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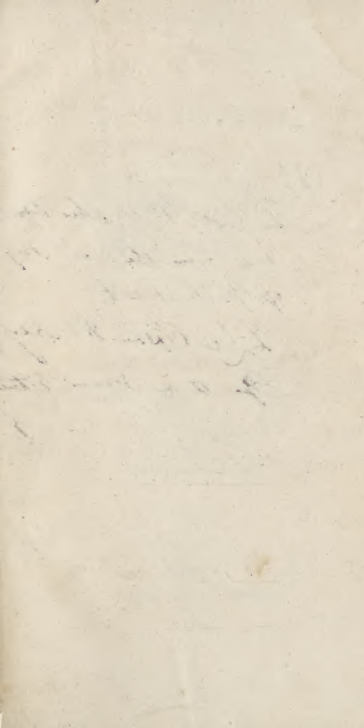


F NORTH STREET
ROTHES

09



THE
PUBLISHERS



Q 13

The first N^o of this work
was given the very day
of publication to

The Late Captain Rob Anderson
Spurr & Isaac Betts

THE

EPHEMERA,

A SERIES OF

John S. S.

ESSAYS

AND

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.



2 NORTH STREET
ROTHES

• “Nos hæc novimus esse nihil”



2 NORTH STREET
ROTHES
ELGIN,

PRINTED BY R. JOHNSTON.

1823.

THE

REPRINTED

A SERIES OF

ESSAYS

AND

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

EDINBURGH
PRINTED BY

"Has been examined and approved"

EDIN.

PRINTED BY H. JOHNSON.

1825.



ceasing toil, to stretch his limbs amid the fields, and breathe the pure air of Heaven; or the pale invalid leaves the bed, where all the long winter he tossed from side to side in feverish listlessness, to look once more upon the sun and sky, and inhale new health and vigour.

Those morning hours which used to be slept away in the darkness and cold of winter, are now devoted to exercise in the fields; or rambling about the suburbs of the town. If in a morning one takes a seat on the top of Lady-hill, or some other commanding eminence, though he may not have such a view as from the Acropolis of Athens, or the top of the Capitoline hill of Rome; yet he will assuredly always find some object to exercise his vision, and perhaps sometimes to amuse him. If he has been out pretty early, the town below him appears as if deserted and uninhabited; at first not a single being is to be seen stirring: by degrees a door here and there opens, when out comes the newly dressed inmate—yawns two or three times—loiters about, and then, with seeming reluctance, resumes his employment. At first no smoke was to be seen issuing from the close crowded chimnies; one at last begins to emit its curling volumes; then another and another in succession, as the hour of breakfast approaches, till the whole mingle into one dense and pitchy cloud. In the course of these observations, you may form some estimate of the comparative habits of the population, if it holds true that the earliest risers are the most persevering and industrious. From this your eminence you will see those engaged in traffick enjoying the only opportunity they have for exercise, ere they return to their warehouse, where they await all day the entrance

of some straggling customer. You will see also the school-boy creeping 'with shining morning face and with his satchel on his back to school,' bewailing the change of season which compels him to get up a couple of hours earlier.

If the forenoons are bright and sunshiney, you will now see the ladies, who; like the Aurelia, have thrown aside the furs and envelopements which covered them from the severity of winter, flitting about in the sunshine in all the silken colours of the rainbow, and revelling among the silks, and satins, and gum-flowers of the haberdasher—or calling at the Booksellers for the last new novel—or the last number of *The Ephemera*. X.

A MEMBER of the Club having omitted on his appointed night to bring his Essay, either through indolence or some other cause, the company began to reproach him for disappointing them of their accustomed amusement, when he drew from his pocket the following letter from one of his correspondents, and begged that he might be allowed to read it in place of his Essay.

DEAR P.

I received yours, but I do not think I shall be in town on the day mentioned. I have no great wish to become a member of the Club. To tell you the truth, I dislike the beverage. I have an utter aversion to Toast and Water ever since I fed on it during a fever; and I always like to have my drink qualified with something more grateful to the stomach.

You cannot expect much news from this remote quarter. Our neighbourhood has been rendered very gay of late, however, by the arrival of a great man—no less a personage than the son of old Janet Saunders the widow. Several years ago, I do not exactly know the precise period, George Saunders, then a stripling, with the assistance of his poor mother, and his own strenuous endeavours, contrived to scrape together as much money as bought him a new suit of clothes, which he exchanged for the old tattered habiliments that he used to sport, and a sufficient sum to procure him a steerage passage in an old crazy ship bound for London. By some means or other, for I do not know the minutiae of his early history, he got out in the capacity of a gentleman's servant to India; where, from one step to another, by means of clerking, merchandize, &c. he contrived to raise himself to some degree of importance—made a snug fortune—took shipping home, and last week drove down in a handsome gig to his old mother's cottage door. You may well suppose the overwhelming joy of the inmates of the cottage on the arrival of their Geordy—now transformed into George the gentleman. For several days there was a continual distribution of shawls, gowns, ribbons, &c. &c. among the delighted relatives. His robust fleshy-faced sisters were decked out in all the finery of the first rate ladies, and the wan-worn Janet had her complexion renovated from the radiance of a bright scarlet shawl, and other gaudy accompaniments.

George, now styled the Indian Nabob, has not by any means lost all traces of his former rusticity; but in the eyes of his relatives, and the simple inhabitants of our

parish, he is looked up to as a perfect, and finished gentleman. In consequence of their treating him with the most profound respect, and addressing him with awe and submission, George actually conceives himself to be a personage of much more consequence and importance than he had hitherto imagined; and accordingly apes all the manners of high life. Intoxicated with the reception he meets with, so different from any thing he has experienced before, and the real satisfaction he feels in again meeting his old acquaintances, he is often led to overact his part, and would appear in a ludicrous light to an impartial observer. After having glutted the curiosity and expectations of his more immediate relatives, he sallies through the Parish to visit his other acquaintances. The dominie, that being on whom he was wont to look with reverential awe and terror, he now, strange vicissitude! grasps in a friendly manner by the hand; and the pedagogue becomes, in his turn, the amazed and abashed. He calls on the minister, in whose presence, except on a catechising day, he would not formerly have remained five minutes for all beneath the moon, as long as he had his heels to bear him to a distance. And even the laird's mansion, over the stile of which he used to peep a ragged boy, in staring wonderment at all the grand things within, he now boldly drives up to, rings the bell, and with the utmost *non chalance* marches forward with a composed and deliberate progress.

And now, to celebrate the arrival of her son, Janet prepares a banquet; the chief guests at which are the parson and dominie, with some of the more respectable neighbours. On the first accounts of his intended visit,

the outside of the cottage had been decorated by expending twopenny-worth of white-wash on the sides of the windows and door. This, as I have been told, was the suggestion and personal labour of the youngest sister, who, having been some weeks in town at the washing and dressing, pretends to a superior degree of gentility. The inside was dusted and scraped with the utmost perseverance. The chairs, tables, and stools, were scoured to a snowy whiteness; and the smoky roof-trees were decorated with green branches of birch trees, which diffused a pleasing fragrance through the apartment. All the old books and ballads were carefully crammed into a recess, which had been originally intended to receive a wall-press, and a white sheet was hung up in front by two pins to curtain the whole from the too curious eye. The dinner table was covered with an elaborately-wove table-cloth, which had rested in the bottom of a chest for, at least, a dozen of years, in all the purity of virgin whiteness, except that it was annually, along with its companions in imprisonment, taken out to enjoy the same bright and sunshiney day that so much delights the gossamer. Over this smoked a profusion of viands, chiefly consisting of fowls—almost half the population of the neighbouring dunghills. There chanticleer, with his neck twisted about, no longer strutted amid his dames, but lay stretched upon his back, quite chop fallen. George presided as master of the board, and, between the intervals of eating and drinking, discussed important subjects with the parson, or told snatches of his multifarious adventures. Janet, though officiating as mistress, could with great difficulty be prevented from rising, and occasionally

acting as waiting maid. Dinner being finished, the ingredients for making the punch were produced; but two important articles had been overlooked amid the bustle of general preparation—I mean the toddy-bowl and ladle. Substitutes, however, were soon found—that capacious dish, in which the unwieldy brose, or stiff-cooled sowins, were wont to repose in a precarious state of quiescence, now fumed with the lighter and more volatile beverage of punch; which ever and anon was tossed to and fro by a good large handled horn spoon. By degrees the company got into a comfortable state of social enjoyment. The utmost good humour prevailed; indeed it superabounded, if it is to be measured by loud and long shouts of convulsive laughter.

About this time the dominie, like * Adam after he had dined with his celestial visitant, thinking that it would now be a good opportunity to get some account of what appeared, to his limited geographical acquirements, little else than unknown worlds, began to put many questions to his entertainer about the countries he had visited; pre-facing his enquiries by “ Mr. Saunders, I ains could hae puzzled you in geography, but ye maun be my maister noo.” His mother, although she, perhaps, did not understand one third part of the conversation, lent a delighted ear to the long and laboured harangues of her son; and could not help whispering to the parson, “ Od I dinna think but he’d amaist lecture as weel as you minister;” and then in a louder tone, “ Geordy—I mean George, ye might try and gie us a prayer noo.” George, nettled, perhaps, at more than one circumstance in her discourse,

* Milton's Paradise Lost.

pulled himself up, and said "Demme we never think of prayers in India." This inconsiderate sally made Janet utter an involuntary groan, and lift up her hands in a half suppressed exclamation—the dominie looked aghast, and even the good natured clergyman could not avoid holding down his head and blushing. For a short time after this there was a pause in the conversation; but as every one was disposed to please, and be pleased, they soon resumed their gaiety:—as a gloomy cloud obscures the brightness of the sun, but in a moment it is past, and all again is light and happiness.

Of course, this dinner was followed by invitations from others in return. A constant round of visitings has taken place; but it is now beginning to be observed, that the Nabob is oftener at the laird's than any other house—in fact, he has almost taken up his residence there for the present—his mother's house not having sufficient accommodation for him. It is even rumoured that a matrimonial affair is in agitation between him and the laird's daughter; and that Miss Mary—although he is not just that being whom her fancy has pictured out to her as her chosen companion, while she has sat on a bank of flowers, by the side of the gushing rivulet, dreaming away a summer's evening—yet having the temptation of rich dresses, and a coach to ride in, in her option; moreover, having now waited, as she thinks, long enough, and seeing an extreme scarcity of objects from which to pick and choose, has at last come to the determination of accepting his hand—and that she is now weighing in her mind how the name of Janet will sound as mamma; and how she will like to be seen making her sisters-in-law

companions, when some of them used to serve her as maids.

George has drove his mother several times to town, perched up in a corner of his gig, and called upon all those having the most distant degree of affinity to them: I mean, of course, all those who are in flourishing circumstances, or from whose acquaintance he can derive any sort of honor. It is wonderful to see how graciously he is received now, and what proffers of friendship and kindness are made to him by those who, had he applied to them at a time when their friendship would have been of use, and their kindness soothing as the sunshine of heaven, would have spurned him from their doors with utter contempt, and not even deigned to have given him an interview. Janet is now admitted into the parlours of houses where formerly she used to make her appearance in the kitchen, with a brace of fowls dangling at her back, bewailing their bonds and captivity in loud screams and lamentations. Her cough and asthma are now enquired after with the utmost apparent solicitude; and great attention, and many little presents are made to her by all the young ladies of the families; and proud is that one who seems to attract a more marked share of her attention than the rest, and whom she pats lovingly on the back, with "O my bonny bairn, how weel I would like to see you the wife o' my Geordy!"

To conclude, for I have tired you too much already with this gossiping story—it is said that the gentleman means to become a settled residenter in his native village and that he is now determining which of the two estates of Kailpots or Peaselillock he will make a purchase of.

Your's, &c.

P. T.

A Philosophical Fable.—(FROM THE GREEK.)

IT happened on a time that, after a long succession of dry weather, Nature, ever invariable, though sometimes seemingly irregular, made up by a continuation of rain the previous deficiency of moisture. Week after week continued to pour down torrents, and weak mortals, never capable of weighing events rationally, and ever disposed to be displeas'd with their fate, began to importune Heaven with complaints, and to charge the Gods with injustice. Till at last Jove, irritated by their unreasonable dissatisfactions, vowed in his wrath that henceforth a drop of rain should not moisten the surface of the earth. Immediately the laws which enabled the Zephyrs as they pass'd over the surface of the ocean to imbibe a part of its moisture, and waft it in fleecy clouds along the face of heaven, from thence to distil it on the earth—were repealed. The grass & herbaceous plants first fell under the scorching heat. By degrees the shrubs and deep rooted trees, deprived of their necessary moisture, began to wither; and large plantations, and impenetrable forests, exhibited one mass of brittle and crackling ruins. The parched soil gap'd in deep and horrid chasms. The streams and rivers, deprived of their accustomed tributary springs, receded from their banks, and, carrying the last of their offerings in a feeble current to the ocean, leave their deep and rocky channels dry. The race of men became terrified—their flocks and cattle, after in vain looking up to them in dumb pity for the sustenance which was not to be procur'd, drop down dead in thousands—and the beasts of the forest, subdued by a like irresistible cause, strew the ground with their dead carcasses. The inhabitants, after lingering on the banks of the largest rivers, and by the deepest springs in the vallies, till all means of subsistence fail, retire to the sea-shore, leaving the inland parts of the country desolate and uninhabited. Throughout the whole earth there reigned a mortal stillness—no sound of ani-

mated life relieved the ear—a dull, uniform, parched brown was the sole livery of nature. The dry loose soil, blown from the high places by the whirlwinds, and subsiding in the vallies, left bare the immense and impenetrable rocks with all their caverns, veins, and fissures.—The atmosphere for the most part was sultry and stagnant. No buzzing of insects interrupted its stillness—no flight of wild fowl disturbed its tranquillity,—except now and then the slow soaring of the sea-mew, whose melancholy screams added tenfold horror to the universal devastation. The hearts of men were subdued—fear and anxiety were pictured in every countenance—all pleasures are forsaken, all arts and sciences laid aside, and one thought alone employs their whole consideration—the means of procuring subsistence. The ocean with its innumerable stores of life held out the only hope of relief. And so happily constituted is man, in having the means of accommodating himself to circumstances, however desperate, that in a short time, by imitating on a small scale the natural process of evaporation, they might have furnished themselves with water; and by exercising themselves in fishing, they could have procured a sufficiency of food. But Jove taking pity on their wretchedness, put an end to their troubles by restoring the regular order of Nature. Teaching them at the same time not to complain without occasion; and leaving this impression on their minds—that such is the admirable connexion existing between the several functions of the elements, that the omission of a single link in the great chain, is sufficient to derange the economy of the whole.

B.

ALTHOUGH we have only had a week's existence we have already received two communications, one of which shall certainly appear in our next.

R. JOHNSTON, PRINTER, ELGIN.

THE

EPHEMERA,

No. III.

Monday, 8th April, 1822.

PLUSCARDEN PRIORY.

IT has been observed that the monks and religious orders of former days, in fixing on the sites of their establishments, would have been unpardonable if, with the whole country in their power, they had made choice of disadvantageous situations. Yet it shows considerable taste and discrimination, even with all these advantages, to have selected the places where the mouldering ruins still point out their former residences. The fertile soil and mild temperature of the climate of Moray, held out peculiar advantages for their settling in it; and, accordingly, we find a greater number of religious establishments in this country than in any one of the surrounding northern Shires. Besides the Cathedral, that great object of attraction, we have an Abbey, two Priories, and several other small monastic institutions, all within the compass of a dozen of miles.

No situation could be better adapted for a Society of devotional monks than that of the Priory of Pluscarden. A fertile valley watered by a small stream, and shut out from the surrounding country by the brown, rugged, heath-covered mountains which frown over it, afforded a calm and solitary retreat from the world.

This beautiful valley long remained in a neglected state; and the ruins of the priory were fast hastening to decay, when a thorough repair, and very considerable improvements were set agoing, and are still making upon it, by the laudable zeal of the present possessor; so that in the course of a few years its modern appearance almost promises to rival its former glory.

What would one of the old priors say if, like Hamlet's ghost, he could 'revisit again the glimpses of the moon,' and see all the changes that have taken place since he departed? A pretty lively idea of this may be formed from the following epistle which has been sent us—of course its authenticity is unquestionable:—

DEAR BROTHER THOMAS,

There have been strange doings in the world since I left it; such as, were I to enter with minuteness into them, you would scarcely credit. I arrived at Elgin, and immediately went to pay my obeisance, as in duty bound, to the Bishop, my superior—but no Bishop was to be found or heard of—the whole fabric of that establishment is abolished.

I then in a solitary manner took my way out by the Palmer-Cross bridge towards the priory, with a confident hope of being warmly received by the presiding Prior. That bridge which used to consist of two huge oak planks, so often pressed by the bare-footed pilgrims, is now elaborately constructed of stone; and the tract in which we used to drive our cattle by a precarious foot-path is now a broad high way. The valley once so wild and luxuriant in tangling bushes, is now parcelled out into trim ridges and agricultural patches, with here and there long belts of stripling plantations. As I approached the priory new scenes of wonder presented themselves. The entrance to the domains has been changed; a modern gateway, an attempt at our style of antiquity, stares you in the face in bare loneliness; and a trim gravel walk fringed with flowering shrubs has usurped the place of the "moss-grown alley winding slow," more suitable to the precincts of a monastery. At the gate, instead of the reverential salute of the old porter, a churlish cerberus snarled at me, until I threw him the sweetened cake, which immediately changed his frowns into a smile. Instead of the old fraternity of Cistercians, the rooks and daws now inhabit the cells and sacred edifice. The roof has tumbled to the ground; and mouldering monuments and defaced ornaments lie strewn above the graves of the silent dead: affording a melancholy view of the instability and changing revolutions of time. That small room which served me for a study, has been so judiciously repaired that its appearance now is little different from what it was when I left it. I looked out again from that window at which I have

often spent many a forenoon gazing upon the little stream, as it crept along in many a winding turn, among the bushy willows; and upon all the variety of the sloping valley, which gradually recedes from the view, till at last the prospect is terminated by the soft blue of the distant hills. The garden has undergone a complete change: the well-selected trees are rooted out, which used to produce those abundant fruits that served to make up the spare dinners of our meagre days. Those shady beeches, under which we used to sit and discuss syllogisms, or con over the ancient manuscripts which we had been transcribing, no longer wave their long boughs in the wind: the scythe of Time and the pruning knives of modern improvers have made great havoc among them. The brethren are no longer seen strolling about the precincts, as inclination leads them; nor is the song of vespers any more heard swelling upon the evening gale—all is silence and desolation.

In short, every thing is changed; and, although it is a sort of melancholy pleasure, I have resolved to linger a little longer among scenes once so familiar; but do not let it be supposed, brother Thomas, that I am unwilling to return from whence I came; for the men of the present day would be rejoiced that the once jolly prior, who fared sumptuously, is now fain to escape from his situation.

S. T.

The Love of Country.

AN intense longing and desire to revisit one's native country when far removed from it, has proceeded to such a degree in some individuals as to produce a derangement of intellect, and even death. The inhabitants of a mountainous country seem more susceptible of this feeling than any other; as has been remarked particularly in the Scotch and Swiss. It has been observed that the poorer the country, and more severe the climate, the attachment of the natives to the soil increases in proportion; but there is a deep thoughtfulness, and acuteness of feeling, together with a strong predilection for the manners and customs of their ancestors, that characterize the inhabitants of Scotland and Switzerland, and which render them peculiarly susceptible of the disease alluded to.

During the memorable year 1745, a young Gentleman, a native of the Highlands, having just finished his education at the University of Aberdeen, carried away by youthful enthusiasm, deserted his father's house, and joined the cause of the *Stuarts*. He accompanied the army in all its movements, and shared its victories and defeats, till at last the fatal day of Culloden cut off all their hopes and expectations, and compelled every man to seek his safety in flight. After undergoing a variety of hardships and perils, he escaped with a few of his companions in a vessel to France. There some provision was made for him along with the other followers of the unfortunate Charles; but he soon experienced that an exiled Prince,

himself dependant on the bounty of others, however much he might be inclined to reward his faithful adherents, had little in his power to bestow. Here every thing appeared to his depressed spirits strange and uncomfortable. The bright sky and luxuriant landscape of France had no charms for him when compared with the green hollow vales and cloud-capped mountains of his own country; and he turned with disgust from the unmeaning grimace of the strangers around him, and longed again for the converse of his own simple mountaineers. He would often wander out alone about the sea-shore, and turn a wistful gaze towards that land which he was debarred from visiting. He would watch the surge as it chafed among the loose pebbles, and think with himself whether it had ever visited his own shore; and the clouds which slowly passed over his head were endeared to him by the idea that they had once, perhaps, hung over his native mountains. It was the practice of the exiled fugitives to meet together, and beguile the tedious hours of their captivity by relating the feats they had performed, or the hardships they had endured. In an evening, under the shade of some tree, they used to practice the ancient melodies of their country, or rehearse the songs which this enthusiasm of a fondly cherished cause had dictated.— These airs, by recalling the scenes and awakening the recollections of his boyish days, had a marked effect upon the young exile. He was often observed to fall into a profound melancholy; and when some airs were sung which seemed to have taken a particular hold of his memory, involuntary gestures, and even strong convulsions would have seized him. He began to droop more and

more every day. The soothing encouragements of his countrymen, or the assiduous attentions of the natives, seemed to afford him little comfort—his thoughts continually turned upon home. No consolation was grateful which did not touch upon that much loved theme. He thought upon all the members of his father's house—the haunts which he had frequented when a boy—the mountain stream on whose banks he had passed many a happy day—and the blue lake, hemmed in by the neighbouring mountains, through which he had so often paddled in his little boat.

The disasters of the times were daily obliging other fugitives to seek the same asylum for security: one of these brought the young exile an account of the regrets of his family for his absence, and that his mother had pined away and died for grief for the loss of her favourite child. He was scarcely seen to smile after this; his limbs failed to perform their office; his hollow eyes gradually faded to a glassy hue; and desiring to be wrapt in his plaid, (the only remaining remnant of his native country,) he calmly expired.—His companions, in mournful sorrow at this diminution of their small and solitary number, buried him with all due respect in a remote and unfrequented corner,—for the hospitality of the natives denied him consecrated ground—because he was a heretic. The place of his interment was long afterwards pointed out as the grave of the *home-sick* Scotchman.* C.

* There must in this Country still be remaining traditions, anecdotes, and pieces of poetry, connected with the memorable attempt of 1745, so pregnant with enthusiastic and chivalrous adventure,

To the Editor of The Ephemera.

SIR,

IN the course of my calls yesterday forenoon, (for I am one of those people whose sole profession is that of calling over half the town in a morning,) I went into a house where one of the young ladies was seated in the parlour, and busily engaged in sewing some work. After I had sat chatting till nearly the exact minute had expired allowed for such an evanescent visit, a small thread paper attracted my attention. Peeping into one corner of it I saw some printed letters. I began spelling E-P-H—I could make out no more till I took it up, when, lo! EPHEMERA, No. I. burst upon my sight!—Alas! poor Insect, thought I, you have already lived your day, and are come to this at last! But take comfort, Mr. Editor, a worse fate might have attended it; see how Hume wrote many years ago thus, to Dr. Robertson, the Historian of Queen Mary:—"I forgot to tell you that two days ago I was in the House of Commons, where an English gentleman came to me, and told me that he had lately sent to a grocer's shop for a pound of raisins, which he received wrapped up in a paper that he shewed me.—How would you have turned pale at the sight!—it was a leaf of your history, and the very character of Queen Elizabeth, which you had laboured so finely!" Now if to wrap a pound of raisins was an occupation worthy of a leaf of the history of Scotland, how highly which have yet escaped the search of Collectors,—the communication of which to these pages would serve to help forward this very slender attempt at introducing a provincial literature.

favoured is the EPHEMERA, in being permitted to hold the silken threads of a fair lady. In the course of my rambles I hear a great deal about your publication; indeed, I have scarcely been in a house where a copy was not to be found. Some may look upon it with unmeaning apathy, as they do upon every thing of the kind that ever was produced; and others vent against it their pitiful criticisms—but fortunately the average mass of Society soon discover even the slightest pretensions to merit, and are disposed to be pleased, “they know not why, and care not wherefore.”

I shall be on the alert to send you further reports by and by—meantime I must be off, as I have a thousand ways to go before dinner.

Your's, &c.

RICHARD SLY.

Saturday morning.

The Death of Mary, Queen of Scots.

“The Queen then passed into another hall where was erected the Scaffold covered with black; and she saw with an undismayed countenance the executioners and all the preparations of death. The room was crowded with spectators; and no one was so steeled against all sentiments of humanity as not to be moved when he reflected on her royal dignity, considering the surprising train of her misfortunes—beheld her mild and inflexible constancy—recalled her amiable accomplishments, or surveyed her beauties, which, though faded by years, and yet more by her afflictions, still discovered themselves in this fatal moment.”

HUME.

“Is it then so—how dread the gloom,
And terror of this sable room!
O God! and can it be my doom,
So soon to die!

Yes, it is well—this world hath been
To me at best a troubled scene;
Long woes, brief joys to intervene;
Then sweet to die!

Weep not my maidens for my fate,
That soul deserves no happier state,
Which, when thus call'd, could hesitate,
In hope to die.

Oceans of tears could not bewail
 The woes that in this world prevail ;
 Methinks from ills which me assail,
 'Tis bliss to die !

Poor sorrowing friends, thus to the end
 To me still faithful prov'd and kind,
 Who now shall cheer thee, or befriend,
 When I must die ?

Censure may wound with tongue severe,
 This breast ; yet known to thee sincere ;
 Ye to the world shall witness bear,
 How calm I die.

Now bind aside my flowing hair ;
 And lay my fated neck thus bare—
 Come round me !—breathe a suppliant pray'r,
 While thus I die !”

She said—then meekly bowed her head,
 Which the dread axe dissevered !—
 “ And thus be all such traitors sped,”
 The stern Lords cry.

Chill horror seiz'd on all around—
 Breathless they stood—the pause profound—
 No single voice was to be found
 Which could reply !

To the Editor of the Ephemera.

Sir,

If you think the few following lines worth the inserting in a corner of *The EPHEMERA*, by doing so you will much oblige,

Your Well-wisher.

*

On the Death of a young Lady abroad.

ALAS! far distant from her native land;
 Far from th' assistance of a parent's hand;
 Far from the eyes of relatives, unmov'd;
 Expiring lay a blooming maid belov'd!
 Belov'd by all who knew her heav'nly mind,
 For Grace and Virtue were in her combin'd!
 Her worth, like gold that's oft refined, was known;
 The more 'twas tried, the more the lustre shone!
 But now, alas! the conquering hand of death!
 Hath nipt the bud! hath stopt her fleeting breath!
 Her task was done, and from this world she fled,
 But ever lives tho' number'd with the dead.

A * *

ELGIN—1822:

G. M. G. is not amiss.

C. J. although not apparently much accustomed to composition, shews a natural good taste, and shall perhaps find a place afterwards

M. M. has been received, but we must here mention, once for all, that nothing in the slightest degree approaching to personalities can be admitted.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. IV.

Monday, 15th April, 1822.

MR. EDITOR,

AFTER an absence of fifty years, I have again returned to my native town. Amid all the diversity of scenes which it has been my lot to visit; and the variety of characters with whom I have mixed, I still retained a vivid recollection of the place of my birth, and the acquaintances of my younger years. With my mind full of these early associations, I gladly embraced the opportunity which long and laborious exertion afforded me of returning to pass the wane of life, and at last lay my bones in my native soil: with many fond expectations of recognising old scenes, and realizing happy meetings which my fancy had so often pictured to me. But the unremitting hand of time had been busy while I never reflected upon the probability of its progress. No man can be certain that the state of things to-day will remain the same until to-morrow: a few years bring about unlooked for changes, but the lapse of half a century

produces strange revolutions indeed. Of all the friends who had been the monitors and guardians of my childhood, and all those whose years, or experience, made them be looked up to with respect, not a vestige remained. The young and blooming companions of my youth were scattered through the wide earth; or if any remain, age and infirmities, or the misfortunes of the world, have so changed them that they are no longer to be recognised. Not only the people but the appearance of the country has undergone a complete change. In the town new and spacious streets are now opened, where old fabrics had formerly stood; many of the old clumsy houses have disappeared, and in their place gay and modern mansions have started up as by magic. In short, Mr. Editor, I find myself as great a stranger in my native town as I was when I first visited London, or any of the cities of foreign countries. With a view in some measure of soothing my disappointment, I have endeavoured to draw a slight comparison between the appearance and customs of the town at the time I left it, and its present state; and send it in the hopes of affording your readers some amusement.

Elgin is one of the most ancient burghs in the North, but, like most of the other old towns, its situation has been chosen with very little view towards commercial advantages. An inland town, and far from any extensive city, or commercial mart, its traffic was confined in my early days, as it now is, to the retail of the necessaries and luxuries of life, to the surrounding population. Luxuries and all the varieties of dress, which now form

a principal part of merchandise, were much less used at that time than now. Of course a shop-keeper then was obliged to combine a much greater variety of heterogeneous materials in his warehouse than what occurs in the modern division of trades, between grocers, clothiers, &c. To increase the limited sphere of their sales, it was usual also for a great proportion of them to make an annual migration like a flock of soland-geese, to the northern islands, in order to dispose of, and exchange commodities with the primitive inhabitants.

The appearance of the town I have already said is greatly altered. It is true I still recognise many objects formerly familiar to me; among which are conspicuous the huge church and town-house, on which time has made very little alteration, only that their deformities are, if any thing, rendered more conspicuous from the modern buildings around them. The cathedral, that object of so much veneration to my boyish fancy, still rears its gothic towers in solemn majesty, and imparts an air of ancient dignity to the town. And I am glad to observe that the ravages time has committed have lately been so effectually repaired, as to give it a chance of remaining for centuries to come, a monument of the taste, ingenuity, and labour of our ancestors. There is one ornament of the houses which I see modern taste or, perhaps rather, modern convenience has abolished; I allude to the piazzas in front of the houses, or, as they were then called, *fore-stairs*. These, a general occurrence to this day in many of the towns of the continent, had a very pleasing effect, and afforded a dry and comforta-

ble promenade in a climate so subject to damp and wet weather.

In other respects the modern style of building is far superior, both in appearance and comfort, to the old. New streets of houses are building in every direction about the town; and a fine edifice, an hospital for the reception of the sick occupies a commanding and well-chosen situation.

But, Mr. Editor, you will, perhaps, make allowance for the partialities of an old man, fond of old times and old customs, if I give it as my opinion, that the manners of the inhabitants have not undergone an equally beneficial change. In my day the society was certainly more circumscribed than the increase of population and influx of strangers have rendered it now. Modern refinement had not made such progress, but there was an openness and simplicity of manner which eminently characterised the men of those days. Every member of the burgh looked upon his townsman as his brother; the social intercourse was more general and more unrestrained; relations to very distant degrees of affinity kept up a close intercourse. Large parties and sumptuous entertainments were seldom thought of, but it was a custom for friends and relatives to have certain days of the week on which they regularly dined with each other on plain but wholesome fare. It was a practice then of the male population to meet at the *change-house*, as it was then called, and enjoy a social glass, home-made ale being the favourite beverage. Few bargains or agreements were

made without going to the tavern, but excess was seldom gone into. Those of the present day may smile at the simplicity of their ancestors, when I mention that I have seen a whole party in a summer evening set upon the steps surrounding the *little cross*, and drinking out of little wooden cups, or *quaichs*, the ale of a hostess famed for excellence in the art of brewing, but whose name I have unfortunately forgotten.

In those days very few of the religious distinctions now so prevalent existed. Almost all the population assembled under one roof (the Muckle and Little kirks) to pay their devotions to their Maker; and although great strictness, and perhaps, in some instances, a contracted rigidness of opinions prevailed, yet they all "leaned to virtue's side."

In dress a prodigious change has taken place. The females, especially those of the lower orders, were attired with great plainness and simplicity in stuffs the produce of the country, and the labour of their own hands. A simple snood or milk-white cap supplied the place of the gaudy head-dresses now used; and the young beaux sported the hoddie grey and blue bonnets of their native looms. What would a kitchen nymph of old say if she beheld the modern cook maid radiant in all the finery of silks and ribbons, or the brawny broad shouldered ploughman, who all the week braves unconcerned the rain and the tempest, dressed on a sunday in his blue broad cloth, and spreading out his green umbrella to shelter him from the soft drops of a summer shower?

In the country, Mr. Editor, greater and more important changes have taken place. The improvements in agriculture have now been brought to a high degree of perfection. In my younger days I was occasionally allowed a respite from the unsavoury discipline of the school, when I was in the habit of paying a visit to a relation in the country. Farms were then on a much smaller scale than they now are. A number of farm houses were generally built near each other, forming a sort of village. Each farm was not distinct as to boundary: the whole fields were divided into stripes or ridges of which every one shared alternately. No green crops were introduced at the period I mention, nor any regular system of rotation. When the labours of the harvest were completed and the fields cleared of the corn, the whole cattle belonging to the village were turned into one drove and allowed the range of the fields. Carts or waggons had not then made their appearance; a conical basket wove of twigs and placed upon a sledge, with small rudely formed wheels, was in general use, and, if I remember rightly was called a *kelloch*. The harness was composed of a heterogeneous compound of old ropes, twisted straw and plaited wands or strong horse hair.

The manners and dress of the country people were even more primitive than those of the Burgh. The utmost simplicity prevailed. Old customs and *freats*, or superstitions, were still tenaciously persevered in. Their chief times of festivities were christenings, marriages, and funerals. Christmas was also a great season of merriment. It was thought unlucky for any person to dine out of his

own house on a christmas day; then all the members of the family assembled and enjoyed themselves by making a heartier meal on that day than any other; immense quantities of victuals were provided for the occasion: beef and mutton with ale and whisky in abundance; and a huge round loaf of bread called a *bun*, was annually prepared at the baker's, which often had great difficulty of gaining admittance at the door, so great was its circumference. In the evening the village fiddler generally held a ball in one of the most capacious barns to which the youth of all the country assembled, *fitting* the floor with great agility, while the old folks looked on delighted, thus making up by the hilarity of the evening the unsocial style of their solitary dinners.

But I perceive, Mr. Editor, that the garrulity inseparable from age, has led me to encroach already too far on your patience. Pleased myself with recalling the manners of my youth, I have forgotten that the young are generally impatient of every thing which does not relate to the present; and that scenes which appear delightful to me, their asperities being softened by time, and all their bright shades heightened by long and pleasing associations, may appear dull and uninteresting to them. I am, &c.

SENEX.

MEMORY.

THAT process by which ideas and impressions are treasured up in the mind, from whence to be recalled as occasion requires, is much more perfect in some individuals than in others. The powers of memory have been possessed by some in an almost incredible degree. It is related of individuals who could, by hearing a long discourse once read over, repeat the whole, word for word; and this not only of a connected composition, but even of a number of words written together, without any dependance upon each other. It is told of the celebrated Sir William Jones that, when a boy, he and his school-fellows had resolved to represent a play; but after fixing upon one, they discovered that they had no copy of it, nor could one by any means be procured; when young Jones set to work and wrote out a literal copy of the whole play entirely from his memory. Another celebrated Author, in being debarred from reading a work which much delighted him, contrived to get the whole by heart, and then gave away the volumes with a promise not to look into them again. But although these are examples of great powers of memory joined to great talents; yet it more generally happens that when the judgment is very acute, or the imagination ardent, and the fancy active, that the memory is partially deficient: and that, on the other hand, an excellent memory for retaining facts, words &c. may be joined to an imbecile understanding.

There is a degree of memory which possesses the power of retaining the ideas and matter of a work, without being

able to preserve one word of the language in which these are clothed. Many a reader of Poetry may be able to give a distinct outline of the images and feelings which the poet excites, without being capable of reciting a couple of verses in succession. It is this species of memory which often gives rise to literary plagiarism, quite unconsciously on the part of the imitator. "I am frequently sensible," says a * writer of considerable eminence, "from the manner in which an idea rises to my imagination, and the readiness with which words also present themselves to clothe it in, that I am only making use of some dormant part of that hoard of ideas which the most indifferent memories lay up, and not the native suggestions of my own mind."

This limited power of memory possesses several advantages over a more perfect one. It is true, in the higher departments of knowledge, the greater your power of recollection, the greater, *ceteris paribus*, will be the extent of your information; but in works of fiction and imagination, where the great object is to please and surprise, the defective memory, by allowing repeated perusal, increases the opportunities of pleasure. Many a one, on laying down a book which has interested him, does so with a pleasing foresight of taking it up again at some future period, when most, if not all the ideas it had suggested have faded from his mind, and a second perusal affords him all the zest of novelty.

It is a quality of powerful minds to retain only what is of importance to be known—a kind of sifting process which the memory performs; whereas a common intellect

* Joanna Baillie.

is more likely to retain what is trifling and unimportant. Bishop Porson observed, with a sarcastic raillery, to a young gentleman who had shewed rather too much presumption in his presence, that he had forgotten more knowledge than all the other was possessed of.

There is another state which, perhaps, may rather be considered as a disease, or decay, than a peculiarity of memory, that occurs in persons far advanced in years.— Every event of recent occurrence passes lightly over them, and leaves no impression, while the incidents of their younger days press vividly upon their recollections. They often recur to the amusements and studies of their youth; and have been known to go over the elements of sciences, in which they had, perhaps, at one time made great proficiency; even the books of the nursery have been reperused with apparent satisfaction, thus affording a marked example of “second childishness and mere oblivion.”

B.

The above is part of an Essay of one of the Members of the Club, who is rather addicted to metaphysical discussion. He is very accommodating, however, and when he perceives that his Essay is beginning to have a soporific effect upon the Members, at the very first nod he desists. It sometimes happens, as in the present case, that the commencement possesses more general interest than the latter part of the performance. In this case, the paper is taken, and, just at the line where the first nasal intimation was given, it is divided into two parts; one is filed up among the favoured few, and the other is launched

into the pit of oblivion, there to sleep with all the ponderous folios of Dutch Theologians and Commentators.

“Peace to each drowsy Metaphysic Sage,
And ever let all heavy systems rest.”

Perhaps at some future period we shall give a slight sketch of the individuals composing the Club; to set at rest the many conjectures which are afloat regarding their identities. Besides the five (for that is the number) who are regular Members, we have several Correspondents in different parts of the country, who are at all times prepared to send their Contributions, although they decline coming five or six, and in some instances a dozen of miles to partake of the *toast and water*.

LOCH —————

How sweet a little spot is here !
Who'd think 'mid shapeless hills so drear
 To meet with such a scene ;
It seems some fairy solitude,
Where elves resort in lightsome mood,
 To sport 'mong copses green.

How calm the little lake doth lie,
Reflecting the soft summer sky,
 One sheet of azure hue :
And, raising their round heads, are seen
The wooded isles of softest green,
 Amid the waters blue.

Dark woods hemmed round on every side,
 And tow'ring hills extended wide,
 Shut out the world unknown ;
 No human footstep presses here ;
 The wild-fowl and the dappled deer
 Make the lone spot their own.

O from loathed scenes of selfish strife,
 Where dulness chills the springs of life,
 How gladly I'd retreat !
 To this embowering solitude,
 Where no vain cares nor wrongs obtrude
 The tranquil mind to fret.

All day, among the willows green,
 I'd muse upon the varied scene,
 In soothing reverie ;
 The deer would pass me tamely by ;
 The wild drake on his webb'd oars lie,
 Not timorous of me.

And when at eve far to the woods,
 The Heron, angler of the floods,
 Slow soaring took his flight.
 I'd cross the blue lake in my skiff,
 To the lone cot beside the cliff,
 And dream of bliss all night.

Banks of the Spey, 19th July, 1821.

The Communication from Forres has been received, and shall appear in our next.

R. JOHNSTON, PRINTER, ELGIN.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. V.

Monday, 22d April, 1822.

FORRES, 10th April, 1822.

MR. EDITOR,

THE three first Numbers of your unpretending publication came into my hands the other day.—I send you the following letter in hopes that it may find a place in your paper, if so I shall, perhaps, from time to time trouble you again. I do not say I shall be a regular correspondent, for I am regular in nothing, but just as the idea strikes me, or as I find I have inclination to scribble, I shall be at your service.—To begin methodically for once I may give you some hint of the personage that addresses you:—I have been always what the world calls a sort of visionary; that is, having no occasion or inclination to mix in the affairs of the world, nor having from education or practice imbibed any professional peculiarity, I act and think as pleases myself. Feeling little interest in the bustle of business, or the petty policy

by which individuals insinuate themselves into trust, or convert worthlessness into importance, I pursue the bent of my own inclination, and leave the haunts of man to cultivate an acquaintance with nature. In her works there is nothing to ruffle the passions, or to make man dissatisfied with his existence; all is beauty, tranquillity, and happiness. I am sometimes called misanthropical, and sometimes mad; but

“ To fly from, need not be to hate mankind—

“ I love not man the less, but nature more.”

I am a great pedestrian—I detest to be muffled up and imprisoned in a close carriage where I have neither air nor exercise—I do not dislike occasionally to mount on horseback; and I admire the ingenuity of man that has brought under his controul the powers of the horse, and that can make the fleetness of its hoofs his own; but I prefer the power of locomotion which nature has bestowed on me, as the most under my controul, and the best suited to my disposition. Winter is rather a solitary season to me—I must then content myself by imagining verdant scenes and a warm sun as I sit by a blazing fire; or, perhaps, by imitating green boughs and summer landscapes with the pencil; but when spring arrives I sally forth to realize all these in perfection. When I set out in the morning I have seldom any particular destination in view, but I wander about sometimes at a quick, and sometimes at a slow pace, as inclination leads me. I have spent whole days on the banks of a small stream listening to the soft gushing of the current, or watching the ever changing clouds which now pile up in volumin-

ous columns of various tints and shades, and now melt away into the thin æther. There is no concert so pleasing to my ear as the warbling of the sky-lark, and the distant hum of the waterfall soothes and tranquillizes me. I always carry a book in my pocket, and whenever the fancy is tired expatiating on themes of its own suggestion, I turn with renewed relish to the contemplations of others. There are many spots where I have read particular works which are so associated with the ideas contained in these, that whenever any of them occur to my recollection, the scenes where I first acquired them present themselves also—thus affording a double pleasure. To many these wanderings and solitary musings may appear little better than a mispending of time; yet amid such scenes the mind is more disposed to thought, and has greater scope for sublime contemplation, than when mingling with the giddy or groveling among the sordid of the world.

But I perceive, Mr. Editor, that I am carried away by egotism from the subject which I had in view at the commencement. To return—these ramblings have made me intimately acquainted with

“ every ally green,
 “ And every bosky bourn from side to side,
 “ My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood.

And I propose to give you occasionally some of the fruits of my perambulations, if they should be deemed of sufficient interest to occupy your pages.

Morayshire, taking it all in all, does not present much picturesqueness or beauty of scenery—I mean of that kind which is pleasing to the eye of a painter, or which would afford him materials to work upon. Its hills are clumsy and grouped in heavy masses, and its vallies, though generally neat and luxuriant from the high state of cultivation, display no very marked richness of scenery. There are certainly some fine views, however, to be met with. And I should be inclined to think, Mr. Editor, that we about Forres possess more than the Elginesians. It is true we cannot boast of the fine ruin adjoining your town which you seem to be so fond of eulogising; nor can we call ours the romantic Priory, about which the old monk writes so pathetically in your third number; but we have a little town more beautifully situated than yours, with a surrounding country finely intersected with clumps of old nodding groves, and a river whose banks will vie in wildness and grandeur of scenery with any almost in Scotland. I shall reserve a description of the latter until some future time, and confine myself just now to the immediate neighbourhood of Forres.

There is an observation which occurs to many, that the situation of Forres resembles in some particulars that of Edinburgh. It is certainly something like; and I have often amused myself when walking round the *Cluny hills* in making the comparison. Before me lay the town in a similar relation to the Cluny hills as Edinburgh to the Calton (if we may thus compare great things to small); then the smooth blue Firth of Moray

stretching up in the same direction as the Firth of Forth; the one bounded by the hills of Fife, and the other, with much more striking effect, by the distant hills of Cromarty and Sutherland. In place of the old town of Leith pouring from its numberless chimnies and glass houses volumes of smoke like as many volcanoes, we have first the remains of the abbey of Kinloss, embosomed in its ancient groves, and then the winding bay and small jutting-out town of Findhorn. The hill itself is surmounted by a tower to the memory of Nelson in a much neater and simpler style, because less was attempted, than the tasteless monument which stands on the Calton hill, and which now looks to such disadvantage in the midst of the other classical buildings which surround it. If we look towards the town the comparison, I am afraid, will hold no farther. We have not the magnificent castle beetling over the huge and primitive rocks on which it has stood for ages, nor all the variety of beautiful edifices of which the modern Athens can boast; yet the white spire of our town house, by no means inelegantly formed, has a very pleasing effect when seen peeping out among the surrounding trees and houses.

To descend from this our eminence we have a very fine prospect from the site of an old baronial fortress or castle, now called the Castle hill. Besides the view from it to the west, there is the small *burn* of Forres winding northward, its banks finely wooded with a variety of trees; and in the distance the smooth and winding bay of Findhorn. I shall conclude by merely mentioning another object of curiosity, I mean the *lang stane* stand-

ing a little to the east of the town, which has been the subject of so much conjecture and discussion among Antiquaries, and the real intention of which has never, and very probably, can never be satisfactorily explained.

I am,

Mr. EDITOR, Your's, &c.

JAQUES.

From CATHARINA FREDERICA OLDENOUGH
to the Editor.

SIR,

I AM deputed by a few young Ladies to remonstrate with you in regard to an omission in your Publication which concerns us nearly. Do not think, Mr. Editor, that we are displeased with *The Ephemera*, quite the reverse;—there may be some, (but let me tell you, in a secret—they are of the bygone school), who affect to despise your work, because it is manufactured in Elgin; but who, if it came from Edinburgh or Europe, or any of those great towns, would praise it to the skies. We get the Publication regularly—and some of us can scarcely sleep on the Sunday night, in anxious expectation for the dawn of day, till the much wished for paper arrives. Miss Betty Dolittle actually dreamed one night that she had it in her possession; but, lo! when she awoke she found the large family Bible grasped in her

arms. Even while sipping our tea the last number of the *Ephemera* is introduced instead of the last new fashions; and one day while we were actually looking at *swatches* for new gowns, the entrance of the small book immediately suspended our attention: one of us sat down to read it aloud, till in one of the most interesting passages, Miss Betty, her patience being exhausted, broke in upon the perusal by exclaiming, "I declare I will not have the sky-blue Sarsnet, it looks so vulgar."

But bless me, Mr. Editor, I had almost forgot what I was going to speak to you about.—The great complaint of our *Coterie* is, that you do not introduce love stories. One would think that the great art of marrying and giving in marriage was quite lost among the people here; and that they will be exclaiming by and by with the Princess Nekyah, "How the world is to be peopled is no business of mine, nor need it be of yours." I wish you would take pity on the human race, Mr. Editor, and give us something soon about this. I see you are beginning to give us some Poetry, or rather your Correspondents are: but how comes it that we have nothing about Arcadia, dying Swains, and love-sick Shepherdesses?—Do give us something of this kind—it would take vastly. Put a little more flourish into your Prose also—it is too concise and unornamented, with not enough of words to make a figure.—Give us something in this style:—

Most sublime and charming Editor, my hitherto unes-sayed pen hath thus far wandered over the virgin-white paper, and hath left a sable tract behind, but the dark

voluminous pitchy shades of night are now closing around
 my morpheus-assailed eyelids ; sleep is descending heavy
 upon me, and for the present I must bid you

Adieu,

CATHARINA FREDERICA OLDENOUGH.

Saturday night.

JACOBITE ANECDOTE.—IN consequence of your notice
 in No. III. of *The Ephemera*, I send you the following:—
 A lady in Morayshire who was a keen adherent of the
 House of Stuart, and all whose relations as well as a
 large family were of the same party, had a son who was
 of the opposite interest, and who held a commission in
 the army which was defeated at Falkirk. On receiving
 notice that her son was made prisoner by the High-
 landers, the old lady, ready to sacrifice even family ties
 to the furtherance of the cause she had embraced, was
 heard to exclaim, "I only wish that a' his master's men
 were in the same predicament."

J. S.

THE TWIN SISTERS.

FAIR as two lilies from one stem which spring,
 In vernal fragrance sweetly blossoming,
 And liker far, in form, and size, and hue,
 If liker could be, the Twin Sisters grew.
 Each limb, each joint, each feature could compare,
 Exact in one with what the others were ;
 No look, no gesture, difference of mien,
 Not e'en a speck distinctive could be seen.
 And like as were their outward forms design'd,
 So were th' internal workings of the mind.
 What could to one delight, or pain impart,
 Raised the same feelings in the other's heart :
 Now gay with hope, and now with pity mild,
 They wept together, and together smil'd.
 If Anna spoke, 'twas often she express
 The thought just forming in Maria's breast ;
 And if Maria hasten'd to pursue
 Some object, 'twas what Anna had in view.
 No wonder, for the same maternal pang
 Brought them to being, and they both did hang
 On the same breast, and drew the nutrient stream
 From the same fount—one cradle nestled them.
 Both frolick'd in gay childhood's rapt'rous years,
 Undamp'd as yet by life's maturer cares.
 Close in each other's baby arms entwin'd,
 With breast to breast, and cheek on cheek reclin'd,
 And eyes which beam'd infantine radiance mild,
 They seem'd of Heav'n, and cherub-like they smil'd.
 Together they did roam the mead or grove,

Chasing the gilded butterfly, or wove
 Of heath-flowers wild, a wreath their brows to deck,
 Or daisy-spotted garland for the neck.

And as maturer seasons o'er them came,
 And stronger glow'd within pure reason's flame,
 Together they would scan the mind's wide range,
 And share of thought the grateful interchange.
 Together Nature's volume wide explore ;
 Together Nature's mighty God adore.
 The mountain, forest, meadow, lake and stream
 Gave varied joy. What was the world to them,
 Its pomp, its bustle, and its idle toil !
 Society did their enjoyments spoil—
 They needed not its aid, a world they were
 Each to the other—why aught else prefer ?

But oft, alas ! the lily in the Spring,
 E'en in its prime of vernal blossoming ;
 Struck at the root by some fell canker's fang,
 Fading its beauteous head begins to hang.—
 So fared it with Maria,—the pure red,
 Soft blended on her cheek, was seen to fade ;
 The tincture of her lip of rubied hue,
 Where smiles once sat, now chang'd to sickly blue :
 No longer full of life, no longer gay,
 With rapid strides came premature decay !
 Her former haunts could now no longer please,
 E'en the soft couch could scarce procure her ease.
 There Anna closely sat and watch'd her eye,
 Aught that could soothe or aid her to supply :

All day she watch'd, and when the suff'rer slept,
 Hung o'er her midnight couch, and silent wept.
 To cheer her thoughtful bosom Anna tries—
 "The Spring again returns, bleak Winter flies;
 Ev'n now the golden crocuses are seen,
 And soon the woodlands will resume their green;
 When you are well delighted we shall rove
 The wood-paths thro', and trim the bower we love."—
 "Yes, Anna, flowers will bloom, and grove, and plain,
 All dormant nature spring to life again;
 Grass clothe the ground, and blossoms crown the tree,
 But grove or plain will bloom in vain to me!
 It was my hope, that as one hour began
 Our beings, one should measure out life's span;
 But Heav'n forbids to murmur would be vain,—
 A few short years shall make us one again."

Prophetic speech! for now life's fading flame,
 Faint, and more faint, did animate her frame;
 Around she cast her eyes of deadly hue
 On sorrowing friends, to bid a last adieu;—
 A parting look she gave—she could no more—
 A throb—a long-drawn sigh—then all was o'er!

A thrilling pang of horrible despair
 Pierc'd Anna's breast, and marr'd all feeling there.
 Long o'er the lifeless form she silent stood,
 With vacant gaze the beauteous ruin view'd;
 Till her faint limbs no more her weight could stay,
 And all unconscious she is borne away.
 All strive to soothe and comfort her, but she

'Refus'd all comfort—"What is life to me!"
 She cried,—then starting, gazed with anxious eye—
 "I come! I come!—hark! 'tis Maria's cry;
 Sure they wou't place her in the damp cold grave?
 See worms do feed on her—O Mercy, save!—
 But yonder's she—how chang'd, how wond'rous fair!
 And those are Angel Seraphs with her there:
 I thought I ne'er should meet again with you;—
 Give me your hand—now! now!—adieu, adieu!—
 Then from her troubled frame forthwith the spirit flew.

J. A. M., Forres, touches on a subject which we would wish, if possible, to avoid.

R. N. has been received and shall be considered.

* * Several applications have been made for the first number of THE EPHEMERA, but as all the impressions have been disposed of it would prevent disappointment in future if those intending to become regular subscribers would give in their names to the Printer or their Booksellers.

R. JOHNSON, PRINTER, ELGIN.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. VI.

Monday, 29th April 1822.

ON Friday night a meeting of the TOAST AND WATER CLUB was held: the last regular meeting for the season. During the summer months, although toast and water is an admirable summer drink, yet the members not choosing to be pent up in a close apartment while the sun shines and all nature rejoices out of doors, prefer the more classical practice, and in imitation of Socrates and Plato of old, of holding meetings on the banks of the Lossie, or in the shade of some embowering wood in the immediate neighbourhood. These meetings, however, are only occasional: the variable state of the climate here not permitting that free use of the open air so much practised in the delightful country of Greece. If the day is fine the members assemble at the spot appointed and take their seats on the green sward; pure water is the beverage, the toast being dispensed with from the inconvenience of procuring it; and the Members are seen at

every pause in the discussions going down to the streams and lapping the crystal element with great avidity. Formerly they had no convenient means of drawing up the water, each depending upon the resources of his own ingenuity, so that there was often great havoc made in the crowns of hats, and many soiled knees of breeches from the oozy banks of the river: but it is now proposed to purchase with the profits of *The Ephemera* a handsome silver cup for the convenience of the Club, on which shall be inscribed a flaming panegyric in the praise of water.

The meeting having been appointed, as has been mentioned, on Friday night, and plenty of toast and water provided in huge capacious decanters, the Members assembled around the table to share

“ The feast of reason and the flow of soul.”

Many of our readers, perhaps, may be disposed to suggest as an amendment,

“ The feast of reason and a flowing bowl;”

but these must be totally ignorant of the virtues of toast and water. Not Sir John Falstaff's sack—the rum punch of the Glasgowegians, nor the whisky toddy of Glenlivet, can be compared to the mild, exhilarating, healthful beverage of toast and water. It is because in general not enough of it has been drunk that its virtues have remained so long in oblivion. A tumbler or two is a mere tasting—a Scotch pint is but a puny allowance, and

nothing under a couple of gallons has any very marked effect. Why did Dr. Johnston regularly swallow sixteen and seventeen basins of tea with such a gusto? No tassedly from any effect which a few dried leaves could have amid such a sea of liquid; but merely because the composition served as a bad substitute for toast and water. It must be taken to a certain extent or it has no effect—a person may eat a few mouthfulls of sallad without doing him either good or ill; but let him devour the same quantity that a cow does, and there is no rational objection why it should not produce similar effects—that is, a large accession of flesh and plenty of milk.

After a short desultory conversation the Club proceeded to business. From the Report of the Secretary it appeared that although materials for five week's Ephemeras had been taken from the stock, so little diminution had it made in its bulk, that five months, nay almost five years would not exhaust it. It is to be taken into account, however, that several communications had been inserted from correspondents; and although more were pouring in every day, yet as it was uncertain how long the tide would continue, it was requested that the Members should still persevere with their exercises, in order to prevent all possibility of a famine in the land. It was also resolved, that as they had hitherto depended upon correspondents for poetical pieces, none of the Members having a propensity for stringing rhymes, and that this mode of supply is deemed, at best, precarious; moreover, having been told that such materials are indispensable to the existence of our publication—it was, we say, resolved to

send to Edinburgh or Europe, or some of those large towns, as Miss Oldenough observes, for a poetical machine capable of producing a certain quantity of poetry weekly; and of long or short, pathetic or humorous pieces as occasion requires.

These matters having been settled, the Essay for the night was called for; it happened to be the turn of the metaphysical gentleman B, whom we mentioned in a former number, and on silence being procured, he took from his pocket, and read the following:—

On the Comparative Merits of Literary and Scientific Studies.

THERE are two great divisions of the Studies which occupy the attention of the learned, *viz.* LITERATURE and PHYSICAL SCIENCE. The one comprehending the study of Morals, History, and Poetry; the other the phenomena and laws of Natural Objects. It is perhaps difficult exactly to determine which of the two is entitled to the preference.

The study of nature presents a wide and interesting field for human ingenuity; whether we trace the admirable construction, and exact relations of its minuter objects; or, ascending in the scale of creation, explore the laws of the elements, and speculate on the formation of worlds. The Arts too, aided and improved by Scientific enquiries, as they contribute to the comfort and elegance of life, exhibit the importance and usefulness of such

studies. But it must be confessed that Scientific enquiries are always imperfect and full of uncertainty: conclusions which have been received with implicit confidence in one age, are flatly contradicted in the next. It has been judiciously observed,* "that every new step in Science is but the correction of an old one." The Vortices of Des Cartes have been succeeded by the Theory of Gravitation of Newton; and it too may be eclipsed by the active enquiries of succeeding sages. Art, though still adding improvement to improvement, is still far from perfection. Though much has been done, still every step that is taken discloses the necessity of doing more.—It is not so with respect to Literature: its speculations are less hypothetical, and its conclusions more stable. It is true, in some departments it possesses, along with Physical disquisitions, the fault of uncertainty and inconclusiveness; because the speculations are on subjects which can never come within the grasp of man's capacity: but for the most part its subjects are of that kind which can admit of no change or amendment. Homer many ages ago pourtrayed feelings, emotions, and passions, which, down to the present time, are recognised to be the emotions and passions of humanity; and in a style too, which, though many may have imitated, and some few, it may be, equalled, yet none have surpassed. Aristotle has laid down laws of Criticism which are still acknowledged—Demosthenes still affords an example of the true art of moving the passions—and the ancient historians still stand as examples for succeeding ages to imitate. There is another view in which Moral and Literary Studies seem

* Forsyth's Remarks on Italy.

to surpass the Physical Sciences,—I mean, as the former relate to the powers and attributes of the soul, which is immortal ; whereas the latter treat of evanescent and perishable matter.

Science, as connected with the Arts, contributes to the comfort, elegance, and amusements of life. Literature is of importance in refining the manners, correcting the passions, and affording an inexhaustible fund of mental occupation. As forming the subject of conversation in society, Literature has this advantage over Science, that, as comparatively few are interested or acquainted with scientific speculations, all can in some degree appreciate the importance of a literary subject. We can hear unmoved a philosophical disquisition on the remote causes of an earthquake, or a minute description of a meteorological phenomenon ; but the investigation of the secret springs which actuate the soul, or a natural representation of its passions and feelings, immediately “ come home to men’s business and bosoms.”

We have seen then that literary studies are of superior importance to scientific—on account of the degree of perfection, and certainty, of which they are capable—because the objects to which they relate are imperishable—and because they are of greater interest to the bulk of society.

But, to conclude—In indulging too far the study of Literature, we are apt on the one hand, by giving an undue licence to the imagination, to fill it with visionary and tumultuous speculations ; or on the other, by diving

too deep into moral or political subtilities, to perplex the mind, and prejudice the judgment. It is of importance, then, to turn to the calm, abstracted, and contemplative walks of Science—there the mind will feel relieved from perturbing speculations on its present state, and obscure anticipations of the future. The judgment will be exercised by tranquil and lucid trains of thought; and the imagination weaned from the too stimulating excitement on which it had revelled, be sobered down to that equable temperament which is most compatible with a useful and comfortable existence.

AT the close of this Essay, as a portion of the Members were asleep, it was at first doubtful whether its doom would be oblivion or preservation, but on taking the numbers it was found the majority were awake; and accordingly it was by their vote advanced to the station it now fills. One of the Members now took the opportunity to mention to B, that a friend of his, well versed in Greek literature, had perused his Philosophical Fable from the Greek, in the second number, but could not recollect the original in all his reading; the Member, therefore, begged of him to state where it was to be found. B, in reply, stated that it was very possible the learned Grecian might not find it in the common printed Greek books, but that there were now many other sources of procuring Greek literature, and that the piece in question was a scrap from one of the identical Herculeaneum MSS. which Sir Humphry Davy is now busied in unrolling.

