CHANNING ON SLAVERY.*

It is a glorious joy to see a great mind grappling with a great question. There is no sublimity like that of genius putting forth its power for the deliverance of humanity. Months of our present existence would be a cheap purchase, could they be given in exchange, for having lived the day when Milton's *Defensio* was published. Such gladness is to the soul what the Vatican Apollo is to the sense; and so cognate are the emotions, that the one suggests, and is a beautiful type or symbol of the other. Thankful were we to hear that the dart of Channing was levelled at the Python of slavery. That it has slain the dragon is much more than we dare to prognosticate. The modern world has bred serpents less vulnerable than those of antiquity, even to the dart of a deity. But it is aimed at the heart; and fitting was it that the monster-mischief of America should be encountered by the master mind of America.

Justice will scarcely be done in this country to the courage which this publication implies in its author. The time is long gone by, and few remember it, when the merchants of Liverpool attempted to jostle Clarkson into the sea. Generally, the cause of abolition was popular; and especially after the planters provoked the Methodists by interfering with the missionaries. We can have no notion of the feeling of the Americans on this subject; and, perhaps, a full conception of it is only to be attained by actual observation during the recent period of excitement. We have no parallel to their fury, unless it be in that of Orangemen and Catholics. But the Orangemen are dunghill compared with the slavers. Nor is there such a re-action as in Ireland against oppression. The Catholics are competent to their own defence; the poor negroes are *hors de combât;* they have only philanthropy in their favour. Moreover they, and all their friends, are continually endangered by the impotent fanaticism of philanthropy. Dr. Channing deems it necessary to disclaim the Abolitionists, and deprecate their proceedings. The cowardice of the quiet people, whose unprincipled pusillanimity is so predominant a power in all wealthy and commercial states, is opposed even to any discussion of the subject. The cocks of the south have crowed over the cravens of the north until they have terrified them into their service, and made them an

* Slavery, by W. E. Channing. London: Hunter; reprinted from the Boston (U. S.) edition.

auxiliary police for suppressing even the mention of emancipation. "The word massacre," says Dr. Channing, "has resounded through the land, striking terror into strong as well as tender hearts, and awakening indignation against whatever may seem to threaten such a consummation. The consequence is, that not a few dread all discussion of the subject, and if not reconciled to the continuance of slavery, at least believe that they have no duty to perform, no testimony to bear, no influence to exert, no sentiments to cherish and spread, in relation to this evil. What is still worse, opinions either favouring or extenuating it are heard with little or no disapprobation. Concessions are made to it which would once have shocked the community; whilst to assail it is pronounced unwise and perilous. No stronger reason for a calm exposition of its true character can be given than this very state of the public mind." (p. 3.) True; to such a man as Dr. Channing; but the bearing of the argument would have been the other way to any one not gifted with a considerable portion of moral intrepidity.

Equally characteristic with the fact of his engaging in the discussion at the present moment, is the mode in which the author has treated it. And this, too, is likely not to be appreciated. He goes into it mainly, or rather exclusively, as a moral question. His appeal is made to principle—broad and abstract principle. There is no getting up of pathetic or horrible stories. There are no carefully-worked calculations, with the results in dollars and cents, of the balance between slavery and emancipation. The pamphlet is as unlike as possible to the report of a speech on the same subject in our House of Commons or in their Hall of Congress. It proceeds on the assumption of there being other realities in the world besides pounds, shillings, and pence; and more facts connected with human happiness than are to be found in Macculloch's Dictionary of Commerce and Manufactures. This assumption is heresy on both sides of the Atlantic; and scarcely finds more favour with many Reformers than with Conservatives. They reckon argument of this description as bad as poetry, in which they never could see any use. To them, it savours of religion, taste, feeling, sentiment, Saint Simonianism, and all such vanities. These worshippers in the outer court of the Utilitarian temple have so blocked up the portal as to make some folks believe, and Dr. Channing himself amongst them, in the non-existence of any inner sanctuary. He should have seen that this pretended philosophy was only the pragmatical repetition of an English vulgarism; which is also an Americanism, and likely to remain so. Be that as it may, we rejoice in his having discussed the great question of slavery in reference to universal and enduring principles, rather than

in connexion with local and temporary circumstances. He has written for the world. And as we have now no slaves of our own, and can afford to make a virtue of condemning the Virginians and Carolinians, his generality will be the less objectionable.

It is but fair, however, to give notice to this class of readers, and to many who profess great admiration of Dr. Channing, that they may, perhaps, find themselves taken in for some consequences which they did not anticipate. The admission of a general principle is so often attended with inconvenience to persons who are disinclined to "go all lengths," that their backwardness to commit themselves is not at all surprising. Let them be cautious, therefore; even amid all their virtuous indignation against transatlantic slaveholders. The principle, the argument, or the rebuke, may rebound, and strike hard upon something nearer home. Let them still keep in reserve some objection to the application of "abstract theory" to our peculiar circumstances which could not have been contemplated by the writer, and with which, doubtless, he can be but very imperfectly acquainted.

The plan and argument of the author are sketched by himself in the following outline:

1. I shall show that man cannot be justly held and used as Property.
2. I shall show that man has sacred and infallible rights, of which slavery is the infraction.
3. I shall offer some explanations to prevent misapplication of these principles.
4. I shall unfold the evils of slavery.
5. I shall consider the argument which the Scriptures are thought to furnish in favor of slavery.
6. I shall offer some remarks on the means of removing it.
7. I shall offer some remarks on abolitionism.
8. I shall conclude with a few reflections on the duties belonging to the times.

It is evident from this outline that the author's argument is founded on the moral sense theory of morals, and not on the utilitarian. He would else have commenced with his fourth section, which does in fact include those which precede. Were the question of slavery still a practical one in this country, we should not be much disposed to pause at this circumstance in our review of the work before us. We are allowed to do so by the happy circumstance that our interest in it is incidental rather than direct. The formation of a correct moral theory is, with us, even more important than the question of negro slavery. The latter has become only a speculation; and the former is the most important of all speculations. Dr. Channing has embarrassed his argument, and enfeebled it by his

theory. The first section is entitled "property." Its object is to show that the claim of property in man is inconsistent with the innate and instinctive idea of justice. "The consciousness of indestructible right is a part of our moral being. The consciousness of our humanity involves the persuasion, that we cannot be owned as a tree or a brute." The developement of the argument amounts to little more than repetition of the above assertion in different words. It runs thus:—1, if one man may be held as property, then every man may be so held; 2, a man cannot be held as property because he has rights; 3, nor can he, because of the essential equality of men; 4, the nature of property precludes man being so held; 5, this principle is recognised by the universal indignation excited towards a man who makes another his slave; 6, property supposes obligation in the slave; and, 7, man is a rational, moral, immortal being, and therefore cannot be property. To our minds, these allegations are neutralized by the simple question, *why not, if it be for his good?* It is certainly *conceivable* that slavery may be the best training for some moral beings, and well purchased, as many other things are, by the sacrifice of some portion of their "essential equality," in which case the "obligation" would follow of course; the indignation would be misplaced, and the notion of property would be properly extended. We say, it is conceivable; not that it is so; that must be decided by argument. But then, in such a discussion, it is plain that the combatants join issue on the question of expediency, and conduct their controversy on the principles of utilitarianism; and to this point, Dr. Channing, in spite of himself, is obliged to come at last. The second section treats of "rights." It only amplifies the last particular of the preceding section. The illustration is eloquent, but it helps not on the argument. In fact the whole peculiarity of the writer's theory is substantially given up in the following paragraph.

"In this discussion, I have used the phrase, Public or General Good, in its common acceptation, as signifying the safety and prosperity of a state. Why can it not be used in a larger sense? Why can it not be made to comprehend inward and moral, as well as outward good? And why cannot the former be understood to be incomparably the most important element of the public weal? Then, indeed, I should assent to the proposition, that the General Good is the supreme law. So construed, it would support the great truths which I have maintained. It would condemn the infliction of wrong on the humblest individual, as a national calamity. It would plead with us to extend to every individual the means of improving his character and lot."—p. 26.

The hypothetical concession here made would be promptly accepted by every utilitarian who has any claims to the cha-

racter of a moral philosopher. The combination of "inward and moral" with "outward good" is contended for by the best expositors of the system; and, indeed, without such comprehension it would be utterly indefensible.

The third chapter is entitled "Explanations," and is chiefly a warning against inferring the wickedness of slave-owners from the wickedness of slavery. The author inculcates that "guilt is to be measured, not by the outward act, but by unfaithfulness to conscience; and that the consciences of men are often darkened by education, and other inauspicious influences." On this principle, Saul the persecutor was perfectly innocent, and when he became Paul the Apostle, grievously erred in describing himself as having been "the chief of sinners." The fallibility of the moral sense, and its liability to "violate many important precepts," are sore deductions from its worth. If it can only become a safe guidance when directed by the calculations of utility, it may well be dispensed with altogether. But let it not be imagined that the suggestion just quoted is made in any spirit of compromise with oppression. The chapter ends with a passage not surpassed in its kind since the Hebrew prophets of old poured forth the awful denunciations of the divine oracle, and commanded earth to hear the word of the Lord.

"There is however, there must be, in slave holding communities a large class which cannot be too severely condemned. There are many we fear very many, who hold their fellow-creatures in bondage, from selfish, base motives. They hold the slave for gain, whether justly or unjustly they neither ask nor care. They cling to him as property, and have no faith in the principles which will diminish a man's wealth. They hold him, not for his own good or the safety of the state, but with precisely the same views with which they hold a laboring horse, that is, for the profit which they wring from him. They will not hear a word of his wrongs; for, wronged or not, they will not let him go. He is their property, and they mean not to be poor for righteousness' sake. Such a class there undoubtedly is among slave-holders; how large, their own consciences must determine. We are sure of it; for under such circumstances human nature will and must come to this mournful result. Now, to men of this spirit, the explanations we have made do in no degree apply. Such men ought to tremble before the rebukes of outraged humanity and indignant virtue. Slavery, upheld for gain, is a great crime. He, who has nothing to urge against emancipation, but that it will make him poorer, is bound to Immediate Emancipation. He has no excuse for wresting from his brethren their rights. The plea of benefit to the slave and the state avails him nothing. He extorts by the lash, that labor to which he has no claim, through a base selfishness. Every morsel of food thus forced from the injured, ought to be bitterer than gall. His gold is cankered. The sweat of the slave taints the luxuries for which it streams. Better were it for the selfish wrong-doer of whom I speak, to live as the slave, to clothe

himself in the slave's raiment, to eat the slave's coarse food, ttill his fields with his own hands, than to pamper himself by day, and pillow his head on down at night, at the cost of a wantonly injured fellow-creature. No fellow creature can be so injured without taking terrible vengeance. He is terribly avenged even now. The blight which falls on the soul of the wrong doer, the desolation of his moral nature, is a more terrible calamity than he inflicts. In deadening his moral feeling, he dies to the proper happiness of a man. In hardening his heart against his fellow-creatures, he sears it to all true joy. In shutting his ear against the voice of justice, he shuts out all the harmonies of the universe, and turns the voice of God within him into rebuke. He may prosper, indeed, and hold faster the slave by whom he prospers; but he rivets heavier and more ignominious chains on his own soul than he lays on others. No punishment is so terrible as prosperous guilt. No fiend, exhausting on us all his power of torture, is so terrible as an oppressed fellow-creature. The cry of the oppressed, unheard on earth, is heard in heaven. God is just, and if justice reign, then the unjust must terribly suffer. Then no being can profit by evil doing. Then all the laws of the universe are ordinances against guilt. Then every enjoyment, gained by wrong doing, will be turned into a curse. No laws of nature are so irrepealable as that law which binds guilt and misery. God is just. Then all the defences, which the oppressor rears against the consequences of wrong doing, are vain, as vain as would be his striving to arrest by his single arm the ocean or whirlwind. He may disarm the slave. Can he disarm that slave's Creator? He can crush the spirit of insurrection in a fellow-creature. Can he crush the awful spirit of justice and retribution in the Almighty? He can still the murmur of discontent in his victim. Can he silence that voice which speaks in thunder, and is to break the sleep of the grave? Can he always still the reproving, avenging voice in his own breast?

"I know it will be said, 'You would make us poor.' Be poor, then, and thank God for your honest poverty. Better be poor than unjust. Better beg than steal. Better live in an alms-house, better die, than trample on a fellow-creature and reduce him to a brute, for selfish gratification. What! Have we yet to learn, that it 'profits us nothing to gain the whole world, and lose our souls?'"—p. 34-36.

In the fourth chapter we come to the very pith and marrow of the subject. "The Evils of Slavery" are set forth in a manner, and with a power to bring conviction home to all minds, and rouse the feeling of all hearts, whatever may be the religious principles or moral theory of the individual. They are classed under the heads of Moral Influence, Intellectual Influence, Domestic Influences, Cruelty, and the effect upon the slave-holder. The alleged advantages of slavery are then discussed,—the supposed lightness of his labour,—freedom from care,—opportunities for enjoyment or instruction, &c. The whole of this chapter is alike logical and eloquent. It demonstrates what slavery *must be*, from its own nature and the nature of man. There are no statements of fact, no reports, authenticated or unauthenticated, to which exception

might be taken. The inferences are deduced from the broadest and most undeniable premises. Every thing is above the reach of cavil. No refuge is left for sophistry; no room for evasion. If the negro, and the negro's master, be men, then the argument holds with links of adamant. The composition is an extraordinary display of dignity and intensity. It is like the voice of an incarnate archangel come to judgment, with all the clearness of a spiritual intelligence, and all the emotion of humanity.

We cannot close this chapter without extracting the rebuke of those who plead the gaiety of the slave as an apology for slavery.

"But still we are told the slave is gay. He is not as wretched as our theories teach. After his toil, he sings, he dances, he gives no signs of an exhausted frame or gloomy spirit. The slave happy! Why, then, contend for Rights? Why follow with beating hearts the struggles of the patriot for freedom? Why canonize the martyr to freedom? The slave happy! Then happiness is to be found in giving up the distinctive attributes of a man; in darkening intellect and conscience; in quenching generous sentiments; in servility of spirit; in living under a whip; in having neither property nor rights; in holding wife and child at another's pleasure; in toiling without hope; in living without an end! The slave, indeed, has his pleasures. His animal nature survives the injury to his rational and moral powers; and every animal has its enjoyments. The kindness of Providence allows no human being to be wholly divorced from good. The lamb frolics; the dog leaps for joy; the bird fills the air with cheerful harmony; and the slave spends his holiday in laughter and the dance. Thanks to Him who never leaves himself without witness; who cheers even the desert with spots of verdure; and opens a fountain of joy in the most withered heart! It is not possible, however, to contemplate the occasional gaiety of the slave without some mixture of painful thought. He is gay, because he has not learned to think; because he is too fallen to feel his wrongs; because he wants just self-respect. We are grieved by the gaiety of the insane. There is a sadness in the gaiety of him, whose lightness of heart would be turned to bitterness and indignation, were one ray of light to awaken in him the spirit of a man.

"That there are those among the free, who are more wretched than slaves, is undoubtedly true; just as there is incomparably greater misery among men than among brutes. The brute never knew the agony of a human spirit torn by remorse or wounded in its love. But would we cease to be human, because our capacity for suffering increases with the elevation of our nature? All blessings may be perverted, and the greatest perverted most. Were we to visit a slave-country, undoubtedly the most miserable human beings would be found among the free; for among them the passions have wider sweep, and the power they possess may be used to their own ruin. Liberty is not a necessity of happiness. It is only a means of good. It is a trust which may be abused. Are all such trusts to be cast away? Are they not the greatest gifts of Heaven?"—pp. 57, 58.

The next chapter, on the argument for slavery from the Scriptures, is not very satisfactorily executed. The writer seems embarrassed, either by his own views of Scripture morality, or by his desire not to outrage those of others, incidentally and unnecessarily. We know not how else to account for the feebleness with which an argument is treated, which is said to produce considerable impression. "The authority of Scripture is more successfully used than anything else to reconcile good minds to slavery." The following seems to us but a poor mode of getting over, if it does get over, the difficulty.

"Slavery, in the age of the Apostle, had so penetrated society, was so intimately interwoven with it, and the materials of servile war were so abundant, that a religion, preaching freedom to its victims, would have shaken the social fabric to its foundation, and would have armed against itself the whole power of the State. Of consequence Paul did not assail it. He satisfied himself with spreading principles, which however slowly, could not but work its destruction. He commanded Philemon to receive his fugitive slave, Onesimus, "not as a slave, but above a slave, as a brother beloved;" and he commanded masters to give to their slaves that which was '*just and equal*;' thus asserting for the slave the rights of a Christian and a Man; and how, in his circumstances, he could have done more for the subversion of slavery, I do not see."—pp. 65, 66.

Begging his pardon, Dr. Channing *does* see how the apostle could have done more; he sees it in his own conduct. Slavery has "penetrated society" in America; the "materials of servile war" are abundant there at the present moment; and yet Dr. Channing assails slavery in a mode for which there is no precedent in the writings of St. Paul. He does so, although it is part of his argument that modern negro slavery, with all its mischiefs, is but a light thing in comparison with the atrocities of slavery as it existed in the ancient world. Another inconsistency is, that while the Apostle's abhorrence of slavery is assumed, from the general philanthropy of his character, and the consequent fineness of his moral sense, he is represented as acting on the morality of expediency, and that, moreover, an expediency of a low and external description, nay, on a fallacious view and gross miscalculation. For Christianity *did* arm "against itself the whole power of the state" on other grounds; and did resist that power, and triumph over it. If a dulled perception of the vice of slavery, arising from familiarity with it as a general and lasting condition of humanity, be not the true solution of the fact, that it was not directly prohibited by the Apostles, we confess we know not where to find one, and must leave the Scripturalists to settle the difficulty as best they can. Dr. Channing seems rather in haste to escape from this portion of the sub-

ject, and after glancing at polygamy, general tenor, and an *argumentum ad homines* on political freedom, he bolts with a quotation from Wayland's Elements of Moral Science, which is to much the same effect as his own previous observations.

Chapter vi. is on the "Means of Removing Slavery." It consists of various suggestions for a gradual and careful change in the condition of the negroes, to be realized by the governments and inhabitants of the slave states, all interference with whom is most earnestly deprecated. The great experiment, now auspiciously proceeding in the West Indies, cannot but furnish all honest abolitionists amongst the American slaveholders with many important hints; while the fact of that experiment should impress the whole body with the necessity which it creates for their not long delaying some analogous measures. The two remaining chapters relate to the indiscretions of the zealous abolitionists, and the temper in which it becomes the free States to meet the insulting and menacing language of the fiery aristocrats of the South. The swaggering tone of these deluded men, while it exposes them to the derision and scorn of the world, seems to have cowed the New Englanders in an extraordinary degree. The slavers bully with pistol in hand, and call their ruffianism "Chivalry." Alack for republicanism! And there are those in the northern States who would suppress by law all discussion of slavery, and deliver over to the tender mercies of Virginia such of their own free citizens as "might be claimed as instigators of insurrection." Loud laugh the despots and demons of the Holy Alliance at such rumours; and well they may.

