

THE
MYSTERIOUS PICTURE.

BY WRANGHAM FITZ-RAMBLE, ESQ.

Edge Clayton

Hence *Satire's* power: 'Tis her corrective part
To calm the wild disorders of the heart.
She points the arduous height where glory lies,
And teaches mad Ambition to be wise:
In the dark bosom wakes the fair desire,
Draws good from ill, a brighter flame from fire.
Strips black Oppression of her gay disguise,
And bids the Hag in native horror rise;
Strikes towering Pride and lawless Rapine dead,
And plants the wreath on Virtue's awful head."

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Southern District of New-York, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the first day of October, A.D. 1825, in the fiftieth year of the Independence of the United States of America, Collins & Hannay, of the said district, have deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as Proprietors, in the words following, to-wit:

"The Mysterious Picture. By Wrangham Fitz-Ramble, Esq."

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled "An Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned," and also to an Act, entitled "An Act, supplementary to an Act, entitled An Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other Prints."

JAMES DILL,

Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.

THE MYSTERIOUS PICTURE.

“ Let Satire then, her proper object know,
And ere she strike, be sure she strike a foe.”

In nothing has the press been so useful as in the correction of fashionable vice, and in the reproof of those little unmeaning follies that seem to hang in clusters upon all the varied relations of society.

To reform the manners, to refine the morals, to chasten the taste, and to invigorate the judgment of social life, has, in every age, been the legitimate office of satire, and a privilege which every writer has assumed, who chooses either to risk the mortification of unsuccessful essays, or contempt for unsolicited advice; in other words, who, like the author of a bad story, ventures his wit at the hazard of his discretion, and often produces a laugh, even at his own expense.

That the time has arrived, when something should be attempted, no one will deny; for, besides the interest which the cause of virtue has

in this matter, never was there such an urgent necessity for some repose from the turmoil of politics; some relaxation from the conflicts of party, and some respite from the rage of passion. Since every thing has been swallowed up in the uproar of political strife, and the press has groaned under the rancour of rivalry and the revenge of contending interests; since it has teemed with nothing else than the fiery zeal of ambition, and the inordinate desire of power, all urged by concealed incentives and shrouded motives, the prim follies and pert vices of the times have had a most triumphant reign. The lash of satire has been perfectly undreaded, and the wailings of Christian benevolence equally unheeded; the one has sheathed its sword in disgust, and the other has folded its arms in despair; for, until the sickly temper and fretful irritation which has so long spell-bound the public mind, shall have delivered up its reason and reflection to their wonted exercise, every effort of literary discipline will be worse than useless, and every essay to amuse, vexatiously abortive.

Revolving this subject in my mind, and believing that, with the presidential election would pass away those feuds which have scattered

through the land such wide-spread discord; a rational hope has been indulged, that gentle invective, if properly pointed, and sober reproof, if timely directed, would resume their accustomed sway, and finally compel their authority to be felt and feared.

I do not flatter myself that I shall be a successful instrument in their hands; but it is the right of all, and the duty of some, to make the attempt; contenting themselves with this truth, that he who *dares well, does well*; for it is better to fail in a *great* undertaking, than succeed in a *small* one; especially when supported by this consolation, that he who in such a case becomes disappointed, has vastly more company than confusion in his misfortune.

In nothing is a good beginning so all important, as in gratuitous scribbling; for, if the writer does not reach his reader through some of his livelier sensibilities; if he does not make him learn or laugh, feel or fancy, he puts no one to shame but himself, and no one to trouble but his printer. Knowing this, I have been greatly perplexed in selecting a leading essay, or proper frontispiece for my speculations; and, though surrounded by the most copious materials, I was

unfurnished with any plan calculated to turn them off with striking effect, or to impart the form of imposing originality. But for a singular and somewhat incredible interposition, I must have inevitably failed.

As I lay, meditating upon this subject, in one of the long winter nights of January, tossing from one side of my bed to the other, my pillow sometimes under, and sometimes over my head, frequently encircled in my arm, and my face buried in its centre, a slow-moving form entered my chamber; and, by a dim and fitful light in the hearth, I saw it approach the place of my dozings. It beckoned me to rise and follow it. Startled, as is usual to persons in imperfect slumber, I made a mental struggle to ascertain whether I was asleep or awake; but was unable to determine, and am not now conscious to which of those states my faculties belonged; the sequel, however, has always favoured the idea that I must have been the sport of a *vision*. This, though, I shall leave to my intelligent readers.

"You have nothing to fear," said the Genius, for such he called himself; "I have beheld your difficulties, and am ordered to furnish the

relief; arise, follow me; and strange as it may appear, I will discover to you an *unknown world of thought*, where *mortal* research has never penetrated, and which *human* ingenuity can never fathom."

I instantly arose, and seemed to possess a surprising activity of body, and a subtle elasticity of mind; in the first, to move without exertion, and in the last, to think without an effort.

"You find, by your new feelings," said the Genius, "that you have the power to comprehend any subject in the twinkling of an eye, and of running through the varied and complicated operations of the mind, at a single glance, and with intuitive readiness. Now, before we proceed any further, it will be necessary to state some things concerning which you have never perhaps had the least conception. The intellectual domain is divided into two great, distinct, and independent sovereignties, to wit, its *open* and *secret* thoughts. With the former you are acquainted; but of the latter, which is much the largest, you know nothing. Vast as is the first, by reason of that constant current of *thought* which is ever flowing from *mind*, and is either directly expressed, or evinced in some overt-act,

to be found in the illimitable field of conversation, in the immeasurable range of human action, and in the millions of volumes that are now too onerous for the source from which they sprung, and are, to ninety-nine hundredths of the world, as though they had never been. Yet these are as nothing to the incomprehensible stores of *thought* that lie hid and hermetically sealed from all observation. With this unexplored region of fantastic imaginings, it is my business and intention to make you acquainted."

He had scarcely finished, before he glided away, and I felt myself involuntarily following, without any sensation of contact with either earth or air. In a very short time we were standing in the portico of a superb and spacious building; and, by the music that issued from the interior, I had no difficulty in learning, that, within its hallowed walls, there was an immense concourse of people engaged in the humble and obedient exercise of devotional duty.

"Here," said the Genius, "are collected together all ages and sexes, all professions and callings. It is impossible to conceive of any of the great diversities or minor distinctions of human character, or its ramified interests

and speculative pursuits, that are not present in this spontaneous assemblage. Indeed, it is an abstract and selected sample of *mind*, exhibited under all those astonishing mutations of which it is susceptible; and are best calculated to test its finer properties, its peculiar lights and delicate shades, and, at the same time, display the vast varieties of its intricate functions. They are assembled for the simple and worthy purpose of public worship; and one would suppose, that in this situation, we should be apt to find the fairest and most favourable specimen of *secret thoughts*. The time, the place, the object, and the sympathetic feelings, inspired by the enrapturing praise and adoration of heaven and earth's great Master, would naturally call home the idle wanderings of the mind, and fix it upon the pleasing contemplation of that last best state for which it should be prepared. But in a few moments you will be overwhelmed with wonder and amazement, at a very different spectacle. We will now enter, and in the most interesting part of the sermon, which shall be, as you will perceive and own, well suited to arouse the most sluggish apathy, and rivet attention, I will strike dumb and motionless the speaker and his audi-

ence, and arrest all the energies and faculties of life, taking especial care to fix permanently upon the brain, the last train of reflection that was passing through that wonderful organ at the precise instant of its suspended powers; and then, by a curious and rather humorous contrivance, will enable you to peruse at your leisure, and to your very great interest and amusement, this astonishing volume of secret, this awe-striking and hidden scroll of moral treason—this, which is its real name, and by which it must hereafter be called, MYSTERIOUS PICTURE.”

Accordingly we entered; not, however, without a sense, on my part, of a cold shivering sensation, and heart-sickening dread of the result. The scene was so novel, the excursion so strange and unexpected, and the whole project so unearthly, that I had not time to accommodate my feelings to what I conceived a species of enchantment. I stood with blood-chilled and anxious emotion, watching the operations of the Genius; and my lively attention was constantly glued to his every movement. I could hear the voice of the preacher, animated and fervent in a high degree, rise with impassioned tones and fall with pathetic cadences; it was answered by the groans and

sobs of his congregation. Then stretching my eyes towards my guide, I perceived, by the workings of his countenance, and the dancing sprightliness of his eye, that the critical moment was at hand, when the promised charm was to be consummated. He suddenly raised his hand, the palm downwards, his arm outstretched, and horizontal with his body, then dropping it in a lifeless manner to his side—in an instant the solemn work was done.

When I surveyed this immense crowd in a state of apparent torpor, possessing the same complexion, cast of countenance, and expression of eye, as if alive, in the death-like stillness and inflexibility of statues, the inward employment of whose minds was shortly to be in my power, I felt an impressive distrust of my own firmness, and a repulsive dread of the scene. I seemed to think that I was meddling with what did not belong to me; that I was lurking around the privacy, and prying into the secrets of heart which ought to be held sacred, by reason of their undivulged nature, and, in virtue of their deep concealment in the very folds of life; that I was taking an ungenerous advantage of a sudden and unavoidable misfortune, which foreclosed

the mind from all preparation for such a distressing examination. Indeed I would have given any thing to have silently withdrawn, and to have refused an insight into this serious and delicate developement, and for this purpose I fondly asked myself, "Is it not all a dream? Exert yourself, and try to shake off the delusion, and by that means escape from this unsought dilemma, and fly from what you so much dislike." But at this moment the Genius approached me, sternly saying, "You are not asleep—it is no phantom—you are compelled, not only to witness, but to reveal the whole; and why should you be afraid or ashamed to do so? There is *One*, infinitely greater than you, the source of all virtue and the fountain of all purity, before whom you are as a loathsome worm, obliged daily to behold these vain imaginations; there is not a secret spring, or the lightest conceivable emotion of the mind, that is not instantly open to his view. And if these people are not ashamed to indulge before *Him*, what you will soon discover, why should they be before you, even if they were sensible of it? Do you imagine they care more for you than *Him*? Besides, suppose that sudden death had seized them, would it not

have taken them in these very thoughts? and will they not, as well as all others, in a coming day, be exposed to the gaze of an assembled world? They wrong themselves; you do them no injury; come, then, and I will show you how to get at the contents of each story, drama, novel, romance, or whatever else you may choose to call it, in this singular sleeping library." So saying, he carried me to the head of a middle-aged man, plainly dressed in neat homespun clothes, who had been caught with his face half-turned from the pulpit, his cheek resting on his hand, supported by his arm doubled and thrown across the back of his seat. The Genius then took hold of my thumb, and raising it to the back part of this person's head, placed it upon a small circular bone, that juts from a crease just at the insertion of the neck, and pressing it quickly, the upper part of the head, as by a spring, like the case of a watch, immediately flew over upon the face, and rested upon a concealed hinge on the inside of the forehead. I felt at first afraid to look into the scull, but stealing a sly glance at the brain, I looked round for the Genius, and found him with his lower lip compressed between his teeth, as if to suppress a smile; and giving

me a kind of confidential nod; I proceeded to examine the distinctly marked ideas that circulated through its inmost recesses. I found that I had the faculty of perceiving and understanding them in an instant of time; and such was the rapidity with which I could perform this most marvellous work, that I could not have been more than two hours in examining the whole throng.

O what a scene I beheld! It tortures me at this very moment to think of it. I am the constant subject of a most unquiet solicitude, a restless anxiety, an inexpressible weight of heart. I eagerly inquire of myself, Can it be possible that this is a *reality*? Have I seen any thing like it in the round of business, or in the walks of pleasure? Have I ever witnessed it bestaining the refinement of social life, corrupting the intercourse of man, or degrading the dignity of his nature? These are questions I dare not answer; let impartial readers listen and determine.

Having given a faithful account of the *manner* in which this *Mysterious Picture* was exhibited to me, it is my intention to give equally as faithful a description of its truly variegated parts;

not by any means answering for its reality; for such is the nervous sensitiveness of my own mind, I am not able to say whether it is all a sportive illusion or a solemn certainty. If the latter, this much I know, that these things ought not *so to be*; and I will straightway reveal the whole matter to the world, under a hope, that the knowledge of detection will lead to honest reformation.

I intend not to be personal; but let every one dread, lest he meet in this picture, some of the loose, idle, and wicked thoughts that are often too shamefully indulged, to the exclusion of more important and weighty concerns.

HUMAN DEPRAVITY.

"Then where's the wrong to gibbet high the name
Of fools and knaves already dead to shame?"

I HAVE no doubt many of my readers are waiting with much anxiety, to learn something of the interesting incidents found in that volume of secrets, or rather discovered in the *Mysterious Picture*, of which such particular mention was made in my last number.

The young ladies especially are peculiarly solicitous to have a peep into the head of a modern Coxcomb, or wire-drawn Dandy; and this last character, in his turn, is equally impatient to see the contents of the head of a tight-squeezed and corset-wrapt Belle. In due time, all this will be shown; and it will be well now to give timely notice, that all who attend church, if any there be, for the purpose of indulging in any little personal vanity, either as relates to dress, figure, gait or consequence, or more

especially, of spending an hour or two in empty Castle-building, or idle reverie, will be very apt to meet with a transcript of their thoughts in the progress of this work; and a little patience will discover to all such, an exposure, which, if not productive of chagrin, and consequently amendment to themselves, will, at least, afford amusement to others.

The few first discoveries are not of so much humorous interest, as they are of vital concern to some great leading principles, that serve as the ligatures of society; the destruction of which, directly tends to a resolution of the whole frame into its constituent elements.

Regarding the order of my operations, as to time, I shall begin with the individual whose head was first opened.

It seemed he was a person rather in obscure life, but who belonged to that numerous and respectable class, that pursue the business of planting for a support, and are bound by every consideration to sustain its ancient and reputable character.

I found by his thoughts that he had made (for he was a Southern Planter) a tolerably saving crop of Cotton; but the greater part of it from

storms and rains, was unfortunately of an inferior quality; the price of which was greatly under what, in the slang of the merchants, was called "*prime*."

To remedy this evil, and obtain the highest price, seemed to be the employment of his mind; and wonderful to tell, which seems almost incredible, he had fallen upon this scheme—viz. to take a small portion of his best cotton, well prepared for that purpose, and stuff it in at each end of what is called the Bale, and line the sides with the same, and then cram the bad into the interior, with now and then a large stone; and not a few of the seeds.

This plan succeeding, he proceeded to make a calculation of what he should realize by the whole crop.

I was much amused at the great facility, seeing he was almost illiterate, with which he could multiply, subtract, and add; and what a singular effect this operation produced upon the mind.

In his case, it seemed to be its food; it imparted to it life and energy, and was the source of all its pleasures; every process communicated new joy, and I could not help suspecting that *calculating* employment, particularly as relates

to the business of money-making, constitutes the mental happiness of nine-tenths of the world.

He tried his crop at several prices; first making, no doubt, an ample allowance for the whole quantity; and then using a small fraction over the integral number, with which he multiplied, "to cover expenses," as he said, or seemed to say to himself. With each result he was generally well satisfied; but I discovered his mind hung on, decidedly, to the highest price, and made no doubt but that he should obtain it. Then it was diverting to follow his other calculation; with this money, after purchasing a few, and but few, necessaries, and perhaps a little *finery*, such as a French calico and a cheap Leghorn, for his wife and oldest daughter, all of which he had run up in his head, and subtracted from the main sum, he determined to buy another *negro*. This would enable him to plant a little more cotton, and next year, he thought it quite likely, he might double the purchase of his negroes; and so he went on, indulging in the most satisfactory expectations; evidently suggesting the singular fact, that with him, the whole business of agriculture, was not to supply wants, and furnish comforts, but to "make cot-

ton to buy negroes, and buy negroes to make cotton."

From the very wide range he had taken on this subject, it cannot be supposed that he had attended much to the object which carried him there. Perhaps he had heard a little of the beginning prayer, part of the text, a few lines of the hymn, and then he had parted with the subject, to meet it no more until arrived at the concluding *Amen*.

It is something a little remarkable, that the next person whose reflections became the subject of examination, was a fierce, pert-looking little Yankee, dressed in what is commonly called a "bob tailed" coat, in one of the pockets of which, I noticed a large gimblet, and in his hat, were some half dozen small wads of cotton, which I afterward understood to be his samples; for instead of a cotton planter, he was a cotton buyer.

I fairly itched to tell him what I had just discovered in his next neighbour's head; by way of putting him on his guard; for, as the whole community is deeply interested in fair dealings and honest transactions among men, and which it is the exclusive object of government to secure,

I hold it, that no man should look on and see another defrauded by a dishonest artifice. But when I came to inspect this little gentleman's own head, I found there was not the least necessity for my kind concern, or friendly interference; for, to use a phrase of the South, and perhaps of the North too, "he was up to a trick or two himself."

He had just then been thinking of a project to cheat the planters in the purchase of their cotton; for, strange as it may appear, although they raise the article, they are generally the poorest judges of its quality. This little *money-trap*, for I can compare him to nothing else, had digested the following scheme, which was sparkling upon his fancy, in all the ecstasy of an already-realized adventure.

He had resolved to distinguish the cotton-crop into three qualities, whether it admitted of those distinctions or not. The first and third representing the highest and lowest prices; the other, though actually nearer the first, was to be rated in value but a shade above the last quality.

He was to furnish himself with "samples," intended to apply to each of the foregoing qualities; these were to be neatly moated, sunned, and

kept loose, so as to be at least an obvious grade better than the very self-same cotton, before it was thus treated; and when compared with the cotton to be sold, though it might be of precisely the same quality, under the same management, yet wanting that preparation, it would apparently be a degree inferior to the samples, and the difference would still be greater as the qualities of the cotton in market became really inferior.

In almost every case of comparison, the first quality of the cotton to be bought, would rank with the character of the third sample; perhaps in some few instances, with the second; but scarcely ever with the first. But, in order to gull the seller, a very small proportion of his crop was to be considered as of the first grade, entitling him to the highest price; all the rest was to be placed to the third, and none to the second. This arrangement having regarded a *part* as *prime*, contrary to the real fact, as was designed for the planter himself to see, and thereby commanding the *full market* for *some*, (which serving to brag upon when he returned home,) would make him cheerfully acquiesce in the decision as to the balance; and, being frequently in situations unsuited to nice cal-

culations, he will suppose the whole crop goes off at about a medium price, when in fact it is very far otherwise. The little speculator then intended to turn round and sell to the regular trader all his ill-gotten stock as belonging to the second quality, which, being little inferior to the first, would enable him to make a "*snug profit*," whether there was any "*rise*" in the "*article*" or not.

His mind was filled with a number of little odd *turns*, and what is called any where out of New England, "*Yankey tricks*," such as buying from the wagons at *one* price, and then getting it at *another* by discovering after it goes into the warehouse, that the quality is very different from what was supposed in the first instance, and claiming a reduction in the price, for a "*shameful imposition*," and such like devices, too tedious to mention.

Merciful heaven! thought I, are these the pranks that are played in the disposition of that great and valuable staple of the Southern States, that constitutes their wealth and strength? Is it possible, continued I, turning round toward the females, and casting my eye upon one who was richly attired, that the beautiful drapery that

covers that more beautiful form, has been made to pass through such a demoralizing process? Can it be that the gay apparel, which flows with so much grace, and shines with such splendour on the glittering nymphs, who so often adorn the mirthful hall, is stained with fraud, has been familiar with falsehood, and almost associated with felony? I trembled at the idea, lest it might be imbued with a contagion that would impart treachery to the bosom it so modestly concealed, or faithlessness to the heart, by which it was so unconsciously caressed.

On the subject of petty frauds, artful projects, cunning stratagems, cheating schemes, overreaching devices, and swindling contrivances, I shall never be able to disclose the half I saw on that occasion. In the mechanic arts, there was a great inclination of the mind to imposition, to slight work, and to charge high, particularly in all the handicraft work; and, if the nature of the labour was out of the common observation and ordinary experience of the customers, they were certainly exposed to a fraud. For instance, I noticed one watchmaker had determined that every watch in his shop should have either a mainspring or a pivot wheel broke, and the repair

of these would, of course, just command the highest price.

In commercial business, the tricks were innumerable. Vintners were adulterating wines; druggists were corrupting medicines, particularly the article of Peruvian bark; and merchants were altering invoices, and furnishing themselves with the materials, to give it no worse name for making round assertions about the "cost" of their goods. One old fellow had just concluded that his last supply of rum would bear "fully a fourth," and as to his molasses, it must take a "third," or he should absolutely lose "on the article," it was so villanously wasting. I was tickled at his uneasiness about his clerks; he seemed to be twinged with the idea that they would ruin him by their negligence, they were so wasteful; not feeling the same interest in business that he did, they never pretended to any thing like particularity in *weighing* or *measuring*; their *down-weight* was always too much, and they were entirely too ready to throw in remnants; and as to salt, they measured it as if it was shot, never dreaming that it is the *tenderest* article merchants have to handle: these deficiencies would swallow up all the profits in the

world: it would not do, as often as he had mouthed about it, he should give them another talk, and that in the morning.