The opinion of the public with regard to *The Ephemera* was now brought under notice. Almost every Member "brought in a different tale," and the President, who is also Editor, had considerable difficulty in summing up the evidence, in the form of instructions to the Members, which were as follows: and which all those who have sent, or intend sending communications will please attend to.

"I find considerable difficulty, Gentlemen, in selecting from the papers which are here before me, or in advising you what plan you are to follow in your future productions, so as to make our performance agreeable to the generality of readers. The public is a many headed monster; unfortunately it has several stomachs also, each requiring a separate aliment. This small public too that we have to deal with, is younger in literary experience than many others, and accordingly requires more humouring. There are many things delicately cooked up which would slide down its throat unperceived without causing the least sensation; and others again which would be rejected by its squeamish stomach, not accustomed to an enlarged, liberal, and unprejudiced digestion. We must steer a middle course, therefore, "*ibis tutissimus medio.*" As there are hundreds of periodical works daily issuing from the press which grasp with avidity, and engross every subject of science and general literature, it is not so much our business, nor do we presume to dabble much in these. Subjects of a local interest are all that are left for us; and of these we must endeavour to make some use. It is possible such may be scoffed at

by many, merely because they are familiar; but let this have no weight, their being familiar does not make them of less importance in the eye of reason. We would wish also to have as much originality in the choice and handling of subjects as possible. No doubt were we to select and transpose materials from the wide field of literature, we might present a much better choice of subjects and composition than our pages can boast; but this, under the existing circumstances already mentioned, would be a needless labour. We must, therefore, abide by our own thoughts and fancies, at the risk of their being oftentimes "flat and unprofitable." It may be objected too, that our subjects are too short, and do not go sufficiently into detail; but from the very circumscribed limits of our publication a greater expansion is impracticable; and were we to engross a whole Ephemera with one subject, it might so happen, that it, to the greater part of our readers, would be totally devoid of interest. By having as much variety as possible, therefore, we have the greater chance of suiting every one's palate. And after all, should we unfortunately be in the same predicament as the worthy Vicar of Wakefield with his learned pamphlets on monogamy, we can have the same comfort—that if they should not sell, we may soothe ourselves with the consoling reflection that they are read only by the chosen *few*.

But I am encroaching, Gentlemen, too far on your time; our cans are all drained to the bottom, and it is already midnight. The streets are silent as death. All the busy sons of labour have sunk to repose. Even the

bacchanalian shouts of the late wassailers have died away —the windows of all the latest sitters are now darkened —the faint candle of the anxious attendant on the bed of sickness has been removed, and the solitary taper of some mechanical student, who snatches a few hours from his sleep, with the laudable object of storing his mind with knowledge, no longer twinkles from the exalted garret. The waning moon half enveloped in clouds, peeps with a glimmering ray from the west, and tinges the sombre walls with a faint light. Every motion of the huge pendulum of the church clock is distinctly heard amid the universal stillness. How sublime the idea, to think with the poet that we alone are awake amid all the silence of seeming death around us; and that no eye beholds us but the eye of Omnipotence!

What a glorious effect would the solitary walls of the Cathedral have, as half displayed to view, and casting a dark shade behind them, in such a night as this!—we shall sally forth and view them immediately; and I will here stop lest you should think I am pilfering from Goldsmith's admirable City Night Piece.

To the Editor of the Ephemera.

SIR,

I SEND you inclosed two little pieces in hopes that they may be deemed worthy of filling a corner in your publication. They are the production of one who has not yet completed his sixteenth year. Although the cultivation of a turn for poetry when it exists should not be allowed to have an undue influence in the education of youth, unless under very particular circumstances, yet encouraged to a certain extent, it has many advantages to recommend it. It forms a harmless and engaging amusement—brings out the more benignant feelings of the heart—accustoms the mind to a correct arrangement of thought, and gives a great facility and harmony of expression when the pupil comes afterwards to prose composition.

I am, &c.

CLERICUS.

 STANZAS.

Laid on this riv'let's mossy sides,
 Which thro' the gently sloping vale,
 In mazy windings slowly glides,
 How sweet to taste the vernal gale!

How sweet to hear from ev'ry spray,
 Of yon green budding hazle grove,
 The feather'd songsters pour the lay
 Of vernal joy, delight and love!

But doubly sweet to me this scene,
 Who late on sorrow's couch was laid ;
 My frame depressed, and racked with pain,
 And horrors hov'ring round my head.

Down, down the torrent's foaming wave,
 Now would I think me borne away ;
 And now, without the power to save,
 Snatched in a whirlwind from the day !

How different are my feelings now,
 From those which then my soul oppress'd ;
 With gratitude my spirits glow,
 And love and joy possess my breast.

Flow, flow thou gently humming stream,
 Swell out ye birds your syphonies ;
 Soothe me into some heav'nly dream
 An raise my fancy to the skies.*

J. B.

* The other piece shall be inserted afterwards.

R N is a very fair performance, and it should be inserted were not the subject so hacknied. If it is a Juvenile production, and the style betrays it to be such, we would recommend the writer to choose a subject more original, and treat it in a plain, simple, and unaffected manner.

J C's second production is better than the first, but Zimmerman has said all that can be said on the subject. This is too hastily written also ; let the author take more time and strive at originality.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. VII.

Monday, 6th May, 1822.

A DAY IN THE MOORS.

(20th August, 1821.)

—**H**ERE I must rest in this hollow green spot where the ground is coolest. I have carried the work of death to a sufficient length, at least for this day. My shooting bag is so loaded that it already galls my shoulders, and I pant with fatigue under the heavy weight: come off then, and regurgitate the contents of thy capacious maw, till I number the fruits of my sport. What a mingled group of variegated birds strew the brown heath of a congenial hue! Here lies the stately moorcock, with his scarlet crest and beautifully variegated feathers: arrested at the outset of his flight by the thundering gun as he mounted up and boldly crowed defiance, he tumbles down headlong, and leaves a widowed mate and young brood to bewail his fate.

There the dam of another family lies separated from her lord; and the young *cheepers*, which have only enjoyed a few months existence, lie by the side of old birds that have inhabited the bleak hills for many a season. Last of all comes a large stiffened hare, which the all-levelling hand of death hath associated with these inhabitants of a different element. He bounded along among the hills in all the pride of conscious agility, with his ever watchful eye and fleet legs, eluding the pursuit of his enemies. But he had no chance when matched with the murdering gun: the flying ball in a moment out-did his fleetness, and he fell lifeless and bloody on the ground. That pitiful scream for mercy, which hares employ, as a last resource, when in the jaws of the greyhound, he here disdained to use; expecting, perhaps, less pity from relentless man, than from an animal more nearly allied to his own species, he gave up his life in despair, and without a groan.—Such are the reflections which do sometimes arise on seeing a parcel of creatures, which the sportsman hath made his victims; and from whence some would argue that such sports are, from their cruelty and barbarity, not suitable amusements for civilized man. But such reasoners are little better than puling sentimentalists. There is a natural propensity in man which impels him to such pastimes; and which no degree of civilization, short of a morbid effeminacy, can altogether eradicate. Even the softest milksop on seeing a hare start from his feet will in the moment endeavour to grasp at her, or send after her his hat or walking cane, in an unavailing effort. Who has not seen an indoor citizen chuckling over the death of a mole in his garden, the

result of his own prowess; or a field of harvest reapers running from their task at the sound of the winding bugle and low howling of the fox-hounds, and leaning on tiptoe over some hedge, grinning and exulting in the fate of poor Reynard? The whole creation is subservient to man; and I do not see why this pursuit, so capable of affording a healthful exercise, and a pleasing abstraction of the mind from the ever eating cares of the present, should be condemned or ridiculed.

Who would not envy me my sensations now, as I repose in this still spot from the toils of the day. While bounding over the heath, and breathing the pure air of the mountains, I looked with pity on the dull monotony of the valley below, and the tame pursuits which engage the men of it: and now that I have reduced my bodily powers to a pleasing langour, and laid myself down to enjoy repose, the mind, ever on the alert, resumes its activity, and calls up a thousand fancies of the past, or speculates on the scene before me. What a boundless scene of stillness and solitude surrounds me! It is now noon, and the sun pours down his vertical rays, without an intervening cloud to mitigate their fervour. All around, as far as the eye can reach, nothing is seen but hills towering above hills, with their sombre covering of dark brown heath. In the foreground, dark shadows, with abrupt precipitous ravines, present themselves to the eye; as the hills recede they assume a more aerial hue, till at last they mingle in the distance with the soft blue æther. The only sound that assails the ear is the fretting of the neighbouring current, as it contrives to make its way

over a thousand projecting rocky crags, till at last it creeps along among the pebbles of its deep worn channel, the gradual work of many a wintry torrent. The mossy soil on which I repose, in winter one oozy spring of moisture, is now dry and porous as a sponge; and is separating by means of the powerful heat into many deep fissures. In some spots, where there is still a little remaining moisture, a few green leaves and moss of variegated hues serve as a resting place to the eye, and relieve the monotony of the sombre heath. A few stunted shrubs also may be seen winding in fantastic tortuosity about the grey rocks, but these are of rare occurrence. The scene is as barren of animal existence as of vegetable. The brown lizard is seen sometimes creeping among the stones; a few honey bees more vigorous than the rest, penetrate thus far to rifle the heather bell of its sweet; but there are few attractions for the other numberless tribes of insects. Here are a few silly sheep, however, come to visit me; they stare at me at a respectful distance, and now speed away to pick their scanty fare among the hills. They require no shepherd here to correct their wanderings; there are no neighbour's bounds which they must avoid, but they range the whole wilderness as inclination prompts them. Of human life there is no vestige within my ken, except yon solitary hut upon a green knoll at a little distance, and which in colour can scarcely be distinguished from the heath that surrounds it. What a life of loneliness and seclusion must the inmates lead!—lonely and secluded even now, when the sun shines out and the season is at its best; but in winter when the whirlwinds howl through the hollows,

when the tempest batters on the close shut doors, and the roaring torrents thunder in the ears, how heart-chilling and awful! No wonder that such situations and such scenes should have the power of moulding the character, and of imparting a peculiar tinge to the fancy, and the affections. No wonder, that amid such a paucity of the means of subsistence, we should see the inhabitants spare and meagre in their appearance—that when the field for exertion is so circumscribed, they should be inclined to indolence—that from their loneliness they should be given to deep thought—have a reverential awe of the Deity, and a strong tincture of superstitious fancies—that they should have strong family attachments, and a love of home, from their little intercourse with the rest of the world, and their necessity for mutual dependance: and, in short, from a combination of all these, that they should be plain, frugal, patient of fatigue, shrewd, intelligent, and have an ardent love of country.

How the mind expands in greatness and sublimity amid such a scene as this! Here are no meretricious ornaments, or obtruding minutiae to distract the attention; all is one uniform grandeur and simplicity. Around is the stillness and repose of uncultivated nature—above, the wide and boundless concave of Heaven. Amidst the crowd of cities, and all the artificial objects which the industry of man hath raised around him: amid the systematic existence in which he is enveloped, and the mutual obeisance which man is disposed to pay to the opinions and efforts of his fellow men, it is possible to entertain the groveling creed, that the present state

bounds and terminates his existence ; but in such a place as this, he must suppose himself a link of some other chain—a part of some great whole, or his existence is nothing—he dwindles into mere insignificance, and is lost in the boundless waste before him. It is here that individuality becomes of importance. Detached from his species, and surrounded by nature's loneliness, man strives to connect himself to Omnipotence: his importance in the scale of being becomes to him more apparent: his mind catches a spark of that grandeur and magnificence which is before it; it is filled with nobler motives and resolves, and is lifted far above the petty littleneesses of every-day life.

But a truce to such speculations. My dog by his restless fidgetings, and occasional pawing of my elbow sleeve invites me to take my departure homewards. Ye feathery inhabitants of the mountains, ye shall have a few days longer respite ; enjoy what yet of life remains to you.—and ye poor victims of my sport, I must huddle you once more into your bag—the roasting spit already whets its long tooth to transfix you ; and the cook maid is ready to slay you a second time. Now as I descend from the mountain tops, my thoughts descend also. Having revelled on intellectual speculations, I now begin to anticipate some of the gratifications of the senses ; and he has enjoyed but half the pleasures of a Day in the Moors who is ignorant of the indescribable luxury, when after having arrived at home, he has received a complete ablu- tion of cold water, and a change of vestments, he sits down to a table smoking with the game of his last day's

excursion, qualified with a cup of something better, Mr. Editor, than your so much vaunted toast and water.—Dinner being over, he stretches his weary limbs upon the yielding sofa—or two chairs placed together form a convenient substitute—here, reclining at his ease, he either dozes away the heavy hours of digestion in a half slumber, or enjoys Gray's Paradise to the full in glancing over the last novel of the Author of Waverly. The close window blind blunts the glare and heat of the sun—the room is all peace and silence—and his only companion is the large bottle fly, which now buzzes about the room with a shrill humming, and now gratifies its drunken propensities by sipping the remnants of the toddy tumbler.

Such are the pleasures which I hasten to enjoy; and may such always await on him who has spent, as harmlessly as I have done, this DAY IN THE MOORS.

Forres, 1822.

JAQUES.

IT is the nature of man to have his thoughts very little engaged on the present; he must either be ruminating on the past, or anticipating the future. In retracing the labyrinths of the past there are a few scattered facts which serve as stepping stones, and some associating links, or railways of memory, which materially assist his progress; but in diving into the ages that are yet to come, there are no such aids or resting places; the fancy must make one fearless bound and fairly overleap the wide gulph

of futurity. Such an excursion one of our correspondents seems to have lately made, and brought back with him in his pocket a Newspaper, from which he sends us the following extracts. We should have preferred having seen the paper itself, not but that the extracts are judiciously made, but some of them may be thought rather too complimentary to this our humble endeavours.

*Extracts from the ELGIN MERCURY, published
13th March, 2150.*

THE GRAND ELGIN CANAL.—This magnificent work is at length finished, and the neat steam-vessel *Lossie* arrived at the Bishopmill Quay this morning from London, after a short passage of three days. The increased population (which according to the late census amounted to 50,200) required some more easy and expeditious way of exporting their manufactures than they formerly possessed. This encouraged some public-spirited gentlemen to undertake the above-mentioned work, by which we trust they will be amply compensated.

The workmen employed in clearing away that old building called the Mason's Hall, found a bottle hermetically sealed containing some old coins and a piece of vellum, from which it appears that the building was begun in 1821, more than 300 years ago. If possible we shall hereafter favour our readers with a copy of this curious piece of antiquity. It perhaps may throw some light on that long lost mystery of Freemasonry which has so much puzzled our Antiquaries. One thing is apparent, from

the considerable size of the area of the building, and some remains of its magnificent ornaments, that the Society was of importance, and the secret contributed to the welfare of humanity.

The Lord Provost and Magistrates have generously voted £700 for repairing and beautifying that old classical building the Muckle Kirk, which has so long stood a specimen of the "taste, ingenuity, and labour of our ancestors." It is reported that the old Town-house will receive a similar donation for repairs next season.

We understand Lord Lingow has given up the contest. The state of the poll stood yesterday as follows:—

Lord Gowry, - -	3714.
Lord Lingow, - -	2364.

Lord Gowry is of course returned, and intends giving a ball next week in the County Rooms.

Let all the Damsels fair,
Their satin shoes prepare.

After the election yesterday, a grand dinner was given at the Toast and Water Tavern, by the successful candidate. The Lord Provost, Baillies, and other city officers drove up to the door in splendid new coaches and four; with scarlet and gold liveries.

An interesting relic of the nineteenth century has lately been discovered in the Library of a celebrated Institution in this city. It consists of the numbers of a

small weekly publication called *The Ephemera*, and contains much curious and valuable information relative to the ancient condition of our native place. From a variety of interesting matter which it contains we select the following; and at the same time sincerely recommend the work itself to the attentive perusal of all who may have access to it. The first paper mentions the establishment of a Printing Press, which, from several circumstances taken notice of, appears to have been the first attempted here. What would our worthy forefathers think, could they be informed that many of the best editions of the Classics have been published here, and that many of our most elegant historical, epic, and dramatical compositions have made their first entrance into the world through the Elgin Press. From a description of the town given in another paper, it seems to have contained at the utmost no more than 3 or 4,000 inhabitants, and to have been almost destitute of commerce, except what was carried on through the medium of some villages on the sea coast. How vast the difference between this and the state of Elgin at present, when its former population ten times told would scarcely amount to the present number of its citizens; and when it holds such a conspicuous place in the commercial cities of the empire. The same paper presents a contrast of the then state of the town, and its condition a period fifty years earlier; which shews that its prosperity became considerable in the course of that time: and indeed *The Ephemera* itself has perhaps been one of the earliest harbingers of increasing importance! The style of the work now before us affords a striking proof of the early period at which our language has been brought to its present perfection.

R. Y.

WE are glad that we can at last gratify Miss C. F. OLDENOUGH, by inserting the following Poem, which we have just received.

MR. EDITOR,

Your great master, the Spectator, had pity on poor Lovers. Do you follow so good an example—and ‘for pity’s sake’ insert the following verses in The Ephemera, and I shall take care that Mary see them.

Your’s, Dear Editor,

TOM LOVESICK.

TO MARY ———

As the face of the sea when the sky is serene,
As the soft breathing gale slightly dimples the ocean,
While languidly borne on its waters’ sheen,
Rides the bark with uncertain and wavering motion ;—

As the dew-drop at eve to the pale drooping flower,
While the moon’s silvery mantle envelopes the dark ;
As the smile of the morn when it whispers the hour
That arouses to love and to music, the lark ;—

As the silvery moon to the fairies of night,
While so lightly they mount on her paly beams,
Preparing love-potions for some mortal wight ;
Or tickling his fancy with treacherous dreams ;—

As the breath of the spring that inviteth the bee,
To extract liquid sweets from the fair heather bells ;—
Such, such and much more is my Mary to me,
The maid on the banks of the L—— that dwells. Y.

SIGHS.

There is a sigh—that half suppress'd,
 Seems scarce to leave the bosom fair;
 It rises from the spotless breast,
 The first faint dawn of tender care.

There is a sigh—so soft, so sweet,
 It breathes not from the lip of woe;
 'Tis heard where conscious lovers meet,
 Whilst yet untold, young passions glow.

There is a sigh—short, deep and strong,
 That on the lip of rapture dies;
 It floats mild evening's shade along,
 When meet the fond consenting eyes.

There is a sigh—that speaks regret,
 Yet seems scarce conscious of its pain;
 It tells of bliss remember'd yet,
 Of bliss that ne'er must wake again.

There is a sigh—that deeply breath'd
 Bespeaks the bosom's secret woe;
 It says, the flowers that Love had wreath'd,
 Are wither'd ne'er again to blow.

There is a sigh—that slowly swells,
 Then deeply breathes its load of care;
 It speaks, that in the bosom dwells,
 That last worst pang—fond Love's despair.

D—X.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. VIII.

Monday, 13th May, 1822.

ON SELFISHNESS.*

—“Those who for themselves
Liv'd only: fame of them the world hath none,
Nor suffers; mercy and justice scorn them both.
Speak not of them but look and pass them by.”

DANTE.

THE Love of Self to a certain extent is wisely implanted in our nature as a means of individual existence and preservation. Pursued so far therefore it is a duty; carried farther it is a stain upon humanity and levels man below the dignity of the brute creation. There are beings whose narrow contracted souls feel no sympathy with the world around them—who have not a single cord vibrating in unison with the feelings of the rest of mankind. Incased within the impenetrable panoply of self, like the snail in its shell, they shrink from all external intercourse and may be truly said to live for themselves alone. To such a being all that is noble and exalted in our nature

* This Essay is by NAZLITT, the famous London Critic, who has left the Metropolitan Periodicals and become a contributor to the EPHEMERA, where his merits will be more justly appreciated, and his labours better rewarded.

appeareth low—all the finer affections which twine round the heart, foolishness. The groans of the afflicted—the wailings of the orphan, and the silent anguish of the widow, are heard by such a one with indifference; but if misfortune happens to himself—if he sustains a trifling pecuniary loss, or pricks his finger with the most insignificant wound, he feels it to the very core, and would, if possible, move heaven and earth in his own behalf.—There are others again who, having less care of their sensual comfort, strive alone for personal aggrandizement. To such a being this world appears too small when shared with others—there is not room enough in it for him and its other inhabitants—he could see the whole race exterminated, that he might reign the solitary monarch of a universe. You will know a selfish being even in the first stage of his existence, before he has yet forsaken his cradle. No entreaties will prevail upon the child to give up its rattle, and he hoards his playthings with a miser's care. When he grows up to that joyous and generally careless period, when “a penny becomes a competency and sixpence great riches,” he is seen laying out his extensive fortune at the pastry cook's or the stall of the huxter, and then retiring to a solitary corner to devour his luxuries in secret, instead of sharing them in his turn with his more generous companions. As he advances to manhood you will see him leaving the path of probity and independance and prostituting himself to the caprice of others—fawning upon the powerful and looking with contempt and superciliousness on the humble. Mark what a discrepancy between his actions and his words—and how man can still “smile and smile and be a villain!”—

This is the extreme point of selfishness, where a man is entirely occupied in his own gratifications without having a sympathy for the rest of mankind or a single feeling or affection to bestow on any human being besides himself. There is another modification where the sphere of affection is somewhat extended, and where the love of self has not sprung up to such a degree as to choak every other feeling of the soul—but still the more benignant influences are very circumscribed—they may extend to the circle of one's family or near relations, but to all the world besides, the same illiberal encroachments, the same ungenerous advantages, and desire of grasping and accumulating without regard to the means employed are still practised.

The soils where the love of self is most likely to take root and flourish, so far as external circumstances have effect on the propensities of the mind, are—among the pampered favourites of fortune, where all things are subservient to their will, and where little pains are taken to correct the effect of unrestrained indulgence by looking into the less favoured lot of others, and balancing the feelings and sufferings of these with their own—among a people suffering under the iron rod of tyranny, where all noble feelings are repressed, and sentiments and actions are under the controul of arbitrary power—and in small communities, where there is not scope for enlarged exertion or great undertakings; where every man's interest seems to infringe on that of his neighbours; where there is a mutual jealousy of encroachment, undermining, and second hand dealing; and where public spirit, enter-

prise or adventure, has long been asleep—perhaps never awakened. As the mind is disposed to be influenced in a considerable degree by the sphere in which it is placed, and to assume a tinge of magnanimity from the grandeur and sublimity which surround it—so also is it apt to be weakened and debased by the continued action of selfish and petty considerations, and that murky cloud of prejudice in which a small community is enveloped, and which hangs around it, a dull and baneful atmosphere. There such a thing as acting purely from principle, without regard to personal considerations, is deemed a chimera—disinterestedness is scoffed at—and the purest actions of philanthropy thwarted through caprice, or blunted by the cold sneer of ridicule. Yet philosophers, amid their distracting speculations on humanity, have soothed themselves with the idea that there are such virtues; and men of practical wisdom have avowed that they have experienced them. Let the cold and unfeeling therefore hug themselves in their impenetrable armour; like the flinty rock they may brave with defiance the rain and the tempest—all the external ills of life—but they can never experience that well-spring of delight which continually rises within that breast which extends its sympathy to, and can share in all the feelings of its fellow men. Painful often, no doubt, such a power of participation must be, but though their perception of pain be more keen their enjoyments are more exquisite, more frequent, and infinitely more lasting. Amid the myriads of beings who rise up in succession—bustle about for a season on this changeful scene, and then fade away, and leave not a trace behind them, it is some

consolation for those to think that they have made some use of their existence, and that they have not lived in vain, for

“ What is man,
If the chief good and market of his time,
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.”

LADY HILL.

“ Elgin is a place of rank,
Situatè on Lossie bank.”

THOMSON.

WE are fond of walking round this Northern Acropolis, and of catching at every turn a view of the champaign country spread out before us. Every one knows that this was a fort of great antiquity. The shape of the Hill seems partly natural and partly artificial—it is most likely that a great part of the base has been pared away so as to make the steepness and difficulty of ascent greater; for the present shape is not what naturally occurs in hills of a similar composition. Shaw, the indefatigable historian of Moray, thus describes it: “The plain area on the top of the hill is eighty-five yards in length and forty-five in breadth. There are some remains of the walls of this Fort yet standing, but such as do not shew the form or extent of the buildings. Generally these forts were a square or an oblong square; the walls about twenty feet high and four feet thick, with towers in the angles, all

wrought with run lime. Within the walls were rooms and barracks of wood ; the gate or entrance was guarded by an iron grate, and a portcullis ; and some forts had parapets on the top of the wall. Within the court there was a draw-well, and the whole Fort was environed with a fosse over which was a draw-bridge. Vestiges of all these are to be seen at this fort at Elgin. The strength of such forts were considerable before great guns came into use. The Randolphs, Dunbars, and Douglas, Earls of Moray, were constables of this Fort, &c." Such is the most rational account of the origin and use of this building, the remains of which are now so insignificant—but not such the marvellous stories, which the garrulous old nurse pours into the delighted ears of infancy. She tells,

“ How that the castle in a single night,
 With all its inmates, sunk quite out of sight—
 There at the midnight hour is heard the sound
 Of various voices talking under ground ;
 The rock of cradles—wailing infants' cries,
 And nurses singing soothing lullabies.”

It seems a *pest* or plague had seized the unfortunate inhabitants—the ground gaped to receive them ; or they, and the whole of their castle, were covered over by their neighbours to ensure the general safety ; and if a bit of the ground is dug up even to this day, it is death to the whole country.

What a crowd of youthful recollections are associated with this same hill ! Here it was that the children assem-

bled on a *Peace Saturday* to row their eggs, stained of various hues,—a practice now altogether laid aside. A finer sight could not have been witnessed, than some hundreds of children ranged, row above row on the sloping side of the hill, with their happy faces watching the bounding of their eggs, as they rolled in various courses down the declivity. It was like the slanting view of a full theatre, while the audience sit entranced with the performance of some favourite actor. Here it was that the Burger's wives and children sat to view their Protectors, starched up into the form of volunteers, go through their martial evolutions; mimic the assault and defence, and waste their rounds of cartridge on the desert air. Here also, at that memorable period when the whole country was under alarm at the threatened invasion from France, did the terrified inhabitants of Elgin, both young and old, flock together and magnify the fishing boats of *Bucky*, seen scudding up the firth into a whole fleet of the enemy's transports. Below rolls, in many a winding course, the blue 'translucent' *Lossie*; the scene of many an unsuccessful trouting match—of many a truant hour—and of many a ducking and soiling of clothes, which inspired the hesitating dread of returning home—

But here we must stop, and give place to a petitioner who has three times begged admission into our pages.—No doubt every Monday morning he has awaited the appearance of *The Ephemera* with all the palpitating expectation of an aspiring author;—he shall at last be gratified, and shall have the satisfaction of seeing the offspring

of his brain now perhaps, for the first time, decked out in print.

“ I came to the place of my birth and said—the friends of my youth where are they ? and Echo answered—where are they ! ”

The pleasures which we derive from memory constitute one great source of our mental gratifications ; and none of them are more delicate and sweet to the mind, than those we experience in recalling those loved ideas which had passed through it when life was young, before the verdure of infancy had passed away, or the soul been distracted by the busy scenes of life.

I was yesterday evening taking my wonted walk along the banks of Lossie: the sun was just sinking to the western main, leaving the hill tops tinged with his departing rays. The air was mild and serene; no sound was heard along the still fields before me, but the sighing of the gentle gale of evening, and the murmers of the passing current as it took its slow winding way to the ocean. While I was musing on all the variety of scenery my situation afforded, my imagination carried me to scenes of other years. Here had I often strayed to be far from the noise of a busy world—on this green bank have I often been soothed by the rippling of the stream ere yet my dreams of happiness had been broken by disappointment; or the sable shadows of sorrow had begun to lour over the graves of those I loved. To look back

on the serene and sunny days of youth, it appears only as yesterday since careless I had run along this grassy bank, pursuing the butterfly, or mingling among the youthful throng as they sported upon the green, free from care and disappointment. It was then that the hours flew past with rapture—but now, how altered is the scene! What a load of care has manhood brought in this world of hopes and fears. We sigh when we think on what has been; and mourn the swiftness of the years of innocence. The sunshine of our existence is fled—never again shall time renew to us the vanished joys of our spring. The hopes and desires which fluttered early around our hearts, are dissipated like a fleeting cloud. We are launched into the tempestuous sea of life, where perils appear in every tract; where dark clouds and contending winds will often interrupt our progress. On this sea we must all sail, a long and eventful voyage; where the wisest of us may be wrecked—where the foolish must. But if we learn to make firm principle our guide, and station prudence to guard us from the sudden blasts of passion, our passage over this troubled sea will be happy; the clouds will be few to cast a gloom over our joys, and the waves of hope will at last roll us gently into the haven of the blest.

C. J.

AMONG the numerous Correspondents who pour in upon us their Communications, none are so indefatigable as the inhabitants of Forres. They seem to have caught the *cacoethes scribendi* in an immoderate degree. Not a post

arrives but the printer is overwhelmed with Epistles, Essays, and Poems, in the most sublime strains : it is impossible that we can do justice to the whole without altogether exceeding our limits ; we must, therefore, have recourse to selection, and in the meantime give the following letter which was received lately. By doing so we must unfortunately let SENEX grow still older in our repositories ; the stern VERAX speak the truth in vain ;— and many a sentimental Lover breathe his sighs *gratis*.

MR. EDITOR,

From your first number I conceived that it was the intention of your Club to enter more into the description of the domestic manners and peculiarities of the North Country than has been done, and that your general description of Burgh manners and tea-parties was but a foretaste of the particulars that were to follow. I myself have been an attendant, and oftentimes a silent spectator of these parties for now, alas! nearly thirty years ; you must allow, therefore, that I have had good opportunities of becoming acquainted with the routine of their management, and I wish to convince you that I have profited by my experience. Indeed I have now become so learned in these matters that in going out to a tea party I can tell as exactly what are to be the subjects of conversation before I go as after I return. This may seem strange to you, but on explanation it all appears very simple. I class tea and all other parties into four great divisions, corresponding to the four seasons of the year. There are certain kinds of subjects peculiar to each of these seasons, which indeed arise out of them, and

which are as regular in their return as the revolution of the seasons themselves. In Spring the cold east winds form the great theme of complaint; and all the devastations they commit are reckoned up with a faithful minuteness: the opening blossoms are all blasted, and not an apple is to be procured this season for any consideration: young blossoms of a more interesting species are also reported to be on the wane; and the blasted hopes of fond parents are commented on with seeming commiseration, though oftener with an ill disguised coolness. In Summer it is either too hot or too cold: the halcyon days of old are returning, or the seasons have degenerated never to improve. In Autumn the crops have entirely failed—the rain pours down in torrents never to be stopped—or the fruit branches, which in Spring were pronounced to be barren, now bend to the ground with their blushing load. When dreary Winter shuts the scene, whist and backgammon, no friends to conversation, silence many a restless tongue. But even then, between intervals, the great depth of the last fall of snow, with the delay of the mails, and the consequent stoppage of parliamentary debates—and love epistles; or the total absence of either frost or snow,—are discussed, and help to beguile the tedious hours. I am so accustomed to these things, and so assured of their regular occurrence, that by having ready a few short answers and nods of assent I can in the intervals enjoy a comfortable nap, (which to tell you the truth I am much given to), without either appearing rude or inattentive. I perceive, Mr. Editor, that *The Ephemera* is now become a general subject of conversation among us—and hope, under its happy auspices, that a change

in the monotony of our parties will speedily be brought about. I think upon the whole that we are more of a literary taste than the inhabitants of your own Burgh, and that *The Ephemera* is more read here than with you.* I forgot to mention that literature was sometimes introduced before into our conversations, but not till all other topics had failed. Our Town has been very happily compared, by your Correspondent *JAQUES*, to the modern Athens. We are certainly much more refined and select in our manners than some places I could mention. Were I fond of making comparisons I should, not invidiously I hope, observe, that Elgin bears the same resemblance to Forres that Glasgow does to Edinburgh. But the mail has just arrived, and I must here hastily conclude.

Your's, &c. B. B. T

Forres, 8th May, 1822.

* Our Correspondent is not quite correct here.—The demand in Forres has certainly gone on increasing every week, but it is not yet equal to Elgin.

P. R.'s letter has been received, and given to the person interested. We wish to encourage fair discussion—and if P. R. sends us an essay on the other side of the question, we shall be happy to insert it. He will observe that in the essay alluded to the opinion is not advanced that no department of Physical Science can be, or has been, brought to perfection;—and also, that it was never suggested that the 'Globe on which we live, and the various productions of the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms,' were not regulated by fixed and unalterable laws—but that the *modus operandi* and effects of these laws were not by any means clearly understood—and that theories regarding these were formed by one age only to be rejected by the next.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. IX.

Monday, 20th May, 1822.

A PERIODICAL publication is like a machine: it requires some exertion at first to set it fairly agoing, but once it receives an impulse, the *vis inertiae*, that invariable property of matter, impels it forward with a ceaseless progress. If it were necessary to descend to particulars, it might, not inaptly, be compared to a thrashing machine, familiar, perhaps, to most of our readers. The Editor is the feeder, whose easy task it is to select the bundles which are brought to him from various quarters and subject them to the operation of the mill, from whence they come out perfect Ephemeræ.

It certainly was not contemplated when this insect was first hatched, literally with the idea that it was to last but for a day, that it should have so soon winged its flight to the east and west, and even to distant parts of the country, and brought back with it such "honey of Hybla" as it has done. We have set the whole grey goose quills in

the country a scribbling—those who never thought of inditing a line before now write whole pages fluently. Many an ingenious and beautiful fancy which might have amused its owner for a few moments, but then was allowed to drop from his memory and be forgotten, will now stand in this our “book of remembrance,” and perhaps afford amusement to many who could otherwise have had no opportunity of being possessed of it. Not a few clever performances also which hath remained for years in the secret repository may thus be brought to light; and the meditations and opinions of many a remote and solitary student diffused through general society. In this view then our little work may claim some merit, and these few remarks may not, perhaps, be deemed out of place preparatory to presenting our readers with the following communications, all from unknown correspondents, and apparently from different parts of the Country.

To the Editor of the Ephemera.

BASHFULNESS & IMPUDENCE—AN ALLEGORY

IN those happy ages of the world, when the deathless dwellers of heaven were imagined to have more of humanity in their frame, and were thought to be in some degree obliged to exercise paternal care over their offspring,—Jupiter, whose anxiety for the welfare of man-

klad was universally conspicuous, joined Confidence with Genius, and Caution with Stupidity, and sent them to the world. "Genius," said he, "ought always to be confident of his value, and Stupidity, to be cautious of incurring contempt."

Genius and Confidence being thus happily united, and intrinsically so excellent, became at once the objects of universal regard;—they were courted by the wise and entertained by the rich. Short time, however, elapsed, before there appeared considerable disparity betwixt this seeming harmonious pair—for, when invited to attend an assembly, or to wait at the levees of the great, Confidence, without reserve, usurped the most honourable station, whilst Genius could not face the public gaze, without evident marks of confusion. Confidence therefore, thinking himself affronted in the eyes of the polite, by the reserve of his associate Genius, resolved as soon as possible to abandon him; and consequently seized the first opportunity of effecting his purpose.

Nor did the other couple, Stupidity and Caution, no less happily joined by the wise Father of all, long subsist in harmonious union. For when Stupidity perceived that his figure in the world would be by no means contemptible, were it not for the timidity and remonstrances of Caution, he formed a resolution to relinquish his vexatious counsellor. One day, accordingly, he took the opportunity of attending a splendid assembly, to which he well knew Caution would refuse to accompany him. The outward appearance of Stupidity, which was not altogether

ungraceful, procured for him, not only among the thoughtless and less judicious of his own sex, but also from the female part of the company, a reception favourable far beyond his expectations, which confirmed him in his determination to abandon Caution. When therefore Caution proffered a re-union, Stupidity rejected the offer with contempt. The parties continued thus separated for a considerable time, before any account of their several adventures transpired. In the meantime, it was generally supposed that Genius and Caution, if not splendidly, would make their way through the world, at least with honour, but that Stupidity and Confidence would hasten onwards to ruin.

One day as Confidence was rambling from scene to scene, he stumbled accidentally on a party of pleasure, of which Stupidity was a fellow; and having joined it without ceremony, as was his custom, he began a conversation with him—in the course of which they contracted a mutual affection; each perceiving in the other qualities which he admired, but which he had found in no companion before. The incapability of being affronted, which Stupidity manifested, coincided with the notions of politeness, which Confidence had formed; whilst the bold unabashed freedom of Confidence, sharpened the blunted feelings of Stupidity. Fired therefore with mutual admiration, they entered into the bonds of the strictest friendship, and swore to be inseparable companions.

Caution, who all this time had kept at no great distance from Stupidity, having never abandoned the hope of be-

ing able to reclaim him,—as soon as he perceived his intimacy with Confidence, despaired of ever effecting his purpose, and leaving him to his fate, took a different direction. As the pale west now warned him of the time for repose, he proceeded towards a small cot, which stood at some distance from the public road, to procure a lodging for the night. This cot was the property and residence of a Gentleman, who had retired from the bustle of business, to superintend in solitude the education of his children, and to close a life spent amidst the hurry of the world, in a calm preparation for eternity. Caution being hospitably admitted by this gentleman, was immediately introduced to Genius, who had wandered to this attractive spot not long before. He had been requested to remain with the utmost cordiality, and yielding to reiterated entreaty, had at last consented to dwell in this innocent abode. And in order to ensure his comfort and continuance, the proprietor had furnished the finest apartment with decent elegance for his reception, where in company with his worthy entertainer's son, a youth of amiable disposition, and whose mind seemed inspiration itself, he lived in the exercise and enjoyment of all that is truly great and good. Genius and Caution thrown thus accidentally together, entered at once into friendly discourse, which ended in a mutual vow of indissoluble amity. Caution, however, rather lost than gained by this union; for Genius being naturally somewhat reserved himself, stood in no need of his strictures. He in a short time, therefore, lost all that vigilance which his former union with Stupidity required, and was known henceforward by the name of Bashfulness.

Stupidity and Confidence, whom we left in close conversation, proceeded with their party to a large magnificent building, situated in an extensive lawn near the banks of a rivulet that wandered silently through numerous clumps of all sorts of trees. This noble mansion, with a very valuable estate, had not long since fallen unconditionally to the present possessor, whose character in the world was that of a polite and intelligent gentleman. His constant companion and chief counsellor was Indolence. Indolence had formerly been butler to this Gentleman's father, when he had ingratiated himself so much into his young master's favour that he soon became the object of his fondest veneration. On the old gentleman's decease, he still retained his influence and now exercised over him more than paternal authority. To one therefore, who, we may thus suppose, had very little relish for intellectual enjoyment, the arrival of a pleasure party was no small gratification. He was always hospitable and kind indeed, but he entertained his guests on the present occasion with particular satisfaction. He had seldom found companions so completely adapted to his taste as Confidence and Stupidity, who accordingly attracted his warmest regard. The odd remarks which Stupidity occasionally threw out, excited a burst of laughter and passed with him for genuine wit—whilst the firm reply and unshaken countenance of Confidence seemed indisputable marks of a high born spirit. At last, he generously invited them to remain with him, and spend the remainder of their days in the midst of abundance. They accepted his offer without hesitation, and soon discovered in Indolence a congenial associate. Confidence, however, by

this union, lost all that dignity which distinguished him when the companion of Genius; and his vast superiority to Stupidity and Indolence securing him alike from rivalry and restraint, soon transformed him into Impudence, under which appellation he was ever afterwards generally known. PISCATOR.

Buckie—1822.

We hope this is not the only communication with which we shall be favoured by PISCATOR.—We are ashamed to say we have never seen the renowned town of Buckie, although we are reminded of it every day at breakfast by its yellow haddocks—no wonder these should be so excellent when caught and cured by such Classical Fishers as PISCATOR.

“The passions are more under the controul of the hours of meals than any one who has not observed human life out of novels can easily believe.”

EDGEWORTH.

THE same object looked upon by different persons frequently appears to them in as many different lights. One man is delighted with the thoughts of paying a visit to a particular place—another looks upon the necessity he is under of doing so with quite opposite feelings—neither of them have ever been there, and on arriving both become dissappointed and their ideas of the place

changed. What a variety of ideas are entertained of professions or employments—one is most pleasing to the imagination while another is the reverse; and if, what an aspirant may call, his evil genius should fasten him to the latter, he comes to find his former notions of it disappear, and to be succeeded by a preference given to it over all others. The same is observable in amusements, and something like astonishment is often expressed how such an amusement could possibly yield delight—while a pastime that at one time affords enjoyment at another is perfectly indifferent to us. And it may be remarked, last of all, that virtue is looked upon by some as containing “whatsoever things are lovely,” and a similar idea is entertained by others of vice.

All the while, however, the several objects in themselves are the same and unchanged; and it must, therefore, be evident that the varieties of appearances thus exhibited are only in the minds of the beholders. The fact is, that the imagination attaches to the objects contemplated qualities which they do not possess, and which is not difficult to conceive may be actually inconsistent with the nature of the idea with which it incorporated them. This adhibition of extraneous properties to a subject may be capricious in the last degree, and having no regulation to guide it but the fortuitous circumstances of their being accidentally placed in contact in the mind.

In reasoning—in forming opinions respecting any subject, the truth and accuracy of the conclusion to which we come is of course essentially influenced by the correct notion which we have entertained of the ideas or

subjects concerning which our reasoning is employed. If then we allow our imaginations by 'running riot' to decorate out these objects in false colours—to attach to them false properties—to, in fact, alter their very nature—it follows as a necessary consequence that we can have no difficulty in ascertaining not merely the usefulness but even the injuriousness of the conclusion we must (unless by chance) infallibly arrive at. It is in allusion to this error of the imagination which from habit becomes a disease, and, in fact, regulates all our settled opinions, a celebrated modern author remarks, that it is no small part of our advancement in knowledge to undo the false associations which we have imbibed in our youth.


There is nothing more fertile as a source of this error, than the very general, almost universal, practice of reading *Novels*. Nor, from the subject being the important one of human life and our conduct in it, are the errors caused by them liable to be often excelled in importance and vital consequence to us. Certain it is, that *life* as it is described in works of this description is one thing, and as it exists in reality another. And yet the resemblance is so great as to make the injury the more: for the more nearly it is connected, or altered to truth, the more dangerous is error. It may be assumed at once then, that the mind which forms its ideas of mankind—of what is called the world—of how one ought to conduct one's self in it—what plans of life one ought to adopt, through the medium of novels, is in a state the very reverse of what its owner wishes it to be. The error is great in itself—in its consequences not less; for those tend to mar not

only his usefulness to himself and others as a member of society, but also his own happiness. Such generally pernicious works—pernicious always to a certain class, unless when read under the eye of one who is qualified to point out what of them has a tendency to mislead—are most commonly in the hands of the young—the inexperienced in the world—the very instance where they are calculated to do most mischief.

Yet it cannot be denied on the other hand that they instil into the young mind a taste for the nobler affections, and something like detestation for whatever is selfish and mean. But all this is to an impracticable and enthusiastic extent, and although not useless in itself, as in training as much one may reach a little, yet the advantage so derived is, we fear, more than compensated by the attendant evils, when we consider that there are many other harmless sources where this taste for *moral beauty* may be imbibed in the proper and rational degree.

We must consider the perusal of novels, therefore, as something like grasping at the naked sword in the hand of an antagonist—an advantage may be gained but it is at a great risk, and of such consequence that it certainly seems more advisable to seek for the good elsewhere where it can be done with safety. Yet though it would follow that these works should be excluded from the hands of the inexperienced, unless under the surveillance of an able monitor, the same consequence does not seem necessary to obtain with respect to those more

advanced in life, whose characters are formed and whose opinions are fixed, and to whom the works of fiction frequently form one of the most delightful, as they are in that case one of the most rational, and harmless of amusements. E.

To the Editor  of the *Ephemeris*.

~~NORTH STREET~~
 LINES

*On an ancient Burying Ground on the Banks of the
 Dorback.*

WHERE, through Braemoray's winding vales
 The Duvie and the Dorback flow,
 Skirted by birch and blossom'd sloe,
 Whose fragrance scents the summer gales,
 Before their dark brown waters meet
 A verdant hill they sweep around,
 Whose sides are pranked with wild flowers sweet,
 And brow with aged oak trees crown'd.
 Oft in the bosom of that wood
 I muse in twilight solitude;
 Then leave its gloom for brighter day,
 And round the waving margin stray;
 Mark where Dunfail's grey ruins rise,
 And wild Slagginnan buried lies;
 Or where that forest dark appears,
 Through which, in days of other years,

Brave Randolf and his trusty Thanes
 Chac'd the red deer with horn and hound;
 Where yet his lordly hall remains,
 With ever during rafters crown'd.
 And nearer still a spot is found
 That oft recalls the wandering eye;
 There, under many a grassy mound,
 The bones of ancient warriors lie.
 By lofty banks inclosed around,
 Which echo Dorback's ceaseless sound;
 Seldom does living thing intrude
 Upon its deathlike solitude.
 Sometimes, returning from his prey,
 The eagle stops his airy way,
 Alights upon the moss-grown stone,
 And seems, with drooping wing to moan;
 As if, by some strange sympathy
 Or instinct, which his bosom fills,
 He knew that there the relics lie
 Of warriors from his native hills.
 On yonder heath, old legends tell,
 They dar'd to meet Earl Randolf's power;
 And met it in a luckless hour!
 Beneath his conquering sword they fell;
 And here in earth their limbs were laid,
 Each clansman, in his belted plaid,
 Far distant from his own lov'd vale.

C—d H—c.

10th May, 1822.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. X.

Monday, 27th May, 1822.

MR. EDITOR,

There are greater changes effected in other Towns which I have seen in the course of a long absence from my native place, in the space of weeks, than there are here in as many years; but certainly no one who has seen Elgin in the year 17 —, and not again till 1822, can give a casual glance over the 'good town,' without being sensible of many improvements. There is, to be sure, a kindly feeling in the breasts of natives which induces them both to think and speak well, in spite of their conviction sometimes of the place where they spent the first happy school-boy years of their existence; but this feeling is more than counterbalanced by the microscopic effect which a person's residence in large towns invariably produces on his vision, when he returns to the quiet provincial burgh, whose apparently diminished edifices, and contracted streets, seem to deny their identity with those which in the same situation had once appeared magnificent. This effect had, I must own, been produced on me

to a considerable extent during my absence from Elgin. I had once believed that our High-street was one of the finest in the world—that our Church was elegant—our Town-house spacious; and had long fondly hoped that I would find them so on my return. But I was disappointed. The Spire of the Town-house appeared to have diminished in height—the Church had lost its magnificence, though not its venerable appearance—and the street, (for in one part it is really spacious,) if it still appeared broad, corresponded the less with the insignificance of some of its houses.

But when my ideas had leisure to descend to an accordance with the size of the Town, I felt more disposed to admire real improvements, than regret only fancied deteriorations. I am now enabled to cross our river at various places, and at all seasons, without the fear of wet feet, so alarming to an old Batchelor; and am charmed with the facility with which I can pass to view the Cathedral, and the picturesque landscape, seen to such advantage from the hill on the Lossiemouth road.

Not to astonish your readers with too great a leap at once, I take our New Rooms on my way to the Hospital. I consider the place on which this necessary building has been erected, as at once beautiful, and the best in every respect that could have been framed for the situation.—The window to the street is classical and elegant. Connected with this building is the new Street, which promises to be as great an improvement on the appearance of the Town when its buildings are finished, as it is already a great additional convenience.

I am very much inclined to admire the Hospital.— There is a prevailing opinion that the Dome is too lofty ; but being naturally contented, and pleased with the advantages which we possess, I uniformly declare against the notion.

There is something so indispensable in having proper places for public instruction, that I consider the Academy and Ladies' Schools, which have risen up since my youth, rather as necessaries of life, than improvements. But indeed we are not farther advanced from the imperfect state in which these Seminaries existed some years ago, than now superior to our immediate neighbours in the excellence of our Teachers and the comfort of our Schools. But be this as it may, I am still child enough to haunt the School-wynd with that soft feeling of melancholy with which one recurs to the scenes of his boyish exploits.

—“ Dear is the school-boy spot
We ne'er forget, tho' there we are forgot.”

I can still fancy the unfortunate traders in *peats*, with their well-filled carts, obliged to bribe the forbearance of the youngsters, not merely from their loads, but also from the tails of their naturally inoffensive ponys,—which soon shewed by their eager efforts in self-defence, that their courage had been roused by painful experience. Indeed so sagacious did these creatures become, that they seemed pleased to feel their superincumbent burdens diminished, even by the most irregular means, provided no unpleasant familiarities were used with the ornaments of their own bodies.

You thus see, Mr. Editor, that I am pleased with every thing around me. There are one or two things, trifling

indeed, on which I would still say a few words, though not in such a strain of encoimum, before taking my leave.

I would first, then, beg leave to uplift my pen against that destroyer of our morning's rest—the Town Drum. I am extremely unwilling to call any thing a nuisance in Elgin;—but the very early hour at which this otherwise useful instrument breaks my sleep, renders it necessary to call your attention to the matter. Indeed the succeeding hour at which another noisy thing exerts its *tongue*, is quite early enough for the most zealous lover of the morning to leave his couch.

The only other matter with which I shall detain you at present is one which must be interesting to every lover of proper feeling. I allude to the disuse of the ancient custom of tolling the knells at the funerals of the deceased Inhabitants, which I remarked with deep regret on my return to Elgin. The grief of those who have suffered a real loss in the death of a relation or friend needs no adventitious circumstance to support its energy. The victim is frequently, for a time, too much the prey of those feelings implanted in our nature by the Almighty, as a counterpoise to mirth and giddiness—and which serve so well to bring back the mind to its proper level. But, Sir, there are others who require to be impressed from without with feelings which their own thoughts cannot create, and the custom alluded to was the most effectual means of bestowing the sadness of sorrow, not merely on those immediately concerned, but in all within hearing of St. Giles' Bell. Often have I in early youth been impressed with the tenderest sympathy with those whom the knells announced to have lost a friend, though

quite ignorant of the individual sufferers. And each time that the solemnity was repeated, even the crowds of giddy boys who brawled at their noisy games, were impressed with awe at the death-tolling sounds. The custom seems to have been once extremely prevalent in Scotland—and in several places is still very properly kept up. In particular it is, or was recently so in Glasgow, where the effect is peculiarly striking.

Adieu at present, Mr. Editor—I shall perhaps describe myself among the animated part of our Town, which I propose as the subject of my next.

Your Well-wisher,

U———.

Elgin, 21st May, 1822.

U——— will, we hope, excuse us for curtailing his letter;—we shall be happy to hear from him again; he will observe that our work is circumscribed in limits, and therefore requires the utmost condensation of its matter.

*To the Writer of the Essay on the comparative merits of
Literary and Scientific Studies.*

I STAND forward, learned Sir, to state the opinions I entertain with the view of refuting those that you have thought fit to advance. In your Essay on *Literature* and *Science* you say that the former is of superior importance to the latter, for the three following reasons:—

1st, Because the objects to which Literature relate are imperishable. 2nd, Because Literary studies are of greater interest than Scientific to the bulk of mankind as refining the manners, correcting the passions, and affording

an inexhaustible fund of mental occupation. And 3d, Because the conclusions that are drawn in Scientific researches, are less correct, than those that are drawn in Literary.

Your first objection then is, that the objects to which Literature relate are imperishable. And do you really consider this a sufficient reason?—surely not. What does it signify whether the object be perishable, provided it outlives ourselves? Do you ask for what purpose we look into things at all?—I answer, either for amusement or for some useful end. Do we seek then for amusement in perishable objects, and find it not? No.—I walk forth in the morning, and am pleased with the freshness of the air, and the beauty of the sky—I gaze on the purling stream, and it gives me delight—I look at the works which industry is rearing, and I return home pleased and happy. Yet these things shall come to an end.—The sun that gives beauty to the sky will disappear—the air will vanish away—the stream will forget to run—and the works of man will yield at last to the slow but constant operations of time. Nor in these perishable objects do I seek only for pleasure. In the study of them, also, I may find many an useful end. Do I look at the nation in which I live, and ask myself how it supports its greatness? When I do so, I am told by a voice from within that she is greatly upheld by the aids of Science. The practitioner of medicine and the manufacturer will tell you of its advantages; and in the beauty of our clothes, the warmth of our houses, and the fertility of our fields, you may find a convincing proof of its great utility.

Secondly, You say that Literary studies are of greater interest than Scientific to the bulk of mankind, as refining the manners, correcting the passions, and affording an inexhaustible fund of mental occupation. And are not the manners refined, the passions corrected, and an inexhaustible fund of mental occupation afforded, by the study of Science? Ask at him who, looking at the starry firma-

ment above, is filled with sublime ideas, or who, gazing on the works of this lower world, “looks through nature up to nature’s God;”—ask him if he does not find his passions stilled and his manners refined; and who is there with a mind so comprehensive, as to grasp the whole of material existence, and say that he understands that whole, and must now look to Literature for objects on which to employ his time.

Thirdly, You give Literature the preference to Science, because the conclusions that are drawn in Scientific researches are less correct than those that are drawn in Literary. You admit Sir, however, in another part of your Essay, that the conclusions to which the literary student arrives are not always correct. You give it a negative praise only, and say, that the speculations of Literature are less hypothetical, and her conclusions more stable, than those of Science. With you I admit, that Homer may have portrayed feelings, emotions, and passions, which, down to the present time, may be recognised as the emotions and passions of humanity, but are these the only subjects that Literature is found to embrace?—No. She also has her points of doubt and difficulty.—* * * *

What then are the degrees of perfection and certainty, with which conclusions may be drawn in Physical science? Look at Mathematics, and say if the conclusions there be wrong? Look at the mechanism of the heavens—behold eclipses predicted, and the time of summer foretold—see the mariner, in his brittle bark, exploring regions formerly unknown, and, partly guided by the faithful magnet, again returning to his native shore. Consider these things and say if they all be the effects of fortuitous chance;—weigh them justly in the scales, and tell the side to which the balance leans.

P. R.

THE following which we have just received smells strongly of Blackwood: on the whole, however, it seems not unworthy of a place, and we here insert it.

THE TRAVELLERS.

SCENE—*M'Lachlan's Inn.* TIME—*Evening.*

1st Traveller. Holloa! hostler—see that dobbin is taken proper care of and deposit our gig under cover for the night.—So we have finished another day's journey, and this is the famous Elgin of which we have heard so much.

2d Traveller. What is it famed for?

1st T. Faith, I cannot exactly say,—Waiter!

Enter Waiter.

Waiter. Coming, Sir.

1st T. Pull off this great coat, bear a hand with my boots, and see to procure me a pair of slippers.—Now I am beginning to be comfortable.—What is this place famed for? Have you got many great men here?

Waiter. O yes, Sir, we have several pretty big men.

1st T. Great men—men of eminence I mean.

Waiter. Aye, Sir, we have some Gentlemen who live on eminences.

2nd T. Ah! take care of that toe now! be easy with it.—Have you any thing in the shape of literature here.

Waiter. O yes, Sir, we have all sorts of liquors here.

2nd T. Psha! by the L—d, I find we must speak by the card or equivocation will undo us. I mean have you any food, any tit bit for the mental palate.

Waiter. I don't know but I shall see what is in the house presently. (*exit*)

1st T. Now what shall we have for supper, something light and delicious.

2nd T. Aye, something light and easy of digestion, with some brandy and water or a couple of bottles of cooled wine.

Enter Waiter.

Waiter. Gentlemen, we have some excellent corned beef, some tender chickens, and profusion of cold lamb and veal.

1st T. Bravo, my boy!—Infinitely before all the literature in the world. Bring all these forward, with a brace of bottles of your best ale and the same quantity of wine,—meantime send to a bookseller's and see to procure us something new to read.—Toll, oll, oll, fall, all, all, (*singing.*)—What is treacle giving in Liverpool now, Dick.

2d T. Oh, confound treacle, muscovadoes, and coffee; I shall have enough of that to-morrow—"sufficient for to day is the evil thereof." Let us talk of literature, the muses three, and all the sable sisters of divinity! (*spouting*)

Enter Waiter.

Waiter. Gentlemen, I have brought you the newest and most interesting publication in town, and here it is, (*laying down a bundle of Ephemeris*)

2d T. Oh, this is the same thing the first numbers of which we saw in Edinburgh, and again on the table of the Coffee-room, Aberdeen. It is lauded to an enthusiastic degree in Edinburgh,—and no wonder it touches a cord soothing to the Elginesians there—calling back to their remembrance many of the scenes of their youth. Besides we heard that the greater part of its matter is concocted there.—I see frequent mention of Forres in its pages also. Why do not the Forresians set agoing a work of the same kind.

Waiter. As I just now stepped to the bookseller's over the way to fetch it, I heard it mentioned there that a similar work was contemplated in Forres. The reason assigned was that the Ephemeris was too small to contain the hundredth part of the communications from thence; one gentleman alone having sent a whole ream of MSS. The work is to be conducted by a Son of the God of

Day, the *Magnus Apollo* of Forres, who exercises the several professions of his great prototype. It is to be called the *Bumbee*. Not the chaste and classical Bee of Greece, but the *Bumbee*—indicative of a certain tincture of vulgarity, and as possessing a sting of satire which pierces through the skin but is too insignificant to reach the heart.

2d T. Well, well, enough of all this.—Bring me pen, ink and paper, and after supper I shall write an article myself. Oh, I see supper is ready. (*a long pause*)

1st T. Whence cometh this ale, which possesses the strength of the Edinburgh, the flavour of the Dundee, and the combined excellences of the Burton?

Waiter. It is Elgin ale, Sir.

1st T. O rare! Had the gods made me poetical I would have celebrated thee, O sparkling fluid, in the most sublime strains. Dick, forget your muscovadoes and try your hand at an ode.

2d T. “Thy monks are gone, but now the Y—ngs
Brew ale and beer to none *secundi*;
In foaming cataracts from the bungs
It flows, ‘*sic transit gloria mundi*.’”

Waiter. I have heard this before.

1st T. Peace, Sir!

2d T. Oh, I am done—*sic transit gloria mundi*.
Now for pen, ink, and paper. (*writes*)

What a glorious place is an Inn! When you arrive at it you at once make the house your own: every face is happy to see you—every eye is on the alert to anticipate your wishes, and every hand prompt to serve you. When you depart there are no ‘salutations in the market place,’ no brim-full eyes, and no stuffing of pockets with loathed gingerbread cakes—every thing is smooth and pleasant, unless you except the payment of the bill. How many great men have visited even this *ultima Thule*, and so-journed, perhaps, in this very room. I see the names of a few of eminence scratched on the window panes amid

multitudes of others of whom the world hath no fame. Hither roamed that huge literary whale, Dr. Johnson, and had meat set before him which he could not eat.† Here the immortal Burns rested him along with his noble Patrons, who vainly expected that the rumbling of their coach and four and the view of some waterfalls and mountains would make him disgorge poetry superior to any he had hitherto produced.‡ Here the renowned Sir John Carr refreshed himself after walking round the Cathedral with his Cicerone, *Sravic* || And here also many a Dramatic witling, to show his smattering of Shakespear, pretends to take the landlord or some of his maid-servants, for Macbeth's witches, "so withered and so wild in their attire," and asks them "how far is't called to Forres?"——

1st T. What are you about, Dick? drink out your glass.

2d T. I had just begun to write an essay for the Ephemera.

1st T. Oh, save yourself the trouble—we are not in their play, and therefore it is our business to run it down, demme!

2d T. What! run down such a harmless insect! I see you are getting drunk.

1st T. To tell you the (*hiccup*) truth I am not—not quite sober—go, call the chamber-maid.——

† See his "Tour through Scotland." Elgin.

‡ See his Life by Dr. Currie.

|| See "Sir J's Tour through Scotland."

TO A RIVULET

Gentle Riv'let which alone,
Thro' the quiet vale unknown,
Glidest smoothe and silently,—
What an emblem thou of me !

Soon perhaps thy destin'd course
Some cause may stop, and dry thy source—
Death quickly too will seize on me,
Then we both forgot shall be.

O, could my weak and simple lays
But survive my short lived days ;
Future times our fame should know,
And in my verse thou still should'st flow.

T. B.

SONNET.

