in rhetoric and poetry, the particular has over the general.

Soon after the Campaign, was published Addison's Narrative of his Travels in Italy. The first effect produced by this Narrative was disappointment.

The crowd of readers who expected politics and scandal, speculations on the projects of Victor Amadeus, and anecdotes about the jollities of convents and the amours of cardinals and nuns, were confounded by finding that the writer's mind was much more occupied by the war between the Trojans and Rutulians than by the war between France and Austria; and that he seemed to have heard no scandal of later date than the gallantries of the Empress Faustina. In time, however, the judgment of the many was overruled by that of the few; and, before the book was reprinted, it was so eagerly sought that it sold for five times the original price. It is still read with pleasure: the style is pure and flowing; the classical quotations and allusions are numerous and happy; and we are now and then charmed by that singularly humane and delicate humour in which Addison excelled all men. Yet this agreeable work, even when considered merely as the history of a literary tour, may justly be censured on account of its faults of omission. We have

Few references to Latin orators and historians, and modern Italians. already said that, though rich in extracts from the Latin poets, it contains scarcely any references to the Latin orators and historians. We must add

that it contains little, or rather no information respecting the history and literature of modern Italy. To the best of our remembrance, Addison does not mention Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Boiardo, Berni, Lorenzo de' Medici, or Machiavelli. He coldly tells us, that at Ferrara he saw the tomb of Ariosto, and that at Venice he heard the gondoliers sing verses of Tasso. But for Tasso and Ariosto he cared far less than for Valerius Flaccus and Sidonius Apollinaris. The gentle flow of the Ticin brings a line of Silius to his mind. The sulphurous stream of Albula suggests to him several passages of Martial. But he has not a word to say of the illustrious dead of Santa Croce; he crosses the wood of Ravenna without recollecting the Spectre Huntsman; and

wanders up and down Rimini without one thought of Francesca. At Paris he eagerly sought an introduction to Boileau; but he seems not to have been at all aware that at Florence he was in the vicinity of a poet with whom Boileau could not sustain a comparison, of the greatest lyric poet of modern times, of Vincenzo Filicaja. This is the more remarkable, because Filicaja was the favourite poet of the all-accomplished Somers, under whose protection Addison travelled, and to whom the account of the Travels is dedicated. The truth is, that Addison knew little, and cared less, about the literature of modern Italy. His favourite models were Latin. His favourite critics were French. Half the Tuscan poetry that he had read seemed to him monstrous, and the other half tawdry.

His Travels were followed by the lively opera of "Rosamond." This piece was ill set to music, and therefore failed on the stage; but it completely succeeded in print, and is indeed excellent in its kind. The smoothness with which the verses glide, and the elasticity with which they bound, is, to our ears at least, very pleasing. We are inclined to think that if Addison had left heroic couplets to Pope, and blank verse to Rowe, and had employed himself in writing airy and spirited songs, his reputation as a poet would have stood far higher than it now does. Some years after his death "Rosamond" was set to new music by Doctor Arne, and was performed with complete success. Several passages long retained their popularity, and were daily sung, during the latter part of George the Second's reign, at all the harpsichords in England.

While Addison thus amused himself, his prospects, and the prospects of his party, were constantly becoming brighter and brighter. In the spring of 1705 the ministers were freed from the restraint imposed by a House of Commons, in which Tories of the most perverse class had the ascendancy. The elections were favourable to the Whigs. The coalition which had been tacitly and gradually formed was now openly avowed. The Great Seal was given to Cowper. Somers and Halifax were sworn of the Council. Halifax was sent in the following year to carry the decorations of the Order of the Garter to the Electoral Prince of Hanover, and was accompanied on this honourable mission by Addison, who had



just been made Under-Secretary of State. The Secretary of State under whom Addison first served was Sir Charles Hedges, a Tory. But Hedges was soon dismissed to make room for the most vehement of Whigs, Charles, Earl of Sunderland. In every department of the State, indeed, the High Churchmen were compelled to give place to their opponents. At the close of 1707 the Tories who still remained in office strove to rally, with Harley at their head. But the attempt, though favoured by the queen, who had always been a Tory at heart, and who had now quarrelled with the Duchess of Marlborough, was unsuccessful. The time was not yet. The Captain-General was at the height of popularity and glory. The Low Church party had a majority in Parliament. The country squires and rectors, though occasionally uttering a savage growl, were for the most part in a state of torpor, which lasted till they were roused into activity, and indeed into madness, by the prosecution of Sacheverell. Harley and his adherents were compelled

Triumph of to retire. The victory of the Whigs the Whigs was complete. in 1708. At the general election of 1708 their strength in the House of Commons became irresistible; and, before the end of that year, Somers was made Lord President of the Council, and Wharton Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.\*

Addison sat for Malmesbury in the Addison, M.P. House of Commons which for Malmes- was elected in 1708. But bury. the House of Commons was not the field for him. The bashfulness

\* Miss Aikin has not informed herself accurately as to the politics of that time. We give a single specimen. We could easily give many. "The Earl of Sunderland," she says, "was not suffered long to retain his hard-won secretaryship. In the last month of 1708 he was dismissed to make room for Lord Dartmouth, who ranked with the Tories. Just at this time the Earl of Wharton, being appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, named Mr. Addison his chief secretary" (i. 235). Sunderland was not dismissed to make room for Dartmouth till June, 1710; and most certainly Wharton would never have been appointed Lord-Lieutenant at all if he had not been appointed long before Sunderland's dismissal. Miss Aikin's mistake exactly resembles that of a person who should relate the history of our times as follows: "Lord John Russell was dismissed in 1839 from the Home Office to make room for Sir James Graham, who ranked with the Tories; but just at this time Earl Fortescue was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, with Lord Morpeth for his secretary." Such a narrative would give to posterity rather a strange notion of the ministerial revolutions of Queen Victoria's days.

of his nature made his wit and eloquence useless in debate. He once rose, but could not overcome his diffidence, and ever after remained silent. Nobody can think it strange that a great writer should fail as a speaker. But many, probably, will think it strange that Addison's failure as a speaker should have had no unfavourable effect on his success as a politician. In our time a man of high rank and great fortune might, though speaking very little and very ill, hold a considerable post. But it is inconceivable that a mere adventurer, a man who, when out of office, must live by his pen, should in a few years become successively Under-Secretary of State, Chief Secretary for Ireland, and Secretary of State, without some oratorical talent. Addison, without high birth, and with little property, rose to a post which Dukes, the heads of the great houses of Talbot, Russell, and Bentinck, have thought it an honour to fill. Without opening his lips in debate, he rose to a post, the highest that Chatham or Fox ever reached. And this he did before he had been nine years in Parliament. We must look for the explanation of this seeming miracle to the peculiar circumstances in which that generation was placed. During the interval which elapsed between the time when the Censorship of the Press ceased, and the time when parliamentary proceedings began to be freely reported, literary talents were, to a public man, of much more importance, and oratorical talents of much less importance, than in our time. At present, the best way of giving rapid and wide publicity to a statement or an argument is to introduce that statement or argument into a speech made in Parliament. If a political tract were to appear superior to the Conduct of the Allies, or to the best numbers of the *Freeholder*, the circulation of such a tract would be languid indeed when compared with the circulation of every remarkable word uttered in the deliberations of the legislature. A speech made in the House of Commons at four in the morning is on thirty thousand tables before ten. A speech made on the Monday is read on the Wednesday by multitudes in Antrim and Aberdeenshire. The orator, by the help of the shorthand writer, has to a great extent superseded the pamphleteer. It was not so in the reign of Anne. The best speech could then produce no

Present parliamentary value of oratorical power.



effect except on those who heard it. It was only by means of the press that the opinion of the public without doors could be influenced; and the opinion of the public without doors could not but be of the highest importance in a country governed by parliaments; and indeed at that time governed by triennial parliaments. The

The pen most powerful in Addison's time. pen was therefore a more formidable political engine than the tongue. Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox contended

only in Parliament. But Walpole and Pulteney, the Pitt and Fox of an earlier period, had not done half of what was necessary when they sat down amidst the acclamations of the House of Commons. They had still to plead their cause before the country, and this they could do only by means of the press. Their works are now forgotten. But it is certain that there were in Grub Street few more assiduous scribblers of thoughts, letters, answers, remarks, than these two great chiefs of parties. Pulteney, when leader of the Opposition, and possessed of £30,000 a year, edited the *Craftsman*. Walpole, though not a man of literary habits, was the author of at least ten pamphlets, and retouched and corrected many more. These facts sufficiently show of how great importance literary assistance then was to the contending parties. St. John was, certainly, in Anne's reign, the best Tory speaker; Cowper was probably the best Whig speaker. But it

Political may well be doubted services of whether St. John did so Addison and much for the Tories as Swift.

Swift, and whether Cowper did so much for the Whigs as Addison. When these things are duly considered it will not be thought strange that Addison should have climbed higher in the State than any other Englishman has ever, by means merely of literary talents, been able to climb. Swift would, in all probability, have climbed as high if he had not been encumbered by his cassock and his pudding-sleeves. As far as the homage of the Great went, Swift had as much of it as if he had been Lord-Treasurer.

To the influence which Addison derived from his literary talents was added all

Humanity of the influence which arises Addison. from character. The world, always ready to think the

worst of needy political adventurers, was forced to make one exception. Restlessness, violence, audacity, laxity of principle, are the vices ordinarily attributed

to that class of men. But faction itself could not deny that Addison had, through all changes of fortune, been strictly faithful to his early opinions and to his early friends; that his integrity was without stain; that his whole deportment indicated a fine sense of the becoming; that, in the utmost heat of controversy, his zeal was tempered by a regard for truth, humanity, and social decorum; that no outrage could ever provoke him to retaliation unworthy of a Christian and a gentleman; and that his only faults were a too sensitive delicacy and a modesty which amounted to bashfulness.

He was undoubtedly one of the most popular men of his time; and much of his popularity he owed, we believe, to that very timidity Addison's popularity. which his friends lamented.

That timidity often prevented him from exhibiting his talents to the best advantage. But it propitiated Nemesis. It averted that envy which would otherwise have been excited by fame so splendid, and by so rapid an elevation. No man is so great a favourite with the public as he who is at once an object of admiration, of respect, and of pity; and such were the feelings which Addison inspired. Those who enjoyed the privilege of hearing his familiar conversation, declared with one voice that it was superior even to his writings. The brilliant Mary Montagu said that she had known all the wits, and that Addison was the best company in the world. The malignant Pope was forced to own that there was a charm in Addison's talk which could be found nowhere else. Swift, when burning with animosity against the Whigs, could not but confess to Stella, that, after all, he had never known any associate so agreeable as Addison. Steele, an excellent judge of lively conversation, said, that the conversation of Addison was at once the most polite and the most mirthful that could be imagined;—that it was Terence and Catullus in one, heightened by an exquisite something which was neither Terence nor Catullus, but Addison alone. Young, an excel-

lent judge of serious conversation, said, that when Charm of his conversation.

Addison was at his ease, he went on in a noble strain of thought and language, so as to chain the attention of every hearer. Nor were his great colloquial powers more admirable than the courtesy and softness of heart which appeared in his conversation. At the same time, it would



be too much to say that he was wholly devoid of the malice which is, perhaps, inseparable from a keen sense of the ludicrous. He had one habit which both Swift and Stella applauded, and which we hardly know how to blame. If his first attempts to set a presuming dunce right were ill received, he changed his tone, "assented with civil leer," and lured the flattered coxcomb deeper and deeper into absurdity. That such was his practice we should, we think, have guessed from his works. The *Tatler's* criticisms on Mr. Softly's sonnet, and the *Spectator's* dialogue with the politician, who is so zealous for the honour of Lady Q—p—t—s, are excellent specimens of this innocent mischief.

Such were Addison's talents for conversation. But his rare gifts were not

His shy, reticent manner.

exhibited to crowds or to strangers. As soon as he entered a large company, as soon as he saw an unknown face, his lips were sealed, and his manners became constrained. None who met him only in great assemblies would have been able to believe that he was the same man who had often kept a few friends listening and laughing round a table, from the time when the Play ended, till the clock of St. Paul's in Covent Garden struck four. Yet, even at such a table he was not seen to the best advantage. To enjoy his conversation in the highest perfection it was necessary to be alone with him, and to hear him, in his own phrase, think aloud. "There is no such thing," he used to say, "as real conversation but between two persons."

This timidity, a timidity surely neither ungraceful nor unamiable, led Addison

Tendency to into the two most serious convivial faults which can with justice be imputed to him.

He found that wine broke the spell which lay on his fine intellect, and was therefore too easily seduced into convivial excess. Such excess was in that age regarded, even by grave men, as the most venial of all peccadilloes, and was so far from being a mark of ill-breeding, that it was almost essential to the character of a fine gentleman. But the smallest speck is seen on a white ground; and almost all the biographers of Addison have said something about this failing. Of any other statesman or writer of Queen Anne's reign, we should no more think of saying that he sometimes took too much wine, than that he wore a long wig and a sword.

To the excessive modesty of Addison's nature we must ascribe another fault which generally arises from a very different cause. He became a little too fond of

His circle of admirers.

seeing himself surrounded by a small circle of admirers, to whom he was as a king or rather as a god. All these men were far inferior to him in ability, and some of them had very serious faults. Nor did those faults escape his observation; for, if ever there was an eye which saw through and through men, it was the eye of Addison. But with the keenest observation, and the finest sense of the ridiculous, he had a large charity. The feeling with which he looked on most of his humble companions was one of benevolence, slightly tinged with contempt. He was at perfect ease in their company; he was grateful for their devoted attachment; and he loaded them with benefits. Their veneration for him appears to have exceeded that with which Johnson was regarded by Boswell, or Warburton by Hurd. It was not in the power of adulation to turn such a head or deprave such a heart as Addison's. But it must in candour be admitted, that he contracted some of the faults which can scarcely be avoided by any person who is so unfortunate as to be the oracle of a small literary coterie.

One member of this little society was Eustace Budgell, a young Templar of some literature, and a distant relation of Addison.

Eustace Budgell.

There was at this time no stain on the character of Budgell, and it is not improbable that his career would have been prosperous and honourable, if the life of his cousin had been prolonged. But when the master was laid in the grave, the disciple broke loose from all restraint; descended rapidly from one degree of vice and misery to another; ruined his fortune by follies; attempted to repair it by crimes; and at length closed a wicked and unhappy life by self-murder. Yet, to the last, the wretched man, gambler, lampooner, cheat, forger, as he was, retained his affection and veneration for Addison, and recorded those feelings in the last lines which he traced before he hid himself from infamy under London Bridge.

Another of Addison's favourite companions was Ambrose Philipps, a good Whig and a middling poet, who had the honour of bringing into fashion a

Ambrose Philipps.



species of composition which has been called after his name *Namby-Pamby*. But the most remarkable members of the little senate, as Pope long afterwards called it, were Richard Steele and Thomas Tickell.

Steele had known Addison from childhood. They had been together at the Richard Steele Charter House and at Oxford; but circumstances had then, for a time, separated them widely.