Other little matters, not particularly ranging themselves under any general class of business, were detected in active preparation to fasten a cheat upon some poor unsuspecting creature; for example, in the business of horse-swapping, I found many minds had been at work. One fellow had just determined to "patch up" his horse's eyes, and "get him off." There were some who intended to smooth over a defect, or withhold a true representation, in this traffic, who, from their appearance, I would have supposed could never have brought themselves to such an act.

I felt as much regret, as at any thing else, to see the variety of subterfuges that were resorted to, in excuse for breaches in punctuality. *Debt* is not a dishonest thing; it is more a misfortune than a vice; and however desirable punctuality may be, it will never involve a delinquent debtor in gross criminality, unless negligence or fraud mingles in his transactions. There is no necessity then for adding falsehood to disappointment, when the creditor comes for his dues; and

yet I noticed a hundred plans in operation, utterly devoid of truth, to ward off expected duns. Some had one thing, others another, but the majority of them had debts owing to them, which they fully calculated upon receiving, but were grievously disappointed."

But of all the most humorous displays of small roguishness, let those that filled the heads of tailors and millers take the lead. These arch robbers of "food and raiment" were as busily at work in planning their little larcenies, as the greatest conquerors would be in dividing their conquests; and what was most remarkable, they seemed to justify their pilferings upon the ground of usage: the *cabbaging* of cloth and the *cribbing* of grain, were in a great measure legalized by the ridiculous custom of occasionally making them the subjects of a low laugh, in which the parties themselves, frequently have the impudence to join.

Perhaps no subject was found so fruitful of mischief as the banking system; like a great sleeping monster, it rises to its weekly meals, and gorges every thing within its power. It has no heart, no sympathy; all within its bosom is as cold as death; it delights in the cries of

children and the tears of women; it never rests until it gets every thing within its bed, and what it cannot devour, it destroys by filth. Besides the misery it occasions to its incautious dealers, it is of itself the source of the blackest crime.

I do not scruple to say, that I saw on that occasion, acts of the most abominable nature, from its highest to its lowest officers. Directors were contriving schemes to serve themselves and friends with an illegal and undue proportion of the joint and trust fund: some were actually engaged in covinous designs to embezzle it. Clerks were preparing to purloin thousands by various stratagems; some, by saying they were knocked down and robbed; others by false keys, some by incendiaries, and others intended to run away altogether. Other officers imagined they could cheat the bank by keeping false books and forging checks, and many other such horrid acts were designed against the institution by its own members. Then again it threw out such temptations to the world. I saw some individuals burrowing under the ground like moles, to get to its vaults; others were making false keys; a great many were counterfeiting bills, while others were making a curious chymical preparation to

change their amount. All kinds of plans and inventions were in train, either to make, alter, forge, counterfeit, or steal bank money; to break open merchants' shops, to rob desks and counter-drawers, pick pockets, and especially to filch pocket-books; so that I could not but believe, and such is my honest conviction, if the whole institution could be swallowed up as by an earthquake, leaving not a vestige behind, that with it would disappear one-half the crime and its demoralizing effects, which at present so deeply corrupt the frame of society; and as to the increase of private happiness, and the diminution of individual suffering and anxiety, the consequences would be incalculable.

I am constrained, from a fear of tediousness, to pass over many other minor instances of social delinquency, and all the open and daring outrages against even life, property, and public confidence; and particularly a train of sensual reflections, which decency forbids to be mentioned; all of which I saw, or thought I saw, on that eventful night, and which so stunned my belief, that the old idea of a dream again recurred to me; but the Genius, who always knew when I was relapsing into that favourite notion, and who

seemed uncommonly anxious to expel it from my mind, suddenly approached me, and said, "I will put an end to this, your obstinate incredulity, which seems to bewilder your discriminating faculties, blends your judgment with your fancy, and confounds your sense of fact with fiction." So saying, he laid his hand on my arm, and we instantly mounted through the building without the slightest knowledge of resistance or impediment. After being elevated to an unknown height, we stopped, and were apparently suspended in the air.

"Now," said he, "I am about to afford you a midnight view of all the scenes that *really* exist, and all the vices that are *actually* perpetrating at this moment, on one-half of the globe." Then, in an instant, a brilliant light, to my apprehension far exceeding the sun's, darted upon the face of the earth, rendering perfectly transparent all the habitations of men; and, drawing them to a very near view of my eye, and almost within tangible distance of my hand, I distinctly beheld every thing that was transacting in the world below; and O! I was too awfully convinced of the shocking ideas that had just been passing through the brain of man.

Such deeds, the most lawless fancy cannot portray, heart cannot conceive, and to which, of course, utterance is denied. Imagination, in the fullest sweep of voluptuous contemplation, whetted by the most luxuriant passion, and urged by the sharpest penetration, can never reach the thousandth part of the deep-died and in-grained hue of this hidden licentiousness. And yet, thought I, this is for ever passing before the all-seeing eye of a pure and spotless Deity. I felt a sickening sensation thrill through my bosom; and I begged to be dropped to the place from whence we had sprung, reflecting as I descended, upon the profound deformity and distorted condition of the moral sense. No wonder that good men display such an anxiety to amend this odious frame of vicious infirmity. Aside from all future consequences, what is society without confidence? what is an individual without integrity? what is wealth without character? and what is character without moral virtue? what an unequal agreement, said I, is the social compact! It is a connexion in which some few of the firm work for the rest; it differs from all other concerns, in the want of good faith and a trust-worthy reliance among the partners. Honest labours for

knavery—the unsuspecting are way-laid by the designing—craft overreaches the candid, and cunning circumvents the cautious. It is said by physicians that the cure is half effected when the malady is known. Can nothing be done then for a distemper so well understood? I do believe that all the blame is justly chargeable to parents in the first instance, and government in the next; the former, in not affording early moral and religious instruction, and the latter, in not supplying the ample means for useful education.

VANITY.

“You think this cruel? take it for a rule,
No creature smarts so little as a fool.”

I SHALL now give the thoughts of one, and leave his appropriate name and character to be ascertained by the ladies; those shrewd observers of human nature, and just reprovers of all its affected weakness. Smack went his whip, just as I looked into a scull that seemed roomy and airy, being no ways crowded with brains, and away went a fine dashing mick-tailed, and bow-necked horse, loaded with net trappings and plated harness, and rattling at his heels, a high-finished, sea-sprung, rich-varnished, gold-bordered, gilt-sprigged, and silver-tipt gig. It was rolling with winged velocity, and rebounding with irregular and dangerous vibrations over the uneven streets of a certain city which need not be named. Away it went up one street and down another; and it was truly diverting to see how well the driver knew all the houses that

were inhabited by fair damsels. He was certain to dash by every house that might possibly have a fine female either standing at the door or sitting by the window; and if he knew where there was a collection of beauties, he was sure to parade by that spot two or three times. He thought he could see them jump up and scamper to the windows and doors to admire his fine person and equipage, and particularly his great adroitness in driving. Some of the faint-hearted and timid little souls would clap their hands together, and be sure to say, "O dear me! I would'nt be in that gig for the world." But there was one particular dwelling by which this young Phæton seemed to take a tormenting pleasure in passing: he would gracefully recline to one corner of his vehicle, and frequently cut an approving glance at his shadow, as it sported over the ground; and just opposite this same habitation, he would suddenly spring up, as if his ungovernable steed had that moment taken fright, (though urging him on all the while,) and popping him with his whip, drawing his mouth open, and reining his neck to one side, until the poor animal was forced to break into a plunging gallop; then his fearless master appeared to be

the happiest man in the world. I discovered by the leadings of his mind, that there was in this house, as this inflated Adonis conceived, a sad, pensive, and sigh-breathing lass, who had gone through all the stages of love for him, from the first anxious dawn of hope to the last dark shadow of despair; and these manoeuvres, in the fulness of his charity, were humane and soul-quieting experiments to break her heart, and at once to end her life and all her cares. Doting upon him, as he fancied she did, and viewing all that the world held dear to her in such a perilous situation, he had no doubt she would fall a sacrifice to her nervous fears, and the rest of the female world would eye him askance, as he vegetated in the busy *beau-monde*, and say, in solemn whispers, "poor Monimia! no wonder you died of a broken heart."

Is it possible, said I, that there is any one in the wide world so vain as this? I know that vanity is the ruling passion of man, and that upon some one point or other it is possessed by all. The discretion and judgment of many, however, enable them to conceal it better than others; but that any thing in the shape of human kind could be so absorbed by such empty conceit, and

had no other intellectual resources upon which to rely for contemplative enjoyment, was what I did not expect to witness. It is true I have frequently seen very much such idle parading with a fine horse and gig, with a gay-dressed, tight-drawn, tapering-waist, and square-shouldered buck, sitting in all the stiffened dignity of fancied elegance; but I never dreamed that so harmless and inoffensive a creature could have such deadly motives at heart as occupied the mind of this murderous individual. I always thought that it was some hard-read student, fatigued with the profundity of his scientific or professional researches, who, anxious to unbend a mind stretched by the labour of deep investigation, had taken that active, quick, rattling, jostling, and swinging method to restore speedy elasticity to his exhausted intellects, and give renewed energy to his labour-searching faculties.

But to return to this genteel heathen and refined barbarian. I felt a great curiosity to behold the object of his savage sport, and could not help indulging the hope that she might be present. Accordingly, I examined particularly the image represented in strong and beautiful colouring upon his brain; and then, casting my

eye over the immense crowd, to my infinite gratification, I discovered her in a distant part of the room, and hastened, with all imaginable despatch, to analyze so sensitive and amorous a mind. But guess my utter astonishment, when, upon opening her head, I thought I felt a slight steam rise from it, and, instead of a soft, soothing train of ideas, such as would be suited to hopeless despondency, a more agitated, unsettled, and revengeful commotion I had not witnessed in the whole assembly. Contempt, bordering upon horror, seemed to be the ascendant passion; and, strange to tell, it was all vehemently directed against this self-same Malapert, that I had just left. Such was the fury of her resentment, and the variety of ways she had fruitlessly adopted to make him feel it, that he, in his turn, who but a moment before, from being an object of ineffable disgust, was fast becoming one of tender compassion. It seemed that he was her evil genius; that he was one of those pests that literally infest the peace of a girl, wherever she goes; in all public places, he hangs around her presence to annoy her comfort; he alone must sit by her, talk with her, walk with her, and, indeed, officiously intrude himself into a participa-

tion of all the amusements in which she is a party ; and usurping an intermeddling agency in all such, of which she may be the projector. She could not possibly get rid of him ; she had slighted, insulted, and repulsed him, in every way she could devise, and her mind was then actually tortured (which accounts for its tumult) to find out new expedients to drive his detested person for ever from her sight. In scheming to invent some untried project of disdain, I found she had called up to recollection all she had previously used ; and I had almost laughed outright at the fruitful ingenuity of a female labouring under the influence of that strong feeling—hatred, excited by the persecuting attentions of one of those light-headed gentry, who has vanity enough to think he can win any woman's affection ; and, what is still more provoking, without even sufficient discernment to discover that he is the object of the especial scorn of those he follows, and the subject of pungent ridicule in every circle where he is permitted to resort. For the information of those, and as a warning to them in future, who are so vain of person and dull of parts, who have more arrogance than apprehension, and more conceit than sensibility,

it may not be amiss to subjoin a few of the instances of this fair one's courtesy, towards this polished marauder upon female happiness. I noticed, upon one occasion, she had suddenly jumped up from her piano in the parlour, when it was announced that he was coming ; and, scudding across the passage to her mother's room, no doubt in view of this intruder, directed one of the servants to inform him " she was not at home." At another time, in a walking party, that started from her own house, she ran down the steps, though he was using all his address to procure her hand, and, by the pretext of putting on her gloves, was able to slide away from him ; then inserting her arm into that of a particular acquaintance, whose intimacy and relationship warranted the familiarity, eluded his undesired attention, and much more his odious protection. On another occasion, she refused, at a public assembly, in the presence of half a dozen ladies and gentlemen, to dance with him, on the ground that she was unwell ; and, therefore, declined any further share in the amusements of the evening ; and, in the very next reel, she engaged herself to another gentleman, and was seen skipping and winding through the figure with

unusual animation and agility. Indeed, she exerted herself to throw an uncommon degree of sportiveness into her actions, and sprightliness into her conversation. At another time, she absolutely refused to join a riding party, because there was no other way provided for her but to take a seat with him in his gig. And then, as to her remarks, made actually in his presence, they were notoriously insulting, and obvious to every one but himself; and all tending to evince her most sovereign contempt of him. Speaking in allusion to his avocation, she would frequently say, "that if ever she married, it should not be to a foppish clerk;" that "she had rather die an old maid than give her hand to a gimp-looking coxcomb, who thought more of his five-caped coat than his business, and attended more to his cravats than his head;" and a thousand other such little inuendoes, that seemed to fit his case like a glove. And yet, strange to tell, this infatuated being seriously imagined that he could drive her to melancholy madness by the glance of his eye, or sink her into swooning by the prancings of his horse. Surely, it would be said, such a case never existed; and that, in the disgusting round of folly, with all its impuissance,

such a miserable act of self-adoration never really occurred. I doubt it myself; but I have represented exactly what I saw, and every body may judge for himself. This much, it is probable, may be safely admitted, that it is not very unlike something of the kind, which has fallen under the notice of curious observation, or happened within the range of instructive experience; and, at least, it has frequently occurred, that many a thoughtless man and many a giddy girl have been wofully disappointed in the nature and extent of the lodgement they have made in other bosoms, and yielding to the soft touches of a most deceptive passion, often encouraged by the false and insinuating blandishments of one sex, and dallied by the artful coquetry of the other, have discovered their delusion too late to avert the defeat, and lessen the mortification, which follow in the train of such mistimed reckoning and shallow penetration.

Before I conclude this number, it will be perfectly in consonance with its spirit and intention to give a few more short specimens of that singular passion, already attempted to be described, which seems to have so little to do with reason, and less with judgment, and was, as may be na-

turally supposed, presented to me in all the multiplied varieties of which, from the diversified nature of human pursuits, it is susceptible.

I came across several young gentlemen, dressed in the highest ton; their bodies drawn to the shape of an inverted cone; well-swaddled in a fresh and increased supply of cravats, standing upon brass-heeled stilts, behind a goodly bale of ruffles, just ready to leave the house, and they would have been off in a second, but for their untimely arrest. These, I found, were persons who indulged in this singular species of vanity; they waited until every body who generally attend church, particularly the ladies, have arrived; and, after they are seated, and are composing their minds for the solemn ceremonies of the occasion, then these distinguished personages rise up with much dignity, and, adjusting either their cravats or frills, gracefully walk out of church, in front of all the ladies, having a neat walking cane stuck under their arm, and their metallic heels clanking upon the floor, to the very great annoyance of not only those who are devotional, but those who are castle-building. They fancied that every female eye would be riveted upon them, as they walked out, and that some would

gaze after them through the windows, (in the direction of which, for that purpose, they intended to keep,) until they got entirely out of sight. They further believed there would be nothing worth regard; the house would become a kind of solitude after their departure. But the most ludicrous part of this display of self-importance was this, viz. that some young ladies would be greatly disappointed in not having them to walk home with them; and that, upon their next meeting at some party, they expected to be reproached for so cruelly forsaking their charge, and deserting their post; to which they intended to have this shrewd reply, or something like it, "that the preaching was so dull, they would have fallen asleep if they had remained."

At all events, the preacher or his sermon was to be charged with their breach of good breeding; and this would lead to a number of smart sayings, and witty criticisms, on the good old divine's manner and matter, and the company would be greatly edified with the profundity of their theological attainments, notwithstanding they never read the Bible in their lives.

I found one young collegian, who had taken an honour upon graduating, had been much

flattered in the progress of his education, created great hopes in his friends, and possessed greater notions of himself, absorbed in a most delightful trance of self-homage. He had just entered upon the profession of law, had delivered a fourth-of-July oration, and was then enjoying the fruits of his resplendent *debut*. All eyes, he conceived, were upon him; the men coveting his talents and genius, and the ladies courting an alliance with him, through their fair daughters. He had gone to the head of his profession at a stride, made a fortune right off, and was somewhat perplexed in his mind whether he should go upon the bench, or go into congress. This last field opened to wider fame and higher glory; but he did not like to leave any distinction unworn, if he could take them all in his march; and, at that time, he did not discover much difficulty in his way, only he noticed that most other great men had to leave one or the other. Alas, poor fellow! thought I, what an *ignis fatuus* you are dancing after. Professional success, as well as political fame, depends upon a thousand things you cannot now foresee; but especially upon the caprice of a huge and unthinking multitude, who are slow to discover merit, and slower to

reward it. The forum is not like a college stage, nor congress like a polemic society. From these great theatres, as many a mournful adventurer will reveal, the laurel of renown is not easily snatched. How often will day after day, and court after court, pass away, and leave you rooted to the spot at which you commenced. Mountains of no description have ever been readily climbed; and your ascension up the long slopes of wealth, or steep of fame, will be equally toilsome.

There was no subject, whether great or small, that did not employ this engrossing passion. One was sweeping every thing before him, and outstripping all his associates in a perilous fox-hunt. Another was actually experiencing a flesh-crawling, hair-raising elevation of soul in the loud and repeated huzzas of the rabble, vented on no other occasion than that of a triumphant horse-race. In both these cases, as well as all others that I noticed, the smiles and approbation of the fair constituted by far the greater part of the fancied glory of these bewitching day-dreams.—A third, being the lady of a member of congress, took great pleasure in *looking down* upon the plebeian rank that

surrounded her, and a greater pride in their *looking up*, as she conceived, to her official dignity. There was no end to the military men whom I found there. Such marching and counter-marching; such martial music; such fine war-horses, so richly and gaily caparisoned; such splendid apparel; such glittering swords, sashes, sword-knots, and waving plumes; such rapid movements, and mighty battles, in which the roar of cannon and the clash of arms, mingled with clouds of dust, volumes of smoke, and seas of blood, presented an awful picture; and then, when returned from "wild war's alarms," such ravishing applause from the people; such balls and dinners; such city-parading; such corporation-addresses, and modest answers, manufactured for the occasion, and by preconcerted arrangement; such transporting and soul-devouring gazes from the ladies on the public promenades, at the theatres, and all kinds of public assemblies. Oh! it was delightful to see how well these great generals stood with themselves; every one of them had fought one duel, and some as many as three, merely for the purpose of lamenting the circumstance before some fine lady. I found too, a great many statesmen and

orators, who seemed to take a cruel pleasure in torturing their auditory, first by gently leading them, as by a hair, from one place to another, altogether charmed by the witchery of their persuasive elocution, and then, all at once, rending them to atoms by the lightning of eloquence, and a sudden burst of its overwhelming thunder. The poor hearers were represented on the canvass of their fancy with distorted countenances, frightfully gazing at each other; their eyes "rolling in phrensy," their hands clenched, and their breathing almost suspended. I seemed to catch the terror-smitten feeling of these unfortunate victims of oratory, and I was glad to flee from their fate, by dropping the curtain upon the subject.

THE ILLUSIONS OF PLEASURE.

" Grace shines around her with serenest beams,
And whispering angels prompt her golden dreams:
To sounds of heavenly harps she dies away,
And melts in visions of eternal day."

BEFORE my readers get half through this number, I feel some apprehension that I shall be deserted, because they will perceive it does not supply that light amusement indicated by the former essays, nor breathes it that whimsical merriment, the life of fugitive writing, so well calculated to be the food of listless minds withdrawn for an idle hour from the vortex of fashionable pursuits, or remitted for a moment from the stimulus of matrimonial adventures.—I feel it an incumbent duty, for sincerity's sake, to give early warning that I am about to enter upon a grave, if not a feeling subject; so that those who have other uses for their sensibility may fold up this paper and betake themselves to some less thoughtful employment. But those who think with me, that as summer showers in-

crease the splendour of sunshine, so tearful sympathy adds fresh fragrance to cheerfulness, I would invite to persevere to the end, with no other promise, however, than an earnest endeavour to gratify rational expectation.

The next individual whose meditations were subjected to my scrutiny, was an aged female, whose frame and corpulent appearance bespoke the long possession of uninterrupted health, though time, with a rude hand, had fixed his deep-furrowed seal upon her wo-worn countenance. She was sitting, with her body bent and face turned side-ways towards the floor; her right elbow resting upon the right knee; the hand, wrapt in her apron, was brought over the eyes, and upon it she reclined her head; the other hand was propped upon the other knee, and in that position she had evidently been rocking herself in the agony of mental grief, and her eyes still betrayed the undried fountains of some deep-settled sorrow.