And now a word or two to thousands of our countrymen who will laud this book to the skies, which is not higher than it deserves; and folding their arms on their breasts, bless God that they are not as these Americans. We ask them how it is, if slavery be so foul an injustice, that not more than one human being out of thirty in Great Britain has any political existence? At most, our political being amounts only to an inconsiderable fraction of the appointment of a representative, who, when appointed, possesses, numerically, one-six-hundred-and-fiftieth of one-third of the legislative power. This power of appointment is so exercised as to be continually subjected to influence and restraint. Its return is only provided for once in seven years, unless there be some purpose to be answered by some portion of the ruling authority. Such is our freedom. And for one that has it, there are nine-and-twenty who are destitute; and whose condition, so far as principle is concerned, comes under the description of slavery. It may be a very light and gentle slavery; it may be a very

beneficent and happy slavery; it may be a very necessary slavery; it may deserve all the beautiful things that have ever been said in laudation of negro bondage; but this has nothing to do with a question of principle. It is slavery. The non-represented are ruled by the represented. And that omnipotence of Parliament which commands their labour, their wealth, and their lives, is to them as irresponsible a power (in principle though not in fact) as that of the slave-owner to his negroes, who may petition, or who may rebel, but who have no recognized portion of the management to which they submit.

"To deny the right of a human being to himself, to his own limbs and faculties, to his energy of body and mind, is an absurdity too gross to be confuted by any thing but a simple statement. Yet this absurdity is involved in the idea of his belonging to another." (p. 12.) True; and is it not also involved in the social arrangements by which the labourer is born into the world with his limbs and muscles mortgaged, so that only perhaps about the hundredth part of what his toil produces is ever consumed by himself, or by those on whom he bestows it voluntarily? Born to toil for tithes, and taxes, and the interest of capital, and the support of the endowed unearning, what is the real amount of their right in themselves? We put it to Mr. Buxton's conscience. We ask the Anti-slavery society. We demand it of the professed religionists of all denominations; of the patriots of all grades; of the hereditary lords of land and money. We "pause for a reply;" and may wait long enough.

Dr. Channing says, that "Nature's seal is affixed to no instrument, by which property in a single human being is conveyed." Did the Doctor never see a marriage contract? What is the condition of woman, but that she *is* property, while she cannot possess property? When that bond has been, as it often must be, unwarily sealed, what but slavery is the condition of dependence and degradation from which nothing can deliver except the foul price of one species of crime to which there is thus affixed a deceptive premium. Yet our divines, and under their direction our legislators, will claim for the absolute indissolubility of this indenture, the seal not merely of Nature but of Nature's God. "What! own a spiritual being, a being made to know and adore God, and who is to outlive the sun and stars! What! chain to our lowest uses a being made for truth and virtue! Convert into a brute instrument that intelligent nature on which the Idea of Duty has dawned and which is a nobler type of God than all outward creation! Every thing else may be owned in the universe; but a moral rational being cannot be property. Suns and stars may be owned, but not the lowest spirit." No, certainly not; unless it be a woman's. But then, as our religious casuists would say,

she is not a "single" being,* but merged in the duplicity of her husband's civil (or uncivil) identity. She is sworn to love, honour, and obey till death. And if the first two become imposssible, what can be more reasonable than making up the deficiency by a double allowance of the last? Who does not remember Mrs. Siddons's humble petition to her idle husband, that he would bequeath her a fraction of the earnings of her own magnificent talent? In this case, as in that of the negro, no doubt there is reaction and retribution. That little mends the matter. Nor should we have adverted to any of these topics now, but that we wish to warn the good people of England what perilous things principles are, and to show what strange thoughts sometimes come into the head amid the loud chorus sings of Justice and Freedom, Equality and Christianity.

F.

THE SONGS OF SCOTLAND.

BY ROBERT NICOLL.

"The songs that lulled me on the breast
To sleep away the noon—
Sing on! sing on! I love them best!"

SCOTLAND, of all countries, ought to be proud of her popular song—of those emanations of the poetical spirit, which addressing themselves not to conventional or passing feelings, but to the fundamental and everlasting emotions of the human soul, thrill it by their woe or cheer it by their mirth, cover the cheek with tears or brighten the brow with smiles. All nations have their popular music and poetry; words and sounds, which by some strange and hidden sympathies of the immaterial part of man, fill his heart with gladness by their joy, or plunge him into grief by the power of their plaintive melancholy. But though all nations possess this popular vehicle of expressing the sentiments of the universal mind, no man who is acquainted with the national—the peculiarly national—music and poetry of Scotland, will feel induced to deny, that they stand preeminent above those of other countries for simple, moving pathos, exquisite and appropriate imagery, plaintive melancholy, and, under other circumstances and the dominion of other feelings, for racy and natural humour. Fletcher of Saltoun, is reported to have said, "Give me the making of a nation's songs, and I will let who pleases make its laws." The patriot spoke in the fulness of his knowledge of the land for which he lived and died; for assuredly in no other country on the face of the earth, not even in Switzerland, is song so efficient an ally to a cause as in our own—in no other does it

* See the manifesto of the Presbyterian Association for a choice specimen of this species of moral logic. Dame Howley, it is contended, directed that her almswomen should all know Bowles's Catechism, for the purpose, not of ascertaining how soundly they believed, but of showing how correctly they could read.

seem to have the same effect. Scotsmen, by hearing the popular songs of their native land repeated from the first dawn of intellect onwards through life—by hearing them sung by the lips most loved on earth—by entwining them gradually with all a man's heart loves the best, come at length to regard them in something like the light of unwritten laws—laws not enacted by God or man—but laws so embued with truth, love, and happiness, so hallowed by remembrance—by patriotism—by time—by all, in short, that can make them venerable and dear, as to carry with them a vague and uncertain but powerful authority. And this is the reason why Robert Burns is sainted by and enshrined in the hearts of his countrymen—why the man whom the flimsy and heartless and headless aristocracy made a "gauger," is greater than kings and conquerors—mightier than priests and peers. Many a glorious old song and ballad did Scotland possess before his day—many a lilt sung in days of old by inspired lips, and carried down the stream of time, written not on the work of men's hands, but on human hearts; but, he, rising like the bright and blessed morning star, came forth of the peasant's cot, a true and clear-souled man; and relying on the burning soul of love and goodness, which Omnipotence had placed within him, and on the intense sympathy which he bore to all created things, more especially the poor and despised of his native land, took the old and hallowed music which had been sung on the banks and braes, amid the hills and glens, and by the lochs and streams of his land for centuries, and to that music he gave words such as poet never before uttered—words tending not to the amusement merely of the great and noble, but to the expression of the noblest sentiments which mortal pen ever wrote—which mortal soul ever conceived; and these sentiments he addressed to those who needed instruction—to the poor and humble! Who dares to say that Burns was not a teacher—a man sent—a prophet according to the wants of his time? Who dares to say that every song that ever poet sung in truth and nature, is not a teacher? Let the scorner go to the lowly cottage hamlets of this land of ours, where he whose hand traces these lines was nursed—for hamlets, and lowly and happy ones too, are even yet, despite the age's mammon-worship, and despite a stronger force—the necessity of a change in our social relations—scattered through the length and breadth of the land—and let him listen there to the maiden, singing in her loveliness, and look how her hearers, from the hoary-headed man, whose foot is sinking into the grave, to the young child, whose senses are entranced by the sound even before it can comprehend the sense—sit enraptured by the simple melody, be it "Duncan Grey," "The Land o'the Leal," "The Flowers of the Forest," or "Mary in Heaven," or any other of the thousand as exquisitely beautiful songs of which my

native land can boast. Let him hear, and observe, and note, and then let him confess that Robert Burns, the peasant—the gauger—the man who never "kept his gig"—who was never respectable—who was neither a rich man nor a high born man, nor a gentleman, but simply a MAN—aye, and a glorious, a noble, and a mighty MAN—was, and is, and will be, in right of his supereminent mental power, a teacher greater than ever spoke from pulpit: that Scotland's songs and ballads, whether the names of their authors are known to our moved hearts, or whether they have died from man's memory, leaving a lay of love and joy as their memorial, are just so many instruments of good, uncounted and uncountable. Let him confess that poetry is not an idle thing, the sport of fools and the scorn of men, but a heaven-given gift, which the recipient ought to turn and will turn, if he know the power and glory of his own mission, to the glory of God and the good of man, by making it an instrument for purifying and uplifting the human soul. It has been said, that the names of many of those who in days long past, added another gem to the rich casket of Scottish Song, have passed away from the minds of men,—but what matters that? The noblest part of such men lives, and will live; they have gained the most immortal of all immortalities; they have given birth to an immortal thought! They were poor and lowly men—it might be, unconscious of the jewel in their keeping, yet certainly like George Fox, the first, and free-souled Quaker, not without dreams and visions, and gleams and glimpses of glorious and spiritual things. It may be that they were born, and laboured and struggled and toiled and died, as poor men are wont, but leaving on the lips of the "bonnie lasses" of their strath, a legacy of song to the land that gave them a birth-place and a grave. Was this a life and death to sigh for? Yes! What matters it to such, though no tongue syllable their names—their better part, the soul, lives —lives in song—lives in many a heart and on many a tongue. They share in the work of omnipotence—*they have created!*

To return.—No man who has lived among the peasantry of Scotland, will deny the effects produced on them by their popular songs. During the expedition to Buenos Ayres, a Highland soldier while a prisoner in the hands of the Spaniards, having formed an attachment to a woman of the country, and charmed by the easy life which the tropical fertility of the soil enabled the inhabitants to lead, had resolved to remain and settle in South America. When he imparted this resolution to his comrade, the latter did not argue with him, but leading him to his tent, he placed him by his side and sung him "Lochaber no more." The spell was on him. The tears came into his eyes, and wrapping his plaid around him he murmured, "Lochaber nae mair!—I maun gang back—Na!" The songs of his childhood were ringing in his ears, and he left that land of

ease and plenty for the naked rocks and sterile valleys of Badenoch, where, at the close of a life of toil and hardship, he might lay his head in his mother's grave. He who writes once travelled a road in Perthshire, in company with an old, ignorant, very ignorant man, a common beggar. Unused to sympathy, when he found himself sympathised with, his heart was opened, and he told something of his past life. From his earliest years he had been an outcast, one of that class who form the hewers of wood and drawers of water, in our great manufacturing towns. Instruction of any sort, save in evil-doing, he had never received, he was one of those who are kept in ignorance and crushed and driven into vice, and then punished for that very ignorance and vice. At the commencement of the war he enlisted for a soldier, and was ultimately sent to Portugal. His comrade happened to be a Scotsman who was well acquainted with the poetical literature of his country, and this poor and ignorant soldier felt all that was good in him so attracted by the sound and the sentiment when he could understand it of these songs, that he learned many of them by heart. Much evil he saw and committed, and much hardship, heart-hardening and grievous hardship, did he endure in the course of that long and bloody war; but at length it approached its close and the British Army was advancing on France. One day while encamped, this soldier in strolling in the neighbourhood of the camp, came suddenly on a small house embosomed among trees. It happened to be tenanted solely by a woman, and thoughts of hell, of such scenes as make the heart shudder, and the hand clench, and the lips curse, even in the name of God, war and warriors, came thronging into this ignorant and debased man's mind; but even in that hour of projected sin, a remembrance came faintly at first, but gradually stronger and stronger of the scenes, the peace and the innocence, described in the songs he had learned, and the beauty and manliness and goodness pictured in them, seemed, in his own words, to take a divine shape and lead him away from iniquity. And that old and miserable man wept while he remembered how Scotland's songs had been instrumental in keeping a damning stain from his darkened but still immortal soul. The old belief that guardian spirits ever hovered round the paths of men, covered with the misty mantle of superstition a mighty truth, for every beautiful and pure and good thought which the heart holds, is an angel of mercy, purifying and guarding the soul.

If it be asked why the Songs of Scotland are thus more beautiful than those of other lands, and why they carry with them a greater influence? the answer is easy. Those who wrote them, were not writing for a caste, but for a people—they were addressing themselves to a universal mind—they were throwing the robe of poetry over joys and sorrows which they had themselves shared—they were addressing a whole

people in language which all understood. Conventionalities were nothing to them. They hallowed the loves of the village maiden—asserted the inherent dignity of man's nature, whether the clay tabernacle was clothed in silk or woollen, and blessed the poor man's heart by exalting his affections. Had the song-singers of Scotland not been poor men singing for poor men—had they bowed their knee in lordly halls, and sung for and of the few instead of the many, Scotland had had no popular national song; but let us be thankful that her song-singers were, for the most part, men born under stern and truth-telling influences, who had to struggle their hour with bold heart and manful hand, until it pleased "The Master" to call them. It is a heart-breaking thing to watch the struggles of genius, lowly of lot, and lofty of soul, caged like the bird, and like it beating the bars in bitterness, while longing to soar away into the light and the sunshine of heaven; but nevertheless, it may be asserted, that there never was a truly lofty intellect nurtured, unless it had to struggle even as the swimmer for life. Before the spirit can be cleared from the earth's impurities, it must be made to feel its nothingness, and to cling only to that which is pure and noble. Pain and want must be smiled over, and while love and hope rejoice in the heart, it must learn to contemn life's littlenesses. Something of the spirit of him who trampled on the pride of Plato must live in the soul. The meaner parts of human nature must die, but the affections must be nursed and cherished. Because they led hard and *renouncing* lives, the songsters of Scotland sung as never men did. They were pure, free-minded men, and their songs have become their country's best inheritance. Gold is but a poor legacy in comparison with an immortal thought. The one is human, worthless, the other divine, invaluable. But it is not by their songs merely that Robert Burns and his brethren, known and unknown, have made their country and the world better. The fact that such men were of the people ennobles our very nature. Who dare mock me, lowly as I am—for whose mockery shall I care when I know that I have "titles manifold," that Burns was a man even such as I, with hard hands and a peasant's heart and home? These memories are my inheritance. Aye, and this feeling is spreading, and that wider and wider every day. Many who aforetime would have worshipped wealth, bow to mind, and the soul that rejoiced once in its ingots, looks upward and onward, saying, "I have dreamed!—Why should I have placed my soul in a coffer, while this glorious world and that sky, and these stars, and suns, and systems, and the poets' songs, and good men's memories were my inheritance—my charter of manhood and freedom?" The dry bones are stirring. The poet's song, and the sage's musing, are turning souls from world-worship to that nobler and better way which

makes not riches, nor titles, nor gauds, nor vanities, but MEN. To such be it said :—

"May the eagles flight ever be thine
Onward and upward true to the line!"

"The Songs of Scotland!" with these words I began, and with these I shall end. Happy the land which possesses such a lever in the work of good. Is it right and proper that men should be taught self-respect; that they should be taught to honour the dignity of man, and to contemn all other dignities? Has not Burns written, "A man's a man for a' that?" Is it right that men should worship the affections? Have not Scotland's songs hallowed them? And this earth of ours which the finger of GOD made, is it not more beautiful since poetry shed its sunshine over it? Will that land ever be without freemen—without martyrs if the cause call for them—in the mouths of whose people "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled" hath passed into a household word—or will it ever be without goodness while "The Cotter's Saturday night" is graven on the universal heart? Never! and while it is remembered that *He* who wrote these was a ploughman—one of the abused multitude—will nobleness of spirit ever leave our native land?

"Bear we not written on our hearts
The name of Robert Burns?"

Bring the pulpit and the press, bring lordly influence and priestly power, bring every force that will and ability can muster, to bear on the liberty—the *nobility*—of the people of Scotland, and her popular song is shield enough against all. Kill and oppress and keep in ignorance; but the popular song lies deep in the heart, a seed from which shall spring liberty. So it is in Poland; "I fear not for my country," said a Polish exile, "for though its children be exiled to Russia's deserts, and though the Russian nurses them in ignorance, I know that the seed is sown. I saw them kneel on the last spot of Polish earth and *I heard them sing their country's songs.*" Ebenezer Elliott, and Mary Howitt, and Barry Cornwall, why wait ye? ye are strong of spirit and free of soul. Let your task be to give to England a body of national song. Hallow her homes and her people—her pleasant festivals and her village customs—sanctify her affections—her freedom—her worth. Let your words be plain and simple, fitted for the mouths of artisans and "mechanical people," and you will do a deed which angels will rejoice to look on. The Authors of the "Corn Law Rhymes," of "The Ranter," of "Tibbie Inglis," and "English Songs" have the power—aye, and the *will* (which would make the power were it wanting), to give to England what Scotland already possesses in her national songs.

CORN LAWS.

What shall bread-tax yet for thee,
Palaced pauper?

ELLIOTT.

THE *landlords* of this country are the *tenants* of the community. The land is *not* "their own." It is *legally* the king's, and *in fact* the people's. For what is the king but the principal "hired servant" of the people? About a century and a-half ago they "gloriously" dismissed this servant; saying, "we will not have this man to reign over us." There can be nothing more unconstitutional than regal tyranny in England! This doctrine of the land not being the absolute property of the landlords of this country, is no chimera; common sense declares it; Blackstone and legal writers confirm it; Locke and constitutional writers demonstrate it. An acre of atmosphere cannot be inclosed, or a part of ocean dammed for the sole use and benefit of a caste; then why should a portion of the "fair face of nature?" Is it because William the Norman conquered, and Henry, the "Defender of the Faith," robbed, that the community has to renounce its natural and indefeasible right? No:—"the earth is the Lord's," and the common inheritance of his creatures: they cannot "dock the entail!" "The possession of the land," says a writer in the *Oxford Encyclopædia*, "is a *concession* on the part of society,—not a *right*. *The end of this possession is the general good.*" Yes, the *landlords* are the *tenants* of the community, and this is their tenure.

A short time ago, the mean average of the prices of wheat at Hamburgh, Amsterdam, Antwerp, and Stettin, was 28*s*. 1*d*. per quarter; in London the average price, at the same time, was 43*s*. per quarter: that is to say, we paid *our tenants*, occupying *our soil* for *our good*, upwards of thirty per cent. more for their wheat than we could have purchased it for of strangers! And yet our tenants are in great distress; our king has lamented their distress from his throne; our representatives have responded to his lamentation; and those magnates of the land, who represent the hereditary principle, have re-echoed the agricultural moan! Wretched landed interest, ruined under the panoply of protection, impoverished by the bounty of Providence! While the committees of the legislature are examining into the causes of agricultural distress, it may not be utterly disadvantageous to inquire whether it is *just* that the landed interest of this country should be protected by a duty on the importation of foreign corn.