Steele had left college without taking a degree, had been disinherited by a rich relation, had led a vagrant life, had served in the army, had tried to find the philosopher's stone, and had written a religious treatise and several comedies. He was one of those people whom it is impossible either to hate or to respect. His temper was sweet, his affections warm, his spirits lively, his passions strong, and his principles weak. His life was spent in sinning and repenting; in inculcating what was right, and doing what was wrong. In speculation he was a man of piety and honour; in practice he was much of the rake and a little of the swindler. He was, however, so good-natured that it was not easy to be seriously angry with him, and that even rigid moralists felt more inclined to pity than to blame him, when he dived himself into a spunging-house, or drank himself into a fever. Addison regarded Steele with kindness not unmingled with scorn—tried, with little success, to keep him out of scrapes, introduced him to the great, procured a good place for him, corrected his plays, and, though by no means rich, lent him large sums of money. One of these loans appears, from a letter dated in August, 1708, to have amounted to a thousand pounds. These pecuniary transactions probably led to frequent bickerings. It is said that, on one occasion, Steele's negligence, or dishonesty, provoked Addison to repay himself by the help of a bailiff. We cannot join with Miss Aikin in rejecting this story. Johnson heard it from Savage, who heard it from Steele. Few private transactions which took place a hundred and twenty years ago are proved by stronger evidence than this. But we can by no means agree with those who condemn Addison's severity. The most amiable of mankind may well be moved to indignation when what he has earned hardly, and lent with great inconvenience to himself, for the purpose of relieving a friend in distress, is squandered with insane profusion. We

will illustrate our meaning by an example, which is not the less striking because it is taken from fiction. Dr. Harrison, in Fielding's "*Amelia*," is represented as the most benevolent of human beings; yet he takes in execution, not only the goods, but the person of his friend Booth. Dr. Harrison resorts to this strong measure because he has been informed that Booth, while pleading poverty as an excuse for not paying just debts, has been buying fine jewellery, and setting up a coach. No person who is well acquainted with Steele's life and correspondence can doubt lessness; that he behaved quite as puted arrest ill to Addison as Booth was by Addison. accused of behaving to Dr. Harrison. The real history, we have little doubt, was something like this:—A letter comes to Addison, imploring help in pathetic terms, and promising reformation and speedy repayment. Poor Dick declares that he has not an inch of candle, or a bushel of coals, or credit with the butcher for a shoulder of mutton. Addison is moved. He determines to deny himself some medals which are wanting to his series of the *Twelve Cæsars*; to put off buying the new edition of "*Bayle's Dictionary*;" and to wear his old sword and buckles another year. In this way he manages to send a hundred pounds to his friend. The next day he calls on Steele, and finds scores of gentlemen and ladies assembled. The fiddles are playing. The table is groaning under champagne, Burgundy, and pyramids of sweetmeats. Is it strange that a man whose kindness is thus abused should send sheriff's officers to reclaim what is due to him?

Tickell was a young man, fresh from Oxford, who had introduced himself to public notice by writing a most ingenious and graceful little poem in praise of the opera of "*Rosamond*." He deserved, and at length attained, the first place in Addison's friendship. For a time Steele and Tickell were on good terms. But they loved Addison too much to love each other, and at length became as bitter enemies as the rival bulls in Virgil.

At the close of 1708 Wharton became Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and appointed Addison Chief Secretary. Addison was consequently Chief Secretary under the necessity of tary for quitting London for Dub- Ireland. lin. Beside the chief secretaryship, which was then worth about two thousand pounds a-year, he obtained a patent ap-



pointing him keeper of the Irish Records for life, with a salary of three or four hundred a-year. Budgell accompanied his cousin in the capacity of private secretary.

Wharton and Addison had nothing in common but Whiggism. The Lord-Lieutenant was not only licentious and corrupt, but was distinguished from other libertines and jobbers by a callous impudence which presented the strongest contrast to the Secretary's gentleness and delicacy. Many parts of the Irish administration at this time appear to have deserved serious blame. But against Addison there was not a murmur. He long afterwards asserted, what all the evidence which we have ever seen tends to prove, that his diligence and integrity gained the friendship of all the most considerable persons in Ireland.

The parliamentary career of Addison in Ireland has, we think, wholly escaped the notice of all his biographers. He was elected member for the borough of Cavan in the summer of 1709; and in the journals of two sessions his name frequently occurs. Some of the entries appear to indicate that he so far overcame his timidity as to make speeches. Nor is this by any means improbable; for the Irish House of Commons was a far less formidable audience than the English House; and many tongues which were tied by fear in the greater assembly became fluent in the smaller. Gerard Hamilton, for example, who, from fear of losing the fame gained by his "single speech," sat mute at Westminster during forty years, spoke with great effect at Dublin when he was Secretary to Lord Halifax.

While Addison was in Ireland, an event occurred to which he owes his high and permanent rank among British writers. As yet his fame rested on performances which, though highly respectable, were not built for duration, and would, if he had produced nothing else, have now been almost forgotten, on some excellent Latin verses, on some English verses which occasionally rose above mediocrity, and on a book of Travels, agreeably written, but not indicating any extraordinary powers of mind. These works showed him to be a man of taste, sense, and learning. The time had come when he was to prove himself a man of genius, and to enrich our literature with com-

positions which will live as long as the English language.

In the spring of 1709 Steele formed a literary project, of which he was far indeed from foreseeing the consequences. Periodical papers had during many years been published in London. Most of these were political; but in some of them questions of morality, taste, and love-casuistry had been discussed. The literary merit of these works was small indeed; and even their names are now known only to the curious.

Steele had been appointed Gazetteer by Sunderland, at the request, it is said, of Addison, and thus had access to foreign intelligence. Steele's literary project of earlier and more authentic the "Tatler." than was in those times within the reach of an ordinary news-writer. This circumstance seems to have suggested to him the scheme of publishing a periodical paper on a new plan. It was to appear on the days on which the post left London for the country, which were, in that generation, the Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. It was to contain the foreign news, accounts of theatrical representations, and the literary gossip of Will's and of the Grecian. It was also to contain remarks on the fashionable topics of the day, compliments to beauties, pasquinades on noted sharpers, and criticisms on popular preachers. The aim of Steele does not appear to have been at first higher than this. He was not ill qualified to conduct the work which he had planned. His public intelligence he drew from the best sources. He knew the town, and had paid dear for his knowledge. He had read much more than the dissipated men of that time were in the habit of reading. He was a rake among scholars, and a scholar among rakes. His style was easy and not incorrect; and, though his wit and humour were of no high order, his gay animal spirits imparted to his compositions an air of vivacity which ordinary readers could hardly distinguish from comic genius. His writings have been well compared to those light wines which, though deficient in body and flavour, are yet a pleasant small drink, if not kept too long, or carried too far.

Isaac Bickerstaff, Esquire, Astrologer, was an imaginary person, almost as well known in that age as Mr. Isaac Paul Pry or Mr. Pickwick Bickerstaff, in ours. Swift had assumed the name of Bickerstaff in a



satirical pamphlet against Partridge, the almanack-maker. Partridge had been fool enough to publish a furious reply. Bickerstaff had rejoined in a second pamphlet still more diverting than the first. All the wits had combined to keep up the joke, and the town was long in convulsions of laughter. Steele determined to employ the name which this controversy had made popular; and, in April, 1709, it was announced that Isaac Bickerstaff, Esquire, Astrologer, was about to publish a paper called the *Tatler*.

Addison had not been consulted about this scheme, but as soon as he heard of it he determined to give it his assistance. The effect of that assistance cannot be better described than in Steele's own words. "I fared," he said, "like a distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid. I was undone by my auxiliary. When I had once called him in, I could not subsist without dependence on him." "The paper," he says elsewhere, "was advanced indeed. It was raised to a greater thing than I intended it."

It is probable that Addison, when he sent across St. George's Channel his Addison's con- first contributions to the tributions to *Tatler*, had no notion of the "Tatler." the extent and variety of his own powers. He was the possessor of a vast mine, rich with a hundred ores. But he had been acquainted only with the least precious part of his treasures, and had hitherto contented himself with producing sometimes copper and sometimes lead, intermingled with a little silver. All at once, and by mere accident, he had lighted on an inexhaustible vein of the finest gold.

The mere choice and arrangement of his words would have sufficed to make his essays classical. For never, not even by Dryden, not even by Temple, had the English language been written with such sweetness, grace, and facility. But this was the smallest part of Addison's praise. Had he clothed his thoughts in the half French style of Horace Walpole, or in the half Latin style of Dr. Johnson, or in the half German jargon of the present day, his genius would have triumphed over all faults of manner.

As a moral satirist, he stands unrivalled. If ever the best *Tatlers* and *Spectators* were equalled in their own kind, we should be inclined to guess that it must have been by the lost comedies of Menander.

In wit, properly so called, Addison was not inferior to Cowley or Butler. No single ode of Cowley con- His wit, and tains so many happy analo- power of gies as are crowded into observation. the lines to Sir Godfrey Kneller; and we would undertake to collect from the *Spectators* as great a number of ingenious illustrations as can be found in "Hudibras." The still higher faculty of invention Addison possessed in still larger measure. The numerous fictions, generally original, often wild and grotesque, but always singularly graceful and happy, which are found in his essays, fully entitle him to the rank of a great poet—a rank to which his metrical compositions give him no claim. As an observer of life, of manners, of all the shades of human character, he stands in the first class. And what he observed he had the art of communicating in two widely different ways. He could describe virtues, vices, habits, whims, as well as Clarendon. But he could do something better. He could call human beings into existence, and make them exhibit themselves. If we wish to find anything more vivid than Addison's best portraits, we must go either to Shakespeare or to Cervantes.

But what shall we say of Addison's humour, of his sense of the ludicrous, of his power of awakening that sense in others, and of drawing mirth from incidents which occur every day, and from little peculiarities of temper and manner, such as may be found in every man? We feel the charm. We give ourselves up to it. But we strive in vain to analyze it.

Perhaps the best way of describing Addison's peculiar pleasantry is to compare it with the pleasantry Humour of of some other great satirists. Swift and The three most eminent Voltaire masters of the art of riddle- contrasted. cule, during the eighteenth century, were, we conceive, Addison, Swift, and Voltaire. Which of the three had the greatest power of moving laughter may be questioned. But each of them, within his own domain, was supreme. Voltaire is the prince of buffoons. His merriment is without disguise or restraint. He gambols; he grins; he shakes his sides; he points the finger; he turns up the nose; he shoots out the tongue. The manner of Swift is the very opposite to this. He moves laughter, but never joins in it. He appears in his works such as he appeared in society. All the company are convulsed with merriment, while the



Dean, the author of all the mirth, preserves an invincible gravity, and even sourness of aspect; and gives utterance to the most eccentric and ludicrous fancies, with the air of a man reading the commination-service.

The manner of Addison is as remote from that of Swift as from that of Voltaire. He neither laughs out like the

Peculiar manner of Addison. French wit, nor, like the Irish wit, throws a double portion of severity into his countenance while laughing inly; but preserves a look peculiarly his own, a look of demure serenity, disturbed only by an arch sparkle of the eye, an almost imperceptible elevation of the brow, an almost imperceptible curl of the lip. His tone is never that either of a Jack Pudding or of a Cynic. It is that of a gentleman, in whom the quickest sense of the ridiculous is constantly tempered by good nature and good breeding.

We own that the humour of Addison is, in our opinion, of a more delicious

flavour than the humour of either Swift or Voltaire. Thus much, at least, is certain, that both Swift and Voltaire have been successfully mimicked, and that no man has yet been able to mimic Addison. The letter of the Abbé Coyer to Pansophe is Voltaire all over, and imposed, during a long time, on the Academicians of Paris. There are passages in Arbuthnot's satirical works which we, at least, cannot distinguish from Swift's best writing. But of the many eminent men who have made Addison their model, though several have copied his mere diction with happy effect, none has been able to catch the tone of his pleasantry. In the *World*, in the *Connoisseur*, in the *Mirror*, in the *Lounger*, there are numerous papers written in obvious imitation of his *Tatlers* and *Spectators*. Most of those papers have some merit; many are very lively and amusing; but there is not a single one which could be passed off as Addison's on a critic of the smallest perspicacity.

But that which chiefly distinguishes Addison from Swift, from Voltaire, from Cynical nature almost all the other great of the mirth of masters of ridicule, is the Voltaire and grace, the nobleness, the Swift. moral purity, which we find even in his merriment. Severity, gradually hardening and darkening into misanthropy, characterizes the works of Swift. The nature of Voltaire was,

indeed, not inhuman; but he venerated nothing. Neither in the masterpieces of art nor in the purest examples of virtue, neither in the Great First Cause nor in the awful enigma of the grave, could he see anything but subjects for drollery. The more solemn and august the theme, the more monkey-like was his grimacing and chattering. The mirth of Swift is the mirth of Mephistopheles; the mirth of Voltaire is the mirth of Puck. If, as Soame Jenyns oddly imagined, a portion of the happiness of Seraphim and just men made perfect be derived from an exquisite perception of the ludicrous, their mirth must surely be none other than the mirth of Addison;—a mirth consistent with tender compassion for all that is frail, and with profound reverence for all that is sublime. Nothing great, nothing amiable, no moral duty, no doctrine of natural or revealed religion, has ever been associated by Addison with any degrading idea. His humanity is without a parallel in literary history. The highest proof of human virtue is to possess boundless power without abusing it. No kind of power is more formidable than the power of making men ridiculous; and that power Addison possessed in boundless measure. How grossly that power was abused by Swift and by Voltaire is well known. But of Addison it may be confidently affirmed that he has blackened no man's Gentleness of character, nay, that it Addison's would be difficult, if not satire. impossible, to find in all the volumes which he has left us a single taunt which can be called ungenerous or unkind. Yet he had detractors, whose malignity might have seemed to justify as terrible a revenge as that which men, not superior to him in genius, wreaked on Bettesworth and on Franc de Pompignan. He was a politician; he was the best writer of his party; he lived in times of fierce excitement—in times when persons of high character and station stooped to scurrility such as is now practised only by the basest of mankind. Yet no provocation and no example could induce him to return railing for railing.

Of the service which his Essays rendered to morality it is difficult to speak too highly. It is true that, Moral value when the *Tatler* appeared, of Addison's that age of outrageous writings. profaneness and licentiousness which followed the Restoration had passed away. Jeremy Collier had shamed the



theatres into something which, compared with the excesses of Etherege and Wycherley, might be called decency. Yet there still lingered in the public mind a pernicious notion that there was some connection between genius and profligacy—between the domestic virtues and the sullen formality of the Puritans. That error it is the glory of Addison to have dispelled. He taught the nation that the faith and the morality of Hale and Tillotson might be found in company with wit more sparkling than the wit of Congreve, and with humour richer than the humour of Vanbrugh. So effectually, indeed, did he retort on vice the mockery which had recently been directed against virtue, that, since his time, the open violation of decency has always been considered among us as the sure mark of a fool. And this revolution, the greatest and most salutary ever effected by any satirist, he accomplished, be it remembered, without writing one personal lampoon.

In the early contributions of Addison to the *Tatler* his peculiar powers were not fully exhibited. Yet Fine essays in the "Tatler." from the first his superiority to all his coadjutors was evident. Some of his later *Tatlers* are fully equal to anything that he ever wrote. Among the portraits, we most admire Tom Folio, Ned Softly, and the Political Upholsterer. The proceedings of the Court of Honour, the Thermometer of Zeal, the story of the Frozen Words, the Memoirs of the Shilling, are excellent specimens of that ingenious and lively species of fiction in which Addison excelled all men. There is one still better paper of the same class. But though that paper, a hundred and thirty-three years ago, was probably thought as edifying as one of Smalridge's sermons, we dare not indicate it to the squeamish readers of the nineteenth century.

During the session of Parliament which commenced in November, 1709, and which the impeachment of Sacheverell has made

memorable, Addison appears to have resided in London. The *Tatler* was now more popular than any periodical paper had ever been; and his connection with it was generally known. It was not known, however, that almost everything good in the *Tatler* was his. The truth is, that the fifty or sixty numbers which we owe to him, were not merely the best, but so decidedly the best, that any five

of them are more valuable than all the two hundred numbers in which he had no share.

He required, at this time, all the solace which he could derive from literary success. The queen had Sacheverell's trial and its effects. She had during some years disliked the Marlborough family. But, reigning by a disputed title, she could not venture directly to oppose herself to a majority of both Houses of Parliament; and, engaged as she was in a war on the event of which her own crown was staked, she could not venture to disgrace a great and successful general. But at length, in the year 1710, the causes which had restrained her from showing her aversion to the Low Church party ceased to operate. The trial of Sacheverell produced an outbreak of public feeling scarcely less violent than those which we can ourselves remember in 1820 and in 1831. The country gentlemen, the country clergymen, the rabble of the towns, were all, for once, on the same side. It was clear that, if a general election took place before the excitement abated, the Tories would have a majority. The services of Marlborough had been so splendid that they were no longer necessary. The queen's throne was secure from all attack on the part of Louis. Indeed, it seemed much more likely that the English and German armies would divide the spoils of Versailles and Marli, than that a Marshal of France would bring back the Pretender to St. James's. The queen, acting by the advice of Harley, determined to dismiss her servants. In June the change commenced. Sunderland was the first who fell. The Tories exulted over his fall. The Whigs tried, during a few weeks, to persuade themselves that her Majesty had acted only from personal dislike to the secretary, and that she meditated no further alteration. But, early in August, Godolphin was surprised by a letter from Anne, which directed him to break his white staff. Even after this event the irresolution or dissimulation of Harley kept up the hopes of the Whigs during another month; and then the ruin became rapid and violent. The Parliament was dissolved. The Ministers were turned out. The Tories were called to office. The tide of popularity ran violently in favour of the High Church party. That party, feeble in the late

Triumph of the Tories.



