

ESSAYS AND SKETCHES

by Charles Lamb

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TABLE_TALK

TABLE TALK

FROM THE ATHENAEUM, 1834.

IT is a desideratum in works that treat *de re culinaria*, that we have no rationale of sauces, or theory of mixed flavours: as to show why cabbage is reprehensible with roast beef, laudable with bacon; why the haunch of mutton seeks the alliance of currant jelly, the shoulder civilly declineth it; why loin of veal (a pretty problem), being itself unctuous, seeketh the adventitious lubricity of melted butter,- and why the same part in pork, not more oleaginous, abhorreth from it; why the French bean sympathises with the flesh of deer; why salt fish points to parsnip, brawn makes a dead-set at mustard; why cats prefer valerian to heart's-ease, old ladies vice versa, - though this is rather travelling out of the road of the dietetics, and may be thought a question more curious than relevant; why salmon (a strong sapor per se) fortifieth its condition with the mighty lobster sauce, whose embraces are fatal to the delicater relish of the turbot; why oysters in death rise up against the contamination of brown sugar, while they are posthumously amorous of vinegar; why the sour mango and the sweet jam by turns court and are accepted by the compliable mutton hash,- she not yet decidedly declaring for either. We are as yet but in the empirical stage of cookery. We feed ignorantly, and want to be able to give a reason of the relish that is in us; so that, if Nature should furnish us with a new meat, or be prodigally pleased to restore the phoenix; upon a

given flavour, we might be able to pronounce instantly, on philosophical principles, what the sauce to it should be,- what the curious adjuncts.

The greatest pleasure I know is to do a good action by stealth, and to have it found out by accident.

'Tis unpleasant to meet a beggar. It is painful to deny him; and, if you relieve him, it is so much out of your pocket.

Men marry for fortune, and sometimes to please their fancy; but, much oftener than is suspected, they consider what the world will say of it,- how such a woman in their friends' eyes will look at the head of a table. Hence we see so many insipid beauties made wives of, that could not have struck the particular fancy of any man that had any fancy at all. These I call furniture wives; as men buy furniture pictures, because they suit this or that niche in their dining parlours.

Your universally cried-up beauties are the very last choice which a man of taste would make. What pleases all cannot have that individual charm which makes this or that countenance engaging to you, and to you only perhaps, you know not why. What gained the fair Gunnings titled husbands, who, after all, turned out very sorry wives? Popular repute.

It is a sore trial when a daughter shall marry against her father's approbation. A little hard-heartedness, and aversion to a reconciliation, is almost pardonable. After all, Will Dockwray's way is, perhaps, the wisest. His best-loved daughter made a most imprudent match; in fact, eloped with the last man in the world that her father would have wished her to marry. All the world said that he would never speak to her again. For months she durst not write to him, much less come near him. But, in a casual rencounter, he met her in the streets of Ware,- Ware, that will long remember the mild virtues of William Dockwray, Esq. What said the parent to his disobedient child, whose knees faltered under her at the sight of him? "Ha, Sukey! is it you?" with that benevolent aspect with which he paced the streets of Ware, venerated as an angel: "come and dine with us on Sunday." Then turning away, and again turning back, as if he had forgotten something, he added, "And, Sukey (do you hear?), bring your husband with you." This was all the reproof she ever heard from him. Need it be added, that the match turned out better for Susan than the world expected.

The vices of some men are magnificent. Compare the amours of Henry the Eighth and Charles the Second. The Stuart had mistresses: the Tudor kept wives.

"We read the Paradise Lost as a task," says Dr. Johnson. Nay, rather as a celestial recreation, of which the dullard mind is not at all hours alike recipient. "Nobody ever wished it longer," nor the moon rounder, he might have added. Why, 'tis the perfectness and completeness of it which makes us imagine that not a line could be added to it, or diminished from it, with advantage. Would we have a cubit added to the stature of the Medicean Venus? Do we wish her

taller?

Amidst the complaints of the widespread of infidelity among us, it is consolatory that a sect has sprung up in the heart of the metropolis, and is daily on the increase, of teachers of that healing doctrine which Pope upheld, and against which Voltaire directed his envenomed wit: we mean those practical preachers of optimism, or the belief that whatever is best; the cads of omnibuses, who from their little back pulpits, not once in three or four hours, as those proclaimers of "God and His prophet" in Mussulman countries, but every minute, at the entry or exit of a brief passenger, are heard, in an almost prophetic tone, to exclaim (Wisdom crying out, as it were, in the streets), "ALL'S RIGHT!"

Advice is not so commonly thrown away as is imagined. We seek it in difficulties; but in common speech we are apt to confound with it admonition; as when a friend reminds one that drink is prejudicial to the health, etc. We do not care to be told of that which we know better than the good man that admonishes. M__ sent to his friend L__, who is no water-drinker, a twopenny tract "Against the Use of Fermented Liquors." L__ acknowledged the obligation, as far as to twopence. Penotier's advice was the safest, after all:-

"I advised him-"

But I must tell you. The dear, good-meaning, no-thinking creature had been dumfounding a company of us with a detail of inextricable difficulties, in which the circumstances of an acquaintance of his were involved. No clew of light offered itself. He grew more and more misty as he proceeded. We pitied his friend, and thought,-

God help the man so rapt in Error's endless maze!

when, suddenly brightening up his placid countenance like one that had found out a riddle, and looked to have the solution admired,-

"At last," said he, "I advised him-"

Here he paused, and here we were again interminably thrown back. By no possible guess could any of us aim at the drift of the meaning he was about to be delivered of.

"I advised him," he repeated, "to have some advice upon the subject."

A general approbation followed; it was unanimously agreed, that, under all the circumstances of the case, no sounder or more judicious counsel could have been given.

A laxity pervades the popular use of words.

Parson W__ is not quite so continent as Diana, yet prettily dissembleth his frailty. Is Parson W__, therefore, a hypocrite? I think not. Where the concealment of a vice is less pernicious than the bare-faced publication of it would be, no additional delinquency is incurred in the secrecy. Parson W__ is simply an immoral clergyman. But if Parson W__ were to be for ever haranguing on the opposite virtue; choosing for his perpetual text, in preference to all other pulpit-topics, the remarkable resistance recorded in the 39th of Exodus [Genesis?]; dwelling, moreover, and dilating upon it,- then Parson W__ might be reasonably suspected of hypocrisy. But Parson

W__ rarely diverteth into such line of argument, or toucheth it briefly. His ordinary topics are fetched from "obedience to the powers that are," "submission to the civil magistrate in all commands that are not absolutely unlawful"; on which he can delight to expatiate with equal fervour and sincerity.

Again: to despise a person is properly to look down upon him with none or the least possible emotion; but when Clementina, who has lately lost her lover, with bosom heaving, eyes flashing, and her whole frame in agitation, pronounces with a peculiar emphasis that she "despises the fellow," depend upon it he is not quite so despicable in her eyes as she would have us imagine.

One more instance: If we must naturalise that portentous phrase, a truism, it were well that we limited the use of it. Every commonplace or trite observation is not a truism. For example: A good name helps a man on in the world. This is nothing but a simple truth, however hackneyed. It has a distinct subject and predicate. But when the thing predicated is involved in the term of the subject, and so necessarily involved that by no possible conception they can be separated, then it becomes a truism; as to say, "A good name is a proof of a man's estimation in the world." We seem to be saying something, when we say nothing. I was describing to F__ some knavish tricks of a mutual friend of ours. "If he did so and so," was the reply, "he cannot be an honest man." Here was a genuine truism, truth upon truth, inference and proposition identical, or proposition identical, or rather a dictionary definition usurping the place of an inference.

We are ashamed at a sight of a monkey,- somehow as we are shy of poor relations.

A__ imagined a Caledonian compartment in Hades, where there should be fire without sulphur.

Absurd images are sometimes irresistible. I will mention two,- an elephant in a coach-office gravely coming to have his trunk booked; a mermaid over a fish-kettle cooking her own tail.

It is the praise of Shakspeare, with reference to the playwrights his contemporaries, that he has so few revolting characters. Yet he has one that is singularly mean and disagreeable,- the King in Hamlet. Neither has he characters of insignificance, unless the phantom that stalks over the stage as Julius Caesar, in the play of that name, may be accounted one. Neither has he envious characters, excepting the short part of Don John, in Much Ado about Nothing. Neither has he unentertaining characters, if we except Parolles, and the little that there is of the Clown, in All's Well that Ends Well.

Is it possible that Shakspeare should never have read Homer, in Chapman's version at least? If he had read it, could he mean to travesty it in the parts of those big boobies, Ajax and Achilles? Ulysses, Nestor, and Agamemnon are true to their parts in the Iliad: they are gentlemen at least. Thersites, though unamusing, is fairly deducible from it. Troilus and Cressida are a fine graft upon it. But those two big bulks-

It would settle the dispute as to whether Shakspeare intended Othello for a jealous character, to consider how differently we are affected towards him and towards Leontes in the Winter's Tale. Leontes is that character. Othello's fault was simply credulity.

LEAR. Who are you?

Mine eyes are not o' the best. I'll tell you straight.

Are you not Kent?

KENT. The same; your servant Kent.

Where is your servant Caius?

LEAR. He's a good fellow, I can tell you that; He'd strike, and quickly too: he's dead and rotten.

KENT. No, my good lord: I am the very man-

LEAR. I'll see that straight-

KENT. That from your first of difference and decay Have follow'd your sad steps.

LEAR. You are welcome hither.

ALBANY. He knows not what he says; and vain is it That we present us to him.

EDGAR. Look up, my lord.

KENT. Vex not his ghost. Oh! let him pass. He hates him, That would upon the rack of this tough world Stretch him out longer.

So ends King Lear, the most stupendous of the Shakspearian dramas; and Kent, the noblest feature of the conceptions of his divine mind. This is the magnanimity of authorship, when a writer, having a topic presented to him, fruitful of beauties for common minds, waives his privilege, and trusts to the judicious few for understanding the reason of his abstinence. What a pudder would a common dramatist have raised here of a reconciliation scene, a perfect recognition, between the assumed Caius and his master!- to the suffusing of many fair eyes, and the moistening of cambric handkerchiefs. The old dying king partially catching at the truth, and immediately lapsing into obliviousness, with the high-minded carelessness of the other to have his services appreciated,- as one that-

Served not for gain,
Or follow'd out of form,-

are among the most judicious, not to say heart-touching, strokes in Shakspeare.

Allied to this magnanimity it is, where the pith and point of an argument, the amplification of which might compromise the modesty of the speaker, is delivered briefly, and, as it were, parenthetically; as in those few but pregnant words, in which the man in the old "Nut-brown Maid" rather intimates than reveals his unsuspected high birth to the woman:-

Now understand, to Westmoreland,
Which is my heritage,
I will you bring, and with a ring,
By way of marriage,

I will you take, and lady make.

Turn we to the version of it, ten times diluted, of dear Mat. Prior,- in his own way unequalled, and a poet nowadays too much neglected. "In me," quoth Henry, addressing the astounded Emma,- with a flourish and an attitude, as we may conceive,-

In me behold the potent Edgar's heir,
Illustrious earl! him terrible in war,
Let Loire confess.

And with a deal of skimble-skamble stuff, as Hotspur would term it, more, presents the lady with a full and true enumeration of his papa's rent-roll in the fat soil by Deva.

But, of all parentheses (not to quit the topic too suddenly), commend me to that most significant one, at the commencement of the old popular ballad of "Fair Rosamond":-

When good King Henry ruled this land,
The second of that name,

Now mark,-

(Besides the queen) he dearly loved
A fair and comely dame.

There is great virtue in this besides.