The people and the legislature of this country have practically recognised the injustice of *peculiur disabilities; special immunities* are obviously as unjust. If the Roman Catholics and Dissenters were entitled to relief, the "landed interest" is *not* entitled to protection. This axiomatic, or *primâ facie* view of the case is too frequently disregarded; the "landed interest" of this country are but too frequently spoken of as being invested with the lay privileges of the tribe of Levi, under the Jewish theocracy, as being the "salt of the earth;" and people, *feeling* that bread is the staff of life, have inadvertently imagined that landlords are the prop of the community. The landlords of England do not support the people of England, the people of England support them. Landlords "toil not, neither do they spin." The relationship existing between them and the community we have already described; they are our tenants; but, *mirabile dictu*, we pay *them rent!* Such was not always the case. Lands were held on tenures distinctly recognising the principles we started with. The holders, in consideration of the privilege of holding, had to support the nation and fight for it. They now legislate for it, and leave the expense of supporting and fighting for it to others. The various feodal tenures were gradually thrown off, an act, passed in the interregnum, wiped away the last portion that was found to be inconvenient; and now we behold the landed interest, *par excellence*, of this country, denuded of those obligatory incumbrances, having nothing to do but to pocket a part of the price of our bread, form agricultural associations to pick our pockets, and legislate to make the theft legal. How can we deny the swell-mob protection if we protect these gentlemen? But the interrogatory is impertinent, *we* are not called upon to protect them; we are merely implored to submit our eyes to the sand they are ready to throw in them, while they protect themselves in parliament; the privilege of paying for the process being our exclusive perquisite. The relationship between the farmer and the community is twofold: the farmer grows corn for us, and this is the view kind-hearted persons take of him when they ask would we muzzle the man that groweth the corn. Certainly not. The man who cultivates the soil is a benefactor to the community; he is entitled to his reward. Ungrudgingly would the community give it to him. But the farmer is the *seller* of corn as well as the *grower* of it; and if, when he exhibits twenty-eight shillings' worth of corn for sale, we pull out our purse with forty-two shillings in it, and he snatches the whole, we are ready to cry out "stop thief!" and deny his right to protection.

There is a relationship also between the landlord and the

farmer, which it is highly important to notice. It is a propinquity analogous to that which subsisted between the planter and his slave. The landlord has the power of exacting from the farmer the greatest portion of the proceeds of the sweat of his brow, and the wear and tear of his sinew, that he can possibly give. True, he wields not the lash, but the law is an instrument of torture not less efficient. In discussing the question we have propounded, it is essential that we bear in mind the fact that those

> "Who till, but not in hope, the teeming soil,"

are not benefited by legislative enactments, prohibiting the importation of cheap corn. No—high prices are required that *high rents* may be paid. This is a consideration of paramount importance,—we must occupy a little time in illustrating it. It is obvious that the necessaries of life consumed by the cultivator of the soil, are grown by himself, and therefore it cannot matter what price they may bear in the market; the surplus of his production he sells to buy clothing, &c.; but principally to pay his rent. Now, if prices be high, we may be sure that high rents will be exacted. And as the main articles of subsistence cannot be affected, as far as the farmer is concerned, it is obvious that the high prices produced by "protection," must go into the pockets of the landlords. Facts bear out this argument. Mr. Blamire stated before a Committee of the House of Commons, in the year 1833, that in Cumberland and Westmoreland, rents were 40*s*. per acre for land that would not fetch above 26*s*. or 27*s*. in Hampshire, owing to the frugal habits of the Cumberland farmers. Look at Ireland,—see the swine sent from the potatoe-fed renter to pay the absentee landlord; look at the ryotwary system of India; look at Italy; look wherever there is a landed aristocracy, and you will invariably see the cultivators of the soil, either in a state of servile vassalage, or in a state as toilsome as vassalage, without its privileges. Well did Mr. Oliver say, when examined by the Parliamentary Committee, that the "corn-law is the landlord's matter alone;" and well was it to record on the Lords' Journal of 1815, with reference to the nefarious law of that year, that it was "to compel the consumer to purchase corn dearer at home than it might be imported from abroad." There can be no doubt that high prices to the consumer and high rents to the landlord are the practical results of the "protective" legislative enactments in question. Then, we ask, is it just that we should pay a tax on every morsel of bread we eat, that the poor should be compelled to live on "coarser food," merely that landlords might pocket our money to enable them to "fare" more "sumptuously every day?"

If the agricultural interest, then, as far as principle is con-

cerned, be not entitled to this immunity, let us inquire whether there are any circumstances in existence to which principle must succumb, and on which a claim so intrinsically unjust may be based in consonance with justice.

And first, does agriculture aggrandise or render a nation powerful, that we should foster it at the expense of every other interest? Consult the histories of Phœnicia, Tyre, Carthage, Palmyra, and Rome; inquire why Venice, Genoa, Holland, rose to eminence; why is England all potent, and Poland extinct as a nation? Why did Napoleon sigh for "ships, colonies, and commerce?" Are the germs of our national greatness in the varied carpet of agricultural districts, or deposited in the sublime undulations of Wales and Cornwall? These interrogatories are an answer. The agriculturist must put in a better claim for his privilege.

Are agriculturists placed in a naturally disadvantageous position with reference to the rest of the community? Population is year after year a better customer. Population has increased nine millions in seventy-six years. The produce of the agriculturist is sold in a home market; the foreign grower must pay a freight and other charges for transit of his corn to this country, before it can compete with the home-grown corn, whereas the manufacturer's produce must pay a freight before it reaches the foreign market; the foreigner must pay more for his English made coat and utensils than the British farmer. No, there can be no reason found here, why the labouring mechanic should give twelve hours of toil instead of eight, for his daily bread.

Are there no accidental disadvantages under which the agriculturist has laboured, and in consideration of which, he may justly demand protection against foreign competition? What does corn-law legislation reply to this? The earliest enactments forbade *exportation*. Up to 1670, *importation* was practically free. Why were not the agricultural producers of this country able to compete with foreign growers as well after 1670 as before? Let us glance at the operation of restrictive laws.

	RENTS.	MILLIONS.		POPULATION.	MILLIONS.
1723	England & Wales	7½	1748	England & Wales	6½
1801	- - - -	18	1800	- - - -	9
1815	- - - -	29½	1815	- - - -	11

So that each individual in England and Wales in the first half of the eighteenth century, paid annually about 1*l.* 4*s.* for rent; in 1815, each individual paid about two and a-half times as much.

Sir W. Curtis said, in the House of Commons in 1815, that rent had in all cases doubled—in some trebled. Of forty-nine millions of taxes exacted during the reign of William III.

the land-tax furnished 19,174,000*l.*, or about one million and a-half per annum. The land-tax of 1832, with a rental increased fourfold, was about one million and a-half. Redemption would account but for a small fraction of this discrepancy. In 1828, Spain paid nearly one million and a-half in land-tax. In France the *foncière* or land-tax is one-fourth the revenue. Prussia has a tax on rent of twenty-five per cent. Take these facts into consideration, then look at the *animus* of the landlords of this country—see them demanding a bounty on the exportation of their corn in 1804, with the most indubitable evidence of a deficient approaching harvest. See them in seventy two years inclosing six millions of acres. Contemplate the improvements which have taken place in the culture of the soil—described by one writer as equal to the steam engine being added to machinery. Rotation of crops, bone manure, improved draining. These improvements, as well as improvements in agricultural implements, being adopted here to a greater extent than in all the world beside. Take into account the factitious value given to land by the enactments of 1815 and 1822. The former inducing the farmers to expect 80*s.* per quarter for their wheat, and the latter 70*s.* Weigh all these facts thus crowded together, and then put the question to conscience, whether the landed interest of this country is justly entitled to a protective duty on the importation of foreign corn.

Are we more an agricultural than a manufacturing people, that we must pay more than other people for our bread, and thus pervert the great maxim of Bentham, "the greatest good of the greatest number?" No.—For in 1831, we had 761,348 agricultural families, and 2,000,000 of families that were not agricultural. In Italy, agriculturists are to others as 100 to 31. In France, as 100 to 50. While in England, agriculturists are but 28 out of 128. Why the 100 should be robbed for the benefit of the 28, certainly does not yet appear.

Whither shall we turn for a "good and sufficient" reason for high rents being exacted, by the operation of restrictive laws on the importation of corn? Have manufacturers been obtaining inordinate profits, and have their high wages enabled their labourers to pay dearly for their food? Let this fact answer. In 1795, the price for weaving a piece of 6-4 cambric, was 33*s.* 3*d.*; in 1815, it was 14*s.*; in 1833, 5*s.* 6*d.* Did the price of wheat experience a corresponding reduction? It is instructive to examine: in 1794, it was 51*s.* 8*d.* per quarter; in 1814, it was 73*s.* 11*d.* per quarter; in 1833, it was 52*s.* 11*d.* per quarter. From 1800 to 1819, the price averaged in France 42*s.* 10*d.* per quarter. In England, during the same period, it averaged 87*s.* 8*d.* per quarter. And in 1834, the price of wheat was 72° per cent. dearer in London

than in Paris. Surely, as yet we have evolved no cause for the protection of the landed interest at the expense of the aggregate interest of the commonwealth.

But if no adequate reason appears for the impoverishment of the bulk of the community, in order to aggrandize the landlords, it is easy to trace the maleficent operation of "corn-laws" in the affairs of commerce. Mr. W. R. Grey stated before a Parliamentary Committee, that on account of cheap food in Austria, Hungary, Naples, Switzerland, and in the north of Germany, cotton mills were being erected; that our customers would become our competitors. What is the feeling of all corn-exporting countries towards England at this moment? If we wade through the evidence adduced before the last Parliamentary Committee on shipping and commerce; or if we ask Dr. Bowring, we shall find that they have an enmity against us for excluding their grain, and it will be strange if they do not adopt the *lex talionis* with regard to our manufactures.

It may be contended that we cannot compete with foreigners in our own corn market. Why not?—They would have to pay expenses amounting to from 6*s*. to 12*s*. per quarter on their corn before it was put up for sale. Is not that sum a sufficient protection for the home grower?—True, that in some countries the labourers are the mere serfs of the soil.—But they eat, drink, and are merry.—What are our rural peasants? High rents, and high rents alone, prevent our farmers from growing, on all soils that ought to be in arable cultivation, wheat, as cheaply as it can be brought to England. If we look at the report of the Poor-law Commissioners, we find, as in the cases of Lenham and Eastbourne, the utmost agricultural distress, we find money borrowed to support the poor, but we find also *that the landlord took as much for rent as would be required to pay for the labour of the whole cultivation of those places.* The cause of agricultural distress is obvious. If farmers were prosperous instead of distressed, there might be some plausibility in contending for the present system of monopoly, but such is not the fact. Prices must fluctuate as production varies; and as the landlords make the laws, they will invariably be made for the landlord's benefit, malgre his tenant or his tenant's customer.

The repeal of these laws of prohibition on importation under a certain price would regulate and render uniform the prices in our market. Such was the case between the years 1773 and 1791, wheat being allowed to be imported into this country when the price was at 48*s*., paying 6*d*. duty. This was deemed a period of agricultural prosperity, and exhibits a valuable lesson to the political economist with regard to this subject.

It is evident that the abolition of the corn-laws would induce foreigners to adopt a liberal policy towards the commerce of this country.—Our shipping interest would be benefited.—Indeed we might as well raise a tax on the community equivalent to the over-charge we pay on our bread, and hand it over to the landed interest, as a bribe for the privilege of obtaining cheap bread from abroad, as continue in our present anomalous state. Nay, we had better pay the tax to them in a tangible and unquestionable shape, for the price of the loaf would be in *statu quo*; we should have better customers for our manufactures, and employ our shipping into the bargain.

The unprejudiced mind of the politician, of the political economist, and of the philosopher, must arrive at the same conclusion on this subject. We are pre-eminent as a mercantile nation, as such we must stand or fall. We are losing in our productive capacity by the operation of these restrictive laws on our commerce. And shall we look to the heavens for direction, or mark the indicating finger of Providence on the surface of the earth?—Shall we contemplate the angle of the world's axis, and the phenomena of the seasons, with all the beautiful varieties of climate and soil, and not see in the whole a provision of an all-bountiful God for the dependence of one nation upon another for their respective peculiar productions? And if wars and chivalry have been the instruments in the hands of the "Parent of good Almighty," ought we not to rejoice, that commerce is superseding them, and that a circulation of humanity is to be kept up by its agency? No, it is *unjust* to protect the landed interest of this country by a duty on the importation of foreign corn. The politician sees in it the first moulderings of a great nation; the economist demonstrates its injurious tendency, and the philosopher deems it opposed to the obvious decrees of Providence.

Y.

SONGS FOR THE BEES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CORN LAW RHYMES."

No. XIV.

Ye wintry flowers whose pensive dyes
Wake, where the summer's lily sleeps!
Ye are like orphans in whose eyes
Their low-laid mother's beauty weeps.

Oh, not like stars, that come at eve
Through dim clouds glimmering one by one,
And teach the failing heart to grieve
Because another day is gone!
But like the hopes that linger yet
Upon the grave of sorrow's love,
And dare Affection to forget
The form below, the soul above;
Or like the thoughts that bid despair
Repose in faith on mercy's breast—
Givers of wings! from toil and care
To fly away, and be at rest

No. XV.

Lo, where the fuddled artisan
Goes forth with dog and gun,
Determined, like a gentleman,
To kill and slay for fun!
'Tis Christmas, trustful redbreast!
Bid thrush and wren beware!
Why may not he kill them or thee?
The squire may kill his hare.

How like the squire yon tilter stalks,
With cock'd impatient gun!
Run, daughter, from the frozen walks!
Thou screaming mother, run!
Fly, fly, too lovely goldfinch,
And bid thy mate beware!
Why may not he shoot her or thee?
The parson shoots his hare.

Hark, squire! could'st thou the parson teach
What thou to learn art loth,
The saving word he yet might preach,
Ere ruin teach ye both.
Who sitteth there in judgment?
The brutal and the blind:
While such as he teach bats to see,
Truth labours for the wind.

Embruted sloth makes toil a brute,
Unsoul'd alike are they;
The wood, the rill, to both are mute,
The heavens to both are clay:
But, God of snowy calmness,
Enthron'd o'er vale and hill!
Shall men, for fun, with dog and gun,
Thy sinless children kill?

When wilt thou, British Artisan,
Refuse to be an ape?
When wilt thou, English Gentleman,
From thy own bonds escape?
No eyes have they for beauty,
Who feed on hate and fear;
The silent field, no joy can yield
To hearts that will not hear.

No. XVI.

THE day was dark, save when the beam
Of noon through darkness broke,
In gloomy state, as in a dream,
Beneath my orchard oak:
Lo, splendour, like a spirit, came!
A shadow, like a tree!
While there I sat, and nam'd her name,
Who once sat there with me.

I started from the seat in fear;
I look'd around in awe;
But saw no beauteous spirit near,
Though all that was I saw;
The seat, the tree, where oft in tears
She mourn'd her hopes o'erthrown,
Her joys cut off in early years,
Like gather'd flowers half-blown.

Again the bud and breeze were met,
But Mary did not come;
And e'en the rose, which she had set,
Was fated ne'er to bloom!
The thrush proclaim'd in accents sweet
That winter's reign was o'er;
The bluebells throng'd around my feet,
But Mary came no more.

I think, I feel—but when will she
Awake to thought again?
No voice of comfort answers me;
But God does nought in vain:
He wastes no flower, nor bud, nor leaf,
Nor wind, nor cloud, nor wave;
And will he waste the hope which grief
Hath planted in the grave?

No. XVII.

LIKE a rootless rose or lily;
Like a sad and life-long sigh;
Like a bird pursu'd and weary,
Doom'd to flutter till it die;

Laudless, restless, joyless, hopeless,
Gasping still for bread and breath,
To their graves by trouble hunted,
Albion's helots live for death.

Tardy day of hoarded ruin!
Wild Niagara of blood!
Coming sea of headlong millions,
Vainly seeking work and food!
Why is famine reap'd for harvest?
Planted curses always grow:
Where the plough makes want its symbol,
Fools will gather as they sow.

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

EVER the human mind, dissatisfied or aspiring, has striven to overleap the boundaries of the present, and to gratify its longing after immortality, with the records of the past, and the secrets of the future. We stand between both, hedged in by the narrow circle of time, upon whose confines we fume and fret. Discontented with the partial beams that pass to us from the things to come, and yet more perplexed by the doubtful glare that flashes upon us from the things that have been. History and prophecy have, therefore, in every age attracted the regard and most signally awakened the curiosity of man. They have by turns kindled his proudest hopes, and called forth his basest fears; roused his noblest energies, and flattered his most grovelling weaknesses; fostered his best virtues, and incited his worst crimes; now exalting him above humanity—now debasing him below it.

Of the history of the past we are not about to treat. It is the purpose of this paper to make a slight survey of the present, and, without pretending to prophetic powers, to inquire what is the probable aspect of the future.

It is very difficult to draw the character of our own times. The artist floats on with the stream, and cannot calculate its rapidity. His attention is so much occupied by the delights or the dangers immediately before him, that he cannot contemplate the terrors, the grandeur, the loveliness, scattered over the entire scene. Probably he plays a part, however humble, and therefore insensibly invests with an undue splendour that peculiar underplot of the great drama in which he appears. The most astounding events come not altogether, nor are their effects visible at once; they appear in succession, and that, which, to the backward eye of history, is one perfect whole, is beheld by the spectator at intervals, and in parts, and therefore seems to him distinct and unconnected.

Let us endeavour to forget for a moment that we are contemplating the features of the present; let the reader imagine himself to be viewing the characteristics of a past age; let him forget the individuals, and regard only the mass. The records of the world present nothing like it. There is a stir, a restlessness, an agitation, throughout the vast chain of society. Men are abandoning old forms, old ideas, old prejudices, and they have not yet accommodated themselves with new ones. It is the age of transition, and the tumult that we hear and see is occasioned by the conflict between the supporters of the old and the advocates of the new order of things. The spirit of the times is peculiarly inquisitive: it requires a reason for every institution; it prys into every abuse; and it finds so much to condemn, that the only danger is, lest, in its anger that men should have been so long imposed upon and plundered, it may sweep away the good with the evil. Hence it is, that we see those who have profited by abuses leagued against the common enemy, and, resigning all minor differences, uniting in one "*holy alliance*" to protect the wicked gains of each other, and stay the progress of opinions so fatal to their future hopes. Nor is this league confined to one nation; it is extended over all Europe. The tyrants in England, Spain, Portugal, France, and Russia make common cause. They sympathize with, they support, they encourage each other. The Wellingtons in England are banded with the Apostolicals in Spain, the Miguelites in Portugal, the despots of Austria and Prussia. The Protestant church of Great Britain, and the Catholic priesthood of the Peninsula, have forgotten their old enmities in their present dangers. They rally round despotism wherever it exists; they oppose the people and the people's cause throughout Europe, because both alike dread the economical and reforming spirit of a popular government, and they know that the abuses by which they profit will not endure the scrutiny of reason and justice.

But if the advocates of abuses be thus leagued on the one hand, the people are no less united on the other. Their sympathies are the same throughout Europe. Wherever they have a share in the legislature their inclinations are unequivocal. They feel that they have a common interest, and a common enemy; they know that they have too often shed each other's blood for the sole advantage of their oppressors, and to rivet only the more closely the chains by which they are bound. Hence it is, that England and France have ceased to be foes. Both governments have passed into the hands of the people, who can be no longer persuaded that they are natural enemies, because they are neighbours. They have covenanted, not in a faithless treaty, but by the tacit wishes

and sympathies of their inhabitants, to rival each other in the arts of peace, and in social happiness, and in free institutions which are essential to both. Nor is this goodwill limited to those two great nations. It subsists also among the people of the continental despotisms, who wait only the day of their not distant independence to join themselves to the solemn league and covenant of the liberal and the free. And the oppressors are conscious of the spirit that is abroad; they see the gathering storm, they are uneasy and anxious; they are striving to stifle opinion and command the progress of knowledge. Idiots! Would they rule the wind, or stay the march of the thunder cloud? Yet as well might they strive to do these things as to sway the thoughts of men, or to build up a barrier against the onward movement of the human mind.