House of Commons, was now irresistible. The power which the Tories had thus suddenly acquired, they used with blind and stupid ferocity. The howl which the whole pack set up for prey and for blood, appalled even him who had roused and unchained them. When at this distance of time we calmly review the conduct of the discarded ministers, we cannot but feel a movement of indignation at the injustice with which they were treated. No body of men had ever administered the government with more energy, ability, and moderation; and their success had been proportioned to their wisdom. They had saved Holland and Germany. They had humbled France. They had, as it seemed, all but torn Spain from the house of Bourbon. They had made England the first power in Europe. At home they had united England and Scotland. They had respected the rights of conscience and the liberty of the subject. They retired, leaving their country at the height of prosperity and glory.\* And yet they were pursued to their retreat by such a roar of obloquy as was never raised against the government which threw away thirteen colonies; or against the government which sent a gallant army to perish in the ditches of Walcheren.

None of the Whigs suffered more in the general wreck than Addison. He had just sustained some heavy pecuniary losses, of the nature of which we are imperfectly informed, when his Secretaryship was taken from him. He had reason to believe that he should also be deprived of the small Irish office which he held by patent. He had just resigned his fellowship. It seems probable that he had already ventured to raise his eyes to a great lady; and that, while his political friends were all-powerful, and while his own fortunes were rising, he had been, in the phrase of the romances which were then fashionable, permitted to hope. But Mr. Addison the ingenious writer, and Mr. Addison the Chief Secretary, were, in her ladyship's opinion, two very different persons. All these calamities united, however, could not disturb the serene cheerfulness of a mind conscious of innocence, and rich in its own wealth. He

\* Miss Aikin attributes the unpopularity of the Whigs, and the change of government, to the surrender of Stanhope's army (ii. 13). The fact is, that the Ministry was changed, and the new House of Commons elected, before that surrender took place.

told his friends, with smiling resignation, that they ought to admire his philosophy, that he had lost at once his fortune, his place, his fellowship, and his mistress, that he must think of turning tutor again, and yet that his spirits were as good as ever.

He had one consolation. Of the unpopularity which his friends had incurred, he had no share. Such was the esteem with which he <sup>His enduring</sup> was regarded, that while popularity. the most violent measures were taken for the purpose of forcing Tory members on Whig corporations, he was returned to Parliament without even a contest. Swift, who was now in London, and who had already determined on quitting the Whigs, wrote to Stella in these remarkable words:—"The Tories carry it among the new members six to one. Mr. Addison's election has passed easy and undisputed; and I believe if he had a mind to be king, he would hardly be refused."

The good-will with which the Tories regarded Addison is the more honourable to him because it had not been purchased by any con- <sup>The "Whig Examiner."</sup> cession on his part. During the general election he published a political journal, entitled the *Whig Examiner*. Of that journal it may be sufficient to say that Johnson, in spite of his strong political prejudices, pronounced it to be superior in wit to any of Swift's writings on the other side. When it ceased to appear, Swift, in a letter to Stella, expressed his exultation at the death of so formidable an antagonist. "He might well rejoice," says Johnson, "at the death of that which he could not have killed." "On no occasion," he adds, "was the genius of Addison more vigorously exerted, and in none did the superiority of his powers more evidently appear."

The only use which Addison appears to have made of the favour with which he was regarded by the <sup>Addison's</sup> Tories was to save some of efforts for his friends from the general <sup>Phillipps and</sup> ruin of the Whig party. <sup>Steele.</sup> He felt himself to be in a situation which made it his duty to take a decided part in politics. But the case of Steele and of Ambrose Phillipps was different. For Phillipps, Addison even condescended to solicit; with what success we have not ascertained.† Steele held two places.

† Miss Aikin mentions the exertions which Addison made in 1710, before the change of



He was Gazetteer, and he was also a Commissioner of Stamps. The gazette was taken from him. But he was suffered to retain his place in the Stamp Office, on an implied understanding that he should not be active against the new government; and he was, during more than two years, induced by Addison to observe this armistice with tolerable fidelity.

Isaac Bickerstaff accordingly became silent upon politics, and the article of News, which had once formed about one-third of The "Tatler" discontinued. his paper, altogether disappeared. The *Tatler* had completely changed its character. It was now nothing but a series of essays on books, morals, and manners. Steele therefore resolved to bring it to a close, and to commence a new work on an improved plan. It was announced that this new work would be published daily. The undertaking was generally regarded as bold, or rather rash; but the event amply justified the confidence with which Steele relied on the fertility of Addison's genius. On the 2nd of January, 1711, appeared the last *Tatler*. On the 1st of March following, appeared the first of an incomparable series of papers, containing observations on life and literature by an imaginary spectator.

The *Spectator* himself was conceived and drawn by Addison; and it is not easy to doubt that the portrait was meant to be in some features a likeness of the painter. The *Spectator* is a gentleman who, after passing a studious youth at the university, has travelled on classic ground, and has bestowed much attention on curious points of antiquity. He has, on his return, fixed his residence in London, and has observed all the forms of life which are to be found in that great city; has daily listened to the wits of Will's, has smoked with the philosophers of the Grecian, and has mingled with the parsons at Child's, and with the politicians at the St. James's. In the morning, he often listens to the hum of the Exchange; in the evening, his face is constantly to be seen in the pit of

Ministry, to serve Phillipps, and adds that "Phillipps appears some time afterwards to have obtained a mission to Copenhagen, which enabled him to gratify the world with his poetical description of a frozen shower" (ii. 14). This is all wrong. The poem was written in March, 1709, and printed in the *Tatler* of the 6th of May following.

Drury Lane theatre. But an insurmountable bashfulness prevents him from opening his mouth, except in a small circle of intimate friends.

These friends were first sketched by Steele. Four of the club, the templar, the clergyman, the soldier, and the merchant, were First sketches uninteresting figures, fit by Steele. only for a background. But the other two, an old country baronet and an old town rake, though not delineated with a very delicate pencil, had some good strokes. Addison took the rude outlines into his own hands, retouched them, coloured them, and is in truth the creator of the Sir Roger de Coverley and the Will Honeycomb with whom we are all familiar.

The plan of the *Spectator* must be allowed to be both original and eminently happy. Every valuable essay in the series may be read with pleasure Entertaining separately; yet the five or and ingenious six hundred essays form a narrative whole, and a whole which has the interest of a novel. It must be remembered, too, that at that time no novel, giving a lively and powerful picture of the common life and manners of England, had appeared. Richardson was working as a compositor. Fielding was robbing birds' nests. Smollett was not yet born. The narrative, therefore, which connects together the *Spectator's* Essays, gave to our ancestors their first taste of an exquisite and untried pleasure. That narrative was indeed constructed with no art or labour. The events were such events as occur every day. Sir Roger comes up to town to see Eugenio, as the worthy baronet always calls Prince Eugene, goes with the *Spectator* on the water to Spring Gardens, walks among the tombs in the Abbey, is frightened by the Mohawks, but conquers his apprehension so far as to go to the theatre when the "Distressed Mother" is acted. The *Spectator* pays a visit in the summer to Coverley Hall, is charmed with the old house, the old butler, and the old chaplain, eats a jack caught by Will Wimble, rides to the assizes, and hears a point of law discussed by Tom Touchy. At last a letter from the honest butler brings to the club the news that Sir Roger is dead. Will Honeycomb marries and reforms at sixty. The club breaks up; and the *Spectator* resigns his functions. Such events can hardly be said to form a plot; yet they are related with such truth, such grace, such wit, such humour,



such pathos, such knowledge of the human heart, such knowledge of the ways of the world, that they charm us on the hundredth perusal. We have not the least doubt that, if Addison had written a novel on an extensive plan, it would have been superior to any that we possess. As it is, he is entitled to be considered, not only as the greatest of the English Essayists, but as the forerunner of the great English Novelists.

We say this of Addison alone; for Addison is the *Spectator*. About three-

sevenths of the work are wonderful in his; and it is no exaggeration to say that his worst Addison's Essay is as good as the best essay of any of his coadjutors. His best essays approach near to absolute perfection; nor is their excellence more wonderful than their variety. His invention never seems to flag; nor is he ever under the necessity of repeating himself, or of wearing out a subject. There are no dregs in his wine. He regales us after the fashion of that prodigal nabob who held that there was only one good glass in a bottle. As soon as we have tasted the first sparkling foam of a jest, it is withdrawn, and a fresh draught of nectar is at our lips. On the Monday we have an allegory as lively and ingenious as Lucian's "Auction of Lives;" on the Tuesday an Eastern apologue, as richly coloured as the Tales of Scherezade; on the Wednesday, a character described with the skill of La Bruyère; on the Thursday, a scene from common life, equal to the best chapters in the "Vicar of Wakefield;" on the Friday, some sly Horatian pleasantry on fashionable follies—on hoops, patches, or puppet-shows; and on the Saturday a religious meditation, which will bear a comparison with the finest passages in Massillon.

It is dangerous to select where there is so much that deserves the highest praise.

Essays of We will venture however to say, that any person peculiar merit. who wishes to form a just notion of the extent and variety of Addison's powers, will do well to read at one sitting the following papers:—the two Visits to the Abbey, the Visit to the Exchange, the Journal of the Retired Citizen, the Vision of Mirza, the Transmigrations of Pug the Monkey, and the Death of Sir Roger de Coverley.\*

\* Nos. 26, 329, 69, 317, 159, 343, 517. These papers are all in the first seven volumes. The eighth must be considered as a separate work.

The least valuable of Addison's contributions to the *Spectator* are, in the judgment of our age, his critical papers. Yet his Addison's critical papers are always

luminous, and often ingenious. The very worst of them must be regarded as creditable to him, when the character of the school in which he had been trained is fairly considered. The best of them were much too good for his readers. In truth, he was not so far behind our generation as he was before his own. No essays in the *Spectator* were more censured and derided than those in which he raised his voice against the contempt with which our fine old ballads were regarded; and showed the scoffers that the same gold which, burnished and polished, gives lustre to the *Æneid* and the Odes of Horace, is mingled with the rude dross of Chevy Chase.

It is not strange that the success of the *Spectator* should have been such as no similar work has ever Great success obtained. The number of of the copies daily distributed was "Spectator." at first three thousand. It subsequently increased, and had risen to near four thousand when the stamp-tax was imposed. That tax was fatal to a crowd of journals. The *Spectator*, however, stood its ground, doubled its price, and, though its circulation fell off, still yielded a large revenue both to the State and to the authors. For particular papers, the demand was immense; of some, it is said, twenty thousand copies were required. But this was not all. To have the *Spectator* served up every morning with the bohea and rolls was a luxury for the few; the majority were content to wait till essays enough had appeared to form a volume. Ten thousand copies of each volume were immediately taken off, and new editions were called for. It must be remembered that the population of England was then hardly a third of what it now is. The number of Englishmen who were in the habit of reading was probably not a sixth of what it now is. A shopkeeper or a farmer who found any pleasure in literature was a rarity. Nay, there was doubtless more than one knight of the shire whose country-seat did not contain ten books—receipt-books and books on farriery included. Under these circumstances the sale of the *Spectator* must be considered as indicating a popularity quite as great as that of the most successful works of Sir Walter Scott and Mr. Dickens in our own time.



At the close of 1712 the *Spectator* ceased to appear. It was probably felt that the short-faced gentleman and his club had been continued in long enough before the 1712. town, and that it was time to withdraw them, and to replace them by a new set of characters. In a few weeks the first number of the

The "Guardian." *Guardian* was published.\* But the *Guardian* was unfortunate both in its birth and in its death. It began in dulness, and disappeared in a tempest of faction. The original plan was bad. Addison contributed nothing till sixty-six numbers had appeared; and it was then impossible even for him to make the *Guardian* what the *Spectator* had been. Nestor Ironside and the Miss Lizards were people to whom even he could impart no interest. He could only furnish some excellent little essays, both serious and comic; and this he did.

Why Addison gave no assistance to the *Guardian* during the first two months of its existence, is a question which has puzzled the editors and biographers, but which seems to us to admit of a very easy solution. He was then engaged in bringing his "Cato" on the stage.

The first four acts of this drama had been lying in his desk since his return

Addison's from Italy. His modest tragedy of and sensitive nature shrank "Cato." from the risk of a public and shameful failure; and, though all who saw the manuscript were loud in praise, some thought it possible that an audience might become impatient even of very good rhetoric, and advised Addison to print the play without hazarding a representation. At length, after many fits of apprehension, the poet yielded to the urgency of his political friends, who hoped that the public would discover some analogy between the followers of Cæsar and the Tories, between Sempronius and the apostate Whigs, between Cato, struggling to the last for the liberties of Rome, and the band of patriots who still stood firm round Halifax and Wharton.

Addison gave the play to the managers of Drury Lane theatre, without stipulating for any advantage to himself. They, therefore, thought themselves

\* Miss Aikin says that the *Guardian* was launched in November, 1713 (ii. 106). It was launched in March, 1713, and was given over in the following September.

bound to spare no cost in scenery and dresses. The decorations, it is true, would not have pleased the skilful eye of Mr. Macready. Juba's waistcoat blazed with gold lace; Marcia's hoop was worthy of a duchess on the birthday; and Cato wore a wig worth fifty guineas. The prologue was written by Pope, and is undoubtedly a dignified and spirited composition. The part of the hero was excellently played by Booth. Steele undertook to pack a house. The boxes were in a blaze with the stars of the Peers in Opposition. The pit was crowded with attentive and friendly listeners from the Inns of Court and the literary coffee-houses. Sir Gilbert Heathcote, Governor of the Bank of England, was at the head of a powerful body of auxiliaries from the city;—warm men and true Whigs, but better known at Jonathan's and Garroway's than in the haunts of wits and critics.

These precautions were quite superfluous. The Tories, as a body, regarded Addison with no unkind feelings. Nor was it for their interest—professing, as they did, profound reverence for law and prescription, and abhorrence both of popular insurrections and of standing armies—to appropriate to themselves reflections thrown on the great military chief and demagogue, who, with the support of the legions and of the common people, subverted all the ancient institutions of his country. Accordingly, every shout that was raised by the members of the Kit-Cat was re-echoed by the High Churchmen of the October; and the curtain at length fell amidst thunders of unanimous applause.

The delight and admiration of the town were described by the *Guardian* in terms which we might attribute to partiality, were it not that the *Examiner*, the organ of the Ministry, held similar language. The Tories, indeed, found much to sneer at in the conduct of their opponents. Steele had on this, as on other occasions, shown more zeal than taste or judgment. The honest citizens who marched under the orders of Sir Gibby, as he was facetiously called, probably knew better when to buy and when to sell stock than when to clap and when to hiss at a play; and incurred some ridicule by making the hypocritical Sempronius their favourite,



and by giving to his insincere rants louder plaudits than they bestowed on the temperate eloquence of Cato. Wharton, too, who had the incredible effrontery to applaud the lines about flying from prosperous vice and from the power of impious men to a private station, did not escape the sarcasms of those who justly thought that he could fly from nothing more vicious or impious than himself. The epilogue, which was written by Garth, a zealous Whig, was severely and not unreasonably censured as ignoble and out of place. But Addison was described, even by the bitterest Tory writers, as a gentleman of wit and virtue, in whose friendship many persons of both parties were happy, and whose name ought not to be mixed up with factious squabbles.

Of the jests by which the triumph of the Whig party was disturbed, the most severe and happy was Bolingbroke's.

Bolingbroke's happy jest. Between two acts, he sent for Booth to his box, and presented him, before the

whole theatre, with a purse of fifty guineas for defending the cause of liberty so well against a perpetual Dictator.\*

It was April; and in April, a hundred and thirty years ago, the London season

Continued was thought to be far advanced. During a whole

"Cato." month, however, "Cato"

was performed to overflowing houses, and brought into the treasury of the theatre twice the gains of an ordinary spring. In the summer, the Drury Lane company went down to the Act at Oxford, and there, before an audience which retained an affectionate remembrance of Addison's accomplishments and virtues, his tragedy was acted during several days. The gownsmen began to besiege the theatre in the forenoon, and by one in the afternoon all the seats were filled.