GENTLE_GIANTESS

THE GENTLE GIANTESS

FROM THE "LONDON MAGAZINE," 1822

THE WIDOW BLACKET, of Oxford, is the largest female I ever had the pleasure of beholding. There may be her parallel upon the earth; but surely I never saw it. I take her to be lineally descended from the maid's aunt of Brainford, who caused Master Ford such uneasiness. She hath Atlantean shoulders; and, as she stoopeth in her gait,- with as few offences to answer for in her own particular as any of Eve's daughters,- her back seems broad enough to bear the blame of all the peccadilloes that have been committed since Adam. She girdeth her waist- or what she is pleased to esteem as such- nearly up to her shoulders; from beneath which, that huge dorsal expanse, in mountainous declivity, emergeth. Respect for her alone preventeth the idle boys, who follow her about in shoals, whenever she cometh abroad, from getting up, and riding. But her presence infallibly commands a reverence. She is indeed, as the Americans would express it, something awful. Her person is a burthen to herself no less than to the ground which bears her. To her mighty bone, she hath a pinguitude withal, which makes the depth of winter to her the most desirable season. Her distress in the warmer solstice is pitiable. During the months of July and August she usually renteth a cool cellar, where ices are kept, whereinto she descendeth when Sirius rageth. She dates from a hot Thursday,- some twenty-five years ago. Her apartment in summer is pervious to the four winds. Two doors, in north and south direction, and two windows, fronting the rising and the setting sun, never closed, from every cardinal point, catch the contributory breezes. She loves to enjoy what she calls a quadruple

draught. That must be a shrew zephyr that can escape her. I owe a painful face-ache, which oppresses me at this moment, to a cold caught, sitting by her, one day in last July, at this receipt of coolness. Her fan, in ordinary, resembles a banner spread, which she keepeth continually on the alert to detect the least breeze. She possesseth an active and gadding mind, totally incommensurate with her person. No one delighteth more than herself in country exercises and pastimes. I have passed many an agreeable holy-day with her in her favourite park at Woodstock. She performs her part in these delightful ambulatory excursions by the aid of a portable garden chair. She setteth out with you at a fair foot-gallop, which she keepeth up till you are both well breathed, and then she repositeth for a few seconds. Then she is up again for a hundred paces or so, and again resteth; her movement, on these sprightly occasions, being something between walking and flying. Her great weight seemeth to propel her forward, ostrich-fashion. In this kind of relieved marching I have traversed with her many scores of acres on those well-wooded and well-watered domains. Her delight at Oxford is in the public walks and gardens, where, when the weather is not too oppressive, she passeth much of her valuable time. There is a bench at Maudlin, or rather situated between the frontiers of that and ___'s College (some litigation, latterly, about repairs, has vested the property of it finally in ___'s), where, at the hour of noon, she is ordinarily to be found sitting,- so she calls it by courtesy,- but, in fact, pressing and breaking of it down with her enormous settlement, as both those foundations, who, however, are good-natured enough to wink at it, have found, I believe, to their cost. Here she taketh the fresh air, principally at vacation times, when the walks are freest from interruption of the younger fry of students. Here she passeth her idle hours, not idly, but generally accompanied with a book,- blessed if she can but intercept some resident Fellow (as usually there are some of that brood left behind at these periods) or stray Master of Arts (to most of whom she is better known than their dinner-bell), with whom she may confer upon any curious topic of literature. I have seen these shy gownsmen, who truly set but a very slight value upon female conversation, cast a hawk's eye upon her from the length of Maudlin Grove, and warily glide off into another walk,- true monks as they are, and ungently neglecting the delicacies of her polished converse for their own perverse and uncommunicating solitariness! Within doors her principal diversion is music, vocal and instrumental; in both which she is no mean professor. Her voice is wonderfully fine; but, till I got used to it, I confess it staggered me. It is, for all the world, like that of a piping bullfinch; while, from her size and stature, you would expect notes to drown the deep organ. The shake, which most fine singers reserve for the close or cadence, by some unaccountable flexibility, or tremulousness of pipe, she carrieth quite through the composition; so that her time, to a common air or ballad, keeps double motion, like the earth,- running the primary circuit of the tune, and still

revolving upon its own axis. The effect, as I said before, when you are used to it, is as agreeable as it is altogether new and surprising. The spacious apartment of her outward frame lodgeth a soul in all respects disproportionate. Of more than mortal make, she evinceth withal a trembling sensibility, a yielding infirmity of purpose, a quick susceptibility to reproach, and all the train of diffident and blushing virtues, which for their habitation usually seek out a feeble frame, an attenuated and meagre constitution. With more than man's bulk, her humours and occupations are eminently feminine. She sighs, - being six foot high. She languisheth, - being two feet wide. She worketh slender sprigs upon the delicate muslin, her fingers being capable of moulding a Colossus. She sippeth her wine out of her glass daintily, - her capacity being that of a tun of Heidelberg. She goeth mincingly with those feet of hers, whose solidity need not fear the black ox's pressure. Softest and largest of thy sex, adieu! By what parting attribute may I salute thee, last and best of the Titanesses, - Ogress, fed with milk instead of blood; not least, or least handsome, among Oxford's stately structures, - Oxford, who, in its deadeast time of vacation, can never properly be said to be empty, having thee to fill it.

REYNOLDS_GALLERY

THE REYNOLDS GALLERY FROM THE "EXAMINER", 1813

THE REYNOLDS GALLERY has, upon the whole, disappointed me. Some of the portraits are interesting. They are faces of characters whom we (middle-aged gentlemen) were born a little too late to remember, but about whom we have heard our fathers tell stories till we almost fancy to have seen them. There is a charm in the portrait of a Rodney or a Keppel, which even a picture of Nelson must want for me. I should turn away after a slight inspection from the best likeness that could be made of Mrs. Anne Clarke; but Kitty Fisher is a considerable personage. Then the dresses of some of the women so exactly remind us of modes which we can just recall; of the forms under which the venerable relationship of aunt or mother first presented themselves to our young eyes; the aprons, the coifs, the lappets, the hoods. Mercy on us! what a load of head ornaments seem to have conspired to bury a pretty face in the picture of Mrs. Long, yet could not! Beauty must have some "charmed life" to have been able to surmount the conspiracy of fashion in those days to destroy it.

The portraits which least pleased me were those boys, as infant Bacchuses, Jupiters, etc. But the artist is not to be blamed for the disguise. No doubt the parents wished to see their children deified in their lifetime. It was but putting a thunderbolt (instead of a squib) into young master's hands; and a whey-faced chit was transformed into the infant ruler of Olympus, - him who was afterward to shake heaven and earth with his black brow. Another good boy pleased his grandmamma by saying his prayers so well, and the blameless dotage of the good old woman imagined in him an adequate

representative of the awful Prophet Samuel. But the great historical compositions, where the artist was at liberty to paint from his own idea,- the Beaufort and the Ugolino: why then, I must confess, pleading the liberty of table talk for my presumption, that they have not left any very elevating impressions on my mind. Pardon a ludicrous comparison. I know, madam, you admire them both; but placed opposite to each other as they are at the gallery, as if to set the one work in competition with the other, they did remind me of the famous contention for the prize of deformity, mentioned in the 173rd Number of the Spectator. The one stares, and the other grins; but is there common dignity in their countenances? Does anything of the history of their life gone by peep through the ruins of the mind in the face, like the unconquerable grandeur that surmounts the distortions of the Laocoon? The figures which stand by the bed of Beaufort are indeed happy representations of the plain unmannered old nobility of the English historical plays of Shakspeare; but, for anything else,- give me leave to recommend those macaroons.

After leaving the Reynolds Gallery (where, upon the whole, I received a good deal of pleasure), not feeling that I had quite had my fill of paintings, I stumbled upon a picture in Piccadilly (No. 22, I think), which purports to be a portrait of Francis the First, by Leonardo da Vinci. Heavens, what a difference! It is but a portrait, as most of those I had been seeing; but, placed by them, it would kill them, swallow them up as Moses' rod the other rods. Where did these old painters get their models? I see no figures, not in my dreams, as this Francis, in the character, or rather with the attributes, of John the Baptist. A more than martial majesty in the brow and upon the eyelid; an arm muscular, beautifully formed; the long, graceful, massy fingers compressing, yet so as not to hurt, a lamb more lovely, more sweetly shrinking, than we can conceive that milk-white one which followed Una; the picture altogether looking as if it were eternal,- combining the truth of flesh with a promise of permanence like marble.

Leonardo, from the one or two specimens we have of him in England, must have been a stupendous genius. I can scarce think he has had his full fame,- he who could paint that wonderful personification of the Logos, or second person of the Trinity, grasping a globe, late in the possession of Mr. Troward of Pall Mall, where the hand was, by the boldest license, twice as big as the truth of drawing warranted; yet the effect, to every one that saw it, by some magic of genius was confessed to be not monstrous, but miraculous and silencing. It could not be gainsaid.

GUY_FAUX

GUY FAUX
FROM THE "LONDON MAGAZINE," 1823

A VERY ingenious and subtle writer, * whom there is good reason for suspecting to be an ex-Jesuit, not unknown at Douay some five-and-twenty years since (he will not obtrude himself at M__th again in a hurry), about a twelvemonth back set himself to prove the

character of the Powder-Plot conspirators to have been that of heroic self-devotedness and true Christian martyrdom. Under the mask of Protestant candour, he actually gained admission for his treatise into a London weekly paper *(2) not particularly distinguished for its zeal towards either religion. But, admitting Catholic principles, his arguments are shrewd and incontrovertible. He says-

"Guy Faux was a fanatic; but he was no hypocrite. He ranks among good haters. He was cruel, bloody-minded, reckless of all considerations but those of an infuriated and bigoted faith; but he was a true son of the Catholic Church, a martyr, and a confessor, for all that. He who can prevail upon himself to devote his life for a cause, however we may condemn his opinions or abhor his actions, vouches at least for the honesty of his principles and the disinterestedness of his motives. He may be guilty of the worst practices; but he is capable of the greatest. He is no longer a slave, but free. The contempt of death is the beginning of virtue. The hero of the Gunpowder Plot was, if you will, a fool, a madman, an assassin; call him what names you please: still he was neither knave nor coward. He did not propose to blow up the Parliament, and come off, scot-free, himself: he showed that he valued his own life no more than theirs in such a cause, where the integrity of the Catholic faith and the salvation of perhaps millions of souls was at stake. He did not call it a murder, but a sacrifice, which he was about to achieve: he was armed with the Holy Spirit and with fire; he was the Church's chosen servant and her blessed martyr. He comforted himself as 'the best of cut-throats.' How many wretches are there that would have undertaken to do what he intended, for a sum of money, if they could have got off with impunity! How few are there who would have put themselves in Guy Faux's situation to save the universe! Yet, in the latter case, we affect to be thrown into greater consternation than at the most unredeemed acts of villainy; as if the absolute disinterestedness of the motive doubled the horror of the deed! The cowardice and selfishness of mankind are in fact shocked at the consequences to themselves if such examples are held up for imitation; and they make a fearful outcry against the violation of every principle of morality, lest they, too, should be called on for any such tremendous sacrifices; lest they, in their turn, should have to go on the forlorn hope of extra-official duty. Charity begins at home is a maxim that prevails as well in the courts of conscience as in those of prudence. We would be thought to shudder at the consequences of crime to others, while we tremble for them to ourselves. We talk of the dark and cowardly assassin; and this is well, when an individual shrinks from the face of an enemy, and purchases his own safety by striking a blow in the dark: but how the charge of cowardly can be applied to the public assassin, who, in the very act of destroying another, lays down his life as the pledge and forfeit of his sincerity and boldness, I am at a loss to devise. There may be barbarous prejudice, rooted hatred, unprincipled treachery, in such an act; but he who resolves to take all the danger and odium upon himself

can no more be branded with cowardice, than Regulus devoting himself for his country, or Codrus leaping into the fiery gulf. A wily Father Inquisitor, coolly and with plenary authority condemning hundreds of helpless, unoffending victims to the flames, or to the horrors of a living tomb, while he himself would not suffer a hair of his head to be hurt, is, to me, a character without any qualifying trait in it. Again: the Spanish conqueror and hero, the favourite of his monarch, who enticed thirty thousand poor Mexicans into a large open building under promise of strict faith and cordial goodwill, and then set fire to it, making sport of the cries and agonies of these deluded creatures, is an instance of uniting the most hardened cruelty with the most heartless selfishness. His plea was, keeping no faith with heretics; this too was Guy Faux's: but I am sure at least that the latter kept faith with himself; he was in earnest in his professions. His was not gay, wanton, unfeeling depravity; he did not murder in sport: it was serious work that he had taken in hand. To see this arch-bigot, this heart-whole traitor, this pale miner in the infernal regions, skulking in his retreat with his cloak and dark lantern, moving cautiously about among his barrels of gunpowder loaded with death, but not yet ripe for destruction, regardless of the lives of others, and more than indifferent to his own, presents a picture of the strange infatuation of the human understanding, but not of the depravity of the human will, without an equal. There were thousands of pious Papists privy to and ready to applaud the deed when done: there was no one but our old Fifth of November friend, who still flutters in rags and straw on the occasion, that had the courage to attempt it. In him stern duty and unshaken faith prevailed over natural frailty."

* William Hazlitt.

*(2) The Examiner, then edited by Leigh Hunt.

It is impossible, upon Catholic principles, not to admit the force of this reasoning: we can only not help smiling (with the writer) at the simplicity of the gulled editor, swallowing the dregs of Loyola for the very quintessence of sublimated reason in England at the commencement of the nineteenth century. We will just, as a contrast, show what we Protestants (who are a party concerned) thought upon the same subject at a period rather nearer to the heroic project in question.