She had been most devoutly engaged, and powerfully exercised. It may at first seem a little surprising that under such pious concern her mind had been permitted to wander from such an exclusive subject to any facts uncon-

ned with devotion, which would serve to furnish either the history of her life, or any of its sorrowful events: but when it shall be seen how afflictive these facts were—that they were, perhaps, under providence, the chastening discipline that brought her bruised spirit to its present humble and supplicating frame, it will be natural enough to suppose that she was constantly applying the soothing of religion, its tender and legitimate office, to those mental tortures which a series of the most signal misfortunes had inflicted. It will be shown in the sequel, what allusions from the pulpit brought up to view the mournful circumstances of her story.

She was clad in the weeds of a widow, and was the surviving and lonely mate of one who, but a few months before, lived to share her troubles, and who for fifty years, in a state of the most endearing affection, had been her support and solace under every human vicissitude. They did not belong to the highest circle of society, considered in reference to refined style or polished manners; but as a plain, simple, virtuous, and intelligent couple, possessing competent, and therefore independent wealth,

there were no persons more useful and respected, and none in their own immediate neighbourhood so beloved.

They married at a very youthful age, and both having an easy fortune, they were enabled, in the early settlements of the country, to procure an extensive body of fertile lands. In the centre of their domain they erected, not a splendid, but a very decent and convenient habitation. It seemed to be embosomed in the depth of an aged and deep shaded forest, enlivened, however, at no great distance from its surrounding skirts, by open and extended fields; and, in one direction from the dwelling, sloping to the margin of a beautiful rivulet, and terminating on its borders in fresh productive meadows. As might well be supposed, all the fruits suited to the climate were collected and planted around, and at no great distance from the mansion, in rich and abundant orchards, not only affording great utility, but no little ornament to the establishment. Added to this, there was a spacious and beautifully arranged garden attached to the curtilage, stored with every useful vegetable and garden delicacy, and adorned with all the vines, shrubs, and flowers that could

either delight the taste or regale the fancy. The farm was furnished with every variety of convenient or profitable stock: the cattle grazed in the meadows, and the flocks browsed upon the hills.—The domestic enclosures were literally alive with every species of poultry, and, to use a poet's strain, the farm-yard rung with the uproar of the noisy hen, which was answered on the lawn by the clamours of the "gabbling goose;" and the dove-house animated the whole scene by the rambles of its cooing tribe.

The discreet and industrious husband was regarded by all his neighbours as their best friend and counsellor, and they gladly evinced their confidence in his good sense and integrity by the bestowing of every public trust within their gift. The amiable and benevolent wife was also the centre of the sphere in which her lot was cast, and became always the special object of affection and esteem wherever called, either by duty or pleasure.

This happy pair were soon surrounded by a lovely family, and they had the good fortune, uninterrupted by a solitary circumstance of lasting regret, to rear five sons and four daughters. The first, directed by the skill and managing

prudence of a firm but indulgent father, mingled in the various concerns of the farm, giving new life to its business, and adding greater increase to its profits. The latter, led by the reasonable wishes of a fond and confiding mother, joined with pleasing alacrity in all the domestic employments, every branch of which, under their fostering care, gave, besides a daily proof of superior management, a constant succession of increasing comforts. Within doors, each apartment glistened with all the neatness of a rural taste, and was ornamented with every plain and simple decoration which the loom or needle could supply. Without, every place teemed with all the abundance which a fruitful earth could yield, and abounded in every rarity that either stock or flock could afford. Their peaceful residence was the resort of the young and blithesome part of both sexes, whose sole object was the enjoyment of that innocent mirth and rational amusement which spring from virtuous intercourse. Though they indulged in all the jocund gayeties of the country life, there was no festivity that was not honestly venial, and no recreation which was not strictly harmless.—The Sabbath too, that day of weekly account-

ability and propitious season for self-reckoning, was always duly observed and cheerfully consecrated to the purposes of devotional meditation.

We have now finished the fair outline and bright colouring of a picture which all must confess is lovely to behold; the contemplation of which pensively prompts the inquiry, If it could be lasting, what more could heart desire in pursuit of earthly happiness, and bounded by rational moderation?—In this moral landscape there is nothing inconsistent with human destiny: every item of which it is composed is within the reach of man, and has often been enjoyed by him in, perhaps, a much higher degree. But the *uncertainty* of the *tenure* by which they are possessed is rarely, if ever, properly considered; and hence many of the fatal errors of human conduct, which tend directly to the destruction of not only their present prospects, but sometimes, fatally include their future peace.—This picture is now about to be defaced; and the causes which will operate to mould its varnish and blur its colouring, will be found to be as familiar and natural as those which contributed so pleasingly to its creation;

and, bearing a faithful memorial of the evanescence of sensual joys, should serve to weaken that confidence in perishing objects which sooner or later betrays to sorrow.

The late war, peaceful as had been its habits before, found this country filled with youths of noble and manly spirit, and of high and disinterested feelings. This, however, was to have been expected: they were the first-born of a government differing from every other in the world, in which is centered every honourable and high-minded principle known to men or nations, and which has fixed its support and reverence of civil liberty upon the only true and rational foundation.—To defend such a government, the eldest three sons of this family determined, and did, volunteer their services. Fired with a military ardour, filled with a love of country, and flushed with the hope of honourable distinction, they bade adieu to all the quiet of domestic safety, to all the comforts of home, and to all the ties of kindred.

The parting scene of such a household can be better conceived than described, and to the feeling bosom I leave that subject. They separated to meet no more: two died gloriously upon the

field of battle; the other fell into the hands of the savages, and his fate is unknown to the present hour. This, it will be thought, would have been a sufficient stab to the peace of this once joyful, but now devoted family. Not so.—after bewailing the loss of these victims of patriotism, after having been sorely wrung by the anguish of tender recollections, and pierced by their sharpest stings, after having been first scourged and then schooled by all the fond associations which every surrounding object perpetually suggested, when time, with its slow but certain office, was enticing them from their gloom, and by its sanative influence was fast restoring them to their wonted cheerfulness—behold! “the vile seducer came,” and by one perfidious blow once more dashed the returning tranquillity of this ill-fated house. Suffice it to say, that the youngest daughter fell a sacrifice to those treacherous arts and delusive wiles so often practised by human basilisks upon unsuspecting credulity.—Torn by the guilty reflection of her fallen and degraded state, and goaded by the remorse of having revived the sorrows of her venerated parents, she sunk into a decline, which, in spite of parental forgiveness, and their kind

and soothing cares, soon put a period to her existence.—This misfortune neither healed nor forgotten, was soon followed by another, though similar in its character, yet much more dreadful in its effects.

The second daughter was addressed by an apparently genteel and well-informed stranger, who had but little difficulty in winning her affections, and proposing an honourable connexion. It was resisted by the parents on the reasonable ground of his being unknown, and the recency of his arrival had placed a proper knowledge of his character entirely out of their power. In vain did the anxious parents urge this serious objection to their thoughtless and passion-struck daughter.—Being positively denied their approbation, she eloped with this specious suitor, and a few weeks discovered to her that she had fallen into the fangs of a serpent in human form. She had married a man of family, who, pursued by the brothers of his deserted wife, fled with precipitancy from this last object of his cruel imposition.—The whole circumstances of the case, but particularly the renewed grief of her family, joined to a continually obtrusive remembrance of their fond advice and expostulating

entreaties, was too much for her intellects, and she fell a victim to her sensibility. She is now a maniac in the house of her mother, addicted to all the tormenting indications of ruined reason. She sings and laughs at intervals, through the "livelong" night; rambles through the fields in the day, and mutters incessantly to every object that passes in her way.

The other sons and daughters have all married and gone to distant and different countries, some to parts unknown, from whom they have never heard.

From her two daughters, living widely separated, she has lately learned that one is a widow, who, from the mismanagement of her husband, is left destitute of a support, with a large and helpless family on her hands, in a land of strangers.—The other is wedded to a sot, who is rapidly wasting every thing he has, and is withal, cruel to his wife and his hungered and half-clothed children.

I paused a moment to reflect and to inquire, Why is it that people forsake the place of their birth, and all the pleasing objects with which their early and late affections are identified? Why is it they abandon a society among whom

they have been raised, and in which they have many friends to whom they are bound by the longest and warmest attachment? But, above all, Why is it they desert their nearest relatives, often an "anxious father clothed in grief, and an aged mother drowned in tears," when too at a season of life they have by right a use for all their affectionate care and support? And this is done to seek a home in a wilderness; not only far from friends and connexions, but often surrounded by prowling savages and wild beasts, with none but strangers, scattered at distant intervals, with whom they can associate, and that but seldom. The Genius, in an impressive manner, whispered me, "It is all for this world's god; the love of glittering dross; compared with which, the love of country and one's native place, with all its soft and pathetic remembrancers, the social affections and kindred tie, are as nothing."—To which I bowed assent, and banished my momentary musing.

A family thus distracted and ruined, separated and dispersed over the world—an estate greatly neglected, by reason of misfortune, and therefore seriously impaired—personal effects much reduced by division and removal, it must na-

turally be expected but little was left to this forlorn and disconsolate matron. That home which afforded so much early happiness, and which, in later times, has been shaded with so much poignant woe, is now the solitary dwelling of widowed wretchedness and orphaned insanity. The fields have grown up in brambles and sedge, and exhibit a wide and silent waste. There is no hum of business, no ploughboy's whistle, and no bleating flock. The orchards have decayed, and their naked and falling boughs, covered with the fungus of age, no longer afford to the sportive bird either a resting place at night, or a retreat from the scorching beams of day. The fences have sunk into the bosom of briars. The houses are barely upheld on their rotten foundations; they rock and totter at every blast; their worn-out sides no longer resist the bleak north wind, and their moss-grown tops refuse to exclude the drenching rains.

It was precisely under the circumstances contained in this deep-wrought narrative, and which brought them up one by one to the painful recollection of this good old woman, that the preacher had suffered his fervid imagination to

indulge in a pathetic strain upon the vanity of all earthly pursuits.—He himself was greatly affected: his frame shook with the energy of feeling; his bosom swelled with the expanding force of the subject; his tongue trembled with emotion; his eyes at one moment were bathed in the gushing flow of sensibility, and at another kindled in the touching passion of oratory.—Upon him was rivetted the unwinking gaze of the pious part of his auditory, whose breasts heaved with broken sighs; and there seemed to rest upon their countenances, instead of the glow of hope, the paleness of dismay. In this deep state of feeling, and in one of his most animated effusions, I caught this strain, which made such an impression it can never be forgotten—“In reference to the universe, our state of being is eternal. Time is as a bright night, and life is but a dream. There is a false and deceptive gloss upon the surface of creation; its gilding is light, and its glistening is transient; the one is soon dimmed, and the other is easily sullied. Ours is a breathless race after retreating phantoms: we often seize them, and feel them not; they vanish upon the grasp, and they melt upon the touch. Oh, my

friends! how often in the morning of life have you seen the fairest of human prospects rise brightening to the noon-day, and then sink at evening behind some dark and portentous cloud! How often have you seen one of your early friends and fond companions begin the journey of life with every pledge of increasing and continued happiness; blessed with an amiable consort, surrounded with affectionate and dutiful children, possessed of every earthly comfort, enjoying all the respect which honest reputation could command, and every honour which public confidence can confer: yea, what is better than all, self-debased and heaven directed, reposing in full reliance upon the consolations of religion—Have you not seen such a moral structure, so beautifully composed of all that the world considers desirable, crushed to pieces as in a moment?—Death makes his approach, and his demands can neither be postponed by flattery, or purchased off by wealth. In his passage over the unbroken calm of domestic peace, he leaves in the bloodless track of his visit nothing less mournful than widowhood and orphanage. Treachery, with its double face, steals into the bosom of the family and insidi-

ously plants a dagger there. Age and misfortunes follow after, and scatter sorrow and infirmity in their train. Ambition, avarice, or worldly schemes separate the family, and they rove to far and unknown regions, exposed to all the vicissitudes of untried adventures, which often end in disgrace or despair. Fortune takes to herself wings, and is in a moment gone. Poverty, with her pale and blighted countenance, usurps her place; and then a wide-spread ruin closes the sickly scene. And what is left of all the former glory? Nothing but that keenest anguish, the quick and feverish memory of departed joys, never, never to be recalled! And is this the course and end of man? Is he not ^{the} slave of fortune, or the sport of chance? Is there no meaning in all this? Speaks it no language, expresses it no sympathy? Is there no refuge from such soul-chilling wretchedness? Yes, my friends, there is. All heaven peals with the note, and earth resounds it in your ears, that there is a place “where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.”—*Here* there is nothing permanent; *here* there is nothing lasting. Our mortal existence is a fixed and positive state of suffering; we enter upon

life with a pang, and leave it in agony; our birth is in shrieks, and our death amid sighs. Collectively taken, there is not a pulse of the heart that does not begin or end a life; there is not a human respiration which is not to some unfortunate being, either his first or last. The world, to its successive generations, is nothing but a fading gewgaw; and we ourselves are only empty bubbles, sparkling as we glide down the tide of time, and bursting at every breath.

“ Long o’er the wrecks of lovely life we weep;
Then, pleas’d, reflect “ to die is but to sleep.”
Organic forms with chymic changes strive,
Live but to die, and die but to revive.
Immortal matter braves the transient storm,
Mounts from the wreck, unchanging but in form.”

It was at this moment the Genius flung his spell over the assembly, and the shuddering silence of death succeeded.

PRIDE AND LOVE.

“ Let satire here in milder vigour shine,
And gayly graceful sport along the line:
Bid courtly fashion quit her thin pretence,
And smile each affectation into sense.”

I AM more inclined to give to my numbers a serious turn than otherwise; but I am too well acquainted with the character of the great mass of my readers not to understand fully that such a course would highly endanger the success of my present undertaking. Without intending to flatter them, I am entirely sensible, and they will perceive before we part that I have acted upon that conviction, that I must, occasionally, give them something light and trifling, if I wish to retain their favour. I must write for the gallery as well as the boxes: I must throw out something that will make them laugh without thinking, or at least think without labour; something that will hold up their neighbours to ridicule, without touching them; in fine, a stroke at

every body's follies but their own. The greater part of this I am now about to attempt, and in the latter item of the bill of fare, I persuade myself that I shall completely succeed; for every reader will, and ought certainly to, suppose I mean any body but him.

As soon as I had wiped the tears from my eyes, and a little composed the concern of my mind, occasioned by the lamentable situation of the good old lady, I passed from her, and was attracted by the gay appearance of a richly dressed lady, and her little daughter, as I supposed her to be, from her striking resemblance to the former. This last who seemed to be about six years old, was as finely clad and as tightly drawn as her mother, who did not appear to breathe more than once in a minute.—Curiosity led me first to inquire, seeing this little urchin was primmed up like a woman, and all her gorgeous apparel strutted out in the affected nicety of a fine lady, what was passing in her head.—The moment I sprung it, her little brain reminded me of a toy-shop. There were her small teacups and saucers, little table and chairs, work-bag, and baskets. But there was a great display of dolls, particularly one large one, made

of a red flannel under-coat, to represent her eldest daughter. Then there was a little patch-work quilt, just commenced, together with needles, thimble, thread, rags, and riband, all constantly working and shifting through her innocent mind, greatly to its amusement, and, I trust, nothing to the injury of its little heart; for I discovered nothing of envy, ambition, jealousy, or vain-glory; and I could not but wish that the thoughts which occupy the mind of "children of larger growth," were as unmingled with vanity and vice as hers.

As a matter almost of course, to witness the contrast of thought, I then went to the mother's head; but, instead of finding the same harmless vagaries, every idea was connected with a strong desire to excel some one neighbour or other, moving in her own circle, in every thing that related to *dress, furniture, or equipage*. I looked carefully to see if the same rivalry extended to the embellishment of the mind: but not even a glimmering of that sort appeared. I discovered that her husband had gone on business to one of the cities; for her mind, of course, would be wherever he was; but I thought I noticed that it did not dwell so much on him, as

it did upon a certain amusing memorandum of articles which she had furnished him, and which seemed to be in full blaze upon her fancy. It contained a vast number of wants; but particularly a carriage of peculiar elegance, designed for the worthy purpose of outvieing Mrs. Dashbattle's late purchase; who, as I perceived, had given great inquietude to this good lady, by using it almost every day since it arrived; but especially in riding by her house frequently, when it was actually out of the way to the place where she was going. But what was still more provoking, and out of all endurance, although Mrs. Dashbattle was her next-door neighbour, she must, forsooth, come to visit her in it, and then ride twice every Sunday to church, scarcely three doors off!

Her mind was fixed and resolutely bent upon putting an end to this aggravating parade; for as soon as her carriage came, which was to be at least two hundred dollars higher in price than the one giving such annoyance, she was determined to dash a little herself, and keep it constantly standing at her door when not employed, which, by the bye, if her thoughts were carried into full effect, would by no means be seldom;

and finally, she had resolved to carry matters to the last extremity, and blow her up at once: for, cruel as it might appear, she intended frequently to invite her rival to ride out with her. Upon this same memorandum there was a direction to procure a Turkey carpet, of the "large figure," and a sea-serpent, dragon-headed, and club-footed Grecian sofa. These, I noticed, were ordered with a view to put to confusion a Brussels, and an eagle's-claw and lion-paw with which Mrs. Brighttop had lately distracted the neighbourhood; and who, directly after getting them home, and it is strongly suspected intentionally too, had the imprudence, (giving it no worse name,) to invite all her neighbours to a tea-party.

It would be endless, and perhaps fruitless, to go over all the items of this bill, and the amiable motives connected with the use and desire of each. Suffice it to say, the above is a fair and faithful specimen; and there was not an article which, when it should arrive at home, would have a less charitable purpose to answer.

How different, thought I, is this from the frolicsome, though innocent, thoughts of her child! In the latter there was nothing of that

mental warfare about the superior pretensions of high life, the heated strife of fashion, the spasms of envy, and the festerings of pride—none of that refined struggle and smothered eagerness for a triumph in the low and short-lived objects of sense, in which all the amability of our nature is perverted. Kind offices rest upon no higher sentiment than jealous rivalry; attentions are designed more to pain than to please; so that there is actually bane in every favour granted, and a sting in all our hospitalities. I left this couple with a distressing fear that the daughter would catch from the mother this tormenting itch for excelling, which she was so shortly to see displayed in overt acts of ostentation; and very soon she would be justly teasing her for a fine doll and finer dress to outshine Mrs. Dashbattle's little daughters. But I reflected that all I can say or do will not prevent it; and I comforted myself with rather a poor consolation, I confess; that if pride must have its course, it sometimes has its fall.

Allied to this species of pride, but rather more innocent, because not so *extensive* in its objects, for it was confined alone to dress;—and not so *malignant* in its motives, for it sought

nothing but the conquest of some poor lame-winged heart—was the great display of finery which I saw reflected upon the brain of a number of fair belles.

It is extremely curious, and would make any body smile just to have a peep into a young lady's wardrobe. One would suppose from the great brilliancy with which they sometimes make their appearance at the public resorts and fashionable entertainments, that every thing at home was in the neatest order; that there, as abroad, every thing was crumpled, and plaited, and starched, and carefully laid away. But not so: like the gorgeous butterfly that frisks with so much splendour on a bright spring morning, if you trace it to the place from whence it sprung, you are certain to find a dirty and uncomely shell: so with a number of these fair nymphs.

I perused the thoughts of one whose mind was busily employed in altering an old dress which lay in one of the drawers of her bureau, and which, from turning, altering, adding new trimming, tucks, flounces, and furbelows, she had already four times successfully palmed upon the *beau monde* as brand new. This, however, I

did not by any means disapprove; for it was an instance of economy that deserves commendation, and ought certainly to be encouraged; but in looking at that identical dress, as she turned it over in her mind to see if it would do a fifth time, I discovered in that self-same drawer such a mixture, such a chaos, that it would have been worth its contents to have put it to rights; and I doubt much if even then it would be practicable short of a moderate life-time.—There were broken combs, unstrung necklaces, tooth-brushes, hair-powder, bracelets a little the worse for wear, ear-rings, breast-pins, a bundle of dirty muslins crammed in one corner, a bunch of rough-dried frills and laces in another—in fact every thing, both in the room and in all the drawers, was lying in the most *helter-skelter topsy-turvy* condition that it is possible to conceive. No one could have believed that such beautiful gay creatures could have left such a dirty and disordered chamber, or endured so much confusion.