A remarkable characteristic of the times is *the direction* which its mind has taken. The stern reality has usurped the place of the false pictures of the imagination. The disputes of scholars and antiquaries no longer attract the attention which is now devoted to the welfare of nations. The sweetest strains of the poet are unheeded, unless he sings the evils of the corn laws, and novels themselves are neglected, unless they illustrate political economy or treat of the utilitarian philosophy. Government has assumed the form of a science, and its vast importance to every individual in the state has given to it such a preponderance in public estimation that all other sciences and polite literature itself have bowed before it. This setting of the tide of public taste cannot be mistaken. It is evident in every periodical. Archbishops treat of it in penny papers for the people; ladies write books upon it for children; the newspapers teem with it; and those magazines enjoy the greatest patronage which present the most of it. We may anticipate one good effect from this, whatever may be its attendant evils, it will teach the people *to think*, which they have *seldom*, and *for themselves*, which they have *never* done.

An ingenious writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, a short time ago treated of this peculiar aspect of the times, in a paper the object of which was to prove that an inquiring age was an unhappy one; that, in fact, ignorance is bliss, and an implicit faith in rulers and teachers the highest state of earthly felicity. It was a strange theory, and most strangely enforced, but if his arguments failed to satisfy the reason, they suggested many novel and serious thoughts. The fallacy which all who read that article felt that it involved, though they could not at once discover it, seems to have lurked in a doubtful definition of happiness, he conceiving it consists in a kind of mental torpor, void alike of pleasure and pain, whereas it lies rather in the proper activity and employment of all the mental and bodily faculties with which we are gifted. He assumed that a man

reading a newspaper or the Penny Magazine, is not so happy as the boor who drinks beer in a bowling-green, or dances to a crazed fiddle in a beer-shop; that the mechanic excited by the debates in Parliament, is a miserable being compared with the wrestler or the cudgel player. But the former is surely a superior creature compared with the latter; he better fulfils the purposes of existence, and, if he be more sensible of pain, his pleasures are multiplied an hundred fold, not only in number but in degree.

But there is another feature of the times, less pleasing though no less striking, admitted indeed and deplored by the most talented publication of the party supported by and supporting abuses: I mean, the *exclusiveness of the aristocracy*, so admirably deprecated in a recent number of *Blackwood's Magazine*. But the evil consequences of this are seen rather in the indirect effect of example than in any *direct* influence which it has upon society; for the aristocracy, properly so called, are not sufficiently numerous, and are too much retired from the multitudes that make up the world to excite in them any sense of humiliation or contempt. Blackwood has attributed this characteristic of the highest classes to an overweening pride. But I am inclined to believe that it has arisen from a less despicable cause. I should rather suppose it to be the consequence of extended wealth and knowledge. Formerly the aristocracy engrossed both. They then needed no artificial distinctions; but of late, education, and commerce have made it very difficult to know a peer from a merchant. Hence the growing exclusiveness of the highest classes; hence the origin of the freemasonry by which they endeavour to keep their order uncontaminated by the presence of the base born. They think that the coarse pottery of human clay, however gilded, is not fit to associate with the porcelain of which they are framed.

Their conduct, as I have said, would be of little consequence, but that the example is fatally followed by every other rank of society, even by the lowest. We are divided and subdivided into an infinite number of sets and circles, one soaring above another in a multitude of gyrations, according to a capricious estimate of things unworthy of esteem. It is every body's object, the great duty of existence, to advance from his own circle to that above him. Thus we live in the future, not in the present. No friendships are contracted, because all hope to move in time to another sphere, and it is felt that the most certain bar to admission into the circle above, is an intimacy with one moving in the circle below; and as all are candidates for promotion, all agree in keeping aloof from all the rest.

But is the middle class more calm, more contented? No. Well has the able author of *England and America* termed it

the *uneasy* class. It is sensible of some oppression which it strives to throw off; but it knows not what it is. It aims at some distant object which it cannot describe. It complains of abuses and evils, to which it cannot, or dare not apply the remedy. Its *wishes* are evident, but it wants either wisdom or courage to gratify them. It shrinks from the consequences of its awakened energies. Like the blind, when the blessing of sight is given to them, it is pained by the very novelty of its feelings; it cannot distinguish the relative forms and colours of things. It is for a while bewildered, instead of assisted, and almost imagines that it can walk about in its former darkness more readily than with the light that has beamed upon it. It is affected by a thousand vague hopes and foolish fears. It presents an extraordinary intermixture of new notions and old prejudices, reason and folly, liberality and meanness, pride and slavishness; greatness in thought, littleness in action; undue confidence and foolish hesitation; a love of truth in the theory—a dread of it in the practice; a knowledge of the right and the doing of the wrong; abject superstition and absolute scepticism; the consciousness of a giant's strength, and the cunning of a dwarf's weakness. For the middle classes also this is the age of transition. They are passing from servitude to freedom; from ignorance to knowledge; from being nothing in the state to be almost every thing; and hence the extremes of the new and the old order of thought; hence the contrariety of character; hence the anomalies which alarm many and startle all observers.

At first it seems strange that any of this great division of society should be found to aid their own oppressors, to rivet their own chains, and, as it were, offer their purses to the plunderers; that any should, as we have daily experience, oppose the gift of freedom, and sincerely fight the battles of their enemies against themselves. It is natural enough that those who hold unjust privileges and profits should war to the death to maintain them; but it is most unnatural, that they at whose expense these things are enjoyed, should not only consent to give them, but aid the intruders in plundering and subjecting their neighbours. Yet is this anomaly explained by the peculiar character of the age. The old, who love old things from prejudice and habit,—the ignorant, of course,—the selfish, who look only to their own immediate interests in the gratification of wealthy customers or influential friends; they who cannot, and they who will not think, are yet abounding. Add to these that numerous crowd who are content to be slaves to those above them, that they may be tyrants to those below, and the no less appalling phalanx of the selfish and the proud who can understand nothing but in its relation to self; who centre all good in personal good; who can view the mass of

men only as machines made for their will and pleasure, and the many as existing only for the benefit of the few. Another generation, and this species of the class we are viewing will be no more, or, at least, the advanced knowledge of the community will shame them into silence. That this hope is not ill-founded, we may be assured by the wonderful efforts which the middle classes have made during the last ten years to shake from them the fetters of prejudice; when we reflect how much unmeaning words have lost their influence with them; how much their reason has prevailed over their imaginations, and, consequently, how the bait which greedy cunning formerly set for ignorance has now lost most of its attractions.

Turn we to the third and last grand division of society. The working classes exhibit the same phenomena as those we have just contemplated. They also are beginning, as it were, to live—to live for all purposes beyond those of mere animal existence. *They have a mind*, and it is a great step gained that *they know it*. That mind is assuming *a character*, pleasing to the philanthropist, terrifying to the tyrant, and to those who have luxuriated in the spoils of nations. Individually, the working people are of little importance; collectively, they are a grand and imposing spectacle. Edward IV. addressed them when in rebellion, as "simple people who know nothing of state affairs,"— their bitterest enemy would not now presume thus to speak of them. They also have learned the secret of their strength, that they are something in the state. They have discovered, that they also have rights as men, rights as citizens; that without them society could not exist, and therefore that they deserve the respect and regard of society; that they are not the slaves of their employers; that service is a mutual agreement for a mutual advantage; that the obligation is reciprocal; that both are men, and in the eye of the law should have equal respect, equal protection, and equal privileges. The mental character of this class is peculiar. It has taken its tone and hue from the circumstances amid which it has been called into existence. It is coarse, but vigorous; energetic, but plain spoken; resolute, but generous; erring often, but open to conviction. It has none of the affectation of the highest, none of the half refinement of the middle class; its thoughts, its opinions, its feelings, its wishes, are expressed in plain and forcible language, without disguise,—without even a consciousness of offence. The protest from the working men of Sheffield against the doctrines of the benevolent but mistaken Owen, the addresses of the Trades' Unions, sufficiently prove the correctness of this estimate. It has more of nature than the mind of the other classes; it is more honest, more generous. It certainly forms an opinion hastily, but it does not cling to it

with obstinacy from a false pride, like the middle, nor profess what it does not think, like the upper class. Its errors, and they are many, are the result of a want of intelligence; they are never fraudful. What it does, it does effectually. It concentrates all its energies to attain its object; and withal there is a good temper, a moderation, a stern sense of justice, which does not always distinguish those whose intelligence is far greater.

Perhaps some of my readers will smile incredulously at this portraiture of the collective mind of the working classes; they will point triumphantly to the French revolution and other historical records of popular phrenzy. But the people of that day had *not a mind*. They were mere animals, and they acted as such. Their rulers had kept them in awful ignorance and most abject servitude, and it is not wonderful that when they had power they should abuse it. But since that era there has been a public mind: the press has been busy, the schoolmaster has been abroad, the people have learned that they are human beings, because they have been treated somewhat as such, and they have comported themselves accordingly. Three or four centuries ago scarcely a year passed without an open rebellion in this country, now it is a thing almost unknown. Forty years ago the brutal populace bathed France in blood; in our own day the scene of a revolution has been acted again in the same theatre, and not a life was wantonly wasted, nor in a single instance was the sacred right of property violated. And why this contrast? The working classes are *men* now, they were *brutes* then.

That this great division of the collective mind is rapidly advancing, none can doubt; and not only is it on its march here, but throughout the whole of Europe. It is unfortunate that this should have occurred at a time when peculiar circumstances have depressed the physical condition of the working classes; for the very improvement of their mental state makes their distresses the more painful, and may urge them to try experiments which, in their cooler moments, they would studiously have shunned. Such are the Trades' Unions, once so formidable, the offspring and the avengers of past bad governments. These associations remarkably illustrate the above view of this division of our national mind. A union of so vast a multitude to obtain their end by peaceful means is an evidence of an advanced state of knowledge and civilization, which is further confirmed by the speeches and addresses that proceeded from its members. The object for which they combined, namely, to raise wages, proves that they have not attained that point in mental cultivation which marks the utilitarian, properly so called, when the mind dwells not alone

on the promise of present good, but calmly calculates consequences and determines whether the total sum of happiness is likely to be increased or diminished by the proposed measure.

But errors of this sort are not peculiar to the class I am surveying. They are not unfrequent among those who think themselves so infinitely superior. The remedy for the evil is education, and it should be applied without delay. The people cannot be now kept in ignorance, and as they will learn something, it is desirable that they should be properly taught. And here I would invite the attention of the reader to a reflection which has of late often occurred to me. By the Reform Bill the working classes are almost, if not entirely, excluded from the elective franchise. A line is thus drawn between them and the rest of the community. May this not lead them to think that their interests also are distinct from those of the rest of the community; that having different rights, they ought to have different objects? Besides, all power has now passed into the hands of the middle class, and I much fear that there is less sympathy in that class with the wants and feelings of those below it than there is amongst the highest. I doubt whether the nobleman is not much more solicitous for the welfare of the labourer than is the tradesman, perhaps from the predominance of that singular feature in our society which induces those who are striving to advance to spurn their immediate inferiors, that they may prove beyond question that *they are* inferiors. It seems to me highly desirable, nay, necessary for the future peace and security of society, that a portion of the working class should be admitted to the enjoyment of the elective franchise under some well digested restrictions, were it only to take from them the present invidious distinction, and make a safety valve through which excited feelings may escape. Besides, the middle class, if it finds it unnecessary for its own purposes to court the working class, may be inclined to legislate too much for its own peculiar interests. This not altogether imaginary danger would be avoided by creating such a body of electors among the labouring class as should compel its superiors not to forget that it has rights to preserve and wants to be satisfied.

Thus, from the surface to the centre of society, all is agitation. Though there is not a trace of a storm, not so much as the cloud no bigger than a man's hand at present visible, yet there is a ground swell which we all feel, a rolling and a tossing, a waving to and fro, a restlessness, an uneasiness from the highest to the lowest, which indicates the secret presence of some mighty but invisible agent. What means this commotion? What does it portend? May it not be the beginning of the great and mortal struggle between the old and the new elements of power, between mind on the one part, and wealth and

hereditary privilege on the other? The natural sources of power are talent and virtue. Formerly the wealthy and the noble monopolized the former, if not the latter; but now it is not so; they are found in every class and station, without any reference to the accidental advantages of birth or good fortune. Nature is therefore striving for the mastery over prejudice; the old powers retreat with reluctance, and hence the trembling of which we are sensible, though it would be difficult to point to any one spot and say, "Lo, here it is!"

Yet are there bright hopes of the future. Like the sea which is freshened by the very storm that vexes it, society will come forth with redoubled vigour and renewed health from the agitation which we now witness; like goodly wine it will be refined by fermentation, and then it will be purer and brighter than it was ever before. Ours is the age of transition. We see the dangers and difficulties of the change without reaping its benefits, but it is not the less our duty to assist its progress and hasten the march of events so big with blessings to generations yet to come. What obstacles there may be between mankind and the goal to which their wishes and their steps are directed, what backslidings may delay the time of triumph, what errors too much ardor or too little knowledge may have in store for us, it is impossible to prophesy. But the victory, if distant, is certain. Right will assuredly prevail over might. Nature will assert her prerogative; society will be set upon its proper and natural basis, and then, and not till then, may we expect to see governments framed for the good of the many, not for the immunity and benefit of the few, and the sole end of every law and every institution the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

Taunton. E. W. B.

SPECIMENS OF ITALIAN POETS.

BY THE TRANSLATOR OF "HECTOR FIERAMOSCA."

No. I.

MANZONI.*

"S'ode a destra uno squillo di tromba, &c., &c."

A TRUMPET'S blast on the right is heard,
On the left a startling blast replies;
Re-echoes the earth, and crush'd is the sward
'Neath the tramp of the horse, and the infantry's throng;
Here a gay pennon flutters and flies;

* The following poem is introduced by the author in his Tragedy of "Count Carmagnola," after the manner of the choruses of the ancient Greek Drama. The subject is the Battle of Maclodio, forming part of the action of the above mentioned Tragedy, and which battle was fought in the 15th century between the Milanese and Venetian States.

There to and fro waves a standard display'd—
Hah! See that war-troop, for battle array'd,
To encounter another comes rushing along!
The short space has vanish'd that kept them apart;
Now weapon meets weapon with horrible clash,
And fiercely they're plunged in the enemy's heart,
And the blood gushes out, whilst blows are renewed.
But who are these foes?—what stranger the lash
Of warfare inflicts on these beautiful lands?
And which is he, who, to die where he stands,
Or liberty gain for his country, has vowed?
Of one nation are all—one language they speak—
By a foreigner all would as brothers be viewed—
One lineage they own—one family make—
'Tis heard in their voice—on their countenance beams.
This earth, now gory and clotted with blood,
This earth with her fruits has nourished them all—
E'en Nature encircles them, as with a wall,
By the mountainous Alps, and the ocean's wide streams.
Alas! and who was the first to draw
His impious weapon a brother to slay?
Oh, horrid thought! Of this conflict of woe
The damnable cause—oh, what can it be?
They know not the cause—no object have they,
In the mutual barbarous slaughter, but *trade*—
They are sold to a leader—a leader that's paid; *
Nor aught of the cause of the war care to see.
Oh, misery! Have they no virtuous wives—
No affectionate mothers—these obstinate foes?
Then, why do not *they*, if they risk their own lives,
Drag their dear ones by force from the infamous field?
And the aged, who look to the tomb for repose,
Whose thoughts and affections are wedded to peace,
Ah! why do not *they*, this mad fury to cease,
Persuade them?—Such eloquence must make them yield.
As the cottager sometimes reclines at the door
Of his quiet abode, and with indolent stare
Marks the tempest afar off its hail fiercely pour
Upon fields and green meadows which *he* has not till'd,
So the man, who the dangers and terrors of war
From a distance in perfect security views,
May be heard of sack'd cities to speak of the news,
And number the thousands of fellow-men killed.
See there those infants who breathlessly dwell
On maternal instruction so fondly bestowed!—
Words of scorn they are learning—the names lisp and spell
Of foes that some day by their hands may be slain.
And this bright crowd of beauties—how vain, how proud

* This refers to the military custom of those times, when wars between different states were chiefly carried on by mercenary leaders, "Condottieri" who let themselves out to hire with the troops under their command to any government that chose to engage them.

Of the jewels and pearls which their persons adorn!
Yet those baubles by husband or lover were torn
From the wives of wretches who vanquished have been!
  Woe!—Woe!—The land far and wide
Already is covered with wounded and dying—
Of blood the whole plain is one crimson tide—
The fury's redoubled, the shouting increased—
Ah! one rank is broken! What hope, save in flying,
Where vigour is lost, and discipline gone?
Despairing to conquer, they deem their task done—
That instinct, the love of their lives, has not ceased.
  As clouds of light chaff, by the wind blown away
From the winnow, are scatter'd and spread thro' the air,
So the panic-struck hosts from the dreadful affray
In headlong retreat rush over the plains.
But fresh and fierce troops from an ambush appear,
The remains of the routed in haste to pursue—
They hotly press on; whilst the flying anew
Hear the much dreaded horse as it fast on them gains.
  Trembling they drop at the feet of their foes—
Surrender their arms, and mercy intreat,
The cries of the wounded, the dying man's woes,
By victory's turbulent clamours are drowned.
A courier takes horse—leaps into his seat—
Receives a despatch—gallops out of the crowd—
A lash and a spur—his steed tears up the road—
And each village he passes is roused by the sound.
  Wherefore do all on the public highway
From their houses and fields so anxiously run?
And each to his neighbour so eagerly say
"What joyful news bears he?"—Ye ask it in vain,
Ye know whence he's come, and whither he's gone;
And hope ye that tidings of gladness he tells?
Hear the horrible tidings! They speak of the yells
Of brothers just murdered by brothers for gain!
  Around me loud shouts of festivity rise;
Ev'ry church is adorned; and the chaunting within
Of hymns and of praises ascends to the skies,
From homicide hearts—hearts that Heaven abhors.
Meanwhile, from the crest of the Alps may be seen
Gazing downward to view the remains of the fight,
The stranger, who reckons with savage delight
The numbers of brave men just slain in the wars.
  Haste! fill up your ranks by the last battle thinn'd—
Your triumphs, rejoicings, and galas suspend—
Let your banners again be unfurled to the wind,
The foreign invader descends—he is here!
Your forces now weaken'd, with weariness bend,
'Tis for this he has come, when he knows you must yield;
And marching his army to that very field
Where your brethren have perish'd, he waits for you there!
  Land! whose confines so narrow were deemed
That thy children within them in peace would not live,

Fatal Land! —It ever has seemed
Heaven's judgment to make thee a foreigner's prey.
A foe, to whom no offence thou didst give,
At thy banquets insultingly sits himself down,
And reaping where thy FOOLISH children have sown,
From thy sovereign's hand plucks the sceptre away.
And FOOLISH the foe! was happiness e'er
To tyrant, oppressor, or murderer given?
No! 'Tis not the vanquish'd alone sheds the tear;
For sadness soon follows a conqueror's joy.
Not always, tis true, does the vengeance of Heav'n
In the midst of his haughty career strike him low;
But it marks, awaits, and watches him too,
And clutches his soul as he breathes his last sigh!
Created all in the image of God,
All children by one great mercy crown'd,
Where'er on earth we may have our abode,
Where'er the blest breath of life inhale,
Brethren we are—by one tie bound,
Accurst be he who would break that tie—
Who oppresses the weak with tyranny—
Who makes one immortal spirit bewail!