The Gunpowder Treason was the subject which called forth the earliest specimen which is left us of the pulpit eloquence of Jeremy Taylor. When he preached the sermon on that anniversary, which is printed at the end of the folio edition of his Sermons, he was a young man, just commencing his ministry under the auspices of Archbishop Laud. From the learning and mature oratory which it manifests, one should rather have conjectured it to have proceeded from the same person after he was ripened by time into a Bishop and Father of the Church. "And, really, these Romano-barbari could never pretend to any precedent for an act so barbarous as theirs. Adrammelech, indeed, killed a king; but he spared the people. Haman would have

killed the people, but spared the king; but that both king and people, princes and judges, branch and rush and root, should die at once (as if Caligula's wish were actuated, and all England upon one head), was never known till now, that all the malice of the world met in this, as in a centre. The Sicilian even-song, the matins of St. Bartholomew, known for the pitiless and damned massacres, were but kapnou skias onar, 'the dream of the shadow of smoke,' if compared with this great fire. In tum occupato saeculo fabulas vulgares nequitia non invenit. This was a busy age. Erostratus must have invented a more sublimed malice than the burning of one temple, or not have been so much as spoke of since the discovery of the powder treason. But I must make more haste; I shall not else climb the sublimity of this impiety. Nero was sometimes the popolare odium, was popularly hated, and deserved it too: for he slew his master, and his wife, and all his family, once or twice over; opened his mother's womb; fired the city, laughed at it, slandered the Christians for it: but yet all these were but principia malorum, the very first 'rudiments of evil.' Add, then, to these, Herod's masterpiece at Ramah, as it was deciphered by the tears and sad threnes of the matrons in an universal mourning for the loss of their pretty infants; yet this of Herod will prove but an infant wickedness, and that of Nero the evil but of one city. I would willingly have found out an example, but I see I cannot, should I put into the scale the extract of all the old tyrants famous in antique stories,-

"Bistonii stabulum regis, Busiridis aras,
Antiphatae mensas, et Taurica regna Thoantis;-

should I take for true story the highest cruelty as it was fancied by the most hieroglyphical Egyptian,- this alone would weigh them down, as if the Alps were put in scale against the dust of a balance. For, had this accursed treason prospered, we should have had the whole kingdom mourn for the inestimable loss of its chiefest glory, its life, its present joy, and all its very hopes for the future. For such was their destined malice, that they would not only have inflicted so cruel a blow, but have made it incurable, by cutting off our supplies of joy, the whole succession of the Line Royal. Not only the vine itself, but all the gemmulae, and the tender olive branches, should either have been bent to their intentions, and made to grow crooked, or else been broken.

"And now, after such a sublimity of malice, I will not instance in the sacrilegious ruin of the neighbouring temples, which needs must have perished in the flame; nor in the disturbing the ashes of our entombed kings, devouring their dead ruins like sepulchral dogs; these are but minutes in respect of the ruin prepared for the living temples.

"Stragem sed istam non tulit
Christus cadentum principum
Impune, ne forsani sui
Patris periret fabrica.
Ergo quae poterit lingua retexere

Laudes, Christe, tuas, qui domitum struis
Infidum populum cum Duce perfido?"

In such strains of eloquent indignation did Jeremy Taylor's young oratory inveigh against that stupendous attempt, which he truly says had no parallel in ancient or modern times. A century and a half of European crimes has elapsed since he made the assertion, and his position remains in its strength. He wrote near the time in which the nefarious project had like to have been completed. Men's minds still were shuddering from the recentness of the escape. It must have been within his memory, or have been sounded in his ears so young by his parents, that he would seem, in his maturer years, to have remembered it. No wonder, then, that he describes it in words that burn. But to us, to whom the tradition has come slowly down, and has had time to cool, the story of Guido Vaux sounds rather like a tale, a fable, and an invention, than true history. It supposes such gigantic audacity of daring, combined with such more than infantile stupidity in the motive,- such a combination of the fiend and the monkey,- that credulity is almost swallowed up in contemplating the singularity of the attempt. It has accordingly, in some degree, shared the fate of fiction. It is familiarised to us in a kind of serio-ludicrous way, like the story of Guy of Warwick, or Valentine and Orson. The way which we take to perpetuate the memory of this deliverance is well adapted to keep up this fabular notion. Boys go about the streets annually with a beggarly scarecrow dressed up, which is to be burnt indeed, at night, with holy zeal; but, meantime, they beg a penny for poor Guy. This periodical petition, which we have heard from our infancy, combined with the dress and appearance of the effigy, so well calculated to move compassion, has the effect of quite removing from our fancy the horrid circumstances of the story which is thus commemorated; and in poor Guy vainly should we try to recognise any of the features of that tremendous madman in iniquity, Guido Vaux, with his horrid crew of accomplices, that sought to emulate earthquakes and bursting volcanoes in their more than mortal mischief.

Indeed, the whole ceremony of burning Guy Faux, or the Pope, as he is indifferently called, is a sort of Treason Travestie, and admirably adapted to lower our feelings upon this memorable subject. The printers of the little duodecimo Prayer Book, printed by T. Baskett, * in 1749, which has the effigy of his sacred majesty George II. piously prefixed, have illustrated the service (a very fine one in itself) which is appointed for the anniversary of this day, with a print, which is not very easy to describe; but the contents appear to be these: The scene is a room, I conjecture, in the king's palace. Two persons- one of whom I take to be James himself, from his wearing his hat, while the other stands bare-headed- are intently surveying a sort of speculum, or magic mirror, which stands upon a pedestal in the midst of a room, in which a little figure of Guy Faux with his dark lantern, approaching the door of the Parliament House, is made discernible by the light proceeding from a great

eye which shines in from the topmost corner of the apartment, by which eye the pious artist no doubt meant to designate Providence. On the other side of the mirror is a figure doing something, which puzzled me when a child, and continues to puzzle me now. The best I can make of it is, that it is a conspirator busy laying the train; but, then, why is he represented in the king's chamber? Conjecture upon so fantastical a design is vain; and I only notice the print as being one of the earliest graphic representations which woke my childhood into wonder, and doubtless combined, with the mummery before mentioned, to take off the edge of that horror which the naked historical mention of Guido's conspiracy could not have failed of exciting.

* The same, I presume, upon whom the clergyman in the song of the "Vicar and Moses," not without judgment, passes this memorable censure:-

Here, Moses the king:
'Tis a scandalous thing

That this Baskett should print for the Crown.

Now that so many years are past since that abominable machination was happily frustrated, it will not, I hope, be considered a profane sporting with the subject, if we take no very serious survey of the consequences that would have flowed from this plot if it had had a successful issue. The first thing that strikes us, in a selfish point of view, is the material change which it must have produced in the course of the nobility. All the ancient peerage being extinguished, as it was intended, at one blow, the Red Book must have been closed for ever, or a new race of peers must have been created to supply the deficiency. As the first part of this dilemma is a deal too shocking to think of, what a fund of mouth-watering reflections does this give rise to in the breast of us plebeians of A.D. 1823! Why, you or I, reader, might have been Duke of __, or Earl of __. I particularise no titles, to avoid the least suspicion of intention to usurp the dignities of the two noblemen whom I have in my eye; but a feeling more dignified than envy sometimes excites a sigh, when I think how the posterity of Guido's Legion of Honour (among whom you or I might have been) might have rolled down, "dulcified," as Burke expresses it, "by an exposure to the influence of heaven in a long flow of generations, from the hard, acidulous, metallic tincture of the spring." * What new orders of merit think you this English Napoleon would have chosen? Knights of the Barrel, or Lords of the Tub, Grand Almoners of the Cellar, or Ministers of Explosion? We should have given the train couchant, and the fire rampant, in our arms; we should have quartered the dozen white matches in our coats: the Shallows would have been nothing to us.

* Letter to a Noble Lord.

Turning away from these mortifying reflections, let us contemplate its effects upon the other house; for they were all to have gone together,- king, lords, commons.

To assist our imagination, let us take leave to suppose (and we

do it in the harmless wantonness of fancy)- to suppose that the tremendous explosion had taken place in our days. We better know what a House of Commons is in our days, and can better estimate our loss. Let us imagine, then, to ourselves, the united members sitting in full conclave above; Faux just ready with his train and matches below,- in his hand a "reed tipp'd with fire." He applies the fatal engine.

To assist our notions still further, let us suppose some lucky dog of a reporter, who had escaped by miracle upon some plank of St. Stephen's benches, and came plump upon the roof of the adjacent Abbey; from whence descending, at some neighbouring coffee-house, first wiping his clothes and calling for a glass of lemonade, he sits down and reports what he had heard and seen (quorum pars magna fuit) for the Morning Post or the Courier. We can scarcely imagine him describing the event in any other words but some such as these:-

"A motion was put and carried, that this house do adjourn; that the Speaker do quit the chair. The house rose amid clamours for order."

In some such way the event might most technically have been conveyed to the public. But a poetical mind, not content with this dry method of narration, cannot help pursuing the effects of this tremendous blowing up, this adjournment in the air, sine die. It sees the benches mount,- the chair first, and then the benches; and first the treasury bench, hurried up in this nitrous explosion,- the members, as it were, pairing off; Whigs and Tories taking their friendly apotheosis together (as they did their sandwiches below in Bellamy's room). Fancy, in her flight, keeps pace with the aspiring legislators: she sees the awful seat of order mounting, till it becomes finally fixed, a constellation, next to Cassiopeia's chair,- the wig of him that sat in it taking its place near Berenice's curls. St. Peter, at heaven's wicket,- no, not St. Peter,- St. Stephen, with open arms, receives his own.

While Fancy beholds these celestial appropriations, Reason, no less pleased, discerns the mighty benefit which so complete a renovation must produce below. Let the most determined foe to corruption, the most thorough-paced redresser of abuses, try to conceive a more absolute purification of the house than this was calculated to produce. Why Pride's Purge was nothing to it. The whole borough-mongering system would have been got rid of, fairly exploded; with it the senseless distinctions of Party must have disappeared, faction must have vanished, corruption have expired in air. From Hundred, Tything, and Wapentake, some new Alfred would have convened, in all its purity, the primitive Witenagemote,- fixed upon a basis of property or population, permanent as the poles.

From this dream of universal restitution, Reason and Fancy with difficulty awake to view the real state of things. But (blessed be Heaven!) St. Stephen's walls are yet standing, all her seats firmly secured; nay, some have doubted (since the Septennial Act) whether gunpowder itself, or anything short of a committee above stairs,

would be able to shake any one member from his seat. That great and final improvement to the Abbey, which is all that seems wanting,- the removing of Westminster Hall and its appendages, and letting in the view of the Thames,- must not be expected in our days. Dismissing, therefore, all such speculations as mere tales of a tub, it is the duty of every honest Englishman to endeavour, by means more wholesome than Guido's, to ameliorate, without extinguishing, parliaments; to hold the lantern to the dark places of corruption; to apply the match to the rotten parts of the system only; and to wrap himself up, not in the muffling mantle of conspiracy, but in the warm, honest cloak of integrity and patriotic intention.

ILLUSTRIOUS_DEFUNCT

THE ILLUSTRIOUS DEFUNCT *
FROM THE "NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE," 1825

Nought but a blank remains, a dead void space,
A step of life that promised such a race.- DRYDEN.

NAPOLEON has now sent us back from the grave sufficient echoes of his living renown: the twilight of posthumous fame has lingered long enough over the spot where the sun of his glory set; and his name must at length repose in the silence, if not in the darkness, of night. In this busy and evanescent scene, other spirits of the age are rapidly snatched away, claiming our undivided sympathies and regrets, until in turn they yield to some newer and more absorbing grief. Another name is now added to the list of the mighty departed,- a name whose influence upon the hopes and fears, the fates and fortunes, of our countrymen, has rivalled, and perhaps eclipsed, that of the defunct "child and champion of Jacobinism," while it is associated with all the sanctions of legitimate government, all the sacred authorities of social order and our most holy religion. We speak of one, indeed, under whose warrant heavy and incessant contributions were imposed upon our fellow-citizens, but who exacted nothing without the signet and the sign-manual of most devout Chancellors of the Exchequer. Not to dally longer with the sympathies of our readers, we think it right to premonish them that we are composing an epicedium upon no less distinguished a personage than the Lottery, whose last breath, after many penultimate puffs, has been sobbed forth by sorrowing contractors, as if the world itself were about to be converted into a blank. There is a fashion of eulogy, as well as of vituperation; and though the Lottery stood for some time in the latter predicament, we hesitate not to assert that *multis ille bonis flebilis occidit*. Never have we joined in the senseless clamour which condemned the only tax whereto we became voluntary contributors; the only resource which gave the stimulus without the danger or infatuation of gambling; the only alembic which in these plodding days sublimised our imaginations, and filled them with more delicious dreams than ever flitted athwart the sensorium of Alnaschar.

* Since writing this article, we have been informed that the object of our funeral oration is not definitively dead, but only moribund. So

much the better: we shall have an opportunity of granting the request made to Walter by one of the children in the wood, and "kill him two times." The Abbe de Vertot having a siege to write, and not receiving the materials in time, composed the whole from his invention. Shortly after its completion, the expected documents arrived, when he threw them aside, exclaiming, "You are of no use to me now: I have carried the town."