About the merits of the piece which had so extraordinary an effect, the public,

we suppose, has made up its mind. To compare it

with the masterpieces of the Attic stage, with the great English dramas of the time of Elizabeth, or even with the productions of Schiller's man-

hood, would be absurd indeed. Yet it contains excellent dialogue and declamation; and, among plays fashioned on the French model, must be allowed to rank high; not indeed with *Athalie*, *Zaire*, or *Saul*, but, we think, not below *Cinna*; and certainly above any other English tragedy of the same school, above many of the plays of Corneille, above many of the plays of Voltaire and Alfieri, and above some plays of Racine. Be this as it may, we have little doubt that "Cato" did as much as the *Tatlers*, *Spectators*, and *Freeholders* united, to raise Addison's fame among his contemporaries.

The modesty and good-nature of the successful dramatist had tamed even the malignity of faction. But Malignant literary envy, it should seem, is a fiercer passion than party spirit. It was by a zealous Whig that the fiercest attack on the Whig tragedy was made. John Dennis published "Remarks on Cato," which were written with some acuteness and with much coarseness and asperity. But Addison neither defended himself nor retaliated. On many points he had an excellent defence; and nothing would have been easier than to retaliate; for Dennis had written bad odes, bad tragedies, bad comedies: he had, moreover, a larger share than most men of those infirmities and eccentricities which excite laughter; and Addison's power of turning either an absurd book or an absurd man into ridicule was unrivalled. Addison, however, serenely conscious of his superiority, looked with pity on his assailant, whose temper, naturally irritable and gloomy, had been soured by want, by controversy, and by literary failures.

But among the young candidates for Addison's favour there was one distinguished by talents above Pope's, the rest, and distinguished, we fear, not less by malignity and insincerity. Addison.

Pope was only twenty-five. But his powers had expanded to their full maturity; and his best poem, the "Rape of the Lock," had recently been published. Of his genius, Addison had always expressed high admiration. But Addison had clearly discerned, what might indeed have been discerned by an eye less penetrating than his, that the diminutive, crooked, sickly boy was eager to revenge himself on society for the unkindness of nature. In the *Spectator*, the *Essay on Criticism* had

\* "The long sway of the Duke of Marlborough," says Miss Aikin, "was here glanced at." Under favour, if Bolingbroke had meant no more than this, his sarcasm would have been pointless. The allusion was to the attempt which Marlborough had made to convert the Captain-Generalship into a patent office, to be held by himself for life. The patent was stopped by Lord Cowper.



been praised with cordial warmth; but a gentle hint had been added, that the writer of so excellent a poem would have done well to avoid ill-natured personalities. Pope, though evidently more galled by the censure than gratified by the praise, returned thanks for the admonition, and promised to profit by it. The two writers continued to exchange civilities, counsel, and small good offices. Addison publicly extolled Pope's miscellaneous pieces, and Pope furnished Addison with a prologue. This did not last long. Pope hated Dennis, whom he had injured without provocation. The appearance of the "Remarks on Cato" gave the irritable poet an opportunity of venting his malice under the show of friendship; and such an opportunity could not but be welcome to a nature which was implacable in enmity, and which always preferred the tortuous to the straight path. He published, accordingly, the "Narrative of the Pope's Frenzy of John Dennis."

"Frenzy of John Dennis." But Pope had mistaken his powers. He was a great master of invective and sarcasm. He could dissect a character in terse and sonorous couplets, brilliant with antithesis. But of dramatic talent he was altogether destitute. If he had written a lampoon on Dennis, such as that on Atticus, or that on Sporus, the old grumbler would have been crushed. But Pope writing dialogue resembled—to borrow Horace's imagery and his own—a wolf which, instead of biting, should take to kicking, or a monkey which should try to sting. The Narrative is utterly contemptible. Of argument there is not even the show; and the jests are such as, if they were introduced into a farce, would call forth the hisses of the shilling gallery. Dennis raves about the drama; and the nurse thinks that he is calling for a dram. "There is," he cries, "no peripetia in the tragedy, no change of fortune, no change at all." "Pray, good sir, be not angry," says the old woman; "I'll fetch change." This is not exactly the pleasantry of Addison.

There can be no doubt that Addison saw through this officious zeal, and felt himself deeply aggrieved by Addison's disapproval of the "Narrative." So foolish and spiteful a pamphlet could do him no good, and, if he were thought to have any hand in it, must do him harm. Gifted with incomparable powers of ridicule, he had never, even in self-defence, used those powers inhumanly

or uncourteously; and he was not disposed to let others make his fame and his interests a pretext under which they might commit outrages from which he had himself constantly abstained. He accordingly declared that he had no concern in the "Narrative," that he disapproved of it, and that if he answered the "Remarks," he would answer them like a gentleman; and he took care to communicate this to Dennis. Pope was bitterly mortified; and to this transaction we are inclined to ascribe the hatred with which he ever after regarded Addison.

In September, 1713, the *Guardian* ceased to appear. Steele had gone mad about politics. A general election had just taken place; he had been chosen member for Stockbridge, and fully expected to play a first part in Parliament. The immense success of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* had turned his head. He had been the editor of both those papers, and was not aware how entirely they owed their influence and popularity to the genius of his friend. His spirits, always violent, were now excited by vanity, ambition, and faction, to such a pitch that he every day committed some offence against good sense and good taste. All the discreet and moderate members of his own party regretted and condemned his folly. "I am in a thousand troubles," Addison wrote, "about poor Dick, and wish that his zeal for the public may not be ruinous to himself. But he has sent me word that he is determined to go on, and that any advice I may give him in this particular will have no weight with him."

Steele set up a political paper called *The Englishman*, which, as it was not supported by contributions Steele's paper, from Addison, completely failed. By this work, by some other writings of the same kind, and by the airs which he gave himself at the first meeting of the new Parliament, he made the Tories so angry that they determined to expel him. The Whigs stood by him gallantly, but were unable to save him. The vote of expulsion was regarded by all dispassionate men as a tyrannical exercise of the power of the majority. But Steele's violence and folly, though they by no means justified the steps which his enemies took, had completely disgusted his friends; nor did he ever regain the place which he had held in the public estimation.



Addison about this time conceived the design of adding an eighth volume to the *Spectator*. In June, 1714, the first number of the new series appeared, and during about six months three papers were published weekly. Nothing can be more striking than the contrast between the *Englishman* and the eighth volume of the *Spectator*—between Steele without Addison, and Addison without Steele. The *Englishman* is forgotten; the eighth volume of the *Spectator* contains, perhaps, the finest essays, both serious and playful, in the English language.

Before this volume was completed, the death of Anne produced an entire change

in the administration of public affairs. The blow fell suddenly. It found the Tory party distracted by internal feuds, and unprepared for any great effort. Harley had just been disgraced. Bolingbroke, it was supposed, would be the chief minister. But the queen was on her deathbed before the white staff had been given, and her last public act was to deliver it with a feeble hand to the Duke of Shrewsbury. The emergency produced a coalition between all sections of public men who were attached to the Protestant succession. George the First was proclaimed without opposition. A council, in which the leading Whigs had seats, took the direction of affairs till the new king should arrive. The first act of the Lords Justices was to appoint Addison their secretary.

There is an idle tradition that he was directed to prepare a letter to the king,

that he could not satisfy himself as to the style of despatches. this composition, and that the Lords Justices called in a clerk who at once did what was wanted. It is not strange that a story so flattering to mediocrity should be popular; and we are sorry to deprive dunces of their consolation. But the truth must be told. It was well observed by Sir James Mackintosh, whose knowledge of these times was unequalled, that Addison never, in any official document, affected wit or eloquence; and that his despatches are, without exception, remarkable for unpretending simplicity. Everybody who knows with what ease Addison's finest essays were produced must be convinced, that if well-turned phrases had been wanted, he would have had no difficulty in finding them. We are, however, inclined to believe that the story is not

absolutely without a foundation. It may well be that Addison did not know, till he had consulted experienced clerks, who remembered the times when William was absent on the Continent, in what form a letter from the Council of Regency to the king ought to be drawn. We think it very likely that the ablest statesman of our time, Lord John Russell, Sir Robert Peel, Lord Palmerston, for example, would, in similar circumstances, be found quite as ignorant. Every office has some little mysteries which the dullest man may learn with a little attention, and which the greatest man cannot possibly know by intuition. One paper must be signed by the chief of the department, another by his deputy. To a third the royal sign-manual is necessary. One communication is to be registered, and another is not. One sentence must be in black ink, and another in red ink. If the ablest Secretary for Ireland were moved to the India Board, if the ablest President of the India Board were moved to the War Office, he would require instruction on points like these; and we do not doubt that Addison required such instruction when he became, for the first time, Secretary to the Lords Justices.

George the First took possession of his kingdom without opposition. A new Ministry was formed, and Addison goes a new Parliament favourable to Dublin to the Whigs chosen. as Chief Sunderland was appointed Secretary—Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, Swift. and Addison again went to Dublin as Chief Secretary.

At Dublin Swift resided, and there was much speculation about the way in which the Dean and the Secretary would behave toward each other. The relations which existed between these remarkable men form an interesting and pleasing portion of literary history. They had early attached themselves to the same political party and to the same patrons. While Anne's Whig Ministry was in power, the visits of Swift to London and the official residence of Addison in Ireland had given them opportunities of knowing each other. They were the two shrewdest observers of their age. But their observations on each other had led them to favourable conclusions. Swift did full justice to the rare powers of conversation which were latent under the bashful deportment of Addison. Addison, on the other hand, discerned much good-nature under the severe look and manner of



Swift; and, indeed, the Swift of 1708 and the Swift of 1738 were two very different men.

But the paths of the two friends diverged widely. The Whig statesman loaded Addison with solid benefits. They praised Swift, asked him to dinner, and did nothing more for him. His profession laid them under a difficulty. In the State they could not promote him; and they had reason to fear that, by bestowing preferment in the church on the author of the "Tale of a Tub," they might give scandal to the public, which had no high opinion of their orthodoxy. He did not make fair allowance for the difficulties which prevented Halifax and Somers from serving him; thought himself an ill-used man; sacrificed honour and consistency to revenge; joined the Tories, and became their most formidable champion. He soon found, however, that his old friends were less to blame than he had supposed. The dislike with which the queen and the heads of the Church regarded him was insurmountable; and it was with the greatest difficulty that he obtained an ecclesiastical dignity of no great value, on condition of fixing his residence in a country which he detested.

Difference of political opinion had produced, not indeed a quarrel, but a tacit compact coolness between Swift and Addison. They at length ceased altogether and Swift to see each other. Yet there was between them a tacit compact like that between the hereditary guests in the Iliad.

Ἐγχεα δ' ἀλλήλων ἀλεώμεθα καὶ δι' ὀμίλου.  
Πολλοὶ μὲν γὰρ ἐμοὶ Τρῶες κλειτοὶ τ'  
ἐπίκουροι,  
Κτείνειν, ὃν κε θεός γε πόρῃ καὶ ποσσὶ  
κιχείω,  
Πολλοὶ δ' αὖ σοὶ Ἀχαιοὶ, ἐναίρεμεν, ὃν κε  
δύνηται.

It is not strange that Addison, who calumniated and insulted nobody, should not have calumniated or insulted Swift. But it is remarkable that Swift, to whom neither genius nor virtue was sacred, and who generally seemed to find, like most other renegades, a peculiar pleasure in attacking old friends, should have shown so much respect and tenderness to Addison.

Fortune had now changed. The acces-

sion of the house of Hanover had secured in England the liberties of the people, and in Ireland the dominion of the Protestant caste. To that caste Swift was more odious than any other man. He was hooted and even unpopularly—pelted in the streets of Addison's Dublin, and could not generous conduct. venture to ride along the strand for his health without the attendance of armed servants. Many whom he had formerly served now libelled and insulted him. At this time Addison arrived. He had been advised not to show the smallest civility to the Dean of St. Patrick's. But he answered with admirable spirit, that it might be necessary for men whose fidelity to their party was suspected to hold no intercourse with political opponents; but that one who had been a steady Whig in the worst times might venture, when the good cause was triumphant, to shake hands with an old friend who was one of the vanquished Tories. His kindness was soothing to the proud and cruelly wounded spirit of Swift; and the two great satirists resumed their habits of friendly intercourse.

Those associates of Addison, whose political opinions agreed with his, shared his good fortune. He took Tickell with him to Ireland. He procured for Budgell a lucrative place in the same kingdom. Ambrose Phillipps was provided for in England. Steele had injured himself so much by his eccentricity and perverseness, that he obtained but a very small part of what he thought his due. He was, however, knighted. He had a place in the household; and he subsequently received other marks of favour from the court.

Addison did not remain long in Ireland. In 1715 he quitted his Secretaryship for a seat at the Board of Addison's Trade. In the same year his comedy "The Drummer" was brought on the stage. The name of the author was not announced; the piece was coldly received; and some critics have expressed a doubt whether it were really Addison's. To us the evidence, both external and internal, seems decisive. It is not in Addison's best manner; but it contains numerous passages which no other writer known to us could have produced. It was again performed after Addison's death, and, being known to be his, was loudly applauded.

Towards the close of the year 1715, while the Rebellion was still raging in



Scotland,\* Addison published the first number of a paper called "The Freeholder." Its admirable political works the *Freeholder* is entitled to the first place. Even in the *Spectator* there are few serious papers nobler than the character of his friend Lord Somers; and certainly no satirical papers superior to those in which the Tory fox-hunter is introduced. This character is the original of Squire Western, and is drawn with all Fielding's force, and with a delicacy of which Fielding was altogether destitute. As none of Addison's works exhibits stronger marks of his genius than the *Freeholder*, so none does more honour to his moral character. It is difficult to extol too highly the candour and humanity of a political writer, whom even the excitement of civil war cannot hurry into unseemly violence. Oxford, it is well known, was then the stronghold of Toryism. The High Street had been repeatedly lined with bayonets in order to keep down the disaffected gowmsmen; and traitors pursued by the messengers of the Government had been concealed in the garrets of several colleges. Yet the admonition which, even under such circumstances, Addison addressed to the University, is singularly gentle, respectful, and even affectionate. Indeed, he could not find it in his heart to deal harshly even with imaginary persons. His fox-hunter, though ignorant, stupid, and violent, is at heart a good fellow, and is at last reclaimed by the clemency of the king. Steele was dissatisfied with his friend's moderation, and, though he acknowledged that the *Freeholder* was excellently written, complained that the Ministry played on a lute when it was necessary to blow the trumpet. He accordingly determined to execute a flourish after his own fashion, and tried to rouse the public spirit of the nation by means of a paper called the *Town Talk*, which is now as utterly forgotten as his *Englishman*, as his "Crisis," as his "Letter to the Bailiff of Stockbridge," as his "Reader"—in short, as everything that he wrote without the help of Addison.

In the same year in which the "Drum-

\* Miss Aikin has been most unfortunate in her account of this Rebellion. We will notice only two errors which occur in one page. She says that the Rebellion was undertaken in favour of James II., who had been fourteen years dead, and that it was headed by Charles Edward, who was not born (ii. 172).

mer" was acted, and in which the first numbers of the *Freeholder* appeared, the estrangement of Pope and Addison became complete. Addison had from the first seen that Pope was false and malevolent. Pope had discovered that Addison was jealous. The discovery was made in a strange manner. Pope had written the "Rape of the Lock" in two cantos, without supernatural machinery. These two cantos had been loudly applauded, and by none more loudly than by Addison. Then Pope thought of the Sylphs and Gnomes, Ariel, Momentilla, Crispissa, and Umbriel; and resolved to interweave the Rosicrucian mythology with the original fabric. He asked Addison's advice. Addison said that the poem as it stood was a delicious little thing, and entreated Pope not to run the risk of marring what was so excellent in trying to mend it. Pope afterwards declared that this insidious counsel first opened his eyes to the baseness of him who gave it.