I dreamed I saw a little rosy child,
With flaxen ringlets in a garden playing ;
Now stopping here, and then afar off straying,
As flower or butterfly his feet beguiled.—

'Twas changed—one summer's day I stepp'd aside
To let him pass ; his face had manhood seeming,
And that full eye of blue was fondly beaming
On a fair maiden whom he call'd his Bride.—

Once more—'twas evening, and the cheerful fire
I saw a group of youthful forms surrounding ;
And in the midst I mark'd the smiling Sire.—

The Heavens were clouded !—and I heard the tone
Of a slow moving bell ;—the white-hair'd mau was gone !

Cupar—1822.

B.

THE
EPIHEMERA,

No. XI.

Monday, 3d June, 1822.

THE GOLDEN ISLE.

“ Jam redeunt Saturnia regna.”—*Virgil.*

“ O age of Innocence—O milk and water.”—*Byron.*

WHERE the southern ocean spreads out its green waters, surrounded by a genial atmosphere, and an unclouded cerulean sky, stood an Isle blessed with all the beauty of situation, and richness of scenery, which nature could bestow. Tall groves reared aloft their aged tops in beautiful luxuriance; smooth and transparent lakes reflected the deep blue of the sky; and numberless streams, their banks fringed with balmy odoriferous shrubs, took their winding course from the hills downward to the ocean.—The inhabitants were simple, and uncontaminated; full of health and spirits. They were as yet unacquainted with the various refinements of society. Ignorant and careless of the numberless contrivances, which are now reckoned indispensable for existence, they were pleased

and contented simply to enjoy life. They spent their time principally in tending their flocks, and in piping on the hills. Their food consisted of fruits, and vegetables; the milk of their flocks, or a lamb from the fold simply dressed. In the middle of the Island was a valley surrounded on all sides by thick groves; a grotto, formed with the utmost simplicity, and ornamented with the chaste profusion which the unsparing hand of nature pours forth, stood in the centre; trees with silvery and golden foliage waved around; and a small rivulet, transparent as glass, babbled over its channel, sparkling with diamonds and precious stones. Here Pastora, the queen of the Island, attended by Hygeia or Health, Hebe, Innocence, Contentment, Justice, and Simplicity, exercised a mild and benignant sway over her inoffensive subjects. If they had not all the luxuries of a more refined state, they were freed from many of its concomitant evils. If they did not enjoy the more exquisite pleasures, much was unknown to them, the ignorance of which secured their happiness.

Thus had they lived, for many years, in uninterrupted repose; when one evening, as Pastora and her nymphs were sitting on the mountain side, watching the sun as he was just about to sink behind the western main, they perceived in the distance an object moving along on the surface of the ocean. Such a sight being quite new, they were surprised and delighted with the appearance;—it gradually approached nearer, the breeze sprung up, and a gallant vessel, fully equipped, and laden with rich stores, and various articles of luxury, bore up for the friendly shore. She was commanded by Commerce, who, accompanied by Avarice and Luxury, with their numerous at-

tendants, Intemperance, Sloth, Impiety, Folly, &c. immediately landed and went to pay his respects to the queen of the country. He proceeded to the valley, the residence of the queen, proposes an alliance with her, and holds out in glowing colours the advantage it would be to herself and people. She at first refuses, but after deliberating for some time, and being tempted by his flattering offers, at last consents. Her attendant nymphs, after hearing with surprise and pity her resolution, and being unable to prevail with her to retract her promise, take their leave of the place, and ascend to the heavenly mansions from whence they came.

A complete change in the Island is rapidly brought about. The inhabitants are called from the hills and vallies, where they lived apart in families tending their rural concerns, and are all assembled into one place.— They erect a large city, gradually lose their simple unadulterated manners, and become selfish, cunning, and luxurious. As their appetites become depraved, and their taste for simple pleasures diminishes, they apply to Fashion for entertainment. She gains a complete ascendancy over them, and there is nothing that she imposes, however gross and ridiculous, which they will not adopt, provided it has the charm of novelty. They no more follow their simple way of living. A thousand arts are employed to gratify their palates. They spend many hours together at one meal; dishes after dishes are brought in, and devoured in succession. Strong liquors are swallowed until the sway of reason is destroyed, and they are brought to a state of phrenzy. Hence they begin to be affected with numerous diseases before unknown. Along

with their animal appetites their mental powers are also depraved. Their minds become effeminated. Patriotism gives place to self-interest. Moral and domestic virtues are slighted, and vice and irreligion are disseminated through all ranks. Those who ought to rouse them, nod over their charge, or have not spirit to exercise their authority. Their poets waste their parts and degrade their office in chaunting the silly rhymes of strolling bards—in rehearsing legends which are not calculated to interest mankind;—or depicting characters of callous sensualists, or raving madmen, which ought not to interest them. But nations, as well as men, have an infancy, a maturity and natural decay: no sooner do they arrive at the zenith of power, and highest pitch of perfection, than they again begin to retrograde, and at last gradually sink into oblivion. A host of Barbarians invade the Island. The inhabitants, melted down by luxury—inactive and irresolute, make but a feeble resistance, and are in the end completely exterminated. The beautiful country, and fertile fields, are laid desolate. All that art had invented, or industry achieved, now only remained ruined monuments, to shew to succeeding ages to what a pitch of refinement man's capacities can be brought, and what are the ultimate consequences of *over refinement*. C.

MATTHEW GRUMBLE, *Esq. to the Editor.*

SIR,

I dont know what changes may have taken place in this Town since fifty years ago,* because I do not re-

* See Senex' letter, No. IV.

collect so long, or at least I do not choose to do so, but I know to my experience, that there have been grievous innovations since I lived in it ten years ago. Then I could have walked the streets from east to west with that pleasing variety of up hill and down dale which constituted such a healthful exercise, but now they are so smooth and gentle that walking on them is no longer reckoned a manly achievement, they are now only fit for ladies. Then I could have slept soundly in my bed without danger of molestation from without or within, but now alas! the sequel will show the contrary; indeed Mr. Editor, the title of this letter may be called the *Miseries of Going to Bed*. You must know, or at least must now be informed, that the house which I occupy fronts the street, and as I am an old—I mean a—a—simply a Bache or and see few company I go early to bed. I am no sooner laid snugly under the sheets than my thoughts take wing, and flutter about and amuse me with a variety of mingled images and recollections of the past day, the past week, and often of long past years. Such gambols the fancy delights in ere it sinks into a temporary oblivion; but just as I am dozing into a slumber, as my eyelids close, and I have laid myself for sound sleep, a supernatural voice from without which you can scarcely distinguish whether it be brute, human, or infernal, bawls out “ha-a-f pa-st el- even o’clock, an’ a fi-ine fre-esh night.” I start up in horror, sleep flies from my eyelids, and I toss about in feverish restlessness for a couple of hours. I again begin to taste of balmy slumber, but a thousand confused dreams and phantoms hover around my head. I sometimes fancy that I have devoured a whole Gloucester cheese in one welsh rabbit for supper, and that is the hidden cause of all my woe. I then dream of crossing bogs and rivers; of having got wet feet, and the dreadful consequence to my throat and chest—of losing my way in woods, and scrambling through thickets, and tumbling headlong over precipices. I half hear the sounds of cats caterwauling and dogs howling in the streets; but in the midst of the

lesser terrors a real sound assails my ear—a twang like the blast of the last trumpet, and a rumbling of wheels louder than a Lisbon earthquake, I jump up and listen—find that it is the mail coach arrived—lie down with a sigh, and wish to heaven I were in the deserts of Arabia. I now lie broad awake for several hours, and speculate upon the degeneracy of the present age and the varied miseries of human existence. I lay down a resolution that I will eat no more toasted cheese for supper nor any more slices of ham, that I will retrench my quantity of grog, and try to wile away an hour or two before going to bed in reading a book—find that the generality of books are not to my taste, they take too bright a view of human life. Resolve to send in the morning for the Ephemera, which I had given up because it was not sarcastic, personal, nor had not enough of broad humour—because it sometimes contained stuff called poetry, which I detest and abhor, and because it did not take a gloomy enough view of our existence, which I take to be the true secret of all good writing. Tired nature must at last give way—I found there was a necessity again to sleep, notwithstanding, in my pettishness, I wished to think it off. I soothe my pride with the reflection that sleep after all is but a negative pleasure, and I again sink to repose. My dreams are now pleasanter than before, for morning dreams, they say, are always pleasant. I fancy that I am again a young man, and that I am holding a flirtation with my old aunt's blue eyed maid-servant. I am sitting at the window of the little parlour, she is before me on the green turning many a glance of kindness towards me, but her rustic wooer suddenly comes past—she flies into his arms, and I turn away vowing vengeance against the whole human race, but especially against the fairer portion of it. I have scarcely got over this imaginary, though provoking, disappointment, when my throbbing head is almost rent asunder with the dreadful peals of the morning drum as the

sound is echoed back with redoubled violence from that old lump of a church which stands so oddly in the middle of the street. I find it is in vain any longer to attempt sleeping—I rise, put on my morning gown, gaze for a long time on my face in the glass—cannot conceive how my hair has become so soon grey; and almost mistake a furrow in my face, caused by lying on the string of the pillow slip, for a wrinkle. In this way I pass off an hour, and the six o'clock bell rings. I find that almost the only gleam of satisfaction I have experienced since I went to bed the evening before, is, that now, by being out of bed, I have avoided another start from my slumber which this noisy nuisance would have produced.

You thus see, Mr. Editor, that it is not without cause that I complain. I might have mentioned the elements, for even they conspire against unfortunate man, but having no controul over these, and they being as it were so out of his immediate sphere, man seldom thinks of inveighing against them. But surely things that pass every day before us, and, even when night spreads out her sable mantle, annoy us, as you have seen mournfully exemplified in my case, should be better regulated and more looked into. That the public attention may be directed to the correction of such abuses is the chief reason why I have solicited a place in your pages at this time.

And I remain, Mr. Editor,

Without more ceremony, for that I detest,

Your's,

MATTHEW GRUMBLE.

GRUMBLE HOUSE, }
 Elgin, 27th May, 1822. }

To the Editor of the Ephemera.

SIR,

I SEND you the following little piece, and if it be thought worth inserting, I shall perhaps trouble you again.

Your's, &c. S.

CONVERSATIONS ON NATURAL HISTORY.

No. I.

Senex. Come away George, I have been in the garden these two hours enjoying the cool of this delightful morning, and expected your company before now—how have you been occupied?

G. Oh, in a thousand ways. But see, I have just got from town the little book on Natural History which you recommended.

S. I am glad of that, and am sure it will afford you amusement and instruction. There is no pursuit so well adapted for young minds, or so likely to engage their attention, as the study of Nature. That person must have very little curiosity indeed, who daily sees before him the ground clothed with a succession of herbage, a variety of animals sporting in the fields, the swift-winged fowls cleaving the air, and the whole atmosphere buzzing with insects, and yet has no desire to become acquainted with their natures, and to distinguish their different tribes. A simple description of natural objects you can now comprehend without any unusual effort of the mind, and when you get older the several laws by which these are regulated and upheld will afford you a higher and more refined pleasure.

G. Oh, how I long to be a big man ! and yet I believe it is as well to be a while a boy, for I have heard you say that an increase of years does not always bring an increase of happiness. But now that we are on the subject, I recollect a question that I wished to ask you. As I was this morning down at the water side, to see if my water-mill of rushes, which I had set on the current the evening before, was still going,—I perceived on many of the round smooth pebbles a number of very small stones, and pieces of wood, glued fast together ; on opening some of them I found to my astonishment that they contained a small whitish worm—Pray what is the name of it, and how does it incase itself in such a strange covering ?

S. I see you will be a Naturalist very soon. I like that scrutiny of observation which lets nothing pass without examining it. Those insects you mention are called *cadis worms*, and are very common in the rivers at a certain season of the year. They seem to be possessed of a sort of glue, by which they attach small pieces of gravel and sticks, or straw, to their bodies,—no doubt to defend them from external injury, and to prevent them from becoming the prey of fishes. In a short time they change their form, and from being a creeping grub, rise to the surface of the water a brown-winged fly called the *cadis fly*.

G. What a strange transformation ! Are there any other insects which change thus ?

S. O yes, a great number. As the most familiar instance, we shall take the common gooseberry caterpillar here before us. You see when I shake this bush that a

number of flies drop to the ground: the light-coloured ones with the brown bodies are the female, the dark-coloured ones the male. You see, when I turn up some of the lower leaves of the bush, on their under side a number of small pearly looking substances;—these are the eggs already deposited, and adhering to the leaf by a gluey substance. In the course of a few days, by the warmth of the sun and the soft moisture of the leaf, these will all assume life—devour the part immediately in contact with them—and then, as they gain strength, spread to the other branches.

G. Then I should think it would be a good plan for the gardeners to watch the first appearance of the caterpillar, and as they take the lower leaves first, by pulling off these every leaf so taken would destroy at least fifty or a hundred of these vermin. But what becomes of the caterpillar in the end of the season when it gets large, and the leaves which are its food decay?

S. It then leaves the top of the bush, crawls into some crevice about the root, or pretty deep into the ground, becomes incased in a tough covering, and remains there all winter, from whence in spring it comes forth the small brown fly which you here see before us. It then deposits the eggs I have shewn you, flutters about for a few days, and having enjoyed existence in its various forms, its little age of one year is closed by death.

G. Oh, I now understand it quite distinctly. What an astonishing change! I see now the reason why the gardeners are at such pains to dig up the earth from the roots of the bushes during winter, and early in spring.

It no doubt must be in order to expose these worms to the air and frost, by which they will be destroyed.

S. This is exactly what they do, or at least what they should do ; and I perceive you are becoming a philosopher already—from marking effects you begin to trace their causes.

G. Oh, I should like much to be a philosopher—but I think I hear the breakfast bell ring, and no one I dare say can be a philosopher with an empty stomach.

Anecdote of last Century.

IN the year 17— an English regiment was stationed at Fort George, wherein the Earl of Effingham (afterwards Governor of Jamaica) was, if not the commander, an officer of some rank. His Lordship being one of a pleasure party to Inverness, and seeing a *respectable looking* almanack in a shop window, walked into the shop and enquired the price of it. The shopkeeper (A--x----r M----y, of quizzical notoriety) handed down the almanack, and demanded double the price of such publications for the then current year. My Lord did not debate about the demand, but paid it down. His Lordship being very plainly, if not shabbily, dressed, as was his custom, the old Quiz returned him *twopence*, saying “that he always wished to consider *sergeants*.” Off went his Lordship with the almanack to Fort George, without further examination, but upon his producing it as a fit subject for

reference at the garrison—lo, and behold! it proved to be one ‘well stricken in years!’ Upon his Lordship’s next visit to Inverness he stepped indignantly into the vender’s shop, and accused him of having imposed upon him, in having exacted more than the value of the book considering the date of its publication; whereupon old Quiz replied “*As I live*, Sir, after having *lain so long out of the money* I could not afford to take less.”

Your obedient Servant,

CHRONONHONTOLOGOS.

This long named gentleman when he next gives us anecdotes will please send them free of postage.

JUVENIS will see what use has been made of his communication. The idea is good, but he should try prose instead of poetry.

R. Y's Verses are smooth enough, but we should prefer something more in the style of the “Extracts.”

C. I. is very fair—if it has not been in print before.

Some other communications have been mislaid.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. XII.

Monday, 10th June, 1822.

THERE is an old man, a Member of the Club, who in his youth studied divinity, but who has not yet been fortunate enough to get a living. At our Friday meetings he frequently reads to us one of his sermons, the soporific effects of which exceed, by an infinite degree, the sleepy power of our metaphysical friend's discussions. The cause of this seeming want of piety is the unpardonable length of his homilies: for two hours will scarcely bring him to his *seventeenthly*; and then follow an application, and annotations, and the prolegomena, and the other "sesequipedalia verba" for which the old school was so remarkable. He insists that we must publish a series of sermons, which he has purposely written for the improvement of the Elgin ladies; but besides that the Ephemera would be a very improper vehicle for conveying such instruction, we have sturdily resisted all his importunities for another reason, namely, the nature of the discourses themselves, which are in fact a string of the most violent philippics against our fair townswomen for their extrava-

gance in dress, &c. a subject which the good old man seems to have much exaggerated, and which does not at all meet our approbation. He has, however, a collection of sketches, as he calls them, descriptive of the manners and customs of Knockbrae, a parish near Elgin, and of which he was a long time schoolmaster; and as they relate to characters and customs which are now fast disappearing, we have selected a few of those sketches, assuring our readers that they are copied from real life.

SEXTON OF KNOCKBRAE.

“Has this fellow no feeling of his business? he sings at grave-making.”
HAMLET.

THE kirk of Knockbrae is situated on the banks of the Blackwater, a small river which mingles its waters with those of the Darber, at a short distance below the ‘modest mansion’ of the parish minister. The back part of the manse looks down on the first mentioned stream, which flows here with great rapidity, and acquiring force by its gradual descent it at length dashes with impetuosity against the sharp pointed rocks which would vainly seem to oppose it. The alder and the weeping birch springing up, as if by miracle, from between the crevices of the flinty rocks, unite their boughs from the opposite banks, and thus exclude the light of the sun and the gaze of man from the fishes that sport beneath their shade. From the church you may hear the hollow sound of these conflicting waters, which to a poetical imagination might seem as the unearthly laugh of the spirit that misleads the steps of the wanderer during the moonless night. To the man of God it, no doubt, suggests a more

rational train of thought; to him it is the music of nature, that attunes his soul to heavenly musings and devout contemplation; it harmonizes with the more gentle workings of his mind, and tends to raise his thoughts above 'the toil and trouble' of the restless scenes of humanity.

Of this romantic parish Saunders Macknockie was, about forty years ago, beadle and grave-digger; and a true specimen of the profession he was—a brother, in so far as mirth and humour are concerned, to the laughter-loving grave-digger in *Hamlet*. His mental and physical constitutions were happily united to one another. His mind and body expressed nothing but the ludicrous—a jest leered in his eye—it curled at his lip—it mantled and diffused itself over his whole visage. He was about four feet eight inches high, and about as much in breadth, firmly compacted and knit together in thew and sinew, lith and limb. He had small sparkling eyes of a greyish hue—a full round face, which in colour might be compared to the purple of the rosy fingered morn when the king of day rises from his bed of waters—or to the back of a lobster when par-boiled. His chin was always covered with a profusion of grisly hairs, which on Sunday appeared as if an attempt had been made to reap them; but either the skill of the operator, *viz.* himself, for a barber was never seen in the parish of Knockbrae, or the instrument employed, had been at fault, for these porcupine quills had kept their settlements unmoved and unsubdued for more than fifty years. The hebdomadal cuts and slashes which garnished his chin on the first day of the week shewed, however, than an attempt had been made to smooth his face; and indeed the state of

Knockie's chin was so familiar to all the parish, and associated with so much rustic wit, that any alteration of the whole man would have been to the worse, at least in the estimation of all who knew him. His clothes were of a light grey colour, for the sake of economy, for he was undermiller to Charlie Clapper. At the funerals, however, of the richer part of the parish he was generally arrayed in black, that is to say, a suit that had once been black, for it had acquired a brownish colour by long exposure to sun and rain. It is hardly possible to convey to modern understandings a just conception of the shape of these mourning vestments, suffice it to say, that they were originally made for a stern Cameronian, who prided himself on the largeness of his buttons and the length and breadth of the skirts of his coat.

These lugubrious weeds, when they covered the outward man of the Sexton of Knockbrae, were by no means the sign-posts of inward grief and trouble of spirit; on the contrary, his face on such occasions had infused into it a double portion of the ludicrous, which became more conspicuous by the effort which he was forced to make in order to lengthen it out to a becoming longitude. In fine, had the Knockbreaes been heathens instead of christians, certes their Sexton had been deified. He would have been the laughter-loving Momus of the hills, and his image would have snuffed up the incense of

" Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks and wreathed smiles,"

and all the etcetera of broad grins that ever distorted the face of man.

The levity of this Sexton was, however, a stumbling-block of offence to the more serious part of the parish; and indeed it was a wonder to all that he who 'had walked hand in hand with death' for so many years, should have never thought that

"Soon some faithful brother of the trade
Would do for him what he had done for thousands."

The worthy Mr. Langtext had made many attempts to impress on his mind some serious thoughts, but with no great success. As that deep divine was one day walking in the church yard, conning over, *memoriter*, the arguments and illustrations of a sermon, for the reading of sermons was never heard of in those days, his attention was suddenly roused by a grumbling sort of noise followed by loud bursts of laughter, that seemed to issue from a new made grave at a distance. Approaching it gently, he perceived the Sexton sitting in the grave, and looking with a mixed expression of anger and humour on the fragment of a spade which he had just broken.

"The deil o' sic trash o' spades as they mak noo," muttered the old man, "did I ever see. Its nae sax ooks since I gae twa lily white shillings to that rascal, Tam Carnoch the merchant, for that mussel-shell there—dear enough in conscience, even tho' they *hae* risen ten per cent per annum at London, as he says. He tauld me it was the ace o' spades, but wae betide me if he dinna soon ken to his cost that he's the knave o' hearts, as sure as my name is Saunders Macknockie. Pretty trash o' wark tools that they mak noo! its nae a fortnight since I broke aff the end o' my pick by striking against the skull of Geordy Greetlang—a dour loon, the Dominic says he

was, for his tawse would never mak ony impression on his head—oh! that I could hae tauld the same tale about my pick: but I should hae drawn a lesson from hence not to hae come in contact wi' sic hard material.

Upon this the Sexton sent up from the bottom of the grave such a loud and long and hearty laugh, that the minister stood with utter amazement like one petrified, and it was not till Knockie had fairly exhausted himself that Mr. Langtext could find utterance to rebuke this thoughtless beadle for his unseasonable mirth. “I have told you again and again, Saunders Macknockie, of the danger to whilk you are exposed, by leading a life of sic thoughtlessness and profanity; but exhortation and warning are thrown awa' upon you. If your heart were not utterly callous and seared over, it would lang ere now have been impressed with some serious thoughts of your own frailty and mortality. Think you, grey headed sinner, that your present seat will soon be your dwelling place to the end of time. Oh! think, where you are now sitting, and repent you of the evil of your ways.”—“Wi' your leave, most reverend and learned Sir,” replied the Sexton, “your advice comes in inklin too late at present, for you ken weel enugh that ‘there is no repentance in grave,’—the very words were your text last Sunday, and a good sermon it was—oh! you handled it brawly: and you kept close by your text, for you camè over it at the end of every paragraph; which every minister, Elspet Groandeeep says, should do: and she's a great judge, and a powerfu' scripture woman, for I saw her ance beat Elder Teuchbody at prolemics, I think she ca'd them. There's nane that comes up wi' you, Sir, except perhaps

that great man frae E---, Mr. Rantowl,—wow, was not that a noble holding forth that he gave us in the afternoon o' the last occasion—and was na he sweet on that glorious word Mesopotamia? Dootless, it was nae sae weel as you yourself would hae done, but surely it was far frae deservin' the censure which your auld hoose-keeper, (I dinna like the woman, she scrimps me o' my milk) passed upon it; *widelicet*, as the dominie says, that ane of her maister's lang Oh's was worth an acre, Scotch measure, o' sic cauld, lifeless, foosionless, threadbare discourses."

By thus administering the cup of flattery, which few can refuse to swallow, the Sexton averted the storm that was about to burst on him for punning on the minister's text.—“A hopeless case,” said the good man, and wheeled away.

To the Editor of the Ephemera.

MENALCAS & ALEXIS.

(FROM THE GERMAN OF GESSNER.)

MENALCAS was now feeble and old—eighty years had already rolled over his head—his scanty locks were silver grey, and a staff supported his tottering steps. As he who, after the labours of a warm summer day, sits with pleasure in the cool of the evening—pours forth his thanks to heaven, and awaits the sweet influence of sleep,—so did he devote the remnant of his days to the service of the gods, and to that repose for which he had long laboured in well-doing, and expected, in peace and con-

tentment, the slumber of the grave. He saw his children blessed in the numerous herds and rich pastures which he had given them. They strove who should most gratify the good old man, by their watchful care—who should most amply repay him for his lessons of virtue, and greatly remember the blessing of heaven. He often sat in the sunny vestibule of his cottage, whence he surveyed the well-stocked garden, and the labours and riches of the fields, gradually disappearing in the distance;—or, he accosted the passing traveller, with friendly discourse, and heard from him the news of the neighbourhood, or the tidings and customs of distant lands. His grandchildren, his highest enjoyment, gambolled around him. He composed their little differences, and taught them lessons of wisdom, and to be indulgent and compassionate towards man and beast: and while he suggested various pastimes, he conveyed pleasing and appropriate instruction. He fabricated their toys and instruments of amusement, while they looked on with anxious interest, or danced around him with noisy mirth. He taught them to make flutes and pastoral pipes of the reed, and to blow them as the shepherd, when he leads forth his flocks to the pasture—he taught them the songs of his youth, which the younger sung and the older accompanied on the flute—or, he rehearsed instructive stories, while they sat around him on the ground, in silent attention.

Once, as he thus sat at his door enjoying the genial warmth of the sun, his grandson Alexis stood near him and alone—a handsome boy, on whom thirteen springs had now shed their balmy influence: the rosy glow of health played on his youthful cheeks, and his golden hair waved its flowing ringlets in the zephyr. The old man told him of the pleasure of doing good to others, and of relieving the distressed, and that no enjoyment is equal to that which beneficence supplies.—The splendour of the rising sun—the placid glow of his setting beam—the moon's full orb in a cloudless night, animate the bosom

with delight, but sweeter, my son, sweeter far are the pleasures of well-doing. The tears rolled down his youthful cheeks—the old man beheld him with rapture. Thou dost weep, my son, he said, and looked on his countenance with a friendly smile, thou dost weep, but sure my words alone could not so move you, there must be something within thy breast which causes such emotion.

Alexis wiped the tears from his blooming cheeks, but they still flowed afresh. Ah! says he, I feel it—I feel it all, nothing is more pleasing than doing good to others. Menalcas strongly pressed the stripling's hand in his, and said, In thy brow, in these eyes I see it—something else must move thee than what I said. The boy looked aside in embarrassment: are not thy words, said he, sufficiently affecting to bedew the cheeks with tears? I see, my son, said Menalcas, I see that thou concealest from me what at first perhaps did agitate thy breast, but will soon sit on thy tongue. Alexis wept and thus replied:—Yes, I will tell you all, though I could willingly have buried it in the inmost recesses of my soul. He is only half-good, you have told us, who boasts of his beneficence, therefore would I have concealed what caused my tears—what makes me feel that doing good is the sweetest enjoyment of life—

One of our sheep had strayed from the flock, and I wandered in search of it through the waste—I suddenly heard before me a voice of lamentation, and running softly towards the place, I found a man standing alone. He took a heavy burden from his shoulders and laid it at his feet—‘I can go no farther,’ he uttered in a feeble voice, ‘wretched is my life, and scanty is the fruit of all my toil—long have I wandered with this load beneath the scorching rays of the mid-day sun, and no fountain is near to quench my burning thirst—no tree, no shrub, affords its fruit to recruit my languid frame. O ye gods, all is waste and desolation around me; I see no footpaths to lead me home, and my feeble knees can support me

no farther—yet, O God, I will not repine, since you have always upheld me.’ As he thus spoke, he dropt down exhausted on his burden. Unseen by him, I ran with all might to our cottage—hastily took up a basket of dried and green fruit, and my largest pitcher full of milk, and ran back immediately to the place, where I still found the man, who had now suak into a gentle slumber. I approached him softly, and placed the basket and pitcher by his side, then quietly withdrew into a neighbouring thicket. But soon the man awoke—he looked down to his burden, and exclaimed, ‘How sweet is the refreshment of sleep! now will I try to drag thee a little farther, since thou hast afforded me so soft a pillow: perhaps the graecious gods will guide my footsteps to the sound of some gurgling rill, or to the sight of some cottage, whose hospitable landlord will receive me under his roof.’ He was now about to replaee the burden on his shoulders, when the pitcher and basket caught his eye—it dropt from his arms—‘O gods, what do I see—Alas! I am hungry, dream of food, and when I awake it is no more.’—He stretched forth his hand to the basket—‘Yet, not O gods, I am awake—Oh what deity, what benevolent deity hath wrought this miraele—to thee, I pour out the first of this pitcher, and devote these two, the largest of the fruit—accept, Oh graciously accept the thanks which my whole soul presents before thee.’ Having thus spoken, he set down and ate his repast with tears of joy. Thus refreshed, he rose again and oace more thanked the deity, who had so bountifully provided for him.—‘Or,’ said he, ‘the gods perhaps have conducted hither some benevolent mortal—Oh why can I not behold him and embrace him!—Where art thou, that I may thank thee—that I may bless thee.—Bless him, O ye gods!—bless him in his kindred—bless, O bless him, in all that is his! I am satisfied, and will take the remainder of this fruit along with me, my wife and children shall partake of it, and bless with me this benevolent stranger.’ He departed, and I immediately quitting my concealment, ran on

before him and seated myself on a knoll, by which I knew he must pass. He came—he saluted me, and said, ‘Tell me, my son, hast thou seen no person in this wild bearing a pitcher and a basket of fruit.’ No—I have seen no person in this wild bearing a pitcher and a basket of fruit: but tell me, I asked, why thou art wandering here; you must unfortunately have gone astray, since there is no path here to guide you. ‘Unfortunately,’ replied he, ‘unfortunately, my son, I have lost my way, and had not some benevolent deity, or mortal, relieved me, (whom the gods will therefore bless), I would have perished in this waste with hunger and thirst.’ Allow me then to show you the way—give me your burden to carry, and you will follow more lightly. After long refusing, he gave me his burden and I conducted him to the road. This, then, it is that still draws the tear of joy from my eye. Small and easy was this act of kindness, yet still it affords me delight, when, like the cheering sunbeam, it darts across my recollection. Oh how happy must he be who has performed many acts of benevolence!

Here the old man embraced his boy with the warmest emotion, and tenderly exclaimed,—Oh how peaceful and contented do I go down to the grave, since I leave such virtue and innocence behind me, to tenant my abode!—

Buckie—1822.

PISCATOR.

SUMMER NOON.

Now the Summer Sun is high,
 And has gain'd the middle sky ;
 While beneath his scorching heat,
 Toiling mortals pant and sweat,
 Oh how grateful to be laid,
 'Neath this thicket's bowering shade !
 All is still and silence round,
 Not a whisper, not a sound,
 Save the hoarse low murmuring
 Of the ever-gushing spring ;
 Or the casual buzzing cry
 Of the fickle wand'ring fly.
 Oft before my half-shut eyes
 Strange fantastic shapes arise—
 Dun shades and silv'ry landscapes fair,
 And structures floating in the air ;
 And oft methinks I music hear—
 Low plaintive sounds assail my hear—
 Softly floats along the sky
 The sweet celestial harmony !
 Now darker, darker, objects seem,
 Sleep's Visions round my eyelids swim—
 But, with quick start my slumbers break,
 And all my half-lulled senses wake.
 Then fairy visions quickly fly,
 As in the world hope's phantoms die :
 Yester-morn bright joys were waking ;
 Now to-day the heart is breaking.

Forres, 1st June, 1822.

JAKUES.

A second edition of the first and second Numbers will be printed in course of a few weeks.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. XIII.

Monday, 17th June, 1822.

SUNDAY AT KNOCKBRAE.—COVENANTERS.

“ Hail, Sabbath!—thee I hail—the poor man’s day.—GRAHAM.

IN my younger days there was an awe and sanctity attached to the Sabbath, of which the present generation can form but a very inadequate conception. The morning of that sacred day was not spent in indulging in an additional dose of sleep, and idleness, to the usual quantum of the week: the same early hour that beheld the pious rustics of Knockbrae engaged about their temporal concerns, summoned them on the morning of the Sabbath to meditate on those of eternity. The venerable father of the hamlet was the first to shake off the soft influence of slumber;—and retiring to his barn, or to some sequestered spot where the weather would permit, did the hoary patriarch of his household prostrate himself at the footstool of the Deity, and call down a blessing on the



heads of his yet sleeping family. The dews of the morning that moistened his hoary locks as they sported with the breeze, were not more grateful to the flowers now opening to receive the sun-beam, than to me was such a spectacle that not unfrequently presented itself to my mind, as I mused on the banks of the Blackwater. In that stubborn necessity that bound him to continual toil, and in that urgency of want that pressed down his aged back, and which drenched his forehead with the sweat of labour,—did I behold a moral discipline—a neutralizing of the poisonous ingredients in the bitter draught which man is doomed to drink—a converting of the curse, (“Cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life,”) into a most merciful blessing. Labour is one of the preservations of virtue; and he whose external circumstances have forced him to undergo a life of toil and hardship—whom ease and plenty have not captivated with the love of this world,—is generally not unwilling “to lay his head on the lap of his mother Earth, and be at rest.” But to return:—Such characters were not uncommon some years ago, in the parish of Knockbrae. I doubt not but that their degenerate children would now consider their simple manners, and their honest virtues, as vulgar and old-fashioned;—they would now confer the appellation of sour and bigotted, on that scrupulous and unbending piety that animated the spirits of their fathers. It was, however, a remnant of that sanctity of character which encircles with such a blaze of splendour the Welshes, the Camerons, the Pedens, and the Rutherfords, of former times;—who, when the arm of lawless power was bared against them,



preferred exile, and torture, and death, to a resignation of that civil and religious liberty, which they had received from their ancestors. It is indeed a mournful exhibition of the ingratitude of the human heart, to hear the memory of such men held up to scorn and ridicule—men by whose unceasing struggles and labours was planted that tree of renown which they watered with their blood; and whose fruit we their maligners so mercifully enjoy. We doubt not but that in some cases they were led into excess, from the unfavourable circumstances of the times; but let us reflect that persecution will drive the best of men to madness: and when we read of the conduct of their oppressors, who seem to have exerted their ingenuity in trying the extent of suffering which human nature could bear,—we are rather forced to admire that patience under oppression, and tolerance of insult and wrong, which were so conspicuously displayed in the conduct of these sufferers. I love the wild moors and the lonely glens of my native country, for they have listened to the prayers and drank of the blood of martyrs: and when I wander through her solitary valleys, or am lost in her woods and mountains, I am carried back in thought to those ‘saint-killing times,’ when the objects of the most cruel persecution that disgraces the annals of our history, were constrained to flee from their hearths and altars, and to take up their abode with the wild fowl of the mountain, or the foxes of the den. From the top of some heath-covered hill I can look down in imagination on the interesting group of these wronged outcasts from society. I can behold their venerable pastors and elders dealing out the bread of life and consola-

tion, among their mourning but not disconsolate flock.— I can listen to the plaintive notes of their simple but soul-stirring psalmody, blending with the scream of the bird of heaven, as it hovers above them and wonders at the unusual spectacle. I can mark the deep lines which care and sorrow have imprinted on their foreheads. There is a tear lurking behind the eye-lashes of him whom I now behold addressing his grief-worn brethren ; but that tear is not shed for his own evils, nor is that voice lifted up to weep for the misfortunes of a moment. Eternity is labouring in the soul of the preacher ; and its mighty concerns he is pressing on the attention of his people.—But hark ! I hear the deep-mantled yell of the blood-hound sent out to track them—I behold the savage joy of the tools of despotism, in having found out the objects of their cruelty. We will close our eyes on the scene that follows, with execrations against the blinded bigotry that would force the consciences of men, and with contempt of those who would hold up to ridicule the sufferings of martyrs.

Y,

New Inn, June, 1822.

MR. EDITOR,

Happening to be here on a very rainy day, I was forced to keep within doors, and, as most people are one day or other of their lives, I was put to many a shift to amuse myself until the dinner hour should arrive. I took out my memorandum-book and began to calculate all the probabilities of getting payments first, and then orders. A. B. he's a steady good payer, but confoundedly stiff to get an order out of. C. D. he's a red-nosed drunken whelp, I'll give him a good soaking, and make him pay and order to boot. E. F. he's doubtful, I fear I must let my friend the attorney loose upon him.—These cogitations helped me off with an hour.—Then putting up my book with 'confound business,' I set to scratching grim unearthly figures on the wall, and amused myself by finding out a likeness in them to some person I had seen before. Next I became poet, and with some labour brought out a line pretty well, but how to get another to clink with it defied my skill; at last by correcting and re-correcting and re-re-correcting I accomplished the following two, which cost me at least half-an-hour each:—

'Tis dreary on a rainy day,
At a country Inn to stay.

What a difficult thing it is, thought I, to write poetry; yet some people spin it off as I do this nonsense, and I myself have been at times—at favoured moments—so

much inspired as to be able to string several couplets together in my mind, and had a pen been at hand there is no saying but they might have seemed fine even in writing. I suppose that it is by coaxing their muse, and seizing the moment of inspiration, or as the Quakers say, "when the Spirit moves," that poets are enabled to produce such splendid performances—for I am certain even gifted poets must at times feel a difficulty in stringing two couplets together. My next amusement was the newspapers, which I read from end to end, not even omitting 'Steam-boats,' & 'Warren's Blacking.' Having exhausted all my resources, I rang the bell and asked the bare-legged lassie if she could lend me a book. She said there was a little buiky down stairs which she would bring. I asked its name—she said she never heard sic a kittle name gi'en to beast or body, muckle less to a bit buiky like a car-itches.—Bring it—'od sal I.—So away she went and soon returned (of course) with your Ephemera. The Ephemera I read with avidity, but it did not last me long, and my *ennui* was threatening to return when I be-thought me to write to you.

Whoever you are, I cannot help commending you for affording to your fellow-citizens such sources of amusement, and such opportunity to the literary youth of Elgin to try the value of their first attempts by making them pass the fiery ordeal of public opinion without the names of the authors being known, and consequently enabling them to avoid that marked humiliation which must attend an unsuccessful aspirant, or in more homely phrase, a *sticket minister*. But, Mr. Editor, I think when you get

better established, and when you can command attention, you should blend with your light pieces more of the serious or moral. How beautiful, for instance, are the Saturday's Spectators; they contain sentiments which will be read and admired, when ten thousand volumes of magazines, whose pages are filled with stuff fitted only to excite laughter by their folly, or to beget spleen and venom by their ridicule, are consigned to oblivion. Madam de Stael remarks—"Mirth is derived from habit, but tears are drawn from nature." If you follow nature, and give us some delineations of exalted character, of manly sentiments, or of virtuous and disinterested actions, although your essays may not draw tears, they will attract that sympathy from all, which real feeling and correct thinking never fail to command.

I am,

Your's, &c.

PEREGRINE.

WILLIAM COWPER & LADY AUSTIN.

(SCENE—*The Green House at Weston.*)

Cowper. When I think of you, Madam, I am almost half inclined to believe in the Pythagorean doctrine of the previous existence and transmutation of souls. From the first moment I saw you my heart bounded with unusual transports, and a more familiar intimacy has only tightened more closely the cords of affection which first attracted me towards you. While other poets invoke a celestial divinity you shall be my muse, the inspirer of my song, and benignant enlivener of my checquered existence.

Lady Austin. Excellent, my dear Sir! I never anticipated that I was to become one of the handmaids of Apollo. But pray, which of the famed ladies of Helicon am I? Not, I hope, the sombre Melpomene?

Cowper. No—you are the gay Thalia, the muse of smiles, of wit, and sprightliness. And yet not exactly her neither, for you are possessed of that charming mixture of seriousness, feeling, and vivacity, for which I cannot find a prototype. You are a perfect nondescript; worthy of having inspired a far loftier poet than I.

Lady A. It is the nature, Sir, of true genius always to underrate its powers. When those trifling accomplishments with which you are pleased to compliment me have long faded into oblivion, next to having enjoyed your friendship I please myself with the reflection, that when future ages shall hang over your works in admiration of their excellence, some slight praise will be be-

stowed on her who was the simple means of many of them having been written.

Cowper. I much doubt 'if ere posterity see verse of mine.' The unsupported opinions and speculations^r of a solitary recluse, as I am, have little chance of making their way to distinction amid the bustle of the world. When I think of the literary taste of a great proportion of society, of their avidity for glare and pretension, for violent emotion, and strong but fleeting and oftentimes useless impressions, I despair of the fate of my plain and unadorned pages, and almost regret that I have laid open, as it were, the inmost recesses of my heart, and exposed my feelings and affections to the gaze of an unsympathizing or scoffing multitude.

Lady A. And I fondly anticipate that such ingenuous exposures will form one great charm of your works to future generations. Of all the objects of nature or of art, there is none attracts man's curiosity so intensely as a peep into the bosom of his fellow man. If the exposure should display his aberrations it will point out what is to be avoided—if his virtuous and endearing qualities, what is to be imitated. Mere descriptive poets are like those persons who are pleasant enough for a transient acquaintance, but as soon as we have parted from them are forgotten; moral and contemplative poets, like the chosen intimates of our bosoms, the more minutely we know them, the more we discover of their excellencies, the longer we are acquainted with them we will esteem them better. As you have already bestowed on me the power of inspiration, you must also grant me

that of prophecy. Methinks I see already your works going through a variety of editions, from the large and broad margined quarto down to the small and closely printed pocket volume; read and quoted by thousands, and enjoying the full tide of popularity. Another age may succeed when other novelties may eclipse, and imitations and frequent perusal may have produced satiety, but still I see many a solitary student extracting delight and consolation from your works, many a bosom glowing with acknowledged sympathy, and often 'heedless folly' learning to think from your pages. Now, if a poet's food be fame, what better cheer could you expect than a peep into a land flowing with milk and honey, such as I have exhibited to you.

Cowper. I take it as you would wish it should be; at all events it is sufficient fame for me that you think me worthy of all you anticipate. I believe never bard was less anxious about his fame than I am. It is true in my youth I felt 'some stirrings of ambition,' but the misfortunes of after years have subdued them all. That man can well spare the applause of this world, often misplaced and capricious, who has his hopes and anticipations placed on the next.

Lady A. While other poets in their youth have produced some of the most engaging and interesting of their performances, how happened it that your juvenile years were passed without discovering any of your subsequent genius? Was the fancy inactive, or was an opportunity wanting to exercise it?

Cowper. I too, when life was young, had my aspira-

tions after excellence, and a thousand fancies flitted before me; but my youth was spent without an aim: my temperament kept me passive and indecisive, and general society chilled me: a dark cloud afterwards overshadowed me, and when joy again beamed forth as the sun from behind the sombre mist which obscured him, I gave 'a local habitation' to the ideas that had long tenanted my mind, less with a view of acquiring a name than as it was an occupation which, above all others, weaned my thoughts from myself, and soothed and tranquilized my bosom. By these circumstances, although my productions may want the glow and fervour of youth they will have the subdued experience of maturer years to recommend them.

Lady A. Pardon me, your mind can never grow old; it is of that description which must always retain the freshness and simplicity of youth. Years and experience may subdue luxuriances of imagination, and mature and expand the reasoning faculties; but the noblest and most powerful minds the world has produced, have always been remarkable for youthful feelings, and almost infantine simplicity.—— ——— M·D——

Lines written on a blank leaf of Hayley's Life of Cowper.

—— Pure spotless being! virtuous and sincere,
Who, could we think that spirits sojourn'd here,

Seem'd'st rather one of heav'n's angelic birth,
 Than of the ever-erring sons of earth.
 And yet, sad portion of frail man below!
 Thou too oft drank'st the bitter cup of woe!
 Thy spirit soaring high to themes divine—
 Endow'd with feelings exquisitely fine,
 Chain'd to an earthly body, could ill bear
 The cumb'rous load, or breathe earth's heavy air—
 Yet now all's past—thou shin'st in regions ever fair. }
 Heroes and kings have toil'd to gain a name,
 Have rush'd through blood of thousands on to fame,
 Proud should they gain a paltry strip of ground,
 Or with war's flaming torch spread havoc round—
 Short is their praise, by pop'lar folly blown!
 A few years pass—and scarce their names are known.
 But long as any worth on earth remains
 Thou still shalt live, esteemed in thy pure strains;
 Truth, friendship, love, so tenderly express,
 Shall meet congenial views in every feeling breast,

—— M'D ——

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. XIV.

Monday, 24th June, 1822.

LOCH-NA-BO.

DULCE EST DESIPERE IN LOCO.

This is a hacknied phrase we learn'd at school,
Which means, 'tis sometimes sweet to play the fool.

IT was on a delightful summer's morning lately that after an early breakfast, and in consequence of a previous agreement the day before, a pretty numerous company set out on a pleasure party to visit Loch-na-bo, a beautiful little lake in the Neighbourhood of Elgin. There are, perhaps, few pleasures in the course of our existence which afford so much real enjoyment as such excursions into the country, either to see the simple beauties and grandeur of nature, or the mouldering monuments of art which time has yet spared. The sky was clear and cloudless and gave promise of a favourable day, the morning dews were just leaving the grass, the larks mounted into the air with songs, and every thing around was serene and cheerful. The party bounded along with light hearts and smiling countenances; each left his cares behind him, and said to himself this day I will be happy. The whole day was intended to be spent in rambling about the place, and a cold collation was provided and sent out to the spot for the occasion; for however much the beauties of nature may feast the mind, yet if there be not something to regale the more corporeal senses, that is, if the stomach be ill at ease, there is an end to the beauties either of nature or of art. It may, perhaps.

be expected that we should give some hint of the vehicles which transported the party—this will be easily done. Dr. Goldsmith in his celebrated journey from London to Kentishtown very learnedly remarks, that there are three modes of locomotion at the option of the traveller, *viz.* riding in a coach, mounted on horseback, or trudging it on foot; which last, observes the Doctor very sagaciously, is the cheapest and most independant of the three—so thought the pilgrims to Loch-na-bo, and accordingly adopted it. A couple of hours of moderate walking brought them almost to the destined spot.

After leaving the high road a few miles east of Elgin you enter a stony and uneven tract, where little is to be seen and less expected. Proceeding farther up and looking towards the north you have a fine view of the fertile parish of Urquhart, interspersed with many clumps of wood, and in the distance the Moray Firth and blue hills of Sutherland. A few yards farther brings you to the Loch itself.

There are many who have lived all their days in Elgin and have not seen this place, and yet there are few scenes in the country that excel it in beauty and picturesqueness. Many people pass and repass the road in its neighbourhood without ever being aware that the barren hills and dark gloomy woods of Scotch firs enclose within them such a fairy abode. There is something in the lonely seclusion of the Loch, and the contrast of the barren scenery around, which very much heightens the effect of the scene. The piece of water is but small—a circular basin about a mile in circumference. From its being sheltered on all sides by rising hills partly covered with wood, the water for the most part remains unruffled by the winds, and lies spread out like a sheet of polished mirror, reflecting the light coloured green of the willow-wooded islands with which it is interspersed. The margin of the lake is also fringed with the willow, whose taper branches and silvery leaf is so finely contrasted with the sombre and gloomy colour of the pines in the back ground. Here the company arrived, and after

contemplating the beauties of the Loch 'till fancy had her fill' they separated into little parties and strolled about the woods as inclination led them; some amused themselves with searching for curious pebbles among the rocks, some dived into the thickets to admire the diversity and beauty of the foliage and the variegated carpet of moss which every where covered the ground, while others sat under the shade of some tree enjoying the luxury of indolence and discursive talk. But it is, perhaps, high time that we should give some account of whom the party was composed. Be it known then that they were no less personages than the Members of the TOAST AND WATER CLUB! with a few of their particular friends. Metaphysicus was there in all his glory, wielding his syllogisms instead of a walking cane: the Ex-Dominie of Knockbrae in a new suit of blacks, with his face completely suffused with the ludicrous: Jaques from Forres was there, neither in a *misanthropical* nor *mad* humour: X. and C. in a style which it is impossible to describe: and Z. a member who has not yet made his appearance in the pages of the Ephemera, that is, *in propria persona*, but who is the greatest curiosity of the whole.

It happened very curiously, but certainly very fortunately, that there was another party who had set out from Elgin the same day on a visit to the same place. The TOAST AND WATER CLUB had not been at the Loch above an hour when they were startled by a somewhat loud and long continued noise, which they at first took for the screaming of a flock of wild geese preparatory to their taking flight from the water, but on looking round they perceived a goodly company approaching, consisting of many gentlemen but more ladies. They also seemed in high spirits, for it was their laughing and hallooing which constituted the noise already mentioned. As both parties had thus happily met, and as both had come for the same object, it was mutually agreed that they should 'join issue;' and while a few, who were appointed for the purpose, were selecting a proper plot of grass for the dining table, and were arranging the minutiae

of the repast, the rest were enjoying themselves in various groups on the banks of the lake.

Here you might see a young spruce gentleman walking with his partner, enjoying 'sweet converse,' and talking sentimentally—there a party busily engaged in *putting the stone*, and farther off a few more in the laudable pursuit of ducking their dogs in the water. There were a few who had procured two household tubs from Mr. G—— in the neighbourhood, and were trying a sailing match on the Loch, to the great amusement of the surrounding spectators; after a keen contest one of them had got considerably ahead of the other, and was bidding fair for victory, but suddenly his tub began to waver, it tumbled and tossed about, he lost his balance, and down he splashed fairly over head and ears into the Loch; he luckily, however, gained one of the neighbouring islands, where after drying and resting himself he again reached the main land in his 'brittle bark,' amidst admonitions from the company on shore never again to venture beyond his depth.

By such varied and harmless amusements they passed off the time till the hour of dinner arrived. There is a green spot about the west end of the Loch, finely shaded by the boughs of trees, and where the soft moss and long waving grass below, rivalled the finest Turkey carpet. Here the company sat down in ample circle, and as it was a sort of *picknick*, each person contributed his share of the banquet. There was a great deal of mirth, and some lame enough jests passed, as each one lugged from its hiding place his contribution. Two gentlemen produced a good fat hen each, when some wag exclaimed, 'there go a pair of fools!' Another gentleman displayed an enormous pie or tart, it looked very tempting, and his next neighbour casting his eye on it, offered in exchange a nicely pickled tongue—the offer was accepted—the delighted possessor immediately began breaking it up, declaring he would dine solely on it in preference to any thing else, when lo! as the crust was broke a flock of sparrows rushed out and fluttered aloft into their native

element, leaving the dry crust to the chagrined possessor! Never shall we forget his look of dissatisfaction and despair, nor the loud bursts of laughter which rung around—he could only faintly utter ‘Oh, my tongue, my tongue.’—

These and many other little incidents which we have forgotten, did not by any means withdraw the attention of the guests from the main object before them; ample justice was done to the cold fowls, lamb, tongues, and pastry; and after the rage of hunger was appeased, as Homer would say, they set in for serious drinking. Profusion of wines, cold punch, and pure mountain dew, were sported on the occasion. After a few preliminary toasts were given—we can scarcely say from the chair, but from the chairman on the turf—that gentleman rose, and after calling for a bumper, begged to propose a toast which he was confident would meet the approbation of all present; he also begged that it might be given with three times three, himself giving the time: he then gave—

“The Provost and Magistrates of Elgin, with prosperity to the *Good Town*”—

Hip, Hip, Hip, Hurra! Hurra! Hurra!

Hip, Hip, Hip, Hurra! Hurra! Hurra!

Hip, Hip, Hip, Hurra! Hurra! HURRA!!!

The sound rose like the meeting of many waters, and the shouts rent the sky—the wild deer startled from their lairs—the geese and ducklings of the lake took wing in terror, and fluttered about in the air astonished at the rout and revelry which now filled their formerly quiet abode. Many other interesting toasts were given, such as, ‘Roads and Bridges,’—‘The Plough,’—&c. &c.; and between the intervals much amusing conversation occurred, of which we regret we can give but an imperfect account. We recollect that when the merits of the Loch before us were discussed, one old gentleman observed that ‘he thought it would make a famous *duke pond*.’—And when another remarked that the ruins of the Pluscarden Priory would have a beautiful effect if situated on one of the islands; ‘Aye,’ replied the former, ‘it would

look very weel if thoroughly repaired and weel white-washed o' the outside.'

About this time an old man in the dress of a mendicant crossed a path in the wood near us; we were not then in a frame of mind to let any person whatever pass our door without coming in and partaking of our cheer; we immediately hailed him, and he proved to be a personage well known in the parish of St. Andrews, who goes under the name of Homer, (not inaptly named, as he practises the calling of the poetical beggar of antiquity, strolling about the country, ever ready to give you a song for a mouthful of bread.) He was dressed in habiliments something resembling the description of Joseph's coat of many colours—a hat like Mambrino's helmet, which once had been black, but to which long wear and tear had given a bronze hue, sat on the crown of his head and half displayed a brown heath coloured wig, made either of hair or heather; under all which reposed a forehead and visage—truly Homeric! He had a hazle staff in his hand, the head bent in the form of a hook, and smoothly polished by long usage, the which he stuck into the ground, and placing his hat, or helmet, on the top of it, took his seat on the grass. After having his breast warmed with a glass of generous liquor, and his poetic vein roused with praises lavishly bestowed, he commenced with a specimen of his powers, prefacing it with the following explanation: "I am now, ladies and gentlemen, going to recite a poem, but for the sake of effect you must suppose yourselves absent, or that you are so many shrubs and trees—this to be a lonely forest in Greece, and I blind Homer led about by a boy with a string."

Homer to his Harp.

Lead, Boy, lead me to some darkening bower,
Thick over-arched with foliaged canopy,
Where in soft rest we'll spend the noon-day hour;
From Sol's oppressive darting influence free.
Alas! to these dark orbs tho' Nature be
A void; the music sighing breezes make,
'Mong rustling leaves, heart-soothing fancies wake,
And the stream's gentle rippling pleaseth me.

Bring me the harp, sweet soother of my care—
 My pride! my joy! without whose magic strain,
 This earth a dark and dreary prison were;
 In life yield nought to make me here remain,
 With thee, on fancy's soaring wing I rove
 Beyond this gross and care-oppressed scene,
 And the low thoughts, and dull pursuits of men,
 Mounting a guest to the high courts of Jove.
 With thee I mix in glorious deeds of old—
 With the Sage Nestor solemn councils hold,
 And hoary chiefs who famed for wisdom are;
 Or joining in the feats of heroes bold,
 Hurl with great Peleus' Son the thunderbolts of war.

Or 'mid the feast, when strife has ceas'd to rage,
 With thee the soul-inspiring song I raise;
 Adored by youth, and honoured by old age.—
 Alas! I sigh to think of those blest days!
 Then did the Sons of Song receive their praise,
 And were held sacred. This degenerate race
 No honor to the heavenly function pays;
 Now the Bard's fate is penury and disgrace.

Low groveling Chief! heavy and cold of blood,
 Dull to the thrill of mighty or sublime!
 Scorn'd as I am I would not change with you
 My independent feelings—Haply too,
 My name shall float a-down the stream of time,
 While yours lie sunk in black oblivion's flood.
 I would not change the artless sympathy
 Of village swains, who crowd to hear my tale;
 Or soft request of maidens for my stay,
 Who with choice fruits their wandering Bard regale—
 No, not for your rich feasts with splendor crown'd,
 And long rang'd trains of minions fawning round—

Yet keen the pains from tow'ring heights sublime,
 Where 'mid pure regions soaring fancy flies,
 O'erstepping space, anticipating time,
 To downward turn to cold realities!—
 Thou spark celestial! native of the skies,
 Chain'd for a time to this dull mortal frame,
 Whilst here thou dwell'st expect no unmix'd joys,
 'Till thou return'st again from whence you came.—

Come, stripling, come, our toil we must renew!
 How! has soft sleep thy tender frame possess—
 'Tis so—he answers not—long breathings too—
 Poor thing, a while enjoy thy balmy rest!—
 Oh, happy privilege of the lowly breast!
 Beyond your humble sphere you never soar,

Never by foiled aspiring aims distrest ;
 Your stated labour done—you think no more !
 How different from the woe-worn Bard you serve !—
 —Well, well, this wither'd trunk and foliage hoar,
 Thin on my temples grown—this palsied nerve,
 Give sure presage 'twill not be long before
 The welcome blast of death shall bear me hence—
 In vales of bliss a second spring to know,
 Safe from the proud man's scorn—from wretchedness and woe.

Homer was loudly applauded for his recitation, which he performed with a good enunciation and suitable gesture ; his health was also drunk,—an honour which had been rarely granted to his obscure merit before. A gentleman who seemed to be a stranger to us now took a letter from his pocket and said, if not displeasing to the company he would read it—that is if he could, (for the writing and spelling were beyond the common). He mentioned that, calling in the morning at the post-office for letters, the post-master shewed him one, the address of which he had difficulty in making out, but it seemed to tally pretty well with his designation, his name being Edward Phemister ; but what was the drift of it he knew not, as it was not from any of his usual correspondents. We gave a look to the back of it, and a single glance convinced us that its destination was not *To Edward Phemister*, but *To Editar of Phemira* ;—we said not a word, however, and he proceeded as follows :—

Forus, 10th day of Jun

MR. EDITAR

I make bould to writ you thes few lines to let you kno that I left Elgin my nativ place two days ago to go to Forus on some bizness which pertains to my own private affairs and which I had to transak with a grate man who lives in a grate house not just in the town but a bit off in the country. As I hav never been so far from home before and as I have often been amused with histories of travels written in Bumbay Africa Angushire and such far off places I thought that the accounts which I myself could pick up in the course of my travels would not be uninteresting to you and pirhaps might be put into that little buiky which ye write every week. On Monday last I set out on a white shely which I burrowed frae David Drystoor an acquaintance who gets a seat wie me in the kirk and sometimes his dinner on the time o' an occasion—I became scar tired of horseback not being used to it, but the langest

day will hae an end so I got to Forus at last, not however without paying money twice for tolls which is a grate grivance on the king's own high way. I did not think Forus such a very grate toon as I was led to expeck. The people were much like those I had been accustomed to see in Elgin also—so that I now doubt the marvelous stories I have read in books about monsters and giants in other countries. One thing Mr Editor they are behind us in Forus and that is their Mukle Kirk which is not placed in the middle of the street but at one end of the toon and after all it is not a mukle but a little kirk, that is, compared to ours, and it is not of the true goathic kind. They have also a Provost who sits in a grand coach, and when their drummer goes through the toon he is not preceded by an officer with a halbut but he is baith drummer and crier himself the which looks very straints. I put up at an inn kept by a very civil gentleman I think called Mr. L—. By good luck I saw the gentleman I had business with in the toon and after settling our affairs nothing would serve him but I should pay him a visit at his grate house and he made offer to send his coach for me. I agreed to this not liking to stay much longer in a change house, not but that they were commonly civil to me, but for fear I should get a bad name for debauchery—as also that it boar heavy on the purse. The coach arrived and I stepped into it—but such a coach, all morroccow and silks in the inside! at first I was afraid to turn myself about, but becoming familiarated I began to think I had grown a Duck or some such grate personage. When I arrived at the grate house I cannot but say that my heart began to beat strangly and I got into something like a flutter. Out came a pour of Flouunkies in their scarlet and velvets one goes to this side one goes to that—one takes my arm to hand me out another seizes on my hit bundle of spair shifts and neckcloths and I cannot but say I began to feel uneasy about them when I saw the chield pop off with them, I followed him with all speed and on my hallooing after him and telling him that was a bit article of mine he told me to follow him and he would shew me into an apartment—This you may be sure I did being loath to lose sight of my new made shifts and some neckcloths not by any means to be despised—when we had travelled a good way up stairs and through passages we came to a door, which having opened the man civilly desired me to waulk in. When I entered I saw the room seemingly full of people—I made two or three of my best boughs but none of them spake and on looking round I was not a little amazed to see some of the people half up the walls and hanging and scrambling about like as many cats on a garden wall—The servant entered, laid down my hundle and was retiring when I entreated him not to leave me among so many strange people—he smiled told me there was no body here, that it was a dressing room and that he had taken me here that I might

dress after my journey—When left alone, and after some hesitation, I had made a proper examination, how was I astonished to find that the people which I had taken to be people were not people in reality, but painted images of men as large as life with eyes staring and hands waving like ony living eyes or hands. I walked about for a long time not knowing what to do, having dressed myself as well as I could in the morning before I came away—however after sitting standing and examining every thing for a long time I at last ventured to dip my hands in a basoon of water and dry them with my napkin seeing nothing else but some bewtiful cloths which I was afraid were for some finer purpose. Being now quite wearied, several hours having passcd away, I opened the door to reconnitre my sitiuation. I went out and after wandering up one pair of stairs and down another I so completely lost my way that I began to tremble and be utterly confounded at the strangeness of my sitiuation, I sat down on a step of a stair and had sat for a considerable space of time when Iockily a serving lad happened to come by—he said he was glad he had found me as he had been searching all the rooms in the house for me to bring me to dinner. I followed him joyfully to the dining room and at the door gave him twopence halfpenny, all my spare change, for his trouble,—It is impossible to describe the dinner, such a profusion of all sorts of victuals!—I was quit distraket and did not kno what to eat first—and as to wine it was in as great plenty as if it had been cauld water, and you were asked constantly to drink of it whether you were dry or not. The evening past on joyfully in a constant succession of eating and drinking and we had nothing in the wide world to do but speak.