Never can the writer forget, when, as a child, he was hoisted upon a servant's shoulder in Guildhall, and looked down upon the installed and solemn pomp of the then drawing Lottery. The two awful cabinets of iron, upon whose massy and mysterious portals the royal initials were gorgeously emblazoned, as if, after having deposited the unfulfilled prophecies within, the king himself had turned the lock, and still retained the key in his pocket; the blue-coat boy, with his naked arm, first converting the invisible wheel, and then diving into the dark recess for a ticket; the grave and reverend faces of the commissioners eyeing the announced number; the scribes below calmly committing it to their huge books; the anxious countenances of the surrounding populace; while the giant figures of Gog and Magog, like presiding deities, looked down with a grim silence upon the whole proceeding,- constituted altogether a scene, which, combined with the sudden wealth supposed to be lavished from those inscrutable wheels, was well calculated to impress the imagination of a boy with reverence and amazement. Jupiter, seated between the two fatal urns of good and evil, the blind goddess with her cornucopia, the Parcae wielding the distaff, the thread of life, and the abhorred shears, seemed but dim and shadowy abstractions of mythology, when I had gazed upon an assemblage exercising, as I dreamt, a not less eventful power, and all presented to me in palpable and living operation. Reason and experience, ever at their old spiteful work of catching and destroying the bubbles which youth delighted to follow, have indeed dissipated much of this illusion: but my mind so far retained the influence of that early impression, that I have ever since continued to deposit my humble offering at its shrine, whenever the ministers of the Lottery went forth with type and trumpet to announce its periodical dispensations; and though nothing has been doled out to me from its undiscerning coffers but blanks, or those more vexatious tantalisers of the spirit, denominated small prizes, yet do I hold myself largely indebted to this most generous diffuser of universal happiness. Ingrates that we are! are we to be thankful for no benefits that are not palpable to sense, to recognise no favours that are not of marketable value, to acknowledge no wealth unless it can be counted with the five fingers? If we admit the mind to be the sole depository of genuine joy, where is the bosom that has not been elevated into a temporary Elysium by the magic of the Lottery? Which of us has not converted his ticket, or even his sixteenth share of one, into a nest-egg of Hope, upon which he has sate brooding in the secret roosting-places of his heart, and hatched it into a thousand fantastical apparitions?

What a startling revelation of the passions if all the aspirations engendered by the Lottery could be made manifest! Many an impecuniary epicure has gloated over his locked-up warrant for future wealth, as a means of realising the dream of his namesake in the Alchemist:-

My meat shall all come in in Indian shells,-
Dishes of agate set in gold, and studded
With emeralds, sapphires, hyacinths, and rubies;
The tongues of carps, dormice, and camels' heels,
Boil'd i' the spirit of Sol, and dissolved in pearl,
(Apicius' diet 'gainst the epilepsy.)
And I will eat these broths with spoons of amber,
Headed with diamant and carbuncle.
My footboy shall eat pheasants, calver'd salmons,
Knots, gotwits, lampreys; I myself will have
The beards of barbels served, instead of salads;
Oiled mushrooms, and the swelling unctuous paps
Of a fat pregnant sow, newly cut off,
Dress'd with an exquisite and poignant sauce,
For which I'll say unto my cook, "There's gold:
Go forth, and be a knight."

Many a doting lover has kissed the scrap of paper whose promissory shower of gold was to give up to him his otherwise unattainable Danae. Nimrods have transformed the same narrow symbol into a saddle, by which they have been enabled to bestride the backs of peerless hunters; while nymphs have metamorphosed its Protean form into-

Rings, gauds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats,
and all the braveries of dress, to say nothing of the obsequious husband, the two-footman'd carriage, and the opera-box. By the simple charm of this numbered and printed rag, gamesters have, for a time at least, recovered their losses; spendthrifts have cleared off mortgages from their estates; the imprisoned debtor has leaped over his lofty boundary of circumscription and restraint, and revelled in all the joys of liberty and fortune; the cottage walls have swelled out into more goodly proportion than those of Baucis and Philemon; poverty has tasted the luxuries of competence; labour has lolled at ease in a perpetual arm-chair of idleness; sickness has been bribed into banishment; life has been invested with new charms; and death deprived of its former terrors. Nor have the affections been less gratified than the wants, appetites, and ambition of mankind. By the conjurations of the same potent spell, kindred have lavished anticipated benefits upon one another, and charity upon all. Let it be termed a delusion,- a fool's paradise is better than the wise man's Tartarus; be it branded as an ignis-fatuus,- it was at least a benevolent one, which, instead of beguiling its followers into swamps, caverns, aid pitfalls, allured them on with all the blandishments of enchantment to a garden of Eden,- an ever-blooming Elysium of delight.

True, the pleasures which it bestowed were evanescent: but which of our joys are permanent? and who so inexperienced as not to know that anticipation is always of higher relish than reality, which strikes a balance both in our sufferings and enjoyments? "The fear of ill exceeds the ill we fear"; and fruition, in the same proportion, invariably falls short of hope. "Men are but children of a larger growth," who may amuse themselves for a long time in gazing at the reflection of the moon in the water; but, if they jump in to grasp it, they may grope for ever, and only get the farther from their object. He is the wisest who keeps feeding upon the future, and refrains as long as possible from undeceiving himself by converting his pleasant speculations into disagreeable certainties.

The true mental epicure always purchased his ticket early, and postponed inquiry into its fate to the last possible moment, during the whole of which intervening period he had an imaginary twenty thousand locked up in his desk; and was not this well worth all the money? Who would scruple to give twenty pounds interest for even the ideal enjoyment of as many thousands during two or three months?

Crede quod habes, et habes; and the usufruct of such a capital is surely not dear at such a price. Some years ago, a gentleman in passing along Cheapside saw the figures 1,069, of which number he was the sole proprietor, flaming on the window of a lottery office as a capital prize. Somewhat flurried by this discovery, not less welcome than unexpected, he resolved to walk round St. Paul's that he might consider in what way to communicate the happy tidings to his wife and family; but, upon repassing the shop, he observed that the number was altered to 10,069, and, upon inquiry, had the mortification to learn that his ticket was a blank, and had only been stuck up in the window by mistake of the clerk. This effectually calmed his agitation; but he always speaks of himself as having once possessed twenty thousand pounds, and maintains that his ten minutes' walk round St. Paul's was worth ten times the purchase money of the ticket. A prize thus obtained has, moreover, this special advantage,- it is beyond the reach of fate; it cannot be squandered; bankruptcy cannot lay siege to it; friends cannot pull it down, nor enemies blow it up; it bears a charmed life, and none of woman born can break its integrity, even by the dissipation of a single fraction. Show me the property in these perilous times that is equally compact and impregnable. We can no longer become enriched for a quarter of an hour; we can no longer succeed in such splendid failures: all our chances of making such a miss have vanished with the last of the Lotteries.

Life will now become a flat, prosaic routine of matter-of-fact; and sleep itself, erst so prolific of numerical configurations and mysterious stimulants to lottery adventure, will be disfurnished of its figures and figments. People will cease to harp upon the one lucky number suggested in a dream, and which forms the exception, while they are scrupulously silent upon the ten thousand falsified dreams which constitute the rule. Morpheus will stifle Cocker with a handful of

poppies, and our pillows will be no longer haunted by the book of numbers.

And who, too, shall maintain the art and mystery of puffing, in all its pristine glory, when the lottery professors shall have abandoned its cultivation? They were the first, as they will assuredly be the last, who fully developed the resources of that ingenious art; who cajoled and decoyed the most suspicious and wary reader into a perusal of their advertisements by devices of endless variety and cunning; who baited their lurking schemes with midnight murders, ghost stories, crim-cons, bon-mots, balloons, dreadful catastrophes, and every diversity of joy and sorrow, to catch newspaper gudgeons. Ought not such talents to be encouraged? Verily the abolitionists have much to answer for!

And now, having established the felicity of all those who gained imaginary prizes, let us proceed to show that the equally numerous class who were presented with real blanks have not less reason to consider themselves happy. Most of us have cause to be thankful for that which is bestowed; but we have all, probably, reason to be still more grateful for that which is withheld, and more especially for our being denied the sudden possession of riches. In the Litany, indeed, we call upon the Lord to deliver us "in all time of our wealth"; but how few of us are sincere in deprecating such a calamity! Massinger's Luke, and Ben Jonson's Sir Epicure Mammon, and Pope's Sir Balaam, and our own daily observation, might convince us that the Devil "now tempts by making rich, not making poor." We may read in the Guardian a circumstantial account of a man who was utterly ruined by gaining a capital prize; we may recollect what Dr. Johnson said to Garrick, when the latter was making a display of his wealth at Hampton Court,- "Ah, David, David! these are the things that make a death-bed terrible." We may recall the Scripture declaration, as to the difficulty a rich man finds in entering into the kingdom of Heaven; and, combining all these denunciations against opulence, let us heartily congratulate one another upon our lucky escape from the calamity of a twenty or thirty thousand pound prize! The fox in the fable, who accused the unattainable grapes of sourness, was more of a philosopher than we are generally willing to allow. He was an adept in that species of moral alchemy which turns everything to gold, and converts disappointment itself into a ground of resignation and content. Such we have shown to be the great lesson inculcated by the Lottery, when rightly contemplated; and, if we might parody M. de Chateaubriand's jingling expression,- "le Roi est mort: vive le Roi!" - we should be tempted to exclaim, "The Lottery is no more: long live the Lottery!"

RELIGION_OF_ACTORS

THE RELIGION OF ACTORS

FROM THE "NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE," 1826

THE world has hitherto so little troubled its head with the points of doctrine held by a community which contributes in other ways

so largely to its amusement, that, before the late mischance of a celebrated tragic actor, it scarce condescended to look into the practice of any individual player, much less to inquire into the hidden and abscondite springs of his actions. Indeed, it is with some violence to the imagination that we conceive of an actor as belonging to the relations of private life, so closely do we identify these persons in our mind with the characters which they assume upon the stage. How oddly does it sound, when we are told that the late Miss Pope, for instance,- that is to say, in our notion of her Mrs. Candour,- was a good daughter, an affectionate sister, and exemplary in all the parts of domestic life! With still greater difficulty can we carry our notions to church, and conceive of Liston kneeling upon a hassock, or Munden uttering a pious ejaculation,- "making mouths at the invisible event." But the times are fast improving; and, if the process of sanctity begun under the happy auspices of the present licenser go on to its completion, it will be as necessary for a comedian to give an account of his faith as of his conduct. Fawcett must study the five points; and Dicky Suett, if he were alive, would have had to rub up his catechism. Already the effects of it begin to appear. A celebrated performer has thought fit to oblige the world with a confession of his faith,- or Br__'s *Religio Dramatici*. This gentleman, in his laudable attempt to shift from his person the obloquy of Judaism, with the forwardness of a new convert, in trying to prove too much, has, in the opinion of many, proved too little. A simple declaration of his Christianity was sufficient; but, strange to say, his apology has not a word about it. We are left to gather it from some expressions which imply that he is a Protestant; but we did not wish to inquire into the niceties of his orthodoxy. To his friends of the old persuasion the distinction was impertinent; for what cares Rabbi Ben Kimchi for the differences which have split our novelty? To the great body of Christians that hold the Pope's supremacy- that is to say, to the major part of the Christian world- his religion will appear as much to seek as ever. But perhaps he conceived that all Christians are Protestants, as children and the common people call all, that are not animals, Christians. The mistake was not very considerable in so young a proselyte, or he might think the general (as logicians speak) involved in the particular. All Protestants are Christians; but I am a Protestant; ergo, etc.: as if a marmoset, contending to be a man, overleaping that term as too generic and vulgar, should at once roundly proclaim himself to be a gentleman. The argument would be, as we say, *ex abundantia*. From whichever cause this *excessus* in *terminis* proceeded, we can do no less than congratulate the general state of Christendom upon the accession of so extraordinary a convert. Who was the happy instrument of the conversion, we are yet to learn: it comes nearest to the attempt of the late pious Dr. Watts to Christianise the Psalms of the Old Testament. Something of the old Hebrew raciness is lost in the transfusion; but much of its asperity is softened and pared down in the adaptation.

The appearance of so singular a treatise at this conjuncture has set us upon an inquiry into the present state of religion upon the stage generally. By the favour of the Churchwardens of St. Martin's-in-the Fields, and St. Paul's, Covent Garden, who have very readily, and with great kindness, assisted our pursuit, we are enabled to lay before the public the following particulars. Strictly speaking, neither of the two great bodies is collectively a religious institution. We expected to find a chaplain among them, as at St. Stephen's and other Court establishments; and were the more surprised at the omission, as the last Mr. Bengough at the one house, and Mr. Powell at the other, from a gravity of speech and demeanour, and the habit of wearing black at their first appearances in the beginning of the fifth or the conclusion of fourth act, so eminently pointed out their qualifications for such office. These corporations, then, being not properly congregational, we must seek the solution of our question in the tastes, attainments, accidental breeding, and education of the individual members of them. As we were prepared to expect, a majority at both houses adhere to the religion of the Church Established,- only that at one of them a strong leaven of Roman Catholicism is suspected; which, considering the notorious education of the manager at a foreign seminary, is not so much to be wondered at. Some have gone so far as to report that Mr. T__y, in particular, belongs to an order lately restored on the Continent. We can contradict this: that gentleman is a member of the Kirk of Scotland; and his name is to be found, much to his honour, in the list of seceders from the congregation of Mr. Fletcher. While the generality, as we have said, are content to jog on in the safe trammels of national orthodoxy, symptoms of a sectarian spirit have broken out in quarters where we should least have looked for it. Some of the ladies at both houses are deep in controverted points. Miss F__e, we are credibly informed, is a Sub - and Madame V__ a Supra -Lapsarian. Mr. Pope is the last of the exploded sect of the Ranters. Mr. Sinclair has joined the Shakers. Mr. Grimaldi, sen., after being long a Jumper, has lately fallen into some whimsical theories respecting the fall of man; which he understands, not of an allegorical, but a real tumble, by which the whole body of humanity became, as it were, lame to the performance of good works. Pride he will have to be nothing but a stiff neck; irresolution, the nerves shaken; an inclination to sinister paths, crookedness of the joints; spiritual deadness, a paralysis; want of charity, a contraction in the fingers; despising of government, a broken head; the plaster, a sermon; the lint to bind it up, the text; the probers, the preachers; a pair of crutches, the old and new law; a bandage, religious obligation: fanciful mode of illustration, derived the accidents and habits of his past calling spiritualised, rather than from any accurate acquaintance with the Hebrew text, in which report speaks him but a raw scholar. Mr. Elliston, from all that we can learn, has his religion yet to choose; though some think him a Muggletonian.