THE LONDON REVIEW

versus

The British Drama.

THERE are few subjects on which the innumerable members of the press are unanimous. When this is the case, it is yet more extraordinary to find them remain so. Amidst all their conflicting interests, passions, prejudices and judgments, there must be good grounds for assuming the subject to be of some importance which can reconcile such jarring elements, and induce *one* opinion, not merely "going the rounds of the papers," but strongly advocated on every fresh occasion. In this position, and for its "soul's cause," stands the genius of the British Drama. It has long stood thus; forlorn and a wreck, it is true; an insulted exile from the gasseous shop of the unjustified *national* theatres, as from the justified publishers; yet still, by the energy of a few individuals, and the constant efforts of the press—especially the stamped press—it has stood an obscured monument of impassioned fortitude, "like blind Orion hungering for the dawn." The unanimity of opinion and purpose, however, is at length broken We must be consoled and content with the wonder that it has lasted so long. It was too much to expect it could endure for ever. Alone, and clad in the severe garb of philosophy, equally armed and adorned with classical style and quotation,

the look profound, the tone moral and seriously respectable, the instances apt, the reasons still more apt than the instances — the theory minute to a hair, and of the same breadth—the major proposition contemptuous—the minor caustic—the conclusion denunciatory and damnatory downright—a 'foolish gentleman,' who has been admitted into the London Review, marches forward to prove that the age is becoming too refined to tolerate the vulgarity of *genuine* dramatic representation!

This is indeed an exception to the principle, purpose, and otherwise unanimous voice of the time. It might have been passed over as a hasty individuality; but, in some connections, such individualities assume disproportionate importance. We might have inferred, had we not known better, that it had been the resolute and admitted purpose of the London Review to drive back the tide of things, in morals as well as in poetry; but the London Review is a great reformer! Howbeit the attempt *is* made. Alone, and sharp in furtive glances, conscious of temerity, yet inflated with its vain purpose,—the form saltant —the small paws ardent—the whiskers splenetic to a hair—the tail restless and elaborately narrow—the nose dissentient, and the tone a squeak—from this mountain issues a mouse!

Now, we are, of course, well aware that "instances have been known," when an individual being perfectly right, and persisting in advocating his cause, has been violently opposed by the vast majority of his time, sneered at, hunted, hooted after, and knocked down; reviled, spit upon, tormented, and sent to heaven. We are of opinion that such facts—and rejoice, as far as the immunity from physical martyrdom is concerned—are by no means applicable to the anti-dramatic critic or critics of the London Review. But as the thing goes on, "from inch to inch ascendant," and may eventually rise for a time so as to become rather mischievous by perseverance, and on the authority of this otherwise powerfully written work, it becomes a duty to throw one's mite into the opposite scale. It will be the business, therefore, of the present paper, to show some reasons for thinking that the *anti-dramatic critics* of this Review, know nothing at all about the matter; that they have not read the authors they fret over—that they have not understood what they have ventured to quote from them—that they have no feeling for unpolished power, but only for elaborate littleness; that they are circumscribed in imagination, therefore in sympathy, therefore in judgment—that they have no abstract affinity with the deepest emotions of human nature—no soul for true art, and finally, that instead of "beating down Satan under their feet," they are doing their utmost to maintain conventional hypocrisy in morals, weakness in practical conduct, and mechanical vulgarity in taste; all of which directly con-

tribute to debase society, to generate a stagnant corruption in knowledge and happiness, and to retard the progress of the species.

The London Review, as a work, does not consider itself responsible for individual opinions. Its writers all affix signatures to their several papers. The Examiner, the Athenæum, Mr. Roebuck, and others, have made this distinction in disagreeing with any particular views and propositions which they considered erroneous. A similar distinction is to be understood in the present case. There is some danger, however, that the London Review will become implicated in the views taken by particular writers of the Drama, the Theatres, and the Fine Arts generally, because there is not only a separate article of the kind to which we allude, in every number of the work, but a similar tone among other of its writers, whenever they discuss such subjects. We sincerely trust, that the conductors of a work which contains articles in every number, of a masterly character, such as could only proceed from minds of the highest order in their several departments, will immediately turn a serious eye to the subject in question (equally important by its influence, when properly exercised on the public mind and feelings, with the subjects to which they devote their best powers) the method of treating which is essentially unphilosophical and vulgar, and inconsistent with the profesed spirit and purpose of the London Review.

We shall commence with No. III, Art. II. entitled "Lamb's Specimens of English Dramatic Poets," being an article at the book, at the old dramatists collectively, and at modern dramatic representations in general. Beginning with sundry remarks on Lamb's character, the reviewer says—

> "The greatest natural talents, when by any accident confined to a narrow and exclusive field of observation, must be weakened, and perhaps perverted."

On the contrary, they are strengthened, as far as that particular field is concerned, and confirmed in their course, which widens as they advance. The greatest natural talents, if they have any means of developement and vent, can never be confined to a narrow field, but only the smallest natural talents. The latter being exactly the reviewer's case with reference to the present subject, he is compelled "by accident" to narrow the field to his own mind. Was it accident that occasioned Charles Lamb to devote himself to the old Dramatists, or natural sympathy and the greatest talents? The same question may be asked concerning Lamb's almost equally "narrow and exclusive" devotion to the old masters in painting? Moreover, what are we to think of the *critic* who considers the study of the Elizabethian dramatists and the old masters of painting "a narrow

and exclusive field?" Do not the two combine nearly all the best that has *hitherto* existed in this round world, and for much of which we must always go back to them until we can create it for ourselves?

After the foregoing "axiom" the reviewer adds,—

"This is the *inevitable lot* of such *partial amateurs in literature* as Mr. Lamb."

A lot, we are venturesome enough to declare, highly preferable to that of the professional practitioners of general literature—not a few among whom, having a "feeling beyond," but would gladly make the exchange.

"That he possessed a quick sensibility, a vivid imagination, and powers of expression of no ordinary description, will be evident to *any tolerably* good judge of these qualities, even *upon a cursory examination* of his essays and criticisms. His style is cast in the mould of Addison's, modernised to that of our best magazines."

It *seems* rather difficult to understand how even such an intolerably bad judge of sensibility and imagination, even upon a cursory examination, could have uttered such an absurdity as the last sentence. Either his reading of Addison must have been as cursory as of Lamb, or he must be uniquely deficient in the faculty of comparison. Perhaps the remark, like many others of this reviewer, originated in a deficiency both of nature and of acquired knowledge. Lamb is altogether as unlike Addison, as Montaigne is to Racine, or an illuminated vellum to a finished line engraving.

We agree with the remarks about Lamb's "nationality," meaning thereby that "he was a thorough Englishman of three hundred years ago, doomed to live in an age with which he appears to have had little in common."—"He was in fact," (*query*, imagination?) says the reviewer, "a professed playgoer of the time of Shakspeare and Heywood."—"The prose and poetry of his life were exactly of the same antiquity." Exactly so; and by no means in the mould of Addison, Pope, and the best modern magazines.

"We are about to rouse the indignation of Mr. Lamb's brethren in taste; but we hope, when the first ebullition is over, they will listen to our reasons."

Men of "that ilk" are not the creatures of "first ebullitions," they are men of continuity, and despise the mere *coup de théâtre* which is the vulgar mania of the *quasi*-admirers of the Drama. That they will listen to the reviewer's reasons, he need not doubt. They will also give theirs, to which it is hoped the conductors of the Review will listen.

The reviewer "opens" in fulfilment of his promise, by informing us that "Shakspeare proceeded upon an essentially wrong plan."

He commences his *schedule* in these memorable words,—

"In Shakspeare's works there is such a profusion of beauty"—(is it possible!) "the *bursts* of genius are so frequent"—(mem !) "the glow of life which pervades even the most defective parts, is so attractive"—(do you really think so?) "that we completely forget the essentially wrong plan upon which he proceeded, and the total negligence and unconcern with which he gave himself up to the spontaneous impulses of his wonderful mind."

If by the use of the term "plan," the reviewer had meant to say that the construction of a great many of Shakspeare's plays was very bad; that, in consequence of his giving himself up to spontaneous impulses, and frequently introducing scenes which have little or nothing at all to do with the subject and conduct of the plot, such plays are wrong *as works of art*, we should have agreed with him. But as he talks of the "*essentially* wrong plan," we are bound to say, either that he does not know the distinctions between art and nature, or does not understand the depth and compass of the term he employs. Shakspeare's spontaneous impulses were always essentially right, but continually outraged all the best and worst rules of art. Moreover, if it be true that the poet by his "glow of life," &c. makes the critic "completely forget the essentially wrong plan," the magnitude of the offence to art cannot occasion this "small particular" any degree of pain worth mentioning.

The next sentence, however, shows features of a different "cast" and expression.

"But no poet inferior to him could follow that path with success;" (*i. e.* the success of essential wrong;) "no genius below his could employ the external forms of the style prevalent in those days, especially on the theatre" (the style on the theatre!), "and still retain the splendour of native beauty." (The equivocal use of the term "native" prevents our exposing another absurdity. Does it mean natural, original, essential, or English?)

So then it appears, after all, that Shakspeare's "essentially wrong plan" was in his "style!" The forms of his mind were expressed by external images and signs of an essentially wrong plan, in which his contemporaries were not equally successful, because they did not possess equal genius! We should not have thought it worth while to object to this writer's choice of words, as well as "blundering and confused" sentences, but that he evidently considers himself a master of style and diction.

"The *essential* and pervading evil of the dramatic compositions at that period' (the time of Shakspeare) 'was all over Europe the same.' It may be described in a few words; it was an unnatural and absurd *style*."

We will cease, for a time, our comments on the practice of this professor of style and diction, and leave him to his own inevitable nonsense.

"By style we understand the habitual manner of clothing our thoughts in images; and the peculiar selection of traits and lineaments which an author makes from the objects, whether material, sentimental, or conceptional, which he proposes to convey to other minds. There is a perplexing inaccuracy in confounding style with diction. *The appropriateness of the words is, of course, of great importance:* the avoidance of superfluities in the expression, the luminous arrangement of the sentences, the right distribution of their different parts—all this constitutes an art of very great importance in every department of eloquence. But *style*, though it may be improved, cannot be taught. It is a part of character; the express image of the mind's own mode of conceiving things: and the very existence of style presupposes a natural power of the mind, which makes it a living mirror—a mirror that must not only reflect various parts of visible and invisible nature, of the material and intellectual creation, but must also give to the reflection a new, a peculiar life: a life derived from human nature, and closely related to humanity. Diction, on the contrary, is an affair of accident and habit. Style and diction, in fact, are so totally distinct, that a true philologist will not unfrequently have to admire the former, in spite of the latter. We remember a remarkable instance in Tertullian. His diction is barbarous, blundering, confused; yet few writers will be found to come up to him in the vigour and life of his style.

"But though good style must have its foundation in a natural power, bad style may, and frequently is, the result of bad taste become fashion. The mind's eye is liable to be impared by imitation: the intellectual squinting is indeed more easily caught than the external."

Probably so; but we shall do our best to prevent your influence. The attempt to show that Shakspeare's habitual method of clothing his thoughts in images was an essentially wrong plan, does not manifest the best possible taste, knowledge, or modesty. We first find the sins of the old dramatists consisting entirely in "an *unnatural* and absurd *style*;" then it is declared that "style, though it may be improved, cannot be taught;" that "it is a part of character; the express image of the mind's own mode of conceiving things," and that its very existence "presupposes a *natural* power, &c." In the next paragraph all this is to be set aside, in the present case, by the equivocation (the imperfect and rather ugly grammar, is probably owing to a mere oversight of the printer, &c.) that "though good style must have its foundation in a *natural* power, bad style may, and frequently is, the result of bad taste become fashion." Or is the reviewer quibbling between a style taught, and a style caught, as though the terms were not equally applicable both to good and bad style? Either of them may be taught or caught to a certain imitative degree;

but the style that is voluntarily and ardently acquired, or that which comes most readily to an individual, is his natural style, and probably the best for him, whether good or bad. What the reviewer endeavours to express about style and diction, is true enough in the main; but not by his showing, nor with his application. If Shakspeare and the rest of the old dramatists did not write in a style natural to them, what class of men ever did? His great contemporaries did not imitate Shakspeare; they occasionally borrowed *situations* from his plays, as he from others, but the *filling up* was their own; they were not taught, neither did they catch his *intellectual squint*!—he was only one among them at that time, as the reviewer would have known if he had ever enlarged his mind with the reverential study of Chapman, Webster, &c. But why should we wish such potent spirits as these,—

"To add to your dead calm, a breath?
For those arm'd Angels, that in spite of Death
Inspir'd these flowers that wrought this poet's wreath,
Shall keep it ever—poesy's steepest star!

* * * * *

Strength needs no friend's trust—strength your foes defeats.
Retire to strength then, of eternal things,
And you're eternal;—for our knowing springs
Flow into those things that we truly know,
Which, being eternal, we are render'd so."

Chapman.

We remember a passage in Webster's dedication to his fine tragedy of Vittoria Corombona, which may not be inapplicable.

"Detraction is the sworn friend to ignorance: for mine own part, I have ever truly cherished my good opinion of other men's worthy labours, especially of *that full and heightened style* of Master Chapman; the *laboured and understanding works* of Master Jonson; the *no less worthy* composures of the both worthily excellent Master Beaumont and Master Fletcher; and lastly, (without wrong last to be named) the *right happy* and *copious industry* of Master Shakspeare, Master Decker and Master Heywood; wishing what I write may be read by their light, protesting that, in the strength of mine own judgment, I know them so worthy, that though I rest silent in my own work, yet to most of theirs I dare (without flattery) fix that of Martial: *non notunt hæc monumenta mori.*"

Let us now proceed with the "full and heightened style" of the mouse.

"The period to which the English dramatists belong presents a perversion of taste from which no portion of Europe remained free. The evil grew up, indeed, to a *greater* height' (keep to the point;) 'than that which *it had reached* in the time of Elizabeth; but *its seeds* were bursting out vigorously,' (where and when?—after they 'had reached' a great height in the time of Elizabeth!) 'and their full growth might be foretold from the rank luxuriance of their

sprouting.' (The greatest tragedies that were ever written are thus to be considered as sprouts!) 'What was its *essence?* Redundancy of diction."

"Composition might then be defined the art of multiplying phrases, to affect the ear of the multitude with a *variety of sound*, and astound them by what appeared an inexhaustible richness of expression. Under this exuberant foliage, this puffy husk of diction, there was generally nothing but the commonest meaning: common sentiment, common thought, the very substance of the popular tales of that period *without the least improvement.* Writing was then an *art*, in the lowest, not in the highest sense; it might be learnt in the most purely technical manner. A long list of objects for metaphors and comparisons, which with a little dexterity might be applied to every subject, not only directly but by opposition; contrasts of high and low, first and last, sweet and bitter, hot and cold, all should be noted in the book of topics, till they became familiar to the mind. The commonest thought should then be *exhausted*, as children exhaust a letter, repeating it under ten or twelve metaphorical dresses."

The above applies very aptly to the third rate play-wrights who preceded and followed the Elizabethian dramatists. A recipe for writing a tragedy on the model of Shakspeare, Webster, Chapman, Marlow, Beaumont, and Fletcher, &c. is then whisked from the pen in the following off-hand style:—

"As for the story, it might be told with no better arrangement than what would be required to amuse a circle of boys and girls in the evening when tired of their play. In that style of writing there is no need of showing the growth and gradual development of some terrific or degrading passion. State any horror at once; the legitimimacy of its birth will not be questioned. Mix the most inconsistent feelings, producing contrasts which, to all but children in taste and moral observation, will appear a parody of the tragic character. Convey all this in a mighty stream of words, *and you have written a play*, which, could you contrive to shove it, dusty and worm-eaten, into the collection of some antiquarian of the late *Mr. Douce's* standing and fame, would be sure to be extracted and praised to the skies by some industrious pupil of *Mr. Lamb's* school."

There is something peculiarly funny in the illogical dogmatism of this classical prig of style and diction. One of Lamb's children of taste and moral observation might rather more fairly assume that were any first-class boy in a public school to write the most pert, marrowless, vapid play in Latin, and ingeniously foist it into a scarce old edition of Terence, and shove it among the mortal remains of Dr. Parr, it would be sure to be scratched up with a shrill *plaudite Pisones*, as a miracle of caustic innuendo and fine touches, by the 'scholar' of the London Review!

"Were we to choose a specimen of the *mock tragic* which abounds in the compositions from which Mr. Lamb has taken his specimens, we would fix upon the Duchess of Malfy."

This is indeed a choice! A more characteristic election —for both sides of the question—could not well have been made.

The passion of the work turns on this point. The Duchess, who is a widow, falls in love with and marries Antonio, her steward. To be a steward or butler is the circumstance of his life; he is not a man of low nature; hence her justification. And if he *were* of low nature, she has her own free will? A real tragedy is the antithesis of convention. Listen to the termination of one of their noble love scenes:—

"*Ant.* Were there nor heaven nor hell,
I should be honest. I have long serv'd virtue
And ne'er ta'en wages of her.

Duch. Now she pays it.—
The misery of us that are born great!
We are forc'd to woo, because none dare woo us;
And as a tyrant doubles with his words
And fearfully equivocates, so we
Are forc'd to express our violent passions
In riddles and in dreams, and leave the path
Of simple virtue, which was never made
To seem the thing it is not. Go, go, brag
You have left me heartless; mine is in your bosom—
I hope t'will multiply love there:—you do tremble!—
Make not your heart so dead a piece of flesh
To fear more than to love me; Sir, be confident.—
What is it that distracts you?—this is flesh and blood, Sir,
'Tis not the figure cut in alabaster
Kneels at my husband's tomb. Awake—awake, man.
I do here put off all vain ceremony,
And only do appear to you a young widow;
I use but half a blush in't.

Ant. Truth speak for me;
I will remain the constant sanctuary
Of your good name.

Fernando, the brother of the Duchess, is outrageous on conventional principles of pride and selfishness, at this marriage, and his passion carries him beyond convention in the demoniac vengeance with which he visits her for the worldly degradation of his family and self-love. To accomplish his purpose he hires the services of Bosola—an intellectual, but heartless villain—and harrows up the imagination and passions of the Duchess by devices not much exceeding many facts known in history; particularly that of Italy, though bearing the sin of some originality of conception; and then causes her to be strangled.

After the wretched, but noble-spirited martyr has been shown the bodies of her husband and children, finely executed in wax, which she very naturally, under all circumstances,

takes to be the real bodies; after being prevented from taking rest or sleep by the noise of maniacs, and the eventual introduction of them into the apartment, where they dance round her, according to their different degrees of disordered mind, with "music answerable thereto,"—Bosola enters, disguised as an old man, and the following scene ensues, which is quoted by the reviewer. If any man can bear metaphysical scrutiny, on great occasions, it is Webster. Let every line be looked into closely.