But I must have doan Mr Editar altho' I had a grate deal moar to tell you, but it is all in good time meanwhile I rest

Your humble Servant to comand

THOMAS MONEYPENNY.

The reading of this letter turned the general current of the conversation into a discussion of the comparative merits of the Towns of Elgin and Forres. One party maintained that Elgin had the superiority—while the other, among which wore several Forresians, as stoutly defended the fame and honor of their *natale solium*. But a general impatience of the subject seemed to prevail, and at last a song was loudly called for from several quarters. All the ladies in succession were asked to sing, but they waved the subject with various excuses;—some had got colds, others could not sing in the open air, and

others again, and indeed the greater number, professed they could not sing at all. What was to be done—the gentlemen could do nothing—the gift of music, as indeed of every other elegant accomplishment, was on the side of the ladies; but they refused to exercise it—even Miss Catherina Frederica Oldenough, who was there, remained obstinate. At last, in this perplexing dilemma, a new guest who had joined the company a little after the arrival of Homer, rose up and offered his services.—It was the poet Pope, not the Bard of Twickenham, but him of Bartlethills.—He had wandered over this way in search of a strayed quey—was attracted to the spot by the sounds of mirth and smell of good cheer—and he found a hearty welcome and plenty of cold punch. This latter had now ascended into his brain and filled it with gay fancies—he volunteered a song at once—an extempore one, pat for the occasion, and thus gave it to the air of ‘*Scots wha hae wi’ Wallace bled.*’

Folks wha’ve aft in Elgin fed,
On sugar’d cates and butter’d bread,
Or bisquits soft with jam bespread,
Come not here to tea!

Here no drawing rooms are found,
With ladies rang’d in circle round;
No scandal, nor chit chat abound;
Come not here to tea!

Now’s the time and now’s the hour—
Our drawing room shall be yon bower—
He who to stand has still the power,
Let him follow me!

But should we have no bohea here,
Yonder’s a lake both cool and clear;
Th’Ephem’ral Club approve such cheer,
We’ll water-drinkers be.

This song was followed by immense plaudits, partly because it was sung with spirit, and partly because people delight in applauding nonsense—a purer specimen of which could not have been exhibited.

Much about this time a new guest joined the party, who certainly proved an immense acquisition. He lives

in a snug cottage on the banks of the Lössie : by day he leads the life of Pan or Sylvanus, ranging about the woods and thickets—in the evening he is the Orpheus of the country round, leading out the gay dancers to the sound of his fiddle. He had been several miles up the country enlivening the dance the night before, which had been prolonged until morning, and he was now returning home with his fiddle on his back in a *merry case*. A word was sufficient to make him lug it out ; and no sooner had he struck up his incomparable reel of Tulloch, accompanying it with suitable gestures of face and body, than a great proportion of the company started to their legs and tript it on the green sward ‘ with light fantastic toe ! ’

It was a delightful sight to witness the mirth and harmony that prevailed.—There were some admirable groups for the pencil and for the pen ; and not the least amusing was the trio composed of the three accidental visitors.—Homer kept pretty closely to his brother muse, the divine Orpheus, with his countenance raised to the heavens, and his poetic eye ‘ in a fine phrensy rolling.’ The prince of harmony was wholly absorbed in his mirth-giving strains, and he of Bartlethills sat a little apart moralizing on the scene before him.

The dance was kept up until the cool dews of evening, and the sun setting gloriously in the west, reminded the party to prepare for home. All arrived there in safety, with their minds disposed to retain for many days and years to come, the recollection of the pleasures of a *Day spent at Loch-na-bo,*

U. and F. shall appear in our next.

Malcom Stuart has been unavoidably delayed but shall appear very soon.

Meditations in the oak wood on the Solar Sphere, and various other subjects, could not appear to advantage unless shorn of their beams.

M. Y.—B. T.—P. P.—B. and B. P. have all been received, and are all excellent in their kind.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. XV.

Monday, 1st July, 1822.

MR. EDITOR,

I beg leave again to address you, with the purpose of attempting some slight sketches of the animated part of our town; and notwithstanding the many difficulties which exist to such an undertaking, I trust that I will be enabled in a great measure to confine my remarks to what may be called the fair side of the picture. These difficulties arise, Sir, both from a predisposition which most men have to give a zest to their remarks on mankind, by satirizing what is indifferent in character and exposing what is bad; and from the circumstance, that what is blameable in conduct is more obvious, or at least more observed, than its opposite. In order, Sir, to bring my pen into a proper tone for this merciful resolution, I shall begin with a subject which it is out of my power to treat with disrespect, and, as is proper and natural at the outset, introduce myself to your readers.

I have formerly hinted that I am a batchelor, and have been for some time abroad. These, Sir, are not circumstances which tend to lessen one's opinion of himself, whatever jealousies they may occasion among the male part of his acquaintance. Accordingly, Sir, self-respect is a quality of which I am far from destitute; and my anxious desire to appear in like manner amiable in the eyes of the world, (and in particular of the other sex,) by a proper attention to dress and the forms and observances of etiquette, has been often characterised as approaching to vanity. This has of course, Mr Editor, taken its rise with persons of my own sex, for none of a softer complexion can possibly view my yellow stockings (in this particular I imitate Malvolio, though without the cross garters) and elegant upper dress, without admiring the handsome limbs which are graced by the former ornaments, and the genteel, though I confess now rather antiquated form, adorned by the latter. Your readers may thus know by what mark to distinguish me on Gala-days, independently of the well dressed periwig which has the honor of occupying the exterior of my head. Were I not too shy to court observation, I would give your readers a hint of the places where I enjoy my morning walks, that they might have no difficulty in becoming acquainted with the appearance of your correspondent.

Our Town, I observe, has its West End as well as the Capital of the Island; and this quarter is in like manner with us the great emporium of fashion. Indeed it appeared to me on my return to Elgin, that the size of the Hospital had by some gravitating power attracted round itself those buildings which adorn its vicinage.—But

fashion rules the day with us, Sir, as well as in more crowded cities; and such are the gregarious propensities of mankind, that houses give rise to streets and streets to towns; although in the instance before us the individual buildings at present preserve somewhat of a haughty distance from each other.

But, Sir, it is with the inhabitants that I have to do at present; and in order to get quit of what is unfavourable at once, I must, though unwillingly, remark, that our Town is cursed with that vice of a limited population—petty scandal: though I trust not to such a degree as is commonly reported. Its origin is obvious, and its existence almost inseparable from small towns. Nothing, I am afraid, can confine it within due bounds except exposure, and I am happy that the pages of your work furnish means of applying the scourge. The vice is contemptible and degrading—it exhibits at once, narrowness of mind, and badness of heart. The selfishness of its possessors is extreme; for direct attacks on the character of our neighbour, imply indirect praise of ourselves, tho' the very act of abusing another's good name is the most effectual destruction of our own. I would be far, however, from putting a stop to every sort of conversation about our neighbours and their actions, for I am quite aware that this would go far to destroy what gives its greatest zest to conversation,—that innocent chit-chat which very properly supplies, at times, the place of more serious matters; and which affords a great part of that enjoyment which we derive from society. There is none sonder than I am of talking of my neighbours, but I choose rather to rally them to their face, than quizz them to their

acquaintance, and have no objections to enquire *who* (tho' not *what*) was at Mrs. Such-a-one's table. The custom I would wish to be reprobated is that malignant scrutiny which is exercised on their failings, while their good qualities are passed over in silence as if the mention of them would burn our tongues; and that petty desire of ascertaining not only what they do in public, but the inmost secrets of their dwellings, and of retailing them to others with interest.

But enough of this—I hope for improvement. Indeed I am so unsuspecting myself, that, in all probability, I would have remained ignorant of the extremes to which such things are carried in Elgin, but for a notable '*redding up*' which my own poor self lately received at the hands of certain ancient maidens. I had been engaged elsewhere to dinner, but agreed to drink tea at Miss ——'s; and on going to join the party, I chanced to arrive at the drawing-room door before the gentlemen had left the dining-room. It was open, and I was arrested at the threshold by hearing my own name mentioned in connection with various epithets and allusions (of course) very gratifying to their object. Indeed, I am at a loss to imagine how the ingenuity of man or woman could have framed them. I was obliged, after thus receiving the reward of a listener, (tho' an unwilling one,) to withdraw myself on tiptoe from the door, and return with audible steps, when I found the assembled Inquisitors as smiling & polite, as if their lips had but just ceased from sounding my praises.

But, Sir, I willingly pass on to more pleasing subjects, and am glad to bear testimony to the hospitality which

From the Magazine in Elgin. I have already formed
 greets the stranger in Elgin. I have already formed a
 numerous circle of kind acquaintances, not by my own
 exertions I assure you, but from their own voluntary at-
 tentions. I am happy to observe that the polish of the
 higher classes is much superior to what I expected, and
 the facilities which we possess for excellent education,
 promise to render this still greater in the rising genera-
 tion. The existence of so much refinement, and the
 prospect of more, is truly delightful to a native.

I am pleased above all things with the appearance of
 our population on a Sunday. There is something really
 imposing even in the outward observances of the Sabbath,
 which with us are most orderly and general. But the
 existence of that real devotion which pervades the various
 congregations of the Inhabitants, calls forth those higher
 feelings which bear evidence to our entire approbation of
 the conduct of others. It is pleasing too, for I am no
 bigot, to witness the quiet and solemn faces of the groups
 that take their station on the street, or enjoy their sober
 walks during the interval of service. The very air seems
 to accord with the occasion; and the stillness of the at-
 mosphere, unbroken by the every-day sounds of labour or
 of pleasure, with the placid minds of a religious population
 on the day of rest. It is thus that Religion appears in
 all her loveliness—as the mother of peace, and happiness,
 and harmony—not of fanaticism and persecution. U.

(To be Continued.)

S. H.

ON SUPERFICIAL ACQUIREMENTS.

THERE are persons who labour to acquire a smattering of information, not from any love they bear to knowledge itself, or the internal pleasure which it affords, but merely that they may appear learned in the eyes of others. Such persons will descant with the utmost fluency on any given subject which can be started; and to a superficial observer they will appear as possessed of immense capacities and boundless information: but no sooner do they come in contact with a person of solid acquirements than, like Satan at the touch of Ithuriel's spear, their real nakedness is immediately exposed. Persons of this description seldom sport an opinion of their own; they adopt the one which first happens to come in their way, without giving themselves the trouble to enquire whether it be right or wrong. One would be apt to think that, conscious of their own deficiency, they would be cautious of advancing any opinions, or giving their judgment on any questions of importance or intricacy—Is this really your opinion? O how blind in respect to the attributes of dunces!—this is by no means the case—the less they know about any subject, the more peremptory are their decisions—the more dogmatical their assertions. In order to insure an apparent superiority of judgment, they generally take the precaution of condemning every thing; and treating matters of importance, or works of ability, with indifference. Have you seen this new piece by Byron? O yes, it is very stupid.—What think you of Scott's last novel? Oh, it is poor, poor! a great falling off from many of the others.—That last Dissertation of Dugald Stewart I think displays great research and much ingenuity of thought and beauty of language. Oh, it is excessively dull! I read the first page of it and then fell asleep.

When you first meet with such a person you flatter yourself that you have found a treasure—a perfect

encyclopædia of intelligence and information: one who will engage you in conversation, and delight and enliven your social intercourse: who, instead of returning a dull and hollow echo to every thing you advance, will please you with lucid trains of reasoning, and delight you with his flow of wit and play of fancy. How miserable is your disappointment! you start some subject which engages the interest of the day, and he immediately lays off to you a garbled opinion of some review which he had read in the morning. You wish to dive deep into some point and he keeps sporting about the shallows, by far too buoyant and superficial to get below the surface. It is a matter of chance—the very cast of a dye, whether he bestows lavish praise on any thing, or condemns it without reservation. He is a tory or whig on any measure as he has read the Courier or Scotsman the day before. He will deliver his opinion—that is, the opinion of his newspaper, with as much vehemence, and dictatorial importance as if it were the original suggestions and well weighed sentiments of his own mind.

To keep up his title to a man of extensive reading, he does not scruple to affirm that he has perused books which he never saw, and that he is master of all the points of a subject which he never heard of. He has a full stock of words indicative of meagre praise or disapprobation, which he can always use when called upon. Ask him his opinion of a work he has never seen, and he will answer—Oh, it is exceedingly dull, nothing at all to interest one in it. But don't you think such and such passages have considerable merit, for instance the one beginning——? Yes, that is pretty well to be sure, but I dont remember them exactly, I skimmed over the book hastily and threw it away in disgust.

How infinitely superior is simple, uneducated, and unpretending common sense to such affectation! How much better even dullness and ignorance than such unmeaning pretensions!

MYCON.

(FROM THE GERMAN.)

MILON and I were coming from Miletus, to present our offering to Apollo. We soon beheld from afar the mountain on which the temple, with its resplendent pillars, shoots aloft amidst groves of laurel into the ætherial blue: while the glimmering prospect of the ocean was lost in the distance beyond it. It was noon—the sand scorched our feet, and the burning rays of the sun darted fiercely on our heads. The eider duck was lurking by the way side among the fens—the cricket and grasshopper were chirping among the leaves in the sacred meadows. At every step the dust rose around us, burning our eyes and covering our parched lips. Thus we were advancing, faint and weary, when we perceived a little onward before us a thick clump of trees. Our vigour suddenly returned, we renewed our activity and soon approached it. Its shade was dark as night—we tread with eager delight in its vivifying freshness—O ravishing spot that so fully relieves all our necessities and pains! The trees surrounded a capacious fountain which received a stream of the purest and coolest water. The boughs hung down on all sides bending under a load of ripe apples and pears, and fruitful bushes and evergreen shrubs were planted beneath them. But the stream we perceived murmured past the base of a simple monument, round which the honeysuckle, the slender bindweed, and creeping ivy, were entwined. O gods, I exclaimed, how delightful is this place of refreshment! Blessed be he who has so beneficently furnished this cooling shade: his ashes, perhaps, are resting near us. There, said Milon, on the farther side of the monument, amidst the tendrils of the honeysuckle, I perceive an inscription: it will inform us, perhaps, who he was that has so generously regarded the wants of the wanderer. He raised the branches with his staff, and read—“Here rest the ashes of

of Mycon, whose life was spent in well-doing. He wished to prolong his beneficence beyond his decease, and therefore brought hither this limpid stream, and planted around it this shady bower." Blessed be the ashes of the righteous, and blessed be the friends who survive him! At this moment there appeared some one coming towards us through the trees: it was a handsome woman, of a slender form and noble aspect. She bore a pitcher on her arm, and advanced to the fountain. "May you enjoy this cool retreat," she said with a friendly smile, "you must be strangers, and a long journey, perhaps, beneath the scorching sun hath exhausted you. Say, can I afford you any refreshment or relief which is not here."

Blessed be thou in thy benevolence, we replied, we require no other refreshment: sweet is this fountain—sweet are these fruits, and cooling is this shade. We are filled with reverence for that righteous man, whose ashes lie under that monument, who has provided so liberally for the wants of the pilgrim. As thou art of this country thou must have known him: tell us, while we enjoy this hallowed shade, tell us who he was. The woman now placed her pitcher at her foot, and leaning her arm on the monument, looked benignantly around her, and thus began: "Mycon, for that was his name, was assiduous in the service of the gods, and esteemed it his highest enjoyment to do good to mankind. There is no shepherd in this neighbourhood who does not revere his memory with affection and thankfulness: none who can rehearse the story of his benevolence without tears of joy. To him I am indebted for all the happiness I possess," (here the tear started into her eye,) "who am the wife of his son. My father was dead: his affectionate wife, my mother, and myself his only child, survived him in wretched poverty. We lived in domestic retirement, supported by the labour of our hands, for innocence and virtue were all our wealth. Two goats supplied us with milk, and a little garden with fruit. We had not lived

long in this peaceful seclusion when my mother died also and left me a helpless orphan behind her, a victim to indigence and despair. But Mycon, whose eye was ever open to the scene of distress, took me home and employed me in his household, watching over my welfare with all the tenderness of a father. My young master, the best of sons, and handsomest shepherd in the country, marked my diligence in the discharge of my duty, and my anxiety to approve myself worthy of my fortune: he saw, and loved me, and told me his love.—Who can imagine the tumult of emotion that then rose in my bosom; but I banished his image from my thought. O Damon, I said, renounce thy love; I am a poor maide and happy enough to be a servant in thy father's house. Yet tho' I thus continued to implore him, he never forgot his declaration. One morning I was employed before the house in preparing our wool for the loom, when Mycon came out and sat down near me in the morning sun.—After looking stedfastly at me for some time, he said with a friendly smile,—My child, thy innocence, thy diligence, thy whole conduct please me; thou art a worthy damsel and I must see thee happy. Can I be happier, my young master, can I be happier, I replied, than when thou art deserving thy kindness; and tears of thankfulness gushed from my eyes. My child, he said, I must honour the memory of your parents; I must see my son and thee happy in my old age. He loves thee; canst thou, tell me canst thou be happy in his love? I fell down before him, pressed his hand with indescribable emotion on my face and bathed it in my tears—and from that day to the present, I have been the happiest of wives. Such thou (here she wiped the tears from her eyes,) ‘such thou she continued, ‘was the man, who now reposes beneath us. But as you wish to know, perhaps, why he brought hither this stream, and planted these shady trees, I now proceed to inform you:—

“Towards the end of his life, he often came and sat down here by the road side, to intercept the aged pilgrims

with a friendly salutation, and to relieve the poor and weary with the hand of beneficence. Ah! when shall I plant a leafy grove of fruit trees on this rugged steep, and build a cooling fountain in its shade, for there is no brook or covert near; that thus I may continue to cheer the languid traveller, long after I go home, and am no more. He brought, accordingly, this cooling stream from a distant field, and planted these trees on its banks, which bring forth their fruit in their season. The work being finished, he ascended with his offering to the temple of Apollo, and proffered his request to the god. 'Send down thy blessing on the grove that I have planted, that so the pious pilgrims who come from afar to thy shrine, may find rest from their labour in its refreshing shade.'

"The god had graciously heard his prayer. Next mornng, having awoke early as was his custom, and looked towards the road, he beheld the saplings which he had planted there so lately, waving their luxuriant foliage on the azure sky. O ye gods, he exclaimed, what do I view—tell me, my children, is it a vision that deceives me. These trees that I planted but yesterday, are already standing before me, in the full growth of maturity. Filled with sacred awe we walk in their shade: they rise above us in all the glory of nature, and their branches stretching far around, bend downward to the flowery sward, beneath the weight of their fruit. I shall wander, cried the old man in delighted astonishment, I shall yet wander myself in the evening of my days beneath these spreading boughs. We offered up thanksgiving and sacrifice to the god who had so graciously granted even more than his wish. But, alas! he did not wander long in his favourite retreat—he died, and we buried him here, that whoever reposes in the shade, may bestow the blessing of gratitude on his ashes."

When she had ended, we affectionately blessed the memory of the saint—sweet is this fountain—refreshing is this shade, and very pleasing is thy tale—blessed art thou among women! we said, and proceeded full of pious emotion towards the temple of Apollo.

PISCATOR.

OCTOBER.

HAIL! dark October, with thy speckled trees,
 Thou gloomy herald of the Winter—Hail!
 Welcome thou robber of Earth's beauty. Where
 Are now the fragrant flowers—ambrosial airs—
 And dazzling sun-beams of sweet Summer's reign?
 Where now the warblers of the bushy groves,
 The buzzing bee that lov'd the heather flower,
 The skimming swallow, and the cushat's note
 That echo'd thro' the woods? All—all are gone,
 And nought remains, save melancholy winds,
 And sadd'ning clouds that rob the slanting sun
 Of his enfeebled rays. The stately ash
 Hath lost its graceful foliage; and the fields
 Are shorn of their fleece. October, Hail!
 Tho' not for beauteous scenes, nor gladd'ning rays,
 Thou still to me art welcome; for there is
 A moral in thy contemplation. When
 I muse alone beside the stream, whose waves
 Bear down the ruins of a leafy world
 That once adorn'd its banks;—I can extract
 A lesson from the scene:—for thus doth time,
 In her resistless current, sweep along
 Towards the gulph, those spirits that adorn'd
 Her mighty stream,—careless of the lustre
 Which their bright names afforded to her course.
 And as the water-current swirls the leaves
 And sweeps them to and fro; the waves of time
 Break o'er their victims. While resistless death,
 Th' Executioner of fate, fulfils the doom
 Of victims such as these;—the dreary winds
 Of chill October, armed with biting frost,
 Destroy the crowding leaflets of the trees,
 And sigh their funeral dirge.———

T.

If Piscator would favour us with original matter, we would prefer it to translation.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. XVI.

Monday, 8th July, 1822.

MR. EDITOR,

I am an old Elginean, and feel a lively interest in every thing that illustrates the respectability and importance of my native city. In this view I consider your Ephemera, and rejoice at the manifest improvement that every succeeding week discovers in the range of thought, and style of expression, which it assumes.— There is a spirit of local attachment in some of its correspondents which delights me; and though not peculiarly fond of “toast and water,” yet I believe I could contrive to finish a pitcher (if made by the new recipe in the Cook’s Oracle, page 383) with such members of the Club as devote themselves to this branch of the publication, in a friendly conference on some subjects that might be discussed with satisfaction to ‘the natives,’ and with advantage, if rightly attended to, to the ‘good town’ itself.— To these Gentlemen I would recommend still more particular attention to ‘our venerable Ruin.’ Good taste will always point to it as the most prominent and attractive object of admiration to all—natives or strangers.

Much has been done in the last six years for its *preservation*, and next to the liberality of the Honourable the Barons of Exchequer, we owe this to the excellent taste and ardent enthusiasm of that eminent architect—Mr. Gillespie of Edinburgh. But something is necessary and is due to its *embellishment*. Thanks to the never-failing bounty of our Paternal Government and its enlightened Officers, what is necessary and proper in this respect has only to be pointed out and applied for by the constituted authorities, and it will certainly be granted. On them this duty naturally devolves. Besides a complete removal of the remaining Rubbish that continues to disfigure and disgrace this noble Edifice, and a developement of the foundations of the Side-Walls of the Church and those of the Transept and Cloisters, which could be done at a very trifling expense, and would exhibit even to careless observers the extent and proportions of the building; it has often been a favourite idea with such admirers of our venerable Cathedral as myself, that the *Tracery* of the beautiful arched window over the Grand west Entrance, and that of the Saint Catherine's wheel ("the Eastern Oriel") should be *completely restored*. I believe no place in the kingdom possesses greater facilities for accomplishing such a purpose as does 'our own dear old town.'—We have a Quarry equal to any in Scotland, and among our numerous practical masons so much improved in the last five or six years, at least a dozen would be found who, under proper superintendance and direction, could do what is possible to be done by chissel and mallet; and there is every reason to believe that Mr. G. would still devote part of his valuable time and great experience

in the details of Gothic architecture, to the perfect restoration of these beautiful objects to their original state, without any other remuneration than what such an enthusiast in his noble art derives from a consciousness of being the restorer of its ancient glory.

If our worthy and public-spirited Magistrates will but draw up a short, earnest, and respectful memoir to the Barons of Exchequer, to be presented with a suitable recommendation by the Sheriff-Depute of the County, and accompanied perhaps by a Report on its practicability, effect, and expense, from their zealous and scientific friend, Mr. Gillespie;—there is not a shadow of a doubt but that, from the munificent taste towards the ancient glories of our land that has lately distinguished that Court, the means of completing these most desirable objects would be speedily placed at their command.

These, Mr Editor, and some others of a public nature, which, notwithstanding the most praise-worthy zeal and diligence of our respectable Magistracy, are still to accomplish, would serve to occupy, as I said, the whole time in which a pitcher of ‘the true toast’ could be discussed.

Wishing you and your friends of the Club all the success your merit deserves, and praying a continuance of their useful labours in drawing public attention to public improvements in our native place, I remain,

Your's, faithfully, AMOR PATRIÆ.

ELOIN, 1st JULY, 1822.

MR. EDITOR,

As you already had the goodness to insert in your Miscellany a small piece of mine, I again send you a trifle, which I hope may also be deemed worthy of a corner, and wishing you every success,

I am, &c.

B. B.

*EXTRACTS FROM TRAVELS IN THE
EMPYREAN.*

BY AERIUS RIBLESS, F. R. S. &c. &c.—*TIME'S LIBRARY.*

—WE were now shown into the Library of Father Time, and by good fortune the old man happened to be there arranging some volumes which appeared to have lately arrived. I was much surprised on looking round to see the number of books so small; indeed for magnitude the library is surpassed by the sorriest modern collection. The whole room was not of great dimensions; about one half of it was filled with books, and the other was fitted up with shelves for the reception of works as they came in. We found the venerable Librarian seated at a desk of adamant; he bore the marks of the greatest age of any being I had seen in my travels: his few scattered locks were bleached to a snowy whiteness: his face was indented with deep furrows, but there was a sparkling freshness in his eye, and his whole countenance indicated a great degree of youthful vigour, and uncommon penetration and sagacity. "With your leave, my good Father, we have come to survey your library:" he turned about, gave a quick stare, but uttered not a word. I advanced nearer. "A pleasant enough recreation this, Sir, for a leisure hour." "Pleasant indeed! a plague on all such pleasures, 'tis such as these that have not left me the life of a dog. It is not enough that I should toil on from

morning to night and from night to morning, continually harassed with one job or another, for every lazy lubber throws his burthen on my shoulders, but I must be distressed with this business also, which is every day getting worse upon my hands. Thanks to this pretty invention of printing, I have got more trouble in this department of late in one month than I used to do in a thousand years. It is not long since a few minutes in a morning every twenty or thirty years, were sufficient to bring up my lee-way. The host of writers were not so numerous in those days, and besides the difficulty of multiplying copies was so great that all works of minor importance were allowed to sink into oblivion, and only a few of the best were thought worthy of sending to me that I might make a selection: but now! I will have whole cart loads of them at my door every year, and were I to admit all the productions of even half a dozen of years there would be more than sufficient to fill my whole library, even were I to throw its present contents to the dogs." But, said I, printing is now brought to such a degree of perfection, and the facility of the operation so great, that many volumes are produced on local and passing subjects, which are never meant to go down to posterity, and it would be as absurd to pester you with these as it would be to send you a hand-bill or lottery puff. In my humble opinion, then, you would be much relieved by having some faithful deputy to make a proper selection previous to your own final revisal. "That is what I have long had," replied he, "do you suppose that I would have patience to tease through their multefarious heaps of trash! no, had I to do so I would lose all patience, an very likely some day in a passion kick the whole out of my study door, and leave posterity to do their best without them. But I will tell you how I manage. You see that stream which runs into the cistern behind the study door: that is the stream called *Public Opinion*, it is of quick-silver, because the particles of which that metal is composed are individually when disjoined, often very un-

steady and volatile, but when united into one mass it forms the steadiest and most equal fluid in existence. Into that stream, then, are all works thrown as they are published. Many, many sink to the bottom as soon as they are plunged in; but all those which float down are received into this cistern. Sometimes from the strength of the current, and from one book bearing up another, intruders will come down, but, as all are subjected to an inspection by me, such are not allowed to have a place on my shelves, but are thrown out or put into a by corner." I looked out from the window in order to have a view of this famed stream. On the banks I saw a number of people with poles and sticks in their hands busily engaged in pushing off books from the shore. They tore out leaves from many and sent them skimming down the current. To some they were tying inflated bladders of air in order to make them float, while to others they hung large lumps of lead in a sly manner, by which I saw they were immediately sunk. "Are these people employed by you, Sir," said I. "Employed by me! that they are not indeed: they are to me a continual annoyance, and the cause of much vexation and trouble in conducting this branch of my business. They very often sink works which would otherwise float down unmolested, and their bladders often support others a good way down the stream to the great annoyance of the other floating volumes. But all their malice comes at last to nought; the feeble threads by which they tie on their lead gradually rot away, when the encumbered work rises again to the surface and pursues its course with greater speed than before; and their inflated bubbles often burst, or silently waste to an empty skin, and down sinks the helpless volume and sticks fast in the mud, never more to rise. I was proceeding to say, that although I thought such persons might sometimes do harm, yet on the whole they were productive of good: but I observed that during our conversation he had been busy in laying up some volumes, and I had missed the opportunity of ascertain-

ing what they were. It was in vain that I begged him to take them down again to see the titles, what he had once done was irrevocable, and without a moment's delay he proceeded to pile up others. The first book which I had an opportunity of looking at was a thin volume of a few pages closely printed, it was *Marmion, the Lady of the Lake, &c.* On my expressing my surprise at seeing the fair creature so slenderly dressed, he told me that I was not to suppose he could admit every one in their court dress, and besides, said he, I could not stow that lady and her associates on my shelves with such a load of antiquated lumber on their backs. The next he took up were two thin volumes: I read, *Poems by T. Campbell.* "This author," said Time, "ought to be held up as an example to all modern writers whether of prose or poetry, but especially of the latter; he is indeed an ancient in this respect and reminds me of the good old times;—he never obtrudes any thing on the public without selecting and polishing his pieces with the most respectful care. I willingly allot a place in my shelves for him—voluminousness is a great drawback to the fame of a Poet. 'The best of things beyond their measure cloy,' as my good friend Homer used to say. I took up a parcel of volumes tied together and marked on the back,—*Waverly, Tales of my Landlord, &c.* Do you admit these, said I?—To be sure I do, and I have got them bound in the strongest and most substantial bindings, for many a tease will they get from the striplings of each succeeding generation;—look up there, and see in what tatters are those books on that shelf (these were *Tom Jones, Roderick Random, &c. &c.*) in a similar state will these be by the time they are as old. I expressed my surprise to see many novels of less note preserved here.—You need not be astonished at that, said he, for a thousand years hence, when civilization and the ladies and gentlemen of her suit, getting tired of their old abodes, shall have taken up their residence in Otaheite or Kamchatka—when it will then be the fashion to walk on the crown of the head

and live at the bottom of coal mines, these works will afford some degree of amusement. People will then be gratified in knowing how their forefathers used to walk on their legs, and live on the surface of the earth—how their grandmothers and maiden aunts used to sip tea, gossip and coquette. Would it not have interested you to have heard how the mighty Cæsar delighted in sporting his four-in-hand—in what manner he set about shaving his beard; or how the grave, the thoughtful, Stoical and philosophic Cato got into a passion with his wife for not mending a hole in his cloak—or in what manner a Roman nymph would whimper and whine when she supposed herself in love? Here, said he, (taking up the celebrated works of a noble poet), are books which I must put on my shelves; their poetical merit is undisputed; I say not so much for their morality, but I have a great variety of readers and I must please all. To be sure I have books which even angels might condescend to peruse; at the same time I have others which afford special merriment to fiends. Excuse me Sir, but I think the binding of these is not so strong as will enable them to endure the handling which they will receive, if their future fame shall continue to equal what it is at present. Pooh! said he, do you think the rage is to continue for ever? Many circumstances conspire to heighten cotemporary fame—novelty, eccentricity, birth, &c. Now-a-days it is as great a miracle to hear of a poetical lord as of a poetical ploughman or sheep-shearer. A few more poetical works and also some volumes on other subjects followed, but with such rapidity that I was barely able to ascertain their names, and had no opportunity of getting his remarks on them. I observed Wordsworth put by carefully—‘This is a poet,’ said the Librarian, ‘who will by no means be neglected by posterity, although he will perhaps be saved the rather disgusting preference of being bandied about in every clown’s mouth, yet he will not want his admirers of a particular cast. Aye, aye, this is our Dutch poet *—poh! I feel the smell of a fish dunghill;

* Crabbe

well, well, he must go in ; he has merit, but strangely misapplied. It is a pity I did not construct a second gallery for such poets, who delight in groveling among the dung-hills of Parnassus, and diving amidst the mud of the pools of Helicon.

I perceive Sir, said I, that of the works which you are kindly storing up for futurity, a great proportion is of the poetical kind. Sure the present age has been wonderfully prolific in this department? Yes, returned he, I have now in my possession a pretty mass of this immortal lumber. The labours of Hercules were but children's toying compared to the toil of wading through my poetical shelves. It was a good turn that those Goths and Vandals did me the other day, in demolishing the greater number of my shelves of Greek and Roman compositions. I had not the heart to do it myself, and I confess I was a little vexed when I heard it was done ; but it was a very good thing ;—it made those works which survived be more esteemed and their merits better appreciated. I wish something of the same kind would happen to purge my modern shelves, otherwise I shall have to look out for a new house ; and yet I am afraid this cannot be that trick they have got of printing, by multiplying copies indefinitely will baffle all attempts of this kind.

I began to observe that though printing may cause trifling inconveniences, yet these are infinitely counterbalanced by its advantages—but he interrupted me :—“ It may be so, I have not leisure to consider the matter, all I can say is, I wish the man who first invented it had been at ———. But I am trifling here when my presence is required elsewhere—Good morning Sir !”—And he darted away in an instant, leaving us in astonishment at so much agility displayed by such an aged and decrepid being.—

The Club resolve on a Jaunt to the sea side.

AT a meeting of the Club on Friday last, that day having been selected for the convenience of the country members, in order to insure a full attendance for the discussion of matters of importance, it was proposed in full meeting—That as the warmth of summer had now set in, and the heat become oppressive, the members should relax themselves and make a holiday by taking a jaunt to the sea side, there to enjoy the cooling airs and other pleasures of the coast. It was, perhaps, owing to the heat of the room which at any time is not very airy but on this occasion was unusually close, and the oppressiveness of which the regular beverage of the Club was perfectly insufficient to allay, that at mention of the subject with all its pleasing associations crowding into the mind, the motion was seconded with extraordinary avidity, indeed it seemed about to pass *nem. con.* although the expression that in all probability would be found best suited to the ardour of the Society on this occasion would be “by acclamation:” when a Member started up and said, that he, for one, could not but *feel* as well as think that the motion was a good one and calculated to refresh the institution under the immense pressure of its literary labours. (*hear! hear!*) At the same time he thought that such a measure should not be carried into execution without the previous adjustment of some points that, in his opinion, were of considerable weight. He reminded the Club that it was about to pass from an inland country fertilized by many limpid streams and running fountains of fresh water, affording a valuable and inexhaustible store of the chief material used in the manufacture of our favourite liquor, to whose inspirations the public had become so much indebted, (*hear!*)—that the change was to the sea shore, where the water that abounded in greatest plenty and of most easy access was of a very different description. Besides the danger of the Club drinking all the fresh water streams dry, and thus

leaving the poor natives there consuming to cinders under the intolerable craving of thirst, they must bear in mind (here the Institution grinned with self approbation) that the intense application bestowed by some Members who had charge of the more abstruse departments, was apt to generate a certain absence of mind, during which it was not improbable they might inadvertently make use of the sea water in place of the fresh: he was of opinion that some expedient should be devised by the Society to prevent so great an evil. This speaker was followed by another who, in a long, learned, and elaborate disquisition, endeavoured to prove that salt water was as palatable and exhilarating as fresh; and he concluded by observing, that, for his part, he had become somewhat tired of the insipidity of the toast and water, and should not be disappointed if something more tasty could be introduced into that beverage. This last remark brought up a Member who had been one of the original founders, and had taken an active share in the formation of the rules and regulations. He was surprised, he said, to hear gentlemen talk thus slightly of the great secret of all their success: they could not be ignorant that it was the peculiar beverage of the Club that gave such of their lucubrations as had appeared in print that decided superiority over other periodical works!—by cooling the judgment of our philosophers, and banishing from our lighter effusions every species of pruriency and excess, too often generated by more stimulating potations. Was not the New Monthly continually dozed to stupidity with opium: Blackwood mad drunk with mountain dew, (although, he must allow, with ‘method in its madness’,) and Constable’s Old Woman drenched with weak tea? But to return, he warned gentlemen of the risk of innovation without some strong, and, in fact, undeniable grounds—he contended that any part of the structure should not be swept away which had been the produce of the labours—of the collective wisdom of this society! He ended: whereupon a Member observed, that as there appeared to be some diversity of opinion he should pro-

pose, that as the day in question intended for the excursion would be one exempted from the labours of business, the Members might infringe so far as to drink nothing but strong ale: this passed unanimously, and strong ale was declared the order of the day, for that day only.

These momentous matters having been settled, the Club was entertained by the reading of two Essays on the curious relic of antiquity which has just been discovered in the Town.* The ingenious hints of one gentleman suggested that it might be a trophy erected by the famous General Helgy, commemorative of a victory gained about the time when it is reported he founded the Town of Elgin, or Helgin, so called after himself; or that it might have been erected at the same period and on the same occasion as Sweno's Obelisk at Forres: the figure and style of sculptor of both being very similar. The other essayist took up somewhat higher ground, and laboured to prove that the stone in question was an antedeluvian relic, perhaps constructed about the time of Seth the son of Noah: but most of the members were of opinion that this was carrying the matter rather too far. After considering patiently the merits of both theories, they left the subject, as most antiquarian researches are left—in as great doubt as they found it.

* While the workmen employed in repairing the streets were levelling the part immediately east of the Church, about 3 feet below the surface, and a few yards north of the old site of the little kirk, they discovered a large stone. It is composed of a coarse grained granite, about 5 feet long and 3 broad: various figures of men on horseback, &c. rather rudely carved *in relief* appear on both sides. It seemed to have stood upright in the manner of an obelisk, the lower end tapering rather narrower than the upper: both ends are broke off, however, so that it is impossible to ascertain its original magnitude.

L.'s verses are not amiss, but not exactly what we could wish; we hope he will excuse our not inserting them. R. Y. next week.

Philorthros has written a very good essay, but he has unfortunately chosen a subject already worn thread-bare. Let him try his hand at something not so hacknied and we think he will succeed.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. XVII.

Monday, 15th July, 1822.

BAPTISM AT KNOCKBRAE.

MR. EDITOR,

In my younger days the only occasions of social festivity among the peasantry were at their baptisms, marriages and funerals. It is true the fairs and markets were eagerly anticipated by the young lads and lasses of the country, and always observed as gala-days; but to the gudemans and gudewives, and all the more staid members of the community, the more serious affairs of business left little opportunity for enjoyment; even they, however, were in the practice of mixing the '*utile cum dulce*,' and on those occasions generally regaled themselves with an extra bottle of *twopenny*. The ceremonies above-mentioned still form remarkable æras in the lives of the country people; but their observance with all 'the pomp and circumstance' of former times being now on the decline, it will perhaps be not uninteresting to such of your readers as relish a peep at simple and primitive manners, to recal a scene of the kind, out of the many with which my memory is familiar.

R

One evening as I had just dismissed my unruly boys from school, (it was while I held the situation of Dominic of Knockbrae,) and as I had set myself down in my little room to regale myself after the labours of the day, by a peep into Cruden's Concordance, which the minister had lent me, I received a visit from Thomas Ival, with a request that I would honour him with my presence at the christening of his child, which was to take place next night. Accordingly next afternoon after the little urchins had hurriedly conned over their tasks, happy with the thoughts of getting their leave an hour earlier than usual, about four o'clock I stepped down to my friend Thomas's. A great part of the country side had already assembled there. Thomas's well brushed up bigging was full even to overflowing—chairs, stools, trunks and bed were all in requisition. "Come awa' Dominic, we've just been waiting for the Minister and you; d'ye no ken what's become o' his Reverence, we thought ye wad hae ta'en him doon the way wi' you—Oh! here he comes; stan' aside awee Saunders till I get the arm-chair set for the Minister."—The arm-chair was accordingly placed in a conspicuous station in front, and soon occupied by the venerable figure of Mr. Langtext. After various salutations had taken place, and the Minister had congratulated the Gudewife on her recovery, the ceremony was commenced. There are perhaps few sights more interesting, or calculated to call up deeper reflections in the mind, than the simple rite of Baptism—A human being, as yet feeble and helpless, just launched into a world of trial and suffering—admitted within the pale of christianity, and henceforth becoming a candidate for the prize of immortality—with

the vows and obligations entered into on its behalf by the author of its being—are circumstances which carry an awe and reverence along with them. The form as practised in the Presbyterian Church is short and simple. The opening prayer was first given by the Clergyman: then one of the *maiden cummers*, or god-mothers, in this case an interesting girl of about fourteen years of age, took the infant from the capacious lap of the *howdie*, who all the time had been at great pains suppressing its cries and lulling it to sleep, and delivered it into the hands of the father; not without an air of ceremony and importance, which shewed that the office, in her eyes, was an affair of the utmost consequence. After a few questions were put and answered, the water was sprinkled on the child's forehead—the other maiden returned it to its nurse, and the whole closed with another prayer or blessing. This important matter being got over, the banquet followed. It would be a difficult matter to determine whether it could be called a breakfast, dinner, tea, or supper; suffice it to say, it was a combination of all these together. Tea, ale, bread, beef, dried fish thickly overlaid with mustard, cheese, &c. &c. lay piled, heaps above heaps, on the capacious board. Dire was the hubbub and noise, the smacking of lips and slow rolling of the jaws, as dish after dish of eatables disappeared like the vanishing of snow before the warm sunbeams: or, to improve the simile, like a trough of bran pottage before a pack of hungry foxhounds. At last, however, the business of eating was finished, and the no less important one of drinking commenced—strong ale frothed in the wooden quaichs, and punch steamed in the capacious

brimmers. The health of the young gentleman, for the child was of that sex, was drunk with many wishes for his well-being, long life, happiness, prosperity, and all those anticipated boons which a breath can so easily furnish. By degrees the conversation took a miscellaneous turn. Cattle, horses, ploughs, carts, yarn, linen, &c. were the subjects of talk in their turns, as the smith, cartwright, or weaver, led off the topics of conversation. I happened to be placed near David Teuchbody, a venerable elder of the church. He was a man much respected by the parish, and indeed on all occasions of importance was the oracle of the country around. He was dressed in a coat of hodden grey of the good old broad cut, with capacious buttons of black horn; his breeches were of the same, over which were drawn the long ribbed *boot hose*, which were then the fashion; his broad bonnet might be distinguished from all the others, as it hung on a pin behind the door, by the red rim round the bottom being covered with a piece of black silk, the work of his neat-handed youngest daughter. His white locks were shaded from his forehead and waved in long curls behind, displaying a countenance marked with all that sedateness, shrewdness, and at the same time thoughtful and benignant air so peculiar to the Scottish peasants. Honest David knew nothing of the learning and subtleties of the schools; yet he had that native sagacity and intuitive knowledge, which is much better for all the ordinary concerns of life. The Bible had been his constant companion from his boy-hood upward; he was intimately acquainted with every page and passage of that sacred volume, deeply versed in "revelation, fate and foreknow-

ledge"—but other books or other studies had rarely come within his reach. When he attempted to stretch farther he wandered in darkness and uncertainty, yet even then you might have perceived the native vigour and powerful efforts of a strong mind. The Elder and I (unfortunately for me) got into a discussion on astronomical subjects. Had I attempted to parry off his frequent questions by evasive answers, and given common place explanations instead of wielding a long host of technical phrases, it would have been a death blow to my future fame and importance in the eyes of my auditors. To them not to be dogmatical is to be thought ignorant; and to hesitate or be silent is, in their eyes, to be vanquished. I stood then in the situation of a combatant in a public arena before an audience, where defeat would have been disgrace, and victory the highest recommendation in the way of my vocation. We were talking of the revolutions of the planetary system: the Elder pushed on and I defended—we got warm in the debate, and at last I was obliged to maintain with authority that the sun remained stationary, the centre of the system, and that the earth revolved round him. "Na, na, Dominie, ye may be gude at the figuring, I winna deny, and naebody can beat you at the pen; I have seen you measuring the height o' the kirk bell too, without ever being up at it, in a wonnerfu' manner; but dinna tell me sic stories as that the yearth runs roon the sun, it is against scripture, man, an' it's heathenish to think o' it." "But," returned I, "great men and philosophers, with their improvements in science, have demonstrated the matter beyond a doubt; and could you follow me through the several problems I could convince you of it according to the Principia of Newton." "I am

for nane o' your *Flosophers*, I stan' by the book itsel', does na it say that the sun stood still in the heavens, noo what for would it be said it stood *still* if it was na its usual way to go roon the yearth? Besides we have it in anither place, that the sun rises in the east and goes on his journey towards the wast; and in many mair passages, the which I could bring up to your remembrance, but I will refer it to the Minister, if he says it is sae I'se be satisfied." The minister was accordingly appealed to; and he was in as great a perplexity as I could possibly be. To decide against his own conviction was what he could not think of, to give it decidedly against the hints in scripture would have been out of place and out of character as he was then situated: the good man, therefore, gave a somewhat evasive answer and the subject was quashed; amid the temporary silence which ensued until another topic was broached, I could hear Janet Langchin whisper to her neighbour in the corner that "she dooted na the Dominie could amaist puzzle the Minister himsel'." By this time the gude-wives, inspired by the good cheer, became uncommonly loquacious, and loud in topics of country scandal, or domestic management; but the evening was getting late, and the Minister and I rose to go home. Our example was followed by the greater part of the company, except a few choice spirits and particular friends who remained to see the matter out. As each of those more immediately concerned retired they shook hands with the old *Cummer Wife*, who sat with an assumed air of great importance in the corner, and left with her a small remembrance, which she slyly huddled into her lap, apparently with amazing satisfaction.

ROMANTIC AND CLASSICAL FICTION.

THE Classical Fictions of Greece and Rome have had such a charm for the learned in all ages, that they have ever been held up as the standards of poetical excellence. But after the Roman territories had fallen into the hands of the Barbarous nations of the North, the occult rituals of Popery, and the practice, then so prevalent, of knight errantry, produced and fostered those monstrous fables which for many ages entertained the bulk of mankind. When a hair-brained knight had travelled in quest of adventures into lands, around which ignorance had cast a veil of darkness, no wonder that he should on his return, in order to excuse his cowardice, or to magnify his courage, tell his credulous countrymen of enchanted palaces and haunted woods, 'of haggard shapes and fiendish spells.' This sort of fiction differs from that of the ancients, in keeping less within the bounds of probability, and in sometimes running directly in opposition to the known laws of nature; stories the most unreasonable and absurd are admitted and sought after; whether they be agreeable or not is never inquired, it is sufficient if they are fitted to astonish and confound.

Romance may be compared to a fantastic edifice shooting continually into grotesque pinnacles, and whose top, wild and irregular in itself, appears still more distorted by the clouds with which it is surrounded. While Classical Fiction resembles an elegant structure, whose parts are all put together on a regular plan, and whose ornaments are conducive to the general convenience, or rise naturally from the places they are intended to adorn.

The beauties of Romance are all exposed to us at one view, and hence in the second reading of a work of this kind there can be little enjoyment. But the beauties of classical authors, though more numerous, are of a less ostentatious kind, and many of them cannot be discovered without considerable labour, so that the search for them affords a pleasant and improving exercise for the mind, and every reading discovers some beauty unobserved before.

The effect of Parody likewise shews the superiority of classical fable. Homer and Virgil have frequently been ridiculed by witty writers, but the consequence has ever been disgrace to those who attempted their ruin; whereas Cervantes and Butler have so completely succeeded in their attacks upon Romance, that they have caused those very fictions, which were formerly the delight of courts and the admiration of the world, to dwindle into childish tales and insignificant absurdity. Writers however of the greatest genius are still, from their early acquaintance with these stories, apt to fall into fictions of the same kind, as might be illustrated by several instances from the most popular writer of the age. But in the hands of such a genius, their close connection with the story, and the important circumstances dependent on them, have rendered them, like spires in a beautiful city, conspicuous and graceful ornaments to his works. R. Y.

We have received from a Correspondent the following extract from an old MS. in his possession, with a request that it might be published. The MS. though much mutilated, we are told, is of considerable length, and this is only a foretaste of what is to follow.

*THE CAIRNEY JOURNAL.**

WRITTEN ABOUT THE YEAR 1728.

* * * * *

For one hearer he has, they have a hunder,
Sae his great parish does him no way cumber.

At length cam on the visitation day,
When now deep snaw amaiist blocks up the way,
Yet over Devron cam good Mr. Scroggie,
Just like himsel the Parson o' Stra'boggie;
An' Meyan he brought o'er the man o' Keith,
Wha tells the truth, just like the wife o' Beith:
An' down cam Glass, to shaw he had guid will
To serve his friend either in good or ill.

But now we see how ——'s conscience goes.
Our Pastor he did not on us impose;
But kept his hands as from forbidden bread,
And would not lay them on our Pastor's head.
Then Hugh began to pray wi' great concern
That his guid-son might be fund a guid bairn,
An' having done, wi a fley'd heart an' sair,
The man o' Keith he bade to take the chair
Botarie an' the whigs that day they were na few,
I wat they thought them an unruly crew.
The Jacobits they furth their papers draw,
An' to the moderator did them shaw:
Clark Watt was bidden read them out fu'scen,
An this the sum o' what they did contain

* The Cairney journal, is an account of the disputed settlement of a Mr. Ramsey, as clergyman of that parish. It is given verbatim from the original MS. which has suffered much by age, several leaves being lost; and some part of what remains scarcely legible.

The Jacobit's Paper.

We a' underwriters, men o' knowledge,
 Fouk o' Great Cairney, bred at Rivan Colledge;
 Wi bi thir presents solemlie declare,
 That wi Mess John we weel contented are,
 He lectures, preaches, baptizes, an' marries,
 Examines, visits families, miscarries
 In naething in our sight; nor e'er gaes wrang,
 Nor hides frae us till for him we think lang;
 Therefor we beg the Reverend Presbytrie
 Wad let Mess John an' us thegither be.

Sic Subscritur ARDONALL.

i. e. ARIETIS ONUS ALLEVO.

Our Pastor's allies now were vera vokie,
 To see sae mony fouk stand by their Jokie.
 The like before, I trow, was never seen,
 For a whig minister, episcopals keen,
 An' papists too, wha are sae slie a pack,
 Will whigrie fa' and poprie at her back.
 Fouk wad e'en think the Cairnie whigs were mad,
 To gie in libels on sae guid a lad,
 That has made friens unto the government
 A number wha before were ill content:
 This is the greatest protick e'er he played,
 Unto the king he sud be chaplain made;
 But Cairnie whigs they think na this way tie,
 As by their paper fouk may plainly see.

The Whigs Representation of their Minister.

We a' Whigs o' Cairnie do complain,
 That we a numscull minister maintain,

Wha's nae way fit to hae a pastor's charge,
 Gross nonsense from the poupit he does bearge,
 He looks bumbazed, as if wrang i' the noddle,
 There's very few that care for him a bodle.
 He in his common converse aft times blunders,
 For gospel truths, he proticks tells and wonders ;
 When for his flock he sud baith watch an' pray,
 He gracelesslie forgets the Sabbath-day,
 An' bragg'd fu' weel he had preach'd aff o' han',
 Tho' of his craft he never will hae can :
 An' tho' the ministerial wark be great,
 He puts it by even at an easy rate ;
 An' seldom studies till the Sabbath-day,
 An' then he kensna when to praise or pray.
 Whene'er he gangs to visit the sick fouk,
 He tells the same tale ower just like the gowk ;
 An' now that he has got a wife fell braw,
 Tho' wi' anither she ran to Brimha :
 His marriage wark a while has stap'd his mouth,
 For which he is lampoon'd throw north an' south.
 At solemn times, he did baith sleep an' snore
 Even in the kirk, not heeding whom before ;
 An' when some fouk were curious, and content
 To speak wi' him afore the Sacrament,
 Ye ne'er heard tell o' sic a graceless corse,
 A' that he spak' o' was bout nowt an' horse,
 Did not examine them, nor help their cares,
 But sent them hame griev'd wi' their doubts and fears :
 Tokens to ithers he did freely give,
 Ne'er asking them before how they did live.
 In families whare he was night and day,
 He no sae muckle as call'd them anes to pray.
 The Tories an' the Papists ay grow mair,
 But our sma' number dayly does impair ;
 A' proselytes Scot wad mak ane by ane,
 But till dooms-day our pastor he'l mak nane.
 Nonjuran ministers and Papists tee,

Did influence the men wha for him be,
 Guid neighbourhood is e'en some ither drift,
 For Meyan's cause to gie a neighbour lift.
 There is a man wha has become o' new
 Our Pastor's frien', an' sticks to him like glue,
 An' yet this man few days afore had said,
 That his wheel-barrow might as weel be made
 A minister, as him wha now we had.
 By this the Rev'rend Presbyt'ry now sees,
 They mean to draw the blear down o'er our eyes;
 An' mair out ower the Reverend Presbyt'ry,
 Whan they imposed Mess John on our Cairnie,
 To place him here a wadna gie consent,
 For his unfitness some o' them weel kent.
 We hope their consciences will smite them now,
 An' tak him frae's since here nae guid he'l do,
 An' lat him gang whare he may usefu' be,
 We beg they act now conscientiouslie.—

Sic Subscriber BOTERIE.

i. e. Bovem Terere.

(To be Continued.)

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. XVIII.

Monday, 22d July, 1822.

CHARACTER OF THE CHEVALIER
ST. GEORGE,

The last of the Stuarts.

THERE is something in tracing the actions and characters of those men whose destinies have led them to act a higher part, and occupy a pre-eminent station among their fellow beings, which is always calculated to excite a peculiar degree of interest. To behold monarchs in the height of their power and in the full exercise of their authority, surrounded by the pomp and splendour of royalty, is an imposing view of earthly grandeur; but to trace the descendants of a long race of kings hurled from the throne of their ancestors, reduced to the situation of private individuals, and at last sinking to oblivion, "no race of their succeeding," affords a melancholy comment on the instability of human greatness. The period has now arrived when the minds of men have become sufficiently impartial to form a true estimate of the character

of the ill-fated Charles Edward Stuart. The passions and prejudices of party have gone down to the dust along with the adherents of both houses. A new race have succeeded under a dynasty common to both, and although some faint feelings and recollections may still linger in the bosoms of a few, yet the facts being now, as it were, reflected by the glass of history, can be viewed without relation to party or personal consideration.

In estimating the character of the Chevalier we must take into consideration the situation in which he was placed, and the mode of education under which his mind was formed. Early impressed with the idea that his family were unjustly deprived of their lawful rights, and that the throne possessed by usurpers, and held by concessions degrading to the dignity of sovereignty, was by divine right his own, his principle aim was directed towards the regaining his inheritance. In his eyes to be less than a king was to be nothing. With that prevailing idea of self-estimation which few are without, he no doubt imagined that under his own government his subjects would be happier and more contented than under another.* In this view his attempt in Scotland might seem, to his mind, justifiable and meritorious, although to others it appeared rash and unnecessary. His intellect was not of that cast which would entitle him to the character of a great man. He had a quick apprehension,† but his judgment was not of that powerful and compre-

* See Journal of his escape from Scotland.

† Dr. King's Anecdotes of his own Times.

hensive nature, nor his knowledge of mankind sufficiently penetrating, to enable him to succeed in an enterprise of difficulty and importance. He did not see through the selfish policy of France until he had gone too far to recede; and he was completely deceived in the character of the English Jacobites, who were fonder of speculation than of action—who amused him with professions and promises, but when put to the test deferred putting these in practice. He had all the generous ardour of youth, with a strong appetite for military glory. His pleasing address gained the hearts of the Highland Clans; and his adopting the national costume, imitating the national manners, and sharing all the hardships and privations of the camp and field, secured their affection. He displayed bravery, magnanimity, and a generous forbearance in his victories; persevering fortitude and a contempt of personal danger in his miraculous escape. After his return to France, and when he had experienced how little reliance is to be placed in royal friendship, debased and influenced by the prostituted views of state policy, he displaced a dignified resentment, not, however, unmixed with an obstinacy of disposition and pertinacity of purpose which seemed to have been hereditary in his family. During the latter part of his life when all hopes of royalty had been abandoned, when he had no aim nor pursuit in view—his hopes disappointed—his proud heart humbled, and a dependant on the bounty of others, having little taste for the nobler exercises of the mind, he sunk into a state of sensual indulgence and degradation, which cast a gloom of darkness over his latter years;

until at last he sunk to the grave unnoticed and unregarded. In his person* he was tall and well made; he had handsome features and good eyes; but he was not particularly remarkable for that polish and dignity of manner which would bespeak royalty. In fine, had he been born a private man he might have proved a respectable member of society, but would never have risen to eminence through his own abilities. Had fortune set him on the throne he might have been an amiable, though not a great monarch; but with his religious and political principles, the possession of which was in his case rather a misfortune than fault, it is providential for the cause of religious and civil liberty that his claim did not prove successful.

C.

* Dr King:

Introduction of the new Psalmody among the Knockbreans.

Oh, qualis firy fary fuit! namque alteri nemo
 Ne vel footbriddum yerdæ yieldare volebat.

Polemio-middinia.

IT was, I think, about the year 1785 when a change of Psalmody was introduced into many of the parishes of Scotland. I had been then about two years schoolmaster of Knockbrae, having succeeded the learned and worthy Mr John Thumpbottom, than whom there never was a person more skilled in Mair's Introduction, a book which he regarded as one of the most splendid monuments of human genius. So high, indeed, was his opinion of the merits of this elementary work that he used to confirm his promises by appealing to the memory of the mighty Mair, an oath which was frequently in his mouth, and especially when he was in his cups, or in a state of immortality, as he called it, which was often the case, for he was a man of a thirsty temperament of body. It is said, however, that Clarke's Introduction puzzled him a little, and that he was wont to say "Clarkey is a dour beuk." But surely it is beseeming in me to speak with diffidence on a point which so materially affects the honour of my worthy predecessor. I am rather inclined to attribute this *fama clamosa* to the malice of the schoolmaster of Ronalbell, whom he used to quiz most unmercifully for having mispronounced, or rather changed, the word *gentle*' into '*genteel*' when giving out the line,

'Gentle and easy is my yoke.'

“Tak aff your dram, Dominie o’ Ronalbell, like a gentleman, its nae *genteel* to leave ony in the glass—yoke to it lad.” This is a specimen of the way he used to torment his brother. He could run changes on this line which were really wonderful, and which, in my opinion, exceed the astonishing powers of the Rev. Mr. Rothercruik, who is said to have preached for thirty years with three sermons, by changing the texts and compounding and mixing them together. Mr. R. was well skilled in the arithmetical rules called alternation and progression, and which we would advise every son of the church most carefully to study.

We have digressed, but our motive is worthy of commendation. “That man,” says Dr. Johnson, “is little to be envied who will not step aside to contemplate the worth of Mr. Thumpbottom, or whose heart has never been warmed by the *spirit* that animated the Dominie of Knockbrae.”†

The year —85, as mentioned above, is one that will always hold a prominent place in parish annals. In this was begun, most inauspiciously to be sure, but at last carried with complete success, a change which created a greater sensation in many of our country parishes than changes of minsters ever did in the political world. We can hardly give any satisfactory reason why the old tunes were so unexpectedly thrust off the stage or why a measure which was so generally disagreeable should have been so suddenly proposed, and pertinaciously persever-

† See ‘Journey to the Hebrides,’ a new edition from the Elgin press.

ed in. The new tunes had few claims to superiority over their predecessors. There was a pathos and simplicity in the old music that went directly to the heart: they were the aspirations of pious spirits too intensely ardent 'in hymning the great Creator' to be much taken up with art or execution. They were associated in the minds of the people with all that is dignified in patient suffering, for martyrs had chaunted them—as holy in family devotion, for their infant mouths had been taught to lispen them—as beautiful in public worship, for their Sabbath bells had regularly summoned them to their lowly temple, and to begin and to conclude the service of the sacred day with these strains of simple melody. If we consider how slowly are innovations of almost every kind effected, and especially among the illiterate, when any part of religion is the subject of such innovations, we need not wonder that the Knockbreans and other parishes made so firm a stand and fought so desperately in behalf of their beloved psalmody. The people too were firmly persuaded that the old tunes had been composed by the Hebrew king, the sweet singer of Israel; and that as the Psalms were written by inspiration, there could be no doubt of their having been so likewise. It required a stout heart and a man firm of nerve to make an incursion into the territory of prejudices so strongly entrenched on every side; and I, who was then precenter, do most candidly confess that, during the whole of the week previous to the first attempt, my feelings were similar to those which we may suppose a soldier experiences when he enters the field of battle for the first time. However, like a cautious general I took care that my forces should

be well trained and ready for the onset: having selected a number of young men whose prejudices were easily overcome, and who had been well exercised in the new psalmody for some months before. Knockie the Sexton, who was a strong-lunged knave, and cared little for tunes of any kind except drinking songs and glees, was chosen as a sort of aid-de-camp. The old man had a good ear although age had broken his voice a little; and it was planned that in case my nerves, which were then in a weak state from too intense an application to the logic of the schoolmen, should not be able to endure the jarring conflict of sounds, the Sexton should take upon him the command. "We'll hae a teach business o't the morn I fear," said the grave-digger after we had finished our last practising lesson, "for there has been a terrible onslaught among the raw eggs these aught days past, they are swallowing whole girnels o' them to make their craigs clear, and to free their lungs o' every clot and obstruction that might mar the music o' their chan-ters. As I was passing Elspet Groandeeep's door the ither night, I was amaist deafened by a loud skirlin noise which by a' the world resembled the skreagh o' the water kelpie that was heard booming frae out the hole o' Slag-innan, about the time that ill Willie drowned his servant lass in the mill dam. I peeped in at the key hole, and hegh, Sirs, what thänk you did I see:—naething mair or less than Elspet and about twenty of her cronies, wi' an unspeakable power o' eggs on the table, and the whole floor deluged with a multitude of shells. As I am a sinner, and a great ane, as the minister, honest man, says, it was the prime of fun to hear the rout they made.