No one can possibly conceive of the infinite variety of projects, some just conceived, some half-developed, and others in full bloom, to display their charms at the usual places for such

exhibitions. I noticed several very much perplexed about the kind of dress they should wear for a grand *squeeze* shortly to be given by Mrs. Marmalade. One thought that her white satin, surmounted by Swiss-sprig drapery, might take as well as on a former occasion, and perhaps do nearly as much execution; though hardly probable, for she was certain of four captives, besides the killed, wounded and missing. But then, she thought, a *certain* admired young gentleman might be there again, and having perhaps an insolent recollection of the fact, would conclude she had no other: so she resolved to rig up and fit out another dress; affording a strong instance of what little circumstances will sometimes change a great purpose.

I found also that all we saw hung out upon a fine girl, which, from its glittering appearance, was well calculated to take in some clowns, who, in the trade of matrimony, had fortunes to sell, or some cockneys who had fortunes to steal, was not all their own; for I saw in one young lady's head a full determination to borrow an old married lady's watch to wear to this same party; a miniature and gold chain from another, and to propose an exchange of pearl necklace and ear-

rings with a certain comrade, to make folks believe she had two pair. So I said to myself, there is a great deal of borrowing and lending going on in the commerce of marriage, as well as in the commerce of merchandise.

There were some young ladies whose fortunes enabled them to avoid these tricks, and therefore to trade on their own capital. It was only those who were running after high life, and straining every nerve as well as their father's purses, to keep up with the fashion, (their inconsiderate and complying mothers slyly pushing at their backs,) instead of contenting themselves in that humble though honest sphere in which, by their limited resources, they were destined to move. Modest simplicity, an open and unaffected sincerity, joined to some cultivation of mind, would much better become them than all the make-shift finery and borrowed jewelry in Christendom.

I was really much amused with one remarkable light passion that ran through the heads of all the young people of both sexes, and to tell you the truth, not a few of the old ones. It was this: they considered themselves the exclusive object of admiration or notice of all the rest;

some for their beauty; some for personal and stately appearance, handsome address; some for their figure; some for a fine feature, such as a fine black or a blue eye; some for fortune, for family, for dress, for wit or fame, for office or talents; and, indeed, their very defects seemed to subserve the humour of this visionary self-complacence: for there was one unfortunate female who believed she was admired for blinking, and one smooth-faced lad actually conceived that nothing could be so attractive as his green spectacles. It is impossible to portray the little arts that were constantly employed to keep upon the summit of observation. Some would hawk, and some would cough; others would pull out their watches, or draw from their pockets a silver pencil and thumb that over in their hand. The quids of tobacco used on that occasion were innumerable. It seemed to look so silly, after the thing was exposed, and so inattentive to the great object for which they had convened, that I concluded, surely these people will never practise these little petty frauds upon morals again, if they should ever learn that they have been detected.

But there was one trait that universally pre-

veiled, (except with the married people,) and which really confused me: I allude to that all-consuming passion, *Love*, with all its soft nonsense. I frequently found myself turning my head away, and with a kind of maiden simplicity would wriggle as if I had been courted myself, so completely did I catch the turn of thought with which many were possessed. Not one in the class first referred to, (for in the other matrimony seemed to have extinguished the flame,) who was not crouching under the sway of this omniform deity. All had their respective objects elevated upon the most conspicuous pinnacle of their imagination; and singular as it may appear, whatever else might occupy the brain, it could not exclude this object from its settled dominion over the contemplative powers of the mind. Every thought and action seemed to have reference to this controlling principle; so that I was almost constrained to infer, that a person in love must for ever be thinking of the subject of his passion, unless when asleep; and then, perhaps, it is the principal ingredient of many a dream. This passion was variant in the extreme, and assumed a thousand shapes. If it was marked by any general characteristic, or

possessed any uniform feature, it was this, that all believed their flame was reciprocated; and under this idea, it is inconceivable into what singular modifications this truly subtle sentiment was wrought, to produce pleasing reflections. One young gentleman had taken a serious miff at his fair nymph, for no other cause than sitting by the side of his rival at a party, and not only indulging, but appearing to enjoy his conversation. For this he had ceased visiting her for two evenings in succession, failed to walk home with her from church, though he walked near enough to discover to her his moody countenance, and had kept himself aloof on one occasion, where they had been thrown together by accident: and now he was enjoying her extreme mortification, he looked forward to the usual explanations on such momentous ruptures, with lively emotions of pleasure. He had brought his fair one almost to her knees—he fancied himself standing in an erect and somewhat disdainful posture, his arms behind him, his eyes cast abroad, and then dropping them upon her in the heavy look of indifference; while she, half bent, with clasped and uplifted hands, was dwelling upon his countenance with the

most imploring concern. In this humiliating manner he was receiving her expostulating defence, self-importantly triumphing in her repentant concessions, and delighting himself with her ardent asseverations of future good behaviour. Gracious heaven! thought I, what a feeling! But thousands are the similar instances into which jealousy will distort that godlike passion.

Opposed, however, to this, I discovered a damsel who was greatly pleasing herself with the arts she intended to employ to provoke this same corroding sentiment in her swain, regardless of consequences; for great as was her own love, she conceived his to be ten times greater, and therefore he could be made to bear a great deal. So accordingly she intended to go to all the assemblies, assume a very flippant air, deport herself with great indifference, flounce with one, dance with another, talk much and laugh loud with a third; skip, giggle, and flirt, keeping her eye constantly cut at her lover; and, after enjoying his alarm and consternation, she fancied she would see him sidle round her, frequently gaze upon her in the most beseeching manner, and then approach her in a soft grin-

ning smile, begging to know if there was any thing in which he could contribute to her amusement, and in a thousand other ways endeavouring to court a conversation for the purpose of evincing his humble devotedness and complying servility.

Though there were a number of such eccentric phantasies as these, the most regular course of this flame was either a constant, strong, fervid glow, or a soft, soothing, and tender anxiety.

The first appeared as if it would devour the object. There was more of rage than reason in it, and seemed to me to be the most hazardous foundation upon which to rest a connexion, of all the forms that love assumes. It is too ethereal to be steady, and too violent to endure.

But the other was all affection: (indeed I almost feel ashamed to describe it; I hope, however, my readers will not laugh at the subject, for it is really a very serious one!) it was so melting, the parties seemed to think they could live with each other in caves and grottos upon bread and water: they could fairly exist on wild berries in some lonely cot, buried in the vale of

some far-away mountains: they could for ever ramble on the borders of a smooth and uncomplaining streamlet carpeted with daisies and embroidered with evergreens: they could waste an age in love-looks, and spend an eternity in sighs. And then, how busily their minds were engaged in arranging their domestic concerns after marriage. The wife would, of course, regulate the interior, while the husband attended to the foreign relations of the house. The furniture and equipage, together with the orderly arrangement of the household, would fall under her jurisdiction. The farm, the office, the study, or whatever other employment belongs to the husband, would engage his attention, and by their occasional absences, give to the seasons of domestic intercourse a greater degree of enjoyment. The garden would be their joint care and in that they promised themselves great pleasure. In their little ones, "the pledges of warm affection," there was a world of anticipated joy. They were all to have double names, and all the stores of classic lore were to be ransacked for such as had musical terminations. Indeed, to walk, to rove, to ride, to visit, and to travel, seemed to be all that these happy people

thought they would have to do. Whether this be true or not, shall be left to the disclosures made by the heads of some of the married ladies, all which shall appear in due time.

THE DISAPPOINTED AUTHOR.

“Some ne'er advance a judgment of their own,
 But catch the spreading notion of the town:
 Some foreign authors do our own despise:
 Themselves alone, and their own works, they prize:
 Valuing their wit, and their own side or mind,
 Still make themselves the measure of mankind.”

It would not be a matter of much regret if, when this number makes its appearance, all the little fire-flies and flap-wings of fashion, should have gone to the watering-places, or what is of greater consequence to them, be deeply engaged in an important preparation for a ball, when even a dish of slander served up, would scarcely attract them from its promised pleasures. As little as we are disposed to believe it, these exert a powerful influence over the literary taste of any society; and whenever they pronounce an essay *dry* or *dull*, there are ten chances to one if it ever survives the sentence. We are the creatures of sense and interest; and the pleasure or profit which a tame submission

to fashionable opinion always ensures in relation to any production, is enough, of itself, to induce thousands to fall implicitly into the first decision which a few ringleaders of high life may choose to announce, without any examination for themselves. Many of the light-topped and copper-bottom tribe, with every sail of ruffle spread to the breeze of fashion, dreading the labour of thinking or reading, take their cue from the belles of highest admiration; and to live in the sunshine of their smiles but for a moment, would at once urge them to give currency to a decree that would damn an author to neglect or infamy for ever. It is no disparagement to say, that the homage of *beauty* is universal, and its dominion overwhelming; but its awards are arbitrary, and its *fiats* are fluctuating. On that account, then, it is my wish that the fate of this speculation could be fixed before it is subjected to such a capricious jurisdiction.

In such a vast crowd as that which I had the permission to examine, when I was done with one head, my next movement was frequently determined by the appearance and peculiar posture of the surrounding individuals; and such as had any oddity of countenance, or singularity of

manner, were sure to receive my next visit. Accordingly, in looking about, first at one and then at another, I discovered an individual sitting at the extremity of a long aisle, very distant from the pulpit, and where the illumination of the church had nearly terminated in shadows. He was sitting with his legs and feet stretched out at full length upon the bench of his pew, his head and shoulders reclining against one of the columns of the gallery. There was a musing pensiveness seated upon his features; and though they betrayed a complaining air, they had by no means a cynical cast. I gently touched his spring, and in a moment all the active evolutions of his mind were laid open to my view.—I found him to be no other than a disappointed *Author*.

He discovered a taste well chastened by the chagrin of miscarried expectations, and a judgment greatly corrected by the reverses of literary hope.—He was then subjecting his mind to the discipline of honest self-examination, with a view to make it candidly confess the ground of its failure, to own the justness of its fate, and, by the faithfulness of the review and the fairness of his deductions, to detect and remove the im-

pediments that lay in the way of future success. It appeared from all the circumstances of his case, that he had taken the usual route of most ephemeral writers; and possessing a sanguine temperament, defeat seemed to have lowered his estimate of public taste more than to have abated his confidence in himself. He laid the fault all to his readers, and doubted not that the time would come when they would acknowledge his merit and reproach their own ignorance. His first effusions were, as usual, in the "Poet's Corner," and, as he conceived, breathed the spirit of sentiment, possessed the modern character of profound obscurity, dealing in moral thought, and abounding in a strained description of certain properties of the heart, and passions, and feelings, unknown to former poets. These were started from their coverts by Scott and Byron, and have ever since been most horribly pursued by all the yelping pack of little poets. His strains, he thought, contained all the smartness of conceit, the novelty of expression, the irregularity of measure, the discrepance of rhyme, the roughness of prose, and, withal, the infinite variety of short and long lines, jumble of thought, jargon of sound, and confusion of me-

tre that constitute the true frame and dress of the respective "stanzas" that belong to the genuine modern "Cantos." He felt confident they were better than many a similar effort that had given immortality to their authors; or at least, such as had gone the rounds in all the newspapers, accompanied with a most lauding notice of the writer, wherever known: and where otherwise, hunting him up from his concealment, and feeling for him in his secrecy, in all the exquisite touches of the most inquisitive curiosity. This was to be his enviable case in every piece; but every piece passed into oblivion with the paper in which it originally appeared, and not one of them ever mounted even to the notice of a tea-party criticism.

Not discouraged, however, by this miscarriage, he next tried "prose pieces" on literary subjects, enlivened by "moral tales." The first were headed with Latin and Greek sentences, giving early notice of much learning, interspersed with numerous poetic quotations, intended to convey the idea of great scholastic reading, with now and then an apt introduction of historical facts, and particularly a neat allusion to heathen mythology, all indicating great

research and the possession of extensive literary treasures. The last contained all the usual materials for such composition; such as old decayed families, the better for being of damaged nobility: old houses so large and full of apartments as to be perfectly unintelligible: courtyards, large forests, robbers, hairbreadth escapes, seasonable reliefs, and most singular discoveries at the end of the tale. These, he was confident, would take, and be eagerly sought for. They afforded him great satisfaction while he was producing them: he flung his mind upon the different distinguished professional and learned characters, and particularly the contemplative class of female readers, and enjoyed the admiration they would bestow upon such classic treats. He chalked out the deportment it would be necessary for so young and so admired a writer to pursue to avoid the appearance of inflated consequence, or the exercise of unbecoming elation—traits, as he considered, of a weak mind, and indications of a puerile vanity. Modesty, thought he, and unaffected simplicity would indicate a manly and masculine intellect, completely poised and uninfluenced by the irregular and sometimes tumultuous sallies of applause.

But, behold, these appeared one after another, and no stir among the literati! no sensation among the readers of scraps, or the devourers of novels. They were so enormously long, without any resting places for the feebleness of light readers, that they "looked down" all opposition; that is, they frightened off all attempts at a knowledge of their contents, and no other newspaper deigned to notice them.

This, though truly mortifying, did not as yet subdue his rage for writing. He determined to try his hand upon *Politics*. Here was a field, he conceived, that promised inevitable success. He knew he had a talent for popular writing, and a most scorching vein of sarcasm. He would attack the highest characters first, and bespatter them with the most cutting invective. The writing of essays *by numbers* would be rather plodding, and bespeak a dull writer; he therefore resolved, like Junius, to address his letters directly to the individuals themselves.— This was bold and daring, fronting the character at once, no mincing the matter. The sentences were to be short, pointed, and expressive; little said, but much to be inferred: pithy and tart allusions, intentionally dark, and on that account

to mean more than was expressed: interrogatories to be asked upon facts that did not exist, so artfully contrived as to imply criminality, either with or without an answer. There was to be a spice of sentiment, an odour of disinterestedness, a flavour of liberty, an air of patriotism, and especially a devotion to the "people" playing through the whole composition: and these were to be seasoned with sententious well-turned periods, and adorned with popular figures. In fine, every arrow was to be feathered with fancy, and barbed with satire. These, he knew, would certainly eternize him; he would become the subject of conversation in all companies; conjecture would be endless about him; curiosity would be tortured; ardent minds would fairly pine and sicken for a knowledge of him. The newspapers, journals, pamphlets, and magazines would institute long dissertations concerning the authorship of "*certain letters*." Handwritings would be compared, *fac similes* made, peculiar expressions and turns of thought would be critically examined: but all to no purpose. A discovery of the "Author of certain letters," would frequently be announced, and the public would rush to the perusal of the facts

accompanying such detection, with a kind of transport; but, in a short time, they would fall back from the aggravating mystery to take another more disturbed and restless pursuit after the "*great unknown*."

Lo! the letters appeared. The first and best passed off, and no political ferment: the second, third, fourth—indeed all, followed the same course, and in the same "noiseless tenor of their way." What can be the matter? thought this truly bewildered "author." I will sally out and make some inquiry into this business! Surely the fluctuations of trade, the scarcity of money, the depression of agriculture, the languishing condition of manufactures, or the unsoundness of the currency, must be the cause of such horrid apathy of popular feeling, or wretched vitiation of public taste. Accordingly, the first friend he met with was asked, What he thought of "certain letters" that had lately made their appearance, with some eclat, in the papers?

"Why, indeed," answered the friend, "I have never read them; and to tell you the truth this is the first time I ever heard of them."

Monstrous! thought the author; and, with a

blank countenance, parleyed but a little while before he passed on to a certain reading-room, where, surely, the thing will be largely discussed.—When arrived, a great crowd were assembled and eagerly engaged in reading newspapers, and occasionally conversing upon the multiplied subjects which they furnish, and the political questions they so warmly agitate. Not a word about our author until just before separating, when one reader broke out into a most vociferous strain, denouncing "*certain letters*" as containing the "most incorrigible nonsense and sleep-producing stupidity that had certainly ever found its way into print: that writers of such trash, and printers of such trumpery, ought to be sewed up in a bag and thrown into a ditch." He then proceeded to read a sentence or two for the amusement of the rest; and at every pause there was a roar of laughter, doubtless more affected than real, and made in slavish obedience to such a violent denunciation. Such was the diversion afforded by these *letters*; that the whole collection unanimously resolved that all their future meetings should be wound up with a few paragraphs from this newly-discovered magazine of bombast, by way of working off

in a broad hearty laugh, the fumes of better reading; which would serve to put every body in a good humour with himself, the company with one another, and give all a better relish for "grog and dinner."

Our author, as might well be supposed, slunk home, and these are his latest meditations on the afflictive occasion. This appeared to be the train of his reflections. "I have no doubt," thought he, "that my productions have been greatly misconceived by myself; but I have as little doubt they have been grossly underrated by the public. My labours aside, (and I frankly own they are too unimportant to have any influence upon the question,) I think I have discovered the true reasons why this country has laboured under the odium of foreign ones, in reference to its literary character, and is so often compelled to listen to their illiberal sneers."

There was, however, something unsettled in his own views on this subject, and his mind displayed that singular operation which is so often witnessed when it halts between two opinions. Anxious to hold on to both, and yet unable to reconcile them, the consequence is, either gross inconsistency, or the most unsettled irresolution.

He was not quite reduced to this dilemma, for he had placed his propositions in such an alternative shape, as to save himself under either selection. He did not by any means admit that the charges against us were true: but that *if they were*, it could be accounted for upon principles the most satisfactory, and by no means implicating the American intellect.

No country in Europe, thought he, except Great Britain, is in the habit of indulging that low and pedantic vanity of *praising themselves by abusing others*—showing, by contrast, their own *finery* in pointing, as they conceive, to the *rags* of others. Their neighbours, France and Germany, equally scientific, and certainly more modest, have never whispered a reflection against America. They believe that if even the reproach were not unjust, it is ungenerous, and would betray a littleness of mind not much profited by *superior* attainments, and altogether incompatible with the enlarged sentiments of a lofty mind or profound erudition. Is America behind Russia, Norway, Sweden, and, indeed, all the other European kingdoms not already mentioned, in point of mind or science? When were they ever reproached with a want of intel-

lect, or the absence of learning? They maintain their standing with indisputable credit, in spite of the very good opinion which Great Britain entertains of herself. No, the true secret is, they have never been colonies, and reduced to the painful necessity of teaching their mother good manners on more than one occasion.—The fact is, in reference to science, notwithstanding our political connexion is dissolved, there is no real change of relations. We constitute a part, and are literally a branch, of that island, separated by a wider stream, to be sure, than that which divides it from the rest of Europe; but that is the whole and only difference. And is it possible that any one will contend much more believe, that the distance of a few thousand miles will vary either the powers or acquirements of the mind under precisely the same sources of information, and actually enjoying higher moral and physical advantages? Is not ours the same language? do we not read the same books? is there not a constant intercourse not only with them, but with the rest of the world? What stores of knowledge lie open to them that are closed to us? Are not our people active, enterprising, warlike, and adven-

turous? Perhaps their navy can answer some of these questions.—Do we live under a climate unfavourable to the mind, or under a government calculated to cramp its energies? No! the truth is, the charges are as malignant as they are untrue: the march of mind here is equal to that in any section of the globe. Compare it, for instance, with that same little island of egotists, whose literary character has been in the keeping of such meretricious poets as Little and Moore, and such Grub-street drivellers as Coleridge and Southey. In what have they excelled us in the mechanic or fine arts? In what has the oratory or mental philosophy of the pulpit exceeded ours? Where has their legal learning or forensic elocution surpassed the American talent in that regard? And, finally, in what have their statesmen outstripped ours, either in political science, diplomatic skill or composition, polemic debate, or parliamentary eloquence?

The tendency of all knowledge is to accomplish useful ends: if, then, in none of these we are excelled by our calumniators, where is the rational foundation for their sneers? We throw them back into their faces.—We ourselves have furnished the pretence for these slurs, and they

have been illiberal enough to seize it for the purpose of gratifying a low ambition, or, perhaps, a *lurking revenge*. It is our own inconsiderate conduct, and the want of a proper and manly and dignified respect for ourselves, that have produced the whole difficulty. We boast too much about the principles of our government, and care too little for the embellishment of our minds. In the first we have too much confidence, and of the last too much distrust.

There is a clear distinction between *learning* and *literature*. The one refers to the *judgment*, the other to the *taste*, and consequently depends very much upon the manners, habits, and refinement of a people. A man may be *learned*, and not *refined*; so also with a nation.—Germany and France are equally learned, but Germany and France are not equally refined; and it is just because there has been a very great difference of attention to these two objects. Learning gives solidity to a nation; literature polishes it. The former dignifies, the latter adorns. While the first bestows all the profound, the other confers all the elevated traits of character. The first, then, being chiefly confined to books, and perfectly within the reach of the genius and

research of our people, has been as readily compassed here as in any other country. It is in the last only, if there is a deficiency, we may be fairly assailed; and then, considering the age of the country and the nature of our private and public pursuits, upon no well-grounded principle of justice or liberality.