"*Enter Bosola to the Duchess.*

Duch. Is he mad too?
Bos. I am come to make thy tomb.
Duch. Ha! my tomb?
Thou speak'st as if I lay upon my death-bed,
Gasping for breath: dost thou perceive me sick?
Bos. Yes; and the more dangerously, since thy sickness is insensible.
Duch. Thou art not mad, sure: dost know me?
Bos. Yes.
Duch. Who am I?
Bos. Thou art a box of wormseed; at best but a salvatory of green mummy. What's this flesh? — a little crudded milk, fantastical puff-paste. Our bodies are weaker than those paper prisons boys use to keep flies in—more contemptible, since ours is to preserve earth-worms. *Didst thou ever see a lark in a cage? Such is the soul in the body: this world is like her little turf of grass; and the heaven o'er our heads, like her looking-glass, only gives us a miserable knowledge of the small compass of our prison.*
Duch. Am not I thy Duchess?
Bos. Thou art some great woman, sure, for riot begins to sit on thy forehead (clad in gray hairs) twenty years sooner than on a merry milkmaid's. Thou sleepest worse than if a mouse should be forced to take up her lodging in a cat's ear; a little infant that breeds its teeth, should it lie with thee, would cry out, as if thou wert the more unquiet bedfellow.
Duch. I am Duchess of Malfy still.
Bos. That makes thy sleep so broken:
Glories, like glow-worms, afar shine bright,
But, look'd too near, have neither heat nor light.
Duch. Thou art very plain.
Bos. My trade is to flatter the dead, not the living:
I am a tomb-maker.
Duch. And thou comest to make my tomb?
Bos. Yes!
Duch. Let me be a little merry:
Of what stuff wilt thou make it?
Bos. Nay, resolve me first; of what fashion?
Duch. Why, do we grow fantastical in our death-bed?
Do we affect fashion in the grave?
Bos. Most ambitiously! Princes' images on their tombs do not lie as they were wont, seeming to pray up to heaven; but with their

hands under their cheeks (as if they died of the toothache): they are not carved with their eyes fixed on the stars; but, as their minds were wholly bent upon the world, the self-same way they seem to turn their faces.

Duch. Let me know fully, therefore, the effect
Of this thy dismal preparation—
This talk, fit for a charnel?
Bos. Now I shall!
(A coffin, cords, and a bell, produced.)
Here is a present from your princely brothers;
And may it arrive welcome, for it brings
Last benefit, last sorrow.
Duch. Let me see it;
I have so much obedience in my blood,
I wish it in their veins to do them good.
Bos. This is your last presence-chamber.
*Car.** O, my sweet lady!
Duch. Peace! it affrights not me.
Bos. I am the common bell-man,
That usually is sent to condemn'd persons
The night before they suffer.
Duch. Even now thou said'st
Thou wast a tomb-maker!
Bos. 'Twas to bring you,
By degrees, to mortification.—Listen!"

This then is a part of the reviewer's choice specimen of the *mock* tragic! This is one of the instances he "fixes upon" as proving the "unnatural and absurd style" of the old dramatists, the *essence* of which consisted in "redundancy of diction." The instance will be fixed upon the reviewer, or we are much mistaken. If it may with decency be called a fault to have too much of that merit in which most other writers are so deficient, then we should say the chief fault of the old dramatists (we speak not of the dull trash of their second and third-rate followers) was redundancy of *imagery*. The foregoing quotation is a fair instance of the wonderful strength and unlopped luxuriance of these great men; the reviewer's page is the transcript of his wordy accusation. Instead of looking into the old dramatists, he has done nothing but look in the glass. It is owing to the result of this slight discrepancy that the only passage he can find worthy of the least praise is the one about the lark, though he takes care to add that it is spoiled by "bombast and swaggering." Where? how? in what? The fact is, he discovers a resemblance to himself in the beak, "nosed to pick" all things fantastic, but he has no sympathy with the wings, the voice, or *the soul* of the lark; hence the re-action. He takes no notice of the fearful philosophy and intellect of Bosola, particularly displayed in what

* *Cariola*, the Duchess's maid.

he says about 'riot clad in grey hairs,' of the mouse (to whom a cat must appear much the same as a fiend does to man), who should be forced to take up her lodging in the cat's ear, so that every breath, pulse, sensation, and thought, may be imagined to be known by the arch enemy; of the powerful Duchess being reduced below the painful, sleepless, and helpless condition of a "little infant that breeds its teeth;" of the deep and suggestive truth, that nature often becomes fantastical on the death-bed, and affects fashion in the grave; and of the living being, standing in presence of her tomb-maker! He mistakes Bosola for a mere vulgar melo-dramatic bravo. He does not comprehend how the Duchess could be deceived by an image of wax, and think it a corpse; because, like as they are to each other, even to an ordinary eye by lamp light, he does not understand the passion through the medium of which it is seen. He thinks the Duchess might have gone close up to the bodies (whether permitted or not) and discovered what they owed to the particular light and shade in which they were placed; whether the frightful stain upon their garments was blood or paint, by wetting and smelling it; and whether they were wax or real corpses, by scraping their faces with a pen-knife. He has not read the play, or he might have perceived that the Duchess has been imprisoned, and probably half-starved, so that her imagination would be liable to tyrannize over her weakened frame. He has proved himself quite unable to see that, besides merely working up the horror of the scene by introducing the dance of maniacs with music descriptive of their several states, Webster has accomplished the far greater end of displaying the powerful mind and character of the Duchess; for assuredly such a scene, following such trials, was enough to have driven an ordinary man or woman as mad as the surrounding group. A fine gradation is shown. Amidst her repeated inquiries concerning Bosola's sanity, she seems a little staggered as to her own identity. "Do'st thou perceive me sick?—do'st know me?—who am I? am not I thy Duchess?" But she presently rises with full dignity and the concentration of lofty defiance—"I am Duchess of Malfy still!" Herein, then, are found the "dignity and decorum" which the reviewer cannot understand.

Such scenes as these are so rich with palpable meaning, deep suggestions, and fine veins that run mining among the roots of agonised humanity, that it is scarcely possible for one mind to discover all they contain. As the reader who can sympathise with these profound writings may have been struck with many omissions on our part, he may naturally entertain doubts of the possibility of the reviewer's utter and thoroughgoing blindness, and think we have exaggerated the non-comprehension

for the sake of presenting a perfect specimen. The reviewer shall therefore "state the case" and give his commentary in his own words.

"To us the collection of horrors made by Webster appears exactly such as the ingenuity of a *bonne*, half a century ago, would have hit upon to produce a striking effect in the nursery. The Duchess having married her butler, 'her brother Ferdinand shuts her up in a prison, and torments her with various trials of studied cruelty. By his command, Bosola, (the reader will remember that Italy continued to be the land of monsters till the days of Mrs. Radcliffe,) the instrument of his devices, shows her the bodies of her husband and children counterfeited in wax, as dead.' The Duchess takes the figures (which, by the by, were made 'by the curious master in that quality, Vincentio Lauriola') to be 'true substantial bodies.' Next to this 'she is kept waking with noises of madmen; and,' at last, is strangled by common executioners.' But the *denouement* is furthermore prepared by a 'dance of sundry sorts of madmen, with music answerable thereto; after which Bosola (like an old man) enters.'"

After Bosola's appalling declaration that what he has said was to bring the Duchess to mortification by degrees, her dirge commences—"the living person's dirge." Lamb notices these two latter points as characteristic of a power "beyond the ordinary conceptions of vengeance and beyond the imagination of ordinary poets." He has grave thoughts touching Master Webster. But our *petit maître* of the *London Review*, nothing moved, dances forward on his way, with all the levity of pert insensibility.

"To carry on this laudable design, a pretty long dirge is sung."

The reviewer then quotes the two last lines, and presently falls foul of one of those fine Shakspearian touches, which the name of Shakspeare has alone preserved in his own writings, from the insult of all the incompetent. This writer—he who undertakes to expose the old dramatists—has to learn that nature, on the principle of extremes meeting, when wrought to a high degree of passion, no matter of what kind, is not only apt, but generally compelled, (by a law, which is understood by those whose business it is to deal with these deep questions of humanity,) to break off suddenly from its course; the abrupt cessation of the storm being the commencement of a train of the simplest thought and feeling, frequently manifested in some trifling characteristic peculiarity, but more commonly in some little domestic circumstance touching the affections. After this relief of the heart, this beginning of life and passion over again from the first, there may be re-actions as powerful and as prolonged as the circumstances, and the nature of the individual, allow and induce.

Just before the Duchess is murdered, seeing that all hope is

at an end, and that it is of no use to call for help, as her maid Cariola would do, she says :—

> "To whom—to our neighbours? they are mad folk.
> Farewell, Cariola!—
> I pray thee, look thou giv'st my little boy
> Some syrup for his cold, and let the girl
> Say her prayers ere she sleep. Now, what you please!"

This feeling, as far beyond hope and despair as the extreme law of nature permits—this transference of all her solicitude to her children, as though she herself had nought more to care for on her own account—yet with the solemn identification, etherial and unconscious, save in the subtlety of sensation, of herself and her futurity with her child, who is to offer up prayers *ere she sleep;* this indeed is the work of a master, and should be approached, for the purposes of study and deep contemplation, with becoming reverence by all men.

What is the remark made on this passage by the writer in the *London Review*? He flaps his wings and says :—

> "The ludicrous rises here to sublimity!"

What is to be done with this man? Here is an individual installed in the post of critic on the drama and "what not," in one of the first reviews of the time (one professing by its superior philosophy to be far in advance of the age) an expositor of the nothingness of the old English dramatists,—who in the most impassioned scenes, invariably sees the facts either without the passion, or as fatal antitheses to it, and "fixes upon" minor details in order to elucidate or destroy (the same thing with him) general principles! *He* sees a little boy sitting up in bed with his night-gown and night-cap on, a strip of flannel round his throat, and a silver spoon in his hand. This he finds "the ludicrous." We fancy we have some sense of the ludicrous, but really we do not discover any grounds for it here, except in the Reviewer's mind. Perhaps our stupidity is the mere natural ignorance of a non-elect batchelor condition, while fathers and mothers would be forcibly struck with the jest immediately? But since allusion is made to the circumstance by the mother, as a last instance of affectionate solicitude for one she will never press to her bosom again in this world, he finds it *sublimely* ludicrous! He sees a little girl whose night-gown and night-cap make nature perfectly ridiculous, or "out of the question," kneeling down to say her prayers ere she sleep. This he considers in itself "the ludicrous;" but as the child is to pray to God, at the request of her mother, beneath whose feet the earth is reduced to a few falling sands, the last grain of which sinks with her into eternity, he considers the idea proportionately rises to the sublime of "the ludicrous!"

"The ludicrous rises here to sublimity; yet such is the power of early habit and association, supported by an *exclusion of every literary pursuit which can enlarge the mind*, that Mr. Lamb, whose taste and mental powers were of no ordinary stamp, could seriously conclude his extract from the 'Duchess of Malfy' with the following judgment."

The reviewer then quotes a passage, with intent to bring contempt on some fine remarks of Charles Lamb, which are not adapted to the fantastic nose of the "small particular." The passage concludes with these words:—

"To move a horror skilfully—to touch a soul to the quick—to lay upon fear as much as it can bear—to wean and weary a life till it is ready to drop, and then step in with mortal instruments to take its last forfeit—this only a Webster can do. Writers of an inferior genius may 'upon horror's head horrors accumulate,' but they cannot do this. They mistake quantity for quality; they 'terrify babes with painted devils;' but they know not how a soul is capable of being moved; their terrors want dignity—their affrightments are without decorum."'

The *mus criticus* immediately exclaims,—

"This is a strange infatuation! Such observations on 'want of dignity and decorum' connected with the syrup prescribed for the child's cold—this mistaking 'quantity for quality,' in conjunction with the incessant heaping up of external circumstances of horror—the 'painted devils to terrify babes,' side by side with the wax figures—show a state of critical *engouement* which could only be found in a man for whom, as it would seem, the universe had shrunk into the Garrick Collection of Plays."

The indignity offered to the tragic principle, and the maternal indecorum, exist only in the cramped, conventional mind and feelings of this trifler with humanity. He cannot, for the life and soul of him, (such as they are) meet Nature face to face. He does not understand *the difference* between quantity and quality, because he only understands the former. This is proved by *his* placing "painted devils to frighten babes side by side with the wax figures," which are instanced by *Lamb* as antithetically different. Painted devils are mere horrible generalities; the wax figures were particulars. The former are abstractions of the imagination only; the latter represented, and were believed to be, the mortal remains of a woman's husband and children. It is a pity that this sad reviewer cannot enlarge his mind to the extent of a scene or two from some play in the Garrick collection. He has not the slightest conception of the action and reaction of passion and imagination on each other and on themselves. Even the expression of terrifying babes with painted devils, taken by itself, and without any tragic cause or principle, is far from a matter of ridicule. Grant the existence of an impassioned state, "with all appliances" of time, and light, and shade; or the delirium of a sick

bed; and painted devils, being believed for the moment to be realities of some kind or other, (as is the case with children) there might be enough in the scene to appal the stoutest of us. But this gentleman sees nothing but the outside of things. He is never present at the doing and suffering. He is always "in the cool of the afternoon." Thus he sits as part and parcel of an unconcerned arm-chair, like a mere critic, instead of mixing himself up with the impassioned scene like a natural man so circumstanced, and afterwards retiring to meditate calmly on his own imaginary experience, comparing it with his practical experience, and testing it by his best powers?

Such then is the perception and judgment of this graceless diction-writer—principal mock-critic in a review founded on patriotic and philosophical principles; a review which professes to be, and in so many respects *is*, in advance of the time; in the pages of which we continually meet with such expressions as "men of cultivated understanding"—"refined mind"—"regular culture"—"close observation"—"educated men"—"critical spirit of persons of refinement"—"blessings of a confirmed literary taste;" &c., and in which—bound up with the very same number—we find the most ignorant scholasticism of mind, inducing narrowness in all things, mechanical minuteness of taste, and pragmatical incorrectness of style and diction,—side by side with the most masterly and instructive articles, such as those on Law Reform, De Tocqueville, Chile, &c. &c.

That the tragedy of the Duchess of Malfy has, like all other works, *its faults*, we of course, admit; but they are not such as the reviewer points out. The faults are not in the fundamental principles of the tragedy, but in some parts of the details. We allude chiefly to the scene which the reviewer gives such bad and blundering arguments for disliking. The quality as well as quantity of substantial horrors being actually brought on the stage, instead of the horrors being suggested only or partially and indistinctly represented, was quite in the bad taste of the time; just as the gross-minded processions of ornate dresses, and other less innocent sensualities, are the *aristocratic* taste of our own times. The terrors of the Duchess of Malfy are brought into the foreground amidst a painfully strong light, when they should have been fearfully undefined among the remote shadows. Mr. Hazlitt objects, it is true, even to the mental presentation of such horrors—for he is far from considering them as "the ingenuities of a *bonne*" who wishes "to produce a striking effect in the nursery." But let us observe the tone in which a real critic, well understanding the depth of the question he is sounding, offers his objection. "The merit," says he, "is of a kind which, however great, we wish to be rare. A series of such exhibitions obtruded upon the senses

or the imagination, must tend to stupify and harden, rather than exalt the fancy or ameliorate the heart. I speak this under correction ; but I hope the objection is a venial commonplace." We must immediately agree that, inasmuch as the Duchess of Malfy, like Macbeth and others, contains too many substantial terrors for any one tragedy, so it should stand alone and become no model for imitation or indirect repetition. To the passage, however, "where the Duchess gives directions about her children in her last struggles," which this reviewer considers the sublime of the *ludicrous*, Hazlitt alludes with very opposite impressions. In fact it seems somewhat necessary that those who write on such subjects should possess strong feelings beyond their own concerns and personalities.

As the reader may have been interested in the story of the Duchess of Malfy, the closing scene of which we have partly given, together with the abortive insults of the vain reviewer, we will extract the remainder, as illustrative of deep pathos and unadorned grandeur.

When the prolonged and solemn "dirge of the living person" concludes, Cariola denounces the executioners as villains and murderers!—adding, "what will you do with my lady," (imagination shrinking from perception) and urging her to call for help. The Duchess knows that there is nobody within hearing but the maniacs, and bids Cariola farewell. Then, by association with that last and long farewell, she thinks of her children, and while her *words* appear trivial, her heart is evidently taking its last long farewell of them also. This done, she concentrates her power to meet and over-stride fate. She has nothing in common with the mean of spirit · they can no more understand her soul than subdue it.

"*Duchess*—Now, what you please;
What death?
Bosola—Strangling. Here are your executioners.
Duchess—I forgive them.
The apoplexy, catarrh, or cough o' the lungs,
Would do as much as they do.
Bosola—Doth not death fright you?
Duchess—Who would be afraid on't,
Knowing to meet such excellent company
In th' other world?
Bosola—Yet, methinks,
The manner of your death should much afflict you ;
This cord should terrify you?
Duchess—Not a whit.
What would it pleasure me to have my throat cut
With diamonds? or to be smothered
With cassia? or to be shot to death with pearls?
I know death hath ten thousand several doors
For men to take their exits ; and 'tis found,

They go on such strange geometrical hinges,
You may open them *both ways:* any way, (for heav'n sake)
So I were *out of your whispering:* tell my brothers,
'That I perceive, death (now I'm well awake)
Best gift is, they can give or I can take.'
I would fain put off my last woman's fault:
I'd not be tedious to you.
Pull, and pull strongly, for your able strength
Must pull down heaven upon me.
Yet stay, heaven's gates are not so highly arch'd
As princes' palaces; they that enter there
Must go upon their knees. Come, violent death,
Serve for mandragora to make me sleep!
Go tell my brothers; when I am laid out,
They then may feed in quiet. [*They strangle her, kneeling.*]

FERDINAND *enters.*

Ferdinand—Is she dead?
Bosola—She is what you would have her.
Fix your eye here.
Ferdinand—Constantly.
Bosola—Do you not weep?
Other sins only speak; murder shrieks out.
The element of water moistens the earth,
But blood flies upwards and bedews the heavens!
Ferdinand—Cover her face: mine eyes dazzle: she died young.
Bosola—I think not so: her infelicity
Seem'd to have years too many.
Ferdinand—She and I were twins:—
And should I die this instant, I had lived
Her time to a minute."

"This," says Hazlitt in his work on the old English dramatists, "is not the bandying of idle words and rhetorical commonplaces" (of style and diction;) "but the writhing and conflict, and the sublime colloquy of man's nature with itself." He also quotes, in another work, the concluding words of Fernando, as an instance of the intensity which characterises the finest passages of these great dramatists, remarking to the effect, that Fernando's solemn brooding over the two points of time, birth and death, was as though the vast interval between was nothing in the comparison, being all absorbed by the passion of the scene. There is likewise an imaginary association of himself with his sister in the grave, even as they had been associated in birth, striving thus to forget that it had been his own remorseless purpose which had occasioned her to 'die young.'

We now come to the ethical question, and our previous charge of false and mischievous views with reference to morals and social conduct, will be made good without the need of any arguments, merely by suffering the reviewer to strut over the course in person. The pragmatical unconsciousness with

which he commits himself beyond the chance of retreat, explanation, grace, or redemption, has something in it of that hopeless melancholy which nullifies the sense both of indignation and of the ridiculous.