Now there can be no doubt that Pope's plan was most ingenious, and that he afterwards executed it with "The Rape of great skill and success. the Lock," and But does it necessarily Addison's follow that Addison's advice vice was bad? And if Addison's advice was bad, does it necessarily follow that it was given from bad motives? If a friend were to ask us whether we would advise him to risk a small competence in a lottery of which the chances were ten to one against him, we should do our best to dissuade him from running such a risk. Even if he were so lucky as to get the thirty thousand pound prize, we should not admit that we had counselled him ill; and we should certainly think it the height of injustice in him to accuse us of having been actuated by malice. We think Addison's advice good advice. It rested on a sound principle, the result of long and wide experience. The general rule undoubtedly is that, when a successful work of imagination has been produced, it should not be recast. We cannot at this moment call to mind a single instance in which this rule has been transgressed with happy effect, except the instance of the "Rape of the Lock." Tasso recast his "Jerusalem." Akenside recast his "Pleasures of the Imagination," and his "Epistle to Curio." Pope himself, emboldened no doubt by the success with which he had expanded and remodelled the "Rape of the Lock," made the same



experiment on the "Dunciad." All these attempts failed. Who was to foresee that Pope would, once in his life, be able to do what he could not himself do twice, and what nobody else has ever done?

Addison's advice was good. But had it been bad, why should we pronounce it unworthy dishonest? Scott tells us suspicions that one of his best friends of Pope. predicted the failure of "Waverley." Herder adjured Goëthe not to take so unpromising a subject as Faust. Hume tried to dissuade Robertson from writing the "History of Charles V." Nay, Pope himself was one of those who prophesied that "Cato" would never succeed on the stage, and advised Addison to print it without risking a representation. But Scott, Goëthe, Robertson, Addison, had the good sense and generosity to give their advisers credit for the best intentions. Pope's heart was not of the same kind with theirs.

In 1715, while he was engaged in translating the Iliad, he met Addison. The meeting at a coffee-house. Phillipps at the and Budgell were there. coffee-house. But their sovereign got rid of them, and asked Pope to dine with him alone. After dinner, Addison said that he lay under a difficulty which he had for some time wished to explain. "Tickell," he said, "translated some time ago the first book of the Iliad. I have promised to look it over and correct it. I cannot therefore ask to see yours; for that would be double-dealing." Pope made a civil reply, and begged that his second book might have the advantage of Addison's revision. Addison readily agreed, looked over the second book, and sent it back with warm commendations.

Tickell's version of the first book appeared soon after this conversation. In Tickell's and the preface all rivalry Pope's versions was earnestly disclaimed. of the Iliad. Tickell declared that he should not go on with the Iliad. That enterprise he should leave to powers which he admitted to be superior to his own. His only view, he said, in publishing this specimen was to bespeak the favour of the public to a translation of the Odyssey, in which he had made some progress.

Addison, and Addison's devoted followers, pronounced both the versions good, but maintained that Tickell's had more of the original. The town gave a decided preference to Pope's. We do not think it worth while to settle such a question of precedence. Neither of the

rivals can be said to have translated the Iliad, unless, indeed, the word translation be used in the sense which it bears in the "Midsummer Night's Dream." When Bottom makes his appearance with an ass's head instead of his own, Peter Quince exclaims, "Bless thee! Bottom, bless thee! thou art translated." In this sense, undoubtedly, the readers of either Pope or Tickell may very properly exclaim, "Bless thee! Homer; thou art translated indeed."

Our readers will, we hope, agree with us in thinking that no man in Addison's situation could have acted Pope's accusation more fairly and kindly towards Pope and Addison. towards Tickell than he appears to have done. But an odious suspicion had sprung up in the mind of Pope. He fancied, and he soon firmly believed, that there was a deep conspiracy against his fame and his fortunes. The work on which he had staked his reputation was to be depreciated. The subscription, on which rested his hopes of a competence, was to be defeated. With this view Addison had made a rival translation; Tickell had consented to father it; and the wits of Button's had united to puff it.

Is there any external evidence to support this grave accusation? The answer is short. There is absolutely none.

Was there any internal evidence which proved Addison to be the author of this version? Was it a work which Tickell was incapable of producing? Surely not. Tickell was a Fellow of a College at Oxford, and must be supposed to have been able to construe the Iliad; and he was a better versifier than his friend. We are not aware that Pope pretended to have discovered any turns of expression peculiar to Addison. Had such turns of expression been discovered, they would be sufficiently accounted for by supposing Addison to have corrected his friend's lines, as he owned that he had done.

Is there anything in the character of the accused persons which makes the accusation probable? We answer confidently — nothing. Tickell was long after this time described by Pope himself as a very fair and worthy man. Addison had been during many years before the public. Literary rivals, political opponents, had kept their eyes on him. But neither envy nor faction, in their utmost rage, had ever imputed to him a single deviation from the laws of honour and of social morality.



Had he been indeed a man meanly jealous of fame, and capable of stooping to base and wicked arts for the purpose of injuring his competitors, would his vices have remained latent so long? He was a writer of tragedy: had he ever injured Rowe? He was a writer of comedy: had he not done ample justice to Congreve, and given valuable help to Steele? He was a pamphleteer: have not his good-nature and generosity been acknowledged by Swift, his rival in fame and his adversary in politics?

That Tickell should have been guilty of a villainy seems to us highly improbable.

That Addison should have been guilty of a villainy of Addison. seems to us highly improbable. But that these two men should have conspired together to commit a villainy seems to us improbable in a ten-fold degree. All that is known to us of their intercourse tends to prove that it was not the intercourse of two accomplices in crime. These are some of the lines in which Tickell poured forth his sorrow over the coffin of Addison:

"Or dost thou warn poor mortals left behind,  
A task well suited to thy gentle mind?  
Oh, if sometimes thy spotless form descend,  
To me thine aid, thou guardian genius, lend.  
When rage misguides me, or when fear alarms,  
When pain distresses, or when pleasure charms,  
In silent whisperings purer thoughts impart,  
And turn from ill a frail and feeble heart;  
Lead through the paths thy virtue trod before,  
Till bliss shall join, nor death can part us more."

In what words, we should like to know, did this guardian genius invite his pupil to join in a plan such as the editor of the *Satirist* would hardly dare to propose to the editor of the *Age*?

We do not accuse Pope of bringing an accusation which he knew to be false.

Pope's We have not the smallest treacherous doubt that he believed it to disposition—be true; and the evidence instances. on which he believed it he found in his own bad heart. His own life was one long series of tricks, as mean and as malicious as that of which he suspected Addison and Tickell. He was all stiletto and mask. To injure, to insult, and to save himself from the consequences of injury and insult by lying and equivocating, was the habit of his life. He published a lampoon on the Duke of Chandos; he was taxed with it; and he lied and equivocated. He published a lampoon on Aaron Hill; he was taxed with it; and he lied and equivocated.

He published a still fouler lampoon on Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; he was taxed with it; and he lied with more than usual effrontery and vehemence. He puffed himself and abused his enemies under feigned names. He robbed himself of his own letters, and then raised the hue and cry after them. Besides his frauds of malignity, of fear, of interest, and of vanity, there were frauds which he seems to have committed from love of fraud alone. He had a habit of stratagem—a pleasure in outwitting all who came near him. Whatever his object might be, the indirect road to it was that which he preferred. For Bolingbroke Pope undoubtedly felt as much love and veneration as it was in his nature to feel for any human being. Yet Pope was scarcely dead when it was discovered that, from no motive except the mere love of artifice, he had been guilty of an act of gross perfidy to Bolingbroke.

Nothing was more natural than that such a man as this should attribute to others that which he felt within himself. A plain, probable, coherent explanation is frankly given to him. He is certain that it is all a romance. A line of conduct scrupulously fair, and even friendly, is pursued towards him. He is convinced that it is merely a cover for a vile intrigue by which he is to be disgraced and ruined. It is vain to ask him for proofs. He has none, and wants none, except those which he carries in his own bosom.

Whether Pope's malignity at length provoked Addison to retaliate for the first and last time, cannot now be known with certainty. Pamphlet against Pope, We have only Pope's story, hastily which runs thus. A pamphlet attributed to Addison. some reflections which stung Pope to the quick. What those reflections were, and whether they were reflections of which he had a right to complain, we have now no means of deciding. The Earl of Warwick, a foolish and vicious lad, who regarded Addison with the feelings with which such lads generally regard their best friends, told Pope, truly or falsely, that this pamphlet had been written by Addison's direction. When we consider what a tendency stories have to grow, in passing even from one honest man to another honest man, and when we consider that to the name of honest man neither Pope nor the Earl of Warwick had a claim, we are not disposed to attach much importance to this anecdote.



It is certain, however, that Pope was furious. He had already sketched the

Pope's character of Atticus in retaliation prose. In his anger he in verse. turned this prose into the brilliant and energetic lines which everybody knows by heart, or ought to know by heart, and sent them to Addison. One charge which Pope has enforced with great skill is probably not without foundation. Addison was, we are inclined to believe, too fond of presiding over a circle of humble friends. Of the other imputations which these famous lines are intended to convey, scarcely one has ever been proved to be just, and some are certainly false. That Addison was not in the habit of "damning with faint praise," appears from innumerable passages in his writings; and from none more than from those in which he mentions Pope. And it is not merely unjust, but ridiculous, to describe a man who made the fortune of almost every one of his intimate friends, as "so obliging that he ne'er obliged."

That Addison felt the sting of Pope's satire keenly, we cannot doubt. That he

Addison's was conscious of one of the noble weaknesses with which he moderation was reproached, is highly and lenity. probable. But his heart, we firmly believe, acquitted him of the gravest part of the accusation. He acted like himself. As a satirist he was, at his own weapons, more than Pope's match; and he would have been at no loss for topics. A distorted and diseased body, tenanted by a yet more distorted and diseased mind—spite and envy thinly disguised by sentiments as benevolent and noble as those which Sir Peter Teazle admired in Mr. Joseph Surface—a feeble sickly licentiousness—an odious love of filthy and noisome images—these were things which a genius less powerful than that to which we owe the *Spectator* could have easily held up to the mirth and hatred of mankind. Addison had, moreover, at his command other means of vengeance which a bad man would not have scrupled to use. He was powerful in the State. Pope was a Catholic; and in those times a minister would have found it easy to harass the most innocent Catholic by innumerable petty vexations. Pope, near twenty years later, said, that "through the lenity of the government alone he could live with comfort." "Consider," he exclaimed, "the injury that a man of high rank and credit may do to a private person under penal laws and many

other disadvantages." It is pleasing to reflect that the only revenge which Addison took was to insert in the *Freeholder* a warm encomium on the translation of the Iliad, and to exhort all lovers of learning to put down their names as subscribers. There could be no doubt, he said, from the specimens already published, that the masterly hand of Pope would do as much for Homer as Dryden had done for Virgil. From that time to the end of his life he always treated Pope, by Pope's own acknowledgment, with justice. Friendship was, of course, at an end.

One reason which induced the Earl of Warwick to play the ignominious part of tale-bearer on this occasion, Addison and may have been his dislike the Countess-of the marriage which was Dowager of about to take place between Warwick. his mother and Addison. The Countess-Dowager, a daughter of the old and honourable family of the Myddletons of Chirk, a family which, in any country but ours, would be called noble, resided at Holland House. Addison had, during some years, occupied at Chelsea a small dwelling, once the abode of Nell Gwyn. Chelsea is now a district of London, and Holland House may be called a town residence. But, in the days of Anne and George I., milkmaids and sportsmen wandered between green hedges and over fields bright with daisies, from Kensington almost to the shore of the Thames. Addison and Lady Warwick were country neighbours, and became intimate friends. The great wit and scholar tried to allure the young lord from the fashionable amusements of beating watchmen, breaking windows, and rolling women in hogs-heads down Holborn Hill, to the study of letters and the practice of virtue. These well-meant exertions did little good, however, either to the disciple or to the master. Lord Warwick grew up a rake, and Addison fell in love. The mature beauty of the Countess has been celebrated by poets in language which, after a very large allowance has been made for flattery, would lead us to believe that she was a fine woman; and her rank doubtless heightened her attractions. The courtship was long. The hopes of the lover appear to have risen and fallen with the fortunes of his party. His attachment was at length matter of such notoriety that, when he visited Ireland for the last time, Rowe addressed some consolatory verses to the Chloe of Holland House. It strikes us as a little strange that, in



these verses, Addison should be called *Lycidas*—a name of singularly evil omen for a swain just about to cross St. George's Channel.

At length Chloe capitulated. Addison was indeed able to treat with her on equal terms. He had reason to

**Marriage of Addison, 1716.** expect preferment even higher than that which he had attained. He had inherited the fortune of a brother who died Governor of Madras. He had purchased an estate in Warwickshire, and had been welcomed to his domain in very tolerable verse by one of the neighbouring squires, the poetical foxhunter, William Somerville. In August, 1716, the newspapers announced that Joseph Addison, Esquire, famous for many excellent works both in verse and prose, had espoused the Countess-Dowager of Warwick.

He now fixed his abode at Holland House—a house which can boast of a greater number of inmates distinguished in political and literary history than any other private dwelling in England. His portrait now hangs there. The features are pleasing; the complexion is remarkably fair; but in the expression we trace rather the gentleness of his disposition than the force and keenness of his intellect.

Not long after his marriage he reached the height of civil greatness. The Whig

**Addison** Government had, during **appointed** some time, been torn by **Secretary** internal dissensions. Lord **of State.** Townshend led one section of the Cabinet; Lord Sunderland the other. At length, in the spring of 1717, Sunderland triumphed. Townshend retired from office, and was accompanied by Walpole and Cowper. Sunderland proceeded to reconstruct the Ministry; and Addison was appointed Secretary of State. It is certain that the seals were pressed upon him, and were at first declined by him. Men equally versed in official business might easily have been found; and his colleagues knew that they could not expect assistance from him in debate. He owed his elevation to his popularity, to his stainless probity, and to his literary fame.

But scarcely had Addison entered the Cabinet when his health began to fail. **Failing health** From one serious attack he **—resignation** recovered in the autumn; **of his office.** and his recovery was celebrated in Latin verses, worthy of his own pen, by Vincent Bourne, who was then at Trinity College, Cambridge. A relapse

soon took place; and, in the following spring, Addison was prevented by a severe asthma from discharging the duties of his post. He resigned it, and was succeeded by his friend Craggs, a young man whose natural parts, though little improved by cultivation, were quick and showy, whose graceful person and winning manners had made him generally acceptable in society, and who, if he had lived, would probably have been the most formidable of all the rivals of Walpole.

As yet there was no Joseph Hume. The ministers, therefore, were able to bestow on Addison a retiring pension of £1,500 a year. **Addison's pension.** In what form this pension was given we are not told by the biographers, and have not time to inquire. But it is certain that Addison did not vacate his seat in the House of Commons.

Rest of mind and body seemed to have re-established his health; and he thanked God, with cheerful piety, for having set him free both from his office and from his asthma. Many years seemed to be before him, and he meditated many works—a tragedy on the death of Socrates, a translation of the Psalms, a treatise on the evidences of Christianity. Of this last performance, a part, which we could well spare, has come down to us.

But the fatal complaint soon returned, and gradually prevailed against all the resources of medicine. It **Sorrows and** is melancholy to think that vexations of the last months of such a **his last years.** life should have been overclouded both by domestic and by political vexations. A tradition which began early, which has been generally received, and to which we have nothing to oppose, has represented his wife as an arrogant and imperious woman. It is said that, till his health failed him, he was glad to escape from the Countess-Dowager and her magnificent dining-room, blazing with the gilded devices of the House of Rich, to some tavern where he could enjoy a laugh, a talk about Virgil and Boileau, and a bottle of claret, with the friends of his happier days. All those friends, however, were not left to him. Sir Richard Steele had been gradually estranged by various causes. He considered himself as one who, in evil times, had braved martyrdom for his political principles, and demanded, when the Whig party was triumphant, a large compensation for what he had suffered when it was militant. The Whig leaders took a very different view of his claims.



They thought that he had, by his own petulance and folly, brought them as well

Misunder- as himself into trouble; and standing with though they did not abso- Steele. lutely neglect him, doled out favours to him with a sparing hand. It was natural that he should be angry with them, and especially angry with Addison. But what above all seems to have disturbed Sir Richard, was the elevation of Tickell, who, at thirty, was made by Addison Under-Secretary of State; while the editor of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, the author of the "Crisis," the member for Stockbridge who had been persecuted for firm adherence to the House of Hanover, was at near fifty, forced, after many solicitations and complaints, to content himself with a share in the patent of Drury Lane theatre. Steele himself says, in his celebrated letter to Congreve, that Addison, by his preference of Tickell, "incurred the warmest resentment of other gentlemen;" and everything seems to indicate that, of those resentful gentlemen, Steele was himself one.