The empire of letters is an absolute monarchy, and in all questions of right, and subjects of taste, reference must be had but to one single tribunal. In the formation of the political institutions of the United States, and the final character they have assumed, every thing is made to subserve the great leading features of that character. Each state, claiming its sovereignty and independence in every thing that was not delegated to the general government, took an immediate and jealous charge of its own science, and consequently there were as many separate and independent depositories of *learning* and *literature*, as there were separate states. The face of society in each was, of course, very different, and, from the condition of the country, subject to perpetual changes. There was no common standard; the same republican notions were attached to science as those that have

been so enthusiastically connected with the principles of government. The field was not too large for the youthful efforts of literature; but divided into so many petty and distinct sovereignties, its exertions were distracted, and could never be concentrated, so as to fix and give character to the *whole* nation.

It was naturally to have been expected, that, in such a vast variety of tastes, diversified interests, habits, customs, manners, and particularly the genius of the people, all perfectly irresponsible to any one great *Censorship*, that in reference to a general national character, what one would gain, another might lose; and as vice is more conspicuous than virtue, and blunders more than graces, the defects of one quarter were sure to be set off and arrayed against the proficiency of another; and as the nature of our government made each state security for the good behaviour of the rest, all were compelled to be involved in each other's miscarriages.

But this is not the most important mischief. The political growth of the Union has been a progressive increase of the States. Its territories were first to be peopled; and of course this was effected from abroad, or from the other

states, not of that description of character whose leisure or ease would enable them to prosecute the arduous labours of learning, or the more polishing pursuits of literature, but generally of those who were seeking, if not an easy, an early support for large and increasing families. These territories, when possessed of the competent population, went into all the rights of self-government, and of course their principal attention was bestowed upon the regulations necessary to their new relations. Then with a thin, and not the most refined and intelligent population, scattered over an immense territory, with the paramount obligations of, first, a support, earned amid many trying privations, and, second, the organization of their political institutions imperiously demanding all their leisure; it cannot be supposed that literature would keep pace with a country where its throne has been established for ages, and instead of circumstances to divide, every thing has contributed to preserve its unity and strengthen its deep foundations.

The spread of our people has had a constant tendency to weaken, physically and intellectually, the whole mass of our population, and subject us continually to all the disadvantages of a

new country. So long as the tide of population sets strongly to the extremities, there must be an *interior* and an *external* commotion; adverse to the progress of mind. In the first, there is the disturbance and breaking up of certain relations and affections, as well as the destruction of certain interests and associations, which, in the last, are to be settled and adjusted. These must inevitably thwart the peculiar combinations of science, and prevent the embodying the active and practical intelligence of the country, so as to act with that consolidated energy, its exclusive and characteristic force, by which alone it becomes efficient. *All improvement* must depend ultimately upon a liberal policy of government; and that liberal policy must rely upon the support which it derives from the *roots* of the institution: in other words, the information that belongs to its *constituent* materials. For in representative democracies, such as ours every thing must be referred to the sources of power; and in whatever degree of mental illumination you find those sources, precisely in that ratio will you find all their deliberate acts of government. Under the circumstances then, just enumerated, it was to have been expected, (and

such is the fact,) that the councils of most of the American governments, especially those of late nativity, have not been the most enlightened; and from the reasons before mentioned, they have consequently been a clog and dead weight upon their older and more intelligent sisters, who have been obliged to honour their drafts, however large or unseasonable. Besides, the efforts of genius have not been properly encouraged. Absorbed as have been the people in objects of necessity, and perhaps in laying the foundations of fortune, so that the sensual, instead of the intellectual, luxuries might first be indulged, they have neither read nor written; and all who have attempted it have been looked upon with a jealous eye, as trying to take a shorter route to livelihood or wealth than that which has secured to the great mass of the people either their present competence or affluence.

The facilities for acquiring knowledge have been greatly abridged, and, until lately, very deficient in promulgating that which really exists. Combined and well concerted plans for giving the best effect and most extended circulation to the actual intelligence of the country, have never been resorted to. Genius has often to depend

upon its own limited means; and unaided attempts, with not an encouraging eye to prompt or hand to lead: no kind succour in necessity, or friendly relief in discomfiture. If it ever essays to raise its voice, or to make itself heard, it must frequently speak from some obscure corner of this wide-spread empire, conveyed in no other channel than some little unknown newspaper, addressed to an infinite variety of clashing interests, selfish views, jealous passions, varied tastes, and political strifes, that, like Aaron's rod, swallow up every other consideration. Seeing these discouraging obstacles, many a hopeful enterprise is left unattempted, and many a promising pretension strangled in its birth. If, however, this heartless resource is employed, unless the productions suit the prevailing temper of the times, they are certain to pass into oblivion; and such are the great number and variety of political subjects growing out of two distinct governments under which the country groans, and which keep the public mind constantly distempered; nauseating every thing but politics, nine-tenths of scientific and literary composition fall "still-born from the press:" it is not countenanced and received as it should

be: it is not regarded as much as matter of the like, and oftentimes inferior, character, that comes from the other side of the ocean: it does not receive the same circulation. What is rejected here; if it had sprung from that quarter, would have been seized and spread with avidity. Literary intelligence is not collected and embodied as it should be: if any important ideas are suggested, they are not extended or improved; and hence they pass off unnoticed by ourselves, and of course by foreigners. But if it were some low wit or light humour, the account of a sea-serpent, a boat or horse race, the arrival of distinguished foreigners, curious murders, extraordinary births, wonderful inventions that never were made, and amazing appearances that never occurred, all the prints from one end of the continent to the other, in compliment to the taste of their witch-believing readers, would be filled with these very dignified and important subjects, giving so much consequence to their papers, and character to the nation.

Let but a petty ensign in the army happen to knock down an Indian chief with the butt of his musket, or a midshipman choke a pirate to death in their official capacities, and, in the pedantry

of the black gown, they become, *eo instanti* and *ipso facto*, entitled to attend the President's levees, liable to be suffocated in the fumes and steam of a smoking dinner, drowned in a pipe of old Madeira, and shot to pieces by cannon in every city through which they may pass *having good fat Aldermen*. Not so by literary achievements; not so by the essayist. The *Letters of the South*, the *British Spy*, the *Old Bachelor*, *Salmagundi*, the *Sketch Book*, and *hundreds of uncollected specimens* of genius and taste, may pass by without a nod from office, or a crust from corporations. Works too, abounding in the most judicious critical observation, and nice discriminating judgment, though not so voluminous, yet very far surpassing in fine fancy, keen satire, embellished style, and moral composition, not only the present samples of English taste, such as the snivelling "*Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life*," and not a few of the novels of the "*Great Unknown*," but even, in my view, the dull and vulgar humour of the *Spectator*, or the studied and monotonous morality of the *Rambler*; those labours that have given such undying renown to British literature. If their authors have neither fortune, profession, or something

else to recommend them, my word for it, their writings will never do it. They may give literary fame to their country, a character that is of more solid glory than any other; yet they must go to foreign countries *and write there*, if they expect for their works a commensurate reward.—

Here I noticed that his heated fancy had made a swell, as if *that* was to be *his* future course: but his powers of thought happened to be suspended before the idea was fully developed. I left him, pleased with his reflections, though they were piquant and erroneous. I pitied his delusion, and wished him a better fate.

THE POLITICIAN.

“When private faith and public trust are sold,
 And traitors barter liberty for gold;
 When fell corruption, dark and deep, like fate,
 Saps the foundation of a sinking state;
 Then warmer numbers glow through satire's page,
 And all her smiles are darkened into rage.”

It was fully my intention, in this number, to have carried the light infantry of my readers through a few easy evolutions, so as to have wheedled them to hang on to me to the end of my labours; for, to make use of a common saying, “any company is better than none.”

I was quite certain at one time, that I should have it fully in my power to furnish sufficient inducement to have sustained them through two or three pages, even of this essay; but this is left somewhat doubtful by reason of the narrow compass into which I have been so fortunate as to condense its light and unsubstantial parts.

I was directed to the head of the next person whom I examined, by the very (to make use of

a new word) *quizzical* appearance of his whole contour, and made sure his thoughts would be good for a laugh at any place, and all through. He was neither fairly sitting nor lying, but was indulging himself in that very graceful posture of good breeding to be seen at almost any time in public places, and not unfrequently in some country churches, where the individual props his shoulders in a corner, rests the small of his back upon the edge of his seat, cocks his heels upon the back of his next neighbour's, sticks his chin into his bosom, and then bringing his eyes to a horizontal direction, presents a stretched brow and wrinkled forehead. This was the precise position of the person whose thoughts I am about to divulge; added to which, there was a leer upon his countenance, his lips were projected in a kind of puckered pout, and evidently smothered a roguish smile, which would certainly, at any other time, or under any other circumstances, have burst into a laugh.

I was as much tickled as he appeared to have been, when, upon looking into his head, I found, I think, one of Goldsmith's anecdotes dancing upon his brain, to which he was very humorously applying a number of curious reflections

which had resulted from his own observation and experience in a long life of rather singular transactions. The above-mentioned author relates the story of a daily labourer passing, with a wheel-barrow of manure which he had collected from the streets of London, near to a gloomy prison, where, at the dark iron grates of which stood a miserable object that had, perhaps, been immured there for years. This forlorn creature hailed the labourer, and inquired what was the news? upon which, stopping and resting upon his vehicle, he kindly told him that it was reported in the city, the French had landed at Dover. "If that be the case," said the prisoner, "*away goes all our liberties.*"—"Yes," said the man of burthen, stooping down to take up the handles of his barrow, "and we shall become *hewers of wood and drawers of water* to the French."—Just at this moment a sailor passing by, and hearing the whole conversation, exclaimed, "*that is not all; d—n my soul for ever, and by J—s, away goes our holy religion.*"

This anecdote, our odd genius, as before remarked, was referring in a number of ways to the prevailing politics of this country; for to

let something more of his character be known, he was what might be termed a successful politician, who was taking this occasion to laugh in his sleeve at the tricks and artifices that are continually played off upon the poor unreflecting people, by unprincipled men who mount into office and consequence from their *stooped shoulders*. In the first place, he seemed to think that those who knew the least, bawled the loudest. The noisiest political characters, on any public occasion, are not those who have the most information on that subject, or such as want any appointment; for they are generally, in point of qualifications or character, a little *under par* for that object. But they are *cats' paws* used by secret agents, furnished with facts, and supplied with falsehoods, which their prompters themselves are ashamed to utter. These redoubtable champions vociferate the most alarming circumstances that are likely to ensue if certain events transpire; and at the same time they are as ignorant of what they assert as the animal that conveyed them to the meeting; and which, if they were really to happen, would place *them* in no worse condition than that in which they were found. They are more clamorous about

their liberties, and at the same time they are slaves, as far as debt can make them so, to every merchant within ten miles of them. They sing out for the liberty of conscience, and yet have no conscience; never hear preaching, and revile all religion. They are very jealous and abusive of wealthy persons, and yet will do any service, however menial, to obtain a little of their money, and are *always* willing to borrow it, if they can get it upon those terms. In the next place, the feeling conceived this feeling is not altogether confined to particular individuals, but has in some measure been communicated to the whole mass of society by persons who little regard the public good, and for purposes very remote from the general welfare. Ever since the formation of this government, thought he, we have been in perpetual danger of the loss of our liberties, and with them all our other great blessings, either from internal or external enemies. If a great event is about to occur in the general government, (and it is the same thing among the states,) such as the passage of some law of general interest, or the election of President, what alarms! what prophecies! what forebodings! The press kindly and most charitably takes the matter into

its calm, modest, and unassuming protection; and then, under its *inviolable liberty*, such tender expostulations—such sober remonstrances—such discreet advice—so little personality, passion, or recrimination! But the “people,” in the spirit of *strife and ambition*, of *their own mere motion*, without any *management* or direction; and as they say in some of the rude parts of the world, “hands off,” and “nobody touching,” no purposes to answer, uninfluenced by any consideration whatever, save an immoderate love of commotion, keep up a constant ferment, and a perpetual warfare against order, principle, feeling, and indeed every thing else; so that private friendships are dissolved, the peace of neighbours is destroyed, the harmony of whole countries is broken up; discord, jealousy, and hot blood pervade every portion of the community. And, behold! when the question that so distracted the nation is over, the whole matter passes off in a kind of laugh. Good feelings are for a while restored; *our liberties* are all *safe*; we neither become *hewers of wood* nor *drawers of water*; and our blessed *holy religion*, what *little* there is of it, is just as flourishing as ever. And so they remain until some other bone of

contention is thrown out, which is within a very short time, and then at it they go again; and this is the constant round of that great struggle for power in a country where every body has a right to contend for it; and let which will succeed, our liberties, labours, and religion will obstinately go on, in spite of all predictions to the contrary, just as smoothly as ever.

Government, continued he, is, and always has been, in every age and in every part of the world, merely a game; and instead of its being what it should be, a *blessing*, it is absolutely, if not a necessary, at least an unavoidable, curse. And it would not, if a body dared to utter it (and what a comfort that one can keep their thoughts to themselves!) be either false or unfair to say, that there is more real, unalloyed, unmixed, and barefaced deception in the *political men* of America, than in any other region of the known world: and the thing is easily accounted for. I lay down these general and incontrovertible principles, that all vice is greater in proportion to the facilities and temptations afforded for its exercise. Ignorance is doomed to suffer from cunning—folly from knavery—innocence from artifice, and confidence from trea-

chery; and that all these will be exerted in the direct ratio of the eagerness and intent with which any of their counter objects are desired or pursued. Then let the character of society in this country be merely glanced at for a moment. Here the people are told, (and God knows it is often enough rung in their ears,) that they are the "*source of all power*," by which is meant, that not a *law* can be passed, or an *office* conferred, which does not come from *them*. Then there are so many thousands of laws of a private nature, in which individuals alone are interested, and so many good snug offices well calculated to keep persons from work, that the people, as well as being the source of all power, become also the *source of all favours*; and this view of the matter makes the question quite an easy one. Let every man who is not an idiot, apply his own experience to the multitude of cases, not of a political nature, where one individual has been seeking a *favour* of another; and besides the obsequious, fawning, time-serving conduct, usually employed to gain his end, does it not always turn out, to use a familiar figure, that weakness and credulity go to the wall? Just take a peep into the commercial

world. What is going on there? Is every thing there as it should be, fair, honest, and correct? If it is not, who suffers? The sharpers, the keen-sighted, the clear-headed, or the close calculator? Let the weak, the unsuspecting, and inexperienced answer these questions, if you please. And yet there are fine wealthy gentlemen, of first rate mind and talents, of great pomp and splendour, engaged in the commercial world.

Passing by the learned professions, affording certainly an excellent illustration of this idea, but rather a hackneyed subject, take an example from the female part of the world. Who suffers from false professions, deceptive arts, and faithless promises? Do men? Not so. Men call them the weaker sex; and doubtless from the very cause of the perfidy and injury they have sustained at their hands. Well now precisely from these examples may be reasonably drawn the conclusions which will establish the position first laid down. The people are the sources of all *power* and *favours*: these are *commodities* and *pleasures* that are in urgent and perpetual demand. They are not to be purchased in open market by money, but by

such currency as best pleases the human heart, that flatters its pride, soothes its self-love, courts its affections, woos its partialities, blinks its follies, and pardons its vices.

The people are not enlightened, and it is no reflection to say so: they are from nature unpractised, and, if let alone, would be honest. But *inexperienced* and *unsuspecting*, will it be in accordance with the instances given to say, that when there are so many competitors for so many favours, and with such means of acquiring them, that every thing will be pure and honourable? Are men better in the *political* than they are in the *commercial* or *amorous* world, or in many other pursuits of private life, where thousands of particular facts to the same point might be shown? But why is there more deception in this country than any other? Just because in any other the people are not the source of *all favours*. Favours are in the hands of *but a few*, who are not *weak, confiding, credulous, and inexperienced*. These get well paid for their bounties. They *retain* the right to *bestow* by *granting* favours; and all this traffic is confined to but a narrow compass: they are not within the reach of every body: like the patronage of

the President, none but *his friends* and a few of *theirs* can ever hope to bask in the smiles, or lick up the crumbs of power. But here, in this country, my heavens! the work is going on in the widest field that can be possibly conceived, from a corporal in the militia to the President of the United States. The people, in one everlasting round, and perpetual succession, are dealing out the *offices* and passing laws, both public and *private*; *not for one*, but for two distinct governments; and this is not all; *receiving nothing* from the greedy applicants but the *change* already mentioned, often administered and *well set*, by means rather more *substantial* than those which fall from the mouth of a double-tongued seducer. The cases of right down gross hypocrisy are endless, and it is not confined to the lower orders; the higher the office, the greater the exertions, and therefore the more unsparing the means to obtain it. Sometimes you will see the designing ones stealing the elections from the people, and getting them as far off from their notice and concern as they possibly can; and so long as all things go on, to use a homely phrase, "to their liking," *there is* the proper place they should be. But let some

circumstance transpire to give the power another direction, and cause it to travel into other hands, and then what a bustle! then you will see these self-same gentry, who have so long managed things without the people's aid, bawl out, "give the *people* the elections;" "we are the people's men;" "all *power* belongs to the people;" "the people ought to be heard;" and chiming the word *people* in a hundred other such like notes: when, in truth and in fact, they care no more for the people than they do for the *people's horses*; and if it were necessary to their purposes, and they believed it would flatter the people into a base compliance with their wishes, they would with the same brazen hardihood cry out, that the "*people's horses* ought to elect;" "we belong to the *people's horses*;" and so through the whole changes upon which this odious tune can be rung. And what is most remarkable, the people do not, or will not, see that they are duped, gulled, and most miserably abused. There is not a schoolboy who does not see through the thin covering and shallow artifices of those members of congress, and particularly of state legislatures, who, with a long-drawn phiz, a smirked countenance, and affect-

ed candour, get up and sicken an audience to death by stating, in a cowering spirit and *wag-tail whine*, "they are the people's servants;" "whatever the people wish, they feel bound to do;" and all such rotten-hearted cant. The people ought to despise them for such unblushing duplicity, and especially as it conveys a direct reproach to their understanding; for it implies the degrading fact that they have not sense enough to detect the most flimsy cobweb devices.

His thoughts recurred frequently to the little dirty, petty manoeuvrings that occurred in the different electioneering campaigns for the various appointments that take place in this "people's" country: such as stuffing and drenching the voters, scraping and bowing, smiling and grinning, shaking hands and making most solicitous and affectionate inquiries after theirs, and family's, and particularly the children's health, then the state and condition of the crops, concerning which, should they learn any disaster, they are almost thrown into vapours. But what is very amusing, as soon as these very mindful and care-taking statesmen of the "people's" rights cease to want or desire an office, that

moment, and as suddenly as they drop off from the breast of the *people*, so sure all their filial regard, warm attachment, and affectionate concern, drop with them, and then the *people* may go to —, or where they please; for, until they want another office, they have no further use for the "people:" and still the people pretend they do not see or understand all this.

Some twenty or thirty years ago, after the most unquiet agitations of the Revolution, and the troubled surface of events had settled to a calm; when the fluctuations of a new and untried experiment were fast yielding to the more solid principles and permanent objects of rational government, two great parties sprung up in this country, (a circumstance by no means to have been regretted,) and eagerly contended for its administration, contesting with bitter strife for years, the final character which its great outlines should assume. A short description of their respective views is simply this. One side maintained that man could govern himself; that in order to effect this end with the greatest success, government should be cheap—officers should be but few, to be rewarded with no more than their services were reasonably worth—to

be held to strict accountability, and always to know that they were created to serve, and not to be served, of which they should frequently be reminded by the process of election. That there was no use for expensive institutions, the interest and happiness of all classes of society being the only true and legitimate end of government; and knowing that man has to live under the curse of earning his support by the "sweat of his brow," no more should be exacted from his labour than is honestly necessary to maintain his peace and property. Simple and republican habits required no splendour, and no unnecessary parade. The fewer the burthens, and the greater the facilities offered to the inducement of individual enterprise, the more certainly would the great object of all social compacts be accomplished. As to military establishments, freemen should never trust the keeping of their liberties to hirelings; they had too much at stake, and would at last be compelled to defend them on all great emergencies.