Elspet was standing in a meal bōwey, like you in your precenting desk, learned Sir, and really she gave out the line wi' a pith of expression that shewed that it was nae apprentice wark wi' her. You must ken that they hae their practeesings as well as oursells, and by dint o' lang exercise they can pitch a tune even at the highest note o' Bangor as easily as I could pitch the skulls of a score of poets, who are light-headed cattle, from the bottom of a sax foot grave. I thought that my lungs would hae split wi' doon right laughing. But as the proverb justly observes, 'ilka dog has his day:' my certy! there was an awfuisome conclusion put to my mirth. For Mrs. M'Glashan having got a glimpse o' me, by some means or other stole out by the back door and let fly at me a great handfu' o' glar, which came whizzin thro' the air like the tail of a comet, and gave me such a skelp on the gash that it almost dumfounded me.—“And tak ye that,” said the rudas limmer, “ye auld doited bethrel, and it will help you to slur London new, and your ither Babylonish strathspeys; and you may tell that sticket stibler body the Dominie (pardon me, Sir, for repeating the menseless hoyden's words) that if he came within the clenches of my ten commandements, that I'll gar him look as bleat as he did the day that Elder Teuchbody proved to the conviction of every one at the last meeting, that Gamaliel was a mountain, altho' that stupid allegory would insist that a hill was a mortal man—the papistical slaver that he is!

“Knockie is nat erroneous in the exhibition which he hath protruded of the rebellious spirit that is afloat in the

sensoriums of the rural community; against the superinduction of the novel psalmody canticles," said John MacInnes, whose 'words of learned sound' which he had got by constantly reading Bailey's Dictionary, often set the villagers a gaping with wonder. This book he had read through ten times: he said that it was a learned work but rather unconnected. "I know too from physical experiment," continued he, "that Mrs. M'Glashan is a female of a most warlike and belligerent disposition.—She cohabited in the manse as my fellow-servant for the space of a week, and we found that she is a *quan-suffi* to illuminate the whole parish with an incendiary conflagration. With regard to the eggs Knockie's averments are quite voracious and true—there has been a great defalcation of them for some hebdomadal's preterite tense, and I have no dubitation but that the generation of fools will soon suffer an extermination." "Marry, Jock, and there will be nae fear o' that," said Knockie, to whom the last sentence alone was intelligible—and indeed few could understand so quaint a misapplication of words. X.

(To be Continued)

LINES

*Written on a visit to the FIELD of CULLODEN,
after an exile in France. A. D. 1764.*

Behold again the well remember'd plain—
Yet O how different from that fatal day!
The sun shines calm o'er the green heaps of slain,
Where gleam'd the host's magnificent array.

Methinks I see the polish'd lances glare,
The glitt'ring standards waving in the wind;
I hear the sounding Pibroch's martial air
Arouse to glory's deeds the ardent mind.

The plaided warriors stand sedate and stern;
Awhile they pause, collected in their might—
Then with a shout, which rock and vale return,
They rush like untam'd lions to the fight!

I see the tide of battle round me close;
This way and that, th' opposing hosts rush on:
I hear the yelling shouts of ruthless foes;
And on my ear comes friendship's dying groan.

But hark! what chilling sounds from yonder wing—
Route and confusion reigns, and wild uproar;
The flying troops the dreadful tidings bring—
The day, the day is lost—and all is o'er.

Mark how He looks, the leader of the host!
See how his breast heaves with the smother'd groan,
A throne and kingdom in one moment lost:
Long cherish'd hopes of years for ever gone!

As urged reluctant from th' ensanguin'd plain,
 He paus'd, and to the carnage turn'd his eye;
 The round drops course adown his cheek like rain—
 "O that this heart would break, and I could die!"—

Would we had died in glory's field that day!
 Then had the woes of after years been spared—
 But hush Remembrance—turn we now away,
 The scene too much hath Memory's fastness bared.

R. JOHNSTON, PRINTER, ELGIN.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. XIX.

Monday, 29th July, 1822.

INTRODUCTION of the NEW PSALMODY.

(Continued from page 214.)

Fiume, ch' arbori insieme, e case svella;
Folgore, che le torri abbatta, ed arda;
Terremoto, che'l mondo empia d'orrore,
Son picciole Sembianze al suo furore.

Gerusalemme Liberata, C. 9. 23

The torrent ruining in its mad career
Both trees and houses; the fierce lightning's wrath
That prostrates and inflames the lofty towers;
The earthquake that alarms a guilty world;
Are children's play, to Elspet Groandeepe's rage.

MS. translation in the Museum of T. Spiers, Esq. Elgin.

I KNEW indeed that the proposed change had given great offence, but I never dreamed that the Knockbrians meant to carry their displeasure to such a length. When I had dismissed my coadjutors I stepped over to the Manse to communicate to Mr. Langtext the intelligence

of the "rebellious spirit that was afloat in the sensoria of the rural community," as John M'Innes termed it, and to devise with his Reverence some method of preventing the unbecoming scenes with which the decorum of the church was so evidently threatened. I had soon an experimental proof of this radical spirit of opposition, for while on my way to the manse my ears were suddenly assailed by a loud torrent of angry words, and lifting up my eyes, I found that they proceeded from the enraged lips of Elspet Groandecp. She was seated on a bank by the side of the road that leads from the village of Balnain to the manse, and as I drew near she arose and thus addressed me:—"Approach ye limb o' Sathan—ye firebrand—ye troubler of the shorn lambs of innocence: and I, though frail, by reason of the many days that hae bleached my black locks with the grey of the hodden, will nevertheless be strengthened to drive this tether stick through the spine bane o' the very saul of you. Ye man o' sin—ye Korah—ye Balaam—ye Daeg—ye Rabshakah: are ye to put your daring hands to the Book and to tear out the tunes that David sang? Are ye to force us to pollute our lips wi' the filthy ballad-meessic o' man's invention? Na! this is waur than when the scarlet harlot o' popery, whose cup is abomination, did try to cram down our craigs, will we nill we, their kists o' whistles, whase bummin would hae drowned the screech o' Parkie, the town's bellman o' Elgin. For the sin in that case would hae lighted on the organ: but you, ye thief o' sermons, whilk are made up o' as many patches as my bed-eover, would try to make us the slaughterers of our ain peace and consciences. By the spirit of

my brave Grand Gatcher, that fell fighting for the covenant on the plains of Auldearn, in sixteen hundred forty and five, it shall not be sae. And while I have lungs and hands, baith shall be lifted up to bear testimony against the crying iniquity that is brooding upon, and blucing and blackening the heather hills of Knockbrae."

With these words the angry enthusiast made a pass at me with the formidable tetherstick, which at my approach she had been in the act of fixing in the ground, but the cow being alarmed by the vehemence of her gesture started back with a jerk so sudden and unexpected, that she pulled the old woman with violence to the ground. I immediately ran to her assistance, forgetting her abusive language in my eagerness to bring her relief:

"————— nullum memorabile nomen
Feminea in poena est, nec habet victoria laudem,"

muttered I, as I raised her up; for being infected with the common disease of schoolmasters, I was fond of quoting the classics on all occasions. But this deed of charity tended only to exasperate her the more, and my unseasonable parade of learning met with a just recompence. "Aroint the warlock," exclaimed she, "wi' your sinfu' words of Dutch: think you to bewitch me as you hae done my cow, wha was never kent to skirt and flog as she is doing at this present moment. Your cantrips are kent to a' the parish since the time that ye pretended to drive awa' the witches from Jamie Ardoch's calves, and forced the poor man who is gifted with a most plentiful lack of understanding, to remove the binwood

and the rawin tree frae aff their necks, although these powerfu' herbs would have been the means of preserving them from the deevilrie of Tibby Tillychloch, and ithers of the infernal sisterhood—may I be preserved from their snairs! But the brutes a' died, as might hae been expected, (for the fox is but a cumstrum guardian to chickens,) and horse hair and rusty nails were found in their moniplies—a blood-freezing spectacle for mortal eyes to look upon! But I am proof against your skill, man, and that you ken fu' weel: for I sained mysel thrice this morning before I had seen the face o' man, or the staff o' life had passed my gizzard. Try your skill, you disciple of Sir Robert of Gordonstown, whose charioting and horsing in flames o' fire over the loch o' Spynie will land him in the pit o' Tobat—try your art, and see if your Latin and Dutch will prevail against the virtues o' this rantree and binwood, whilk had I fixed to the horns of my douce and sagacious crummock, she would not now be flinging and glowering like ane demented, or like the bethrel Knoekie when he shakes his bowed houghs to the sound of Rab Murray's creaking cat gut."

"What, Elspet, said I, you surely don't believe that I am in the service of the powers of darkness. There are no witches, you foolish woman."

"You hae lied and blasphemed and abused wi' ae breath, ye murderer of psalm tunes," said she, with increasing fury, "and woman too! the ill scrapit tongue o' you! I'm Mrs. Elspet Groandeeep, relick o' the defunct Maister Jedediah Groandeeep, who was but ten removes from the family o' the lairds of Cleughenandoighterchy-

loch, and by no other name shall I be called, you doup-skelper. But letting that pass at present, for what can we expect from brocks but a poosioning flavour, you say there are no witches, but the Book says something else, Dominie; and I have heard my father, who was a greater scholar than yoursel, you misleard loon, explain and expound how that there are acts of our Scots parliament against witches, that were made by wiser heads than your's, (woman too wi' a weengeance!) And as you are a divine, may we be keepit frae sic a breed o' them as you seem to be, you may have heard in the course of your readings of a forebear of your ain that dwalt at Endor—so there's law and Scripture for you. Besides, man—I see you are wondering at my lear—the first Jamie o' England wrote a book on the same subject, which I read in the days of my youth to my great edification, it is called *Douminology; and it is weel named, for the whole of you are burned with ae iron—it is the only good the papistical Stuarts ever did to mankind. And lastly, in the last place, by way of application, there is anither book—deny witches noo if you can, and call me woman again if you dare—there is anither work wrote by a Professor Sinclair of Glasgow, intituled “Satan's invisible world displayed.” which I would exhort you to peruse that you may see the end of those that league themselves wi' the enemy, and hold dalliance wi' witches or warlocks, or ghosts, or hobgoblins, or water-kelpies, or——.”

“Hold, hold, Elspet, interrupted I, enough of such:

* See King James' Treatise on Demonology.

nonsense, but explain why you are pleased to rank me among these imps of superstition."

"Taking no notice at present," said she "of your not having the breeding to put Mistress before Elspet, I would tell you, you ill-mannered goat, that there's Highland blood in the veins of you—you spier the way you ken weel enough. I fear you not, Sir, smell that binwood and tremble. But as it would gratify you to be taudid why you are supposed to be nae that canny, as it wur, you may lend your ear and listen to proof. It is about a twalmonth frae this time when my Crummock, see yonder how she flytes, was giving fourteen pints o' milk daily, I was milking her ae day when ye happened to come by wi' a book in your hand, and you cam straight before the cow, and you cast an ill e'e upon her, muttering some hell-words about 'novum lac'—may I be forgiven for taking such language between my lips—and, Oh! your words were verified wi' a wengeance, for there was a lack sic as I hope never again to witness. I had a guess o' wha was the occasion o' a' this, but in order to be sure I took the goodman's breeks—they are useless noo, for the dear man's at his rest—and *I put a leg on each o' Crummock's horns, and allowed her to take her ain will and to go where she pleased, when aff she darted like an arrow, nor did she stop till she came directly opposite to your door, whilk was proof that you were the cause of her evil; and you, fearing the consequence to your character, such as it is, restored the brute-beast her milk; and if you wish not to be made a public example,

* We can assure our readers that this experiment has been frequently made by the Knockbreans in cases of this kind.

I would advise you now to give back to the animal her usual reason and understanding, and to take your cursed glamour aff her een."

"My good woman—Mrs. Elspet, I mean, if you would not scream in that manner your cow would soon be more reasonable than yourself. It would be useless to attempt to convince you of the absurdity of such superstitions, therefore I leave you. With regard to the new tunes which are to be introduced to-morrow, and of which I hear you are to be a principal opposer, I would warn you of the danger of such an attempt, which will be disgraceful in itself, and will tend to no good purpose. Good day, Mrs. Elspet Groandeeep, relick of the defunct Mr. Jedediah Groandeeep." With this I turned away from my fair antagonist, and directed by steps towards the manse. But Elspet was not yet pleased to desist from abusing, and raising herself on the bank on which she had been sitting, she extended her withered arms like a prophetic Sybil, when goaded on by the *oistros*, her breast laboured with the violence of conflicting emotions, and having opened the barrier of her tongue, she poured forth her soul in lamentation. "Ohon! and alas! and waes me, a dark cloud hath gathered round my inner-man, and sorrow hath entered thereunto, and will dwell therein, for our tunes are to be taken from us. Oh, for the pith of my great ancestor, whose blood was shed at Auldearn; or for the might of his no less valiant brother, who followed the persecuted ones to the foreign land called the Pentland hills, when the destroyer, under the shape of Dalziel of Binns, was permitted to flaff his

wings and to crow on the middenstead of carnal victory, and to persecute, and to cut, and to kill: then would that wizzard the Dominic, whose goings forth at present are to destruction, hae kent to his woeful experience that Mrs. Elspet Groandeeep inheriteth the spirit of her fathers.—Ou Crummock, is that you! so you hae come to yoursel again, and the warlock hath taken aff his enchantments.”

(*To be Continued.*)

CAMERON of LOCHIEL.

ALMOST all the writers who have touched on the subject, agree in commending the amiable disposition, disinterested virtues, and personal bravery of this faithful adherent of the Chevalier St. George. When the latter arrived at Kinloch Moidart, with only seven attendants, bent upon the romantic enterprise of regaining the throne of his ancestors, Lochiel, foreseeing the utter hopelessness of the undertaking, endeavoured to persuade him from the attempt, and remained for a considerable time in doubt and hesitation. But at last the gentleness of his nature yielding to the earnest entreaties of Charles, and influenced by the deep and hereditary attachment which he himself bore towards the exiled family, in an evil hour he embarked in an enterprise which proved the ruin of his house, and the source of all his misfortunes in after years. When the standard of the Chevalier was first displayed, it is well known with what eagerness the greater number of the Highland Clans assembled around it. Taught from the nature of their own feudal government to hold hereditary right and succession in a sort of

sacred reverence, and little acquainted with the views and purposes of political expediency, they were more inclined to favour the claims of their supposed rightful sovereign, and to range them under the banner of the lineal descendant of a race of kings, whom their ancestors were wont to serve and obey. The chiefs too had become jealous of a government which had been wisely endeavouring to controul the undue influence which the ancient feudal rights, vested in individuals—often dangerous to the peace of the community, and subversive of the necessary authority of the sovereign. The spirit of party likewise handed down from father to son, and rather fostered and increased, than chilled from the necessity of concealment—the long delayed hopes of disappointed individuals—the romantic nature of the cause, and that contagious enthusiasm, which when it once bursts forth among the multitude, inflames the passions of men and subdues their judgment.—All these combined circumstances impelled numbers to join an attempt, which, in their more dispassionate moments, they must have seen to be impracticable. Lochiel accompanied the Prince in all his progress—was admitted to a share in his councils—always held a particular station in the field—and is said to have possessed the affection and confidence of his master to a greater degree than any of the others. He was wounded in both legs while leading on his clan at the battle of Culloden : after that unfortunate day he lurked for a considerable time among his native mountains, attended by his two brothers and a few of his remaining followers, undergoing great hardships, and often in imminent danger of being discovered, until at last he made

his escape in a vessel to France. There, having obtained a commission in the French army, he lived a perpetual exile from his native country. It is mentioned* in a late interesting work on the Highlands, in order to illustrate the attachment of the clans to their chief, that, in the year 1776, the son of Lochiel, after his father's death, having returned from France, the followers of his father's family, though under another master, raised 120 men for a company to him in the 71st Regiment. C.

* Col. Stewart's Sketches of Highland Regiments.

THE CAIRNIE JOURNAL.

Continued from page 204.

Whan this was read, they a' began to hum,
 An' sum o' them ca'd ane anither scum ;
 The Jacobites did crouselly crack this day,
 Wha was sac keen for Presbytrie as they.
 Than to the squeel chaumer the Presbytrie
 Betook themsels, for cauld an' privacie ;
 They argued back an' fore, but couldna gree
 Amang themsels, how things sud ended be ;
 Therefore they a' thought fit for to delay
 Puir whigs their answer till anither day ;
 That same day fortnight, they did a' agree
 Agen to haud anither Presbytrie ;
 But i' the mean time, Ramsay is allowed
 To preach till then, as gin he war red wood ;
 Glass, Steinson, an' his ain guid father Hugh,
 They ordred this, e'en by a pirleque ;
 But Keith, an' Scrogie, they dissentit baith
 To disobey the Synod, they war leath,
 Wha had appointit that the Presbytrie

Sud lat him preach, as they guid cause sud see ;
 But they wha gart him preach will wis, I fear
 That he had restit him this hauf a year.
 The Presbytrie rose up whan they had pray'd,
 To tak their dinner an' guid need they had.
 The Gentle Jacks war a' invited syne,
 In wi' Reverant Presbytrie to dine ;
 But the puir whigs, war letten gang their wa',
 To seek their dinner through the wreaths o' snaw,
 I'n sear the like afore was never seen,
 But fy, fatrex, byd ye till a' be deen,
 Gin they win a plack upon't, Ise be mistaen.

Carnie, Nov. 29th.

Carlins will tire to scauld the live lang day,
 An' kail-wives weary, o' their flyting way ;
 Our Cairnie blades, do fitly these resemble ;
 But only those canna sae weel dissemble ;
 Those canna flyt, except they angry be ;
 But our bra' lads can easy fly an' gree ;
 Those get nae hire at a' to scaul or ban ;
 But our bra' lads get clinkum for their win :
 Short syne, ane o' them angry to a pitch,
 Did ca' our Pastor an eternal —,
 — him, if ever he wad hear him mair,
 Wow but the kyles are turned unco sair :
 Na na this canna di, up wi't my muse,
 Gentle fouk sud gentle fashions use.
 Tho it was late last night afore we slept,
 Yet day nae sooner o'er the Binhill peep't,
 But we gat up, an' on wi' a' our claise,
 To haud the frost frae freezin o' our grease ;
 Just as the moderator was uprisin,
 BOTARIE sent a letter maist surprisin,
 An' bade the Presbytrie conform to law,
 Appoint a quorum o' themsels to draw
 A formal libel, this did vex them a'.

Then o' their nummer they appointit three,
Glass, Keith, an' Grange, this biziness to di.

Cairnie, Dec. 2d and 9th.

The Halie writ dis teach us that there are,
Hyrelins wha for their flocks di little care,
To guard against sic Pastors, fouk hae need,
Wha fleece their flocks, an' lat the foxes feed.
These twa days in our kirk, withoutten lie,
There war saxteen, we never there did see ;
But this is nae for nought, I'm verra seer
That saxteen sterlin poun, brought them nae there,
An' tho our Pastor's kirk still thin appears,
His flock twal hunder is, past saxteen years,
For ilke saxteen year, he has a mark,
Less siller weel might sair for a' his wark.
How can Religion flourish in our lands,
Whan sic a charge is in a B—kh—d's hands.

Cairnie, Dec. 12th.

These fourteen days bypast, an' sax owks mair,
Our Pastor's allies hae been vexed sair,
To mak friens for him, an' theyve made ancw :
But waes the craws, they're a' o' the wrang lue, }
For they sud be a' Presbytrian blue,
But O they're black bruiket schismatics,
Uncharitable Romans, an' Prelatics ;
But that's a' ane, he'el stick as lang's he may,
Twal hunder mark is nae to cast away.
This day being fair, the ministers cam a',
Only our brother Bellie was awa'.
The Presbytrie sat down, Keith gat the chair,
To moderate anes mair on this affair,
The parties then their papers forth did draw,
An' Steinson he gat up in angry flaw,
An' said these papers we will see nae mair,
For we had done last day wi' this affair.

(To be continued.)

THE

EPHEMERA,

No. XX.

Monday, 5th August, 1822.

INTRODUCTION of the NEW PSALMODY.

(Continued from page 224.)

Ecce pro Laicis
Multum allegavi;
Nunc pro Presbyteris
Multum comprobavi.

Archdeacon Walter de Malet.

I FOUND that Mr. Langtext was determined to resist the contumacious spirit of his parishioners. His observations on this occasion were fraught with that plenitude of sapience, which like Nestor's fleeces of descending snow, was continually pouring from his lips. We may mention here in passing, that Peter Macfergus, who was one of the wildest of the Seceders, and whom nothing but the most powerful stimulants could incite, remarked to me when quoting this expression in a vindication of my patron's preaching from his foul aspersion, "that the similitude, or allegory, as we call it, exactly describes the character of your shepherd; and the sort of hungry food with which the sheep, if they may not more justly be call-

ed goats, are starved and poisoned. For the dum dog, one of those that are represented as 'clothed in the finest of the wool;' and that he is cold I have had experimental evidence, having been once subjected to his 'descending snow,' as you aptly call it, Dominie, for the space of a scrimp half hour, whilk was lang enough. The cauld-glaff of that ondinging has not left my inward part to this blessed hour; and I trust that I shall never be given over to my own perverse nature to come in the way of sic a frozening again, as lang as my legs can carry me twal miles to the laigh kirk of F—— even though I am bereaved of the outpouring of the forenoon's exerceeding.

Gentle reader, like our favourite bard Ariosto, we are apt to digress: but we think that these circuitous paths will guide you to the desired object, which is, that you may have thorough insight into the character, and a complete knowledge of the opinions of the primitive Knock-breans on many important points; and if the language which we are forced to employ should savour of irreverence for what is sacred, we utterly disavow such an intention, and with that clerical degree of indignation that beseemeth the colour of our coat. We must use the language which the people described spoke, if we wish to do justice to our subject; and as language is the medium of thought, so is it likewise the vehicle by which the peculiarities of thought can alone be conveyed to the understanding; and a single word may have included in it such a multitude of simple conceptions of so peculiar a nature, arising from local circumstances, habits, education, climate, manners, &c. of individuals,

that no other expression can supply its place with equal force and clearness. If you ever saw a French translation of any of the Scotch, or *Scott's*, novels, you know what we mean. We hope too, gentle reader, that you will find no fault with our so frequently employing our native dialect. We hear, indeed, that our friend Miss Jenny Prim-mouth has withdrawn her patronage for this very reason. This is owing to her having been lately in London; and she has got so confoundedly cockneyish, by a three weeks residence, that the language of her fathers—the language of Burns, of poetry & song, is now grating to her refined ears. We were lately present at a ball with our fair friend, where wishing to shew off her new accomplishment, she bawled to the fiddlers to play either ‘Hover the mountains and a great way hoff,’ or ‘Katharina hembraced the manufacturer.’ The poor musicians could only scratch their heads, and say, “Ma-am, we’re nae understanding you weel,” when an interpreter of tongues kindly stepped forward and told them that Miss P. wished for ‘O’er the hills an’ far awa’ or ‘Kitty kiss’d the weaver.’ In Miss P.’s own tongue we would tell her that ‘we ope that she will see the habsurdity of such abits, and that she will be pleased to mix less winegar with her strictures hon the vulgarity of hour hidears.’ Having thus premised we now proceed:—The internal arrangements of the kirk of Knockbrae are now as different from what they formerly were as the decent, full-made, long-waisted, wide-sleeved, large-buttoned, *joseph* of the ruling elder, is from the scrimp, curtailed tunic of the rustic beau, whom he rebukes at the kirk-session. The seats formerly seemed as if they had

dropped at random from the clouds, and the passes, as they were called, belied their name, being rendered totally impassable by crowds of old people, who, when the service had begun, formed a phalanx which mortal foot durst not penetrate. The matrons who occupied those thoroughfares had generally their children planted on their knees, on whose laps were placed the well covered Bible with large ponderous clasps; besides these youngsters lay their favourite dogs, whose snorings blended themselves with the deep toned nasal-bass of some reprobate toil-worn villager. Hence it may be easily conceived how difficult a thing it was to steer through the pass of the kirk of Knockbrae. To accomplish this, when any one was so daring as to attempt it, it was necessary first to raise the matrons, who had to arouse their sleeping children, from whose laps would fall the large clasped Bibles upon the skulls of the sleeping curs below, whose howlings would disturb the slumbers of some sleeping rustic, who, forgetful of time and place, might utter some unseasonable ejaculations, which would draw down upon his devoted head the sharp rebuke of the Rev. Mr. Langtext.

Such then was the pass: and on the Sunday when the new tunes were to be introduced, it was so completely crammed I despaired of getting at my desk. "Dinna fear," said Knockie, "follow me and I'll act as feugleman. Jamie Steele has fortified my shoon with good substantial rackets, and wae betide their shins if they dinna draw them in to give us room—battershins, ye sinners get up." With these words the Sexton began to

move forward with such a clattering on the pavement, and gave so rude an *accolade* to the extended legs of Meg Macglashan, that the compacted phalanx was broken a little. "There's leg-bail to you, Meg," whispered Knockie to his foe, now groaning from pain, "for the morsel of glar with whilk you seasoned my stammach the ither day, and you'll be paid in full time and place convenient. Tibby MacWharter hae a care o' thir cart-trams o' your's" continued he, "if you want them shod there's iron at hand: wow but you hae wonderfully regained the use o' your lungs since the last parting of the poor's money; you then whined so that you could hardly ask your share on account o' the asthma. Jenny Clerach would you kick, you limmer, you forgot that you are troubled with the rheumatics: nae playing at 'the deil amang the tailors' here, sic glaiks are not for douce folks like you and me."

In this manner did the Sexton clear the way for us, without hurting any one, only his enemy above-mentioned received a slight contusion, which was done by way of retaliation.

When I had mounted into my desk, and my eyes encountered the many scowling glances of those with whom I had walked in peace and amity, I felt grieved at being an instrument in the hands of others to violate that bulwark of prejudices, perhaps absurd in the present case, which had held out against the unrighteous band of oppressors, and preserved to our beloved country her liberty and religion. The most obstreperous part of the congregation were those who had more of the 'tinkling

brass' of piety than the solid burnished gold. But there were men among them of sound, sober, substantial religion: men whose embrowned faces bespoke a life of toil and hardship, whose bare temples and furrowed brows declared that care and sorrow had not unfrequently crossed their path in their pilgrimage to the land of rest: men in whose eyes there 'beamed the sacred influence of a light—the offspring of heaven firstborn—drawn down by converse with the Deity.' The images of those patriarchs of 'the days of other times' now flit across my imagination, robed in all the sanctity with which either the credulity of their fellows or their real worth had invested them: we say credulity, for those devout men were believed to have had 'angel visits,' not short nor far between, conferred upon them: that the grand enemy of man had often appeared to them in visible tangible form to interrupt their devotions, and to draw them aside from their integrity: and that their death-beds were soothed by strains of melody, such as mortal ears may not often hear, sweet as the lutes of angels, and soft as the notes that swell on the breeze of eve from the floating islands of the blessed. But not even could those men of strong minds burst asunder the many links that united their psalmody with their tenderest and most sacred feelings; and they sat in gloomy sadness, as if the angel of desolation had been hovering above their temple, and about to hurl a thunderbolt of woe on their devoted heads. At last Mr. L. came in, and read a portion of a psalm: and when I was preparing to begin, Oh, there was a mighty bustle of preparation by the sitters in the pass, of whom Elspet Langrace was one of the most noisy; 'a clocher-

ing,' as Knockie called it, and a clearing of throats, and hauking up, and a distending of chests, and a screwing of lips: as if they intended to call up sounds which, like the charmed glance of the basilisk would inflict death and destruction. The reader may easily conceive their amazement when I began one of their favourite tunes. There was something like a look of disappointment in the faces of our friends in the pass, but in the countenances of the patriarchs already alluded to, there was kindled up a gleam of joy, that played like a sunbeam on a dark lowering cloud; they were like criminals that had received a respite—like sailors that had escaped the devouring waves. The grand attempt, however, was made in the afternoon; and the discordant notes that arose from our singing two different tunes at the same time cannot be easily conceived, and should not be described. I could not stand the very first onset, but fled like the bard at Philippi, 'relicta non bene parmula,' and scrambled below the desk; with my fingers thrust into my ears, like Hogarth's 'enraged musician,' leaving the command with Knockie, who seemed to enjoy it; and who, it is feared, did traitorously sing on both sides alternately. This shameful exhibition was continued for several Sundays; and it was not till the arm of the law was bared against them that the Knockbreans could be reduced to order. Ralph Boswell the officer, 'who,' as Knockie said, 'although a wonderfully small, diminutive, little looking creature, had yet an extraordinary gift of the gab,' posted up from the town of Forres, and so threatened the parishioners with charges, hornings, poindings, distrainings, &c. that some of them were soon reconciled to the

new tunes, although others of them carried their prejudices along with them to the grave. Y.

THE CAIRNIE JOURNAL.

(Continued from page 228.)

Cairnie, Dec. 12th.

An ass spak Hebrew i' the day o' yore,
 But till this day nane e'er spak Scots afore.
 Than up stood Glass, an' spak, guid sense spak he,
 An' said what has convened the Presbytrie,
 If this affair was done the day before,
 What need the Presbytrie sit on it more.
 Steinson sat down, he had nae mair to crack
 He sauld nae wares altho' he lous'd his pack.
 Then Aberlour the clark was bidden read
 Baith parties papers, an' a' took guid heed,
 The soum o' what these papers did contain,
 I tauld afore, an' needna tell again.
 Baith parties they did verra strangely quibble,
 Upo' the relevancie o' the lybel;
 They spent the day an' maist part o' the night,
 But warnna able to get matters right,
 They that bade Ramsey preach, war ill content,
 An' upo' this they did tak instrument,
 That their last sentence sud revised be,
 An' sud this day agen in causa be.
 Wi' sic bairns play, this court they manna bangle,
 Nor back an' fore like penny weddins jangle,
 But being weary they did a' agree,
 This same day month to haud a Presbytrie;
 An' likewise, they appointit wi' that breath,
 BOTARIE, an' a quorum meet at Keith.

Upo' particulars to condescend ;
 An' they to form a lybel for this end,
 Our Pastor might a copy get to try,
 If he'd confess the truth or it deny.
 Gif he is wise, he'l e'en gang his wa,
 An gar fouk nae mair o's gimcracks shaw.

Dec. 13th.

This day accounts frae Mortlich did advise,
 There is a man, will gar saxteen plows rise
 In Enzie land, to tak our Pastors part,
 Fair fa' you yet Strabogie, for your art ;
 This man near Bogie dwalls, hauf Presbyterian,
 Hauf Jacobite, an' hauf Hanoverian,
 He hears the prist aft times, yet Protestan,
 He's get a quart ale first guesses the man.

Dec. 16th.

In ilka day we live we changes see,
 An' at our Cairnie mony changes be :
 The Jacobits wae worth the fousom pack,
 This day are to their meetin houses back.
 Our Pastor snister'd verra sair this day,
 An' wistna weel sometimes what he did say ;
 Wives an' little anes were his congregation,
 An' he preach'd *Heterodoxie* for the fashion.
 DOUGLAS was there to keep him out o' langer,
 Pox tak the loun, for he ay breeds us anger ;
 Our pastor's wife saw him an' looked down,
 Our pastor notic'd this, an' looked brown,
 An' said to her, sit up, an' clapt on's buik ;
 But she neer tint wi' her auld frien a look.
 War I a prophet, I wad tell you a'
 What mair about our Cairnie out will fa'.

Labes sine labe—Tache sans tache.

Some ill tongued Rhymer hudibras'd my last,
 While he thereon unjust reflections cast ;

Wi' Binhill melody, burlesqu'd my muse,
 An' in my stead, anither did abuse.
 Wi' dogralism did burlesque my strains,
 For whilk some ither has repaid his pains :
 But this Surveyor wi' his borrow'd wings,
 Flies i' the parties face for whom he sings.
 Proceed my muse, thy warbling notes let fly,
 Cairnean strains the truth shall beautify.

Dec. 17th.

This day we cam to ken how the prelaties,
 Anither project tried 'gainst the fanatics,
 Their former cantrips a' they wanted pith,
 Gade wrang like steel, till temper'd bi' the smith,
 'Therefore this day they tried anither trick ;
 An' gif they can they'l gie the whigs a kick,
 For this end they to Gordon Castle draw,
 By which guid manners an' guid sense they shaw.

Gordon Castle, Dec. 18th.

This day the Jacks cam wi' a Caliishake,
 An' crav'd a hearin o' the noble Duke :
 There's something here, whilk I maun secret keep.
 I haena will to waken dogs that sleep.
 The Sefvan to his Grace he gaed in haste,
 An' tauld him wha a hearin did request.
 Wha unto Courts as Councillors resort,
 Sud unto Princes aye the truth report.
 This worthy Prince maist ready is to hear,
 The puir an' rich alike to him are dear.
 As father of his tenants he's beloved,
 For from their tacks they seldom are removed.
 Into his presence they are brought belyve,
 That a' their grievance they might now descryve.
 An't please your Grace, quo they, a' mair or less
 We hae to say, look here, is this address.

The Jacobit's Address.

Maist potent Prince, wha virtuously governs
 Your subjects a', whereof sum are but ill bairns;
 Wi bi thir present solemnlie declare,
 That Cairnie Whigs do plague us unco sair:
 They hae complained unto the Presbytrie;
 Wi' Poprie they're undone, an' Prelacie.
 For mair outowre within your Grace's dominion,
 We think they a' sud be o' your opinion;
 At least against the Papists nae appear,
 Wha now are like to pay even verra dear:
 An' that ye sud let a' the warld ken,
 That ye an enemy are to sic men
 As stan' for government and Presbytrie,
 Wad ye do this the whigs wad let us be.

Now we maun tell you how this work began,
 An' this the gate, your Grace has a man
 They ca' James Mill, he lives at Boterie,
 (We think he sud be sent up to *Auld-berie,
 To live amo the Raes on the black cocks,
 A people wha a paper libels mocks)
 This man an mony mair began to fret,
 That fre Mess John our Pastor scouth we get
 An' apo' this, as we afore hae said,
 Unto the Presbytrie complaint they made;
 Naething will sair them, but Mess John maun gae
 Awa wi' himsel, they him nae mair will hae
 To be their pastor, 'cept your succeed
 To us, an' Mess John's cause wi' us plead;
 For we maun say; but to yoursel keep this,
 M. J. our P——r, a great B---h---d is,
 Keep in Mess John, frae fash we will be free:
 But if he gang, we'll be in jeopardie.

This is the feck o' fat we hae to say,
 For wi' the whigs, we're flytan ilka day.

* A barn in Glen Fiddich.

Ilk Presbytrie we gie them a sound battle;
 But pox upo' them, they're odd kind o' cattle;
 They say something ca'd conscience them press'd
 To what they've done, they surely are possess'd;
 We think your Grace sud sen for them some day,
 An' hear them; but heedna fat they say,
 Gie them a flegg, an' then your Grace will see
 Their crying consciences will lat them be,
 Say you will cast them out o' a' their tacks,
 We'l then be quit o' a' the carl's cracks.
 Twice ten an' mair, wha ne'er Mess John did hear,
 We gart subscribe for him, an' a' for fear.
 Dinna ye care for what the warl say,
 Only hear us, an' we sail humbly pray.

The Duke read this, an' calmly did them hear;
 But said,—to the absent I must keep an ear.

Our Pastor's friends cam vokie hame indeed,
 An' tauld him a' their news, wi' muckle speed.
 He treated them syn a' wi' a hearty dram,
 Wi' beef, an' mutton, its nae time o' lam.
 Whan he gat merry, he wad hae a spring,
 But his son's fiddle lost the treble string
 Langsyne, an' broken was, therefore they try
 Some vocal music—Binhill melody.

(To be Continued.)

Christie M'Knockie was duly received last week;—we are afraid
 that her statements would offend the worthy Ex-Dominie of Knock-
 brae if they were given to the Public.

Several other communications have been received, but are not
 exactly adapted for publication.

"Who Isit," from Forres, we take it would be too well known,
 at least it seems to be personal.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. XXI.

Monday, 12th August, 1822.

LORD LOVAT.

OF all the Chiefs who figured in the unfortunate attempt of 1745, certainly the most singular and notorious was Simon Fraser of Lovat. To the wild ferocity, unsubdued passions, and cunning and caprice of savage life, he added the insinuating address, dissimulation, and crafty policy of a more civilized state. Bold, restless, aspiring, and avaricious in the extreme, he was continually plotting the means of self-aggrandisement; false and deceitful, he was profuse of oaths and promises, when in his heart he had resolved to act contrary to his protestations. But his schemes often failed through a refinement of cunning; while his restless and turbulent disposition was continually leading him into new plots, until at last his intrigues brought him to the scaffold. His station in life and the period in which he lived, were unfortunately too favourable for the developement of such a character. Living in a remote part of the country, and the head of a people

Simon

Simon the son

who knew no law but the nod of their chief, he exercised an authority nothing short of regal sway; his violent passions raged without controul, and there was no enterprize however lawless, oppressive or criminal, in which he was not seconded by his followers.

Simon was the son of Thomas Fraser of Beaufort, the male heir of the house of Lovat. After the death of Hugh tenth Lord Lovat, the title and estate of Lovat were disputed between his Lordship's daughter, heir of line, and Thomas Fraser, heir male. Simon, in order to combine the claims of both houses, proposed an alliance with the daughter of Lord Hugh; but being thwarted through the interference of the Marquis of Athole, the lady's uncle, who gave her away in marriage to another, Simon Fraser came to the desperate and unaccountable resolution of forcing a marriage between himself and the Dowager Lady Lovat, daughter of the Marquis of Athole, a lady advanced in life, of respectable character, not certainly of an inviting person, but who in virtue of her jointure was in possession of a considerable part of the estate of Lovat. This design he actually put in execution:—"he went through the mock ceremony of a wedding, had her dress cut from her person with a dirk, and subjected her to the last extremity of brutal violence, while the pipes played in the next apartment to drown her screams."—For this unwarranted outrage he was obliged to fly to the continent; and having been tried in his absence, was declared an outlaw. He repaired to the court of St. Germain, entered into some plans for the restoration of the exiled family of Stuart, came over privately to Scotland,

but his plot failing he was, on his return to France, thrown into prison.

It was not until the troubles of 1715 commenced, that Government, foreseeing the advantage of securing such a powerful and numerous Clan, in their interest gave a pardon to Lovat, and invited him to return for the purpose of heading his Clan in behalf of King George. To secure his allegiance he had a pension granted to him, besides some other offices of distinction which he held; and he continued faithful to the government until the arrival of the Chevalier in 1745. Allured by the hopes of plunder, and tempted by high promises of personal preferment, he again began to waver; and, with his usual duplicity of character, endeavoured to hold a stake with both parties, until the success of the Chevalier's army at Prestonpans, confirmed him in the resolution of joining the Prince's standard. Still, however, it was in an underhand manner; he did not join the army himself, but compelled his son to head a detachment of the Clan, although he pretended to the government party that his son had joined the Chevalier's army contrary to his injunctions. Lovat was not present at the battle of Culloden; nor had he, previous to that event, had an interview with the Prince in whose cause he had involved himself. It was not till after that fatal day, that the vanquished Charles, with his few attendants, came galloping with full speed to the remote and solitary mansion of Castle Dounie, bringing the fatal intelligence of the ruin of the cause and the dispersion of his adherents. Thus Lovat saw all his hopes blasted, and his doom at length

sealed. Old and infirm, he attempted to seek his safety in flight, although obliged to be carried on the shoulders of his attendants ; but after lurking for some time he was at last discovered in the hollow trunk of a tree, and carried prisoner to London.

He displayed to the last all the peculiarities of his character.—In a singular letter which he wrote to the Duke of Cumberland, he endeavoured to excite his compassion “ by telling him how often he had carried him in his arms when a child, and offered to make such discoveries as would be of an hundred times more advantage to government than the sacrifice of an old grey head.”—During his trial he made an excuse that his deafness prevented him from ascertaining the nature of the accusations against him : on the scaffold he preserved that undaunted firmness, mingled with a satirical causticity of humour, for which he was remarkable ; and died with the words of the old Roman in his mouth,—

“ Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.”

That such a person should assume such sentiments in his last moments must certainly appear singular.

His life from the outset was one tissue of falsehood and deceit. His public conduct was invariably influenced by views of self-interest, not by the good of his country ; in private life he was harsh, tyrannical, and ungenerous, with not one redeeming virtue to palliate his many vices.

C.

To the Editor of the Ephemera.

SIR,

THERE are many incidents which occur in every day life, that, were they to appear, as Shakspeare says, in a play, would be looked upon as fictitious. The following incident, simple enough in itself, which occurred to a friend of mine, in whose veracity I have the utmost reliance, may perhaps be looked upon by some of your readers as approaching to the romantic. I give it as nearly as I recollect in his own words.

About fourteen or fifteen years ago I set out in a fine summer morning, on foot, as is my usual practice, to visit an aged relative, living at the distance of a dozen of miles from my home. The morning was mild and pleasant, and I had finished somewhat more than the half of my journey, when I came to a small *burn*, the scanty waters of which, dried up by the heat, scarcely covered the round-worn pebbles, among which the stream crept quietly on, with a faint murmuring. A few yards from its banks grew two willow trees on a small level spot, distinguished from the stoney and barren heath around by a soft verdure, and on which stood the remains of what appeared to have been a small cottage. Walking round and round the spot, and often pausing, as if absorbed in thought, I perceived a person of tall form, and respectable appearance, who, from some part of his dress, appeared to belong to the army. After the usual salutations, he inquired of me if I could give him any information of the fate of the former inhabitants of this spot. I

told him I was sorry I could not, as I was quite a stranger in this part of the country. "It is no wonder I linger about this place," said he, "for here I first drew breath, and spent my first boyish years; every part about it is familiar to me. These trees I planted with my own hand, but they now seem as lonely and woe-worn as myself. I early in life joined the army; have been for a number of years in foreign countries; and in moving from clime to clime have never had an opportunity of hearing from home, or of the welfare or misfortune of the friends I left there. I still however cherished a fond recollection of the place of my nativity, and on arriving once more on British land, I eagerly set out for home, not without hopes of again meeting my aged parents, and affording a cheering comfort to the close of their life: but I find they have been gathered to their fathers, and the place that once knew me knoweth me no more. I have no tie to detain me any longer in this country; now that I find that my search is in vain, I shall set out on my return to-morrow from whence I came." After hearing some more particulars of his history, and his name, I discovered (for from the first I thought his face was familiar to me) who he was; and we both recognised each other, old acquaintances, and distant relatives. I assured him that his mother still lived, and that she had been for a long time, and was at present, a resident in the village I had just left in the morning; that if he would accompany me a few miles farther on, where I was going I would return with him and conduct him to his aged parent, who, I informed him, had long given over the hopes that her favourite and only son was

yet in the land of the living. When we approached the village of ——, it was agreed that I should go on before, and prepare the old woman for the joyful news, least coming suddenly and unprepared, the meeting should be too overpowering. I entered one of those low, turf built cottages, so frequently the abode of the sons and daughters of penury; but where a pious resignation and subdued contentment, often make the lot of its inmates more enviable than that of the inhabitants of palaces. The old woman was seated by the hearth. I sat down, and after some conversation, I asked her if she had heard from Jamie for some time. "Oh, no, Sir," she replied, shaking her head, "nor ever expect to hear o' him in this world; Jamie was na the ane to forget his poor parents, if life had been spared him; we had twa letters from him, but that is many a year ago, and there is now ower good reason for his silence." But I said, it might be possible he was still alive: letters were often miscarried, especially from some of the remote quarters where the duty of a soldier often calls him. "Oh dinna gie me hopes o' that kind, Sir, I have made up my mind for the warst. I am a poor old creature, my husband and friends have gone down to the grave before me, and I here wait patiently my time, till my eyes be closed by strangers, and I lay me down and be at rest." But, I said, it surely would give her pleasure to hear if he was alive or not: I had spoken to one who knew of him. "Oh, did you, Sir!" she exclaimed, "I would be happy to hear that he was weel, and doing weel, although he should be never so far awa". He is well I said and is coming home to see you, perhaps by this time he is in this country;

would you know him if he were here ? Her 'Jamie,' who was in the passage could contain himself no longer, he came forward: and I despair of conveying to you any idea of the interview. The old woman gazed for some time as in doubt and uncertainty; but time or any changes of feature will not easily obliterate the deep rooted recollections of a mother. She soon recognised her long lost child and favourite son. My friend dined with me, and I daresay neither of us were the less happy for the incidents of the day; and it may be safely said there was not a being in the village who passed a pleasanter night than old Janet —, not in sleep, for she did not shut an eye, but in gratitude, thankfulness, and exultation in the divine goodness which had thus 'comforted her in her low estate.'

I am, &c.

AMICUS.

THOMAS MUMBLECHOPS, Esq. To the Editor.

SIR,

I HAVE been always disposed most cordially to agree with those philosophers who place the chief pleasure of our existence in the possession of a good appetite. An excellent dinner is one of the most excellent things I know. To eat it at home, and alone, without the danger of being anticipated in the choice of any dish, has several important advantages; but to dine abroad at an excellent table, without having the trouble and ex-

pense of preparation—this, this is a luxury indescribable. I have lived now, let me see—a good many years, and do not think I have dined at home above once a week in all my lifetime. This may seem strange: but I am now about to disclose, for the good of posterity, how I manage in this matter. I shall give the result of my experience as briefly as possible.—

He who would aspire at getting good dinners from his neighbour, must, in the first place, take care that he forms his acquaintance among the opulent and luxurious: the poor, the needy, and unfortunate, let these be far from him.

2d. He must have the most accommodating disposition imaginable; endeavour to be “all things to all men.” And must never venture to assert an opinion of his own (if he should happen to have any) in opposition to that of others.

3d. He must always seem interested in the personal affairs of his entertainers, however disgusting or trifling they may be: must listen attentively to tiresome egotisms, and most interesting stories of the hundredth edition: must bear with the caprice, and smile at the insults of his most kind host. Why should such things jumble his milk of human kindness? are there not a sufficient number of butchers, bakers, rascally servants, and impudent beggars, to vent one’s spleen against? Why should one snarle at the hand which feeds him?

4th. He must always be on the alert to pick up every sort of intelligence, public, private, false, gross, and ridiculous. He must go about from house to house, and

from corner to corner, every forenoon, swallowing every morsel of petty scandle, unfounded reports, hints, insinuations, and gross and malignant lies; which he is to ruminate, and concoct, and dress up, according to the tastes of the guests before whom he is to disgorge them at the evening dinner party; always taking care that he wields his malevolent stories against the enemies of his companions for the time being, and which he can easily again turn on the parties themselves when he happens to be in a different company.

5th. He must constantly be in motion, and as much as possible omnipresent. Where two or three are seen standing in the street, he must always insinuate himself; where calls are making he must invariably endeavour to be of the party. Those persons whom he has to deal with are exceedingly afflicted with defective memories, and if he should be long absent he may possibly be forgot for ever.

6th. He must be indefatigable in all the little attentions and civilities of social intercourse which are daily given and daily expected. Above all a judicious attention to the tastes and humours of the fair sex opens many inroads to favour and distinction. A seeming affection for the children of your hostess never fails of securing her favour. You must praise the astonishing beauty of young Miss, therefore, although she should be the ugliest pig you ever beheld; and relate anecdotes of the uncommon precocity of genius of young Dicky, the heir, notwithstanding he should be the most consummate dunce of all the boys of his age. Another most effectual way to the heart of the landlady, is your praising the goodness

of a pudding which has been unfortunately spoiled in cooking, and which has called forth the animadversion of the landlord. This, depend upon it, will procure you the choice of the next best dish; for the lady of the house is always held in some measure responsible for the faults of her cook.

7th. If you are set near a young lady, and have got any hint of the swain whom she favours, the most pleasing accents to her ear are encomiums on his person or accomplishments, or, perhaps, as you will see necessary, a pompous account of his estate or income.

8th. Should your evil stars place you beside an old spinster, or antiquated matron, bitter invectives against the follies of youth, the extravagancies of the present age, and the staid sobriety and economy of the past, are subjects which are likely to be acceptable. But above all, you must see that your partner's wine glass be never empty; and, if it should be after supper, that the toddy is made sufficiently strong and sweet. I have seen omissions of this kind prove fatal to the hopes and expectations of —weeks.

Lastly, should you be an old batchelor, every Autumn, before the winter campaign sets in, it would be well for you to feign a dangerous sickness, make a will and remember in it all those who are expected to give the best dinners during the ensuing winter; taking care that you employ the most babbling attorney you can find, who will, of course, make the necessary disclosures. At the same time it will be proper, if real sickness should occur, to add a *crocodile* to the will, (as one of my friends says)

in order to disappoint the sharks who have been lying in wait for you.

In hopes, Mr. Editor, that these few important hints on a most important subject may find a place in your admirable, transcendent, and far-famed Miscellany,

I remain,

Your most obsequious and devoted Servant,

THOMAS MUMBLECHOPS.

P. S. Pray do you ever give a select party yourself? If so I shall be happy to pick a bone with you.

T. M.

Mumble Cottage, 1st August, 1822.

S. has been received. We feel obliged by his communication, more especially as he has favoured us before, if we are not mistaken, under a different signature. His pieces are far from doing him discredit, but we doubt they would not command sufficient interest if inserted.

A "WELL WISHER" has our thanks for his little piece. The sentiments are good, but, we are afraid, not much adapted for the generality of Ephemeral readers.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. XXII.

Monday, 19th August, 1822.

KNOCKBRAE REVERIES.

I never may believe
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
Lovers, and madmen, have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.

Midsummer-night's Dream.

IT is surely an interesting study to contemplate the human character in its different stages of improvement, from that of the rude and unpolished barbarian, to that of the refined and accomplished member of civilized society. We know not if any of our readers will sympathize with our taste when we tell them that we have always derived greater pleasure in viewing those rough sketches of our nature which the early annals of nations lay before us, than from criticising those highly finished pictures which are exhibited in the refined productions of gifted artists. The laws of the twelve tables are more estimable in our eyes than Justinian's Pandects;—the

black broth of the Spartans is more grateful to our palates than the whole trumpery of an Athenian cook-shop; and we would rather eat a few cresses with the elder Cato, than wallow in the styes of Epicurus with the board-devouring Emperors of degenerate Rome.

From the superstitions of early time, we can also derive the greatest gratification; and in those rude songs which record the prowess of 'warriors bold,' or celebrate the loveliness of 'ladies fair'—or breathe the devoted attachments of both; or speak of the high deeds of renown, and of the many perils and 'hair-breadth 'scapes' which the mail-clad knight had to undergo for the sake of his capricious fair one. In such songs, notwithstanding all their roughness and want of art, do we perceive a beauty and a harmony—and a simplicity and a feeling, which in vain we look for in the productions of more learned bards. The 'Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border' is a gallery of beauties that have long held us in thralldom; and we love our chains for they are more precious than gold—it is a galaxy, 'candore ipso notabilis,' which we are never weary in contemplating—it is a temple of the ancient muses, and we love it for the sake of the wild flowers, and the moss, and the creeping ivy, which mantle its venerable walls; and we enter its portals with the feelings of pilgrims, to offer up the incense of our admiration to the genius of the place—to the bards of old, who were so skilled in their craft—to the departed sons of song, who knew the human heart, and could touch its every string, and awaken sounds which thrilled through the spirits of the heroes of old; and pour out those glowing conceptions, 'these thoughts that breathe and words

that burn, which inflamed them to high deeds of mighty daring; and who could melt their minds by infusing into them the gentler feelings of our nature, and making them the willing slaves of those high-born dames, who weighed in their moated castles the umpires of combats—tyrannical in the greatness of their beauty. On those wild superstitions too, in which the early history of all countries abounds, and which were the plentiful sources of much pleasure and pain to those who were enthralled by them, we frequently meditate in pleasing reverie. In such moods we are sometimes disposed to find fault with that light of knowledge which has driven our fairies from their midnight revels, on our moors and glens, by moonlight; and which has exiled our brownie, ‘that lubber-fiend,’ from our hearths, where our fathers were happy to place the cream-bowl, to reward him for having performed the work of ‘ten day labourers’ in the space of a single night.

“When in one night, ere glimpse of morn
 His shadowy flail had threshed the corn
 That ten day lab’ers could not end,
 Then lays him down the lubber-fiend,
 And, stretch’d out all the chimney’s length,
 Basks at the fire his hairy strength;
 And cropful out of doors he flings,
 Ere the first cock his matin rings.” — *L’ALLEGRO.*

We think that we would willingly spend seven years in enjoying such a spectacle as was beheld by the farmer in the parish of Alves, when he ascended that enchanted ground the Knock. As he drew near the hill, his ear

were captivated by the sweetest melody : and having gained the top, and casting his eyes down into the bowels of the earth,—Oh ! they beheld a sight which we fear the Knock of Alves will never again exhibit—a palace, the splendour of which the imagination of moon-struck bard in its loftiest flight, cannot conceive, and of which the proudest description of eastern magnificence comes infinitely short. The farmer—“*haud ignota loquimur*”—remained spell-bound, and his eyes could never be weary with gazing on the lovely fairy forms that sailed before them, in measured step, to the sound of ‘lute and soft recorder,’ and other instruments which the hands of such musicians alone could finger. It was not till seven years had passed that the spell was broken, and the farmer awakened from this dream of blessedness.—We may easily imagine his surprise, when upon returning home he found his family, whom he had left children, now grown up, and his blooming wife, who had mourned the term of her widowhood, and ‘wailed the living Hector as the dead,’ now perhaps looking around her for some helpmate to supply his place. It was such evidence as this that convinced him of the length of time which he had spent ; for he thought that he had been absent from home only a few hours. We certainly think that the good dame had great merit in remaining single for so long a time. If husbands choose to go a gallanting after these light gentry, we do apprehend that any wife would be justified in taking to herself a more domestic spouse. This by the bye is a curious case, and we should like much to hear the wisdom of the Session of Alves—a parish that has been always distinguished for

the sapience of its counsellors, and the multitude of its fairies—on a point that so materially concerns their welfare. If there be any part of Morayshire where the fairies still hold dominion, that part is the oakwood, and especially the pine-covered Knock. We think, indeed, that we have had experimental proof of this being the case: for when returning from a brother of the *ferula's* house, which is near this enchanted ground, and at which we enjoy that flow of conversation which circulates with such a *spirit* that it would turn the heads of the mere frequenters of Elgin tea drinking conversazioni,—we have heard sounds, and seen sights, that undoubtedly were more than human. Such then being the case, we are alarmed lest something should occur similar to what happened to the aforesaid agriculturalist: and the Session of Alves will do well to warn their people to refrain from second marriages, when a loving husband or wife, at any time, unexpectedly disappears.

But to return:—we know not the reason why we, who are now well stricken in years, should still derive so much pleasure from legends of this kind. We can only account for it by considering the powerful influence which early impressions have over all our future feelings, whether of happiness or misery. Whatever has much affected the mind of childhood is lasting: but the greater number of such impressions, when they afterwards recur, are generally associated with so much that is pleasing and delightful, that the pain is forgotten, and the contemporaneous pleasurable sensations alone present themselves. In some minds this may not be the case: and if

Byron tell us that he loves not Horace,* because the page of the bard was crammed down his throat against the will of his stomach, we can only say that we envy him not his feelings; nor do we admire the constitution of a mind, how great and grand soever it may be in other respects, that can dwell with such bitterness on the slight griefs of boyhood, and fume and rant and rave as if sorrow in some shape or other were never to be tasted by man. We too, perhaps, have had the song of the Roman sung in our ears in more ways than one, at a time when our eyes were blind to his beauties, when we were forced to scan his crabbed quantities, by means of a quantity of blows from a crabbed teacher: when we were taught the nature of the *ictus metricus* by an *ictus* from the master's rod. Yet we can now admire the page that so faithfully describes the joys and sorrows of our stormy life, and we now can smile at those evils which our boyish imaginations had so greatly magnified. From the superstitious tabs of the nursery too we have received pain, but it was the transitory pain of boyhood; and we think that it has been more than counterbalanced by the pleasure which in after life we derived from them. We have long ago forgotten the fear that seized us when left in darkness, with our heads filled with some tale of horror, and when we crawled to bed with much trembling, or when we were forced to pass through the church yard by night. Then every bush was 'an apparition tall and ghastly,' and every sound was the scream of a ghost,

'That walks at dead of night, or takes his stand
O'er some new opened grave.'

See 4th Canto of 'Childe Harold,' and Notes.

Such fears were real evils at the time: but if in after life we have ever derived any pleasure from the works of imagination—if the bright creations of the poet have risen before our eyes in all the pride and splendour of their adornments—if the fancy of bard have ever borne us along on the full tide of its impetuosity, or warmed us by its favour, or melted us by its plaintiveness—if we have ever been able to withdraw ourselves from the cares of life, and its dull concerns, and its every day routine of insipid sameness, to wander among groves that are ever green, and by waters that are ever pure: and to gaze on the fair forms of ideal beauty, and to be in love with the ‘airy nothings’ on which the energetic power of imagination bestowed ‘a local habitation and a name’—if we have ever been able to give a visible form to our abstract conceptions, and to view them in their every attitude, and to dismiss them and to call them back at our pleasure—if we have ever been mad enough to breath a sigh to the fair damsels of Helicon, even altho’ ‘the lightning of their angel smile’ would have led us astray—in fine, if we have been able at any time to divest ourselves of real pain, and to put on the fair mantle of imaginary happiness—and how much of human happiness may be so named. Ye sons of mammon who look so wise and so wary, declare—and if there be any good in all this, then we are disposed to attribute it in a great measure to the Scottish Mythology which was so carefully instilled into the minds of our boyhood.

of which was now and then slowly opened by the hesitating hand of a sympathising neighbour. It was the house of mourning; and that day was the corpse of one of its inmates to be carried in mournful procession to the neighbouring church-yard. The possessor of the small cottage was the father of a numerous family of sons and daughters, who had all grown up to maturity in health and vigour, and were settled in various situations of employment in the country around. But there was one pale and sickly child, which from infancy was destined to be the peculiar charge and solicitude of her parents: soft and blooming in childhood, and with a delicate and interesting manner beyond all the others, she was the pride and delight of her family; but as she advanced in years, as if a canker-worm had nipped her bloom, she gradually became pale and feeble, and lost all her gay and buoyant spirits. She could not participate in the boisterous mirth of her more hardy companions; nor when labour called forth the more robust members of the family to the fields and woods, could she share in their toil. She remained at home, the constant companion of her parents; and it is no wonder that she should be doubly dear to them, considering the precarious feebleness of her constitution, which they daily beheld increasing. There was something in the pale thoughtfulness of her features which shewed her mind was abstracted from the interests of this life;— and her large dark and intelligent eyes seemed as if they were steadfastly fixed upon the world towards which she was fast hastening.

In the course of my walk two days before, I had met the oldest sister hastening to the town, on the sufferer.

having got much worse, to call in, as a last resource, the assistance of a medical adviser. She was walking hurriedly onwards, with her dress hastily put on, and in her swollen eyes and flushed countenance I could perceive some faint gleams of hope, the last frail expectation on which she could lay hold. Alas, there was no hope remaining! The sufferer grew worse and worse, till she was barely able to raise her heavy eyelids, to look once more upon those who had been so long her anxious attendants, when she dropped them softly down again, and calmly breathed her last.