THE_ASS

THE ASS FROM "HONE'S EVERY-DAY BOOK"

MR. COLLIER, in his "Poetical Decameron" (Third Conversation) notices a tract printed in 1595, with the author's initials only, A. B., entitled "The Nobleness of the Asse; a work rare, learned, and excellent." He has selected the following pretty passage from it: "He (the ass) refuseth no burden: he goes whither he is sent, without any contradiction. He lifts not his foote against any one; he bytes not; he is no fugitive, nor malicious affected. He doth all things in good sort, and to his liking that hath cause to employ him. If strokes be given him, he cares not for them; and, as our modern poet singeth,-

"Thou wouldst (perhaps) he should become thy foe,
And to that end dost beat him many times:
He cares not for himself, much less thy blow." *

* "Who this modern poet was," says Mr. Collier, "is a secret worth discovering." The wood-cut on the title of the pamphlet is- an ass, with a wreath of laurel round his neck.

Certainly Nature foreseeing the cruel usage which this useful servant to man would receive at man's hand did prudently in furnishing him with a tegument impervious to ordinary stripes. The malice of a child or a weak hand can make only feeble impressions on him. His back offers no mark to a puny foeman. To a common whip or switch his hide presents an absolute insensibility. You might as well pretend to scourge a schoolboy with a tough pair of leather breeches on. His jerkin is well fortified; and therefore the costermongers, "between the years 1790 and 1800," did more politicly than piously in lifting up a part of his upper garment. I well remember that beastly and bloody custom. I have often longed to see one of those refiners in discipline himself at the cart's tail, with just such a convenient spot laid bare to the tender mercies of the whipster. But, since Nature has resumed her rights, it is to be hoped that this patient creature does not suffer to extremities; and that, to the savages who still belabour his poor carcass with their blows (considering the sort of anvil they are laid upon), he might in some sort, if he could speak, exclaim with the philosopher, "Lay on: you beat but upon the case of Anaxarchus."

Contemplating this natural safeguard, this fortified exterior, it is with pain I view the sleek, foppish, combed, and curried person of this animal as he is disnaturalised at watering-places, etc., where they affect to make a palfrey of him. Fie on all such sophistications! It will never do, master groom. Something of his honest, shaggy exterior will still peep up in spite of you,- his good, rough, native, pine-apple coating. You cannot "refine a scorpion into a fish, though you rinse it and scour it with ever so cleanly cookery." *

* Milton, from memory.

The modern poet quoted by A. B. proceeds to celebrate a virtue for which no one to this day had been aware that the ass was

remarkable:-

One other gift this beast hath as his owne,
Wherewith the rest could not be furnished;
On man himself the same was not bestowne:
To wit, on him is ne'er engendered
The hateful vermin that doth teare the skin,
And to the bode [body] doth make his passage in.

And truly, when one thinks on the suit of impenetrable armour with which Nature (like Vulcan to another Achilles) has provided him, these subtle enemies to our repose would have shown some dexterity in getting into his quarters. As the bogs of Ireland by tradition expel toads and reptiles, he may well defy these small deer in his fastnesses. It seems the latter had not arrived at the exquisite policy adopted by the human vermin "between 1790 and 1800."

But the most singular and delightful gift of the ass, according to the writer of this pamphlet, is his voice, the "goodly, sweet, and continual brayings" of which, "whereof they forme a melodious and proportionable kinde of musicke," seem to have affected him with no ordinary pleasure. "Nor thinke I," he adds, "that any of our immoderate musitians can deny but that their song is full of exceeding pleasure to be heard; because therein is to be discerned both concord, discord, singing in the meane, the beginning to sing in large compasse, then following into rise and fall, the halfe note, whole note, musicke of five voices, firme singing by four voices, three together, or one voice and a halfe. Then their variable contrarieties amongst them, when one delivers forth a long tenor or a short, the pausing for time, breathing in measure, breaking the minim or very least moment of time. Last of all, to heare the musicke of five or six voices chaunged to so many of asses is amongst them to heare a song of world without end."

There is no accounting for ears, or for that laudable enthusiasm with which an author is tempted to invest a favourite subject with the most incompatible perfections: I should otherwise, for my own taste, have been inclined rather to have given a place to these extraordinary musicians at that banquet of nothing-less-than-sweet-sounds, imagined by old Jeremy Collier (Essays, 1698, part ii. on Music), where, after describing the inspiring effects of martial music in a battle, he hazards an ingenious conjecture, whether a sort of anti-music might not be invented, which should have quite the contrary effect of "sinking the spirits, shaking the nerves, curdling the blood, and inspiring despair and cowardice and consternation." "Tis probable," he says, "the roaring of lions, the warbling of cats and screech-owls, together with a mixture of the howling of dogs, judiciously imitated and compounded, might go a great way in this invention." The dose, we confess, is pretty potent, and skilfully enough prepared. But what shall we say to the Ass of Silenus, who, if we may trust to classic lore, by his own proper sounds. without thanks to cat or screech-owl, dismayed and put to rout a whole army of giants? Here was anti-music with a vengeance; a

whole Pan-Dis-Harmonicon in a single lungs of leather.

But I keep you trifling too long on this asinine subject. I have already passed the Pons Asinorum, and will desist, remembering the old pedantic pun of Jem Boyer, my schoolmaster:-

"Ass in praesenti seldom makes a WISE MAN in futuro."

IN_RE_SQUIRRELS

IN RE SQUIRRELS FROM "HONE'S EVERY-DAY BOOK"

WHAT is gone with the cages with the climbing squirrel, and bells to them, which were formerly the indispensable appendage to the outside of a tin-man's shop, and were, in fact, the only live signs? One, we believe, still hangs out on Holborn; but they are fast vanishing with the good old modes of our ancestors. They seem to have been superseded by that still more ingenious refinement of modern humanity, - the treadmill; in which human squirrels still perform a similar round of ceaseless, improgressive clambering, which must be nuts to them.

We almost doubt the fact of the teeth of this creature being so purely orange-coloured as Mr. Urban's correspondent gives out. One of our old poets - and they were pretty sharp observers of Nature - describes them as brown. But perhaps the naturalist referred to meant "of the colour of a Maltese orange," which is rather more obfuscated than the fruit of Seville or St. Michael's, and may help to reconcile the difference. We cannot speak from observation; but we remember at school getting our fingers into the orangery of one of these little gentry (not having a due caution of the traps set there), and the result proved sourer than lemons. The author of the "Task" somewhere speaks of their anger as being "insignificantly fierce"; but we found the demonstration of it on this occasion quite as significant as we desired, and have not since been disposed to look any of these "gift horses" in the mouth. Maiden aunts keep these "small deer," as they do parrots, to bite people's fingers, on purpose to give them good advice "not to adventure so near the cage another time." As for their "six quavers divided into three quavers and a dotted crotchet," I suppose they may go into Jeremy Bentham's next budget of fallacies, along with the "melodious and proportionable kinde of musicke" recorded, in your last Number, of another highly gifted animal.

CHARLES_LAMBS_AUTOBIOGRAPHY

CHARLES LAMB'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

CHARLES LAMB, born in the Inner Temple, 10th of February, 1775; educated in Christ's Hospital; afterwards a clerk in the Accountants' Office, East-India House; pensioned off from that service, 1825, after thirty-three years' service; is now a gentleman at large; can remember few specialities in his life worth noting, except that he once caught a swallow flying (teste sua manu). Below the middle stature; cast of face slightly Jewish, with no Judaic tinge in his complexional religion; stammers abominably, and is

therefore more apt to discharge his occasional conversation in a quaint aphorism, or a poor quibble, than in set and edifying speeches; has consequently been libelled as a person always aiming at wit; which, as he told a dull fellow that charged him with it, is at least as good as aiming at dulness. A small eater, but not drinker; confesses a partiality for the production of the juniper-berry; was a fierce smoker of tobacco, but may be resembled to a volcano burnt out, emitting only now and then a casual puff. Has been guilty of obtruding upon the public a tale, in prose, called "Rosamund Gray"; a dramatic sketch, named "John Woodvil"; a "Farewell Ode to Tobacco," with sundry other poems, and light prose matter, collected in two slight crown octavos, and pompously christened his works, though in fact they were his recreations. His true works may be found on the shelves of Leadenhall Street, filling some hundred folios. He is also the true Elia, whose Essays are extant in a little volume, published a year or two since, and rather better known from that name without a meaning than from anything he has done, or can hope to do, in his own name. He was also the first to draw the public attention to the old English dramatists, in a work called "Specimens of English Dramatic Writers who lived about the Time of Shakspeare," published about fifteen years since. In short, all his merits and demerits to set forth would take to the end of Mr. Upcott's book, and then not be told truly.

He died 18__, much lamented.

Witness his hand,

CHARLES LAMB

18th April, 1827.

CAPTAIN_STARKEY

CAPTAIN STARKEY

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVERY-DAY BOOK":-

DEAR SIR- I read your account of this unfortunate being, and his forlorn piece of self-history, * with that smile of half-interest which the annals of insignificance excite, till I came to where he says, "I was bound apprentice to Mr. William Bird, an eminent writer, and teacher of languages and mathematics," etc.; when I started as one does in the recognition of an old acquaintance in a supposed stranger. This, then, was that Starkey of whom I have heard my sister relate so many pleasant anecdotes; and whom, never having seen, I yet seem almost to remember. For nearly fifty years she had lost all sight of him; and, behold! the gentle usher of her youth, grown into an aged beggar, dubbed with an opprobrious title to which he had no pretensions; an object of a May-game! To what base purposes may we not return! What may not have been the meek creature's sufferings, what his wanderings, before he finally settled down in the comparative comfort of an old hospitaller of the almonry of Newcastle? And is poor Starkey dead?

* "Memoirs of the Life of Benjamin Starkey, late of London, but now an inmate of the Freeman's Hospital in Newcastle. Written by

himself. With a portrait of the author, and a fac-simile of his handwriting. Printed and sold by William Hall, Great Market, Newcastle." 1818. 12mo, pp. 14.

I was a scholar of that "eminent writer" that he speaks of; but Starkey had quitted the school about a year before I came to it. Still the odour of his merits had left a fragrancy upon the recollection of the elder pupils. The schoolroom stands where it did, looking into a discoloured, dingy garden in the passage leading from Fetter Lane into Bartlett's Buildings. It is still a school, though the main prop, alas! has fallen so ingloriously; and bears a Latin inscription over the entrance in the lane, which was unknown in our humbler times. Heaven knows what "languages" were taught in it then! I am sure that neither my sister nor myself brought any out of it but a little of our native English. By "mathematics," reader, must be understood "ciphering." It was, in fact, an humble day-school, at which reading and writing were taught to us boys in the morning; and the same slender erudition was communicated to the girls, our sisters, etc., in the evening. Now, Starkey presided, under Bird, over both establishments. In my time, Mr. Cook, now or lately a respectable singer and performer at Drury Lane Theatre, and nephew to Mr. Bird, had succeeded to him. I well remember Bird. He was a squat, corpulent, middle-sized man, with something of the gentleman about him, and that peculiar mild tone- especially while he was inflicting punishment- which is so much more terrible to children than the angriest looks and gestures. Whippings were not frequent; but, when they took place, the correction was performed in a private room adjoining, whence we could only hear the plaints but saw nothing. This heightened the decorum and the solemnity. But the ordinary chastisement was the bastinado, a stroke or two on the palm with that almost obsolete weapon now,- the ferule. A ferule was a sort of flat ruler, widened, at the inflicting end, into a shape resembling a pear,- but nothing like so sweet, with a delectable hole in the middle to raise blisters, like a cupping-glass. I have an intense recollection of that disused instrument of torture, and the malignancy, in proportion to the apparent mildness, with which its strokes were applied. The idea of a rod is accompanied with something ludicrous; but by no process can I look back upon this blister-raiser with anything but unmingled horror. To make him look more formidable,- if a pedagogue had need of these heightenings,- Bird wore one of those flowered Indian gowns formerly in use with schoolmasters, the strange figures upon which we used to interpret into hieroglyphics of pain and suffering. But, boyish fears apart, Bird, I believe, was, in the main, a humane and judicious master.