Opposed to this doctrine it was contended, that man was not altogether able to govern himself; his passions were too violent, and his mind too unenlightened. Hence the necessity of an

"*Agreement*," which should not be altered at pleasure, *with those* whose tempers were subdued, and whose minds were disciplined by the force and influence of moral and political science, and therefore the better qualified to administer the laws for the protection of the whole. That sacrifices could not be expected on the part of the rulers without a very adequate retribution, and that this ought to be left to their own discretion. That government, to be respected either at home or abroad, should be dignified; and to be dignified, their institutions should be imposing. It was a great and growing nation, and all its arrangements should correspond with those distinguished features. National defence was all-important, and it was the bounden duty of a people separated in its political feelings from the rest of the world, cultivating the blessings of civil liberty, and on that account an object of jealous hatred to the revengeful chiefs of despotism, to be prepared at all times to repel promptly any aggression on their rising prospects.—These two parties, whose names were well known, but which, with deep regret be it now known, are no more, took their stand; and, after a long and well-fought combat, the mastery

fell to the first described. Such appeared to be the zeal and sincerity of their professions and actions, they so intimately identified their feelings and views, though scattered in all directions over the union, they embodied themselves as a party, so closely and affectionately, that the friends of rational liberty had every right to expect, and every reason to predict its perpetual duration. It seemed to move on with such a fixed and settled purpose of mind to the full execution of its avowed principles; unmoved by local prejudices or sectional interests, had conducted the nation through great internal convulsions, and even through a glorious war, amidst insurrectional tumults; had so lessened its burthens and increased its fame, that it was not only the admiration, but was fast becoming the example of the world. Its resplendent beams had gilded the summits of some of the darkest piles of Gothic tyranny and superstition in both hemispheres, and was gradually transmitting its genial rays to the base of those lordly and gloomy structures; when, lo! the mainspring of all these grand and wonder-working movements suddenly gave way, and all its operations have been brought to a dead and ominous pause. Private

interest, personal views, individual aggrandizement, state pride, local feelings, and sectional jealousies have taken, and are fast usurping, the rule of this once triumphant political combination: and what makes the case melancholy in the extreme, this mournful event has resulted from a *political suicide*, perpetrated in an appeaseless rage to gratify the ambition, and flatter the pride of office aspirants. Affecting, indeed, are the evidences of the furious distraction of the party before its final dissolution: it went through every gasp, spasm, and struggle peculiar to an agonizing exit. It imprecated and offered violence to its old faithful leaders; it denounced and deserted its own measures, and particularly abjured the acts by which it was wont to concentrate its own views, collect the sense of its parts, and operate with the most consolidated and successful energy. The generous affections and long-tryed attachments of those whose political fortunes, fame, and reputation were embarked in the same cause, who had struggled in the same conflict, shared in the same difficulties, and risked a common fate, disappeared as if by charm; and there succeeded to this illusion the delirium of passion, the ran-

cour of hatred, the intrigue of settled malignity, and the vengeance of enduring animosities, striving to overwhelm each other in disgrace and confusion, and essaying to involve the character of the best patriots and highest officers of government in one general ruin. Instruments were selected from their old inveterate opponents to accomplish their wild and unthinking purposes; and in a remarkable instance, *one of them* was chosen to aid in a *great design*, who but a few years ago had to take refuge in a prison from their pursuing fury, and was not safe even there from their devouring revenge. What a lesson does this teach? What reliance can now be placed upon human professions, human actions, or human plans? What stability is there in any system which has for its object the diffusion and extension of civil liberty, especially when principles have been avowed, safely acted upon, succeeded to the full expectation of their advocates, and then suddenly abandoned from no other than *personal motives*? Who will not believe in future, that *principle* is a delusive sound, and *patriotism* an empty name? What a pity thought he, that all this could not appear upon the faithful page of history, as a beacon to warn

a future unsuspecting generation how they trust a selfish zeal, or hollow professions?

But there was an idea pervading his mind that he seemed to indulge with terror, notwithstanding he was sensible it was as secret as the grave. He was fully convinced the people should know it; yet he was candid enough to acknowledge to himself, that he had not honest boldness sufficient to broach the matter to them. He readily foresaw that it was to produce the next *great question* which would divide the parties of this country. It was this: the nation was engulfed in a fatal error, if it continued to believe that the *Federal Constitution* was that peerless work of wisdom of which it has so long been our boast and pride. This conclusion his mind seemed to grasp with a force which was unyielding, that it was either the *weakest instrument* by which any nation was ever bound, or it was the most dishonestly regarded of any that was ever executed. Justly venerated as were its immortal framers, and containing principles so vitally sacred and dear to man, he confessed he had been educated to revere it from those considerations alone, without a strict and scrupulous examination of the manner in which it

had been framed and put together. It is said of the English government, and somewhat sneeringly too, that it has no *constitution*; its great leading features are scattered through their countless volumes of common and statute law; and in fact is nothing but the *will* of the Parliament. If an Englishman were to retort the reproach upon us, how far would it be untrue? Suppose he were to open our boasted *written constitution*, which expressly declares on its own face, that it claims and pretends to exercise no other than clearly derived and well-defined powers, and ask us to put our finger upon the clause which authorizes the chartering of banks, the protecting domestic manufactures, and the making of internal improvements; what would we say? My dear Sir, these, though not defined, are clearly inferred. The Federal Court has declared, we have the right to do so in the first of these cases, and Congress has willed it in the two last. Go to our legal reporters, and you will see the *reasoning* on the subject; *there* the *question* is *settled*. Then I am to understand, replies the Englishman, that all your constitution is not to be found in this *scroll*—that I am to look through your *reporters* for a part?

If so, what is the difference between your constitution and ours? We had a scroll or two ourselves in "olden time," and they remain as a text yet, upon which our courts and parliament, precisely like yours, have descanted and construed, and inferred powers, until they have swelled it to a size that can now only be found between the first and last lids of fifty thousand volumes; and if you live to be as old as we are, yours will be exactly in the same sickly and dropsied condition. Oh! but you do not take a correct view of the matter: these powers were always intended by the framers, and can be readily inferred without carrying them into reporters.—What will you do with that *discretion* which has a right to *infer* these powers? it must be lodged *somewhere*; and as men who exercise discretion do not always think alike, will not the powers be *varied* according to the various views they may respectively entertain of the same *expressed* principle?—Ah, but this will be cured by *precedent*.—Exactly what cures every thing with us in England, and will be with you the all-availing remedy in a few years more, unless you resolutely determine to rescue your constitution from such a heaving, troubled ocean

of uncertainty. You cannot believe that your great men who framed your constitution, had never heard or read of a *Bank*, and its immense influence and importance in government: you cannot believe they never heard or read of internal improvements or domestic manufactures, subjects of such prime magnitude, and so intimately interwoven with all political economy; and if you do not, you pay their wisdom a poor compliment indeed, when you say there was no necessity for *specially* mentioning them in their "great charter:" for they have granted other, and *well-expressed*, powers of infinitely less consequence to the happiness of your people, or the duration of your *Union*.

This reasoning, as well as its other obvious defects, especially in relation to the choice of President, and his dangerous and unnecessary patronage, contributed to overturn in his mind one of those long indulged opinions, implanted alone by education, and cherished by those affectionate feelings which too often plead and expostulate with sober reason when she comes to prune exuberance and correct obliquities, until they successfully stifle her voice.

THE WIDOW AND WIDOWER.

"These thoughts he fortified with reasons still,
(For none want reasons to confirm their will :)
Grave authors say, and witty-poets sing,
That honest wedlock is a glorious thing."

I WAS so fearful that I might break into a long dry subject again, if I uncapped another male head, that I determined to try the contents of one belonging to the opposite sex; and I rejoice exceedingly that I carried this resolution into effect: for, besides the opportunity which it has afforded me of redeeming my pledge to those who make a pastime of reading, and therefore pass the preface and introduction of all works to get immediately into the story, I certainly made some curious discoveries.

The good lady whose secrets were next to be exposed, was sitting up very starched and affected, laced suffocatingly tight, and her busk was fully an inch or two higher than was usually worn; and, in fact, all her clothing, though of

the richest and most expensive kind, seemed to sit rather awkwardly upon her—either not quite in the ton, or a little over, as if it was all a new thing with her, or an old one recommenced. But all this was readily explained when I came to ascertain that she was a buxom middle-aged widow, just re-rigged, well trimmed, and newly launched for another voyage of matrimony. I found from the bent of her mind she was determined to marry, and that too upon the very first offer; and she nothing doubted of success; for, all other chances failing, being a person of property, she had her overseer in reserve, to make good her retreat from the neglect of a world poorly qualified duly to appreciate the charms of a fine widow.

Upon examining the folds of her brain, it appeared without doubt, and there was a strong presumption in favour of more, that not less than thirteen different objects passed in the review of her imagination, inventoried as follows: seven widowers, three bachelors, two clerks, and one dandy. All these had their respective qualities, characters, capacities, and fortunes contrasted and fully analyzed by this busy-headed candidate for nuptial bondage.

I discovered by the pictures of each of them drawn upon her fancy, that nine out of the thirteen were present, and five of the widowers were actually ogling her: so I resolved, in due time, to know what *they* were thinking about. The most prevailing idea, and one that gave her more embarrassment than any other, was to know what she should do with her property. She wanted to marry most outrageously, but yet she wished to retain all her worldly goods under her exclusive control and management; and this she could hardly flatter herself would take with any other than an old, head-turned, uxorious widower, precisely such a character as she did not covet, if she could possibly help herself. A young man, which seemed to be her greatest desire, would not, she was sure, submit to such terms. This question, as must be seen, was quite a perplexing one. Her reasoning was something like this. Love, I know, from that best of all teachers, experience, is very uncertain, very childish, and therefore very capricious. It lasts but a little while with youth, and infinitely less in old age. Both conditions of life like to have a refuge from the tedium of satisfied desires, and nothing so well secures that boon

as a fine rich fortune. It can incite to many sensualities, and furnish a thousand channels of pleasure, long after the once heavenly graces (speaking in the language of courtship,) the angelic form, the unfading beauty, the deathless charms, and all that nonsense, of a wife, have ceased to perform that office. Besides, a second love, especially in the autumn of life, is like the second crop of fruit-trees, which have been tempted to put forth blossoms, and bear a hasty and insipid fruit compared with their former product, by a season of short and deceptive warmth in an Indian summer; when suddenly a nipping frost withers their growth, and fades their lively hues. Then if a wife, the greenness and freshness of whose life has been possessed and wilted by another, suggesting perpetually the idea of second-hand joys, whose bloom has drooped, and whose vigour has decayed, should happen to be without fortune, that most efficient substitute for rifled charms, wo be to the evening of her life; it will be filled with regrets, and checkered with griefs, greatly heightened by the sad recollection of better days, and the voluntary surrender of a better condition even in lonely widowhood. She will be given up to all

the upbraiding horrors of solitude, the living grave of woman, from which her retreat is unfeelingly cut off by the insupportable derisions of the world; and this is to be borne with spirits depressed by misfortune, and a mind and strength diminished by age.

She will live forsaken, even amidst society, and will be alone in the bosom of her family. There will be a sickly complexion upon the few scanty enjoyments within her reach, and every surrounding object, in the impressive silence of sympathy, will seem to say, "yours is a disconsolate fate." Just at this point, she appeared to have roused up, and shaking off the cold chills of her gloomy forebodings, determined, at all events, to *secure her property*.

Let what will happen, she seemed to say, I must have *my fortune*; if for no other purpose than to hold over the head of my next husband. It will be a kind of rod to him; for, besides having it in my power, the common right of widows, to tell him what my poor first husband used to do, in order to make and secure property, whether he did it or not; and to tell him many other things which he never did, I can at least have it to say to my second husband, I took *him* out

of the ashes; and further, by way of adding keener edge to the scoffs, if it had not been for me, he would not have had a second shirt to his back; in fact, I can vary these kind of taunts to suit the nature of the quarrel. No one ever expects an engagement, or goes a journey into a strange land, who does not adequately provide himself with weapons for the occasion; and what a fool must a widow be, who takes such a dangerous step as second marriage; an enterprise more perilous than battle, a trip into worse than a country infested by banditti; such a blind leap, who would encounter such a strife of conflicting interests, without the armour and implements of war, suited for such an impending difficulty!

She had not fixed her mind so positively on either of these individuals, as to provoke even the inquietness of partiality; much less the more restless uneasiness of a stronger passion. It was rather an object of speculation with her, than any thing else, to answer temporary purposes; for, to give you the honest convictions of her mind, she did not believe, if she possessed a kindlier feeling, that it would be retained very long after her connexion; at least, it was the safer plan to act upon that supposition, seeing

how many fatal examples of its truth were constantly staring her in the face.

Indeed, except what she had been told by intermeddling old women, game-making girls, and crafty-minded servants, who eternally keep silly and husband-seeking widows in hot water, she knew little or nothing of the state of feeling towards her of any of this moderate throng of anticipated gallants, except the oldest of the widowers, who had a great many more children than teeth, and more wrinkles than reason. He, poor amorous soul, had broken the matter to her, and set his flame to note, in all the strains of a dymg love-letter. Her maid-servant had lately told her, (for which she gave her a half-worn crape and collarette,) that she heard several gentlemen talking about her, in a certain store; and all agreed she was a fine-looking widow, dressed tastefully, walked with great elegance and an air of easy dignity. But the oldest clerk, who, by-the-bye, is one of the aforesaid clerks, declared, with some warmth, that, independent of her other attractive qualities, and fascinating manners, she had the prettiest set of teeth that was ever placed in the head of any living creature; that she had the finest eye, and

wore her curls more gracefully than any of the belles in town; and, finally, had the smallest, neatest foot he had ever seen, and which, in her gait, she turned out with an effect almost bewitching. This was enrapturing news; a little damped, however, by a fact, which, I have no doubt, the servant unwarily let slip, that the clerk had carelessly inquired, "how many negroes her mistress had."

I discovered that she had been gadding about, and, of course, gossiping wherever she went (as is very much the custom of widows fishing for news,) every day in the preceding week; and at some houses, she learned that she was the constant theme of conversation among all the widowers, and the toast of the town, by all the bucks. One old motherly matron, in the fulness of her tender concern, and in the excess of her overflowing benevolence, with a shrug of the shoulders and a side-cast cut of the eyes, that displayed much of the white in the corners, and her breath drawn in with a half-whisper, warned her to take care of a certain widower, who, no doubt, indeed she was positively certain of it, would pay his addresses to her.

"He is not as good as he should be, take my

word for it—people say a good deal—ah! his poor wife—I wonder where his children are—debt is a bad thing—thousand pities there ever was such a thing as ardent spirits—I wish I knew what ever became of the woman that lived in their neighbourhood." This, surely, is what may be called breaking a character upon the wheel, and that with not a single implement but horrid inuendos, like killing some kind of game with nothing but the wind of the bullet. Here then is not a solitary fact charged; and who does not see that a timid woman would as soon go into the arms of a fiend, as such a man as this?

At one place, she had learned what any one would have supposed ought to have occasioned her much distress; but widows are heroes in every thing but gender. Some girls, doubtless in the hoaxing playfulness of innocent roguery, had told her that a Dandy and Quill-driver, two of the self-same characters already alluded to, were certainly to fight a duel about her. They well knew that all the preliminary notes, discovering manly turns of thought, evincing a high and chivalric sense of honour, showing sharp and short-set periods, studiously polite but strikingly spirited, and all breathing the valorous sentiment

of *death*, in preference to *life* without *honour*, had actually passed between them. One young lady stated, she knew the day they were to fight, for she had her information direct from those young sons of courage, that make it a business to pay evening visits round the town, whenever a duel is on hand, merely to furnish the latest news about it, and to deal out the freshest anecdotes to which it has given rise, and occasionally to make a few to which it has not given rise, for the *rational* entertainment of *young ladies*; giving, at the same time, their shrewd and sapient opinion, *which will fight* and *which will not fight*, and *which will be killed*, if they do fight. She declared positively, that the challenge had been received, seconds appointed, the articles of combat adjusted, time, place, and manner all fixed, nothing to do now but practise, which was done so slyly, that not more than three justices of the peace, one sheriff, and two constables had any knowledge of it. There was no hope of a reconciliation; the parties themselves began seriously to apprehend that the thing would come to a fight; that it had been pushed a little beyond the point of an honourable retreat; friends were letting them go, and standing by, willing to see

the fun; even a court of honour could not save them; one had met and broke without doing any thing, unless it was to settle the general principle, that in future it will be unlawful for a dandy to fight in his corsets; so that she might prepare herself for the delicious treat of a murder case on her account; perhaps the most enjoyable state of exaltation to which female pride can soar.

This duel seemed to season all her other thoughts with a smack of importance, which, besides giving her a great deal of self-complacency, served to regale her with a foretaste of her future consequence. She appeared to have, though not a sorrowful, yet not a very unreasonable view of the affair. If people were such fools as to try to shoot out what little brains they had, (which, by the bye, she thought would require some skill,) why should she grieve about it? Every body likes to be talked of, and she did not pretend to suppress the satisfaction it would give her to learn that one was killed dead on the spot, and the other mortally wounded; for the bloodier the battle, the more noise it would make: it would even get into the papers, those kind-propagators of all sorts of good news.

and surely, she thought, it will be asked what was the *melancholy cause* of such a pathetic catastrophe? This would at once float her name upon the waves of conversation, and she would be tossed mountains high on the surges of public admiration.

Considering herself fairly in the market, she determined to lose no opportunity of showing herself, and exhibiting her charms to the best advantage. Why might not widows hang out signals? Every ship has her flag, and every shopkeeper his sign; and, according to the gentlemen of the green bag, not a thing can stir a peg in court without *notice*. She should, therefore, go to all the balls, be first at all the *conversations* to which she might happen to be invited. She determined to give great parties herself, and be sure to invite all candidates for a wife, both young and old. But particularly, she resolved to spend all her mornings in the very agreeable and conspicuous pastime of *shopping*, when not otherwise engaged in collecting town incidents from maids and matrons. She had not the least intention of buying any thing, but it was such a fine occasion to make a display, and to electioneer; she should meet so many fine

beaux on the side-walks; bow to one, smile at another, and toss her nodding plumes as she skims along. Then in the stores, so amusing to make the young clerks pull down all their goods on the counter, laugh and giggle with them, chat and wriggle with others that may be circulating through the room, find nothing suit, all too dear, not the newest fashions either—get better bargains somewhere else—break up, and pass off to another shop; and so tripping on, up one street and down another, right and left through the crowd, hey, cross over and go home. And so end the mornings of a widow, and *some few belles* too, who are shopping, not for merchandise, but for a husband, an article that some of them will find out to their cost *looks* better than it *wears*.

I left this good lady to take a survey of what was passing in the heads of her desired, if not expected, suitors. One of the bachelors happened to be present; and, independent of the peculiar relation in which he stood to this loving fair one, I had a great curiosity to see the inside of a bachelor's pate. He seemed to have been sitting in a very careless and unconcerned posture; his legs crossed, and no doubt the upper

one had been dangling in a seesaw; his hands lying open, one flat in the other, upon his lap; his shoulders stooped; his eyes unfixed, as if they had been wandering about, without seeing any thing. I was much surprised when his head flew open. I expected to find, if not exactly the same thoughts as in the rest, at least the same structure of the brain: but no one can have any idea of the difference. There was no colour in it; it resembled a great withered white rose, full of worm-holes, the leaves bruised and drooping, and the edges ragged. It was as barren as a desert, and as bleak and dreary as a dungeon, and I think it highly probable if a thermometer could have been inserted into his head, the mercury would have fallen from temperate heat to freezing point. There did not appear the slightest trace of any affection whatever, not even for a hound, that second, and sometimes first, family object of regard with most men. He had no strong feelings of any kind. I looked particularly for his dominant passion; but discovered that all were alike. He seemed to desire, if really he desired any thing, that every thing in nature would perform its office without imparting pleasure; that he could eat and drink

without tasting, talk without interest, laugh without knowing it, and sleep without refreshment: in fine, that all created good in the grateful offer of its enjoyment, should *sort* with that singular inaptitude of his mind for social and connubial affections. I felt a quick sudden chill run through me as I hastily shut up his skull, and I soon moved off to the widowers, where I was more than repaid for the cold, damp, agree-
bringing entertainment I had just forsaken.

Here all was good humour, all was love! or at least they thought so. Although among the oldest I found the brain, like the face, shrunk, and of course somewhat wrinkled, yet the little channels were filled up with a limpid trickling fluid, that seemed to excite to love-contemplations; for in every man of them, the first thing that appeared was a *wife*. Their children, (for some had children,) their farms, their business, every thing appeared to give way to this all-absorbing thought. They really believed they could love as hard as they did in youth; but this was a most deceptive feeling, easily accounted for. Their minds were subjected to the violent urgency of present and clamorous passion, whetted by the strong recollection of former

pleasures. Oh, how tender, and kind, and soft they would be to their next wives! they could see a thousand ways to please that had entirely escaped them in the first connexion. As they thought of nothing else but marrying, it would seem they must surely talk of nothing else; for I noticed they were all busily engaged in manufacturing puns, and putting up the raw materials for small talk and smart sayings, as powder-men put up rockets to be used on gala days, which they intended to play off in the finest flashes of fancy, and coruscations of wit, to the very next company of ladies into which they might be thrown; and show at least by intellectual vigour that the ravages of time upon the energies of a widower, are not so extensive as an ill-natured world is disposed to believe. These witty preparations, and studied gallantries related chiefly to certain secrets which each one knew of every body else; and particularly the better knowledge which they had of every one's business than their own. They had supplied themselves with a number of hints and inuendoes on the subject of expected matches; they knew all about certain engagements, who were courting, and who were to be married, and even the very

day when. They had prepared themselves for a great deal of *guessing*, which is extremely productive of humour on such occasions. In fine, they were running over all that little, loose, idle change, belonging to the currency of conversation, which, on that ever-joying and never-tiring subject of matrimony, is so frequently employed by a chattering, tittering, and rattling company of ladies and gentlemen, having no better business, sitting in what is very properly called a parlour, in a large semi-circle, round a cheerful winter evening's fire. But I was most amused with the shifts and little pleasant turns they had fortified themselves with to parry cuts and thrusts at their ages. This is always quite a fruitful subject of jeering, and to be prepared for these attacks seemed to be very important to the widowers; consequently, they all had some good things to say, when this subject should be brought up again. The oldest widower had wound himself into a perfect ecstasy, to tell them, at their next meeting, that he had been actually taken for his son.