I had not sat long on the eminence which commanded a view of the cottage, when I saw the inhabitants of the village and many of those of the country round assemble to the funeral. For some time they kept pacing about the door, or standing in groups around the house; till at last, at the appointed hour, the corpse was taken out, and the mournful procession proceeded slowly by the winding path which led to the churchyard, about a quarter of a mile to the right of where I was seated. I could see the lanes of the village filled with children and young females, who crowded around to take a last look of the remains of her who had so often been the companion of their sports; and every countenance appeared deeply impressed with the solemnity of the scene. I arose, and taking a near cut, was at the burying ground in time to witness the last solemn ceremony of committing 'dust to dust.' While the grief of the younger branches of the family was extreme, the old grey-headed father stood bent to the ground, with features unmoved, and his eyes rivetted on the grave, which already contained the ashes

of many of his earlier relatives, and which was now about to engulf the most beloved of his own offspring. When the last sod was placed upon the grave, he turned away heart-sick and overcome. His friends and neighbours kindly interposed their soothing attentions, but his thoughts were too full to be suppressed, and he proceeded in silence to his home. To those in humble life the loss of relatives is a calamity felt to be deep and lasting. The rich have many artificial sources which divert the mind, and oftentimes blunt the affections; but to the poor man the love of kindred and family ties are the principal links which bind him to the world, and which make existence tolerable: if these be broken then he feels that he is indeed lonely and forsaken; and that there is little on this side the grave which can yield him satisfaction.

JAQUES.

Forres, 1st August, 1822.

MR. EDITOR,

I HAVE repeatedly sent you communications for your work, but hitaerto all in vain. I have tried the sublime, the pathetic, and the humourous, but never yet has any production of mine been favoured with insertion. Do not think that I take offence at this, quite the reverse—I would rather be disappointed fifty times than once be obtruded on the public unworthily—As a last effort I send you the following, and am your's, &c.

F.

A WISH.

I HAVE a wish which busies oft my mind,
 At home, abroad, amid the shade reclin'd,
 At morn, at noon, and eve: it will obtrude
 E'en on the calm of midnight solitude.
 When Summer breathes o'er earth luxurious gales,
 The pleasing fancy of my mind assails;
 'Mid winter storms, beside the blazing fire,
 My bosom flutters with the fond desire.
 LAURA, you pant to know it, prying elf!
 No, no, I'll keep the secret to myself.
 You rack your brains to guess what it may prove,
 Ambition, Fame—Success in hopeless love—
 Or some high pantings after excellence—
 Perhaps 'tis just as well to tell at once—
 I've of en wished, with SWIFT, that I had clear,
 Just for my life—*five hundred pounds a year!*

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. XXIII.

Monday, 26th August, 1822.

THE POET OF KNOCKBRAE.

Beatus ille quisquis,
Non indigus levare
Sermonibus Sophorum,
Curas potest jocosa
Fugare cantilena.

SANADON.

WILLIAM T——r Homer, the only poet who, it is thought, ever visited Knockbrae, was not born in that parish: but from the frequency of his visits thither, and from our desire to render that celebrated place still more illustrious, we are disposed to naturalize him, and to set him down as one of those worthies on whom the pages of the Ephemera will confer immortality. The *cognomen* Homer, was given to him—by himself. It certainly is not the family name, nor did he assume it till he was well advanced in life. We have not heard that any thing extraordinary attended his birth as ominous of his future greatness: neither swarms of bees settled on his lips, as indicative of the sweetness of those strains which he was destined to pour into the listening ears of the Knock-breans: nor were men seen fighting in the air, as prophetic that he was to write that heroic work, “The Battle of the Tinkers:” nor were there fiery meteors, as denoting the fire and the energy of his future productions: nor, in short, were there any of those convulsions of nature, which of old took place when great men made their appearance on our earth; only his mother’s cat mew’d thrice. The old woman who attended the *bard-*

ling's mother did not neglect to 'Sain the bairn,' and to exorcise the enemy of mice, that had thus opened her mouth during their important operations.

"Heard you that, (said one of them) I fear it bodes nae good luck to the *wee ane*, that it has its first good-morning frae the whiskered lips of that auld farrant bawdron. I wish that it dinna turn out some harim-scarim o' a ne'er-do-weel. I aye had my doubt o' that cat, and o' cats in general, for the lucky half o' them are but handmaidens to witches, and indeed there's nane o' them canny. If our Jock were here wi' his gun I would not grudge a sixpence to load it wi, in order to gie that there ill-looking brute a clamabuc on the cheek, for lead would hae little effect on her, if she be what I suspek her to be; may I be preserved frae the limmer, look how she glowers!" "That's true (replied a second) and I hae little doubt but that we would before this time to-morrow, see the mark on the face o' a certain neighbour of ours, nae saying wha." "Dinna crack sae crouse, (said a third) there may be lugs listening that are nae seen, for on occasions o' this kind the infernal sisterhood are not standing still licking their fingers. Hae a sharp look out in case the bairn be changed. Dinna tak your een aff it till I run for *Gz—y F——g's gird, and then we may defy a' the witches and cats and fairies that was ever hatched."

The foregoing is the only remarkable circumstance in the life of the modern Homer, till he became a professed poet, at least as far as I, the Dominic Emeritus of Knockbrae, have been able to ascertain.

It was on a beautiful summer's evening, when, having dismissed my school, I observed my pupils collected together, and listening with great eagerness to the loud

* The person alluded to was an Elginesian. The hoop had great efficacy in preventing witchcraft in the days of my youth. Infants alone could receive any benefit from it as they were *passed* through it, and the instrument itself was narrow.—Ex-D. of K.

declamation of an old man who was planted in the midst of them. Advancing towards them, I was struck with his appearance. He seemed to be about 60 years of age. His face was of the true poetic cast, 'sharp and gleg as ony razor;' his eyes, 'in a fine phrenzy rolling,' were small and sparkling; and from the wildness of their expression, and the quickness of their motion, it could be easily perceived that his mind was partially deranged. He wore a wig of a brownish colour, and his clothes were so unequally matched that they gave 'lucid proof' of having graced the persons of different individuals. A large tin case, such as is commonly used to hold plans of estates, hung like a quiver from his shoulders; the use of which, as I afterwards found, was to contain his literary works: poems, sermons, pieces of humorous songs, &c. by the reciting of which to the villagers he contrived to gain a livelihood. The sermons were for the purpose of edifying the more serious of the parish, and one in particular 'On Paper Ministers,' as it was called, was liked exceedingly. His songs were for the young lasses; and his humorous pieces, one of which was titled 'The battle of the Tinkers,' were relished by all. While I was contemplating this extraordinary person, the boys who surrounded him began to request of him to give them a song. "Come, come, Maister Homer, gies a song, or repeat to us the battle o' the Tinkers, or——." "Silence, ye ignoble throng, silence ye *profanum vulgus*," as Flaccus hath it, '*favete lingus*," (said the poet, as he eyed me sideways,) is not that the new Dominie. Ehew, he is a lank lean youth, and forms a strange contrast to that great man his predecessor, Mr. Thumpbottom. *Colaphus-a-posteriore*, as I used jocularly to call him, and who liked a dram extraordinary weel. Yet notwithstanding the thinness of his face, there is something in it that draws me towards him.—You see before you, (said he) approaching me, hat in hand, and making a low bow, William T——r Homer, the Minstrel, '*pueris virginibusque canto*,' who am a man of parts, having studied the

latin tongue, and had even an entrance into the Greek, as my works fully demonstrate; and, as I live, you shall instantly hear one of my poems. Would you like the 'Earthquake,' or 'Britannia's Lament for the Rose,' or 'The Pedigree of the ladies of D——d,' who are 'the fairest of their kind.' The exordium of this poem was much admired—no invocation—nothing about gods and goddesses here, who were the idols of the heathen, and therefore should be held in abomination;—I dash into my subject at once, in the true Pindaric style—*ecce*

“ I begin with I——I and with J——s
I pray the —— their souls to bless—”

But as this poem is rather long, perhaps you would prefer Mr Thumpbotton and Mr M'Fungus's Lamentation and Eulogium of a brother Computator deceased.” And without waiting for a reply, he thus began with great vehemence of gesture, and volubility of enunciation. We may observe that we afterwards procured a copy of these rough rhymes, which are more curious than poetical:—

“ Now Sir, mark the exordium. I wish to terrify—
dout be alarmed boys—

1.

'Twas night, and clouds obscured the sky,
And birds did to their coverts fly.
The storm was gathering thick and fast,
And grimly loured the threat'ning blast;
Anon the winds began to howl,
Re-echoed by the hooting owl.

2.

It was a dreadful night I wot,
When Mr Dominie Thumpbot-
-Tom, and his trusty friend Macfungus,
Whose heart was dry as any sponge is,
Convened;—a brace of thirsty souls,
Skilled in the classics—and punch-bowls.

3

Loud and more loud the whirlwind blew,
 And deep, and deeper drank the two,
 And aye another cork they drew,
 From side to side the bottle flew,
 And every glass their hearts did glew,
 And love and grief and pain renew.

4

Their tongues the deadest silence kept,
 They filled, they swallowed, and they wept ;
 And on a chair placed in a nook,
 Full many a longing, lingering look
 With eyes suffused with tears they cast,
 And listened to the howling blast.

5

Say, Oh my muse, what means that look
 Cast on the chair—placed in the nook—
 And why with tears suffused their eyes—
 And why so many sobs and sighs—
 And why with night-caps placed awry,
 Do they with bitter moanings cry ?

6

That chair hath oft sustained the body
 Of one whose life was whisky-toddy,
 But he is gone—and passed “ that bourne
 From whence no traveller shall return.”
 But of their minds he was a part—
 Bone of their bone—heart of their heart.

7

At length Thumpbottom rising slow,
 While tears into the punch-bowl flow,
 Essayed to speak ; but the shrill note
 Stuck in the wind-pipe of his throat :
 Macfungus the strong conflict spied,
 And to relieve his brother tried.

8

Forbear my friend—forbear, forbear—
 Nature's too strong. I fear, I fear,
 I for the dead too am distrest—
 Witness the sigh that heaves this breast :
 Too bitter is my grief to sham ;
 To ease our pain let's take a dram.

9

Thumpbottom drank, and found relief.
 " Of Dominies I was the chief,
 When that same chair, now so forlorn,
 Was filled by him—but ah he's torn
 For ever from—anither dram,
 My spirits faint."—He then began :

10

" For ever from my longing eyes,
 And left me in a world of sighs—
 Sighs, groans, and tears, and moanings *satis* ;
 A dram's the only solace that is
 Left to me now—wretch that I am,
 Macfungus here—another dram.

11

" No wonder that I am not filled,
 Since every dram's so fast distilled
 From the alembic of my eyes,
 Or else evaporates in sighs ;
 And that the source mayn't dry,—my brother,
 Another dram—haste, haste—another.

12

" The Introduction he could make
 Better than we, Macfungus spake."
 "'Tis a black lie, rejoined Thumpbot :
 A black infernal lie, I wot.
 Better than I !—that will not pass,
 I'll make't with any man—you ass.

13

" I know you can—I know't, my brother,
 Here take a dram—here take another :
 Such sorrows nature cannot bear,
 So many griefs our bosoms tear ;
 We'll e'en sit down and take our gill,
 For sure of grief we've had our fill."

14

His brother the advice approved,
 And from his eyes the tears removed,
 Arranged his night-cap, and sat down,
 And all his griefs in punch did drown ;
 And the next morning found them sure,
 Lying dead drunk upon the floor."

(Written by me). W—M T—R HOMER.

A most humorous lamentation, Mr. Homer, said I, and I hope that you will always call on me when you visit the parish—

" Would you please to hear this short thing on the ' Earthquake,' it only contains 2550 lines—but I see you are tired, so no more at present, but *remains* your loving friend until death, as Jamie Logie the gardener says in his Epistles." And with these words the minstrel departed.

Y.

M'LACHLAN'S INN.

TIME—Half past 4 o'clock, P. M.

E. Waiter! bring some light, mild, and cooling beverage. Pray, have you any good ginger beer?

Waiter. (*aside*,—I'll lay my life this is one of the Ephemeral water-drinkers.)—Yes, Sir, we have some excellent ginger beer, which, in flavour and briskness, rivals the finest champagne.

E. I have no doubt of it—bring me a bottle; and if a grave-looking gentleman, dressed in black, call for me, shew him up. I wonder what the Dominie of Knockbrae can want of me, by appointing me to meet him here. I have not seen him for several days.

(*A noise without—the sound of a horn, and rumbling of wheels heard. The Duke of Gordon coach arrives; after a short pause the door opens. Enter the Ex dominie of Knockbrae.*)

E. Can I believe my eyes! Is this really you, Dominie? Wherefore have you laid aside your solemn suit of sables and decked yourself out in that smart blue coat, lined with yellow, white vest, and snow-white *inexpressibles*, your St. Andrew's cross, and hat cocked *a la militaire*?

Dominie. My dress might at once explain the matter. Know then that I am fresh from Edinburgh, where I have been to see his Majesty.

E. Is it possible! I never missed you. But tell me quickly all that you have seen. You must have beheld glorious sights indeed.

D. O I am quite sick of kings, dukes, and nobles. Like one that has been surfeited on turtle soup and plum-pudding. I long again to return to the milk and barley cakes of infancy. Yet, after all, the king's entrance into Edinburgh was the grandest pageant mortal could ever behold. I had a most conspicuous station exactly in front of the Register Office, I saw the King just as the crowds on the Calton Hill, Arthur's Seat, Princes-street, &c. first burst on his sight; no wonder he was overpowered, astonished, and delighted. The living mass of people appeared like innumerable layers of white clouds piled up in the dark blue heavens—like 'the cattle on a thousand hills:' or like countless myriads of mites on the curdy pyramids of a *kebbock*, tossing, and rolling on the towering summits of the *caseous* Teneriffes!

E. You might have finished your sentence with some more sublime simile. One would have thought your

mind would have been mounted on stilts after having viewed such noble sights.

D. And so it was I assure you while I was there; but one cannot always be upon the heroics. And yet, after all the allusion is not so bad; in half a century hence, all those gay and happy crowds will be little better than a parcel of poor maggots which the greedy, gaping jaws of some lover of old cheese are about to engulf.

E. But how did the people of Edinburgh receive his Majesty?

D. Oh, most enthusiastically; indeed they are all royally mad, the ordinary flow of sober, sedate rationality is there out of the question. And this is all as it should be. Such a visit will do an immense deal of good. It will purge their minds of all little, petty, party spirit for years to come: enoble their thoughts and refine the rigidity of their manners. These are among the many advantages of a monarchy. When I heard the pibrochs sounding, and saw the tartans flying, with the chiefs and their followers ranged around their King, also decked out in the national costume, I almost imagined the days were returned when Scotland ranked among the kingdoms of the earth, and boasted a monarch of her own. I wish they would keep him, now they have got him amongst them.

E. Then we might have a chance of seeing him in Elgin, and perhaps Forres too, He could live in the Priory of Pluscarden, which is *modernizing* for his reception. We have been doing great things in Elgin in honour of his arrival.

D. I have not heard of any thing of that kind.

E. Public-dinners, &c, &c.

D. Pshaw! I would have blazed all the tar-barrels in Elgin, on Lady-hill, roasted oxen whole, pierced a butt of strong ale as large as the Muckle Kirk; and drunk the King's health out of a bottle of claret, the shape and size of the Tolbooth.

E. Why did not our magistracy make their appearance in Edinburgh: I see the Glasgow, Dundee, and Aberdeen Magistrates have made a notable dash there; I am sorry to see ours behind in that respect.

D. I saw in the Procession the rulers of one Burgh make a conspicuous figure. They were drawn along in a dung-cart with two horses, accompanied by drums and pipes—among the most remarkable of the members was Councillor Murrian, with an empty bee-hive on his head.

E. You seem to be joking,—you surely did not see all this?

D. Upon my honor I saw it—while overpowered with fatigue, I took a nap in the coach coming home this morning. The idea was so ludicrous that I burst into a fit of laughter, which awoke me. A gentleman who was my fellow-traveller, I make no doubt, set me down for a runaway from Bedlam.—But pray, could you recommend me to a wife?

E. A wife! what do you mean by that—what would you do with a wife?

D. I don't know—I have just taken it into my head, I despair now of getting a kirk, and I am determined to have a wife—could you recommend one to me?

E. I don't know, perhaps the best way is to advertise for one in the Ephemera; write a letter and let it run thus—

D. By the bye, how is the Ephemera coming on; are those articles I sent inserted, and are they approved or condemned?

E. The best way to answer that question is to tell you that all the Numbers printed are disposed of, and as the first Volume of the Ephemera is now nearly at a close, it is proposed throwing off a second edition of the whole, with considerable alterations, improvements, &c. A Prospectus will soon be left at the Booksellers, when those wishing complete copies are requested to put down their names.—But the ginger beer is done, will you take a lit-

the more? I am so glad to see you after you have had the effulgence of Royalty blazed in your face, that I could detain you the whole evening.

D. Not any more: I shall keep myself up for a swig of the Toast and Water in the evening. Meantime let us be going—(*Exeunt*).

ON TEA.

*Te dulcis conjux, Te solo in littore secum,
Te veniens die, Te decidente canebat,*

VING. G. IV. 465.

My Muse, if at my greatest need
Thou ever to my prayer gavest heed,
Now lend thine aid to tune my reed

And o'er its stops my fingers lead;
With triple glee,
I sing of Tea.

Hail noble plant! thy very name
Kindles a true poetic flame,
Well worthy thou of all the fame,

And not to sing thee were a shame,
Which I can give;
As lang's I live.

Let other Bards, wi' rhyming clink,
Sing to the praise of gude Scotch drink;
And let them bowse till candles blink,

Then senseless, menseless, down they sink,
Wi' double glare,
Beside their chair.

'Tis thine, a peacefu' mirth to gie,
Sweet, sober, joy-inspiring Tea,
All Thracian broils before thee flee,

And gloomy Care, at sight of thee,
Thou plant of peace
Cheers up his face.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. XXIV.

Monday, 2d September, 1822.

DAVID MORRISON.

“ I have been young, and now am old; yet never saw I the righteous man forsaken, or his seed begging their bread.”

THERE was not a man in the whole Parish of _____ more esteemed and beloved than David Morrison: meek, patient, kind, and benevolent, with all the more turbulent passions which disfigure humanity subdued in his nature, he seemed another Nathaniel “without guile”. Every one wished him well, and while most other men have generally some enemies who are disposed to detract from their virtues, and look with a jealous eye on their successes, there was not a single being who would not have rejoiced in David’s good fortune. Yet David was not by any means fortunate; he seemed to have been born under an evil star; while others of his neighbours prospered and got rich, he was always struggling with difficulties, and involved in pecuniary embarrassments. Year after year

his crops failed, and his flocks and his herds were generally unproductive. Some people might be apt to say, that by attending a sacramental occasion at the distance of twelve miles from home, he often left his cows pent up in starvation for a whole day, while the poor brutes filled the byre with their pitiful lowings; and that instead of tilling his grounds, he was fonder of stopping his horses at the end of the field, sitting down on his plough, and engaging the passenger in some favourite theological argument.—I will not deny that, perhaps there was something in this. David was not, by any means, the most active of men; and, for his own part, he would at any time prefer meditation to action. But notwithstanding all this, there was a certain fate attending him, a sort of ‘crook in his lot,’ which even the best of men are oftentimes subjected to.

His substance, wasted by a variety of unforeseen accidents, and involved, through the deceitfulness of others, whom his unsuspecting heart had trusted, in more than his own losses, his manful struggling against adversity he saw could no longer avail him. Harrased with a proceeding, and the unrelenting demands of justice, he was obliged at last to give up his possessions, and with a few necessary articles of furniture and a single cow the only remnants saved from the wreck of his fortunes, he prepared to retire to a small cottage about a dozen of miles from his former abode. To such a man as David Morrison, accustomed to submit to every event with meekness and resignation, such a reverse of fortune was not overpowering; yet, it may be supposed, that he could not

easily relinquish the station he had so long and so honourably retained in society without deep feelings of regret and sorrow. The soothing commiserations, which many were prompt to pay him in this the day of his adversity, were peculiarly gratifying; yet his sensitive heart was not unfrequently stung with anguish when he experienced the ingratitude of those on whom he had formerly heaped favours, and perceived the cold selfishness with which the unfeeling always keep aloof from the unfortunate.

The first night that David, his wife and only daughter, settled themselves in their humble abode, they could not avoid frequently reflecting on the change of their condition, and looking around on the bare and homely apartment, comparing it to the more substantial one they had just left. They partook of their evening meal almost in silence: each one was too much taken up with their own solitary musings to contribute to the general conversation. After supper was finished the old man took down the Bible, which was his familiar companion, and opening it, began to read at that place where it says, "I am the man who have seen affliction;" during the perusal his eyes were often full and his voice faltered, but ere he had finished his countenance brightened up, and he laid down the book with an air approaching to exultation. "I thank God, my friends," he exclaimed, "that the worst is past, and that all our misfortunes have only brought us to this: with good consciences and hearts that fear the Lord we may still be happy, and I would not now exchange my place at this humble hearth, surrounded by

those I love, and by whom I am beloved, with the comfortings I have this night experienced, for all the pomp and grandeur of the unrighteous."

It has been already hinted that David was somewhat fond of theological controversy; indeed the indulgence of this appeared to be his only failing; when opposed in any favourite argument he was apt to become heated, and in those moments displayed an intolerance of opinion which was in opposition to his general feeling of universal charity. With the minister of his former Parish, he had entered warmly into some discussions regarding some points of Scripture doctrine, the real nature of which I have unfortunately allowed to escape my memory; however, it produced a coolness between them, which, joined to a dislike which David had taken to the frequency of the minister's *moral* discourses, induced the former to leave, for the most part, his own parish church, and travel every Sunday twelve miles to attend another clergyman. When obliged to change his residence he made a point of choosing his cottage in the neighbourhood of his favourite minister; and this was one source of congratulation with him, "that he could now every Sabbath hear the word of God unpolluted and unmixed with strange doctrines of man's invention." The hurricanes of fortune having blown their worst, peace and hope seemed once more to have spread their soft wings over the dwelling of David and those he loved. Relieved from the anxious care and perplexities in which he was before involved, his heart was now unloaded of a burthen of sorrow, and he began to taste again of the calm plea-

asures and sober joys of contentment. Unable, from increasing years, for more violent labour, he was now frequently seen tending his cow, now his only dependance, in the green lanes and by the sides of hedges. In the long summer afternoons he was generally seated on the grass, busily engaged with some book: either the Bible, the Pilgrim's Progress, or Watson's whole Body of Divinity. Not unfrequently he amused himself with singing some favourite psalm or hymn of the church; and I have seen the workmen in the neighbouring field suspend their labours and listen attentively, as the simple, but solemn strains, came wafted to them on the summer breeze.

There was another inhabitant of the neighbouring hamlet, who was often the companion of David, in these his out of door exercises—a pale, sallow middle-aged man, who walked on crutches. He was an expert angler, and generally spent one half of the day, when the weather was favourable, hopping up and down the banks of the small rivulet, which ran in a winding course along the valley. At home he manufactured snuff-boxes, egg-cups, and punch-ladles, the distribution of which secured him the patronage and good-will of the country round. He had a tenacious memory and ready wit, but withal a grave deportment and serious turn of thought, which was the principal cement of friendship between him and David.—In returning from his fishing excursions he often encountered the latter; when laying aside his fishing rod and basket, they would both set themselves down on the grass and spend an hour or two 'in sweet converse.' More-

over, when David imagined he had made him a convert to some of his most fondly cherished opinions, in the fulness of his heart he would press him to accompany him to his cottage, there to be regaled with a draught of whey or bowl of butter-milk, from the fair hands of his lovely daughter Mary.

But we have not yet spoken of Mary. What description can convey any idea of the mild; simple, delicate and interesting blossom which seemed thus to have been transplanted to the lonely and sequestered vale 'to bloom in vain'! When a child, Mary had all the glow of health and vivacity of spirits which characterise her age; but as she grew up, misfortune too soon accustomed her to bitter reflection, and cast an air of tender pensiveness over her pale and thoughtful countenance. Besides her father's difficulties she had also troubles peculiar to herself, which preyed upon her mind.—We may here mention slightly, that there was a neighbouring farmer's son who had been her companion almost from infancy. For many years they had walked together every day two miles to school and returned regularly every evening. Rob was what is generally called a roving lad; he had all the boisterous spirits of a boy: was generally the leader of the rest in any exploit of mischief or sport, and seldom was without a blue eye, the trophy of some boxing match; yet with all this, he was generous, kind-hearted, and affectionate. Mary's little basket containing her dinner, which, on account of the distance, they always brought with them, he regularly carried himself, to relieve her; and when there was any dispute among the

scholars Rob invariably took Mary's part, and if need were, stood forward as her champion. From a child he had always shewn a marked predeliction for a seafaring life, and his friends seeing he was bent on that profession, at last gratified his wishes, and he entered on board a small trading vessel. Generally at the end of every voyage he returned home, when he was sure to bring some present to his Mary: a silk handkerchief, a set of ribbons, or some gaudy gewgaw which was likely to strike the fancy of a sailor. He danced with her at the country weddings, accompanied her to the fairs; and in short, they were set aside by the whole country round, as intended for each other. Rob was attentive and assiduous in his profession, and at last was appointed mate of a pretty large vessel bound for a foreign voyage. Alas! they set sail, accompanied by many others; but a dreadful hurricane coming on some time afterwards, and no tidings having been heard of them for, now, three long years, it was but too reasonably concluded that they had all perished. Mary drooped her head like the lily in the field which has been drenched with the torrent; but afraid to aggravate the sufferings of her father, she submitted in silence. Yet when he, according to his usual custom, prayed for all descriptions of men, especially for "those who go down to the sea in ships," she could not help being visibly affected, and her bosom would heave with the sigh of despair.

It seemed as if fortune had not yet poured forth all its miseries on the head of David. The cow, now their sole wealth, and the only source from which they derived

their subsistence, was one morning taken ill : David was not particularly skilled in the diseases of cattle, but what simple means he knew, he administered for her recovery; a bottle of salt and water was poured down her throat, and they awaited with anxiety for any indications of her amendment. All day she remained without eating, either tossing about on the ground, or hanging her head, heaving her sides, and groaning pitifully: All night David or his family shut not an eye—watching every heavy breathing, as distinctly heard coming from the adjoining outhouse, kept them constantly awake. It may appear to many that the cause of their anxiety was insignificant; but that man knows little of human nature, who supposes that the sight of the loss of one's all can be viewed with indifference, whether that all be a cow—or a patrimony, rich as the half of the Indies. Next morning, when David and his daughter went to visit the cow, they found her stretched out on the ground, knocking her head against the stall and in the last agonies of death. When they entered, the poor creature, who had always been a favourite, seemed to recognise them; she gazed steadfastly with a pitiful look, gave a faint low, and attempted to rise up; with much sprawling she got to her knees, but the effort seemed to have exhausted her remaining strength, and she dropped down again—quite dead.—David turned aside, went into the house, and said not a word. I have heard that Mary let fall a tear—at all events she hid her face in her apron; and if any one should be disposed to ridicule her, I have only to say that I do not think a bit the less of her for the deed. When some of the stoutest of the neighbours came in the fore-

noon, and with ropes were dragging the carcase to a pit prepared for it in a sandy hollow in the neighbourhood, amidst exclamations of "Waes me but she was the bonniest beast in the country, and gae milk just like ony cream,"—David gave one look out of the window, then turned—put on his spectacles—set to the Pilgrim's Progress—and never mentioned the cow, all that day.

(*To be Continued.*)

CATHARINA FREDERICA OLDENOUGH:

To the Editor.

MY DEAR SIR,

I was exceedingly obliged to you for inserting a letter of mine, a long, long while ago, in your little book. I am again solicited by a few of my acquaintances to address you; but, upon my honor, I don't know how I shall begin, it is such a queer subject for a female pen.

You know our sex have been always accused of instability and fickleness of fancy; but I am just about to retort on the gentlemen for those failings.

In this part of the country where the ladies are so numerous, and the gentlemen, alas! so scarce; where, moreover, something like the reserve of Dutch manners prevails between the sexes; the gentlemen, by having so wide a field to choose in, have become extremely capricious in their tastes. They flirt about like butterflies from one fair flower to another. And after a lady has played her part with great dexterity; when she has angled perhaps for a whole long year, and seen the large wily trout eye the bait again and again, flirt round and round it.

with steady gaze, then skim off and again return, till at last he gives a 'glorious nibble,' and she thinks she has fairly hooked him; her delusion vanishes when she finds that he bounds away, engages in the same kind of flirtation with another, and never finds his way back. Now this is all extremely hard in the case of the lady, who in these matters, according to the established rules of decorum, must remain passive. How often have we seen one of these capricious gentlemen named to a whole batch of ladies, whom he has kept on the tiptoe of expectation, when after all most likely he flies off at a tangent and weds another whom nobody suspected. The cruel creatures then exclaim that we have 'cocked our caps' (their usual phrase) at them, when, in fact, it was their marked conduct which first raised our hopes. How much better than this would the practice of the Turks be, which I have heard papa read out of a large book called the Cyclopaedia, which is that the intended man and wife never see each other till the wedding day; or the custom of some other strange place which I have forgot, but which is, that the parents of the couple bring about and settle every thing regarding the match, without the interference of the parties themselves. Oh, what a saving of much impertinent prattle this would cause! then there would be no use for tea parties, and *Scandal*, that horrible old maiden, would be forced to hide her diminished head.

But I find, Mr. E. that although I felt a little awkward when I began my epistle, I am now going on as unceremoniously as I generally write to my cousin Jessica in the country, when I give her an account of the births, marriages, (when there happen any,) and deaths, in the town, with a whole page of description about the last tea-party, and the various dresses, &c. &c. that were wore on that occasion.—I shall obtrude no longer on your time however, and with kind compliments from Miss Betty Dolittle, Miss Christy Siptea, &c. &c. I subscribe myself

Your obedient Servant,

C. F. OLDENOUGH.

THE EXILE.

“ There is in souls a sympathy with sounds—
 _____ Wherever I have heard
 A kindred melody, the scene recurs,
 And with it all its pleasures and its pains.”

Cowper.

LONG, ling'ring years of sorrow have pass'd o'er,
 Since rash misdeeds of youth, now public grown,
 Compell'd me to forsake my native shore,
 And hide my follies in a land unknown.

Immur'd 'mid Onondago's forests drear,
 Where sound is heard not, save the torrents flow,
 Contempt, and stern oppression did I bear,
 And waked each morning—but to toil, and woe.

My spirits fail'd ; crush'd with o'erwhelming care,
 I sunk into a senseless apathy ;
 Bent to the earth in sullen, sad despair,
 I had no hope—no wish, save but to die.

All thoughts of my lost country fled my mind,
 No hope remain'd of seeing it again ;
 Perhaps I deem'd its censures too unkind,
 And spurn'd the wish its memory to retain.

One eve, releas'd from the hard toils of day,
 With vacant gaze bent on the setting sun,
 I sat ; till far behind the main, his way
 He'd sped—and dark the shades of night came on,

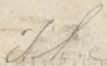
When slowly on my roused-up senses break
 Heart-thrilling strains, borne on the silent air ;
 Sure some good sp'rit his golden harp did wake,
 They could not be of earth—of heav'n they were.

They seem'd the well-known strains of boyish days,
 And instantly, that chord by their controul,
 Which long had ceas'd from vibrating, they raise—
 My home—my country, rush upon my soul.

I pant with eager longing to return ;
 New courage every obstacle gets o'er ;—
 And now on ocean's swelling bosom borne,
 I hope again to press my long lost shore !

— M'D —

R. JOHNSTON, PRINTER, ELGIN.



THE

EPHEMERA,

No. XXV.

Monday, 9th September, 1822.

DAVID MORRISON.

(Continued from page 284.)

SLEEP has a wonderful effect in dissipating sorrowful thoughts. David arose the morning after the loss of his cow, somewhat cheerful, with his mind resigned and serene. Who has not felt with David, that in lying down with a load of cares which appeared almost unsupportable, he has awoke calm and collected? 'Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.' David in the morning had gone forth into the fields to meditate, and when he returned to breakfast his mind was so absorbed in his musings, that, forgetting his loss, he enquired at his daughter what had become of the milk, which usually formed a dish at his morning repast, but immediately the misfortune of the previous day came across his mind, and he exclaimed "well, well, it canna be helped, we maun eat our bread dry, but it's nae sae meikle for that, although it will be a sair want to us, as

for poor crummock hersel'; may I be forgiven, but when I mind o' her I amaist think I have lost a friend. Ye may mind, gudewife, that her mither was gi'en to me when a bonny calf by your father, honest man, who is now at rest, on the very day on which we were married. I aye had a liken to the beast, and to her offspring after she was awa'; and o' a' my cattle I wished to retain this ane as my last and only possession, and the stay o' our auld age; but it canna be helped, as I said before, and we must just learn to bear wi' the dispensations o' Providence.

It was on a mild and beautiful autumn forenoon, when David, relieved of his accustomed charge, strolled out along the burnside to breathe the fresh air and enjoy the beauty of the scene. He was soon joined by his acquaintance Richard, the angler, when both retiring within the shade of a willow bush which grew on the bank of the stream; they sat down together to have some comfortable talk. Richard had enjoyed a most successful day's fishing: his basket was full of large trout, and I know not how far this had an effect in making him descant so eloquently on the virtue of contentment. Do not however suppose that Richard had not a feeling heart; he could sympathize with the distress of another most keenly, and did so on this occasion. They talked of the vicissitudes of this life: of the uncertainty of this mortal stage: of the folly of being over-solicitous in laying up our treasure in this world, and, finally, of the joyful anticipations of the world to come. A couple of hours soon passed over in such conversation, and when David rose

to go away, with his mind elevated far above the anxieties of frail mortality, yet on his road homeward his thoughts were entirely occupied in pondering by what means he could get another cow. He contrived expedients, weighed them in his mind again and again; but they all turned out unavailing, there was not a single ray of hope remaining. "Were I some great laird or duke," thought he, "I would reckon it one of my highest pleasures had I twenty cows to bestow upon the unfortunate." And he immediately went on to build castles in the air; for there is no time that hope is more active than when real misery has weighed down the mind. As David was crossing the public road which passed within a quarter of a mile of his cottage, walking slowly, with his hands crossed behind his back, he saw within a few yards of him a man on horseback coming riding along. He was mounted on a tall raw-boned hack; although the day was uncommonly sultry he wore a large dreadnought great-coat, long blue trowsers, a red cravat, and brownish coloured straw hat. In his hand he flourished a knotty cudgel, with which he every other minute belaboured the sides of his steed, which, notwithstanding this discipline, and also pretty severe applications of the rider's spurless heels to its flanks, yet preserved a grave and somewhat contumacious pace. David had now crossed the road, and was proceeding onwards, when the rider accosted him—"Ahoy! friend, put about ship if you please, these roads are confoundedly changed of late, pray, can you direct me the nearest way to Whaupchapple?" This word sounded like magic in David's ears; it was the name of his late farm, which, now that I think

of it, I unaccountably forgot to mention at the outset. David turned round quickly to answer, but the stranger interrupted him,—“ Hurra! Master Morrison, my honest friend, fu are ye?—it was just you I was seeking. How 's the gudewife—and how 's Mary?” and in a moment he was off his horse, caught David in his arms and almost smothered him in the folds of his woolly dreadnought. David lifted up his eyes and stared for a few moments in astonishment. “ The Lord be praised!” said he, “ gin this be na' Robby Rantree come back again, it is his ghaist! And do I see you ance mair in the land o' the living? Oh, happy will your father be! for it's many a day since he thought ye was cauld dead in the bottom o' the ocean.” “ It is really and truly me, Master Morrison, and all alive yet; it is true I have been lang awa', and have had some gay sair rubs, but I have weathered the storm at last, and I have now a good trig vessel o' my ain, ‘ *The Bonny Mary*,’ wi her colours flying, in the harbour o' the Skirlin Skellies. But how is my bonny lassie? I'm just this far on my way to Whaupchapple to lay my wealth at her feet. I hope she has na' forgot her Rab: if she has, the limmer, I'll set aff to the sea and never be heard o' mair.” David gave a groan, which startled the heart of the Sailor more than ever did the loudest whirlwind howling among his shrouds. “ Ye are aye the same kind hearted laddie,” said David, “ and I am glad to see you again. Whatever ithers might hae said o' your tricks and your frolics, I could never see ony thing but the spirit o' young blood wi' an honest heart at bottom. I am very glad to see you again weel, but times are sadly changed wi' me now :

my substance is wasted and gone, and I am now, like the mother of Ruth, in a strange country and friendless. And my daughter,"—"Good G—d! what of her?" exclaimed the sailor.—"My daughter, though it would ains hae been my joy to have seen her your's, is now, in her low condition, too humble to be a match for you." "Pooh, is that all!" said Rob—I beg his pardon, Captain Robert,—"Come, come, Master Morrison! what though ye may have been boarded by pirates, and perhaps rifled o' your cargo, does that make any difference to me? there is as much stowed in the hold of the 'Bonny Mary' as will refit you twice over; and as for the lassie, if so be she does not sail under false colours, she shall be mine, and I say it." "I doubt it canna' be, Captain; ye can never hae my sanction contrary to the advice of friends; gae your ways hame, and what they advise do ye abide by. But, may be, sin' we are so near, ye would step down to my humble cottage yonder, and see my gudewife; ye mind what a favourite ye used to be wi' her, when a little white haired callant; and how she used to stap your pockets wi' cheese, and gie you bread and butter spread ower wi' sugar. Honest woman! she will be as glad to see you as your ain mither would hae been." "Is that there your cottage, Master Morrison? Let us bear down upon it instantly!" And off he set at a quick pace, dragging his reluctant nag by the bridle in one hand, and pulling David along with the other. As they approached the cottage, Mary was standing at the door looking out for her father, but on perceiving a stranger coming along with him she timidly shrunk into the house. On Mary telling her mother that there was a visitor

coming, the old woman, anxious to know, if possible, who it was, before he should arrive, went to the door in order to have a peep, when she was instantly met and accosted by Robert. He shook her heartily by the hand and enquired after her health; but she gazed at him evidently without recognising him. Mary, who stood behind, when her ear first caught the sound of that voice, whose tones were so firmly fixed in her memory, and which the slightest incidents would often recall to her; and when she beheld that form, the image of which so constantly floated before her eyes in the day time, and came so often to her in dreams of the night, turned pale as death, then her face flushed red as scarlet; and uttering a faint scream, she fell into the arms of her Robert, stretched out to receive her.

I am sorry I cannot finish this scene in the style of the novelists, by introducing burnt feathers, fainting fits, and cold water; there was no such thing here. Mary had acute feelings, but she had also a strong and resolute mind to controul them.

Rob seated her on his knee, told her of his ship, and gallant crew, now lying at the Skirlin Skellies: run over some of the most remarkable of his adventures, and then rummaging his capacious pockets, produced a variety of presents which he had reserved for her. First of all there was a necklace of large lammer beads, strung upon a sky blue ribband; then a parcel of silk handkerchiefs of the most gaudy colours; a China cream-pot in the shape of a calf, which was intended to spew out the cream at its

mouth; and, lastly, a strange monster carved in wood, with several gold ornaments stuck on it, which appeared to have been some of the Indian's household gods, and which Rob valued above all the others—because it had a droll appearance.

In the course of a few weeks there was not a happier or more comfortable family in the country than that of David Morrison. By the liberal assistance of the Captain, which no refusal of David's could prevent, the latter found himself placed in a snug little farm in the immediate neighbourhood, well stocked with every thing necessary. When this was all settled, his daughter's marriage was solemnized with all due ceremony. Music and the dance resounded once more in his habitation; and I was credibly informed by an eye witness, that, at the earnest entreaty of the son-in-law, the old couple danced a strathspey, to the no small amusement of the company. Some people may think that this freak of David's was out of character: they are wrong: David was not that sour cynic, who condemned every species of innocent amusement, and even had it been disagreeable to him, his placid nature was so yielding and accommodating, that if he saw it would give pleasure to others he could not refuse. As the Captain's sea-faring life obliged him to be often absent, it was resolved that the new married wife should reside in her father's house; accordingly it was fitted up for her accommodation. A cuckoo-clock, nicely varnished, 'clicked behind the door,' and as it told the hour with its imitative note, astonished and delighted the country visitors; innumerable curiosities graced the

chimney piece; shining tea trays of various sizes were ranged in abundance; and, mingled with various sea shells, stood some curiously carved cups, made of the shells of cocoa, or some other nuts. A large punch bowl, on which was depicted the 'Bonny Mary,' with all her sails unfurled, her streamers floating in the air, and innumerable tars planted on the deck, with their arms placed a-kimbo, stood ready to be filled on any extraordinary occasion.

Always when the Captain returned from a voyage he was sure to bring home a keg or two of rum, brandy, or hollands; and he was invariably displeased with David when he found how little use he made of these in his absence, and marvelled how he could possibly subsist on such a small allowance of grog; for David was an abstemious man both in eating and drinking; and when in expressing his gratitude, he would exclaim 'that his cup had been made to overflow,' the Captain could never understand this, as, he said, he never saw him swig off a bumper in his life. In short, they all lived on the most amicable terms with each other. The Captain declared that if there was a saint on earth it was Master Morrison; and the only thing he could not well swallow, he said, was his desperate long prayers at night; for after he had got his quantum of grog he had main difficulty in keeping himself from snoring during the performance.

Thus lived David Morrison, till he saw his children's children sporting around him; and the latter days of his life were happier than the first.

Among

P. T.

Ite domum, Saturæ, ite capellæ.

Virgil.

Go little Book, from this my solitude,
I cast thee on the waters—go thy ways.

Southey.

AT the end of the twenty-fifth Number, the Club now pause on perceiving that their lucubrations have accumulated to the size of a small volume. The silent wing of Time has already stolen over six months since the first sheet made its appearance. As it was ushered into the world without any of that pretension, or *puffing*, which usually is the case with similar productions: as no means whatever were employed to recommend it to notice, it being left entirely to push its own way, with a feeling of perfect indifference on the part of those concerned whether it was approved or laughed at,—it is somewhat astonishing how it has stood its ground so long. And if we take into consideration the very limited population among which it has to circulate, compared to that of other places where similar works are published, it will, we think, be found that the number of copies distributed weekly are as great *in proportion* as could have been possibly looked for. Much of this must be attributed to the novelty of such a thing in this part of the country, the local allusions &c. Of course it is not attempted to consider the continuance of its circulation as a test of any intrinsic merit the publication itself can contain. A trifle, commenced the moment it was thought of, merely from the accidental circumstance of a printing press being established in

the Town, and carried on from a wish of encouraging such a necessary Art among us,—cannot be subjected to a grave or formal criticism; or if so, such criticisms must be miserably misplaced. It is true, we have often seen

—————“ Some sage erudite, profound,
Terribly arched and aquiline his nose,
And overbuilt with most impending brows,”

give a freezing look of derision as he glanced over the pages of the ‘Little Book;’ and then throw it aside; this gave us no uneasiness, as we saw we shared this contempt along with all that is elevated, profound, or witty, in the language. We have also seen the poor shallow pretender to literature look extremely wise, as he pounced with imbecile talons on some unfortunate passage in our pages, and vainly attempted to tear it to pieces; but this, so far from exciting resentment, only afforded cause of merriment when the secret *conclave* met over a jug of their Toast and Water. Meanwhile, notwithstanding all this, the Members still write on, and having become so fond of the new amusement, they still look forward to the probability of commencing a second volume, with unabated vigour.

“ Such joys have those who write. But, ah! not such,
Or seldom such, the readers of their books.
Fastidious, or else listless, or perhaps
Aware of nothing arduous in a task
They never undertook, they little note
Their dangers or escapes, and haply find
There least amusement where they found the most.”

Copyist.

Since the commencement of the work we have received from *unknown Correspondents* thirty-seven communications, thirteen of which have been inserted; we could have wished that a much greater proportion had been adapted for publication; every single one received an impartial perusal, and every one which we thought had merit was inserted; if any one was omitted it must be attributed solely to a want of taste, or error of judgment, of the selector—and to nothing else. After all, taste, in such matters, is exceedingly variable; and what might appear a poor, or middling performance to one, may be highly relished by another. It was once in contemplation to give an *Ephemera* of these unsuccessful communications, under the title of ‘Rejected Addresses,’ but the number of these has accumulated so much, that two or three sheets would not now contain them, and of course the idea has been abandoned.

We feel highly obliged to those Gentlemen, and, if we are not mistaken, Ladies, who have favoured us with contributions; and indeed it has been one principal pleasure in going on with the work, that it has been the means of bringing some of these contributions to light, and we only regret that they have not had a more celebrated vehicle to bring them forward to the notice which they deserve.

With regard to the various reports that circulate about the Contributors to this *Jeu d’Esprit*, we may observe, with the most perfect sincerity, that they are *quite erroneous*. The original founders, and *real supporters* of it are not even known to those immediately engaged in its

publication. We mention this, because we have heard individuals given as the writers of articles, which they never put a pen to, and others said to be intimately connected with the work, who have either nothing to do with it whatever, or, at most, can only be contributors of an occasional essay. Indeed, to shew how tenaciously the secret is kept, we may observe that we have heard a person in public gravely *cut up* his own performance, and he has been joined by the rest of the company, without the slightest suspicion on their part that he was criticizing his own production; and others again commending pieces which, had they known the real author of them, their prejudices would not have permitted them to be so candid. But enough of all this—we merely mention it, because we understand that such rumours, by singling out persons as connected with the work, have given uneasiness to individuals; a circumstance which generally attends anonymous publications,—but which cannot be well remedied, as works like this, to be worth any thing, must be strictly anonymous.

In fine, should the labours of the Club have afforded a laugh, or a single moment's amusement to any one, we heartily wish them good of it: should they have given pain to any one (which we cannot believe) we are heartily sorry for it: should they seem to have treated any subjects of importance with irreverence—they flatly deny it: and, should any one be disposed to sneer at their efforts, and treat them with contempt, they have only to say that they look upon all such with the most perfect indifference.

END OF VOLUME I.

THE PRINTER thinks it necessary to observe, that a communication, sent to him for insertion, in a late number, containing some matter which seemed to give offence, was put in from his *total ignorance* of its containing any thing amiss.

R. JOHNSTON, PRINTER, ELGIN.

THE

EPHEMERA,

No. 1.

Monday, 16th September, 1822.

On the rise of Art and Science among Nations.

Salva res est, philosophatur quoque jam :
Quod erat ei nomen ?—Thesaurochrysonicochrysidea.

Plant. Captiv. A. 2. S. 2.

THE distinguishing characteristic of man is, his being capable of continual improvement. All the lower animals have a certain boundary of knowledge prescribed to them, beyond which they have not the power of advancing ; but of man every new accession of knowledge expands the mind, strengthens its powers, and renders it more able to receive further additions. This consideration, by the way, is a strong argument that the soul of man is destined to immortality, and that it will go on progressively improving through endless ages of duration.

But although the human mind be so noble in itself and its future destiny so high, man would not be much superior to the animals that perish if his mental powers were not cultivated, and directed aright.

The solitary savage who traverses the desert in search of prey, and who has no incitement to action except the

gratification of his passions—who has no home, no fixed abode, or resting place—and who carries about with him a principle, the obscure glimmerings of which, perhaps, only shew him that his nature and feelings are different from those of the brute creation,—is surely a less enviable being than the animals which he kills for his sustenance.

Many of these, indeed, are superior to him in the means of procuring food, as nature has been more liberal to them in physical endowments, and in acuteness of some of the senses. It is reason and understanding alone which stamp pre-eminence on man: but these in the savage lie dormant and inactive; and the angry and violent passions of his nature are the only inciting principle remaining, and which are common to him with the animals around him. Yet this being, perhaps, has within him the seeds of the statesman, the poet, and the philosopher; and if it were not that the thorns of ignorance and barbarism choke them, they might, if placed in a more genial soil, spring up, and vegetate, and send out blossoms to enrich and beautify the intellectual world.

But man, even when most favourably situated, and when he has all the means of improvement which civilization and science afford, is yet extremely slow in acquiring knowledge; and it is the work of time, aided by precept and example, to form the mind and understanding. If then he have no one to guide and direct him—if he be left to his own unaided efforts, his progress must be slow, and his acquirements unimportant. The human mind resembles those vegetable productions of nature which require a length of time to arrive at maturity proportioned to their destined durability: the sapling oak which is to see ages roll over its head, must receive the heat of many a summer's sun, and the moisture of many a winter's shower, before its roots be firmly fixed in the earth, and its branches afford shelter to the animals of the forest—

while the humble reed, which is to endure but for a season, may spring up in a day.

It is with nations in this respect as with individuals, for improvement advances slowly, and with fruiting steps. There seems to be a principle in human nature repugnant to innovation and change; and if men can only live: uncomfortable and unsocial as their lives may be, yet they will be extremely slow in improving their condition, and slower still in finding out the way. It is by being brought into contact with others more refined and enlightened than themselves, and by contrasting their own condition and enjoyments with those of others, that men will wish for change, or try to imitate.

Art and Science never flourish in the infancy of a nation; for the first care of a new society of men, is to provide for the necessaries of life, and to ward off future want. It is not to be expected, that men who must direct their energies to provide for the day that is passing over them, will be much inclined to speculative enquiries; or that they will have much pleasure in contemplating the works of nature, in examining her laws, or exploring her productions. The huntsman who traverses both wood and valley to procure food for himself and family, will care little for the beauty or deformity, the nature or habits of the animals which he kills. The rude and misshapen huts which the hands of infant society huddle together, are intended to ward off the inclemency of the seasons, and provided they answer this important end, their inhabitants concern not themselves about beauty and order, and proportions. And so long as men find it difficult to procure the necessaries of life, so long will literature and science be strangers to them. It is only when the mind is at ease, when it feels no painful anxiety for to-morrow, when it rests secure from future wants, that the important question—"where am I, and from whence,"—will suggest itself.

Thus then will men, when their security is once awakened, begin to make discoveries in nature, and go on improving these comforts and conveniencies, and advancing themselves in the scale of being. But still, if left to their unaided efforts, men thus situated will advance very slowly in intellectual improvement, and many a century will elapse before they arrive at any degree of perfection.

The current of knowledge must be assisted by many a tributary stream, before it become a grand and mighty river; but even unaided, it will silently force its way, and extend its boundaries, and deepen its channel, and water and fructify the country through which it flows.

A single man of science will do more to civilize and improve a nation, such as has been supposed, in a very short time, than their own combined efforts would in a good many centuries. The wisdom of Peter of Russia was conspicuous in this, that he invited the learned of Europe to civilize his Barbarous subjects, by introducing letters among them. After the defeat* of the brave Charles of Sweden, by which he lost the fruits of so many victories, the politic conqueror did not exchange the captives for gold and silver, but he sent them to the remotest parts of his vast Empire, where they introduced the knowledge of the mechanical arts, and science and letters.

The improvement of nations depends on various circumstances, and proceeds from various causes. Some have been civilized by being conquered. Britain, subdued by the Romans, soon began to make a figure in Roman arts and Roman eloquence. Others have been indebted to the vanquished for the gifts of knowledge and refinement. The Romans derived from Greece, which they subdued, all the knowledge of the fine arts, of philosophy and poetry; and the savage victors, as the poet terms them, were in a manner subdued by the vanquished.

* At the Battle of Pultowa.

Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes
 Intulit agresti Latio—
 Et post Punica bella quietus, querere cepit
 Quid Sophocles et Thespia et Æschylus utile ferrent.

Hor.

Some nations again have received their knowledge by means of commerce, by colonization, by visits from countries more refined, or by visiting them. † Greece herself, as history informs us, was indebted to Egypt and Chaldaea for the rudiments of Science and Literature. The happy situation of a country which was in a manner the frontier of Europe with Asia, and divided only by a narrow extent of Sea from Egypt and Syria, naturally invited travellers from these countries, which, from the remotest times, were renowned for wisdom and knowledge. Temporary colonies, too, were formed by these travellers, which conferred many signal benefits on the natives, and diffused a light over the melancholy gloom of ignorance, which pervaded Greece in the early period of her history.

The Greeks for a long time acknowledged the benefits which these visitors conferred on them; but when their refined descendants began to distinguish themselves in arts and arms, and to compare themselves with the nations around them, their pride and consciousness of their own superiority induced them to think that the Gods above must have reared the infancy of a people who so far excelled the rest of mankind.

That Egypt and the East were the cradles of knowledge, we have the testimony of history: and the reason why these nations were so early renowned for their knowledge may be explained in the following manner.

It has been already observed, that the first care of an infant society is to provide the necessaries of life; and when this is once accomplished, then will the works of nature begin to attract their attention. If this be true,

† See Gillies' History of Greece.

it necessarily follows that if the country be remarkable for the fertility of its soil, the inhabitants will be enabled to look around them, and to enquire into the laws of nature the sooner. And if the country be remarkable for its natural productions and wonders, as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, inundations, &c. the curiosity of the natives will be the more strongly excited, and their desire to understand the cause of these phenomena will stimulate them to enquiry. Egypt, Chaldea, and the East, unite most of these considerations; and accordingly Science has been traced to these places. The inundations of the Nile effacing the boundaries of property, it is said, first turned the attention of the Egyptians to remedy this inconvenience:—hence Geometry had its origin. This theory is likewise supported by the consideration, that in those countries where the unhappy inhabitants can hardly obtain the absolute necessaries of life hardly any discoveries in Science have been made, and when introduced its progress is slow and unpromising. It is delightful to think, however, that knowledge has now made its way through barriers of ice and snow to many of the Arctic regions, where the inhabitants can hardly wrest from the reluctant soil a scanty subsistence,—that the productions of Grecian and Roman genius deceive the long nights of their tedious winters, and cheat them of their gloom and sadness,—that in imagination they can leave the abode of storms and tempests and transplant themselves to more favoured climes, and wander among groves and woods and vallies, immortalized in verse and consecrated by song. It is more delightful still, to think that the song of praise is raised to the Most High even in these scenes where nature is most dreadful, where the angry scowl of winter saddens the face of the earth for the greater part of the year: where nothing is heard but the discordant jarring of contending elements, the thunder noise of the descending avalanche, the melancholy howl of the beast of prey, desperate and infuriated by hunger,—that even there the cheering

beams of science should radiate the mind, and the light of truth illuminate the soul. ‡

And this is the boast and glory of Art and Science, that they minister to the happiness and comfort of those among whom they dwell. Nor are these philosophers to be listened to who would try to persuade themselves and others, that the rude and unsophisticated manners of the untutored savage are preferable to those of civilized and polished life. Refinement, no doubt, is attended with many crimes and vices, and perhaps the luxury of a people is a test of the flourishing state of science among them; yet it is no conclusive argument against refinement of manners or against science that ministers toil to say that vices and misery frequently accompany them, seeing they afford the means of the greatest earthly happiness if employed aright. The history of all ages shows that the real comfort and enjoyment of men depend on their intellectual improvement. If we consider the condition of rude society when men must depend on the spontaneous productions of the earth, or on the pecuniary success of the chase for their support, when they are unsheltered from the inclemencies of the seasons,—from the scorching rays of the summer's sun and the piercing colds of the winter's hail; when they are as savage, as unrelenting, as the animals they pursue; when the better feelings of their nature never appear, but are effaced and obliterated by the darkest and most malignant passions; when the voice of mercy is never heard, but is drowned by the piercing yell of blood-thirsty revenge; when there is no security but arms, and life is one continued scene of feuds and animosities. If we consider this, and compare it with that of the Greeks of Athens, when Athens was in her glory—when her citizens were renowned for their wisdom and knowledge,—when her architects embellished and beautified her with temples and palaces,—when her statuary embodied the

‡ See Sir Geo. M. Kenzie's Travels.

gods of her idolatry, and 'polished into flesh the rugged stone,'—when her painters feasted the eyes of her inhabitants, and her poets charmed their imaginations,—when her philosophers improved their hearts and pointed out to them the way to happiness, her orators inspired them with the love of glory and martial deeds, with hatred against the tyrant and oppressor—if we consider this, then will appear the difference between barbarity and refinement—the happiness attending the uncultivated mind, and the enlightened understanding. Y.

At the weekly meeting of the TOAST AND WATER CLUB on Friday night, one of the Members produced a handsomely bound volume which he had just received, and which was titled "A Summer in the North; or, Observations on Men, Manners, and Scenery, in Morayshire. By Richard Stanley, Esq. of Lincoln's Inn, London." We must observe that the volume was in Manuscript, it not having yet been published. Besides some quires of pages written out in a neat and legible hand, there was also a variety of sketches of the most remarkable scenery, ruins, groups of country peasantry, &c. done with considerable spirit. Some of our readers may perhaps recollect a young gentleman who spent a considerable part of the summer here, and who was generally to be seen about the Hotels, dressed in a pea-green surtout, yellow vest, and drab trowsers: he is the writer, and being intimately acquainted with one of the Members of the Club, he has sent him his book in MS. to revise it preparatory to its publication. As several of the passages read before the Members seemed to afford considerable amusement, we have been induced to extract a few of them, in hopes that they may be found not uninteresting to general readers.

Although the observations of travellers seldom inform us of any thing which we did not know before, yet they are generally read with eagerness, from a wish we have to get the opinions of a stranger on subjects which, having become so familiar to us from daily acquaintance, we are less likely to judge of impartially. Besides, a judicious traveller, by drawing a comparison between the manners and customs, advantages and disadvantages, of his own country, and those of the one he is visiting, will enable his readers either to correct what with them is amiss, or to enjoy with a higher relish those advantages in which they have the superiority. In the present writer there is often, perhaps, a good deal of flippancy of remark; and from his having lived always amid the refinement and luxury of the Metropolis, he is more likely to undervalue the comparatively simple manners and inartificial life of the country and country towns. We shall endeavour to give those passages which are the least exceptionable.

The work is written in the form of letters. And a few of the general heads are as follow:—

On the situation, general scenery, and aspect of Morayshire.—A description of Country Towns, more especially Elgin and Forres—Elgin described—Its past and present history—Account of the manners of the Inhabitants—The Ladies—Gentle Society—Burgesses, &c.—Some account of the most remarkable battles in Elgin, especially the late “Civil Wars”—Visit to the Cathedral, Castle of Spynie, Priory of Pluscarden, &c.—Forres—Ancient set of the Burgh, and curious anecdotes of its magistracy—Literati—Learned men and women—Description of the Country Peasantry, with sketches, &c. But we cannot enumerate the half of the subjects, and must content ourselves for the present with giving a few extracts. The following is a general account of the Town of Elgin.—

"I ARRIVED here this morning. The entrance into the Town from the South is certainly prepossessing. The ruins of a fine Cathedral rising in solemn majesty amid its embowering trees, has a grand and venerable appearance. The Town itself consists of one long street, extending from east to west, about a mile in length. The houses are set down without any sort of regularity, with sometimes their fronts, but oftener their ends, exposed to the streets; this latter plan, I am told, is an expedient contrived to save the expence of feu duty, and what room they want in front they make up by running the walls along in a dark narrow lane behind, every door in which being graced with a dunghill in a high state of fermentation, the pungency of the atmosphere may be more easily conceived than described. In short, were our good old *Strand* or *Cheapside*, lightly as they are esteemed at home, taken and set down here, compared to Elgin they would appear as goodly cities, and their houses like palaces. Yet the spirit of improvement seems to be stirring in some parts of the town, and new streets and new houses, of, by no means, a contemptible appearance, have been lately erected. But enough of streets and houses, I shall now endeavour to give you some account of the natives."——

This account, from the unceremonious and superficial manner in which it is written, we shall not transcribe; but prefer giving an extract from a MS. which was sent us a considerable time ago, said to be written by the celebrated Sir Thomas Urquhart, of Cromarty, but which we have always deferred giving until we could ascertain its authenticity. Speaking of the inhabitants upwards of two centuries ago, he says,

"On the one hand thou art not to look for the polish and refinement of courtliness, nor on the other for the rusticity of a remote barbarity: you must steer a middle course, and you will come upon a sober, sedate, week-day sort of community; careful withal to scrape together a subsistence, and as careful after they have accumulated it to keep it from dissipating. In this light their habits to a stranger may appear somewhat penurious. Yet luxury is estimated very differently by different grades of society, and I am convinced that the peasant, coming only a few miles from the country, whose daily fare is a never ending round of oatmeal and vegetables tortured into a variety of aspects, would look with admiration into the dianer pot of a townsman, where the small joint of mutton bears no proportion to the oceans of watery fluid with which it is surrounded.

Who has not heard the exclamation of the old starved beggar—"Oh, were I a king what lumps of butter and honey I would eat!"