In a play by Middleton and Rowley, called "A Fair Quarrel," the character of Captain Ager's mother becomes stigmatised by the suspicion that she had conferred personal favours on somebody, without due observance of customary ceremonials and the lawful fees of the Established Church. The Colonel of the regiment—a man, no doubt, of the most rigorous chastity, and punctilious honour in all his payments—insinuates a corresponding reproach, by designating Captain Ager as an illegal human being. The son is of course exasperated and eager to resent the insult, but pauses from a misgiving that his mother might really have been guilty of that social crime of the female sex, with which she was charged. He consequently first seeks an explanation with her. She is highly indignant at his suspicions, until she finds he is determined on a sanguinary contest with the Colonel, and in order to prevent the destruction of one or both, she has the moral courage to brave the odium of all her own sex, and the majority of the opposite sex, by pretending that the epithet applied to her son was founded in truth. This being the case, Captain Ager manifests an equal moral courage in exposing himself to the contempt of the whole of both sexes by suffering the imputation of physical cowardice. He is dragged to the field by some very gentlemanly friends—"all honorable men,"—but even there he resolutely endures his antagonist's taunts and refuses to fight. The Colonel, however, carries these taunts to an extent sufficient to constitute just cause for a serious quarrel on fresh grounds, and Captain Ager then draws, and giving way to his long-suppressed passion, quickly strikes the sword from his antagonist's hand.

"The insipid levelling morality" (observes Mr. Lamb) "to which the modern stage is tied down, would not admit of such admirable passions as these scenes are filled with. A puritanical obtuseness of sentiment, a stupid infantile goodness, is creeping among us, instead of the vigorous passions, and virtues clad in flesh and blood, with which the old dramatists present us. Those noble and liberal casuists could discern in the differences, the quarrels, the animosities of man, a beauty and truth of moral feeling, no less than in the iterately inculcated duties of forgiveness and atonement. With us, all is hypocritical meekness. A reconciliation scene (let the occasion be never so absurd or unnatural) is always sure of applause. Our audiences come to the theatre to be complimented on their goodness. They compare notes with the amiable characters in the play, and find a wonderful similarity of disposition between them. We have a common stock of dramatic morality, out of which a writer may be supplied without the trouble of copying it from originals within his own breast. To know the boundaries of honour, to

be judiciously valiant, to have a temperance which shall beget a smoothness in the angry swellings of youth, to esteem life as nothing when the sacred reputation of a parent is to be defended, yet to shake and tremble under a pious cowadice when that ark of an honest confidence is found to be frail and tottering, to feel the true blows of a real disgrace blunting that sword which the imaginary strokes of a supposed false imputation had put so keen an edge upon but lately; to do, or to imagine this done, in a feigned story, asks something more of a moral sense, somewhat a greater delicacy of perception in questions of right and wrong, than goes to the writing of two or three hackneyed sentences about the laws of honour as opposed to the laws of the land, or a common-place against duelling. Yet such things would stand a writer now-a-days in far better stead than Captain Ager and his conscientious honour; and he would be considered as a far better teacher of morality than old Rowley or Middleton if they were living."

Hence the false views in morality; hence hypocrisy and moral vulgarity of conduct; hence the fall of the true Drama, to the level of erroneous opinion; hence the degradation of the stage, both public and private, and hence the 'W' of the London Review.

We are of opinion that there should not be one morality for men, and another for women; and that the heinousness of too free a translation of the term 'personal liberty' should either be somewhat abated in public opinion, or equalised. Thus much for the question involved in one part of the conduct of Captain Ager's mother; as to the rest, we consider it noble on both sides. The reviewer begins by stating the case with a sneering levity that may become *him* well enough, but which is wretchedly unbecoming to the subject, and to the consistency of the chief writers in the London Review. "Thus," says he, "in 'A Fair Quarrel' by Middleton and Rowley, we find a very *curious* "*casus conscientiæ*" which puzzles a certain captain, upon whom his colonel had bestowed an opprobrious name in which his mother's character was involved. Our conscientious captain, though dying to punish the insult, is mightily perplexed with the thought that the reproach might be well grounded." (The reviewer thinks it a good joke that the *truth* should have any influence in the matter either way!) "In this state of doubt he goes straight to the person who best knew the truth of the case, namely his own mother. She is extremely angry, as one might suppose, at her son's not very delicate inquiry;"—(his excitement rendering him unmindful of perfection in style and diction?) "but upon discovering that the certainty of her former good conduct will induce the captain to fight, she falls into the *curious* fancy of confirming the colonel's report. This unnerves the gallant youth,"—(upon whom the truth should have taken no sort of effect?) "so thoroughly that his seconds are almost ready to beat him into the combat. Fortunately the Colonel calls him a coward. This *falsehood*," (the

writer puts this word in italics to show that Captain Ager *was* a coward for not fighting in a wrong cause;) "according to the Captain's ethics, justifies his fighting." (This is not according to the ethics of the London Reviewer, who thus infers that it was unjustifiable to fight with some cause, though cowardly not to fight in a wrong cause.) "He draws, and as might be expected, disarms the Colonel. Our critic's indignation at our degenerate age, and his scorn of present notions" (which are so very true to philosophy and nature!) "are to us extremely *curious*. The manner in which he expresses his strange notions —those dreams and visions of his misplaced existence in a period to which he did not belong—gives the passage the appearance of such effusions as clever men, under a certain degree of delirium, are apt to bring forth."

These remarks are far beneath an answer; and we leave the writer to the deliberate contempt of his readers.

At the conclusion of the extract from Lamb, the reviewer says, "We are certainly willing to fall under the condemnation of Mr. Lamb, on the moral question at issue." In other words, the reviewer would have preferred *no* more "delicate perception in questions of right and wrong, than goes to the writing of two or three hackneyed sentences about the laws of honour as opposed to the laws of the land, or a common-place against duelling." This he would have considered as far better morality than that taught in this instance by Rowley and Middleton? "The preceding passage," pursues the reviewer, "is a more *curious*"—(really this gentleman is so vain of his style and diction, that he thinks his very tautologies cannot be too profuse!)— "a more *curious specimen* than any he has given us in his collection."

A great quantity of similar stuff follows. Lamb's fine comprehension of the best passages in the old dramatists, is termed "a complete hallucination." Lamb is compared (meaning an insult) to Don Quixote. The whole article, indeed, is the reviewer's "commission of lunacy" against his betters. Lamb's style in the last quotation is said to be "tainted with the vices of verbosity and diffuseness." The *instance* given is "the ark of an honest confidence, found to be frail and tottering." To find such remarks made on such passages, is really enough to shake our confidence in the capacity and literary sanity of certain instances of "regular culture; educated men; critical spirit of persons of refinement; blessings of a confirmed literary taste," &c.

He goes on:—

"We might multiply instances of similar absurdities in the conception and development of character, which Mr. Lamb regarded as almost supernatural revelations respecting the human heart. He is quite in raptures with the 'Revenger's Tragedy' by Cyril Tourneur."

Of this fine tragedy, like all the rest, the reviewer speaks in his usual style of arrogant ignorance, dull flippancy, and *refined grossness*. His whole article is one of the most extraordinary instances of perfection in non-comprehension that is, or ever will be, on record. He libels his subject at every inch of his progress. All his nouns, adjectives, and verbs, are actionable. By every work on which he comments, or to which he only alludes, in every sentence and in every important word each sentence contains, he adds another sour tinct, false harmony, and characteristic touch to the antithetical portrait which he continually strives to hang up in opposition to the noble passions, principles, and powerful imaginations, the profound truths, and vigorous nature of Master Shakspeare, Master Webster, Master Decker, Master Chapman, and the rest of the old English Dramatists. Should space permit, a few words will presently be offered as to why and how all this happens.

This champion of style and diction, who would fain prove genius to be a mere sequence of words, concludes his silly remarks on the "Revenger's Tragedy," by tautologically saying, "We could multiply similar instances of impropriety," (by dissimilar logarithms of ignorance?) "false notions of morals," (by false views of true morality?) "and absurdly-conceived situations, which the authors imagined to be *theatrical*."

"In short," says Hazlitt in his Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth, "the great characteristic of the elder dramatic writers is, that there is nothing theatrical about them. In reading them, you only think how the persons, into whose mouths certain sentiments are put, would have spoken or looked: in reading Dryden and others of this school, you only think, as the authors themselves seem to have done, how they would be ranted on the stage."

This rank overgrowth striving to choak up Lamb's Specimens, and all the "men and things" involved in the question, is in itself a melancholy inversion of humanity which would make creation ugly. The article is one crowded field of ESSENTIAL blunders and semi-vital forms, which outrage or burlesque, turn where you will, every great and integral principle of Nature, with a systematic propagation of luxuriant abortion. Mildew and blight are upon the face of it, and the spirit of the human heart pants for its true atmosphere and cannot continue human. The image of God is changed into a mandrake, and there is no more hope of progression. Thus, at least, the solemn bugbear of the field would have it. But that we mean to break down all his fences, and put the wholesome plough through it, he may rest assured.

The fear of fatiguing and irritating the reader by the multitude of this reviewer's *specimens*, compels us, unwillingly, to pass over many tempting sentences—"the least, a death to

nature." We will conclude therefore, these numerous instances of what a man of "regular education," who "enjoys the blessings of a confirmed literary taste," doth most consistently hate and deride, with a specimen of what he relishes and applauds. We have shown what ideas and modes of expression he considers vulgar or worthless; we will now show what he considers the highest excellence.

He quotes a long scene from "*The Spanish Tragedy*, or, Hieronymo is Mad again," by Thomas Kyd. He designates it as "a powerful scene." Now this inconsistency we felt, at first, coming as it does after all his previous tirades and phillippics, was really "the unkindest cut of all." That it is a powerful scene we most unequivocally admit, nor do we think there is a finer extant in any play, by any writer. But there are different definitions in the minds of different men as to power; and this being settled,—then, where, or in what points and passages is it powerful, and why? With this understanding it will presently be discovered that the real admirers of the scene in question, are just as far apart from this reviewer, as if he had "lumped it" with the "essentially wrong plan" of Shakspeare and the rest of the blunderers!

The reviewer, from a secret misgiving, ventures no remark on particular passages throughout the scene, with one exception. Hieronymo's brain is disordered by grief for the loss of his son who has been cruelly murdered, and the wretched father breaks into the following reproach of night, and day, and heaven's ministers.

> "*Hier.*—Light me your torches at the mid of noon,
> Whenas the sun-god rides in all his glory,
> Light me your torches then!
> *Ped.*—Then we burn daylight.
> *Hier.*—Let it be burnt. Night is a murd'rous slut,
> That would not have her treasons to be seen,
> And yonder pale-faced Hecate there, the moon,
> Doth give consent to that is done in darkness;
> And all those stars that gaze upon her face
> Are aglets on her sleeve, pins on her train.
> *And those that should be powerful and divine*
> *Do sleep in darkness when they most should shine.*
> *Ped.*—Provoke them not, fair sir, with tempting words,
> The heavens are gracious, and your miseries
> And sorrow, make you speak you know not what."

Whether the apparently unnecessary introduction of the toilet trivialities of Hecate, may find any qualification in the wild complexity of association which madness gives to the train of ideas, is left for the reader's decision; but with the exception of that line, and the tautology in sense, of "miseries and sorrow," it will be perceived that the "style and diction" of the

foregoing passages are faultless. There is not a wrong word, a word too much, or a word in the wrong place. It is a clear, muscular style, possessing deep pathos and entire simplicity. Let it speak for itself: and here is the critic of the *London Review* who shall also speak!

"The *spirit of ranting* could not be absent from the poet even when he had struck so happily into the right path. Hieronymo's *quibbles* and *quirks* about Hecate and the stars are quite annoying, as an unexpected disturbance; *but the lines* which we have put in italics *remind us* of one of the *most tender and affecting lines* in Garcilaso:

'Y tu, rustica Diosa, donde estabas?'

Mr. Wiffen in his *tasteful* translation of that celebrated Spanish poet, has missed the *exquisite delicacy of the original.* The passage is a lamentation on the death of a lady who had perished in child-birth. The reproach of cruel neglect is addressed, as in the above passage, to *the moon,* but especially in her character of Lucina. Mr. Wiffen's translation is—

'*Discourteous* power,
Where wert thou gone in that momentous hour?'

He has taken *Rustica* in the sense of *rude;* but the delicate allusion of the Spanish poet is to *Diana's* character as the goddess of field-sports, for the sake of which she is supposed to have neglected the labouring female's—'gentle voice, &c.'"

The reader will immediately perceive that a reverential sympathy with one of the greatest trials, as one of the most important events in the arcana of nature, must induce that retiring of the mind, which prevents such remarks as we would otherwise right gleefully offer on the utterly contemptible vapidities, "tasteful" common-places, and *nothings* of smooth sound, which this gentleman is pleased to consider as subtle criticism and "exquisite" poetry! It is a pity, however, but some worthy old *bonne* had been at hand to have suggested a few more original ideas, and aided their production:—"*Y tu, rustica Diosa, donde estabas?*" Let the reader only place this last specimen of the Reviewer beside the quotations we have given from the "mock tragedy" of the Duchess of Malfy, and from the specimen of Lamb's "complete hallucination of mind:"—nothing further is necessary.

The scene of Hieronymo's madness is rather too long for us to quote, more especially as it abounds with passages which excite such profound and varied reflections, and suggest so many thoughts and feelings, that the present paper would be unavoidably drawn out to a far greater length than was intended. Concerning those passages, suffice it to say, the reviewer offers no remarks whatever. All his *criticism* is contained in the "exquisite" specimen just quoted, and in the general observation, that the scene possesses great power. We shall now proceed to his definition of power, as it becomes ne-

cessary that we should clearly know what he means by paying a compliment so inconsistent, to all appearance, with his previous verdicts and other notions.

"Since it is unquestionable," says he, "that most of the old dramatic writers were men of no common talents," (and therefore we may add, not to be *apprehended*, tried and transported by men of common talents;) "and that their defects arise chiefly from the *depraved taste*, which began to make a fearful progress in their times, they cannot have failed to *strike out* passages of considerable beauty." The diction is somewhat equivocating; but a sufficient number of fine passages have been suffered to remain. Presently afterwards, he says, "The diction (for we adhere to our distinction) which the dramatic writers had imitated, mostly at second-hand from the Italians, is always flowing and *pleasing to the ear.*" Because redundant, and of a depraved taste! Again:—"The habitual negligence with which those purveyors of the stage wrote," (purveyors *to*, he means;) "enabled them to write so much, that they must now and then have *stumbled* upon some striking situation, some *affecting exhibition of passion.*"

Let the admissions and positions of the foregoing passages be borne in mind. We will now give the concluding paragraphs of this unique article. The writer has just quoted the scene from the Spanish Tragedy:—

"There is *great power* in all this. Yet it is only at a certain stage of refinement, a very early one indeed—that the public can take pleasure in *this kind of amplification* upon the stage."

"There is a period when uneducated men are very much alive to exhibitions of the faculty of expressing thought under a great variety of forms. Acquainted in themselves with the wonderful power of *language*, but no less conscious of the difficulty of using it beyond a certain number of daily common phrases, they are astonished at the richness which the same *language* displays when used by the orator or the poet. This admiration, in the infancy of society, is so great, that it leads to the notion of inspiration. A man gifted with remarkable powers of *language* cannot be conceived to be like other men: there must be a divine spirit speaking in him. A pleasure in the *mere sound* of *flowing* and *varied phrases*, is discoverable at all times in the mass of the people. It is this pleasure that fills the churches and chapels with people who do not comprehend a single phrase in a long discourse." (Ahem!) "But a *mere display of elocution* has lost its charm with the average of the classes that frequent the stage." (Qy. *theatre?*) "The *reason is implied* in an answer of Horace Walpole, which we quote from memory. When asked where *good language* might be acquired, he said, '*Go to the next chandler's shop, and you will hear it.*'"

W.

The reviewer's train of definitions, axioms, and their necessary deductions– which deductions seem very seldom to have entered his mind—thus becomes sufficiently complete. If

not very instructive, it will be at least very "*curious*" to see them fairly placed in battle array before us.

I. Shakspeare, in his writings, proceeded on an essentially wrong plan.

II. This essentially wrong plan consisted in the use of an unnatural and absurd style.

III. Diction is an accidental acquirement; but style is a part of character. (Therefore part of the *character* of Shakspeare was *unnatural* and absurd.)

IV. The faults and defects of the old dramatists of Shakspeare's time, arose from the depraved taste of the period.

V. The essence of these faults, and the depraved taste which induced them, was redundancy of diction. (Hence the error in the taste of the time, and of these writers, consisted in the *quantity*, and not the quality, of the words employed. The essentially wrong plan of Shakspeare was the result of a part of his character—which was unnatural and absurd: the essentially wrong plan of his contemporaries, was in the use of too many words.)

VI. What the admirers and students of the old dramatists consider as profound problems of human passion solved by action, are, in reality, nothing better than the nursery tales of a *bonne;* and what the said admirers consider as rich and powerful imagery, is, in truth, the mere exhaustion of commonplace thoughts by repeating them in various verbal forms, producing *variety of sound*. (The reviewer gives abundant *instances* of the *fact*.)

VII. Most of the old dramatists, being unquestionably men of no common talents, could not fail to strike out (from their *flinty* natures?) passages of considerable beauty. Habitual negligence enabled them to write so much, and, owing to the quantity, they sometimes stumbled upon some affecting exhibition of passion. (If this be the cause, how very extraordinary that so many others, before and ever since, should have written so much in the dramatic shape—and all sorts of shapes—who have never once stumbled upon anything of the kind! It is *not* accident that generates true power. We will defy anybody to produce one original thought or image of the highest power, either in intellect, imagination, or a compound of both, from all the works of all the mass of minor poets that have ever lived?)

VIII. Great power is the amplification of *language*.

IX. Great power is only admired in the infancy of society. Those who enjoy the blessings of a confirmed literary taste, are too refined to endure it.

X. The scene from the Spanish Tragedy, in all of which there is great power, derives its merit, and conveys pleasure, from the mere sound of flowing and varied phrases, or the mere display of elocution.

XI. This display of mere elocution is no longer attractive on the stage, or in the church and chapel, because it cannot be termed *good language*, *i. e.* such language as we may hear in the next chandler's shop.

XII. Hence we must conclude, that in order to satisfy the refined taste of men of regular culture, and convey to them a correct intellectual instruction and pleasure, all fine dramatic works, and other genuine sermons and moral homilies, should be translated into the vulgate according to the model of such language as may be habitually used in a chandler's shop. Lecturers, and heads of schools and colleges, would therefore do well to institute corresponding establishments for the teaching of polite literature on the above principle, so as to qualify writers and speakers for addressing "the educated classes" in the most appropriate manner.

XIII. There are different standards of morality for the two sexes; and conventional morality, however opposed to individual or general nature, and the particular circumstances, is the true morality.

Such then, is the "*jewel* of criticism," which the *London Review* has permitted to culminate on its forehead, shedding "disasterous twilight" over true intellectual power and morality, while it strives to blazon itself forth as the new and improved philosophy of dramatic literature. It is all of a piece with the shallowness of saying that a pleasure derived from the mere sound of flowing and varied phrases is what fills the churches and chapels with people; as if the true cause—whether rational and sincere, or otherwise—did not lay far deeper than in the organ of hearing! In the hands of the same writer we find poetry in general, treated after a similar fashion. His very high standard is manifested in various articles. In the article on *Crabbe's Life and Works* he says, among other things, "Language employed *principally* for some necessary or useful purpose, and *incidentally* for gratification, is prose; reverse the two conditions, and it is poetry!" Anybody, therefore, who can write language with such intent, can write poetry!