Oh, how I remember our legs wedged into those uncomfortable sloping desks, where we sat elbowing each other; and the injunctions to attain a free hand, unattainable in that position; the first copy I wrote after, with its moral lesson, "Art improves Nature"; the still earlier pot-hooks and the hangers, some traces of which I fear may yet be apparent in this manuscript; the truant looks side-long to the garden,

which seemed a mockery of our imprisonment; the prize for best spelling which had almost turned my head, and which, to this day, I cannot reflect upon without a vanity, which I ought to be ashamed of; our little leaden ink-stands, not separately subsisting, but sunk into the desks; the bright, punctually-washed morning fingers, darkening gradually with another and another inkspot! What a world of little associated circumstances, pains, and pleasures, mingling their quotas of pleasure, arise at the reading of those few simple words,- "Mr. William Bird, an eminent writer, and teacher of languages and mathematics in Fetter Lane, Holborn!"

Poor Starkey, when young, had that peculiar stamp of old-fashionedness in his face which makes it impossible for a beholder to predicate any particular age in the object. You can scarce make a guess between seventeen and seven-and-thirty. This antique cast always seems to promise illluck and penury. Yet it seems he was not always the abject thing he came to. My sister, who well remembers him, can hardly forgive Mr. Thomas Ranson for making an etching so unlike her idea of him when he was a youthful teacher at Mr. Bird's school. Old age and poverty- a life-long poverty, she thinks- could at no time have so effaced the marks of native gentility which were once so visible in a face otherwise strikingly ugly, thin, and careworn. From her recollection of him, she thinks that he would have wanted bread before he would have begged or borrowed a halfpenny. "If any of the girls," she says, "who were my schoolfellows, should be reading, through their aged spectacles, tidings, from the dead, of their youthful friend Starkey, they will feel a pang, as I do, at having teased his gentle spirit." They were big girls, it seems, too old to attend his instruction with the silence necessary; and, however old age and a long state of beggary seem to have reduced his writing faculties to a state of imbecility, in those days his language occasionally rose to the bold and figurative: for, when he was in despair to stop their chattering, his ordinary phrase was, "Ladies, if you will not hold your peace, not all the powers in heaven can make you." Once he was missing for a day or two: he had run away. A little, old, unhappy-looking man brought him back,- it was his father,- and he did no business in the school that day, but sat moping in a corner, with his hands before his face; and the girls, his tormentors, in pity for his case, for the rest of that day forbore to annoy him. "I had been there but a few months," adds she, "when Starkey, who was the chief instructor of us girls, communicated to us a profound secret,- that the tragedy of Cato was shortly to be acted by the elder boys, and that we were to be invited to the representation." That Starkey lent a helping hand in fashioning the actors, she remembers; and, but for his unfortunate person, he might have had some distinguished part in the scene to enact. As it was, he had the arduous task of prompter assigned to him; and his feeble voice was heard clear and distinct, repeating the text during the whole performance. She describes her recollection of the cast of characters, even now, with a relish. Martia by the handsome Edgar Hickman, who afterwards went to

Africa, and of whom she never afterwards heard tidings; Lucia, by Master Walker, whose sister was her particular friend; Cato, by John Hunter, a masterly declaimer, but a plain boy, and shorter by the head than his two sons in the scene, etc. In conclusion, Starkey appears to have been one of those mild spirits, which, not originally deficient in understanding, are crushed by penury into dejection and feebleness. He might have proved a useful adjunct, if not an ornament, to society, if Fortune had taken him into a very little fostering; but, wanting that, he became a captain,- a by-word,- and lived and died a broken bulrush.

A_POPULAR_FALLACY

A POPULAR FALLACY, THAT A DEFORMED PERSON IS A LORD FROM THE "NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE," 1826

AFTER a careful perusal of the most approved works that treat of nobility, and of its origin in these realms in particular, we are left very much in the dark as to the original patent in which this branch of it is recognised. Neither Camden, in his "Etymologie and Original of Barons" nor Dugdale, in his "Baronage of England," nor Selden (a more exact and laborious inquirer than either), in his "Titles of Honour," affords a glimpse of satisfaction upon the subject. There is an heraldic term, indeed, which seems to imply gentility, and the right to coat-armour (but nothing further), in persons thus qualified. But the sinister bend is more probably interpreted, by the best writers on this science, of some irregularity of birth than of bodily conformation. Nobility is either hereditary, or by creation, commonly called a patent. Of the former kind, the title in question cannot be, seeing that the notion of it is limited to a personal distinction which does not necessarily follow in the blood. Honours of this kind, as Mr. Anstey very well observes, descend, moreover, in a right line. It must be by patent, then, if anything. But who can show it? How comes it to be dormant? Under what king's reign is it patented? Among the grounds of nobility cited by the learned Mr. Ashmole, after "Services in the Field or in the Council Chamber," he judiciously sets down "Honours conferred by the Sovereign out of mere benevolence, or as favouring one subject rather than another for some likeness or conformity observed (or but supposed) in him to the royal nature"; and he instances the graces showered upon Charles Brandon, who, "in his goodly person being thought not a little to favour the port and bearing of the king's own majesty, was by that sovereign, King Henry the Eighth, for some or one of these respects, highly promoted and preferred." Here, if anywhere, we thought we had discovered a clew to our researches. But after a painful investigation of the rolls and records under the reign of Richard the Third, or "Richard Crouchback," as he is more usually designated in the chronicles,- from a traditionary stoop or gibbosity in that part,- we do not find that that monarch conferred any such lordships as are here pretended, upon any subject or subjects, on a simple plea of "conformity" in that respect to the "royal nature." The posture of

affairs, in those tumultuous times preceding the battle of Bosworth, possibly left him at no leisure to attend to such niceties. Further than his reign, we have not extended our inquiries; the kings of England who preceded or followed him being generally described by historians to have been of straight and clean limbs, the "natural derivative," says Daniel, * "of high blood, if not its primitive recommendation to such ennoblement, as denoting strength and martial prowess,- the qualities set most by in that fighting age." Another motive, which inclines us to scruple the validity of this claim, is the remarkable fact that not one of the persons in whom the right is supposed to be vested does ever insist upon it himself. There is no instance of any of them "suing his patent," as the law-books call it; much less of his having actually stepped up into his proper seat, as, so qualified, we might expect that some of them would have had the spirit to do, in the House of Lords. On the contrary, it seems to be a distinction thrust upon them. "Their title of 'lord,'" says one of their own body, speaking of the common people, "I never much valued, and now I entirely despise; and yet they will force it upon me as an honour which they have a right to bestow, and which I have none to refuse." *(2) Upon a dispassionate review of the subject, we are disposed to believe that there is no right to the peerage incident to mere bodily configuration; that the title in dispute is merely honorary, and depending upon the breath of the common people, which in these realms is so far from the power of conferring nobility, that the ablest constitutionalists have agreed in nothing more unanimously than in the maxim, that "the king is the sole fountain of honour."

* History of England, "Temporibus Edwardi Primi et Sequentibus."

*(2) Hay on Deformity.

LETTER_TO_AN_OLD_GENTLEMAN

LETTER TO AN OLD GENTLEMAN WHOSE EDUCATION HAS BEEN NEGLECTED

FROM THE "LONDON MAGAZINE," 1825

TO THE EDITOR OF THE LONDON MAGAZINE:-

DEAR SIR- I send you a bantering "Epistle to an Old Gentleman whose Education is supposed to have been neglected." Of course, it was suggested by some letters of your admirable Opium-Eater, the discontinuance of which has caused so much regret to myself in common with most of your readers. You will do me injustice by supposing that, in the remotest degree, it was my intention to ridicule those papers. The fact is, the most serious things may give rise to an innocent burlesque; and, the more serious they are, the fitter they become for that purpose. It is not to be supposed that Charles Cotton did not entertain a very high regard for Virgil, notwithstanding he travestied that poet. Yourself can testify the deep respect I have always held for the profound learning and penetrating genius of our friend. Nothing upon earth would give me greater pleasure than to find that he has not lost sight of his entertaining and instructive purpose.- I am, dear sir, yours and his sincerely,

ELIA.

MY DEAR SIR- The question which you have done me the honour to propose to me, through the medium of our common friend, Mr. Grierson, I shall endeavour to answer with as much exactness as a limited observation and experience can warrant.

You ask,- or rather Mr. Grierson, in his own interesting language, asks for you,- "Whether a person at the age of sixty-three, with no more proficiency than a tolerable knowledge of most of the characters of the English alphabet at first sight amounts to, by dint of persevering application and good masters,- a docile and ingenuous disposition on the part of the pupil always presupposed,- may hope to arrive, within a presumable number of years, at that degree of attainments which shall entitle the possessor to the character, which you are on so many accounts justly desirous of acquiring, of a learned man."

This is fairly and candidly stated,- only I could wish that on one point you had been a little more explicit. In the meantime, I will take it for granted, that by a "knowledge of the alphabetic characters" you confine your meaning to the single powers only, as you are silent on the subject of the diphthongs and harder combinations.

Why, truly, sir, when I consider the vast circle of sciences,- it is not here worth while to trouble you with the distinction between learning and science,- which a man must be understood to have made the tour of in these days, before the world will be willing to concede to him the title which you aspire to,- I am almost disposed to reply to your inquiry by a direct answer in the negative.

However, where all cannot be compassed, a great deal that is truly valuable may be accomplished. I am unwilling to throw out any remarks that should have a tendency to damp a hopeful genius; but I must not, in fairness, conceal from you that you have much to do. The consciousness of difficulty is sometimes a spur to exertion. Rome- or rather, my dear sir, to borrow an illustration from a place as yet more familiar to you, Rumford- Rumford was not built in a day.

Your mind as yet, give me leave to tell you, is in the state of a sheet of white paper. We must not blot or blur it over too hastily. Or, to use an opposite simile, it is like a piece of parchment all bescrawled and bescribbled over with characters of no sense or import, which we must carefully erase and remove before we can make way for the authentic characters or impresses which are to be substituted in their stead by the corrective hand of science.

Your mind, my dear sir, again, resembles that same parchment, which we will suppose a little hardened by time and disuse. We may apply the characters; but are we sure that the ink will sink?

You are in the condition of a traveller that has all his journey to begin. And, again, you are worse off than the traveller which I have supposed; for you have already lost your way.

You have much to learn, which you have never been taught; and more, I fear, to unlearn, which you have been taught erroneously. You have hitherto, I daresay, imagined that the sun moves round the earth. When

you shall have mastered the true solar system, you will have quite a different theory upon that point, I assure you. I mention but this instance. Your own experience, as knowledge advances, will furnish you with many parallels.

I can scarcely approve of the intention, which Mr. Grierson informs me you had contemplated, of entering yourself at a common seminary, and working your way up from the lower to the higher forms with the children. I see more to admire in the modesty than in the expediency of such a resolution. I own I cannot reconcile myself to the spectacle of a gentleman at your time of life, seated, as must be your case at first, below a tyro of four or five; for at that early age the rudiments of education usually commence in this country. I doubt whether more might not be lost in the point of fitness than would be gained in the advantages which you propose to yourself by this scheme.

You say you stand in need of emulation; that this incitement is nowhere to be had but at a public school; that you should be more sensible of your progress by comparing it with the daily progress of those around you. But have you considered the nature of emulation, and how it is sustained at those tender years which you would have to come in competition with? I am afraid you are dreaming of academic prizes and distinctions. Alas! in the university for which you are preparing, the highest medal would be a silver penny; and you must graduate in nuts and oranges.

I know that Peter, the great Czar- or Emperor- of Muscovy, submitted himself to the discipline of a dockyard at Deptford, that he might learn and convey to his countrymen the noble art of shipbuilding. You are old enough to remember him, or at least the talk about him. I call to mind also other great princes, who, to instruct themselves in the theory and practice of war, and set an example of subordination to their subjects, have condescended to enroll themselves as private soldiers; and, passing through the successive ranks of corporal, quartermaster, and the rest, have served their way up to the station at which most princes are willing enough to set out,- of general and commander-in-chief over their own forces. But- besides that there is oftentimes great sham and pretence in their show of mock humility- the competition which they stooped to was with their coevals, however inferior to them in birth. Between ages so very disparate as those which you contemplate, no salutary emulation can, I fear, subsist.

Again: in the other alternative, could you submit to the ordinary reproofs and discipline of a day-school? Could you bear to be corrected for your faults? Or how would it look to see you put to stand, as must be the case sometimes, in a corner?

I am afraid the idea of a public school in your circumstances must be given up.

But is it impossible, my dear sir, to find some person of your own age,- if of the other sex, the more agreeable, perhaps,- whose information, like your own, has rather lagged behind his years, who should be willing to set out from the same point with yourself? to

undergo the same tasks?- thus at once inciting and sweetening each other's labours in a sort of friendly rivalry. Such a one, I think, it would not be difficult to find in some of the western parts of this island,- about Dartmoor, for instance.

Or what if, from your own estate,- that estate, which, unexpectedly acquired so late in life, has inspired into you this generous thirst after knowledge,- you were to select some elderly peasant, that might best be spared from the land, to come and begin his education with you, that you might till, as it were, your minds together,- one whose heavier progress might invite, without a fear of discouraging, your emulation? We might then see- starting from an equal post- the difference of the clownish and the gentle blood.

A private education, then, or such a one as I have been describing, being determined on, we must in the next place look out for a preceptor; for it will be some time before either of you, left to yourselves, will be able to assist the other to any great purpose in his studies.