While poor Sir Richard was brooding over what he considered as Addison's Bill for limiting unkindness, a new cause the number of quarrel arose. The of Peers Whig party, already introduced. introduced. divided against itself, was rent by a new schism. The celebrated Bill for limiting the number of Peers had been brought in. The proud Duke of Somerset, first in rank of all the nobles whose religion permitted them to sit in Parliament, was the ostensible author of the measure. But it was supported and, in truth, devised by the Prime Minister.

We are satisfied that the Bill was most pernicious; and we fear that the motives which induced Sunderland to frame it were not honourable to him. But we cannot deny that it was supported by many of the best and wisest men of that age. Nor was this strange. The royal prerogative had, within the memory of the generation then in the vigour of life, been so grossly abused, that it was still regarded with a jealousy which, when the peculiar situation of the House of Brunswick is considered, may perhaps be called immoderate. The prerogative of creating peers had, in the opinion of the Whigs, been grossly abused by Queen Anne's last ministry; and even the Tories admitted that her Majesty, in swamping, as it has since been called, the Upper House, had done what only an extreme case could justify. The theory of the English con-

stitution, according to many high authorities, was, that three independent powers, the monarchy, the nobility, and the commons, ought constantly to act as checks on each other. If this theory were sound, it seemed to follow that to put one of these powers under the absolute control of the other two was absurd. But if the number of peers were unlimited, it could not be denied that the Upper House was under the absolute control of the Crown and the Commons, and was indebted only to their moderation for any power which it might be suffered to retain.

Steele took part with the Opposition; Addison with the Ministers. Steele, in a paper called the *Plebeian*, The rival papers, "The Bill. Sunderland called for *Plebeian*" and help on Addison, and Addison obeyed the call. In "The Old Whig." a paper called the *Old Whig* he answered, and indeed refuted, Steele's arguments. It seems to us that the premises of both the controversialists were unsound, that, on those premises, Addison reasoned well and Steele ill; and that consequently Addison brought out a false conclusion, while Steele blundered upon the truth. In style, in wit, and in politeness, Addison maintained his superiority, though the *Old Whig* is by no means one of his happiest performances.\*

At first both the anonymous opponents observed the laws of propriety. But at length Steele so far forgot Steele's violent himself as to throw an and foolish odious imputation on the conduct; morals of the chiefs of the Addison's administration. Addison rebuke. replied with severity, but, in our opinion, with less severity than was due to so grave an offence against morality and decorum; nor did he, in his just anger, forget for a moment the laws of good taste and good breeding. One calumny which has been often repeated, and never yet contradicted, it is our duty to expose. It is asserted in the "Biographia Britannica" that Addison designated Steele as "little Dicky." This assertion was repeated by Johnson, who had never seen the *Old Whig*, and was therefore excusable. It has also been repeated by Miss Aikin, who has seen the *Old Whig*,

\* Miss Aikin says that these pieces, never having been reprinted, are now of extreme rarity. This is a mistake. They have been reprinted, and may be obtained without the smallest difficulty. The copy now lying before us bears the date of 1789.



and for whom therefore there is less excuse. Now, it is true that the words "little Dicky" occur in the *Old Whig*, and that Steele's name was Richard. It is equally true that the words "little Isaac" occur in the "Duenna," and that Newton's name was Isaac. But we confidently affirm that Addison's little Dicky had no more to do with Steele than Sheridan's little Isaac with Newton. If we apply the words "little Dicky" to Steele, we deprive a very lively and ingenious passage, not only of all its wit, but of all its meaning. Little Dicky was evidently the nickname of some comic actor who played the usurer Gomez, then a most popular part, in Dryden's *Spanish Friar*.\*

The merited reproof which Steele had received, though softened by some kind and courteous expressions, Steele's reply, galled him bitterly. He replied with little force and great acrimony; but no rejoinder appeared. Addison was fast hastening to his grave; and had, we may well suppose, little disposition to prosecute a quarrel with an old friend. His complaint had terminated in dropsy. He bore up long and manfully. But at length he abandoned all hope, dismissed his physicians, and calmly prepared himself to die.

His works he entrusted to the care of Tickell, and dedicated them a very few days before his death to Craggs, in a letter written with the sweet and graceful eloquence of a Saturday's *Spectator*. In this, his last composition, he alluded to his approaching end in words so manly, so cheerful, and so tender, that it is difficult to read them without tears. At the same time he earnestly recommended the interests of Tickell to the care of Craggs.

\* We will transcribe the whole paragraph. How it can ever have been misunderstood is unintelligible to us.

"But our author's chief concern is for the poor House of Commons, whom he represents as naked and defenceless, when the Crown, by losing this prerogative, would be less able to protect them against the power of a House of Lords. Who forbears laughing when the Spanish Friar represents little Dicky, under the person of Gomez, insulting the Colonel that was able to fright him out of his wits with a single frown? This Gomez, says he, flew upon him like a dragon, got him down, the Devil being strong in him, and gave him bastinado on bastinado, and buffet on buffet, which the poor Colonel, being prostrate, suffered with a most Christian patience. The improbability of the fact never fails to raise mirth in the audience; and one may venture to answer for a British House of Commons, if we may guess from its conduct hitherto, that it will scarce be either so tame or so weak as our author supposes."

Within a few hours of the time at which this dedication was written, Addison sent to beg Gay, who was then Addison's living by his wits about dying town, to come to Holland interview House. Gay went, and with Gay. was received with great kindness. To his amazement his forgiveness was implored by the dying man. Poor Gay, the most good-natured and simple of mankind, could not imagine what he had to forgive. There was, however, some wrong, the remembrance of which weighed on Addison's mind, and which he declared himself anxious to repair. He was in a state of extreme exhaustion; and the parting was doubtless a friendly one on both sides. Gay supposed that some plan to serve him had been in agitation at court, and had been frustrated by Addison's influence. Nor is this improbable. Gay had paid assiduous court to the royal family. But in the queen's days he had been the eulogist of Bolingbroke, and was still connected with many Tories. It is not strange that Addison, while heated by conflict, should have thought himself justified in obstructing the preferment of one whom he might regard as a political enemy. Neither is it strange that, when reviewing his whole life, and earnestly scrutinizing all his motives, he should think that he had acted an unkind and ungenerous part in using his power against a distressed man of letters, who was as harmless and as helpless as a child.

One inference may be drawn from this anecdote. It appears that Addison, on his deathbed, called himself to a strict account, and was not at ease till he had asked pardon for an injury which it was not even suspected that he had committed—for an injury which would have caused disquiet only to a very tender conscience. Is it not then reasonable to infer that, if he had really been guilty of forming a base conspiracy against the fame and fortunes of a rival, he would have expressed some remorse for so serious a crime? But it is unnecessary to multiply arguments and evidence for the Defence, when there is neither argument nor evidence for the Accusation.

The last moments of Addison were perfectly serene. His interview with his son-in-law is universally Addison's last known. "See," he said, moments; his "hew a Christian can death, June die!" The piety of Addi- 17, 1719. son was, in truth, of a singularly cheerful



character. The feeling which predominates in all his devotional writings is gratitude. God was to him the all-wise and all-powerful friend, who had watched over his cradle with more than maternal tenderness; who had listened to his cries before they could form themselves in prayer; who had preserved his youth from the snares of vice; who had made his cup run over with worldly blessings; who had doubled the value of those blessings by bestowing a thankful heart to enjoy them, and dear friends to partake them; who had rebuked the waves of the Ligurian gulf, had purified the autumnal air of the Campagna, and had restrained the avalanches of Mont Cenis. Of the Psalms, his favourite was that which represents the Ruler of all things under the endearing image of a shepherd, whose crook guides the flock safe through gloomy and desolate glens to meadows well watered and rich with herbage. On that goodness to which he ascribed all the happiness of his life, he relied in the hour of death with the love which casteth out fear. He died on the 17th of June, 1719. He had just entered on his forty-eighth year.

His body lay in state in the Jerusalem Chamber, and was borne thence to the Abbey at dead of night.

His funeral. The choir sung a funeral hymn. Bishop Atterbury, one of those Tories who had loved and honoured the most accomplished of the Whigs, met the corpse and led the procession by torch-light round the shrine of Saint Edward and the graves of the Plantagenets, to the Chapel of Henry the Seventh. On the north side of that chapel, in the vault of the house of Albemarle, the coffin of Addison lies next to the coffin of Montagu. Yet a few months, and the same mourners passed again along the same aisle. The same sad anthem was again chanted. The same vault was again opened; and the coffin of Craggs was placed close to the coffin of Addison.

Many tributes were paid to the memory of Addison. But one alone is now remembered. Tickell bewailed

Tributes to his memory. his friend in an elegy which would do honour to the greatest name in our literature; and which unites the energy and magnificence

of Dryden to the tenderness and purity of Cowper. This fine poem Collected was prefixed to a superb edition of Addison's works, his works. which was published in 1721 by subscription. The names of the subscribers proved how widely his fame had been spread. That his countrymen should be eager to possess his writings, even in a costly form, is not wonderful. But it is wonderful that, though English literature was then little studied on the continent, Spanish Grandees, Italian Prelates, Marshals of France, should be found in the list. Among the most remarkable names are those of the Queen of Sweden, of Prince Eugene, of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, of the Dukes of Parma, Modena, and Guastalla, of the Doge of Genoa, of the Regent Orleans, and of Cardinal Dubois. We ought to add that this edition, though eminently beautiful, is in some important points defective; nor, indeed, do we yet possess a complete collection of Addison's writings.

It is strange that neither his opulent and noble widow, nor any of his powerful and attached friends, should have thought of placing Addison in even a simple tablet, in- Statue of Poet's Corner. scribed with his name, on the walls of the Abbey. It was not till three generations had laughed and wept over his pages that the omission was supplied by the public veneration. At length, in our own time, his image, skilfully graven, appeared in Poet's Corner. It represents him, as we can conceive him, clad in his dressing-gown, and freed from his wig, stepping from his parlour at Chelsea into his trim little garden with the account of the Everlasting Club or the Loves of Hilpa and Shalum just finished for the next day's *Spectator*, in his hand. Such a mark of national respect was due to the unsullied statesman, to the accomplished scholar, to the master of pure English eloquence, to the consummate painter of life and manners. It was due, above all, to the great satirist, who alone knew how to use ridicule without abusing it, who, without inflicting a wound, effected a great social reform, and who reconciled wit and virtue, after a long and disastrous separation, during which wit had been led astray by profligacy, and virtue by fanaticism.



# BERTRAND BARÈRE.

(EDINBURGH REVIEW, APRIL, 1844.)

*Mémoires de Bertrand Barère*; publiés par MM. HIPPOLYTE CARNOT, Membre de la Chambre des Députés, et DAVID d'Angers, Membre de l'Institut: précédés d'une Notice Historique par H. CARNOT. 4 Tomes. Paris: 1843.

THIS book has more than one title to our serious attention. It is an appeal, solemnly made to posterity by a man who played a conspicuous part in great events, and who represents himself as deeply aggrieved by the rash and malevolent censure of his contemporaries. To such an appeal we shall always give ready audience. We can perform no duty more useful to society, or more agreeable to our own feelings, than that of making, as far as our power extends, reparation to the slandered and persecuted benefactors of mankind. We therefore promptly took into our consideration this copious apology for the life of Bertrand Barère. We have made up our minds; and we now purpose to do him, by the blessing of God, full and signal justice.

It is to be observed that the appellant in this case does not come into court alone. He is attended to the bar of public opinion by two compurgators who occupy highly honourable stations. One of these is M. David of Angers, member of the Institute, an eminent sculptor, and, if we have been rightly informed, a favourite pupil, though not a kinsman, of the painter who bore the same name.

The other, to whom we owe the biographical preface, is M. Hippolyte Carnot, member of the Chamber of Deputies, and son of the celebrated Director. In the judgment of M. David and of M. Hippolyte Carnot, Barère was a deserving and an ill-used man, a man who, though by no means faultless, must yet, when due allowance is made for the force of circumstances and the infirmity of human nature, be considered as on the whole entitled to our esteem. It will be for

the public to determine, after a full hearing, whether the editors have, by thus connecting their names with that of Barère, raised his character or lowered their own.

We are not conscious that, when we opened this book, we were under the influence of any feeling likely to pervert our judgment. Undoubtedly we had long entertained a most unfavourable opinion of Barère; but to this opinion we were not tied by any passion or by any interest. Our dislike was a reasonable dislike, **A reasonable dislike.** and might have been removed by reason. Indeed our expectation was, that these Memoirs would in some measure clear Barère's fame. That he could vindicate himself from all the charges which had been brought against him, we knew to be impossible; and his editors admit that he has not done so. But we thought it highly probable that some grave accusations would be refuted, and that many offences to which he would have been forced to plead guilty would be greatly extenuated. We were not disposed to be severe. We were fully aware that temptations such as those to which the members of the Convention and of the Committee of Public Safety were exposed must try severely the strength of the firmest virtue. Indeed our inclination has always been to regard with an indulgence, which to some rigid moralists appears excessive, those faults into which gentle and noble spirits are sometimes hurried by the excitement of conflict, by the maddening influence of sympathy, and by ill-regulated zeal for a public cause.

With such feelings we read this book, and compared it with other accounts of



the events in which Barère bore a part. It is now our duty to express the opinion to which this investigation has led us.

Our opinion then is this, that Barère approached nearer than any person mentioned in history or fiction, whether man or devil, to the idea of Consummate depravity. consummate and universal depravity. In him the qualities which are the proper objects of hatred, and the qualities which are the proper objects of contempt, preserve an exquisite and absolute harmony. In almost every particular sort of wickedness he has had rivals. His sensuality was immoderate; but this was a failing common to him with many great and amiable men. There have been many men as cowardly as he, some as cruel, a few as mean, a few as impudent. There may also have been as great liars, though we never met with them or read of them. But when we put every thing together, sensuality, poltroonery, baseness, effrontery, mendacity, barbarity, the result is something which in a novel we should condemn as caricature, and to which, we venture to say, no parallel can be found in history.

It would be grossly unjust, we acknowledge, to try a man situated as

Just comparison. Barère was by a severe standard. Nor have we done so. We have formed

our opinion of him by comparing him, not with politicians of stainless character, not with Chancellor D'Aguesseau, or General Washington, or Mr. Wilberforce, or Earl Grey, but with his own colleagues of the Mountain. That party included a considerable number of the worst men that ever lived; but we see in it nothing like Barère. Compared with him, Fouché seems honest; Billaud seems humane; Hébert seems to rise into dignity. Every other chief of a party, says M. Hippolyte Carnot, has found apologists: one set of men exalts the Girondists: another set justifies Danton; a third deifies Robespierre: but Barère has remained without a defender. We venture to suggest a very simple solution of this phenomenon. All the other chiefs of parties had some good qualities, and Barère had none. The genius, courage, patriotism, and humanity of the Girondist statesmen more than atoned for what was culpable in their conduct, and should have protected them from the insult of being compared with such a thing as Barère.

Danton and Robespierre were indeed bad men; but in both of them some important parts of the mind remained sound. Danton was brave and resolute, fond of pleasure, of power, and of distinction, with vehement passions, with lax principles, but with some kind and manly feelings, capable of great crimes, but capable also of friendship and of compassion. He, therefore, naturally finds admirers among persons of bold and sanguine dispositions. Robespierre was a vain, envious, and suspicious man, with a hard heart, weak nerves, and a gloomy temper. But we cannot with truth deny that he was, in the vulgar sense of the word, disinterested, that his private life was correct, or that he was sincerely zealous for his own system of politics and morals. He, therefore, naturally finds admirers among honest but moody and bitter democrats. If no class has taken the reputation of Barère under its patronage, the reason is plain: Barère had not a single virtue, nor even the semblance of one.