We must close our "specimens" by observing, that there is a superfluity of gems to be found of equal brilliancy in sundry other articles and numbers of the work from which we have quoted. From the thorough-going style in which all profound insight into the human heart is denied to the old dramatists, one might suppose that the writer had been brooding over the following passage in a well-known medical work.

☞ "When man was formed, the Creator, by bestowing on him the faculty of observation, gave him the power of adding to his stock of present comforts and conveniences, and even pleasures: by observation, he learns that such causes will always produce such effects; by this he is informed that fire always burns. He may possess some

knowledge in mechanics; and, if he is attentive to cause and effect he may obtain the means leading to great knowledge in mechanics. But such and no more, is given to man." *

It is to be hoped that we have shown, to those who required such showing, that the old dramatists were men to whom great knowledge was originally given, and who also possessed great acquired knowledge of a different kind from mere mechanics, and the art of displaying language or diction. They were the bold and manly representatives of that primitive order of the best and earliest poets of all nations, who have ever written from an implicit faith in nature, and no faith at all in any pragmatical accoucheur of the muses. The time is at hand when their principles will be more generally recognized and understood, and nobody will listen for a moment to the formal proposals of systematic aid from the practitioners of such "regular culture," whose craft will proportionately fall into contempt and ridicule. *Donde estabas?*—and an echo answers, "*donde?*"

This writer in the *London Review* may possibly have some worthy admirers. Such a circumstance will make no difference either way; but he should not, therefore, forget that the old dramatists and Charles Lamb, have also a rather stronger body of admirers—meaning by strength, the capacity of showing reasons for "the faith that is in them." The general insult and defiance might as well have been omitted in his attempt to criticise works, concerning which he is so shamefully and laughably uninformed. What he considers absurd, is discovered, when analyzed, to contain the finest principles of human passion and intellect; what he admires "from his soul" is sure to turn out something quite unworthy of notice. It is just like the *Literary Gazette* talking about literature! As we have no doubt but this reviewer has a very mediocre opinion of such writers as Lamb and Hazlitt, he cannot reasonably accuse us of much vanity in saying that he is at liberty to consider the present article as proceeding from one of that school—with the additional circumstance of being alive. It will make his faction—the *myosuran*—excessively uncomfortable, but tend to abate a general nuisance.

We shall conclude this vexatious article by hazarding a few conjectures touching the characteristic impulses which have induced such an attack on the old dramatists, on Lamb, on the British Drama in general, and on those who would *reform* the stage.

It has been continually witnessed in periodical literature, that when a reviewer has had to deal with a work concerning the subject and fundamental principles of which he was profoundly ignorant—a sealed book to one of his natural incapacity—he has almost always been found to commit himself to

* See the London Practice, by Jewel. C. III. Sec. I.

the ludicrous extent of selecting the finest passages as marks of the absurdity of the work. It is plain enough how this happens. Such an individual is naturally struck—back to his mother earth sometimes—by those things which are in strongest opposition to himself. He denounces all those feelings, ideas, and combinations of which he understands least, and perhaps, nothing whatever, because his self-love is the most pained and confounded by them. His attack is the unconscious impulse of self-defence. If such things be valuable, he himself must be worthless so far as they are concerned? Simply, therefore, he inverts the conclusion. The attack is made chiefly from self-love, partly in spite of himself. The article on "Lamb's Specimens" is a choice instance of the working of these principles. It is manifestly written by one whose natural constitution of mind and body, whose habitual course of thought and reading, and the character of whose train of circumstances and experience, from childhood upwards, (be it here acknowledged that we do not know who the writer is, except from his articles in the *London Review*) have rendered him exquisitely unfit for the task he has undertaken. He seems to have been made on purpose *not* to understand the subject. Now this is just why he has undertaken it. We may hear him saying to himself—"The British Drama, both as regards writers and stages, is at a low ebb; but a love for certain old writers still exists in the breasts of many. Here are a class of men who feel a deep sympathy with what they find in the old dramatists, and experience a corresponding delight. I find nothing in such writings that claims my sympathy, nothing that occasions my delight! On the contrary; antipathy and pain are excited in me by everything they admire! This is very surprising;—I must look into it! Surely there must be a great mistake somewhere? I see it plainly; there *is* a great mistake somewhere! The mistake is in the old dramatists and their admirers, poor men! I will set this matter in a proper light, and the world shall see how wrong they have been. I will do this in my best style and diction; and if they fail, the *London Review* will be none the wiser for it."

To say that the article partly originated in a degree of resentment at the pleasure certain people derive from the old dramatists, might be fair enough; but to add that there was for that reason a conscious wish to destroy it, would perhaps be too harsh. Such things, however, have been known; though we are all very apt to give a "tastful translation" of our sins. There has been a strong shade of the "evil eye" in man ever since his ill-advised affair with the apple. "Discourteous power!" But we are willing to believe, in the present instance, that mere natural inaptitude was the chief cause of the mass of discrepancies that have been noticed, and no malevolent

feeling. Let those, however, by whom, if they at all examine and understand their own natures, the inaptitude must be felt, be exhorted not to meddle and tamper with uncongenial truths, nor attempt to reach the forbidden fruit of dramatic power, whose taste, well understood, leads to the deepest recesses of the heart, and the most profound and unexclusive Knowledge.

Sundry expressions and sentences of an unceremonious nature, which the spirit of the cause impelled us to write, have been suffered to remain here, but nothing personal, except as relates to that cause, was intended. We have also to qualify the sweeping position with which we commenced, concerning the antagonism of the *London Review* with the Fine Arts generally, by expressing our admiration of the masterly criticisms on *Music*, under the signature of M. S. O. It will be but small and inadequate praise to observe, that the writer is the first of the time on that subject. Here the public derive a sensible advantage from the correct application of powers and acquirements. If the writer of the sound and acute article on "Prose Fictions and their Varieties," in No. II, had reviewed "Lamb's Specimens," the present reply would not have been needed. Where we now feel indignation and contempt, we should probably have felt respect, admiration, and sympathy. Those two articles, as they now stand, may be read against each other. Such circumstances make us fear that the liberal principle of the *London Review*, in giving full licence to the individualities of all its different writers, will induce an outrageous incongruity in the whole work, unless greater care be taken to preserve a general tone and tendency, and to apply *rightly* the talents of the many able contributors it possesses. A more concentrated and consistent influence would thereby be exercised.

The Author of the Exposition of the False Medium, &c.

MANIFESTO

OF THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, AGAINST THE MORAL INTERESTS OF THE PRODUCTIVE CLASSES.

We have read with mingled feelings of pain and astonishment the leading article in the *Examiner* of the 20th of the past month, on the proposed reduction of the Newspaper Stamp Duty. Incredible as it may appear, that paper calls upon the people of England to accept with thanks, as an invaluable boon, the offer of a penny stamp duty, although far, very far, from being such a measure as the public interest requires, and as the public voice has loudly demanded. Is it possible that this can be the counsel of so enlightened and strenuous a friend to popular rights? Accept with gratitude, at the eleventh hour, after a struggle more severe than any in which the people have been engaged since the passing of the

Reform Bill, a miserable compromise,* by which the accomplishment of the object of that struggle will only be indefinitely delayed! Very different is the advice which we would give the people on an occasion like the present. We denounce the proposition of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as the gravest insult that ever has been offered to a body of intelligent and deserving men. For two years a reduction of the Stamp Duty on Newspapers has been in contemplation. It was foreseen that, however disinclined to such a measure, however dilatory in effecting it, the Goverment would be driven to it at last, by the impunity with which the law was defied, and the growing influence of public opinion. It was foreseen also that a mere reduction would not be sufficient. The object sought was, not to save the money of the rich, but to make newspapers accessible to the working classes; and it was known that with a duty of a penny, the end would not be gained. Deputation, after deputation, (composed of men of the highest reputation for liberal and enlightened opinions,) waited upon Government. Successive Chancellors of the Exchequer, have each, in turn, been addressed, and invariably to the same effect. "We come in the name of the poor man who claims the right of instruction, and who would be as effectually debarred from the means of information by a duty of a penny, as he is now by a duty of three pence halfpenny." The different deputations have been dismissed with bland smiles and smooth words; but all was false and hollow. The day arrived when the intentions of Government were to be officially announced. Mr. Spring Rice rose in his place in the House of Commons, and the mask was dropped. The working men of Great Britain and Ireland were now distinctly told the Government of Lord Melbourne did not exist for them. "Toil on," says the Chancellor of the Exchequer, "it is not for you to interest yourselves in the busy scenes by which you are surrounded. Read if you will read, under the besotting influence of the public house, and I object not to your perusing in a tap-room, or beer shop, the advertisements of a high-priced journal; but my care it shall be to prevent newspapers becoming so cheap, that you might purchase them to read with your wives and families at home."

The foulest and deepest blot by which the character of the present administration has been stained, was the speech of Mr. Spring Rice on the consolidation of the stamp duties, as far as they related to this subject. But let us not be unjust to every member of the Cabinet of Lord Melbourne, by confounding the innocent with the guilty. Mr. Poulet Thomson and other members of the government are known to be advocates of the total abolition of the stamp duty. The premier himself and Lord John Russell are understood to be favourable to the entire abolition.

Out of the Cabinet Lord Howick is also for the abolition. The Marquis of Lansdown, and Lord Palmerston belong to the party of the resistance; but it is well known, that the opposition from any of the ministers was so faint, that a person in the position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, expressing a strong opinion that the stamp duty ought not to be retained, would have decided the question for the people. Is it not incredible that this power should have fallen, even for an instant, into the hands of any one man, and that man one anxious to identify himself with the liberal party, and yet, that it should not have been instantly employed to secure, for ever, the most essential of all the rights of freemen? Yet such is the fact. Mr. Spring Rice had the power of giving to England a free press, and withheld it.

The reasons upon which the Chancellor of the Exchequer professes to have acted, are set forth in a pamphlet which, we are informed, is the joint production of Mr. Mudie, and Mr. Charles Knight, the publisher. The first argument urged by these gentlemen is the following. "It is better to have comparatively few national journals,* than an immense multitude of merely local newspapers." This might be granted; but it is better still to have both. There is, however, a large class of persons for whom it is more important that there should be newspapers containing mere local information, than journals filled with intelligence of a general kind. We refer to the more ignorant class, the inhabitants of small villages; who, if ever they begin to read, must read something which they can understand, and nothing but the politics of their own neighbourhood will excite, at first, any definite interest in their minds. The advantage of having no stamp would be, that there might be penny newspapers of this character, paying all expenses with a moderate circulation; but it is quite preposterous to suppose that such journals would impede the circulation of newspapers of a higher character, which would be bought for the most part by a totally different class of readers. The fact is, the more local journals are read, the more what are termed national journals* will also be read, and for a very simple reason;—little things lead to great. Agricultural labourers, who begin to read about the affairs of their own parish, bye and bye will take an interest in

* It is asserted that ministers are scarcely strong enough to carry even a reduction of the stamp duty; and that some compromise with the enemies of the press is, therefore, necessary. This is a mere delusion. Those who would vote against the abolition would also vote against the reduction of the stamp. If the one can be carried, so might the other. Nothing is to be feared from the Lords. The Bill goes to them as a money Bill affecting general taxes to the amount of 6,000,000*l.*

* Strictly speaking, there are no *national journals.* Two thirds of the space, (upon an average), of London newspapers is filled with local intelligence of no interest to persons not resident in the metropolis.

those of the county; after a time they will feel a pleasure in discussing a measure affecting the whole nation, and then their curiosity will be excited to read about other nations. The strongest objection we know of to a penny stamp is, that it *would prevent the existence of cheap local newspapers.* If there were no small beginnings, there could be no progress,—no attainment of intellectual power,—and the brutal and debasing ignorance of some millions of our countrymen would be perpetuated from generation to generation.

The next assertion we find in the pamphlet is, that without a stamp, newspapers could not be conducted with the same ability as at present, through the excessive competition that would arise. In other words, these consistent advocates of free trade actually tell the public, that the way to improve the quality of a commodity is to tax it! Wonderful discovery! But what still more wonderful stupidity on the part of the public, by which they should have been led to imagine that it was nothing but competition that made capitalists expend their money in improvements, in order to gain the command of a market! Learn every one, and know, henceforth, from the testimony of Mr. Mudie, Mr. Knight, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that it was only the obligations of the stamped journals to government that induced them to get their newspapers printed by steam, and that induces now the proprietors of those journals to expend *15,000l.* per annum in the salaries of reporters and editors. Learn, moreover, that if the stamps be taken off, the laws of human nature will be reversed, and the anxiety of every newspaper proprietor will then be to offer the worst possible commodity to the public, as the surest means of success.

We hear much of the inferiority of American newspapers, but the fact may be explained, without resorting to the absurd hypothesis that it is to be attributed to the absence of a stamp duty. Every thing manufactured in that country is inferior to the English for one and the same reason. Competition in the United States has in no branch of industry reached the same point as in this country. Increase the number of literary men in the United States, and the number of newspaper establishments, so that the supply shall be greater than the demand, which has never yet been the case in America, and there will be immediately a visible improvement in the American journals; but already an improvement has commenced, and in a few years they will equal if not excel our own.

If there were any real ground for apprehension, it is not that the competition of newspaper proprietors would be too severe without a stamp duty, but not severe enough. The sale of the unstamped newspapers, in holes and corners, proves that there would be an immense market for cheap journals, if the

trade were free. Will there be, for a length of time, as many sellers, outbidding each other for public favour, as it would be desirable should exist? We doubt it. Still it is not possible that the press in this country can retrograde; we may see a proof of the continued tendency towards progression in the existing unstamped press. Advertisements are continually appearing of new twopenny newspapers, professing to contain better information, or to be printed on a larger sheet, than any other newspaper of the same price.

Mr. Wakley proposes to give compensation to the proprietors of stamped newspapers for any injury their property may sustain, by the abolition of the duty. We regret the question should be embarrassed by such a proposition. It must be rejected on two grounds. First; no class of capitalists can be allowed to claim a vested right in the continuance of a public tax; and, secondly, there is yet no case made out that the proprietors of stamped journals would be losers by the change. The people of the Times, and Chronicle, say they would be gainers. We will take them at their word. If the fact should be so, they have no claim for compensation; if only a hypocritical pretence for opposing the freedom of the press, they deserve to lose. One thing is certain; no journal that chooses to be honest will suffer by the change. The price of advertisements will be reduced by the competition, but the circulation which will be attained by popular liberal journals, will be a sufficient recompense for this diminution of their profits.

Another statement made by the pamphleteers in favor of a penny stamp, is, the utter impossibility, according to these gentlemen (and the Chancellor of the Exchequer adopts the same opinion), of making arrangements for receiving, and sorting, double the number of newspapers now circulated by post, if a halfpenny or a penny were to be paid with each newspaper. We remember when it was urged on Mr. Spring Rice that a considerable revenue might be derived from a penny postage, his answer was that it would produce little or nothing, because payment of the penny would be avoided by cheaper agencies than the post-office, and that newspapers would be forwarded to all the large towns by coach. This argument was so far solid, that the calculations of gain to the revenue, from this source, have generally proceeded upon the supposition, that the number sent through the post-office (even if the stamp were abolished) would not be increased for years to come, and that the sum they would produce would be only 100,000*l.* Now, however, by the advice of his ill-judging friends, Mr. Spring Rice is induced to reverse his former position. We are now told the number of penny pieces brought to the post-office would be so great, that St. Martin's-

le-grand would become a mountain of copper, and that it would be impossible to contrive any means by which the money might be counted, and removed. A penny stamp is asserted to be the only way of getting out of the dilemma. But mark the dishonesty of the whole proposition. It is proposed not merely to stamp every newspaper requiring to be sent through the post-office, but also to stamp newspapers having an exclusively local circulation. If cheap local newspapers could be published, they would be generally preferred by country readers to London journals, two-thirds of which are always filled with advertisements, puff paragraphs, critiques upon theatres, and other matters of no interest to any person not resident in town. But no, says the Chancellor of the Exchequer, every newspaper reader in Manchester or Liverpool, whether he wishes it or not, shall be compelled to purchase London newspapers, or what is equivalent to the same thing, shall pay a tax, and a heavy tax too, for having them conveyed to other persons. Again: a large proportion of the London papers are now regularly sent off by the morning coaches as soon as published. The county papers are chiefly circulated by means of butchers, bakers, and other tradesmen, who make periodical visits to the villages, and gentlemen's seats. In other cases county newspapers are charged with a cross-country postage of a penny, which would continue to be levied. These are all instances in which it is unjust to inflict a penny stamp duty, under the pretence of giving the public in return the accommodation of the post-office. The obvious course would be to let those pay for the accommodation who require it, or to bestow it gratis, which is the more liberal policy of other countries with respect to various literary and scientific publications.

It is worth while to see whether the profit to be derived from a penny postage would pay the expenses, if it should be necessary, of a few additional mail coaches, and new receiving houses.

The mail coaches now charge at the rate of 1½*d.* per pound for large parcels, carried one hundred miles. A parcel of one thousand newspapers weighing 88 pounds would therefore cost 11*s.* The maximum cost of collecting, and distributing them by hand, would be 9*s.* A postage of one penny, or of 4*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.* the thousand, would, therefore, leave a profit of 3*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.* As there are now about twenty-five millions of newspapers circulated by the Post-Office, every time the business of the newspaper department was doubled, with a penny postage, there would be a profit to Government, over and above all expenses, of 79,166*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*

It is disgraceful to our Legislature that it should be necessary to reiterate these facts. The example of America and

France, where the postage upon newspapers is not a penny, but on the average less than a halfpenny, is sufficient to convince every impartial person that there can be no real difficulty in making similar arrangements in this country.

The truth is, it is not a Post-Office question. The Chancellor of the Exchequer confesses that the penny would be more than sufficient to defray all expenses. Why then does he wish to retain it? Is it for the sake of the few thousand pounds that the revenue would gain by the tax; quite the contrary. It is to keep penny and two-penny newspapers out of the hands of the working classes. With a penny stamp, no journal as large as the Penny Magazine could be published under two-pence-halfpenny or threepence. The reason is that the profit on each number must be larger, because with the same expenses, the circulation would be less, and because there would be a greater outlay of capital, than if there were no stamp. Under the operation of a penny stamp duty, no daily morning journal will be published under fourpence or fourpence-halfpenny. A price quite as effective as that of sevenpence in keeping them entirely out of the reach of working men. This is the object desired to be effected. The Whigs are afraid of the people; be it so. The people will not return the compliment—they are not afraid of the Whigs. The party of the *doctrinaire*, and the *juste milieu* will have a shorter lease of power in England, than in France. Meanwhile let the people watch the conduct of those who profess to represent their interest in the House of Commons.

A division will be taken on Mr. Wakley's amendment for the total abolition of the stamp duty. The result is certain; for the Tories will of course vote with Ministers, but the result will also cause to be circulated throughout the country, the names of the friends and enemies of a free press, and the time will soon come when the information may be turned to a good account.

Theta.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have to apologize to contributors, as also to our readers, for the postponement of various original Articles, and Notices of Books. It will be perceived, by the extra quantity of matter in the present number, that the delay is unavoidable.

R. Q. cannot be accepted.

Foh-hi has wit, but no logic. The subject requires both.