And now, my dear sir, if, in describing such a tutor as I have imagined for you, I use a style a little above the familiar one in which I have hitherto chosen to address you, the nature of the subject must be my apology. *Difficile est de scientiis inscienter loqui*; which is as much as to say, that, "in treating of scientific matters, it is difficult to avoid the use of scientific terms." But I shall endeavour to be as plain as possible. I am not going to present you with the ideal of a pedagogue as it may exist in my fancy, or has possibly been realised in the persons of Buchanan and Busby. Something less than perfection will serve our turn. The scheme which I propose in this first or introductory letter has reference to the first four or five years of your education only; and, in enumerating the qualifications of him that should undertake the direction of your studies, I shall rather point out the minimum, or least, that I shall require of him, than trouble you in the search of attainments neither common nor necessary to our immediate purpose.

He should be a man of deep and extensive knowledge. So much at least is indispensable. Something older than yourself, I could wish him, because years add reverence.

To his age and great learning, he should be blessed with a temper and a patience willing to accommodate itself to the imperfections of the slowest and meanest capacities. Such a one, in former days, Mr. Hartlib appears to have been; and such, in our days, I take Mr. Grierson to be: but our friend, you know, unhappily has other engagements. I do not demand a consummate grammarian; but he must be a thorough master of vernacular orthography, with an insight into the accentualities and punctualities of modern Saxon or English. He must be competently instructed (or how shall he instruct you?) in the tetralogy, or four first rules, upon which not only arithmetic, but geometry, and the pure mathematics themselves, are grounded. I do not require that he should have measured the globe with Cook or

Ortelius; but it is desirable that he should have a general knowledge (I do not mean a very nice or pedantic one) of the great division of the earth into four parts, so as to teach you readily to name the quarters. He must have a genius capable in some degree of soaring to the upper element, to deduce from thence the not much dissimilar computation of the cardinal points, or hinges, upon which those invisible phenomena, which naturalists agree to term winds, do perpetually shift and turn. He must instruct you, in imitation of the old Orphic fragments (the mention of which has possibly escaped you), in numeric and harmonious responses, to deliver the number of solar revolutions within which each of the twelve periods of the Annus Vulgaris, or common year, is divided, and which doth usually complete and terminate itself. The intercalaries, and other subtle problems, he will do well to omit, till riper years, and course of study, shall have rendered you more capable thereof. He must be capable of embracing all history, so as, from the countless myriads of individual men who have peopled this globe of earth,- for it is a globe, - by comparison of their respective births, lives, deaths, fortunes, conduct, prowess, etc., to pronounce, and teach you to pronounce, dogmatically and catechetically, who was the richest, who was the strongest, who was the wisest, who was the meekest, man that ever lived; to the facilitation of which solution, you will readily conceive, a smattering of biography would in no inconsiderable degree conduce. Leaving the dialects of men (in one of which I shall take leave to suppose you by this time at least superficially instituted), you will learn to ascend with him to the contemplation of that unarticulated language which was before the written tongue; and, with the aid of the elder Phrygian or Aesopic key, to interpret the sounds by which the animal tribes communicate their minds, evolving moral instruction with delight from the dialogue of cocks, dogs, and foxes. Or, marrying theology with verse, from whose mixture a beautiful and healthy offspring may be expected, in your own native accents (but purified), you will keep time together to the profound harpings of the more modern or Wattsian hymnics.

Thus far I have ventured to conduct you to a "hillside, whence you may discern the right path of a virtuous and noble education; laborious indeed at the first ascent, but else so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospects and melodious sounds on every side, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming." *

With my best respects to Mr. Grierson, when you see him, I remain, dear sir, your obedient servant,
ELIA.

* Milton's Tractate on Education, addressed to Mr. Hartlib.

PROPER_NAMES

ON THE AMBIGUITIES ARISING FROM PROPER NAMES

HOW oddly it happens that the same sound shall suggest to the minds of two persons hearing it ideas the most opposite! I was conversing, a few years since, with a young friend upon the subject of poetry, and

particularly that species of it which is known by the name of the Epithalamium. I ventured to assert that the most perfect specimen of it in our language was the "Epithalamium" of Spenser upon his own marriage.

My young gentleman, who has a smattering of taste, and would not willingly be thought ignorant of anything remotely connected with the belles-lettres, expressed a degree of surprise, mixed with mortification, that he should never have heard of this poem; Spenser being an author with whose writings he thought himself peculiarly conversant.

I offered to show him the poem in the fine folio copy of the poet's works which I have at home. He seemed pleased with the offer, though the mention of the folio seemed again to puzzle him. But, presently after, assuming a grave look, he compassionately muttered to himself, "Poor Spenser!"

There was something in the tone with which he spoke these words that struck me not a little. It was more like the accent with which a man bemoans some recent calamity that has happened to a friend, than that tone of sober grief with which we lament the sorrows of a person, however excellent and however grievous his afflictions may have been, who has been dead more than two centuries. I had the curiosity to inquire into the reasons of so uncommon an ejaculation. My young gentleman, with a more solemn tone of pathos than before, repeated, "Poor Spenser!" and added, "He has lost his wife!"

My astonishment at this assertion rose to such a height, that I began to think the brain of my young friend must be cracked, or some unaccountable reverie had gotten possession of it. But upon further explanation, it appeared that the word "Spenser," which to you or me, reader, in a conversation upon poetry too, would naturally have called up the idea of an old poet in a ruff, one Edmund Spenser, that flourished in the days of Queen Elizabeth, and wrote a poem called "The Faery Queen," with "The Shepherd's Calendar," and many more verses besides, did, in the mind of my young friend, excite a very different and quite modern idea; namely, that of the Honourable William Spencer, one of the living ornaments, if I am not misinformed, of this present poetical era, A.D. 1811.

THE_CONFESIONS_OF_A_DRUNKARD

ELIA ON "THE CONFESIONS OF A DRUNKARD" FROM THE "LONDON MAGAZINE," 1822

MANY are the sayings of Elia, painful and frequent his lucubrations, set forth for the most part (such his modesty!) without a name; scattered about in obscure periodicals and forgotten miscellanies. From the dust of some of these it is our intention occasionally to revive a tract or two that shall seem worthy of a better fate, especially at a time like the present, when the pen of our industrious contributor, engaged in a laborious digest of his recent Continental tour, may haply want the leisure to expatiate in more miscellaneous speculations. We have been induced, in the first

instance, to reprint a thing which he put forth in a friend's volume some years since, entitled *The Confessions of a Drunkard*, seeing that Messieurs the Quarterly Reviewers have chosen to embellish their last dry pages with fruitful quotations therefrom; adding, from their peculiar brains, the gratuitous affirmation, that they have reason to believe that the describer (in his delineation of a drunkard, forsooth!) partly sat for his own picture. The truth is, that our friend had been reading among the essays of a contemporary, who has perversely been confounded with him, a paper in which Edax (or the Great Eater) humorously complaineth of an inordinate appetite; and it struck him that a better paper- of deeper interest and wider usefulness- might be made out of the imagined experiences of a Great Drinker. Accordingly he set to work, and, with that mock fervour and counterfeit earnestness with which he is too apt to over-realise his descriptions, has given us- a frightful picture indeed, but no more resembling the man Elia than the fictitious Edax may be supposed to identify itself with Mr. L. its author. It is, indeed, a compound extracted out of his long observations of the effects of drinking upon all the world about him; and this accumulated mass of misery he hath centred (as the custom is with judicious essayists) in a single figure. We deny not that a portion of his own experiences may have passed into the picture; (as who, that is not a washy fellow, but must at some times have felt the after-operation of a too-generous cup?) but then how heightened! how exaggerated! how little within the sense of the Review, where a part, in its slanderous usage, must be understood to stand for the whole! But it is useless to expostulate with this Quarterly slime, brood of Nilus, watery heads with hearts of jelly spawned under the sign of Aquarius, incapable of Bacchus, and therefore cold, washy, spiteful, bloodless. Elia shall string them up one day, and show their colours,- or, rather, how colourless and vapid the whole fry,- when he putteth forth his long-promised, but unaccountably hitherto delayed, *Confessions of a Water-Drinker*.

THE_LAST_PEACH

THE LAST PEACH FROM THE "LONDON MAGAZINE," 1825

I AM the miserablest man living. Give me counsel, dear Editor. I was bred up in the strictest principles of honesty, and have passed my life in punctual adherence to them. Integrity might be said to be ingrained in our family. Yet I live in constant fear of one day coming to the gallows.

Till the latter end of last Autumn I never experienced these feelings of self-mistrust, which ever since have imbittered my existence. From the apprehension of that unfortunate man * whose story began to make so great an impression upon the public about that time, I date my horrors. I never can get it out of my head that I shall some time or other commit a forgery, or do some equally vile thing. To make matters worse, I am in a banking-house. I sit surrounded with a cluster of banknotes. These were formerly no more to

me than meat to a butcher's dog. They are now as toads and aspics. I feel all day like one situated amidst gins and pitfalls. Sovereigns, which I once took such pleasure in counting out, and scraping up with my little tin shovel (at which I was the most expert in the banking-house), now scald my hands. When I go to sign my name, I set down that of another person, or write my own in a counterfeit character. I am beset with temptations without motive. I want no more wealth than I possess. A more contented being than myself, as to money matters, exists not. What should I fear?

* Fauntleroy

When a child, I was once let loose, by favour of a nobleman's gardener, into his lordship's magnificent fruit garden, with full leave to pull the currants and the gooseberries; only I was interdicted from touching the wall fruit. Indeed, at that season (it was the end of Autumn), there was little left. Only on the south wall (can I forget the hot feel of the brickwork?) lingered the one last peach. Now, peaches are a fruit which I always had, and still have, an almost utter aversion to. There is something to my palate singularly harsh and repulsive in the flavour of them. I know not by what demon of contradiction inspired; but I was haunted with an irresistible desire to pluck it. Tear myself as often as I would from the spot, I found myself still recurring to it; till, maddening with desire (desire I cannot call it), with wilfulness rather, - without appetite, against appetite, - I may call it, - in an evil hour I reached out my hand, and plucked it. Some few raindrops just then fell; the sky (from a bright day) became overcast; and I was a type of our first parents, after the eating of that fatal fruit. I felt myself naked and ashamed, stripped of my virtue, spiritless. The downy fruit, the sight of which rather than its savour had tempted me, dropped from my hand, never to be tasted. All the commentators in the world cannot persuade me but that the Hebrew word, in the second chapter of Genesis, translated "apple," should be rendered "peach." Only this way can I reconcile that mysterious story.

Just such a child at thirty am I among the cash and valuables, longing to pluck, without an idea of enjoyment further. I cannot reason myself out of these fears: I dare not laugh at them. I was tenderly and lovingly brought up. What then? Who that in life's entrance had seen the babe F__, from the lap stretching out his little fond mouth to catch the maternal kiss, could have predicted, or as much as imagined, that life's very different exit? The sight of my own fingers torments me; they seem so admirably constructed for-pilfering. Then that jugular vein, which I have in common __; in an emphatic sense may I say with David, I am "fearfully made." All my mirth is poisoned by these unhappy suggestions. If, to dissipate reflection, I hum a tune, it changes to the "Lamentations of a Sinner." My very dreams are tainted. I awake with a shocking feeling of my hand in some pocket.

Advise me, dear Editor, on this painful heart-malady. Tell me, do you feel anything allied to it in yourself? Do you never feel an

itching, as it were, - a dactylomania, - or am I alone? You have my honest confession. My next may appear from Bow Street.

SUSPENSURUS.

REFLECTIONS_IN_THE_PILLORY

REFLECTIONS IN THE PILLORY FROM THE "LONDON MAGAZINE," 1825

About the year 18__ , one R__d, a respectable London merchant (since dead), stood in the pillory for some alleged fraud upon the revenue. Among his papers were found the following "Reflections," which we have obtained by favour of our friend Elia, who knew him well, and had heard him describe the train of his feelings, upon that trying occasion, almost in the words of the manuscript. Elia speaks of him as a man (with the exception of the peccadillo aforesaid) of singular integrity in all his private dealings, possessing great suavity of manner, with a certain turn for humour. As our object is to present human nature under every possible circumstance, we do not think that we shall sully our pages by inserting it.- EDITOR of the London Magazine.

SCENE,- Opposite the Royal Exchange.

TIME,- Twelve to One, Noon.

KETCH, my good fellow, you have a neat hand. Prithee, adjust this new collar to my neck gingerly. I am not used to these wooden cravats. There, softly, softly. That seems the exact point between ornament and strangulation. A thought looser on this side. Now it will do. And have a care in turning me, that I present my aspect due vertically. I now face the Orient. In a quarter of an hour I shift Southward,- do you mind?- and so on till I face the East again, travelling with the sun. No half-points, I beseech you,- N. N. by W., or any such elaborate niceties. They become the shipman's card, but not this mystery. Now leave me a little to my own reflections.