It is true that he was not, as far as we are able to judge, originally of a savage disposition; but this circumstance seems to us only to aggravate his guilt. There are some unhappy men constitutionally prone to the darker passions, men all whose blood is gall, and to whom bitter words and harsh actions are as natural as snarling and biting to a ferocious dog. To come into the world with this wretched mental disease is a greater calamity than to be born blind or deaf. A wretched mental disease. A man

who, having such a temper, keeps it in subjection, and constrains himself to behave habitually with justice and humanity towards those who are in his power, seems to us worthy of the highest admiration. There have been instances of this self-command; and they are among the most signal triumphs of philosophy and religion. On the other hand, a man who, having been blessed by nature with a bland disposition, gradually brings himself to inflict misery on his fellow-creatures with indifference, with satisfaction, and at length with a hideous rapture, deserves to be regarded as a portent of wickedness; and such a man was Barère. The history of his downward progress is full of instruction. Weakness, cowardice, and fickleness were born with him; the best quality which he received from nature was a good temper. These, it is true, are not very



promising materials ; yet out of materials as unpromising, high sentiments of piety and of honour have sometimes made martyrs and heroes. Rigid principles often do for feeble minds what stays do for feeble bodies. But Barère had no principles at all. His character was

Destitute of principles. equally destitute of natural and of acquired strength.

Neither in the commerce of life, nor in books, did we ever become acquainted with any mind so unstable, so utterly destitute of tone, so incapable of independent thought and earnest preference, so ready to take impressions and so ready to lose them. He resembled those creepers which must lean on something, and which, as soon as their prop is removed, fall down in utter helplessness. He could no more stand up, erect and self-supported, in any cause, than the ivy can rear itself like the oak, or the wild vine shoot to heaven like the cedar of Lebanon. It is barely possible that, under good guidance and in favourable circumstances, such a man might have slipped through life without discredit. But the unseaworthy craft, which even in still water would have been in danger of going down from its own rottenness, was launched on a raging ocean, amidst a storm in which a whole armada of gallant ships was cast away. The weakest and most servile of human beings, found himself on a sudden an actor in a Revolution which convulsed the whole civilized world. At first he fell under the influence of humane and moderate men, and talked the language of humanity and moderation. But he soon found himself surrounded by fierce and resolute spirits, scared by no danger and restrained by no scruple. He had to choose whether he would be their victim or their accomplice.

Victim or accomplice.

His choice was soon made. He tasted blood, and felt no loathing : he tasted it again, and liked it well. Cruelty became with him, first a habit, then a passion, at last a madness. So complete and rapid was the degeneracy of his nature, that within a very few months after the time when he had passed for a good-natured man, he had brought himself to look on the despair and misery of his fellow-creatures, with a glee resembling that of the fiends whom Dante saw watching the pool of seething pitch in Malebolge. He had many associates in guilt ; but he distinguished himself from them all by the Bacchanalian

exultation which he seemed to feel in the work of death. He was drunk with innocent and noble blood, laughed and shouted as he butchered, and howled strange songs and reeled in strange dances amidst the carnage. Then came a sudden and violent turn of fortune. The miserable man was hurled down from the height of power to hopeless ruin and infamy. The shock sobered him at once. The fumes of his horrible intoxication passed away. But he was now so irrecoverably depraved, that the discipline of adversity only drove him further into wickedness. Ferocious vices, of which he had never been suspected, had been developed in him by power. Another class of vices, less hateful perhaps, but more despicable, was now developed in him by poverty and disgrace. Having appalled the whole world by great crimes perpetrated under the pretence of zeal for liberty, he became the meanest of all the tools of despotism. It is not easy to settle the order of precedence among his vices ; but we are inclined to think that his baseness was, on the whole, a rarer and more marvellous thing than his cruelty.

This is the view which we have long taken of Barère's character ; but, till we read these Memoirs, we held our opinion with the diffidence which becomes a judge who has only heard one side. The case seemed strong, and in parts unanswerable : yet we did not know what the accused party might have to say for himself ; and, not being much inclined to take our fellow-creatures either for angels of light or for angels of darkness, we could not but feel some suspicion that his offences had been exaggerated. That suspicion is now at an end. The vindication is before us. It occupies four volumes. It was the work of forty years. It would be absurd to suppose that it does not refute every serious charge which admitted of refutation. How many serious charges, then, are here refuted ? Not a single one. Most of the imputations which have been thrown on Barère he does not even notice. In such cases, of course, judgment must go against him by default. The fact is, that nothing can be more meagre and uninteresting than his account of the great public transactions in which he was engaged. He gives us hardly a word of new information respect-

Charges admitting of refutation.



ing the proceedings of the Committee of Public Safety ; and, by way of compensation, tells us long stories about things which happened before he emerged from obscurity, and after he had again sunk into it. Nor is this the worst. As soon as he ceases to write trifles, he begins to

Trifles and  
lies.

write lies ; and such lies !  
A man who has never  
been within the tropics

does not know what a thunder storm means ; a man who has never looked on Niagara has but a faint idea of a cataract ; and he who has not read Barère's Memoirs may be said not to know what it is to lie. Among the numerous classes which make up the great genus *Mendacium*, the *Mendacium Vasconicum*, or Gascon lie, has, during some centuries, been highly esteemed as peculiarly circumstantial and peculiarly impudent ; and among the *Mendacia Vasconica*, the *Mendacium Barerianum* is, without doubt, the finest species. It is indeed a superb variety, and quite throws into the shade some *Mendacia* which we were used to regard with admiration. The *Mendacium Wraxallianum*, for example, though by no means to be despised, will not sustain the comparison for a moment. Seriously, we think that M. Hippolyte Carnot is much to blame in this matter. We can hardly suppose him to be worse read than ourselves in the history of the Convention, a history which must interest him deeply, not only as a Frenchman, but also as a son. He must, therefore, be perfectly aware that many of the most important statements which these volumes contain are falsehoods, such as Corneille's Dorante, or Molière's Scapin, or Colin d'Harleville's Monsieur de Crac, would have been ashamed to utter. We are far, indeed, from holding M. Hippolyte Carnot answerable for Barère's want of veracity. But M. Hippolyte Carnot has

Carnot  
censured.

arranged these Memoirs,  
has introduced them to  
the world by a laudatory

preface, has described them as documents of great historical value, and has illustrated them by notes. We cannot but think that, by acting thus, he contracted some obligations of which he does not seem to have been at all aware ; and that he ought not to have suffered any monstrous fiction to go forth under the sanction of his name, without adding a line at the foot of the page for the purpose of cautioning the reader.

We will content ourselves at present

with pointing out two instances of Barère's wilful and deliberate mendacity ; namely, his account of the death of Marie Antoinette, and his

Death of Marie  
Antoinette.

account of the death of the Girondists. His account of the death of Marie Antoinette is as follows :—  
"Robespierre in his turn proposed that the members of the Capet family should be banished, and that Marie Antoinette should be brought to trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal. He would have been better employed in concerting military measures which might have repaired our disasters in Belgium, and might have arrested the progress of the enemies of the Revolution in the west."—(Vol. ii. p. 312.)

Now, it is notorious that Marie Antoinette was sent before the Revolutionary Tribunal, not at Robespierre's instance, but in direct opposition to Robespierre's wishes. We will cite a single authority, which is quite decisive. Bonaparte, who had no conceivable motive to disguise the truth, who

Bonaparte's  
affirmation.

had the best opportunities of knowing the truth, and who, after his marriage with the Archduchess, naturally felt an interest in the fate of his wife's kinswoman, distinctly affirmed that Robespierre opposed the trying of the Queen.\* Who, then, was the person who really did propose that the Capet family should be banished, and that Marie Antoinette should be tried ? Full information will be found in the *Moniteur*.† From that valuable record it appears that, on the first of August, 1793, an orator deputed by the Committee of Public Safety addressed the Convention in a long and elaborate discourse. He asked, in passionate language, how it happened that the enemies of the republic still continued to hope for success. "Is it," he cried, "because we have too long forgotten the crimes of the Austrian woman ? Is it because we have shown so strange an indulgence to the race of our ancient tyrants ? It is time that this unwise apathy should cease ; it is time to extirpate from the soil of the republic the last roots of royalty. As for the children of Louis the Conspirator, they are hostages for the Republic. The charge of their maintenance shall be reduced to what is necessary for the food and keep of two individuals. The public

Account in the  
"Moniteur."

\* O'Meara's *Voice from St. Helena*, ii. 170.

† *Moniteur*, 2d, 7th, and 9th of August 1793.



treasure shall no longer be lavished on creatures who have too long been considered as privileged. But behind them lurks a woman who has been the cause of all the disasters of France, and whose share in every project adverse to the Revolution has long been known. National justice claims its rights over her. It is to the tribunal appointed for the trial of conspirators that she ought to be sent. It is only by striking the Austrian woman that you can make Francis and George, Charles and William, sensible of the crimes which their ministers and their armies have committed." The speaker concluded by moving, that Marie Antoinette should be brought to judgment, and should, for that end, be forthwith transferred to the Conciergerie; and that all the members of the House of Capet, with the exception of those who were under the sword of the law, and of the two children of Louis, should be banished from the French territory. The motion was carried without debate.

Now, who was the person who made this speech and this motion? It was

Barère's speech. Barère himself. It is clear, then, that Barère attributed his own mean

insolence and barbarity to one who, whatever his crimes may have been, was in this matter innocent. The only question remaining is, whether Barère was misled by his memory, or wrote a deliberate falsehood.

We are convinced that he wrote a deliberate falsehood. His memory is described by his editors as remarkably good, and must have been bad indeed if he could not remember such a fact as this. It is true that the number of murders in which he subsequently bore a part was so great, that he might well confound one with another, that he might well forget what part of the daily hecacombe was consigned to death by himself, and what part by his colleagues. But two circumstances make it quite incredible that the share which he took in the death of Marie Antoinette should have escaped his recollection. She was one of his

An illustrious victim. earliest victims. She was one of his most illustrious victims. The most hard-

ened assassin remembers the first time that he shed blood; and the widow of Louis was no ordinary sufferer. If the question had been about some milliner butchered for hiding in her garret her brother who had let drop a word against

the Jacobin club—if the question had been about some old nun, dragged to death for having mumbled what were called fanatical words over her beads—Barère's memory might well have deceived him. It would be as unreasonable to expect him to remember all the wretches whom he slew, as all the pinches of snuff that he took. But though Barère murdered many hundreds of human beings, he murdered only one Queen. That he, a small country lawyer, who, a few years before, would have thought himself honoured by a glance or a word from the daughter of so many Cæsars, should call her the Austrian woman, should send her from jail to jail, should deliver her over to the executioner, was surely a great event in his life. Whether he had reason to be proud of it or ashamed of it, is a question on which we may perhaps differ from his editors; but they will admit, we think, that he could not have forgotten it.

We, therefore, confidently charge Barère with having written a deliberate falsehood; and we have

no hesitation in saying, Deliberate falsehood. that we never, in the course of any historical researches that we have happened to make, fell in with a falsehood so audacious, except only the falsehood which we are about to expose.

Of the proceeding against the Girondists, Barère speaks with just severity. He calls it an atrocious in-

justice perpetrated against the legislators of the republic. He complains that distinguished deputies, who ought to have been readmitted to their seats in the Convention, were sent to the scaffold as conspirators. The day, he exclaims, was a day of mourning for France. It mutilated the national representation; it weakened the sacred principle, that the delegates of the people were inviolable. He protests that he had no share in the guilt. "I have had," he says, "the patience to go through the *Moniteur*, extracting all the charges brought against deputies, and all the decrees for arresting and impeaching deputies. Nowhere will you find my name. I never brought a charge against any of my colleagues, or made a report against any, or drew up an impeachment against any."\*

Proceeding against the Girondists.

Now, we affirm that this is a lie. We affirm that Barère himself took the lead



in the proceedings of the Convention against the Girondists. We affirm that

**Affirmations.** he, on the twenty-eighth of July, 1793, proposed a decree for bringing nine Girondist deputies to trial, and for putting to death sixteen other Girondist deputies without any trial at all. We affirm that, when the accused deputies had been brought to trial, and when some apprehension arose that their eloquence might produce an effect even on the Revolutionary Tribunal, Barère did, on the 8th of Brumaire, second a motion for a decree authorising the tribunal to decide without hearing out the defence; and, for the truth of every one of these things so affirmed by us, we appeal to that very *Moniteur* to which Barère has dared to appeal.\*

What M. Hippolyte Carnot, knowing, as he must know, that this book contains such falsehoods as those which we have

**Want of veracity.** exposed, can have meant, when he described it as a valuable addition to our stock of historical information, passes our comprehension. When a man is not ashamed to tell lies about events which took place before hundreds of witnesses, and which are recorded in well-known and accessible books, what credit can we give to his account of things done in corners? No historian who does not wish to be laughed at will ever cite the unsupported authority of Barère as sufficient to prove any fact whatever. The only thing, as far as we can see, on which these volumes throw any light, is the exceeding baseness of the author.

So much for the veracity of the Memoirs. In a literary point of view, they are

**Beneath criticism.** beneath criticism. They are as shallow, flippant, and affected, as Barère's oratory in the Convention. They are also, what his oratory in the Convention was not, utterly insipid. In fact, they are the mere dregs and rinsings of a bottle, of which even the first froth was but of very questionable flavour.

We will now try to present our readers with a sketch of this man's life. We shall, of course, make very sparing use indeed of his own Memoirs; and never without distrust, except where they are confirmed by other evidence.

Bertrand Barère was born in the year 1755, at Tarbes in Gascony. His father

\* *Moniteur*, 31st of July, 1793, and *Nonidi*, first Decade of Brumaire, in the year 2.

was the proprietor of a small estate at Vieuzac, in the beautiful vale of Argeles. Bertrand always loved to be called Barère de Vieuzac, and flattered himself with the hope that, by the help of this feudal addition to his name, he might pass for a gentleman. He was edu-

**Birth and education.** cated for the bar at Toulouse, the seat of one of the most celebrated parliaments of the kingdom, practised as an advocate with considerable success, and wrote some small pieces, which he sent to the principal literary societies in the south of France. Among provincial towns, Toulouse seems to have been remarkably rich in indifferent versifiers and critics. It gloried especially in one venerable institution, called the Academy of the Floral Games. This body held every year a grand meeting, which

was a subject of intense interest to the whole city, and at which flowers of gold and silver were given as prizes for odes, for idyls, and for something that was called eloquence. These bounties produced of course the ordinary effect of bounties, and turned people who might have been thriving attorneys and useful apothecaries into small wits and bad poets. Barère does not appear to have been so lucky as to obtain any of these precious flowers; but one of his performances was mentioned with honour. At Montauban he was more fortunate. The Academy of that town bestowed on him several prizes, one for a panegyric on Louis the Twelfth, in which the blessings of monarchy and the loyalty of the French nation were set forth; and another for a panegyric on poor Franc de Pompidan, in which, as may easily be supposed, the philosophy of the eighteenth century was sharply assailed. Then Barère found an old stone inscribed with three Latin words, and wrote a dissertation upon it, which procured him a

**Early writings.** seat in a learned Assembly, called the Toulouse Academy of Sciences, Inscriptions, and Polite Literature. At length the doors of the Academy of the Floral Games were opened to so much merit. Barère, in his thirty-third year, took his seat as one of that illustrious brotherhood, and made an inaugural oration which was greatly admired. He apologizes for recounting these triumphs of his youthful genius. We own that we cannot blame him for dwelling long on the least dis-



graceful portion of his existence. To send in declamations for prizes offered by provincial academies, is indeed no very useful or dignified employment for a bearded man; but it would have been well if Barère had always been so employed.

In 1785 he married a young lady of considerable fortune. Whether she was in other respects qualified to make a home happy, is a point respecting which we are imperfectly informed. In a little work entitled *Melancholy Pages*, which was written in 1797, Barère avers that his marriage was one of mere convenience,

A marriage of convenience. that at the altar his heart was heavy with sorrowful forebodings, that he turned

pale as he pronounced the solemn "Yes," that unbidden tears rolled down his cheeks, that his mother shared his presentiment, and that the evil omen was accomplished. "My marriage," he says, "was one of the most unhappy of marriages." So romantic a tale, told by so noted a liar, did not command our belief. We were, therefore, not much surprised to discover that, in his *Memoirs*, he calls his wife a most amiable woman, and declares that, after he had been united to her six years, he found her as amiable as ever. He complains, indeed, that she was too much attached to royalty and to the old superstition; but he assures us that his respect for her virtues induced him to tolerate her prejudices. Now Barère, at the time of his marriage, was himself a Royalist and a Catholic. He had gained one prize by flattering the Throne, and another by defending the Church. It is hardly possible, therefore, that disputes about politics or religion

Politics and religion.

should have embittered his domestic life till some time after he became a

husband. Our own guess is, that his wife was, as he says, a virtuous and amiable woman, and that she did her best to make him happy during some years. It seems clear that, when circumstances developed the latent atrocity of his character, she could no longer endure him, refused to see him, and sent back his letters unopened. Then it was, we imagine, that he invented the fable about his distress on his wedding day.