But to return to our traveller and his book. There is a long letter on tea parties, or, as he styles them, 'Tea and turn out;' we have already had enough of these in our pages,—we shall give the concluding paragraph of the letter on 'Routs.'—

"It is rather astonishing that the people here, so fond on all occasions of aping the manners of the metropolis, have not yet adopted the sort of entertainment called a 'Rout,' or, 'At Home;' perhaps it argues so much for their good sense that they have not tried that ridiculous practice of squeezing some hundreds of poor mortals into close apartments to be half roasted, and almost suffocated with heat, vapour, dust, a poisonous atmosphere, and all the combined horrors of another Calcutta dungeon."

There is another letter descriptive of the "Board of Secret intelligence," or, "School for Scandal;" an institution which we never knew existed in Elgin before; and which we have some doubts must be a mistake in the writer,—he, however, seems to admire the perfection to which the institution is brought, and declares it is as completely organized as any system of police, or society of Inquisitors. There is a long and rather dull letter on the Ladies of Elgin; and, from the writer's taste being rather fastidious, we are afraid we could not give it with any probability of its affording satisfaction. Among other matter he has a long discussion on thick ankles, which he attributes to the 'eating of oat cakes, and wearing worsted stockings.' He gives a very good account of a visit to Pluscarden Priory; one passage of which we shall insert,—*O si sic omnia!*

"The road through this valley winds along the foot of a brown rugged heath-covered mountain, whose grey rocky summit, destitute of any enlivening vegetation, frowns over the head of the traveller, and fills his mind with a sombre and chilling loneliness. Indeed there is an air of seclusion and solitude which pervades the whole scene, and seldom are your silent musings interrupted, except by the occasional meeting of a wayfaring passenger. Then indeed it is

delightful to the stranger to see with what an air of frankness and respect he is saluted by these Country people. None of the peasantry here, although you may never have seen them before, pass you without a salutation. they invariably put their hand to their bonnet, and not unfrequently make some observation on the state of the weather, or some general topic of conversation. How very different this from the practice of cities, where thousands pass each other every hour without spending a look on each other or uttering a word! But though such a practice would be impracticable and often inconvenient amid the crowds of a metropolis, yet it would appear somewhat strange in these lonely and secluded vallies if two persons should pass regardless of each other, as if they were not beings of the same species, and members of one great family. I have frequently entered into conversation with these people, and found them possessed of all the intelligence, simplicity, and proper feeling so characteristic of their Country."

But we must here stop, although the few extracts we have given will convey but a very imperfect idea of the multifarious topics which the volume treats of. It being written, as Byron says of Lady Morgan's Italy, in a *fearless* manner, has precluded us from giving extracts which we are pretty sure would be unacceptable to the generality of our readers. X.

H——n has been received, but we must beg leave to decline his services although we think well of his epistolary style.

Knockrae sketches shall be resumed very soon. Also something more by the author of 'David Morrison.'

B. & Z. shall be attended to very soon.

Some other communications have been received, and shall be answered afterwards.

B. JOHNSTON, PRINTER, ELGIN.

EPHEMERA,

No. II.

Monday, 23d September, 1822.

ON ANCIENT GREECE.

— Vns exemplaria Græca

Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.

Her. De Arte Poetica. 268.

IN Philosophy and Science, and in many of the arts of life, which, from their nature, must be progressively improving, the Greeks have been surpassed by other nations; but in the fine Arts, and in polite Literature, it may be doubted if any other nation has excelled or even equalled them.

The profusion of Pericles, and the liberality of Alexander, roused the human intellect to gigantic exertions; and the painters and statuaries, under the fostering care of these extraordinary men, seem to have contended with nature herself, and to have produced works, which, if we believe the report of antiquity, have never been equalled, and perhaps will never be surpassed.

Athens especially was rendered by Pericles the abode of every thing that is beautiful and lively;—the very Olympus of celestial grandeur and dignity, where the Gods of Pagan superstition were seen to assume a tangible form, and to dwell in the habitations of men. Pericles has been blamed for having squandered away the public money in decking his favourite city; but for the honour of human nature he may be forgiven: he shewed what man could do, and called out powers which were not supposed to exist. In judging of the fine Arts of Greece, the voice of antiquity must be chiefly listened to:—few specimens have escaped the ravages of time, but in these may be seen the powerful genius of that mighty people; and all that has been said concerning the fine Arts among them may be easily credited. It would be difficult to investigate the cause why Greece was so pre-eminently distinguished for her attainments in the imitative Arts. The prejudices of Euripides, Aristotle, and Plato, will meet with indulgence because they proceeded from a praiseworthy feeling,—the *amor patriæ*; when they try to persuade us that the genial atmosphere, the serene and unclouded skies of Greece, were peculiarly conducive to the growth of Art, Letters and Philosophy.

The doctrine of the influence of climate on the intellectual faculties of man has had its defenders even in modern times, and was once as much over-rated as it is now erroneously descried. All theoretical opinions are more frequently supported and attacked by a spirit of petulant contradiction than by the fair deductions of sober reasoning. Thus the history of Philosophy exhibits a picture of prejudice and paradox,—the ‘baseless

fabrics of visions,"—an alteration of learned folly and madness. Climate once was every thing but now it is nothing. Climate is not a standard whereby the intellectual powers of a nation may be determined, yet surely it violates neither experience nor probability to say that physical causes may have very great influence on all that relates to the senses, and consequently on the intellectual constitution of man. There is a mutual connexion between the mind and body, so that the powers and energy of the one depend on the health and vigour of the other. If climate then operate on the physical constitution of man, it must, if the premises be true likewise operate on his intellectual constitution. It is one of many co-operating causes, but of itself it has no great power over genius and intellectual greatness. Plato returned thanks to the immortal gods that he was an Athenian and not a Theban—that he breathed on the southern and not on the northern side of the Asopus, and although the 'Crassus aer' of *Bœotia was proverbially dull and stupefying, yet Pindar, and Pelopidas and Epaminondas sufficiently vindicate the honour of the climate. The shores and the isles of the Archipelago are now as highly favoured by nature as in the days of Pericles. With as liberal a hand she still scatters flowers, 'empurpling all the ground,' and perfuming the air with their balmy fragrance. The song of the nightingale may still be heard

• ————— "quod si
 Judicium subtile videndis artibus illud
 Ad libros et ad hæc Musarum dona vocares
 Doctum in crasso jurares ære natum.

Hor. lib 2 Epist. 1.

in the groves: the shepherd's roundelay in the vallies, and the village maidens may still be seen adorned with garlands and flowers 'returning with a choral song when evening has gone down.' Modern travellers confirm the evidence of antiquity, that there the human form is more grand and majestic, and the features have greater animation and intensity of expression than are to be met with in other nations of the world.

The soil and climate and the external appearance of the country are the same as in the proudest days of Grecian grandeur. The human form can be still seen either in its manliness and dignity, or in its gracefulness, delicacy and softness; and the men and women still look as if they had walked out of the pictures of an Apelles or the statues of a Phidias had again started into life. But now there is no Phidias to animate the marble of Paros, and the canvas of an Apelles no longer reflects the beauty and the loveliness of Greece. The reason of this, perhaps, is that there is not a Pericles or an Alexander to encourage and foster genius; or perhaps a better reason may be given, namely, that Greece has lost her liberty and independence. Liberty is the parent and nurse of art and science; with her they are born, with her they flourish, and decline as she languishes. There is a mutual sympathy between them, so that whatever affects the one is felt by the other.

Genius is of a delicate and sensitive nature; it shrinks from the cold icy hand of slavery, or rather they cannot exist together. They mutually repel one another; they are of heterogeneous principles, they can never amalgamate. That the rise and progress, the decay and fall, of

art and science in nations, depend upon the liberty which they enjoy, might be illustrated by comparing the different periods of Grecian and Roman history, and by contrasting the literature of these different periods. The despotic governments of many eastern nations would shew likewise, that ignorance is the constant attendant on slavery; but our limits will not permit. If liberty and independance then operate so materially on the advancement of art and science in a nation, we may apply the rule to the governments of ancient Greece.

But perhaps it was owing to the peculiar nature of these governments, as much as to the high degree of liberty which they enjoyed, that they so far excelled the rest of mankind in wisdom and learning. The active and laborious education of the Greeks—their united and separate interests—their rivalship and jealousy—their pride and ambition—their religious and civil and military institutions, and, perhaps more than any thing else, their Olympic and other games, all tended to elicit the powers of man, and to rouse him to intellectual exertion.

The literature of Greece has been more fortunate than the fine arts. A great many works have come down to us which are the purest and most perfect models in almost every kind of composition. The historian, poet, and philosopher, have the sublimest examples for their imitation in the writings of Greece: they are drawn from nature, and founded on the life and feelings and the constitution of man.

They are an inexhaustible fountain, which, flowing in ten thousand channels, has filled the whole world with bright images and illustrious thoughts.

Y.

On the disadvantages of a too great Popularity.

It is a universal observation, that what is too common is little esteemed. There is a charm about every novelty which makes it acceptable for the time, and which gilds the most insignificant trifles with the glitter of importance. But, independent of this, even things intrinsically good in themselves, by coming repeatedly before our view and being continually obtruded upon us, begin to pall, and at last become absolutely disagreeable. The food which was highly relished at first, by being daily repeated loses its agreeable flavour,—the scene which was once viewed with admiration, by being frequently seen can at length be passed without exciting a feeling,—it has happened that the most ardent lover could have changed his partner after the honey-moon,—and friendships which were thought to be eternal have sometimes given place to a new acquaintance or a change of circumstances. But these observations are found to hold true, no less frequently, in what regards the fine arts. We have often heard a beautiful air when it was first introduced highly admired and relished; we could hear it repeated two or three times a day with the highest pleasure, and practised again and again with renewed delight; but, by and by, when it became more common, when we have heard it re-echoed from the mouths of the rabble, and tortured and mangled by every scraper on-stringed, or puffer on wind instruments, it has really become grating to the ears, and at length quite insufferable. Even literary works of merit, especially those of that felicitous description, which are equally relished by

the most refined taste, or by the most simple and uneducated, are often ultimately injured in public estimation by their universal diffusion. The deep philosophy of the Stagyrte—the beautiful speculations of Plato—the accurate reasoning of Bacon—and the solemn sublimity of Milton,—can only be duly appreciated by the learned, and they stand apart in respectful dignity; while the all-sympathising scenes of Shakespeare—the simple pathos of Burns—and the exquisite humour and nature of the Author of Waverley,—are subject to the fickle praise or censure of every pretender to literature.

There is a fashion in literature as well as in every thing else. After the revival of Letters, the great models of imitation were the writers of Greece and Rome. Homer and Virgil, among the poets, were the standards of excellence: their manner was copied and their style imitated by every writer who expected to excel. Every juvenile versifier and petty rhymster, when he had a hero to celebrate, was sure to do it in the true epic style, until at last the changes, rung upon the two great originals, became perfectly disgusting. The sweetness and simplicity of pastoral poetry was once capable of delighting, soothing and refining the imagination; but by and by, such a gurgling of rills, fanning of breezes, cooing of doves, and sighing of love-sick Amyrillises, was heard re-echoed from all quarters, that the ear became stunned with the tinkling sounds, and was closed to the beauty, the simplicity and innocence of the songs of Arcady. At one time the correct and flowing melody of Pope was reckoned the perfection of poetical excellence: his writings were quoted on every occasion, and every essayist

or declaimer was sure to seize hold of some of his sententious couplets "to point a moral or adorn a tale." But the popularity of Pope has now given place to other candidates for fame; and there are those to be found, who deny him even the title of a poet. Another race have succeeded, who, wearied of the monotony of chaste and classical diction, of concise though sometimes stiff and laboured modes of expression, have returned to the old English diffuseness and irregularity, originally founded on the Italian and Provençal poetry; and English literature is now threatened with a total extirpation of all classical propriety,—of that purity and correctness of diction, which form such a conspicuous excellence in the productions of antiquity.

Writers of the present day despise the good old rule of Horace, to keep their productions from the public until they have received the repeated polishing and corrections of half a score of years. An almost inconceivable rapidity of writing seems now to be thought indispensable to the ease and spirit of every publication; but whether such a diffuse and lax style of composition will sustain its importance and interest in the critical eye of Posterity, is extremely doubtful; and what new manner of writing the ever-varying tastes of men will afterwards adopt, though it may be an amusing subject of speculation, cannot even be guessed at till Time, the great solver of mysteries, shall discover.

Notwithstanding all these changes of custom and fashion, experience convinces us that there is a fixed standard of taste, and a certain class of productions, which are

calculated to please in every age, and under all circumstances. These may pall upon the public taste, from their becoming too common, and from being over-praised; but after a time they will resume their proper place in public estimation, and, once properly established, retain it ever afterwards. That station in Science or Letters, where the approbation of the select few is obtained, without being subjected to the prejudices of the vulgar, is no doubt the most dignified; but the power of exciting universal interest and awakening the common feelings of humanity, though attended with the inconveniences already mentioned, is certainly a mark of the utmost compass and refinement of genius. E.

MATTHEW GRUMBLE, ESQ.

To the Editor.

SIR,

I HAVE just drawn my large easy chair close to the side of the chimney, and having enveloped myself in my large flannel night-gown, with night-cap of the same, stirred the fire with my poker till the gleams mount half up the chimney; and having assorted my pen, ink and paper, I sit down to give you some account of my present feelings,—more with the view of weaning my thoughts from myself, than from any wish I have to please you or your readers. I must premise that it is now about twelve o'clock of the day—the morning set in with a dense, gloomy and drizzling rain, which has now increased to a heavy shower—the rain patters on the window, and

runs down the glass in streaming torrents—no person is to be seen out of doors who can keep in, and all is solitude, except an occasional passenger who now and then runs along with his drenched umbrella, which barely shelters him from the furious elements. I should except the poultry, which are now to be seen with their wet plumage running to gain the most convenient shelter, and the ducks which alone of all the animated creation keep holiday by splashing about in the newly formed pools.—In short, every thing is as gloomy as a gloomy man like myself could wish, and I now proceed to give you the promised account of myself, which may properly be called “The diary of a Hypochondriac.” In the morning I generally rise with the presentiment that the day is to be one of misfortunes. The first thing I do is to look at the state of the weather. If the morning looks raw and damp I take the precaution of putting on three or four additional folds of clothing. I ring for Grizzy to air my shoes, and to put into them several plies of cork and flannel soles. I then consider for about two hours whether I am to venture out that day or not, and after revolving the matter seriously in my mind, I generally come to the resolution of leaving the event to be decided by the state of the weather. Breakfast comes, and I either find the tea tasteless, the toast overdone, or imagine that I see the head of a chicken peeping out of my hard-boiled egg.—After breakfast, if the day be decidedly bad, I sit down as I do at present, and either pick my teeth, twirl the poker in my hand, or pare my nails—in either of which amusements I contrive to pass away the time until dinner. If the day is good I sally out with a couple of great-

coats on, and a night-cap so nicely put on below my hat that no person perceives it. I sometimes spend half-an-hour in reading the Scotsman; but if I should not find him sufficiently severe and scurrilous for that week, I prefer taking a ramble into the fields to enjoy my own particular humour, as it may happen to flow. The fine balmy air, the singing of birds, and the playful gambols of the brute creation in the fields before me, sometimes inspire me with a feeling which women and children would call cheerfulness, gratitude, or contentment, but which is in reality foolishness and effeminacy.

At dinner I am sure to find that Grizzy has spoilt some of the dishes and give her a dressing on that account—feel provoked at the unmoved manner in which she receives my reproofs—but after I have finished my dinner and despatched the whole contents of the dish in question, I begin to think that she has been in the right after all. After dinner, and during the ‘heavy hours of digestion,’ I attempt to look into Zimmerman on Solitude, or Burton’s Anatomy of Melancholy—but find them by far too light and cheerful reading for my taste. Sometimes I doze away an hour in a confused slumber, in a corner of my ‘easy chair:’ not unfrequently I have strange dreams, and I recollect one evening I awoke and found myself brandishing the poker at the head of a bust of Wellington, which was placed on the mantle piece—with the impression that the said effigy had meditated a serious attempt on my life. During tea I am sometimes teased with a visit from my little nephew, who, although all the world calls him a delightful boy, I cannot endure, as he is exceedingly pert, and generally empties the contents

of the sugar-basin into his pocket. Moreover, I perceive that his friends are wishful that he should ingratiate himself into my favour, in expectation I will make him my heir—whereas I have determined to give him the slip there, and have resolved to bequeath all my property to the “Old Maid’s Fund.” During the evening, after tea, I find myself more at ease than at any other periodical period of my existence—and were I not ashamed to own it I might almost say I am cheerful. Indeed when I was sure no person was within observation, I have sometimes caught myself tripping it ‘on light fantastic toe,’ and cracking my thumbs. I shall never forget one evening that Grizzy, hearing a more than usual noise, burst into the room and discovered me at my exercise—it was a dreadful blow to my personal gravity and importance!—But as the evening draws to a close, the apprehensions of the night and horrors of next morning dissipate all my spirits, and I again resume my usual gloom—In which state, I remain,

Your fellow mortal,

MATTHEW GRUMBLE.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. III.

Monday, 30th September, 1822.

AN AUTUMN DAY.

“ Sweet day, so calm, so pure, so bright,
Thou bridal of the earth and sky,
Sweet dews shall weep thy fall to-night,
For thou must die.”

THE Sun has now dispelled the dense clouds which obscured the morning, and he shines out bright, glowing, & dazzling. Still as much of the attenuated vapour remains as to impart a soft and silky haze to the atmosphere, and the natural objects around. The brown mould and the stubble fields are glittering with innumerable silken threads of the gossamer, and the various insects which the chill of the evening had rendered torpid now flutter about in the warmth of the noon-day sun. Every rural sound is heard distinctly in the calm and still atmosphere: the distant shot of the fowler coming at a long interval after the flash and smoke has been seen—the soft bleatings of the sheep—even the browsing of the cattle can be heard as they

traverse the cleared pastures, and pick the sweet herbs from among the stubble; and the splash of the stone thrown by the shepherd boy from the height is heard distinctly as it falls into the deep pool below. Many hours might be spent delightfully in viewing the varied scenery of the plains; but let us now dive into the thickets, and enjoy the beauty of the woods, while yet their leafy honours remain. But a short time must elapse when the winter whirlwind will strip them bare, the tempest will howl among the leafless branches, and the chill and piercing north wind sigh among the scattered leaves. Already they have lost the deep and uniform green of summer, and yellow, red, and brownish tints mingle in beautiful diversity. The oak, the hazel, and the weeping birch, are now almost of the same hue as the brown rock, out of the fissures of which they spring in fantastic bendings; and the leaves of the tall mountain ash are nearly of as bright a red as were its berries. The pale primroses, which in such numbers ushered in the Spring, are no longer to be seen—the wild hyacinth, and innumerable other flowers which spring up among the moss have faded—and the fox glove, with its pyramidal stem of red and purple bells, is now almost in the last stages of decay.—The slanting rays of the sun now scarcely penetrate here; the dew still lies on the variegated moss, which, together with the white and curly lichens, has become rank with the moisture. A strong, though not unpleasant flavour of fading leaves and exuded gums is perceptible, mingled with the aromatic smell of the berry-bearing shrubs and plants. All is silence and solitude, and the many birds, which used to fill the grove with their warblings—what

has become of them? The Robin, feeling the approach of winter, has left its haunts among the bushes, and drawn to the warm and friendly abodes of man.— Many other species more delicate have taken their flight to a gentler clime, and others have penetrated deeper into the thickets to obtain shelter from the severity of winter. A few rooks, on the topmost branches, are heard pouring forth their solitary cawings, in melancholy presage of the lenten time of winter, when they will suffer the penance of sharp hunger for their many deprivations and their luxurions living in summer.

How still and desolate are these groves now, to what they were when the first genial warmth of spring called them forth to new life and beauty. The little birds hopped about among the branches with restless activity, every waving spray was rendered vocal with innumerable piping throats. And the Thrush and the Blackbird, the songsters of the evening, filled the woods with a soft and delightful melody. Then was the spring-time of their being, when love, music and delight engrossed their existence. But, like man, as the duties of life and the cares and anxieties of a numerous offspring grew upon them, labour and solicitude took the place of enjoyment, till now the approaching winter of adversity has silenced their music, and spread desolation amidst their green and leafy habitations; Happy birds! who share annually a periodical round of enjoyment equal to the range of man's whole existence. The privations of winter are only of short continuance, and but serve to enhance the pleasures of the returning spring, the welcome signal which marks the commencement of renewed delights

But man struggles through a long, a painful and gloomy course of probation, ere a second spring dawns upon his being, and gilds with a ray of immortality, his renewed and purified existence.

The declining sun now soon accomplishes his diurnal course, and the west is already glowing with his descending disk. All is one blaze of flaming light,—nearer and nearer he seems to skim the dark blue hills which bound the horizon,—he sinks gradually behind it,—darker shadows come over the earth, and the day is closed—like a dream that vanisheth away. Soft flakes of purple, red, and yellow clouds mingling in imperceptible shades curtain the evening sky. The gentle breeze of twilight comes from the west, but so gentle as scarcely to move the leaves that quiver on the branches, now seen dark and gigantic between you and the far receding horizon. The sombre light has now amalgamated all objects into one dense continuous and softened shade; space or distance is now undistinguishable. The trees, the rocks, and the ground, are all of one hue. There is no shade of light except from the glowing sky in the west, and a slight reflection from the stream which winds below. Hail! mild, sober, pensive, and contemplative evening! Others may delight in the broad glare of noon-day, but thou art the season for meditation and thought. If the spirits of a happier world ever leave their blest abodes to visit this earth, it must be at such a season as this. If fancy pictures supernatural beings gliding along the heavens like the meteor flitting through the air—if it hears imaginary sounds coming swelling on the breeze, and golden harps pouring forth exquisite melody, 'that

lifts the soul to heaven,' it must be under the influence of such a scene as this, when all the grosser feelings are excluded, the turbulence of the passions soothed; and when the mind, exalted and elevated, is left free to expatiate.

“ In such a night as this,
 When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
 And they did make no noise; in such a night
 Troilus methinks, mounted the Trojan walls,
 And sighed his soul towards the Grecian tents,
 Where Cressid lay that night.—

In such a night,
 Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew,
 And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,
 And ran dismay'd away.—

In such a night,
 Stood Dido, with a willow in her hand,
 Upon the wild sea banks, and wav'd her love
 To come again to Carthage.—

And, in such a night,
 Medea gathered the enchanted herbs
 That did renew old Æson.”†

JAQUES.

† Merchant of Venice, A v. s. 1.

SUPERSTITIONS OF THE KNOCKBREANS.

My doom is fixed —then why repine;
 Has that availed? since first I fell
 The shape of grovelling brutes 's been mine,
 In swamps and marshes dank to dwell
 With loathsome toad, and loathsome smell,
 And snake impure, and vermin foul;
 Myself a burning raging hell,
 Where fiendish passions ever howl.

From W. T---r's Poem on the Elf-Horse.

IN the bygone days of our youth, we derived the greatest pleasure from examining into the superstitions of our native country; and when we were exalted to the important charge of training up the children of Knockbrae, we there found an abundant field for carrying on enquiries of this nature. The office of a country schoolmaster is far from being disagreeable—for he is the greatest man in the parish, not excepting the minister himself. We have been told that our learned and worthy predecessor, Mr Thumpbottom, who was not only skilled in Mair's Introduction, but was likewise such an adept in the logic of the schools that he could dispute with the Dominie of Ronalbell upon the famous Germanic question, "*Utrum Chimæra bombinans in vacuo possit comedere secundas intentiones,*" very intelligibly—(this question, by the way, was the subject-matter of much discussion between the two, over many a bowl of punch—the *in vacuo* state of which alone made them postpone the argument)—we have been told, we say, that the disciple of Ramus had many a keen contest with Mr Langtext on the superiority of his own profession. The Dominie was such a stickler for the dignity

of his calling, that, like the renowned Dr Busby, he would not, we believe, have uncovered in the presence of majesty itself. He claimed precedence of all the clergymen that attended dinners at the Manse. It was on one of these occasions that he gained a signal victory over the Rev. Mr Rule, on the question of "priority in time and place," as he called it—a question which he ever afterwards considered as fully settled—a rule to which there was no exception, no more than to the "*um semper neutrum*" of Watt the grammarian. "Will you give us a *propinatio* or toast Mr. Rule," said the parson of Knockbrae, as reclining in his arm chair he deliberately filled his glass with his wooden punch-ladle,—“for we have not had one since we drank, ‘a kirk, a wife, and a cow’, given us by our facetious brother of Denpluscar, who you will be glad to hear is about to be raised to a more exalted charge, whilk toast has been pledged ten times at least.” “I propose one, said Mr R., which we must drink standing with all the honours—fill up my brethren,—“Here’s to the clergy of Scotland, the most dignified body of men upon earth.” Oh, Mr Thumpbottom, will you not stand up, exclaimed they all at once, (for the Dominic remained glued to his chair,) we fear that you have taken a quid nimis—a drap o’er muckle; are you drunk man? “Drunk! ye milk-sops, and what wi’,” exclaimed the Dominic, with as much contempt as if his knowledge of Mair’s Introduction had been called in question, “is it a score or twa of glasses o’ cauld punch, the maker of which most assuredly had in mind the exordium of the first Pindaric ‘Ariston men hudor,’ which means water is best,—that would make me drunk? By the memory of

the immortal Mair, I am neither *ebrius* nor *ebriosus*, and it is not in the pith '*vires deficiunt*,' as Flaccus hath it, of any of you to make me *sae*. Drunk! I have seen the Dominies of Ronalbell and Stanequarry, and they are a thirsty generation—downright Thracians at engulfing, below the table, while I, the Dominie of Knockbrae, was as cool as if I had been sitting in the '*opacum frigus*' of the Mantuan bard, listening to the contest between Corydon and Thyrsis, as you may read at your leisure in the eight Bucolic. Drunk! '*vir gregis ipse caper deerraverat*'—Mr. Rule, the goat of his flock, hath wandered from common sense,—'*eque sacra resonant examina*,' and from his sacred head, lo! swarms of bees resound." "The insolence of the pedagogue, Sir, Sir, I'll break your——."—'*Tantæne animis celestibus iræ*—dwells such resentment in heavenly minds," said the Dominie, interrupting Mr. R. who had foolishly allowed himself to get in a passion, "break nothing but a glass now and then, which ane cannot help, '*ut vitrum prodit ex officina fragile, sic homo nascitur debilis*,' as Dr. Grigory saith in the first chapter of his *Conspectus*, which you should read to improve your *humanity*; however, let that pass at present. But do you think, Mr. Rule—*Mes-Rule*, you would have been called, had you been a Romanist, that I would pledge a toast which would no more go down my craig than would a dose of toast and water,*—the clergy the most dignified body of *men* in Scotland! where learned you that logic, not from Ramus or Scotus, after whom an idiot is called a dunce,

* "*Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis*," the members of the Club may well exclaim,—Ex-D. or K.

—*lucus a non lucendo*, but from the illogical Polemics of your ancestor Gilbert Rule,* the Elginensian—the would-be ‘*malleus Episcoporum*.’” “It is generally allowed,” said Mr. R. that what I have averred is true; and indeed every body knows that we take the precedence of all others on every public occasion, excepting in this parish, the reason of which I cannot divine: I wonder that Mr. Langtext should permit——.” Nae reflections on my worthy friend,” interrupted the schoolmaster, “who kens his ain place, or, at least, it is not for the want of precept and example baith if he do not; but sit down, Sir, that we may argue the matter syllogistically, and perhaps we may find that the Dominies are still the ‘*Dominos rerum*,’ the lords of the world, and are to be placed before the ‘*gentumque togatam*,’ the gentry that wear

* Gilbert Rule, M. D. born at Elgin, 1628, was educated in the King's College, Aberdeen, where he took his degrees, and was appointed professor of philosophy. In 1659 he was elected principal of his college, but ejected in 1661 for refusing to comply with the act of uniformity. He went over to Leyden, where he studied physic, and returning to Scotland practised that art till the revolution, when the magistrates of Edinburgh appointed him principal of their university and one of their parish ministers. He spent most of his leisure hours in writing against the episcopalians. He died at Edinburgh in 1705, aged 77.—See Hutchinson's *Biographia Medica*, vol. 2d, page 35.

We are inclined to think from considering this sketch of the high promotion of our townsman, that the Dominie has treated his writings unfairly. However, we must own that Hutchinson speaks of them with no great respect, calling them “the most wretched compositions that ever were presented to the public, in point of logic and historical investigation.”—Ex D. or K.

the gown, as Maro hath done in that celebrated line.
And as the punch is cauld for my stomach,—hand me
the bottle that we may reason coolly on the subject,

“—————dum *Spiritus* hos reget artus,
Pro re pauca loquar;”—————

as long as a dram will put mettle in my heels I'll
argue the point in question, as Virgil says.” The
minister of Deapluscar who was a man of great worth
and learning, and who, as Mr. Thumpbottom used
to say, “completely answered Maro’s description of the
goddess of love, when she met her son Æneas in the
wood—‘*dederatque comam difundere ventis*’—allowed
his locks to wanton with the wind, and which, like Ab-
salom’s, would have yearly weighed two shekels,”—but
whom the rigid Knockbreans, who did not care for his
manner of preaching, designated as “the man with the
revealed head”—the minister of Denplusear, we say, who
liked to see the Dominie brandish his syllogistic wea-
pons, seconded the motion, and without emptying their
glasses, down they sat. “Now, Mr. Rule, began the Do-
minie, brush up your regulæ philosophandi, buckle on
your arms, for by the immortal author of the imperisha-
ble Introduction we shall soon see their temper, and that
I may have no undue advantage, I would recommend a
tasting of that bottle, which is very good, even although
it hath seen a little water—aquavitæ it *may* be called.
And, that you may have all fairness, you have your
choice of all the weapons which the armoury of Aris-
totle supplies—either the regular syllogism, or the abbrevi-
ated one called the Enthymema, or the elongated Epi-
chirema, or the co-acervating Sorytes, or—“The last,”

interrupted the minister of Denp'uscar, for Mr. Rule, dreading the Dominie's wit, which had been sharpened by many a hot encounter with his brother of Ronalbell, maintained a sullen silence.

As the object nearest our heart is the edification of our fair townswomen (of which by the by we will soon give sufficient proof, it being the intention of the Ex-Dominie of Knockbrae to open a school for the sole purpose of instructing them in the learned tongues), we forbear to encumber our pages with the numerous hard words, and nice distinctions, and subtle definitions, which the Dominie poured forth for two hours, without intermission. We shall only give the concluding part of his harangue, for it could not be called an argument, as Mr. Rule disdained to reply—which the schoolmaster afterwards said, "*procul dubio* redounded to the glory of the victory, as I had to attack and to defend at the same time." "And now, (said he in conclusion) you must grant that I have made it plain to the meanest capacity that women have in every age ruled the men, having given you a home thrust called *argumentum ad hominem*, by way of proof, by instancing Mrs. Rule; and I have shewed too, that children have always ruled the women, and likewise that schoolmasters rule the children,—*ergo per Soryten seu co-acervationem*: schoolmasters rule men, women, and children, and they that bear rule are certainly the most dignified: *ergo*, schoolmasters are the most dignified body of men upon earth. Besides, Sir, the very etymology of the names shews the superiority of the profession: by the *manes* of Mair, I have a mind to be called, my Lord Thump-bottom: it is a literal *translation*, and ministers are never

averse to translations—and now what think you of my logic?" "It is convincing as the evidence of intellection itself, my Lord Thumpbottom," exclaimed the minister of Denpluscar, with that loud cachinnation for which he was remarkable. Soon after the Dominie wended homeward—some indeed say that he was carried—but of this we demur.

Most thinking public! we have wandered far from the subject with which we set out; but it is an infirmity of our nature whenever our predecessor comes across us.—His memory is dear to us, for he was the bulwark of our dignity; and ye will sympathise in our feelings, and pardon our digressions, when we tell you that by the means of this great man the salary of the Knockbrae School was raised from £5 to its present princely income of £10.13s 4d. besides 3 bolls of barley some odd pecks. This he accomplished by teaching the Factor's children for nothing.

(To be continued.)

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No. IV.

Monday, 7th October, 1822.

SUPERSTITIONS OF THE KNOCKEREANS.

Continued from page 36.

“Whene'er *Thumpbottom* comes across me
My readers still are sure to lose me.” — BURNS.

BEING fully aware of an infirmity of our nature, of which we have already spoken, we have sworn by “Mahomet's mustard-pot.” an oath which is as binding on us as was that of a highlander when sworn on the point of his dirk, that the name of *Thumpbottom* shall no longer again be introduced throughout the remainder of this article—“*Pour commencer par le commencement,*” as somebody says,—the primitive Knockbreans held a number of curious opinions and were addicted to many superstitions, a few of which we hope it will be interesting to our readers to know. They had the fullest belief then in all the stories that ever were or could be told of witches, fairies &c. They believed that if you burn the body of an animal that has

died by witchcraft, the witch that has done the injury will appear before you. They made use of many charms to remove or to prevent diseases of man and beast. Dr. Asher, who was chief physician to the parish, and whom we may afterwards introduce in his official capacity, had unbounded confidence in the virtues of kail, or colewort, in every disease. If the patient died, this was owing to his not having swallowed enough of his panacea. It was in his eyes a Sengrado remedy—a universal elixir—a balm of Gilead—applicable externally, internally, and eternally. His constant recipe was, “put on a pot of kail,” and he did wonders for the Knockbreans had excellent constitutions. They believed that whisky and salmon were good in fevers of every kind. In inflammation, however, arising from external injury, they used this spirit with great caution. If the part affected for instance was above the region of the stomach a little mountain dew could do no harm and *vice versa* it would be injurious—“it ran to it” as the phrase was. If the part affected could be raised above the stomach as the hand, whisky could likewise do no harm: they thought the liquor could not run upwards and consequently they kept an inflamed hand on the head while drinking. They did not understand the circulation of the blood, and how could they? Dr Asher himself never studied Anatomy—neither did Dr Bowie who denied the efficacy of all remedies except prayer. They believed that the Devil frequently appeared in visible form to tempt people, and above all, women. These he often ensnared by making love to them: if young, in the form of a handsome youth: and if old, by conferring on them supernatural power in exchange for their souls. They be-

lieved that the Devil could assume any shape except that of a lamb or a dove ; and the reason is, that our Saviour is frequently called by these names. We like this explanation it is fraught with many pleasing suggestions. They believed that witches dare not repeat the Lord's prayer ; and that they always left church before the blessing was given. They believed that cats and magpies were the favourite animals of witches—that they could be wounded only by silver—and that they could have no power over the person who *sained*, that is, blessed himself when meeting a witch. This exemption, however, only continued for a day. Having ' the first word of a witch,' as it was termed, protected a person from her power for the space of a day. So afraid indeed were the Knockbrians of witches having the first word of them, that at whatever distance from them, they bawled out to them if in sight. This perhaps is the reason why country people speak so loud ! But above all, the Knockbrians placed unhesitating confidence in that enemy of witches,—the wonderful W—l—k, whose fame has spread itself over all Murrayshire. Perhaps the gentle reader may have never heard in what manner this renowned individual was so supernaturally gifted. We ourselves were obliged to James Logie the gardener, for this information, and in its truth we do most firmly rely ; for he was a man deeply versed in all witchcraft lore, and had a great insight into the mysteries of Botany from the common cabbage, which every one knows to the whole tribe of exotic plants which are reared in hot-beds, and which none but the initiated can comprehend.

“ Well, James, said I, as he was one day complaining of the weather, as is usually the case with gardeners, have you recovered from the effects of that fright which you got some time ago from the two magpies that stared at you so unmannerly? I cannot but admire your courage in approaching them, and even speaking to them, you are a complete hero gardener.” “ Nane o’ your jeering, Dominie, said the horticulturist somewhat offended, and dinna treat serious matters wi’ levity. My intellectuals were so forjasket wi’ that terrible visitation that I could not regain my ordinar soberness of judgment and strength o’ body for many a day after. Faith, and they would have played me a bonny begunk if it had na been for W—!—k who is a blessing to the country that produced him: but he beflam’d them—he’s the boy for bamboozling them. Was it ever heard tell o’ that pyats would come and look in a Christian’s face and shake their heads at him if they had na been uncanny—I tould you frae the very first that they were a brace o’ witches seeking to play me some plisky though you are dour in the belief: yet know, Dominie, that your scruples must now cease, for W—!—k says the same. “ Ah! James, did *he* say so, then there must be some truth in it, (said I with feigned astonishment) and did he tell you who they are?” “ And that he did, (said the gardener, with greater complaisancy)—tell me! my certy! he even brought it to the proof o’ my ee-sight. I saw the limmers woe betide them, door neighbours o’ my ain—and may Sathan soon take his ain: they hae reigned lang enough.” “ Pray James said I) will you describe the ceremony which this extraordinary man performs in cases of this kind?” “ Hoping that it will tend

to edification, (replied the gardener) I will: tho' I am scant o' time, for the weeds are getting up unco fast. Know that I had no sooner crossed the threshold, than W—l—k cried out "James Logie you have come in time tho' long have I looked for you,—an image of wax has been made representing you, and it is placed before the fire, and it melts, and you melt as the snow before the sun-beam: had you waited much longer you had been dry as the autumnal leaves that strew the banks of the fair Findhorn—ut follow me, there is help at hand"—Uttering these awful words in high English, for he speaks like a printit beuk, he conducted me into an inner chamber, while I shook and trembled like an aspen leaf, for he had on a most gruesome look; and then he took the bridle o' the eif-norse and the wonderful stone, and he placed the stone in the loop of the bridle, and then he dippit them bath in the water which is near his house, for no ither will do; and when he lifted them out, the stone shone like the looking-glass which the gud-wife uses on Sunday morning; (it's broken noo tho' by little Jane the careless thief wha must hae her kick-ups as weel's her mither)—and then he held them up before my eyes, and bid me tell what I saw * and assuredly I did perceive twa women having white sheets about them; and for fear o' me they had their faces turned from me: but nevertheless I saw enough to convince me that they were my door-neighbours, whom I hae lang suspected—deil burst them, they'll suff'r yet, that's ae comfort. And W—l—k said that he could make them throw off the sheets, but

* This account of the ceremony is strictly true, and is performed to this day.

that it would be dangerous, for if they knew that I had seen them they would ha'e a' the evil spirits o' the Shire upon me—and we ken o'er weel that they're nae fēw; so I was content wi' the information which I got. And when he had dismissed the likenesses o' the jades, he gave me a sloaking o' the water—and wonderful to tell! I instantly felt myself revived—new pith came into me—I was myself again: and will you laugh and jeer noo Dominie?” “Far be from me and from my friends such frigid philosophy, (as Dr Johnson says) replied I, with the pedantry of the profession. I certainly cannot doubt the evidence of the senses, seeing too that you were in so collected a state of mind. But pray can you tell me how W--l--k came by the bridle, by means of which he performs miracles so astonishing?” “Before proceeding to enlighten you on that head, (replied the gardener with increasing importance both in manner and language) it may be necessary to premise, that the great man gave me a bottle of the wonderful water, which I must preserve with as much care as I would onions or potatoes frae Januar frosts. If I allow the water to be spilt, which may a' thing that's good forfend! I'm undone—the limmers are upon me—I'm a dead man, and will follow the footsteps of Willie P—— frae Elgin,† who neglected to take care of the bottle after W--l--k had cured him of a most grievous distemper. He allowed the water to be spilt: his enemies accordingly got hold of him, and he died—a lesson to you Dominie not to speak so lightly o' witchcraft: if that be not done designedly, a' some winna care to say, tho' I dinna believe it, as you teach the

† This is a fact, and is a curious example of the power of imagination.

single and double Carritch, which no warlock would do.”

“ Thank you, James for your advice and good opinion of me, but now for your account of the bridle.” “ It was indeed a blessed morning, and should be distinguished from other days by a sort of half fast (said the gardener with uplifted hands) —when W-l-k descended out from his ain habitation to take a cheekful of calker air, and to gather sic plants as are effectual towards the removing of the diseases of man, woman, and brute beast. For while he was employed in this gracious calling—for every thing connected with plants is honourable, Adam himself having been a gardener,—lo! and behold! an Elf-horse made his appearance, and came bouncing and rushing like a flash of lightning, and screaming like a legion of devils, and uttering sic sounds as would hae bombaised the intellect of any ither man but the stout-hearted W-l-k. But he stood firm and collected as the rock ’t’uick, when the speat rages and puts out the horns o’ its wrath, like Peter Macphergus’s bull when he tore Meg Macglashan’s lindsey petticoat which she wael deserved, for she has a tongue that would cut clouts;—but to return, the Elf-horse came as I have described, for what occasion have I to lie on the subject; but the fallen spirit (for Elf horses are fallen spirits) had to do with one that feared him not, and who knew how to manage him. W-l-k faced him, (for mind that if you turn your back on an Elf-horse, that moment you are in his power: they say you must not turn your back on a king either; I wonder if they be anyways related),—and then the wonderful man rushed on the evil spirit, and seized on the bridle which he had in his mouth, and pulled him along wailing

backwards to his house. And the fiend could make no resistance in so long as he was stared at in the face—for nothing that's bad likes to be stared at,—and when W-l-k had his back at his ain door, the Elf-horse knowing that his end was come, set up a howling lamentation, louder than Elspet Groandeeep when she's troubled with the rheumatics, and fow can ding her at youling;—and it spoke in a sort of metro, for a' out-o'-the way creatures intromit wi' that unprofitable art o' poem making—or instance that minstrel body Willie Homer, as he calls himself, tho' I can depone that T——r was his father's name;—and then W-l-k twitched the bridle from the Elf-horse and lo! the creature vanished in a flame of fire. I may observe that the fiend repeated verses telling W-l-k of the power that was given him, which I have by heart, for he told them to me. They were originally in Gælic, but Willie Homer translated them thus:—

1

WHILE the stream from the fountain

To ocean is born;

While the hern of the mountain

Hails the dawn of the morn;

While the heather-bell grows

On the heath-covered hillock;

No witch can oppose,

The might of the W-l-k.

2

The fiends of the North,

Shall await at his bidding;

In egg-shell must sail,
 Or on besom come riding
 From the forests of Norway,
 Where the lofty pine grows—
 From the drear wilds of Lapland
 Eternal in snows.

3

This bridle and stone
 From their evil will charm thee,
 Nae witches nor warlocks
 Shall injure or harm thee.
 While the heather-bell grows
 On the heath-covered hillock,
 No witch can oppose
 The might of the W-l-k.

Y.

Miss CATHARINA FREDERICA OLDENOUGH

To the Editor.

"For what should man be sorrowful but for afflictions?—Why should his heart give up joy when the causes of it are not removed from him?—Is not this being miserable for the sake of misery?"

Econ. of Human Life.

SIR,

The sombre growlings of your correspondent Mr. Matthew Grumble, in last *Ephemera* quite shocked our little female *Coterie*. For heaven's sake, do not let him groan any more through your pages, or he will cast an irrevocable damp over our spirits, and we shall become as melancholy as himself. He seems one of those odious beings called a confirmed bachelor—his mind, wanting any other object to engage it, by continually preying on itself, is eaten away by the rust of *ennui*—he sees no beauty, pleasure, or usefulness in any thing around him. "Man delights not him—nor woman neither."‡ No, he is now lost to every thing—had he asked my advice before it was too late, I could have put him upon a plan of happiness. Instead of leaving his hoarded wealth to the Society of Old Maidens, who by the by would be called in the language of Political Economy (which subject I see they make a great fuss about in the Magazines) the unproductive class of Society—instead of this, I say, he might now have had a dozen or

‡ I saw this once in some book, I forget whether it was in the *Plays* of Waverley, or *Shakspeare's Novels*.

more fine chubby boys and girls sporting around him, to whom he could have transmitted his wealth and on whom nature would have taught him to bestow his affections. Besides securing his own happiness he would have rescued from the garret some spinster who now perhaps lives out her lonely days "in single blessedness." Even yet it may not be too late with him and in that case I need not say, could they contribute to his comfort, what pleasure it would give to Miss Betty Dolittle, Miss Christy Siptea, Cousin Jessica, or your humble servant,

C. F. OLDENOUGH.

P. S.—Since I am in the humour of scribbling, I shall subjoin a few lines which I received from a friend on sending *him* (he is not my sweet-heart) the last four numbers of the *Ephemera*.

"Thus have I seen, when loosen'd from his back,
 Th' itinerant Pedlar opes his well-stored pack;
 Knives, thimbles, ribbons, silks, pins in a row—
 Razors, perfumes, and gewgaws kept for show—
 The word'ring maidens gaze with hankering eyes,
 Run for their pelf, and make the goods their prize—
 So I have here in sweet confu-si-on
 Miss Oldenough, and David Morrison—
 Essays on Greece—with how the fine arts rise—
 Matt. Grumble's groans and a poor Exiles sighs—
 I look on all with a delighted stare,
 Then sit me down to revel on such fair."

A correspondent wishes to enquire if any thing further is known of Robert Alves, or his productions, than what is contained in the following extract :—

“ROBERT ALVES was born at Elgin in 1745; he was educated at Aberdeen, and in 1765 took the degree of M. A. He was designed for the church, but for want of patronage or of talents sufficiently popular, sunk into the situation of a parochial teacher, first at Deskford and afterwards at Banff. In 1779 he removed to Edinburgh where he subsisted for several years by teaching the Greek, Latin, French, and Italian languages. In 1782 he sent to the London press a volume of miscellaneous poems, which met with such success as encouraged him to produce a second in 1789, entitled “Edinburgh, a poem in two parts; also the Weeping Bard in 16 cantos.” In these works much genius is not to be discovered, but they bear the impression of a cultivated mind, and much poetical susceptibility. In 1784 he began a work entitled “Sketches of a history of literature and it was in the press when he died on the 1st January 1794. It was afterwards published by his friend, the late Dr Alexander Chapman. The plan of this work is excellent, but it is extremely inaccurate in its details.”

What is PISCATOR about?—now that the bustle of the herring season is over he might resume his pen again.

J. R. N. I. has our thanks for his verses, which in the feeling that dictates them are commendable; but it requires repeated practice and a particular talent, to write poetry that would be approved of in these versifying days.

A. AYATAUK, for much the same reason must be declined.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. V.

Monday, 14th October, 1822.

*The advantages of a Youth of Activity, and adventure in
solacing the Languor of Old Age.*

——— “ When we shall hear
The rain and wind beat dark December, how
——— Shall we di-course
The freezing hours away ?—We have seen nothing !

Cymbeline.

THE succession of time is measured by us, not by its actual duration, but by the paucity or multiplicity of the objects which pass before our view—of the actions in which we are engaged—or the subjects which employ our thoughts. To the person who is entirely unoccupied, or to him who is engaged in one employment, and fixed to one place, the day, unbroken and undiversified, appears short, fleeting, and unimportant ; but the traveller who sets out in the morning—who passes a variety of stages, and towns, and villages—to whom every hour and every minute presents a new object, a strange face, and a change

of scenery ; when, at the close of eve, he finishes his journey, his mind having so many objects and incidents to occupy its attention, he looks back upon the past day as one of uncommon length and importance. Thus it is in the great journey of life. An age of inactivity and indolence may be passed without yielding the satisfaction or producing the good even of one well-spent day—it passes unheeded away, and in the end appears as nothing. In this important view a life of activity and exertion will be found infinitely superior to one of sloth and indolence :—but what we have principally in view at present is, that a variety of adventure and enterprise will be found to impart a superior zest to existence beyond the more common and uniform occupations of life. There are many possessed of that stirring and active disposition, to whom indolence, restraint, or confinement would be the most irksome of punishments : like birds confined within the narrow limits of a cage, they strive with unabated efforts to gain a freer and more congenial existence. 'Tis this spirit which prompts the traveller to forego the comforts of home and brave the dangers of tempestuous seas—of baneful climates, and the barbarism of savage men, to gratify his desire for knowledge and add to the improvement of his country : this prompts the sailor to struggle with the fury of the elements, and impels the soldier to rush into battle, and endure the many hardships of the protracted siege. But man's enjoyments are derived no less from the participation of the present than from reflection on the past. He who has seen and experienced much, has that within himself on which he can ruminate and reflect, when the season comes that repose is grateful

after labour. The pleasing scenes of the past rise up before him in renewed beauty, through the medium of memory; and even perils, disappointments and afflictions, which at the time harassed his person and weighed down his heart, can now be dwelt on with a soothing comparison of his present ease, with his former sufferings. The sluggish and unenterprising drag out their age as they have spent their youth—in listless inactivity. Existence has been to them a blank—"they have seen nothing."

Sir Joseph Banks, after having sailed round the world—explored the productions of foreign climes, and made himself acquainted with the manners and customs of nations hitherto undiscovered;—set himself down to enjoy with increased relish the remainder of his life, and to contribute to the amusement and instruction of the society around him. Mungo Park relinquished the inglorious obscurity of a country village to explore the deserts of Africa, and died a victim to his thirst for knowledge; while a more fortunate and no less enterprising traveller, Humboldt, has traversed many of the most interesting parts of the globe and enriched science with his varied and interesting labours.

The most contented and self-satisfied being I have met with, was a soldier, who had been pierced with bullets, stabbed and cut in various parts of the body—had been overwhelmed in the breach amid the dead bodies of his comrades—was once left wounded on the field of battle for a whole day and night—and in short suffered all the privations and casualties of several long and severe campaigns. At one time he had been loaded with the spoils

of the vanquished and at another so pennyless that he could not purchase a morsel of bread—till at last, his services being no longer required, he was sent home with a small pension—small indeed, yet equal to his wants, and perhaps beyond his expectations. In the course of his campaigns he had captivated the heart of a southern damsel, who had attended him in his wanderings, ministered to him in his sickness; and who now choose to prefer with him a hut on the bleak side of a Scottish moor, to the balmy air and luxuriant landscape of a more favoured clime. To him the renown of Wellington was a constant theme of pride—for the praise of his general reflected honour on himself—he was tenacious of the fame of the British army, and took care to deck himself on every holiday, in some of its gaudy badges, to shew that he belonged to it. Besides an old rifle gun, his wounds were the only trophies he had to shew: but these he exhibited with a secret and honest pride; he told the “plain, unvarnished tale” of his adventures, with becoming modesty—the recollection of them would serve to amuse his thoughts in the gloom of many a winter’s night—and when old age came upon him he had them to tell to his children. There is not a doubt, but that he found it a sufficient reward for all his past hardships,—to be seated in the midst of an evening group of old friends, and relations, and village companions—and to see them listening with eager attention while his glowing breast added nature’s eloquence to the lips,

“Which told of all he felt and all he saw!”

C.

Very good

To the Editor of the Ephemera.

THE LONELY WIDOW.

It is a common remark, that one half of the world knows not how the other lives. There are those so occupied with their own affairs, and so engaged in securing their own happiness, that they never pause to think how it fares with the rest of mankind; while some again are anxious to see humanity in all its shades and bearings, in order that they may interpose their aid where assistance can be of use,—that they may appreciate their own happiness the more by viewing the less favoured lot of others; or learn contentment and resignation, if they themselves should be unfortunate. To the former, every thing which does not bear immediately on their affairs, or suit their particular passions, appears trifling and unimportant. It is only to the latter that the following simple account of *The Widow* may be found not altogether uninteresting.

She, a lone and solitary dweller among men, was one who had the misfortune to survive all her friends and relatives,—a state which is generally reckoned one of the most melancholy, incident to humanity. Many years had elapsed since her husband one morning went out to the fields to prosecute his accustomed toil; but, before evening, was carried home a lifeless corpse. Three children still remained, but one after the other pined successively into the grave: and thus from being once happy and comfortable, a few weeks saw her poor, widowed, and childless. She occupied a small and humble

cottage on the hill side, at a considerable distance apart from the other scattered dwellings of the neighbourhood: it was a lonely and secluded mansion, and could with difficulty be distinguished from the brown heath and furze with which it was surrounded, and above which the low roof of the cottage scarcely peered. Indeed it would scarcely have been taken for an inhabited abode, but for the blue curling smoke which it occasionally sent forth from its simple chimney. It was marvellous how in her helpless situation and with her slender means she contrived to support her existence: yet the little birds of the air, which toil not neither sow, are always provided for—and He who feeds the fowls of heaven did not leave unregarded a poor and helpless female. Her desires were moderate, her manners simple, and her wants were always some one way or another supplied. Meek and unassuming, she gained more favour by her modest and diffident manner than others with all their finesse and importunity.—Her house and apparel were neat and clean: though grave and serious in her deportment she was contented and resigned; and while amid the society of her acquaintances, or when a friendly neighbour opened the latch of her dwelling, she would for a time forget her woes and even appear cheerful. Yet, with her it might be seen that this life was looked upon as a state rather to be endured than enjoyed; and that she placed all her happiness, and looked forward for all her comforts, to that other life which is to come.

In the summer months when the air is mild and balmy, and when the whole face of nature is decked out in beautiful luxuriance, the enjoyments of the poor are placed

more nearly on a level with those of the opulent. In this season their privations are less, and the objects of delight within their reach are multiplied. They have not to contend against the chill of the elements—they walk forth and enjoy the pure and glowing radiance of Heaven—and their temperate diet, perhaps too spare to withstand the piercing cold of winter, is grateful and healthful under the influence of the summer sun. They have the green moss and soft meadow grass spread under their feet more grateful than the finest carpet—groves waving their green foliage and affording a delicious shade—and a bright sky over their heads, canopied with clouds of innumerable hues, more glorious than the finest curtained palaces of princes. While thousands of birds pour forth their wild notes from every bush, and fill the air with a delightful melody more pleasing than all the combined notes of flute or viol. The bright yellow blooms of the furze and long broom which waved around the dwelling of the widow, and which spread through the air a delicious odour, imparted a pleasure to her mind as she strayed among the bushes to pick up the withered roots and branches for her winter fuel—provident, like the bee, which busied itself among the wild thyme at her feet, to lay up a store for the approaching season of necessity. Such were her summer enjoyments;—but when the piercing blasts of winter set in—when the chill air compelled her to crouch over the faint gleams of the expiring embers—alone and solitary, with no social voice to beguile the gloom of the season—or when sickness confined her for days to her pillow, where there was no friendly hand to pour out the cordial or administer comfort.—It is at such seasons that

the poor feel their necessities most ; and sigh for those comforts which the rich wallow in, without appreciating their importance. The frequent indispositions of approaching age now often made her a lonely prisoner at home. It is true the friendly hand of a neighbour not unfrequently opened her door to bestow the balm of consolation and make a proffer of services : but where all are poor, the urgent necessity of providing for the day that is passing over them leaves little time in their power to bestow upon the necessities of others. The winter had now commenced in all its severity—dark and portentous clouds hung over the heavens for several days—the hollow blast was first heard moaning among the hills, till at length it broke out into a loud whirlwind, and sleet and rain descended in torrents. The inhabitants of the village with difficulty gathered their flocks together and housed their cattle before the approach of night—then ranging themselves around the fire they listened in terror to the fury of the elements and fancied they heard the shrieks of evil spirits careering on the blast—The dangers of the way-faring traveller did not escape their sympathy—and the many perils of the mariner, tossed about on the enraged and tempestuous ocean formed a prolific theme of regret and commiseration, They thought on the sick and lonely widow also, and some of the most compassionate made several attempts to visit her—but the night was dark and horrifying—they saw not their way nor could they face the tempest—and at last prudently gave up the attempt until morning. All night the wind howled round their dwellings and the rain streamed on the close shut doors and windows. Sleep, at other times grateful to the toil-

worn peasant, on that night forsook their pillows—or if at times a short slumber seized them, disturbing dreams and visions aroused them, startled and terrified. Their superstitious fancies suggested to them the sounds as of coffins nailing up—death watches clicking in the walls—and shrouds and spectres and all the accompaniments of death flitting before them. Morning came, and the tempest of the night which disturbed the world having expended its fury, produced in nature a corresponding calm. The sun shone out bright—and the atmosphere, lately so agitated, now remained still and purified. The peasantry of the village arose to their accustomed labours, relieved from their terrors, and rejoicing in the favourable change. But the cottage of the widow sent not forth as usual the blue smoke from its chimney—and the door had not yet turned on its hinges. The withered grass on the roof and about the door, hung down, loaded with drops of moisture; and all around displayed an ominous stillness.—The cock had repeatedly crowed in joy of returning peace and sunshine; and had led out his mates on the green, but there was no appearance of the hand that used to feed them. On the previous day the poor woman had become worse and no doubt had anticipated that her sickness ‘was unto death.’ When the neighbours entered they found her stretched on her couch, more in the posture of repose than of death—so calmly had she breathed out her last. Accustomed to look forward to the great change, she had “set her house in order.” Many folds of fine linen, which she had bleached on the grass with her own hands, and which she had kept by her carefully for many years, were found ready for her winding

sheet ; and the Book which had been her constant companion, and from which she had derived her comfort in many a long year of adversity, lay open upon her breast. She was now safe from the storms of the world ;—hardships and misery could no longer assail her. Lone and solitary had been her pilgrimage on earth, and when the agonies of death seized her, although she had no friendly voice to soothe her, and the blast of heaven alone echoed back her dying groans,—yet she looked forward to a brighter scene, where long lost friends awaited her arrival on the shores of a happier country.

“ What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence come they ? These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

P—

THE SCEPTIC.

They were a happy family ! Each eve
 Soon as the varied toils of day were o'er,
 A sacred hour to heaven they did give,
 The Gracious Power who form'd them to adore,

Grateful upon the wings of air uprose
 The song of praise, melodious, simple, clear,
 Now pealing high, now dying in soft close ;
 Pure, artless strains—'twas luxury to hear.

But one sad wayward heart was not with theirs
 In unison :—One never join'd the strain
 Of joy—he spurn'd their earnest grateful prayers,
 And deem'd their pure belief and fervours vain.

Too much elated with man's erring lore,
 Vainly, himself he all sufficient thought—
 Deem'd he the end of all things cou'd explore,
 And by what causes each effect was wrought.

Despising higher aims, he from the world
 His fame and sole approval hoped to share :
 Hence its capricious, erring voice oft hurl'd
 Him into gloomy woe, doubt, and despair.

Without a ray of favor'd light, in vain
 By systems did he strive to reconcile
 The chance-like state below of bliss and pain—
 He labour'd on—and found no end of toil.

But now more thoughtful and perplex'd he grew:
 He had been missing two whole days and more;
 In a lone place they found him—horrid view!—
 The marks of self-inflicted death he bore.

Darkly, from mouth to mouth the tidings spread:
 In the dire tale are sunk all lesser cares.
 Each clasps his panting breast in anxious dread,
 To be assured fond being still is theirs.

“Shield us, Great Power! with heav'nly panoply!”—
 They cry—“without thy aid we are undone;
 And never may we madly cast off thee—
 For what is erring man when left alone.”

— P — . *

* P—'s 'hints' shall be strictly attended to.

IGNOTUS has been received, and shall appear next week.

R. JOHNSTON, PRINTER, ELGIN.

THE

EPHEMERA,

No. VI.

Monday, 21st October, 1822.

ON TRUE HAPPINESS.