Bless us, what a company is assembled in honour of me! How grand I stand here! I never felt so sensibly before the effect of solitude in a crowd. I muse in solemn silence upon that vast miscellaneous rabble in the pit there. From my private box I contemplate, with mingled pity and wonder, the gaping curiosity of those underlings. There are my Whitechapel supporters. Rosemary Lane has emptied herself of the very flower of her citizens to grace my show. Duke's place sits desolate. What is there in my face, that strangers should come so far from the East to gaze upon it? [Here an egg narrowly misses him.] That offering was well meant, but not so cleanly executed. By the tricklings, it should not be either myrrh or frankincense. Spare your presents, my friends: I am nowadays mercenary. I desire no missive tokens of your approbation. I am past those valentines. Bestow these coffins of untimely chickens upon mouths that water for them. Comfort your addle spouses with them at home, and stop the mouths of your brawling brats with such Olla Podridas: they have need of them. [A brick is let fly.] Discase not, I pray you, nor dismantle your rent and ragged tenements, to furnish me with architectural

decorations, which I can excuse. This fragment might have stopped a flaw against snow comes. [A coal flies.] Cinders are dear, gentlemen. This nubbling might have helped the pot boil, when your dirty cuttings from the shambles at three-ha'pence a pound shall stand at a cold simmer. Now, South about, Ketch! I would enjoy Australian popularity.

What, my friends from over the water! Old benchers- flies of a day- ephemeral Romans- welcome! Doth the sight of me draw souls from limbo? can it dispeople purgatory?- Ha!

What am I, or what was my father's house, that I should thus be set up a spectacle to gentlemen and others? Why are all faces, like Persians at the sunrise, bent singly on mine alone? It was wont to be esteemed an ordinary visnomy, a quotidian merely. Doubtless these assembled myriads discern some traits of nobleness, gentility, breeding, which hitherto have escaped the common observation,- some intimations, as it were, of wisdom, valour, piety, and so forth. My sight dazzles; and, if I am not deceived by the too-familiar pressure of this strange neckcloth that envelops it, my countenance gives out lambent glories. For some painter now to take me in the lucky point of expression!- the posture so convenient!- the head never shifting, but standing quiescent in a sort of natural frame! But these artisans require a Westerly aspect. Ketch, turn me.

Something of St. James's air in these my new friends. How my prospects shift and brighten! Now, if Sir Thomas Lawrence be anywhere in that group, his fortune is made for ever. I think I see some one taking out a crayon. I will compose my whole face to a smile, which yet shall not so predominate but that gravity and gayety shall contend, as it were,- you understand me? I will work up my thoughts to some mild rapture,- a gentle enthusiasm,- which the artist may transfer, in a manner, warm to the canvas. I will inwardly apostrophise my tabernacle.

Delectable mansion, hail! House not made of every wood! Lodging that pays no rent; airy and commodious; which, owing no window tax, art yet all casement, out of which men have such pleasure in peering and overlooking, that they will sometimes stand an hour together to enjoy thy prospects! Cell, recluse from the vulgar! Quiet retirement from the great Babel, yet affording sufficient glimpses into it! Pulpit, that instructs without note or sermon book; into which the preacher is inducted without tenth or first fruit! Throne, unshared and single, that disdainest a Brentford competitor! Honour without co-rival! Or hearest thou, rather, magnificent theatre, in which the spectator comes to see and to be seen? From thy giddy heights I look down upon the common herd, who stand with eyes upturned, as if a winged messenger hovered over them; and mouths open, as if they expected manna. I feel, I feel the true episcopal yearnings. Behold in me, my flock, your true overseer! What though I cannot lay hands, because my own are laid; yet I can mutter benedictions. True otium cum dignitate! Proud Pigsaw eminence! pinnacle sublime! O Pillory! 'tis thee I sing! Thou younger brother to the gallows, without his

rough and Esau palms, that with ineffable contempt surveyest beneath thee the grovelling stocks, which claim presumptuously to be of thy great race! Let that low wood know that thou art far higher born. Let that domicile for groundling rogues and base earth-kissing varlets envy thy preferment, not seldom fated to be the wanton baiting-house, the temporary retreat, of poet and of patriot. Shades of Bastwick and of Prynne hover over thee. Defoe is there, and more greatly daring Shebbeare. From their (little more elevated) stations they look down with recognitions. Ketch, turn me!

I now veer to the North. Open thy widest gates, thou proud Exchange of London, that I may look in as proudly! Gresham's wonder, hail! I stand upon a level with all your kings. They and I, from equal heights, with equal superciliousness, o'erlook the plodding, money-hunting tribe below, who, busied in their sordid speculations, scarce elevate their eyes to notice your ancient, or my recent grandeur. The second Charles smiles on me from three pedestals! * He closed the Exchequer: I cheated the Excise. Equal our darings; equal be our lot!

* A statue of Charles II., by the elder Cibber, adorns the front of the Exchange. He stands also on high, in the train of his crowned ancestors, in his proper order, within that building; and the merchants of London, as a further proof of their loyalty, have, within a few years, caused to be erected another effigy of him on the ground in the centre of the interior.

Are those the quarters? 'tis their fatal chime. That the ever-winged hours would but stand still! but I must descend,- descend from this dream of greatness. Stay, stay, a little while, importunate hour-hand! A moment or two, and I shall walk on foot with the undistinguished many. The clock speaks one. I return to common life. Ketch, let me out.

CHARACTER_OF_THE_LATE_ELIA

A CHARACTER OF THE LATE ELIA BY A FRIEND FROM THE "LONDON MAGAZINE," 1823

THIS gentleman, who for some months past had been in a declining way, hath at length paid his final tribute to Nature. He just lived long enough (it was what he wished) to see his papers collected into a volume. The pages of the London Magazine will henceforth know him no more.

Exactly at twelve, last night, his queer spirit departed; and the bells of Saint Bride's rang him out with the old year. The mournful vibrations were caught in the dining-room of his friends T. and H.; * and the company, assembled there to welcome in another 1st of January, checked their carousals in mid-earth, and were silent. Janus wept. The gentle P__r, *(2) in a whisper, signified his intention of devoting an elegy; and Allan C., *(3) nobly forgetful of his countrymen's wrongs, vowed a memoir to his manes, full and friendly, as a Tale of Lyddalcross.

* Taylor and Hessey, the publishers of the London Magazine.

*(2) Procter, better known as Barry Cornwall.

*(3) Cunningham.

To say truth, it is time he were gone. The humour of the thing, if there was ever much in it, was pretty well exhausted; and a two years and a half's existence has been a tolerable duration for a phantom.

I am now at liberty to confess, that much which I have heard objected to my late friend's writings was well founded. Crude they are, I grant you,- a sort of unlicked, incondite things,- villainously pranked in an affected array of antique modes and phrases. They had not been his if they had been other than such; and better it is that a writer should be natural in a self-pleasing quaintness, than to affect a naturalness (so called) that should be strange to him. Egotistical they have been pronounced by some who did not know that what he tells us as of himself was often true only (historically) of another; as in his Third Essay (to save many instances), where, under the first person (his favourite figure), he shadows forth the forlorn estate of a country boy placed at a London school, far from his friends and connections,- in direct opposition to his own early history. If it be egotism to imply and twine with his own identity the griefs and affections of another,- making himself many, or reducing many unto himself,- then is the skilful novelist, who all along brings in his hero or heroine, speaking of themselves, the greatest egotist of all; who yet has never, therefore, been accused of that narrowness. And how shall the intenser dramatist escape being faulty, who doubtless, under cover of passion uttered by another, oftentimes gives blameless vent to his most inward feelings, and expresses his own story modestly?

My late friend was in many respects a singular character. Those who did not like him hated him; and some, who once liked him, afterwards became his bitterest haters. The truth is, he gave himself too little concern about what he uttered, and in whose presence. He observed neither time nor place, and would ever out with what came uppermost. With the severe religionist he would pass for a free-thinker; while the other faction set him down for a bigot, or persuaded themselves that he belied his sentiments. Few understood him; and I am not certain that at all times he quite understood himself. He too much affected that dangerous figure,- irony. He sowed doubtful speeches, and reaped plain, unequivocal hatred. He would interrupt the gravest discussion with some light jest; and yet, perhaps, not quite irrelevant in ears that could understand it. Your long and much talkers hated him. The informal habit of his mind, joined to an inveterate impediment of speech, forbade him to be an orator; and he seemed determined that no one else should play that part when he was present. He was petit and ordinary in his person and appearance. I have seen him sometimes in what is called good company, but, where he has been a stranger, sit silent, and be suspected for an odd fellow, till (some unlucky occasion provoking it) he would stutter out some senseless pun (not altogether senseless

perhaps, if rightly taken), which has stamped his character for the evening. It was hit or miss with him; but, nine times out of ten, he contrived by this device to send away a whole company his enemies. His conceptions rose kindlier than his utterance, and his happiest impromptus had the appearance of effort. He has been accused of trying to be witty, when in truth he was but struggling to give his poor thoughts articulation. He chose his companions for some individuality of character which they manifested. Hence not many persons of science, and few professed literati, were of his councils. They were, for the most part, persons of an uncertain fortune; and as to such people, commonly, nothing is more obnoxious than a gentleman of settled (though moderate) income, he passed with most of them for a great miser. To my knowledge, this was a mistake. His intimados, to confess a truth, were, in the world's eye, a ragged regiment. He found them floating on the surface of society; and the colour, or something else, in the weed, pleased him. The burs stuck to him; but they were good and loving burs for all that. He never greatly cared for the society of what are called good people. If any of these were scandalised (and offences were sure to arise), he could not help it. When he has been remonstrated with for not making more concessions to the feelings of good people, he would retort by asking, What one point did these good people ever concede to him? He was temperate in his meals and diversions, but always kept a little on this side of abstemiousness. Only in the use of the Indian weed he might be thought a little excessive. He took it, he would say, as a solvent of speech. Marry- as the friendly vapour ascended, how his prattle would curl up sometimes with it! the ligaments, which tongue-tied him, were loosened, and the stammerer proceeded a statish!

I do not know whether I ought to bemoan or rejoice that my old friend is departed. His jests were beginning to grow obsolete, and his stories to be found out. He felt the approaches of age; and, while he pretended to cling to life, you saw how slender were the ties left to bind him. Discoursing with him latterly on this subject, he expressed himself with a pettishness which I thought unworthy of him. In our walks about his suburban retreat (as he called it) at Shacklewell, some children belonging to a School of Industry met us, and bowed and courtesied, as he thought, in an especial manner to him. "They take me for a visiting governor," he muttered earnestly. He had a horror, which he carried to a foible, of looking like anything important and parochial. He thought that he approached nearer to that stamp daily. He had a general aversion from being treated like a grave or respectable character, and kept a wary eye upon the advances of age that should so entitle him. He herded always, while it was possible, with people younger than himself. He did not conform to the march of time, but was dragged along in the procession. His manners lagged behind his years. He was too much of the boy-man. The toga virilis never sat gracefully on his shoulders. The impressions of infancy had burnt into him, and he resented the impertinence of manhood. These were weaknesses; but such as they were,

they are a key to explicate some of his writings.

He left little property behind him. Of course, the little that is left (chiefly in India bonds) devolves upon his cousin Bridget. A few critical dissertations were found in his *escritoire*, which have been handed over to the editor of this magazine, in which it is to be hoped they will shortly appear, retaining his accustomed signature.

He has himself not obscurely hinted that his employment lay in a public office. The gentlemen in the export department of the East-India House will forgive me if I acknowledge the readiness with which they assisted me in the retrieval of his few manuscripts. They pointed out in a most obliging manner the desk at which he had been planted for forty years; showed me ponderous tomes of figures, in his own remarkably neat hand, which, more properly than his few printed tracts, might be called his "Works." They seemed affectionate to his memory, and universally commended his expertness in book-keeping. It seems he was the inventor of some ledger which should combine the precision and certainty of the Italian double entry (I think they called it) with the brevity and facility of some newer German system; but I am not able to appreciate the worth of the discovery. I have often heard him express a warm regard for his associates in office, and how fortunate he considered himself in having his lot thrown in amongst them. There is more sense, more discourse, more shrewdness, and even talent, among these clerks (he would say), than in twice the number of authors by profession that I have conversed with. He would brighten up sometimes upon the "old days of the India House," when he consorted with Woodroffe and Wissett, and Peter Corbet (a descendant and worthy representative, bating the point of sanctity, of old facetious Bishop Corbet); and Hoole, who translated Tasso; and Bartlemy Brown, whose father (God assoil him therefore!) modernised Walton; and sly, warmhearted old Jack Cole (King Cole they called him in those days). and Campe and Fombelle, and a world of choice spirits, more than I can remember to name, who associated in those days with Jack Burrell (the *bon vivant* of the South-Sea House); and little Eyton (said to be a facsimile of Pope,- he was a miniature of a gentleman), that was cashier under him; and Dan Voight of the Custom House, that left the famous library.

Well, Elia is gone,- for aught I know, to be reunited with them,- and these poor traces of his pen are all we have to show for it. How little survives of the wordiest authors! Of all they said or did in their lifetime, a few glittering words only! His Essays found some favourers, as they appeared separately. They shuffled their way in the crowd well enough singly: how they will read, now they are brought together, is a question for the publishers, who have thus ventured to draw out into one piece his "weaved-up follies."

PHIL-ELIA.

THE END OF ESSAYS AND SKETCHES