I found that all of them had more than half a dozen widows in view, (and some of them were very anxious for a young wife;) and, strange to

tell, they thought they had nothing to do but to make up their own minds on the subject: and they were sure to get whichever they selected. Widowers never dream they can be refused; and this being a singular species of self-love, resting upon rather extraordinary circumstances for indulgence, seeing they are generally past the prime of life, and clogged with obstacles very unfavourable to matrimony, I could but search closely for the reason of it; and I think I discovered that they rely not so much upon their own merit as the folly of the widows. They seemed to entertain the idea, that a widow was never known to refuse an offer; and this uncharitable opinion was stretched to the monstrous length, that widows would marry "peaceably if they could, but forcibly if they must."

Indeed, I perceived that these liquorish old blades possessed fully all the nonsense, without the true fire of love; all the smoke, without its flame; the temper, without its edge; and the tendency, without its lasting sensibility.

There was another striking folly about an old widower, which would of itself, almost, have enabled me to distinguish him from the rest of the crowd. I allude to his dress. Generally speak-

ing, during their first marriage, they consult ease and economy in their apparel; and if, as is sometimes the case, they are not right-down slovenly, they are, at least, very careless and untasty in their appearance, and almost always with the beard of a *Bruin*. But just let them lose their poor dear wives, and see how soon they will "spruce up," as it is called. Now, in consequence of their former loose and irregular habits of dress, their new *regime* sits awkwardly upon them; there is a cramped stiffness about them, that would be observable from the actual pain it produces, if from nothing else.

All these widowers had new clothes, hat, and boots; and they were just one grade behind the fashions. By way of illustrating the idea I mean to convey, it may not be amiss to describe the costume of one of these gay sparks. He was just clean-shaved, and much hacked and butchered in the operation. His cravat was tied on in such a manner as to show clearly, that until lately, perhaps, one had not been on his neck since shortly after his last marriage. It enclosed a thick, narrow pad, politely called a *pudding*, and drawn so tight around his wind-pipe, that he was half-choked. He looked, for all the world,

like a lady in corsets; the knot was half way between his chin and his ear; one corner, starched as stiff as buckram, had shot behind his cheek, and was sticking up on the cape of his coat, and the other was resting transversely on his breast, on the outside of his vest. His fine blue broad-cloth coat, glittering with gilt buttons, hung drooping from his shoulders, and the lap-pelles, flaring open, flapped against his arms, like the wings of a fly-fan. He had on high-heeled Wellington boots, a thing, doubtless, he had never worn before, and which were so tight, could he have been seen walking, it would have been in a tormenting hobble, upon the sides of his feet, and his toes turned in. His pantaloons, though of beautiful materials, were cut so tight and short about the waist, and so full and swelling about the legs, that strangers to such a fashion would have sworn that he had them on *up-side down*. In fine, all his dress displayed the awkwardness of long disuse, and a new and unfamiliarised habit of restraint.

Upon leaving these two characters,—to wit, the widow and widower, I could not help reflecting that they presented the most ridiculous figure of any I had seen; for there are really none of

the justifications for their folly, which belong to youthful indiscretion. They seem to act contrary to the ordinary process of nature, and present a singular example of its reversed operations; for, instead of being sedate from age, and considerate from experience, they have not either quality, in as high degree, as when they first commenced life. There is more reason and dignity and self-respect in their first courtships than in their last. They appear to have lost their former discernment; and particularly their common-place observation. They have not either the penetration or prudence of the younger unmarried classes. The widow is more flippant in her conversation, more flirting in her manners, and more tawdry in her dress than the girl. The widower, in all the above particulars, is more silly, fidgeting, and uncouth, than the youngster. He frequently presents, in his person and manners, a living caricature. He has a dress that does not suit him; a gait that provokes constant laughter, and withal, love being his exclusive theme, he is always the unceasing object of ridicule. Each character is, generally speaking, the butt of every company, and perpetually the sport of the younger of both sexes, those who

are much below them in point of age, and, consequently of the experience and discretion, which are the invaluable results of that respectable condition of life.

EDUCATION.

“Dare nobly then ; but, conscious of your trust,
As ever warm and bold, be ever just ;
Nor court applause in these degenerate days :
The villain's censure is extorted praise.”

It is a species of Quixotism to war against the follies of the world ; but it is a good wide subject, and affords a fine opportunity for authors to display their smartness, and bring themselves into notice. The writer who thus arrays himself against such an enemy, ought to be fully sensible that he is combating where he can and will receive no quarter, and therefore should be resignedly prepared neither to ask nor grant any. It is a voluntary conflict of his own seeking, and perfectly undesired, though not undeserved, on the part of his adversary. So long then as the strife continues, there should be no begging of favours, no apologies, no peace-offerings, no palliative overtures. There is something ungenerous, as well as cowardly, in lashing an an-

tagonist, and at the same time deprecating his resistance—provoke his wrath, and yet supplicate his patience. This I have not done. Error of opinion will never be successfully overthrown unless resolutely attacked. It has the great advantage of long acquiescence, and, on that account, has grown into a kind of cartilage. As before suggested, it is frequently nourished by tender passions, and guarded by affectionate associations, which, in a moment, spring at the least alarm to repel the very first onsets of reason; and however open in attack, or sinuous in approach, there is the same unsleeping protection afforded to a long-indulged prejudice. I have glanced at one or two instances in former numbers; the present will contain another which will, perhaps, kindle a flame around my head that may be difficult to extinguish. Nevertheless I shall try it, under the old proverb, that “ventures make merchants.” All undertakings are great according to their risks; I therefore go for “a crown or a cross.”

In one corner of the room there sat an old man, of small stature and thin visage, wrapt in a black silk gown, with a neat white stock around his neck; and a black velvet cap on his head.

On his right and left were seated a number of youths of different ages, the youngest nearest to him. The whole appearance of the group suggested to me the idea, which was afterward confirmed, that he was a venerable schoolmaster, with his little flock, where it should be, immediately under his own eye, receiving the benefits of Christian instruction. I thought I would first look into the heads of the little stretching and yawning urchins, and see how they were employed under their present confinement, and whether their thoughts reached to any matters connected with their scholastic slavery. I was much amused with the great variety of their unsettled and straggling ideas. Their brain shifted its subjects with the rapidity of lightning; and finding nothing of that reasoning, reflection, discretion, judgment, and experience which constitute sanity of mind, I was almost led to suppose that their thoughts must resemble a madman's; and yet, thought I, children are not deranged. In the absence of all these rational powers, there is one remarkable fact connected with children which I have never seen noticed, and of course unaccounted for—that they do not kill one another as often as men. They are

more numerous, and having no pursuits but those of education, are oftener together in crowds, frequently engaged in violent exercises creative of great collision of feeling, well calculated to excite passion and provoke the worst of temper; and, what is still more wonderful, they are always furnished with deadly weapons; for when was ever a boy without a knife? They are not under the fear of the law, and yet there are not among them as many murder, or even stabbing cases, as with men, who boast of more reason and foresight.

As might be expected, I found that their sports afforded a great field for contemplation; some were counting their marbles; others covering trap-balls; not a few were bending bandy, more commonly called *shinney* sticks; while others, again, were making cat-paddles; so that all the kinds of games in use at schools, were most industriously occupying their little brains, and they were anxiously longing for the morning to arrive, that they might be up and engaged. But there was another most officious and meddling train of thought that broke in very much upon the pleasure of those just mentioned, and that was their "*tasks*." Oh! they all had

tasks, and they were of heart-aching magnitude; the morning would open to them, as it does to every living creature, a day of uncertainty; certain, however, as to trouble; but uncertain as to comfort: so that we may sorrowfully inquire, if it is not among youth, where is the condition of life without its troubles? These burthens upon their mind were the sources of all their little spite and prejudices against their poor old teacher, who was really their father in disguise. They wished him all manner of harm. Some were devising schemes of mischief against him; others were actually pinching him in their minds; and all had determined to whip him as soon as they grew to manhood. Poor schoolmasters! thought I, if all the threats that boys make concerning you were carried into effect, there would not be one of you left upon the face of the earth: a strong proof how changeable the human mind in all the stages of its existence; for, of the million of beatings that are faithfully promised to schoolmasters, not one in a million ever receives his pay. I passed, by no means out of humour, from this Saturday-loving and Monday-hating tribe to their good old master, whose thoughts I found to be extensively and

warmly interested on the subject of education; one, of all others, that appeared to be the nearest to his heart. There was such a positive confidence in his convictions, supported by such force of reasoning, that I confess I felt staggered; but like the rest of the world, I was determined not to yield up my prejudice of education: I had too much pride for that. I was determined to hold on to old established notions long after the reason for them had ceased, and also long after all plausible arguments had given way in their support; and finally, like the perverse folly of that government which once attempted to make the customs of a despotism fit the habits of a democracy, entrench myself behind that flimsy and most indefensible barrier—*immemorial usage*. I entertained this sober opinion, that instead of thinking for ourselves, it better becomes tame and submissive minds to acquiesce in this very rational conclusion, that the roots of all *custom* lie in some fertile, though hidden, beds of reason, which were well known to our forefathers, maugre their entire obscurity to us. The old gentleman did not pretend to mince the matter; he roundly maintained, in his own imagination, that the whole system of “*Col-*

lege education was wrong, constitutionally wrong.” He mentally asserted, that all education had two grand objects in view. The first and most important is the implantation of those cardinal and essential principles, which directly centre in the unequivocal performance of our *whole* duty to God and man; and, secondly, the communication of certain portions of useful or ornamental science. These ought never to be separated if possible; but, if necessity or any other cause should ever operate to produce an alternative choice, every one will admit that the last should be rejected.

There is nothing to be compared to moral and virtuous habits. Learning, without them, is a curse. Then it follows, that the system of education, which best secures the first object, is that which claims, and ought to receive, our decided approbation. This important end would be most effectually obtained in a course of domestic education; and all parents would greatly prefer, and, doubtless, adopt it, if either their qualifications or resources would justify that plan. It would seem then the one which approximated nearest to it must be the most desirable. The first natural division, of opposing systems of education,

is into *private* and *public*; and we have only to examine the pretensions of each to ascertain to which our discreet and sober judgment most inclines. The first presents a more striking resemblance to parental authority, possessing all its energy, without its indulgence—all its vigilance, without its weakness—all its firmness, without its culpable fondness. The authority there, as it should be with all worthy teachers, (and none others ought to be employed,) is substituted for, and is, emphatically, that of the *parent*, absolute and unconditional. It does not seek to govern upon the delusive admission of a virtue in youths, which is the very end and object of education to confer. I allude to their *sense of honour*. This is the great operating spring, and controlling agency, of all public systems of education; and here is the great *radical error* of the whole plan. The discipline of all public institutions is bottomed upon a principle, which does not in the nature of things exist. All honour is false, that is not founded upon our social and religious obligations; all honour is dangerously deceptive, that has not immediate reference to moral duty. And who does not see that these obligations, and this duty is the laborious study of a lifetime?

Why is a principle resorted to, even if it did exist, for the regulation of civil conduct, which is not used under parental authority, and which is abandoned as soon as the student quits the haunts of science? Are human laws addressed to this nice sense of honour? Is there no punishment then but that of turning a man in upon his own conscience, to receive the whips of *honour*, a principle so undefined, and the scourges of *shame*, a faculty so often hardened? Would this do for the concealed assassin, the more desperate ruffian, the midnight incendiary, or, in fine, the perpetrator of the petty offences against society? The sense of shame is only one among a thousand instruments of correction; and, in its place, is a good one, because it is moderate, and often saves the necessity of a more rigorous resort. But to say it is the only one that shall be used, in any system of government, no matter of what description, under the wretched and ruined condition of man, betrays not only a gross ignorance of human nature, but a lamentable opposition to divine law. And, when applied to children, evinces an alarming state of society; for it displays the arrogance of human presumption, in setting up its opinions against the explicit autho-

rity of sacred revelation. Hence, all good government and all well-regulated families have discarded this fallacious idea. No parent, who is honest with himself and faithful to his child, will use, in the application of discipline to his faults, *nothing* but *shame*. And no statesman, who is just, judicious, and intelligent, will rely upon its *exclusive* agency, for successful results, in the suppression of crime and disorder. If, then, it will not do in either kind of the governments above mentioned, the first and last to which human conduct is subjected in this life, how does it happen that it will exactly suit for the short, and, indeed, important interval, usually employed in colleges for fixing knowledge and correct principles upon the human mind? But, as before stated, it presupposes a sentiment that does not, and cannot, in the nature of things, exist. No one will surely contend that it is instinctive. Where has it been acquired? Not at home; for there the youth has been taught, if properly managed, to *fear* as well as to *feel*; and why is it not reasonable that the same discipline to which he has been accustomed should be continued throughout his state of pupilage? And when it ceases, it will certainly prepare him better for

the condition upon which he is immediately thereafter to enter. This singular anomaly is produced: in college the youth is taught to forget the lessons of his earlier years, and the discipline by which they were enforced; and here he imbibes with his science, in draughts of intoxicating self-importance, and visionary dreams of personal impunity, principles and opinions which neither suit the trials of life, the active pursuits of business, the anxieties of the domestic obligations, the responsibilities of society, and, bottomed upon all these, the demands of government, that inevitably await him, upon the last stage of temporal accountability which he is obliged to mount. The consequence is, he must again, if he can, unlearn the Utopian notions of the college, and either go back to the more wholesome impressions of childhood, or speedily enter upon the acquisition of ideas adapted to his present relations. He will have discovered that his college life, in discarding *fear* from the government of youthful aberrations, was an unnecessary interruption of the only true method of curbing human impetuosity, and correcting its vicious tendencies—was of short duration, chimerical in its conception, and

leading to no useful practical result. A youth, upon entering college, is virtually told, that "here we rely upon your *honour* for your good behaviour. It is true, you know nothing of that term; your past management has been rather of a slavish kind: that is at an end for the present, and you may dismiss your fears. We shall fine you, which is a punishment that acts directly upon your parents, and has the peculiar merit of making the *innocent* suffer for the *guilty*. We shall then admonish you; and if this will not do, we shall dismiss you: these are very *dishonourable* punishments. It is the business of education to teach you what *honour* is; but we will suppose you possess enough of it for the purposes of your collegiate course."

What rational mind, thought he, can expect a happy result from such false premises? And what is the experience of this system?—Fines and admonition are scarcely ever regarded: the sense of shame depends upon the opinion of the community in which it is to operate; and if that community agree, that instead of shunning an offender, they will support him, in the name of common sense, where is its salutary effect? Are not combinations formed in colleges not

only to resist the odium of this kind of punishment, but to uphold and countenance the subject of it, and so divide his *shame* as effectually to destroy its force and influence. No one is concerned in this matter, being an insulated society, but the governors and the governed, between whom there is a constant warfare; the object of the latter being to paralyze the authority of the former, weak as it is, and bring their discipline into contempt; and this they most successfully accomplish by reason of the confederacies already mentioned. As to expulsion, it may be safely affirmed that an instance has never yet occurred in which the parents and friends of the accused did not readily believe that he was most cruelly persecuted and wrongfully disgraced. His companions rise at once in his vindication, censure roundly and openly their officers, sooth the relatives of the exile, and succeed in fixing upon their minds the conviction of the most unnatural oppression. It all passes off to the discredit of the institution, in triumph to the offender, and to the traducement of his judges. And where are the *shame* and *dishonour*? But this is not one half of the evil consequences of this system. Hundreds of indiscreet youths

leave their families, many with good feelings, well-trained minds, and correct principles as far as they have gone; and when arrived at college they are collected into one body; habits, principles, and dispositions of every description are intimately mixed and associated together; large edifices are prepared for them, in which they are placed by themselves, separated, to be sure, into squads, but possessing the entire control of an apartment open to an uninterrupted intercourse with each other; no other guard over their conduct but the occasional and stated visits of young tutors, and sometimes, perhaps, the older officers, who consider this as not only an irksome, but sometimes a hazardous duty, and therefore it is not the best performed. These youths are left to study at their own discretion; they recite in large classes, where some have perhaps one question to answer, and others frequently none—return to their rooms—indulge in idleness, noisy conversations, and boisterous amusements. But this is not all; the habit of idleness begets the habit of mischief and dissipation. Who has not heard of college tricks? Unfortunately they furnish a source of diverting narration; and it has actually, by a most unna-

tural and criminal allowance, become a species of wit to enliven the more dull entertainments of polished life. Every denomination of outrage is committed; habits of vice are contracted, which cling to the individuals through life. Indeed, if all the scenes of a college, its midnight employments, its secret frolicks, its predatory mischiefs, and, in fact, a thousand other considerations it were useless to name, could be laid open to the noonday observation of the world, it would make parents quake to the heart, and shudder to the soul to see their children sporting upon the "crumbling brink" of such a gulf of ruin. The youths are not to blame. Do we expect more of them than men? Idle men have always acted thus. Disorder is the infallible result of loose restraint. They are thrown together without discretion, without judgment, without reflection; filled with passions the more strong, because youthful, unchastened by reason, and unregulated by experience; and what is infinitely worse, surrounded by a thousand temptations, and actually furnished by their inconsiderate parents, through an overweening tenderness for their condition and regret for their absence, with all the means to gratify their most

unlicensed desires. The world is deceived in this system, and it is kept in operation, because, like a lottery, there is once in a while a great prize turned up to some fortunate individual: some rare instances, "like angels' visits, few and far between," of a great man, who would have been equally so under any other course, who turns out from a college; and then behold its great and superior utility! Never reflecting that hundreds have gone into obscurity, and even do not prosper as well as those who have sprung from private schools; while other hundreds have plunged into the tide of dissipation, and are lost to friends and country.

That portion of striking and acknowledged fame to which the American character has been elevated for military and political renown, as well as for moral and scientific greatness, owes its exaltation to neither the open work nor secret charm of a college. When this bold assertion is made, the names of Washington and Franklin suddenly rise to every mind in support of its truth. This, however, may be considered accidental, and contrary examples may be supplied: but it will not be unsafe to affirm that they may be met and matched by equal pretensions, in

every walk of society, from the closets of private instruction. In confirmation of this idea, there is another remarkable fact, which will become doubly so, if such too should be thought fortuitous, that in the late competition for the Presidency of the Union, three out of the four rivals for that distinguished honour, were the humble offerings of private education, who boast neither influence from titled learning, nor consequence from the pageant of a decorated parchment.

If all the parents who have ever educated sons at college could assemble together, there would be some melancholy information, and precious, because useful, facts, that would tend to the discovery of an awful disproportion between those whose exertions have been crowned with success, and those who have passed into oblivion, or have been conspicuous only from disgrace.

All instructors, whether public or private, should receive the aid of parents, at least in that most important branch which relates to their morals and principles, and the due observance of such laws as are necessary to their government. The course of a youth is like a rocket. Left to his own ardent imagination he is without

law as to direction, and without moderation as to temper and desires. Hence, a constant vigilance is indispensable, both at school and at home, to engraft and fix those leading features of character which are to square with every great duty of life. Parents should then, if possible, *never separate from their children during their education: they should go to the place, whether public or private, where this most CRITICAL AND INTERESTING WORK is performed, AND THERE REMAIN until it is finished.* But if this object cannot be attained, all reason teaches us to place them where they may be frequently seen, and that at not only short intervals, but at the shortest notice, under the management of as few persons as possible, where their associates are select and limited; removed from scenes of temptation, and, above all, unfurnished with those resources that can command the indulgence of any passion, and pamper the unsteady cravings of every desire.