In 1788 Barère paid his first visit to Paris, attended reviews, heard Laharpe at the Lycæum, and Condorcet at the Academy of Sciences, stared at the envoys of Tippoo Saib, saw the Royal

Family dine at Versailles, and kept a journal in which he noted down adventures and speculations.

Some parts of this journal are printed in the first volume of the work before us, and are certainly most characteristic. The worst vices of the writer had not yet shown themselves; but the weakness which was the parent of those vices appears in every line. His levity, his inconsistency, his servility, were already what they were to the last. All his opinions, all his feelings, spin round and round like a weathercock in a whirlwind. Nay, the very impressions which he receives through his senses are not the same two days together. He sees Louis the Sixteenth, and is so much blinded by loyalty

First visit to Paris.

as to find his Majesty handsome. "I fixed my eyes," he says, "with a lively curiosity on his fine countenance, which I thought open and noble." The next time that the King appears, all is altered. His Majesty's eyes are without the smallest expression; he has a vulgar laugh which seems like idiocy, an ignoble figure, an awkward gait, and the look of a big boy ill brought up. It is the same with more important questions. Barère is for the parliaments on the Monday and against the parliaments on the Tuesday, for feudality in the morning and against feudality in the afternoon. One day he admires the English constitution; then he shudders to think that, in the struggles by which that constitution had been obtained, the barbarous islanders had murdered a king, and gives the preference to the constitution of Bearn. Bearn, he says, has a sublime constitution, a beautiful constitution. There the nobility and clergy meet in one house and the Commons in another. If the houses differ, the King has the casting vote. A few weeks later we find him raving against the principles of this sublime and beautiful constitution. To admit deputies of the nobility and clergy into the legislature is, he says, neither more nor less than to admit enemies of the nation into the legislature.

Remarks on Louis XVI.

In this state of mind, without one settled purpose or opinion, the slave of the last word, royalist, aristocrat, democrat, according to the prevailing sentiment of the coffee-house or drawing-room into which he had just looked, did Barère enter into public life.

Representation of the Third Estate.



The States-General had been summoned. Barère went down to his own province, was there elected one of the representatives of the Third Estate, and returned to Paris in May 1789.

A great crisis, often predicted, had at last arrived. In no country, we conceive,

A predicted crisis.

have intellectual freedom and political servitude existed together so long as in France, during the seventy or eighty years which preceded the last convocation of the Orders. Ancient abuses and new theories flourished in equal vigour side by side. The people, having no constitutional means of checking even the most flagitious misgovernment, were indemnified for oppression by being suffered to luxuriate in anarchical speculation, and to deny or ridicule every principle on which the institutions of the state reposed. Neither those who attribute the downfall of the old French institutions to the public grievances, nor those who attribute it to the doctrines of the philosophers, appear to us to have taken into their view more than one half of the subject. Grievances as heavy have often been endured without producing a revolution; doctrines as bold have often been propounded without producing a revolution. The question, whether the French nation was alienated from its old polity by the follies and vices of the Viziers and Sultanas who pillaged and disgraced it, or by the writings of Voltaire and Rousseau, seems to us as idle as the question whether it was fire or gunpowder that blew up the mills at Hounslow. Neither cause would have sufficed alone. Tyranny may last through ages where discussion is suppressed. Discussion may safely be left free by rulers who act on popular principles. But combine a press like that of London, with a government like that of St. Petersburg, and the inevitable effect will be an explosion that will shake the world. So it was in France. Despotism and License, mingling in unblest union, engendered that mighty Revolution in which the lineaments of both parents were strangely blended. The long gestation was accomplished; and Europe saw, with mixed hope and terror, that agonizing travail and that portentous birth.

Among the crowd of legislators which at this conjuncture poured from all the provinces of France into Paris, Barère made no contemptible figure. The opinions which he for the moment pro-

fessed were popular, yet not extreme. His character was fair; his personal advantages are said to have been considerable; and character. Appearance and, from the portrait

which is prefixed to these Memoirs, and which represents him as he appeared in the Convention, we should judge that his features must have been strikingly handsome, though we think that we can read in them cowardice and meanness very legibly written by the hand of God. His conversation was lively and easy; his manners remarkably good for a country lawyer. Women of rank and wit said that he was the only man who, on his first arrival from a remote province, had that indescribable air which it was supposed that Paris alone could give. His eloquence, indeed, was by no means so much admired in the capital as it had been by the ingenious academicians of Montauban and Toulouse. His style was thought very bad; and very bad, if a foreigner may venture to judge, it continued to the last. It would, however, be unjust to deny that he had some talents for speaking and writing. His rhetoric, though deformed by every imaginable fault of taste, from bombast down to buffoonery, was not wholly without force and vivacity. He had also one quality which, in active life, often gives

Qualities.

fourth-rate men an advantage over first-rate men. Whatever he could do, he could do without effort, at any moment, in any abundance, and on any side of any question. There was, indeed, a perfect harmony between his moral character and his intellectual character. His temper was that of a slave; his abilities were exactly those which qualified him to be a useful slave. Of thinking to purpose, he was utterly incapable; but he had wonderful readiness in arranging and expressing thoughts furnished by others.

In the National Assembly he had no opportunity of displaying the full extent either of his talents or of his vices. He was indeed eclipsed by much abler men. He went, as was his habit, with the stream, spoke occasionally with some success, and edited a journal called the *Point du Jour*, in which the debates of the Assembly were reported.

Edits a journal.

He at first ranked by no means among the violent reformers. He was not friendly to that new division of the French territory which was among the most im-



portant changes introduced by the Revolution, and was especially unwilling to see his native province dismembered. He was entrusted with the task of framing Reports on the Woods and Forests.

Reports on the woods and forests. Louis was exceedingly anxious about this matter; for his Majesty was a keen sportsman, and

would much rather have gone without the Veto, or the prerogative of making peace and war, than without his hunting and shooting. Gentlemen of the royal household were sent to Barère, in order to intercede for the deer and pheasants. Nor was this intercession unsuccessful. The reports were so drawn, that Barère was afterwards accused of having dishonestly sacrificed the interests of the public to the tastes of the court. To one of these reports he had the inconceivable folly and bad taste to prefix a punning motto from Virgil, fit only for such essays as he had been in the habit of composing for the Floral Games—

“*Si canimus sylvas, sylvæ sint Consule dignæ.*”

This literary foppery was one of the few things in which he was consistent. Royalist or Girondist, Jacobin or Imperialist, he was always a Trissotin.

As the monarchical party became weaker and weaker, Barère gradually estranged himself more and more from it, and drew closer and closer

Draws closer to the republicans. It would seem that, during this transition, he was for

a time closely connected with the family of Orleans. It is certain that he was entrusted with the guardianship of the celebrated Pamela, afterwards Lady Edward Fitzgerald; and it was asserted that he received during some years a pension of twelve thousand francs from the Palais Royal.

At the end of September 1791 the labours of the National Assembly terminated, and those of the first and last Legislative Assembly commenced.

It had been enacted that no member of the National Assembly should sit in the Legislative Assembly; a

A preposterous regulation. preposterous and mischievous regulation, to

which the disasters which followed must in part be ascribed. In England, what would be thought of a parliament which did not contain one single person who had ever sat in Parliament before? Yet it may safely be affirmed, that the number

of Englishmen who, never having taken any share in public affairs, are yet well qualified, by knowledge and observation, to be members of the legislature, is at least a hundred times as great as the number of Frenchmen who were so qualified in 1791. How, indeed, should it have been otherwise? In England, centuries of representative government have made all educated people in some measure statesmen. In France, the National Assembly had probably been composed of as good materials as were then to be found. It had undoubtedly removed a vast mass of abuses; some of its members had read and thought much about theories of government; and others had shown great oratorical talents. But that kind of skill which is required for the constructing, launching, and steering of a polity was lamentably wanting; for it is a kind of skill to which practice contributes more than books. Books are indeed useful to the politician, as they are useful to the navigator and to the surgeon. But the real navigator is formed on the waves; the real surgeon is formed at bedsides; and the conflicts of free states are the real school of constitutional statesmen. The National Assembly had, however, The National Assembly. now served an apprenticeship of two laborious and eventful years. It had, indeed, by no means finished its education; but it was no longer, as on the day when it met, altogether rude to political functions. Its later proceedings contain abundant proof that the members had profited by their experience. Beyond all doubt, there was not in France any equal number of persons possessing in an equal degree the qualities necessary for the judicious direction of public affairs; and, just at this moment, these legislators, misled by a childish wish to display their own disinterestedness, deserted the duties which they had half learned, and which nobody else had learned at all, and left their hall to a second crowd of novices, who had still to master the first rudiments of political business. When Barère wrote his Memoirs, the absurdity of this Self-denying Ordinance had been proved by events, and was, we believe, acknowledged by all parties. He accordingly, with his usual mendacity, speaks of it in terms implying that he had opposed it. There was, he tells us, no good citizen who did not regret this fatal vote. Nay, all wise men, he says, wished the National Assembly to con-



tinued its sittings as the first Legislative Assembly. But no attention was paid to the wishes of the enlightened friends of liberty; and the generous but fatal suicide was perpetrated. Now the fact is, that Barère, far from opposing this ill-advised measure, was one of those who most eagerly supported it; that he described it from the tribune as wise and magnanimous; and that he assigned, as his reasons for taking this view, some of those phrases in which orators of his class delight, and which, on all men who have the smallest insight into politics, produce an effect very similar to that of ipecacuanha. "Those," he said, "who have framed a constitution for their country, are, so to speak, out of the pale of that social state of which they are the authors; for creative power is not in the same sphere with that which it has created."

M. Hippolyte Carnot has noticed this untruth, and attributes it to mere forgetfulness. We leave it to him to reconcile his very charitable supposition with which he elsewhere says of the remarkable excellence of Barère's memory.

Many members of the National Assembly were indemnified for the sacrifice of legislative power, by appointments in various departments of the public service. Of these fortunate persons Barère was

Court of  
Appeal.

one. A high Court of Appeal had just been instituted. This court was

to sit at Paris; but its jurisdiction was to extend over the whole realm, and the departments were to choose the judges. Barère was nominated by the department of the Upper Pyrenees, and took his seat in the Palace of Justice. He asserts, and our readers may, if they choose, believe, that it was about this time in contemplation to make him Minister of the Interior, and that, in order to avoid so grave a responsibility, he obtained permission to pay a visit to his native place. It is certain that he left Paris early in the year 1792, and passed some months in the south of France.

In the meantime, it became clear that the constitution of 1791 would not work.

The constitution  
of 1791.

It was, indeed, not to be expected, that a constitution new both in its principles and its details would at first work easily. Had the chief magistrate enjoyed the entire confidence of the people, had he performed his part with the utmost zeal, fidelity, and ability, had the representative body included all

the wisest statesmen of France, the difficulties might still have been found insuperable. But, in fact, the experiment was made under every disadvantage. The King, very naturally, hated the constitution. In the Legislative Assembly were men of genius and men of good intentions, but not a single man of experience. Nevertheless, if France had been suffered to settle her own affairs without foreign interference, it is possible that the calamities which followed might have been averted. The King who, with many good qualities, was sluggish and sensual, might have found compensation for his lost prerogatives in his immense civil list, in his palaces and hunting grounds, in soups, Perigord pies, and Champagne. The people, finding themselves secure in the enjoyment of the valuable reforms which the National Assembly had, in the midst of all its errors, effected, would not have been easily excited by demagogues to acts of atrocity; or, if acts of atrocity had been committed, those acts would probably have produced a speedy and violent reaction. Had tolerable quiet been preserved during a few years, the constitution of 1791 might perhaps have taken root, might have gradually acquired the strength which time alone can give, and might, with some modifications which were undoubtedly needed, have lasted down to the present time. The European coalition against the Revolution extinguished all hope of such a result. The European coalition.

The deposition of Louis was, in our opinion, the necessary consequence of that coalition. The question was now no longer, whether the King should have an absolute Veto or a suspensive Veto, whether there should be one chamber or two chambers, whether the members of the representative body should be re-eligible or not; but whether France should belong to the French. The independence of the nation, the integrity of the territory, were at stake; and we must say plainly, that we cordially approve of the conduct of those Frenchmen who, at that conjuncture, resolved, like our own Blake, to play the men for their country, under whatever form of government their country might fall.

It seems to us clear that the war with the Continental coalition was, on the side of France, at first a defensive war, and therefore a just war. It was not a war for small objects, or against despicable



enemies. On the event were staked all the dearest interests of the French people. Foremost among the threatening powers

**A just war.** appeared two great and martial monarchies, either of which, situated as France then was, might be regarded as a formidable assailant. It is evident that, under such circumstances, the French could not, without extreme imprudence, entrust the supreme administration of their affairs to any person whose attachment to the national cause admitted of doubt. Now, it is no reproach to the

**Louis XVI.** memory of Louis to say, that he was not attached to the national cause. Had he been so, he would have been something more than man. He had held absolute power, not by usurpation, but by the accident of birth and by the ancient polity of the kingdom. That power he had, on the whole, used with lenity. He had meant well by his people. He had been willing to make to them, of his own mere motion, concessions such as scarcely any other sovereign has ever made except under duress. He had paid the penalty of faults not his own, of the haughtiness and ambition of some of his predecessors, of the dissoluteness and baseness of others. He had been vanquished, taken captive, led in triumph, put in ward. He had escaped; he had been caught; he had been dragged back like a runaway galley-slave to the oar. He was still a state prisoner. His quiet was broken by daily affronts and lampoons. Accustomed from the cradle to be treated with profound reverence, he was now forced to command his feelings, while men who, a few months before, had been hackney writers or country attorneys, sat in his presence with covered heads, and addressed him in the easy tone of equality. Conscious of fair intentions, sensible of hard usage, he doubtless detested the Revolution; and, while charged with the conduct of the war against the confederates, pined in secret for the sight of the German eagles and the sound of the German drums. We do not blame him for this. But can we blame those who, being resolved to defend the work of the National Assembly against the interference of strangers, were not disposed to have him at their head in the fearful struggle which was approaching? We have nothing to say in defence or extenuation of the insolence, injustice, and cruelty, with which, after the victory of the re-

publicans, he and his family were treated. But this we say, that the French had only one alternative, to deprive him of the powers of first magistrate, or to ground their arms and submit patiently to foreign dictation. The events of the tenth of August **Events of August 10th.** sprang inevitably from the league of Pilnitz. The King's palace was stormed; his guards were slaughtered. He was suspended from his regal functions; and the Legislative Assembly invited the nation to elect an extraordinary Convention, with the full powers which the conjuncture required. To this Convention the members of the National Assembly were eligible; and Barère was chosen by his own department.

The Convention met on the twenty-first of September 1792. The first proceedings were unanimous. **Royalty abolished.** Royalty was abolished by acclamation. No objections were made to this great change, and no reasons were assigned for it. For certainly we cannot honour with the name of reasons such apophthegms, as that kings are in the moral world what monsters are in the physical world; and that the history of kings is the martyrology of nations. But though the discussion was worthy only of a debating-club of schoolboys, the resolution to which the Convention came seems to have been that which sound policy dictated. In saying this, we do not mean to express an opinion that a republic is, either in the abstract the best form of government, or is, under ordinary circumstances, the form of government best suited to the French people. Our own opinion is, that the best governments which **Governments.** have ever existed in the world have been limited monarchies; and that France, in particular, has never enjoyed so much prosperity and freedom as under a limited monarchy. Nevertheless, we approve of the vote of the Convention which abolished kingly government. The interference of foreign powers had brought on a crisis which made extraordinary measures necessary. Hereditary monarchy may be, and we believe that it is, a very useful institution in a country like France. And masts are very useful parts of a ship. But, if the ship is on her beam-ends, it may be necessary to cut the masts away. When once she has righted, she may come safe into port under jury rigging, and there be completely repaired. But, in the meantime,