In most successful colleges, under the popular meaning of that phrase, there are, generally from one to two hundred students, requiring nine officers, in order to do them any thing like tolerable justice. Now, will any one hesitate to

believe, that if the same number of pupils were divided into classes, consisting of between twenty and thirty individuals, and placed under the private and uncontrolled management of the same number of pious and learned men, notorious for experience and sobriety of character, remote from the usual allurements to idleness and dissolute amusements, there would not result to society, and of course to parents, a greater degree of morals, learning, and usefulness, than under any other system? This was the ancient mode of education; and, in relation to it, we have yet to learn where any well-founded error has ever been detected. To say that such instructors cannot be had is yielding the question. Let the attempt be made; and when it fails, no generous projector will press his plans, and no liberal reformer will urge his complaints. This plan comes forcibly recommended by the additional consideration, that private instructors have to depend, for the support of themselves and character, upon their own unassisted exertions. To live, they have to labour; and success can only be expected from the force of industry, and the pride of reputation. With them, no public patronage deadens competition; no easy salary,

from rich endowments, entices to indolence, or beguiles to indifference. The clamours of conscience are not hushed by the suggestion of arduous *public services*, or the self-consoling assumption, that public servants are objects of public gratitude.

What a singular and fatal indifference is manifested by parents towards their children, in relation to their morals and principles, while they are situated at college! They trust them *abroad* for years, without once visiting them, or even instituting an inquiry into the state and condition of their progress in learning or traits of character. They often suffer them to leave their home in youth, and return only in manhood; never having seen them in the interesting and anxious interval, and, therefore, perfectly ignorant of their proficiency or practices, which, too often, to their inexpressible grief, disappoint their fondest expectations. How different would it have been, if a valuable property had been sent from home on an adventure, or placed in the hands of an agent for profitable speculation. Would a considerable sum of money have been left in the hands of professors of college, for years, without once inquiring into the manner in which it

was managed, and what was likely to be its ultimate advantage? Judging from the avarice of the world, the answer is well understood. And yet, what is wealth compared to the loss of one's offspring? What virtue have untold thousands, in soothing the anguish of that bosom, whose first and early hopes have experienced an untimely blast?

There are always some virtuous and studious youths at every college, mindful of the object that has attracted them thither, and honourably ambitious of literary distinction. These would do well any where, and, perhaps, better in any other situation; for they would meet with fewer obstacles and less inconvenience from jealous-minded and disorderly companions, who are always to be found in every college, interposing the most studied difficulties that are calculated to defeat the views or retard the progress of praiseworthy assiduity.* While it is acknowledged that there is this honourable exception in favour of a few, and but few; it must be admitted, on the other hand, that a number out of all pro-

* It is a remarkable fact, that the best scholars and characters are those who remain at *private institutions*, until they are qualified to enter the two last classes of college.

portion to these, pursue a very different course. Opposed to mental labour, (and what youth, who is insensible of its future advantages, can willingly encounter it?) meeting with so many secret and open facilities to avoid it, with no kind parental encouragement to stimulate exertions, and no watchful eye to guard from snares, will voluntarily sit down and subject himself to an anxious, a deep, and thorough prosecution of academic studies; and without which, how profitless are his researches? What then is the consequence? A false affection has lined his pocket with the means of gratifying every wish; he flies to dissipation as a refuge from the compunctions of misspent time; he contracts the vice of extravagance: this drags after it the love of dress: intoxication, with all its attendant and incalculable follies, dance in the train; and the youth that might otherwise have been respectable, is awfully precipitated into a whirl of giddy infatuation, from which all the concern and admonition of instructors, all the solicitude of friends, and all the affectionate grief of parents can never extricate him.

Often has it happened, and many are the witnesses that could attest the fact, if their voices

could be heard; that an amiable and modest youth, who has been the long and anxious care of pious parents, and on that account early learned the value of moral rectitude and the adorning qualities of an unassuming deportment and virtuous conversation, has been thrown into a groupe of college veterans, hardened in mischievous debaucheries and hackneyed in wanton irregularity, unable to withstand their besetting importunities, and the inveigling character of their seductions, gradually yields his fair fame as a sacrifice to their wiles, and becomes an immolated victim upon the altar of the most abandoned profligacy.

At this point I discovered his thoughts were suddenly broken off by the tittering of one of his little pupils; and he had turned to chide him with his eye, and to signify as well as a look could do it, that all would not be well with him in the morning.

THE NEGRO'S DREAM.

“ But tread with cautious step this dangerous ground,
Beset with faithless precipices round :
Truth be your guide ; disdain ambition's call ;
And if you fall with Truth, you greatly fall.”

MY labours are now wearing to a close : not that my subjects have given out ; for every one, with the least discernment, must at once perceive that I have sprung a mine of inexhaustible mental treasures ; that if mind is immortal, the varied passions and diversified thoughts that flow from it in one unslackened stream, must be equally so. I have, therefore, many rare, curious, and interesting secrets yet in reserve, and intend one day or other to present them to the world : but I owe it to prudence as well as to my present exertions, for they have not been light, however indifferently they may be received, to wait and see if I need trouble myself any more on this subject, and to ascertain if new discoveries are in any better request than

old ones, and what is the state of the public taste as to either. A hint in this regard may be very necessary to one of indolent habits, loving ease and hating toil, and who, perhaps, like his own unfortunate author, may be waked up from the same fatal hallucination. I must, therefore, after giving this essay, modestly retire until I ascertain how the repast already furnished has been relished by my grateful readers.

In sauntering through the crowd, I descried, in a remote recess of the building, a groupe of poor dejected blackamoors, some anxiously engaged in devotion, and all very attentive and serious except one old back-bowed and age-stricken negro, who had been overcome by the power of sleep, and was yielding to its quiet indulgence. His feet propped outwards, and his knees drawn together supported his face, buried in his hands. An idea instantly struck me that in *his* head I should find something very curious, if not interesting ; for I imagined I should detect a dream, and with it the true cause and operation of those singular phantasms. I was not disappointed ; for, upon opening his head, there was glowing upon his brain and flitting across his fancy, one of the most incident-fraught visions

that, perhaps, ever gambolled upon the human imagination. The brain was evidently different from that of one awake. It seemed to have puffed up and become extremely spongy, and directly upon the top of it rested, apparently, a small open book, the lids horizontally pressed down, and the leaves strutting in a regular semi-circle, resembling the crescent of a peacock. They were as thin and as brilliant as gold-leaf, and constantly fluttered, as if agitated by a breeze. Upon these were written, in the most inconceivably small characters, that were as lustrous as the diamond, all the events of his life, and every thing he had ever *heard, seen, or conceived.* These, though lost to his recollection in his wakeful moments, and entirely from under the government of his reason and judgment, always select the sleeping hours to riot in their incoherent sports, independent of all control of the Will. From these materials, thus recorded, the Fancy weaves a picture of the most distorted and motley appearance, and sometimes half-a-dozen at a time, then suddenly reflecting them upon the dormant powers of the mind, which, falling upon the old obliterated traces through which they were originally derived, bring up to

view, as by the flash of electricity over metallic particles, all the impressions it has received, of which those immediate dreams are fabricated. Hence the quick and sudden changes of dreams; their confused and dissociated character; their obscurity in some particulars, and their great precision in others; some ideas, at their original reception, being deeper graven than others. And hence, also, that singular phenomenon of the mind's greater powers, in some things, while asleep, than when awake. The ideas and language, derived from superior intellects, as well as the mind's own contemplations, (which, as every one knows, are often far above the competency of language to express,) are transferred to this fancy register, as matter for the composition of visions; and, after being long forgotten, are revived in the manner above related, so as to create the belief that they are original thoughts and the exertion of a new power. By this process, it is readily perceived, that persons can possess a consciousness of ideas, much above the character of those belonging to their wakeful hours. Orators and public speakers have, in that season, experienced the exercise of declamatory powers perfectly new to them, and even

individuals, who never while awake had a poetic idea in their lives, have, in that state, turned off the finest effusions of fancy. It is upon this principle, the following very remarkable incidents can be satisfactorily explained.

The dream, that occupied the mind of this good old African, was this. He imagined that he had died, after lingering upon a bed of straw, in a cold, damp hovel, without a single comfort but cold water, and no friend to administer that. His last ideas clung to his wife and children, separated from him, in some unknown region of the world, and the finishing pang of death was embittered by the recollection that not a kindred tear would bedew his grave. While his spirit hovered over his dead body, he saw his fellow-servants, the aged first, enter to pay to his memory the tribute of their grief, and to his mortal remains, their last sad rites. As they surrounded his corpse, one by one, their heads fell within their hands, and they wept (for even negroes can weep) bitterly for his loss. He seemed to say to them, the separation will not be long, the ties that bind a slave to earth are but few, and, when dissolved, the event should never occasion regret to surviving friends. When his soul took its de-

parture, he thought it rapidly ascended to another world, possessing a consciousness of all its earthly knowledge, and an increased capacity for fresh acquisitions; and, when he touched it, he seemed to have landed upon a sea-coast. A strange idea rushed upon his mind, that he was again about to enter upon another long life of slavery. Oh! said he, is this to be my cruel fate? After giving way for a moment to tears, he aroused himself up, wiping his eyes, and taking courage, marched into the interior of the country. He looked fearfully around for overseers and patrol, and being unfurnished with a passport, he expected every moment to be surrounded and taken; for a shifting train of ideas, not unfrequent in dreams, would occasionally haunt him that he was a runaway. However, after roving for a while, he came to a bright opening, which displayed, in all directions but one, endless fields, clothed with the most enlivening verdure, diversified with the most pleasing eminences, studded, at intervals, with an infinite variety of luscious fruit-trees and enchanting groves; and all refreshed by innumerable streams and sparkling islands. The clusters of trees were alive with birds that were warbling

in every conceivable strain, and flying from grove to grove. Flocks of all descriptions both of beasts and fowls, were strolling in every direction; some grazing on the meadows, others laying in the lakes; some resting under the shade-trees, and others winding up the hills. This scene revived his spirits; but he kept a constant look-out for the *plantations*: he expected every moment to come across the *cotton* and *sugar* fields; and many of his poor comrades, who had long before left him, bending, as he expected to find them, at their daily tasks, "moistening the parched earth with their tears, and fanning it with their sighs." But no such sight appeared; he moved from meadow to hill, and from hill to dale, until at last he was obstructed by a wall that terminated the prospect of the fields, and appeared in height and length to be without end. He walked by the side of it, anxiously looking for an opening, to discover, if possible, what lay beyond it; when, at last, he came to an immense massive gate, and peeping through its grates, he beheld a plain that seemed to dazzle like the sun; and, at no great distance from this entrance there stood an inexpressibly grand and towering edifice that glistened like

the rays of light reflected from a mirror, and left the settled impression that it was a structure of diamond rock. He immediately concluded that this was the dwelling of God; and believing that it was known he had arrived, he waited with patience to be summoned to the immortal presence. In a short time the gate slowly turned upon its ponderous hinges, and until that moment he was not sensible of any weakness or concern: but, as he moved, a most awful trembling seized him, and he was evidently sinking under the most insupportable weight of something which he could not see, and which his powers were unequal to define. He would certainly have sunk, but he felt himself suddenly come in contact with an invisible prop, from which there seemed to issue a voice, saying, "this is not the first time I have supported you, and your present wretched and overpowering burthen." In a few moments he was prostrate at the feet of his Maker, "his face in his hands, and his hands in the dust." He thought he was asked in a voice of thunder, What brought him to that place? and instantly to give an account of his claims to such transcendent glory. He imagined, however, that he was encouraged to

speak without worldly dread; for, negro as he was, he was upon a footing with princes and kings in that place.—Here there are no whips and scourges, fetters and manacles, task-masters or drivers—rise, collect yourself, look around, and begin your story. He arose immediately; all his slavish fears were gone, and in their place succeeded an honest boldness unknown to bondage, unaccompanied by any the remotest feelings of revenge. Indeed he felt that firm self-confidence which would be naturally inspired by the mighty protection of the great Author of nature.

Turning in the direction he had come, the world he had left was laid perfectly open to his view, and after surveying it for a moment, he pointed to a dark spot upon the face of it, and said, “That black smoky region that seems, when compared with the rest of the earth, to be a deep gloomy cavern, was the place of my birth: and though I lived like the beasts of the desert, knowing nothing of the world and my Creator, yet as far as bodily pleasures constitute happiness, I was happy. I had but few wants, and consequently but few wishes; it was the only condition my Maker deigned to give me, and with it I was content. The estate which I

held in the scale of existence, and its scanty joys, were as much my own as the greatest potentate's on earth; but few and squalid as they were, they became the envy and desire of avarice and power. That little bright spot that seems to twinkle like a star, and standing by itself in the ocean, near to, but separated from, that other brilliant continent, though it has stretched the human mind nearer to the intelligence of angels than all the world beside, yet it is, with shame but honest confidence I say it, the abode of robbers. It has been to my unfortunate country a nation of pirates. From thence there issued a gang of unfeeling banditti; and, coming to my native shores on one bright morning as I lay basking, the chief pleasure of a negro, on the sunny side of my father's cabin, meditating upon the sports of the chase and the pleasures of sleep, little dreaming of any danger, all at once I was suddenly seized by these civilized ruffians, tied hand and foot, and, with as many others as they could speedily collect, were borne to their vessels and crowded into a dark, damp, and suffocating hole. I was torn from my father, mother, and many brothers and sisters, who happily escaped the same dreadful

fate, by reason of a temporary absence from home; and I was separated from other affections arising out of the relations of home, country, and friends, which, in all conditions, constitute the chief attachment to life, and without which, its duration is a matter of indifference. I was then carried to that wonderful cluster of countries, on the western side of the earth, which, though so numerous and extensive now, were then the vassals of that self-same little speck. What an eventful country! What a singular appearance! It seems to emit a fitful and irregular splendour, like the sparks of a suddenly revived flame, and its towering blaze, to the astonishment of anxious Europe, is bending over upon the fabrics of despotism, and, occasionally, with its lambent point, lashing and curling around their very summits, and threatens an awful conflagration, in spite of the exertions of that *holy groupe of crowns*; that are watching it in such dread-smitten dismay. Those reeling flashes are rapidly tending to settle into a steady radiance; and will, when the dark smoke of slavery shall have passed away, leave it the seat of unsullied brilliance.

To that spot, which I think the most resplen-

dent of the whole, and called *Virginia*, I was carried. That magnanimous state, when informed of our unhappy condition, and the base design we were doomed to subserve, which was to clear the lands, work the fields, and promote, by involuntary labour, the ill-sought gains of that miserable little island; at once cried aloud against the horrid scene, raised her hands, and protested against the abominable project. But what could she do? She was herself a slave; and submission, as I wofully learned, is the first, last, best, and only quality of a SLAVE. She was compelled to receive us; and, having received us, we were obliged to be treated as best befitted that law, which is paramount to every other, *the law of self-preservation*. And as well might the furious lion, or the still more ferocious tiger, of our own native forests, complain of their chains, when carried, as an exhibition, to that country, as we, under the deadly and rancorous feeling occasioned by our hopeless and galling fetters. I have never blamed the aggregate country for the original act, nor for its present continuance. On the contrary, I do believe they have been most wrongfully reproached, and there is now a false compassion and an officious morality not only

indelicately, but injuriously, intermeddling with the main question. But for an inattention to, and neglect of, some comforts; not wholly incompatible with our degraded and miserable state, I must, though to me it will now be unavailing, but for the sake of my surviving companions, submit a charge to the Almighty throne of Heaven. We could be better clothed; we could be better fed; we could be better instructed, at least in moral duty, and not endanger the safety and peace of our masters, which, I frankly own, they have a right to protect. The proportion of our labouring time is too great; some relaxation is due to such a constant and unremitting servitude. We should be protected from the whim and unreasonable passion of those, who think, because slaves have no rights, they have no feelings; and, therefore, for trivial offences, subject them to the most furious assaults of an unmeasured resentment.

I had not long been in the country, before I was, in a great measure, reconciled to my fate. It was my enviable lot to fall to a good master; and many such there are, whose credit is lost in the more conspicuous inhumanity of others. I soon arrived to manhood, and became a husband

and a father; relations in life, which, when happily founded, are well calculated to sooth and mitigate, if not all, at least very many, of the troubles belonging to bond or free. In this, I was blessed to the full measure of my wishes; and the soft and tender affections created in my bosom had gradually taken the place of those which were worn out, in relation to my long-lost country, friends, and parents; and I was so resigned to my situation, that, strange as it may appear, I was not willing to forsake my family, even to regain my liberty and my native home, with all the renewed and filial emotions that would ensue. But this was a fate I was compelled to experience. Highly as I prized these new associations, and as greatly as they contributed to the relief of my hard fortune, yet I was forced to relinquish them, and made to drink deep of the bitter dregs of affliction.

The fluctuations of trade, the miscarriages of commerce, the abortions of speculation, and the absorbing frauds of the banks, shed a withering mildew over the prospects of the country, and my unfortunate master was one of its early victims. Anxious, however, to retain his slave property, (which is considered the most valua-

ble,) as long as he could, he parted with my dear children one by one; some at the tender ages of from four to ten years, and they have gone to far distant climes, where I have never heard of them. My wife, with an infant in her arms, parted from me last to end a cheerless condition in the western wilds; and I, myself, was finally driven to the burning sands of the south. There, with a mind for ever dwelling upon my scattered family, I have never seen a peaceful hour. Parched with heat, drenched with rains, pinched with hunger, and benumbed with cold, has been the cruel succession of my years. The day exacted the utmost effort of my strength, and the night denied the comfort of sleep: the first tortured with the steady pressure of its burthens; the last agonized with the variety of its keen reflections. In one ceaseless round of labour I have sweated out a faithful life; I have sought the ways of heaven with all the earnestness of my limited means, with all the eagerness of a state of ignorance wilfully imposed; and now I bend at the feet of Eternal Mercy.

I could not help shedding a tear when I came to this point, and I turned aside to wipe it away. When I resumed the scrutiny of his vision, I

found from the frolicksome and shifting scenes peculiar to a dream, that I had not been able to carry on all its parts, and had omitted some curious features, particularly as related to the charges which he had against the original enemies of his freedom. He seemed to be deeply impressed with a sense of shame, for his mind indulged in no worse passion, on account of the late conduct of that same little island which had so wantonly destroyed his peace. She had been the immediate cause of all his misfortunes; had entailed a curse upon a young and virtuous country, and now had the insolence to reproach that country for the stain of her own misdeeds, and that too at a time when slavery exists in her own islands, and while she is destroying the innocent natives of *another country*, and grinding the survivors to pamper her greedy avarice, and to swell the wealth of her already bloated extortion.

He glanced at the conduct of some of our neighbouring states, where slavery does not exist, as rather uncharitably interfering with the subject. He seemed to think they ought to remember the share they had, if not in originating, at least in lending their assistance to continue

the disaster. Their ships have borne many a hapless cargo to the southern shores, and they have ultimately succeeded in confining the curse to a particular region, where it must for a time remain, and where it ought not to be disturbed until the remedy, which lies in the womb of time, can be safely applied. He thought that no selfish desire to get rid of the vexatious impudence of free negroes, who are daily rising in their clamours as they snuff the opening fragrance of freedom, should actuate them to hasten the consummation of an act fraught with incalculable mischiefs to the master, on account of its immaturity, and misfortunes to the slave by virtue of its inefficiency. This was an evil imposed upon the whole : it existed and was well understood to the sisterhood at their union. It has been shifted upon a portion only, where it has created *habits, feelings, and dispositions*, that cannot be shaken off in a day, and given a direction to property and involved the means of support, which will not be changed, and cannot be supplied, in the course of an age. Those who do not feel the evil, only as it offends their nice morality, should await patiently the convenience of those, who have felt it, and may suf-

fer, in a more substantial manner, even in the best appointed means to remove its deprecated effects.

The old man, having gone through his story, his mind assumed a most forgiving and quiet temper of benevolence ; and, in a frame of the most reverential acquiescence, he stood to receive his doom.—But, unfortunately, at this critical moment the dream was arrested, and the page that contained his fate was so glued to its neighbouring one, that, concerning its contents, all my curiosity, great as it was, could not compass a single indication.

As before mentioned, I have collected a vast number and variety of precious facts and secrets, from that heretofore unfrequented region of mental speculation, and have made a note of every thing I witnessed, on that memorable occasion. I was encouraged by the Genius, after he had restored the congregation to their former situation, and we were returning home, to be of good cheer, and to expect, that sooner or later, they would be in great demand. I have fondly flat-

tered myself, that his prediction would be true ; and, indeed, I should not much despair of it, seeing his singular powers, if I were not so much tormented with the idea that all I saw was nothing but a *dream*. Of this, however, he assured me, upon parting, that if I still indulged that notion, I was greatly *mistaken*. He accompanied me to the door of my chamber, and then, waving his hand, in token of an adieu, vanished "into thin air ;" and I retired to rest, awaking as usual in the morning, as much refreshed as if nothing had occurred.