So Virtue, diffident of strength,
Clings to Religion's firmer aid,
And by Religion's aid upheld
Endures Calamity. ——— *Southey.*

THE vanity of human life has been a favourite topic of moralists in every age. They have strained every nerve to set this truth in its proper light: they have exhausted every figure of rhetoric to give energy to their reasonings: they have drawn hideous pictures of man from the puling days of infancy to staff-supported, tottering old age. They have spared no class of individuals from the nobles of the land that float along the high-way of life's journey in charioted splendour, to the humble way-farers that trudge it on foot; and from the maxims which they have laid down, and from the arguments which they have employed, they have arrived at this sweeping conclusion,—that human life is a dream of vanity—that it is nothing—that it is less than nothing. Nor can these preachers complain that their harangues have not met with a respectful attention. The sermons of Ethic writers have been held in high estimation: and Socrates and Seneca, and Epictetus, have been admired and commented on, and

thrown aside—and practically forgotten. Christian Divines too have taken up the subject, and, borne through by the weight of their own peculiar authorities, have they inveighed against the folly of man in grasping at the fleeting shadows of time which elude his efforts: and in short neither satyrists, nor divines, nor moralists, have spared any pains to send home to the bosom of man, the conviction of his own insignificance, and of the vanity of human life. Now we think that in all this there has been a great deal of labour in vain—a beating of the air to little purpose. The truth which they have insisted on with such an urgency of argument is a self-evident proposition, if they regard human beings merely as born to eat, and drink, and to die. The thought that death will put an end to every sublunary enjoyment—a thought which must occur to every mind,—is of itself sufficient to stamp the essence of an axiom on all the lengthened declamations of these moralists. Whenever such an idea recurs to the mind, it concentrates into one focus the rays that lie scattered over their many pages—it flashes conviction on the mind—we give it our unhesitating acquiescence. Many of these writers too have, we apprehend, mistaken greatly the nature of the human mind. They insist on tranquillity and peace amid the billows of a stormy and tempestuous voyage. They have not considered that passion in some shape or other must have possession of the heart of man—that the mind abhors a vacuum;—that beings constituted as man must have some stimulus to incite them on to action;—that if you remove the impetus that sets the whole mental machinery in motion you paralyse their every effort to be happy—that you render

existence a complete blank—a dreary solitude. But altho' passion cannot be eradicated from the breast of man, yet one passion may be there substituted for another. The spendthrift may become a miser, and in the annals of our world's history such changes frequently occur. Rail not against the dissipated man, nor preach to him on the madness of intemperance. Tell him not that the cup out of which he is drinking is poisonous—that it is filled with gall and bitterness. He has drank too often of the incbriating draught to be persuaded by all your preachments. When the intoxication has worn off, and the delirium subsided, he knows that your reasonings are cogent—that the picture which you draw of the madness and the vanity of his pursuits is just in its every lineament—but yet he will repeat the dose, as he is miserable. All the arguments of this nature which you can employ have occurred to himself a thousand times: he sees the Demon that goads him on, but the lash of his tormentor is more grateful than the stillness of listless ennui. You must point out to him a higher principle to supplant that which now lords it over him—you must lay before him the nature of his own spirit as being an immortal essence, and the consequent unsuitableness of aught that is mortal to meet its high demands. From the peculiar constitution of the human soul, it must have some good in prospective. It has a restlessness in the present—a looking forward into futurity in which it may be said even now to live. Every thing is perfect on earth—but the spirit of man. A profusion of happiness hath issued from the presence of the CREATOR, and gone abroad among his works; and its overflowings are seen in the music of the woods

and in the joy of animal life bounding in living motion. From the insect that flutters on the sunbeam, to the eagle that is not dazzled by his orb : from the lowly flower that "is born to blush unseen," to the spreading tree that crowns the forest : from the noiseless streamlet, to the resounding ocean—that "image of eternity," and that "mirror of the Divinity : " through all the works of God, from the humblest to the most sublime, can be traced a mutual dependance of uses and means, and ends—a Divine presence every where—a perfect whole. And in the midst of all this luxuriance of enjoyment, was it intended that man, on whose brow is imprinted the marks of a diviner origin than on the other marks of creation, should be unhappy?—that he who has been permitted to rule and to bear dominion should be the very slave of the gross materialism that is before him and around him. It is this slavery however that is the above cause of all that misery which is poured out so piteously from the satiated bosoms of the men of our world. It is their forgetfulness—it is their keeping behind the scenes of life's drama, their intended characters of candidates for immortality, that renders them incapable of enjoying the blessings that are allotted them. They try to force upon an immortal spirit the gratifications of time, although it is continually warning them that nothing sublunary can satisfy its high demands. And surely it is not wonderful that the mind cannot find happiness in the pleasures of sense : it is nothing extraordinary that sense and spirit should not be able to hold sweet communion with one another. It would be strange indeed if so high a principle as the soul of man should with complacency submit itself to the gross

body with which for a season it is connected. It would be "passing strange" if the lord and master of the senses should endure to be cast down from its seat of power, and be stript of its just privileges, and be trampled on by its hereditary servants. We will not declaim on the misery of human life, nor whine out a lengthened lamentation on the vanity of its pursuits. We are convinced that man may be happy if he commit not violence on his better nature: but we insist that the only happiness which can be called real, and on which the mind can rest with satisfaction is that which accords with its own inherent excellence. It is spiritual—and matter will not gratify it: it is immortal—and nothing subject to decay can accord with it: it is destined for eternity—and time is too circumscribed for it. It is 'active aerial towering unconfined,' and the things of time are dull, and gross, and low, and bounded—therefore such things cannot harmonize with its feelings.

We will not exercise the high authority of the Theologian, but we will say that in the revealed will of its Creator will the soul find a provision for its every want, and employment for its most active energies. Unlike the pleasures of sense and time which perish by enjoyment, the joys of Religion increase by being indulged in; the soul can sympathise with them; they meet its every desire: for like itself they will never perish—there is a suitability of the one to the other—they are infinite as space, and boundless as eternity.

“ In vain we seek a heaven below the sky;
The world has false but flattering charms: .

Its distant joys show big in our esteem,
 But lessen still as they draw near the eye :
 In our embrace the visions die :
 And when we grasp the airy forms,
 We lose the pleasing dream."——WATTS.

Y.

To the Editor of the Ephemera.

“ Soon as the watchful grey-hounds catch the view,
 With ears erect they eagerly pursue.
 Then, how your bosom pants with keen desire!
 You snur the steed, and all your soul's on fire;
 O'er hill, o'er dale, and winding plain you fly,
 And cheer the grey-hounds with the well known cry.
 They strain each nerve; and now the foremost tries,
 Eager, with outstretched neck to seize the prize;
 But, with a spring, she starts aside t' elude
 His grasp, and tries to gain the friendly wood—
 In vain—for now her strength and swiftness fail,
 And all her artifices nought avail.
 Faint and in wild despair she yields her breath,
 And shrieks and piercing cries proclaim her death.”

Wm. Homer's Poem on Hare Hunting.

SIR,

I am no sportsman, nor as far as I recollect did I ever take the life of any flying or creeping thing in the shape of game, nor was ever accessory to the murder of hare fox or roebuck. Being glad however of any novelty to dissipate the monotony of this monotonous place, I mounted an old hunter, borrowed from a friend, and join-

ed the cavalcade of the "Coursing Club" the other day. Being totally ignorant of all the mysteries of the chase, I of course derived little pleasure from the scientific manœuvres and technical phrases used on the occasion—but the day was pleasant—the exercise put me into good spirits—and the motley group around afforded endless amusement. The company were mounted on all possible varieties of steeds, from the sleek and swift hunter down to the diminutive Shetland pony. Plump, well-fed galloways mingled with raw-boned hacks, whose sides were two ladders of wide projecting ribs—and long, switched, docked and rat tails waved in the air in indescribable diversity. Here too you might perceive something of that inequality of conditions which prevails in society, and that inappropriateness of the means to the end which we sometimes see take place in the world. In one place was to be seen a diminutive short legged animal panting and wheezing under the enormous load of some high and full-fed rider—while in another a stately nag bore on his back some skeleton of a man, whose bare and loose bones rattled within him for want of flesh to keep them separate. Here the plough horse, released from his daily toil, wielded his enormous and heavy heels, and rolled about his goggle eyes, amazed to find himself in so much good company; and the old coach horse capered nimbly on, full glad to be released from 'the rumble of the wheels.' We traversed the fields for a considerable time, every countenance seeming intent and eager for the sport, and every eye on the alert, piercing with scrutinizing gaze the brown ferns and every bush and thicket for the prey. But no hares were to be seen: I myself began to despair

and meditated returning home—but there is no limits to the ardour of sportsmen,—they still persevered and beat about, and smacked their whips with unremitting diligence. At last I perceived one gentleman make a full halt, and bellow out with all his might, “See-ho! See-ho!!—Immediately the whole crowd assembled around in ample circle: great bustle of preparation took place: cries of “spread out, spread out, and give the hare fair play,” echoed from all quarters: the dogs were ready to be slipped, and the happy finder, who all the time had kept his eye fixed on one particular spot, now, amid the breathless expectation of all around, raised his whip, and on being assured that all was ready, with a self-satisfied look of exultation gave the knowing smack which was to raise the hare.—But lo!—no hare arose; and on more minute examination, how were we all disappointed! when we found, half-concealed among the ferns, that the object of hope proved to be only—an old grey stone! This disappointment, however, was soon forgotten by a real puss soon making her appearance, when the whole cavalcade galloped off at full speed over hill and over dale,

“In fancy swallowing up the space between.”

Neither I nor my horse were very intent on the sport, so I drew him up upon an eminence which commanded a view of the whole plain around—I believe the very spot* where the Duke of Cumberland encamped in his march westward to meet the rebels in 1745. To an uninterested person, the sight of so many men, horses, and dogs in full chace after a poor, silly, insignificant hare, appears

* A rising ground in the parish of Alves.

somewhat ludicrous, if not something more. To a person fond of declamation it might afford a fertile field to expatiate on. To a real sportsman it evidently yields a high degree of pleasure. But as man is generally fond of crying down whatever does not suit his own taste,—if I were not just now in the middle of a chace, I would endeavour to balance one prejudice against another.—In the meantime we return to the hare, which to do her justice sold her life as dearly as possible—scampering over ditch and through bush and thicket, thereby unhorsing many gallant riders ere she gave up the ghost. And here I cannot help remarking, that what I thought an unapt arrangement at first, proved in the end highly appropriate. Those round-bellied gentlemen, when their treacherous ponys came to the ground on faithless knee, rolled gently off their backs like a barrel of ale, whereas if they had fallen from a mightier charger they would have been dashed to pieces; and on the other hand the men of bones came rattling from on high without sustaining the slightest injury. Several other ‘runs’ took place, but in these the victims had the good fortune to baffle their pursuers and make their escape. Much conversation and debate took place about the merits of the several dogs: some run fair and some cunning; but being totally unversed in the attributes of dogs, I lent a deaf ear to the whole. Notwithstanding the casualties above-mentioned, all arrived at home in safety—where, in “ghostly halls of grey renown,” (that is, in the New Masonic Rooms,) the pleasures of the banquet, and mirth, music, and song, crowned and concluded the labours of the day.

I am, Your’s, &c. NIMROD SECUNDUS.

MORNING SCENE IN SUTHERLAND.

1

The silver moon is seen no more,
 Soft glittering on the torrents roar—
 The Seamew's screams along the shore,
 Proclaim returning day.
 Now on the frothy wave they ride,
 Now skimming o'er the foaming tide,
 Like mimic barks along they glide,
 Bright with Aurora's ray.—

2

Towering in rugged majesty,
 Its rocky head ascending high,
 With giant front that threatens the sky,
 The scowling Crask is seen;
 Now on its top the ray is shed,
 And sparkling on its purpled head,
 The heath tip'd with the dewy bead,
 Reflects the red and green.

3

Now hovering o'er its crusted face,
 In airy shapes the clouds you trace,
 Now slow, they roll with loitering pace,
 And now they crest the top.
 Now skimming o'er the vale below,
 In tattered shreds like drifted snow,
 Roll down the Glen—away they go—
 They rise, and now they drop.

4

Anon, along they swiftly glide,
 Now kissing oft the mountain's side ;
 And now again his head they hide,
 Now hovering round, remain ;
 The golden beam of lovely Sol,
 Its warmth sends out from pole to pole,
 It penetrates, away they roll—
 The Crask is seen again !

5

The mist that erst obscured the vale,
 Now flits along before the gale,
 The bark spreads out the bosom'd sail,
 And lightly cuts the wave :
 The beach-bird and the wild seamew,
 The solan and the beak'd curlew,
 And others of the feather'd crew,
 Squeal o'er the warrior's grave.

6

Sweet vale, oft by your glassy flood *
 I've paced your shores in pensive mood,
 Oft on the rugged rock have stood
 And mourned the days that were ;
 My eye bent o'er thee, lovely vale,
 Might gaze upon the distant sail,
 Or castled walls of Old Helmsdale.
 Or on the mountain bare.

* The vale here mentioned formerly contained a lake, which was drained, and in the bed of which corn is now growing.

Old Helmsdale, now within thy space,
 We scarce thy feudal hall can trace,
 Where proudly sat the Gordon† race,
 Around the wassel bowl;
 Thy lofty turrets are cast down,
 Where spring the weeds,—the rose has grown—
 Its garden songsters now are flown,
 And left the screaming owl.

IGNOTUS.

† Gordon was formerly the name of the Earls of Sutherland.

R. JOHNSTON, PRINTER, ELGIN.

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THE

EPHEMERA,

No. VII.

Monday, 28th October, 1822.

“ Some drill and bore
The solid earth, and from the strata there
Extract a register, by which we learn,
That he who made it and revealed its date
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.
Some more acute, and more industrious still,
Contrive creation ; travel nature up
To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,
And tell us whence the stars.” — Cowper.

Mr EDITOR,

Nothing can shew the imperfection of human nature in its present state more strongly, than the great diversity of tastes and opinions which prevail among men, and the feelings with which one set of persons regard others professing different sentiments, and following different pursuits from themselves. If the mind of man were perfect—as all are born alike, and all have the same des-

tiny,—it is most probable that there is a right path and a standard of taste and opinion which all would follow, and all approve of: but even granting that there may be a variety of paths all leading to the same final point, suited to the diversity of tastes of men, still it shews a littleness in his nature, for man to be so prejudiced in favour of his own pursuits and opinions as to look with contempt, and reckon frivolous, or erroneous, those of others. In common life we see this exemplified every day. A person exercising a particular trade or profession rails at the extortion, chicanry, cruelty, or underhand dealing, peculiar to the occupation of his neighbour—the most insignificant difference in political opinions is sufficient to create a lasting animosity—and religious dogmas, nowise tending to edification, are discussed with that rancour and uncharitableness which too often brings contempt on the sacred subjects they are intended to elucidate.

But this feeling has its place no less frequently amid the proud walks of Philosophy than in the more humble occupations of the vulgar. The votaries of learning have, too, their favourite speculations, and are extremely apt to reckon frivolous, those pursuits for which they have no taste themselves, and to extol their own particular study. The Astronomer looks with contempt on the golden dreams of the Chemist—the Chemist on the laborious trifling of the Botanist—and the Botanist in his turn on the Linguist. While the Moral Sage reckons the whole speculative tribe of Naturalists as so many empty dreamers trifling life away, and peremptorily asserts that his science is the only one that ought to occupy rational beings. It is by attaching too much consequence to their acquire-

ments that such men form these partial judgments; and hence we see with what pomp and importance men of partial information usher their opinions into the world, and advance and maintain systems and theories, which, oftentimes being built on the most visionary hypothesis, scarcely live their day, when they drop into oblivion. How different from these was the truly great and philosophic Newton, whose mind—of that gigantic capacity which could comprehend a whole—was not enchained to a particular part—who, fully aware of the bounds and limits of man's capacity, was humble in his own eyes and charitable with regard to the opinions of others. A little before his death he said, "I dont know what I may seem to the world, but as to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble, or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." *

I have been led to these reflections by the perusal of an 'Apologue' which I found among the papers of a friend who had lived abroad, and which bearing in some degree on the subject I here transcribe.

"Having fatigued myself one forenoon by rambling through the delightful plains of Hindostan.—the sun being then high, and the heat oppressive. I sat myself down in the shade of a broad-leaved Palmeto. Refreshed by the delicious coolness, and the perpetual fanning of its leaves. I soon recovered my strength, and rising up, proceeded on my way homewards. I had not gone far, however, when I discovered that I had lost my watch; and I

* Spence's Anecdotes.

* immediately recollected, that, taking it out to ascertain the hour while sitting under the tree, I had laid it on the grass, and forgot to take it with me. I retraced my footsteps in order to find it, and had come within a few yards of the place when I perceived a crowd of monkies (animals which are found there in great numbers) assembled round the watch. They had by some means or other forced open the cases, and were examining the works within, and debating about them with great warmth. You must know that these monkies have a considerable degree of sagacity; and in common with other animals have a sort of jargon peculiar to them, by which they easily make themselves intelligible to one another. By long attention to them, and from some lessons which I once received from a wandering Brahmin, I have become as well acquainted with their language as with my own vernacular tongue; and often amuse myself, while rambling in the woods, with listening to their conversations. They were now carrying on a fierce debate about the watch; and each was delivering his opinion as to how it had come there, or from whence and in what manner it had been produced. Anxious to hear the result, I stole softly behind the tree, that the sight of me might not interrupt them. The contest was keenly supported on all hands. A spruce gentleman monkey, having very much the volubility of a chattering Frenchman, affirmed that the body before them must be a part of the sun, or perhaps, one of the stars which had been driven from its situation by some of the others running against it;‡ and that being red hot and pliable, the whirling motion which it received in

‡ In allusion to the Theory of Buffon.

its descent would easily account for the formation of all the internal parts which they now saw. A grave austere monkey on the other side, having his gray hair curled into the form of a large bob wig, darted a contemptuous look at the last speaker, and called him an idle, dreaming theorist. It was his confident opinion, that the body before them was produced upon some tree, in the same manner as a pippin; and that it was by the action of an internal heat, which had fermented and belched out in some parts, and retired to the centre in others, that the irregular appearances which they perceived had been formed †. He was interrupted by another, who talked of soluble menstrua—primitive atoms drawn together by affinities—chrysalizable attractions, and many more terms coined for the occasion, which I did not understand; and I think summed up the whole by laying it down as a *fact*, that these atoms, after tossing about for a long time in chaotic confusion, at last, of their own accord, arranged themselves each into its proper place; and thus was formed the wonderful body, which he was then examining. † Each of these leaders now drew towards them their particular partizans, by whom they were keenly supported. The disputes became louder and more violent; and some of the combatants proceeded so far as to peel the skin off each others faces with their nails. Amid the confusion and uproar I could hear some say, that on so weighty a matter, they ought not to give their judgment rashly; but that they should appoint certain of their virtuosi, whose sole business for the future should be, to examine all the internal parts of the body, and to take

† The Huttonian Theory.

† The Wernerian Theory.

accurate measurements of the same, by which they might be more able to judge of the manner in which it had been originally formed. This motion was approved of by most of the society; and some actually commenced their measurements and observations, and I heard it agreed that they were to meet every following day to prosecute their researches. But I was now quite tired of listening to them, and although I could not help sometimes laughing at their absurd conjectures, yet I was so provoked at their overbearing arrogance and extreme ignorance, that I came forward to seize my watch and put an end to their idle speculations. At sight of me, the whole assembly of learned Doctors made the best of their way off in considerable alarm. I called after them in their own language that I meant them no harm. This quieted their fears, and at some distance from me they all made a halt. I then told them of the extreme silliness, of spending so much of their time in debating about what did not at all concern them—that they would do much better to go and look after their ordinary business—to collect fruits for themselves and their young cubs at home, that perhaps were now gnawing their own fingers for want of food. The watch, I said, which had occupied so much of their attention, was mine, and was made by a being superior to themselves, of whose powers of invention, and the various machinery which he employed, their limited understandings could form no idea.—That instead of the internal parts of the machine having been formed by any powers or actions inherent in themselves, each particular part was cut out, and rounded, and set in its proper position by the hand of the artist, and the instruments which he em-

ployed. Abashed at my reproof, and conscious of their own folly and presumption, they slunk away in disgrace, and I again resumed my way home." * X.

(We have received the two following letters, which we insert in one Number, as the subjects, though evidently treated by different pens, have some similarity to each other.)

MR. EDITOR,

The imitative faculty has been ever strong among the human race; and, although perhaps not so much so as in certain kinds of the lower animals, is sufficiently powerful to enable us either to profit by good example, or make ourselves ridiculous. The mimickry of the ape, and the imitations of the parrot, are the efforts of beings sunk beneath the influence of reason, and consequently produced without design and without any object; but those of the human kind are done from choice, or from conviction, and either shew the man who profits by the example of his betters, or who puts on *airs* because he has seen his superiors do the same. It is of the latter sort that we mean to speak at present; and we are sorry that the world in general, and our Town in particular, furnish so very many examples on which to moralize.

The first class that we shall notice consists of those who ape the manners of their juniors, in the endeavour to

* This is very good in the imitation
 - but about the boundary line between
 rot ability of fiction these two are so blended
 throughly, even into one another that it

restore to the *middle age*, the charms and accomplishments that exclusively belong to youth. This species is more frequent among the fair sex, but both furnish abundant examples of it:—you see the maiden turned of half a century, attempting to sport the ivory teeth and the raven curls of youth; and you behold the coxcomb of fifty-five, dressed out in the habiliments of those who might be his grandchildren, and turning the staff that ought to be the support of his age into the cane that betrays his footsteps. But this is the distance of the picture. It is more instructive to contemplate objects immediately under our observation.

There is a certain class of persons of the tender sex, just emancipated from the toils and fatigues of the market, and who for aught any body cares might lay themselves up in ordinary for the rest of their lives. These personages, who had been taught to shew their paces after the olden fashion, behold with bitter aversion a new system of accomplishments introduced and practised by the less ancient nymphs who are destined to supply their place. This they cannot prevent, so that they resolve to fight their youthful competitors on their own ground.—They accordingly go again to school—bedeck their matron-like figures with girlish ornaments, and make *rouge* supply the colour of the roses, which has evanished from their cheeks, with the freshness of youth—fading roses, which a shower of rain can as effectually disperse as it does the leaves of the flower itself, when it would bloom after the stalk is withered! They go to the dancing-school—learn quadrilles—and bump through the mazy evolutions of the dance with infinite satisfaction to them-

selves; but to the spectators, with the appearance of those superannuated individuals of the *equine* tribe, who are caused to exert themselves with unusual agility upon market days. They are far fonder of the *pironette* than of any other step, so that those dances in which it abounds are infinite favourites with our heroines. You here behold them in all their glory and activity—their arms striking off at a tangent, like those of a baby's doll when put in circular motion—and the ornaments of their dress shewing like the paper *flyers* on a kitchen jack. It would be endless however to follow them through their devious orbits.

Another class consists of those who wish to be genteel, by imitating the dress and manners of their superiors.—This is a very extensive class—as wide as the space between the jay with peacock's feathers, and the mocking bird that fills the forests of the western world with the borrowed music of a whole universe of songsters. In this division we have the *Sunday bucks*, who strut in mock gentility through our streets on holidays, and may be aptly compared to the aforesaid jays. We have the young *bourgeois*, who, after spending a season at Aberdeen or Edinburgh, inundate our quiet cities in the summer season. They come hither, perhaps, to enjoy that consequence which is denied them in the more populous cities of the South. You may see an individual of the species, flouncing along on pavement (too narrow to accommodate more than one of such great men) with all the smirking confidence of perfect vanity: he vents his impertinent nonsense on every one of whom he fancies that he enjoys or has a right to the acquaintance: he bustles

into church after the congregation has been quietly seated—bedecked perhaps with some of the temporary medals, or trappings, used *in the Capital*, during the King's visit. Or you may see him increasing his fancied importance by a shooting excursion—whether to Covesea or the moors is of no consequence—although he has perhaps never smelt the flash of a pan,—far less is aware whether the black dust or the round pellets put into the gun produce the explosion. Such an animal is to be pitied, and can only be tolerated when he merely shews his nose at the window of his work-shop. But it would lead you much beyond your limits to pursue the matter farther at present—suffice it to say, that I would recommend to all such persons to study the *moral* of the fable of the Jay, and to profit by the lesson.

V.

ON MODERN DANDIES.

Spruce affectation ;
 Figures pedantical ; these summer flies
 Have blown me full of maggot ostentation ;
 I do forswear them :——— *Shakspeare.*

MR EDITOR,

Among the many changes of modern days, that in dress is one of the most general and conspicuous. Some years ago, to be a man of fashion was nothing more than to dress respectably, and to be an adept in gaming, drinking, hunting, horse-racing, and the like accomplishments. Now-a-days, most of these qualifications are unnecessary, and the change is highly creditable to our age. Finery however has survived, and being now almost the only requisite, has distended itself in a prodigious degree

so far indeed that a new term has been admitted into our vocabulary, to distinguish a class of beings who had no existence in the days when our language was formed, and whose character, if they were designated by the title of their predecessors, would be grossly misrepresented. A *beau* of the last century was what a *bully* is now,—the most boisterous, the most forward, and the most blustering of the species. Now-a-days, the man of fashion is a weak tender creature, who wears clothes merely to display them, and who, like a dwarf in a show-box, never ventures out except to exhibit; who is rendered slender, like a Chinese lady's foot—and delicate, like the bud of a potatoe that has germinated within doors,—by confinement. These however are but 'the lilies of our land'—

“The lilies male, who neither toil nor spin,
As sister lilies *might*.”

But there is another species of Dandies, who have of late years made no less progress,—‘The Eigin ’prentices.’ They likewise, in order to make some compensation for the loss of that consideration which their fraternity possessed in Lord Nigel's days, have thought it expedient to become Dandies. It is no doubt pleasant to see a well-dressed lad handling the goods we are going to purchase, and to some it may be an attraction to frequent the shop. But it occasions a confusion of ranks, and impels those who are resolved to lead the fashions to lengths still more ridiculous. A beau of the first order will be sadly chagrined if he hears that the ——'s shopkeeper has been mistaken for him; and as the only means of preventing a repetition of the mistake, he will adopt some new insignia. From this refuge even his protection will be of no long continuance, and he will soon be forced to think of some new badge of distinction. Thus, as in the Macedonian phalanx, the first rank was constantly pressed forward by the second; so in the *beau monde*, the second order of Dandies constantly follows up and impels those whose

vanity makes them wish ever to be conspicuous. And thus a foolish emulation on the part of the Dandies, occasions a constant current of cash from their pockets into those of our haberdashers and tailors, which will prove in fine the means of enabling those who now ape their fashions, themselves to take the lead, and throw their present archetypes far into the back-ground.

Observations on such a subject may be deemed by some, futile and to no purpose. Let those persons, however, reflect, that since such important results have been deduced from the contemplation of a shadow,* it is by no means ridiculous to expect some benefit from the consideration of a—*surface*.
R. Y.

* Philosophers have observed that the shadow of the earth in every situation is of a circular form; and hence has been deduced one of the most plain and comprehensible arguments for the earth's rotundity.

Captain Sandy Barbison has been received, and shall appear as soon as possible.

T. N. next week.

R. JOHNSTON, PRINTER, ELGIN.

THE

EPHEMERA,

No. VIII.

Monday, 11th November, 1822.

*Sequel to the Introduction of the New Psalmody among
the Knockbreans.*

Stet quicunque volet potens
Aulæ culmine lubrico:
Me dulcis saturet quies.
Obscuro positus loco,
Leni perfruar otio.—*Thyestes 2. A. Ch.*

IT was not till some years after the battle of the Psalmody, that I, the Ex-Dominie of Knockbrae, could regain my credit with the parishioners, and live on that friendly footing which is so conducive to the happiness of man,—namely, the interchange of mutual acts of kindness one to another. Man is a gregarious animal, and it is not good for him to be alone. Dark must the frowns of fortune have been, and forbidding the pathway of life's journey, when a human being with all his kindly feelings and social

affections, has at any time been forced to commit such a violence on his better nature, as to tear himself from the society of his fellow-creatures, and to live unnoticed and unknown—"the world forgetting—by the world forgot." The Ex-Dominie of Knockbrae was never the man to envy the life of eremites, and he has always thought that such characters, notwithstanding the profession of "prayer all their business—all their pleasure praise"—would have taken the more direct path heavenward, had they chosen that which their fellow creatures were treading, and helped them on their way, by encouraging the faint-hearted, supporting the feeble-kneed, and administering consolation to the afflicted. Therefore was he sorry that the people looked on him in anger. We envy not the feelings of the man who can receive with indifference the scouling glance of the meanest individual; and him who has no one to sympathise in his joys or sorrows, we reckon to be miserable indeed, even were he the master of a world. It is in the exercise of mutual love, that the soul can be properly said to exist, and he that has never felt his spirit to kindle, and his 'strong conception' to dilate with the wish to make a fellow-creature happy, has yet to learn the true enjoyment of existence. "Anima, says St Bernard, *magis est ubi amat, quam ubi animat,*" the soul may be more justly said to exist, when under the influence of love, than when it merely animates: and one of the female saints of the Romish Church, when describing the wretchedness of the great enemy of man, has singled out this consideration as the most intense of his torments—"that he is condemned to love nothing." We believe that to love nothing is an attribute of no human

being, even the most depraved and the most malignant of the species; and he whose crimes or misfortunes have driven him from society, must still have some object to receive the o'erflowings of those affections which, like collected waters, would destroy if kept long confined. The trees of the forest which shelter the miserable outcast, he will call his friends; he will tame the savage animals which howl around him, and into their bosoms will this man of sorrow pour the full tide of afflictions:—their dull and vacant stare will be to him as the look of sympathy.

We have been led into a train of thought different from what we intended. The Dominie of Knockbrae could not brook the idea of being an outcast from the society of his fellow-parishioners. He accounted the triumph of the new psalmody as one of those which like triumphs of a later time may have brought glory, but little ease. His worldly circumstances too were beginning to suffer as much as his comfort and peace of mind; for the fair sex, who have always, in Knockbrae and elsewhere, had so much influence over the minds of the lords of the creation, falsely so named, (or at most their power is but nominal) persuaded their husbands to withdraw their children from the school, by representing to them how dangerous it would be to have them educated by a "heretic ballad-monger." His unfortunate habit too of continually quoting scraps of Latin,—ye sons of the *ferula*, you can understand the nature of this infirmity—went to increase the suspicion of witchcraft, which Elspet Groandeepe, as the reader knows, first raised against him; and ever since the time when he tried to persuade Elder Veuchbody that Gamaliel was not a mountain, the soundness of his religi-

ous principles had been called in question. He had incurred the odium of two of the best 'scripture-men' of the parish, for having sacrilegiously dared to laugh at a long story about the devil—whom they represented as constantly teasing a friend of theirs; by throwing stones at him,—pulling off his bonnet, appearing to him in flames of fire, &c. This fatal laugh was the means of sapping to the very foundation, the goodly structure of sound sense, and moral, and religious character, which his patient listening to many a long-winded dissertation on the supernatural, had induced them to raise up to his honour. In short, Knockbrae would have become very disagreeable to him, if his influence as session-clerk had not served to counteract the bad opinion, which the people began to entertain concerning him. In order to insinuate himself into their good graces, he was instant in proclaiming marriages at half price; eager to encourage population, by inserting the names in the parish register for nothing; and above all, by the eagerness with which he strove to pull down those penitentiaries to which offenders of a certain class were exalted, and which were soon after changed for rebuking and exhortation in private, he completely gained over to his interest, the younger part of the community. Those persons, however, who had been forced to submit to the rigid discipline of the kirk, were not well pleased with this last measure, and they ascribed his humane and praise-worthy endeavours to false and unworthy motives. They did not indeed avow their opinions openly, but by significant winks and shakings of the head, and shrugging up of shoulders, they easily gave vent to their indignation. Some of them made use of brief and senten-

tious proverbs, such as "Corbies winna pick out Corbies' een." In this we may see the workings of human nature. The greatest sinners are frequently the greatest declaimers against sin. Conscious of their own iniquities, they hope to conceal them by railing at the works of iniquity. The good will pardon the wicked, the wicked will not forgive one another.

In time, however, which is the medicine of every grief, the Dominie of Knockbrae began to perceive a better spirit to prevail. The daughter of Elder Feuchbody, who had experienced the benefit of the late relaxation of church discipline,—as an acknowledgment of gratitude to the Dominie, who had been instrumental in promoting this deed of mercy,—prevailed on her father to adopt one of the new tunes, although he had often declared "that he would never take a note of one between his teeth, as it was an awfulsome intromitting and trafficking wi' iniquity, yet that in order to please the lassie he would sing one of them on the government fast-days, using the words of the paraphrases, but on no account whatever would he profane the Sabbath and the Psalms by the heathenish music of carnal-minded strathspey-makers.

To conclude; the downfall of the stool of repentance was the means of exalting the Dominie to the pinnacle of public favour. He walked hand in hand with the people: he entered their dwellings; and conversed freely with them: and some of these conversations he will soon lay before the readers of the Ephemera. Y.

Mr. EDITOR,

WHEN your first volume was given to the world, I, after puzzling and beating my brains for the four preceding weeks, had the merit, in your own impartial and unbiassed opinion, to produce a *very good essay*; but alas! I was wrong at the very foundation, and having pitched upon a topic already 'hacknied and thread-bare,' procured it a place among the "Rejected Addresses."

Now what am I to do to be immortalized in your pages? shall I again attempt to 'lash the vices of the age'? No—I'll leave that to people convinced that they possess fewer vices of their own. Where then is there a subject for the following essay to be found? In which department of human knowledge—In history, mathematics, philosophy, or poetry—among these, I must certainly fall upon something to please.—Let us try. By attempting an historical essay might not some light be thrown on the antedeluvian-geographical features of Antiqua Moravia—and the customs, characters and manners of its primeval inhabitants; or, descending to more authenticated times, could not the character of Helgy be portrayed and the various passions and propensities of his noble mind traced,—more especially, that kind favour and fatherly love he bore to us, his unworthy protege, which induced him to pitch upon the commodious comfortable, airy and highly-favoured situation for his Gude Town.

But none of these will do—the reason why is, that they are o'er kittle queries for me, altho' I trust not so for many of your respectable essayists and correspondents; and having as yet not seen any *Mathematical* disquisitions in the 'little book,' I will not form a precedent for introducing such abstruse matter into its pages.

Shall I meddle with Philosophy, then I would be a Philosopher—Oh, how grand!—but pray what is a Philoso-

pher—merely a lover of wisdom—well Sir, I am undoubtedly an enthusiastic admirer of wisdom; yet I am far from what the world calls a Philosopher. What a corruption of terms!

However after maturely considering these matters, under the guise of Philosophy, may be handed for your perusal, “A dissertation shewing how that fabric called the Jail, which so incommodiously obstructs the street, could (provided the centre of gravity fall not without the base) stand as security on its top; and thus add new dignity to our already highly ornamented City” But before giving this to your readers, a way of access must be devised for the public functionaries, otherwise there will be no more courts, elections, or bell ringing;—and consequently the tongues of busy gossip tattlers must find food in something else about the michaelmas time.

I may well say *food*, for there are not a few who would prefer a dish of scandal, well seasoned with *indelicacies*, (I beg pardon, a mistake of my pen) and decked out with exaggeration, to the ‘most excellent thing’ Mr Mumblechops ever knew—I was about to confess myself guilty of a failing similar to that of the worthy Dominie, viz apt to wander from the subject; but alas poor I! only searching after, and in vain endeavouring to find a *subject*, cannot be accused of wandering therefrom.

Having discussed the others, there remains the boundless extent of poetical fiction. There the mind, unfettered and freed from plain matter-of-fact, and commonplace topics, will soar on the wings of imagination, and indite what I trust will not be altogether unpalatable to some of your enlightened and grateful readers, and which, ‘*Deo volente*,’ you’ll receive from—

TOM NUMSCULL (a patronymick, in what sense it could be applied to me, I’ve never been able to find out.)

Auchtermuchty, 11th Oct. 1822.

Mr EDITOR,

I have read with some degree of pleasure the account of the superstitions of our worthy neighbours the Knockbreans, contained in a late number of our Northern Spectator, and must express my high approbation of your lending your hand to bring to light those scattered and neglected anecdotes, which well illustrate the manners of our part of the world; and I ever indulge the hope of one day seeing them referred to, by some industrious Scottish Tacitus, as a proof of one or other of his opinions 'de moribus Scotorum;' or, what would be a still higher honour, in the notes of an elegant volume of lines *in forma poetæ* from the Ballantyne Press. But while the design is praise-worthy, I must say the account of the renowned Willok is rather insufficient to answer either the purpose of the Historian or Poet; indeed, so far from descending to antiquarian minuteness, it does not even satisfy the curiosity of my maiden daughter Grizzy, who has pestered me all day with questions such as these: If I was sure he had not horns? or if I even saw his feet: if he lived in a cave, a sheeling, ha' or castle: and even whether he was possessed with a good or evil spirit. On all which points I took care not to satisfy her, well knowing, that if she knew ought of the matter, she would, ere this could reach you, have published it to the four winds of heaven; aye, & sent it to the Imperial city to her old friend Miss Biddy M'Comie, by whom it would no doubt be transmitted to some of the Kit. North Club and find its way into Blackwood, by which you would lose an excellent article for next Ephemera.

But to proceed. I was at school about thirty years ago in a village in Aberdeenshire, where I lived in the house of a very gentlemanly fellow a cousin of my own, who kept the post-office, when a robbery was committed on the farm of a gentleman's factor near the village. On that

occasion Willok was sent for to Strath-Don, where he occupied a very extensive farm in the respectable situation of gentleman-farmer, and what in Ireland would be called a middleman.

I shall now describe him, as well as a superstitious dread which his presence caused would allow me to make my observation at the time. He was a man about sixty, of the middle size, but very strongly, though lightly built; his hair was of the purest white, gently shed to a side and carefully smoothed down, his brow was high and bold, his nose was very prominent, but yet its claim to be the most elevated part of his countenance was disputed by two tremendous cheek bones, quite Caledonian. His little grey eyes, deeply sunk in his head, and appearing still more deep from the height of the prominences on each side, gave him exactly the look of one,

“Who had been where the grey cock never crew,
Who had seen what good men never knew.”

In other respects he was formed as a christian ought to be. His dress was as remarkable as his face. Though no military man he wore a fine long scarlet coat gorgeously ornamented with real gold buttons, said to be worth an immense sum; the rest consisted of white vest and breeches, with knee boots after the manner of a country gentleman of the time. Your account of the manner in which Willok obtained the *bridle of power*, is the same as that which I heard him relate seriously to the post-master; but a still more potent agent of dominion over the spirits of the air and of the water, was soon after obtained by him, of which I am surprised to find nothing in Gardene Logie's narrative; for as far as I recollect he was not long in the possession of the one, till he made himself master of the other. The Exorcist was out in the hill one autumn day, when he felt a desire to drink of the water of a moor-land burn, and it so happened that he stooped down, to apply his mouth to the surface. The place was lone and solita-

ry; it was the Kelpie's pool. As he drunk he heard a violent bubbling noise, he looked up, and before him, on a large shelf of mountain rock partially surrounded with water, stood a hideous Elfin form, who addressed Willok in unearthly language which cannot be told, but that it related to selling soul and body to satan is highly probable. The bold Strathdonian, without waiting until he finished, threw the bridle of power (without which he durst not venture abroad) over him and held him fast, on which the Elfin spirit shrieked and groaned hideously. At last stung with pain he offered his captor a ball of the purest adder glass, by means of which he would become mighty over all those who had dealings with the evil one, from the Tay, to the great glen of Scotland. Willok accepted the offer, the precious jewel was delivered, and the curb removed, when instantly the unearthly figure vanished in the dark bosom of the pool. Not very long after I left the country, and since my late return, I often hear of one of the same name being consulted about robberies, bereavements, death of cattle. &c. Indeed no later than yesterday some men from the lowlands of Moray, returned from a journey of more than sixty miles to visit Willok on some such errand. By the bye it may not be without interest to mention that the superstition of adder glass is very ancient, as is proved by the hieroglyphical writings of ancient Egypt, the fable of the good and evil genii of Persia waring for it being a symbol of the world; and according to Tacitus and others, the Gauls, Germans and Britons believed it to be formed by the froth of a collection of serpents by whom it was propelled into the air, and if caught in its fall by a Druid in a sacred towel the serpents pursued with great fury. If the priest got off with the *Anguis ovis* or serpent's egg, its value was inestimable, giving him power to perform mighty wonders.

Your's, &c.

CAPTAIN SANDY BARRISON.

Mr EDITOR,

I have in my possession an Elzivir Edition of Horace, which once belonged to my worthy predecessor, Mr Thumpbottom. The copy is interleaved, and in it there are a great many translations of many of the odes of this delightful poet. As the translations are in Mr T.'s hand-writing, and as they are those chiefly which describe the pleasures of a social glass, I have reason to conclude that he is the author of them. I send you one as a specimen. Mr T has substituted the liquors of his native country, in the place of the wines of the ancients, and the scenery of Knockbrae for that of Italy.

Your's, &c. THE EX-DOMINIE OF KNOCKBRAE

Addressed to the Dominie of Ronalbell.

See ! how the Knock's auld haffets hoar
 Wi' wreaths o' snaw are covered o'er ;
 See—winter curbs the burns wi' rains,
 And Findhorn binds wi' ivy chains ;
 R - - - - -'s oaks begin to crack
 Wi' weight o' snaw upon their back.
 Oh Jock ne'er mind the frost and snaw !
 Draw in your chair and let it blaw ;
 Tak in a cog o'good brown stout,
 And o' it take a hearty tout ;
 Or aquavitæ four years aul,
 Will drive awa baith care and caul.
 What 'though yon rose in ruin lies,
 And jarring winds disturb the skies ?
 The rose in purple pride will blush ;
 And Jove the jarring winds will hush ;

And, will he not gie's brose and claiith?
 Gouks that we are of little faith!
 As to the morn ne'er fash your thum,
 Tak aff your dram, and let it come;
 Count as a gain whate'er his will,
 And grieve—but when you want a gill.
 And, if you chance to meet your jo,
 And ask a kiss, she'll answer "no."
 Tho' "yes" she means: and in the dark,
 She'll cough, for fear you miss your mark.
 'T'wixt ilka smack, "ill bred" she'll ca' you,
 Tho' faith she only means "fair fa' you"!

Y.

C. It's story fails in not exciting sufficient interest.

Some other communications must at least for the present be delayed.

R. JOHNSTON, PRINTER, ELGIN.

THE

EPHEMERA,

No. IX.

Monday, 25th November, 1822.

“ Paulo majora canamus.”—*Virg.*

Mr. EDITOR,

That of all cants, the cant of Criticism is the worst, is a just remark of a great man, with which all writers in Magazines, Repositories, and Ephemeris should be made acquainted, and which your correspondent X. of October 28th, should duly lay to heart. It is no doubt true as his Indian friend said to the monkies, regarding the watch, that the world is made by a Being superior to man, whose ways are higher than he can comprehend; and it is also true as Cuiver remarks in his funeral oration on Werner, that previous to the time of that great man, Geologists did not found their various theories of the earth on facts carefully collected, but giving unlimited licence to their imaginations they formed worlds at their will, phenix-like

raising up their own wild hypothesis on the ruins of the equally ingenious and full as well supported visions of their predecessors. To this wild theorising without data, are to be ascribed, the vulgar prejudices against all theories of the earth, whether they be the wild musings of an imaginary theorist, or the beautiful system of Werner, founded on just deductions from the phenomena of nature. What can be more absurd than the theories of those who set out with the principle, that the earth was formed from a comet changing its wandering course into a planet, regular in its motions round the sun; and this by means (as they would make us believe) which had not their origin in the all-powerful voice of God? Or that it was originally but a liquid drop from the sun's surface, driven from thence by that world-creating comet, which by a mathematical demonstration (founded as we are told on true principles) struck the sun about five thousand years ago; and that if we are not soon destroyed we will find to our amusement, that the heat coming from the centre of our once liquid earth, no more nourishes the principal of animal and vegetable life; but that India and Africa will be changed into regions full as frigid and dreary as are now found at the poles—the sun shining in vain on the insensible surface of the desert world. But I hope none of your readers will form such an irrational idea on the subject before us, that because much has been written that has passed away like the baseless fabric of a vision, that nothing of any stability can be written or thought on the subject. I entreat them to beware of such false analogies, which would make us throw into the fire the works of Bacon and Locke, because the philosophy of Aristotle

is fallen to the ground. Rather examine into the truth of the facts adduced, and into the justness of the reasoning founded on them, not listening to find fault and refute, neither to believe or defend, but to consider to which side of the question probability attaches. You probably know that the opinions of the Geological world regarding the formation of the earth are much divided; the greater part adhering to the Neptunian system of Werner, but many to that promulgated and supported by our countrymen, Hutton and Playfair of Edinburgh.

Dr Hutton supposes the globe to be in a constant state of decay and renovation, our present world being formed from the ruins of one preceding it, which in the lapse of ages must submit itself to the destroyer's hand, to afford materials for the formation of other worlds. The water and air are supposed to be continually producing the destruction of the solid parts of the globe, which are gradually carried by the action of the rivers and tides to the depths of the ocean, where they are subjected to an intense heat, by which they are fused and consolidated, and are then elevated by the expansive power of this heat, by which they receive their various inclinations. The stratified rocks are supposed to have been in a state of imperfect fusion, while the unstratified rocks (granite, &c.) and veins are supposed to have been perfectly liquid, and to have been injected upwards with inconceivable force, forming the most elevated parts of the globe. In my opinion this theory owes its beauty to the grandeur of its conception, not to the stability of its structure. Its first principles involve insuperable difficulties, and the facts

from which these are inferred will be found to be at variance with them. The decay of the solid parts of the earth is in many places so slow, that the time required for its destruction must be infinite. Thus in Egypt are found hieroglyphics sculptured on stone, which possess all their original beauty, after a lapse of, at least, 3000 years. Basalt retains the acuteness of its angles after a lapse of thousands of years; and rocks possess the same appearances which they are described as possessing before the christian æra: but even the matter which is carried to the sea by rivers is not conveyed to the depths of the ocean, but is deposited at their mouths by the action of the tides, which are well known to run with much more force *to* the shore than *from* it. Therefore the very first principles of this theory appears to be in opposition to truth. But if it be admitted, that the waters carry the waste of our globe to the depths of the sea, it will be found impossible, to account for their fusion. A single particle of limestone, invisible to the naked eye, can hardly be melted by the greatest heat we can produce; and it may easily be shewn, that all the vital air in our atmosphere is insufficient to produce a heat capable of melting a single calcareous mountain. What then must be the quantity of this fluid (even allowing a sufficiency of combustible matter to exist) to melt whole continents? It is even admitted that such a heat cannot be produced by any known means; therefore it would be unphilosophical to admit its existence. But if, with a learned Reviewer, we admit the possibility of its existence, we must suppose it not to increase, as no cause can be supposed for its increment: hence it is impossible that it could have raised

continents, from the immense depths of the sea, to great altitudes above its surface. And this stupendous operation of the central heat, after having raised them, is not continued to prevent them sinking again below the flood; but is employed in preparing another world from the bosom of the deep, which it does not raise until inconceivable quantities of matter are accumulated to give a greater resistance to its action. Farther, by the theory of Hutton, the diameter of the globe must be constantly on the increase and of course the quantity of heat, necessary for carrying on the supposed operations, must be also augmented; both of which suppositions are extravagant in the extreme. If we add to this the necessity of supposing that heat *does not diffuse itself around*, till an equality of temperature is produced, the first principles of the system will appear to be so contradicted by all the rules of philosophy and reason, as to render it unnecessary for one to enlarge on the facts adduced to support an hypothesis so ill imagined. But let not pretenders to superior sagacity and discernment, in their self-complacent state of ignorance, look on Dr. Hutton as a splendid trifler, or on his theory as useless; for it has led to some of the most beautiful and interesting experiments,* which have increased our knowledge in this age of improvement, and to many important discoveries in the geological structure of our own country.

If you favour me by giving this a place in the *Ephemeris*, I will send you an apology for the Wernerian theory of the Earth, in which I will as shortly, and in as po-

* Sir James Hall (in Edinburgh) Transactions.

pular a manner as I can, point out the modesty of its pretensions—the probability of its first principles—the strong evidence by which it is supported—and lastly, its accordance with sacred history.

PHILO-PHILOSOPHUS.

A TRUE STORY †

IN a beautiful and picturesque part of Scotland is situated the romantic village of ——— inhabited by people of all ranks and degrees, from the brave and warlike Captain Fopling, to the scarce less celebrated, and more agile Ralph Boswell. There are also females in this community equally opposite in their character, and denominations. Among others, there is a good natured person, yeleft Madge Wildfire, who it was reported had some private or public pique against the noble Captain; and the only way her art could discover, to wreak her vengeance against this ill-fated, unfortunate individual, was (however slight it may appear to an unprejudiced person) the harshest mode of any. Not the greatest tyrant who ever swayed, with unrelenting rigour, the sceptre over an enslaved and wretched nation, ever invented a punishment more galling and severe. Not the Bastinadoe or the Rack could, for a moment, be put in comparison with that employed by

† The heroic comic raillery of the *fair* writer of the above (for the style and crow-quill manuscript warrant us using this gender) is of that light nature, which cannot offend, and can scarcely fail of affording amusement.

Madge to insult the Captain's wounded vanity! For be it known to the gentle reader, that this said noble officer had all the keen sensibility of a youth, being a young man over whose head only about seventy-five years had rolled, in alas! (for him at least) too quick succession! Now the Captain had like all of us his weak side, viz a most superabundant and ridiculous conceit of his person, which however, to do him justice, was by no means defective. He also wished to pass himself off for a young, handsome, dashing Beau; indeed he even had at that time (till this unlucky discovery of Madge's put an end to all his newborn hopes) some intentions of binding himself with the "silken chains of matrimony" which to him could have been no difficult matter, he was so extremely moderate in the requisites which she whom he should honour with his hand, must have been possessed of. All he required was, "Youth, Beauty, Birth and Fortune." Scandal alleges that the disappointed Madge, seeing herself now bereft of all hope of bearing off in triumph the envied prize, aware that she was only endowed with one of the four necessary ingredients, namely "Birth," and resigning herself to jealousy and despair determined to be revenged, and therefore fixed upon the following method of venting her wrath and disappointment. She spread a report that she had one day seen the Captain reading the newspaper at the window of the Inn where he resided. Oh dire and eternal stigma! "with spectacles on nose"!!! This (as in small towns always is the case) quickly circulated; the old Ladies who lived in a state of "Single Blessedness" when met in the evening to drink their "Dish of tea" chatted it over and made their own additions and comments; till,

at length one fatal day, it reached the Captain's ears, which (whatever his eyes might have been) were by no means deaf to this unwelcome intelligence. His eyes flashed fire, his mouth (and I have even heard it confidently affirmed, his nostrils, but for the truth of the latter assertion I cannot vouch) emitted volumes of smoke; his whole frame was agitated with a fearful tremor; his tongue cleaved to the roof of his mouth, and was paralysed with horror and indignation; his lips became parched, and even the hairs of his wig stood on end; the cork upon his eye brows, instead of retaining its original hue, changed to a sort of bluish purple. Altogether the metamorphosis certainly produced a most ludicrous effect. As soon as he recovered the power of speech, which was not however for a considerable time, he exclaimed with great difficulty of articulation "D—D—Dam—na—tion she—she—shall be prosecuted—to—to—to—the utmost rigour of the law! she shall be put in jail for defamation I—I—I swear she shall!" But alas! upon consulting some learned "limb of the law," he found to his unspeakable vexation, that the words were not *actionable*. and therefore was obliged to consign the affair, as soon as possible, to oblivion. But his soul would not rest contented with such a weight upon it; and therefore, in order to prove the falsity of the accusation, and that it was made with *malice prepense*, he went to visit the Laird of —, and during the conversation he lifted a newspaper, which lay on the table, and holding it as far as possible from him, conning the syllables first over to himself, he attempted to stammer out some words (of course, sans spectacles) but however seemed to feel so severely the want of his

disowned friends, that by his failure, the report gained additional credit; and, to the latest posterity, his having worn spectacles at the age of seventy-five will be an everlasting disgrace upon his name, and character!!! But if our reader has had the kindness to proceed thus far in this narrative, we, as the best recompence for his patience now deliver him from the thralldom of fatigue, which the perusal of this may have excited in him. We return him our sincere and grateful thanks, and request his indulgence, as this is the first attempt of a very young Author, in order to illustrate the effects of vanity and conceit upon a weak and frivolous mind, faintly pourtrayed in the too common character of Captain Fopling.

“AN ENEMY TO VANITY.”

F———, }
Nov. 1, 1822. }

Mr. EDITOR,

That experience teaches fools, and that wise men are the better for it, is an axiom so true as not to require confirmation; but if it did, the Ephemera will afford it. At first, I fear, in the style of its composition, and the choice of its subjects, we must award it a place below the medium standard of periodical writing; at present it is more certainly above it. The topics are better chosen and the composition much more easy and evidently coming from more practised hands; in proof of which I need only instance the paper of X in No 7. In this is discussed with some wit, and much elegance, the overweeping

pretensions of naturalists, "to travel nature up, to the sharp peak of her sublimest heights," but while so properly engaged, your correspondent himself falls into a more grievous error, than those which he so ably satyrises: It is this—he says "as all are born alike, and all have the same destiny—it is most probable that there is a right path, and a standard of taste and opinion, which all would follow and all approve of"*—now as this contains a direct assertion of the equality of our intellects by nature, and that all the various differences we see in the talent, characters and passions of men depend on education, or are merely the effect of circumstance; it will be easily proved that this opinion is perfectly absurd and unfounded, by referring to any wielder of the birch or any happy mother of three children † within the wide bounds of our Provence. They will all tell you that this child has a wonderful memory; that one can learn a language in two short years, which another could not master though his life were prolonged to four score; and yet, he will excel in the mathematics, in every kind of ingenuity, and will be able to give a far better account of what he has seen and read, than the others. Or perhaps one child may now and then be found to whom every task is easy, while to another, brought up in the same manner, nothing can be taught, or to use a common phrase 'be dunted into him.' However I would not take it on the authority of these experienced judges alone, but rather refer to the testimony of men of extensive science and acute observa-

* See page 79-4

† In Rome privileges went along with the happiness of adding three to the number of citizens.

tion, who have made it their exclusive study; who have examined into the characters of the children attending the principal public seminaries in Europe—into the characters of the inmates of dungeons, and houses of correction; and into the dispositions and peculiar natural bents of those men who have been remarkable for any thing, either at present existing, or of those of whom any thing is to be gathered in history:—I allude to Drs. Gall and Spurzhiem,—men who have given rise to a theory so interesting and so well founded, as to ensure to its authors a celebrity equal to that of the greatest discoverer in Philosophy, and far greater than that of the metaphysicians of the north, who by heaping on phrenology ridicule and sarcasm, only prove how much easier it is to laugh than reason. This system which has spread confusion and dismay, through the ranks of the supporters of the ancient codes of metaphysics, had its origin in the following circumstance. Gall when a boy observed his school-fellow much his superior in the languages, but as far inferior to him in every thing else, which he could ascribe to nothing but a protuberance on his scull, which he observed to be wanting in himself. This set him to observe, and finding it to be present in every other boy who learned the languages with ease, and in the heads or figures of men venerable for acquirements of this nature, he very naturally inferred that there was some connection between the two, and this connection could only be, that the faculty depended on the bump. By degrees the situations of other organs, were determined with more or less certainty, amounting in all to 32. To point out any more of its principles would be impossible in your short space at pre-

sent, but I may mention one or two arguments in favour of the theory. 1st, The skull is formed on the brain, and its external surface is an exact index of its figure. 2d, That as there is an evident connection between the faculties of the mind and brain, so it is probable *a priori*, that a change in the developement of that organ would produce a correspondent change in the faculties so closely connected with it. 3d, That in animals of the lower orders, in idiots and in men of weak intellects, a correspondent deficiency of the anterior parts of the brain is found. 4th, That in the examination of many thousand individuals in different parts of the world by different persons, it has been universally found, that such as were remarkable for the possession of any faculty, had a proportionally developed bump in the same part of the cranium. I hope I have said enough to interest your readers so far as to prevent them using decidedly contemptuous language respecting a system professing to be founded on a kind of experience of which every one is capable of forming an opinion, and to entitle me to address them again through you, on a subject of, at least, speculative importance.

I remain, Your devoted Admirer,

P. Y.

We have to apologise for many errors of the press which creep into our pages— which may often arise from the writers of the pieces having no opportunity of correcting them—but which more generally occurs from the *illegible* state of the MSS. sent. The errors are in general so obvious as easily to be remedied—in some cases, however, they interfere materially with the sense.

The hints of one correspondent towards the more general circulation of the *Ephemeris* we thank him for, but we think it best, as we have hitherto done to leave it entirely to make its own way.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. X.

Monday, 9th December, 1822.

“ I'll talk a word with this same learned Theban—
What is your study ?”

K. LEAR.

Mr. EDITOR,

Last monday evening I returned from an excursion to the sea side where I had been a Gull shooting (by the by, I shall soon lay before your readers an essay on the art of Gulling, or “ shooting folly as it flies.”) I had, I say, just returned and seated myself comfortably in my large arm chair, beside a blazing, glowing, sparkling coal fire; when missing the Ephemera, the perusal of which used every monday evening to solace me after the labours of the day, I sent to enquire the cause of its delay. To my unspeakable mortification I was informed, that the printing of the Ephemera could only be accomplished every second week, and that its visits in future were to be like those of Angels, “ few and far between.” This gave me uneasiness on several accounts. In the first place, being a consummate philanthropist, I was afraid that the public, so long accustomed to its weekly appearance, would feel the want of its stimulus in the same manner as they would the disuse of snuff, tea, wine, or whisky toddy, and in the second place, having a whole bureau filled with

K.

ommunications ready for it, I am doubtful that the world may not last long enough to enable them all to see the light, at the tedious rate of one essay in a fortnight. Being disappointed of new matter, I began to con over again the last number. I perceive that my unfortunate essay, contained in No. 7 of the Ephemera, has drawn forth the animadversions of two 'learned Thebans'. It is true they usher in their remarks in a handsome manner—but like the charmed Basilisk they only fascinate with compliments, the more effectually to lure me to destruction in the end. In the first place, I shall 'talk a word' with Philo-Philosophus.

I do think, Mr Philo, that your own concise, and accurate account of the Hurtonian doctrines is the very best comment on my Indian friend's 'Apologue' that could have been produced: you at once come to the conclusion "that the first principles of the system appear to be so contradicted by all the rules of philosophy and reason, as to render it unnecessary for one to enlarge on the facts adduced to support an hypothesis *so ill imagined*." Thus far then you agree with the 'Apologue' in condemning the 'ill imagined' theory of Hutton—But you seem to be a confirmed Wernerian, and reserve your account of his doctrines to give a finishing blow to the unfortunate essay. Be it so—I shall be glad to see it make its appearance, and then perhaps some Huttonian will start up and call it "ill imagined," so that we will presently have realized, at least the pugilistic part of the fable. But moreover, you say that, granting such theories to be vague and illusory, still the prosecution of them has led to beneficial results in science. I have not the least doubt of it, yet this is only saying that good sometimes springs out of evil.—Will any man call the object of the laborious toils of the Alchemists of the middle ages for the discovery of the Philosophers' Stone, a rational amusement, and one which is not to be viewed with ridicule? I take it no one will; and yet their labours were productive of more use to sci-

ence and the arts than any of the discoveries of modern geologists. The 'Apologue' was never meant to hold up to ridicule the study of Geology itself, but only the overstrained importance—partial and visionary views—and contracted party spirit, which too often characterize, not so much the great leading men who have been the founders of the various systems, as the less gifted herd, who enlist under their banners, and ape their opinions;—although on the whole it is not unlikely, that were a superior being to look down on their various labours and listen to their 'wise saws and modern instances,' he would do so with somewhat similar feelings as did the gentleman on the monkeys debating about his watch on the plains of Hindostan.

I come now to the epistle signed P. Y. Alas! I am afraid I shall cut but a poor figure in discussing the mysteries of the cranium, having never seen a head but upon its accompanying shoulders, and being ignorant, as far as personal experience goes, whether the inside be stuffed with brains, or wool. By what learned process of induction has P. Y. arrived at the conclusion that the *Ephemera* is now conducted by "more practised hands" than formerly? 'Ease' in writing may certainly be acquired by practice, but many of the later pieces can only become older than the first, if, "like crabs, they could go backward." I am astonished to hear P. Y., a stickler for the divine rights of bumps on the cranium, and the hereditary claims of native propensities, talk at the very outset of *experience* teaching fools, or wise men being a bit the better of it. Of what use can experience be to a foolish cranium, whose surface is as smooth as a globe of glass, and bumpless as a yellow turnip? or who would talk of experience to that man, on whose head towered mountains of native intelligence, compared to which Belrines is but a wart? But after all I am obliged to P. Y. for detecting a mistake, which an attempt at too great brevity has led me to commit. It was not my opinion that all men

are born with equal capacities, as the sentence alluded to may be supposed to imply.* What I meant by "all men being born alike" was, that the mind was similarly formed in all, in so far as it possessed powers, feelings and passions, which are the universal characteristics of humanity. Some, or all of these, may be more perfect, more intense, or more active in one individual than another, but that individual surpasses his fellows, not in having a greater number of faculties—or having them of a different kind, but from their greater perfection, and the power he has of calling them into more strenuous exertion. Thus men may be born with similar, though not with equal capacities. Willie Homer, the Poet of Knockbrae, may have all the mental attributes possessed by Lord Byron, though in an inferior degree; and what is termed a craze in the one, is looked upon as the highest degree of poetic inspiration in the other. And Gen. Brown, whom we have seen parading our streets on his milk white charger, may vie with the Duke of Wellington in his ardour for military glory; though he may not have in perfection all the requisites for a great Commander! But I need not carry the illustrations farther, I dare say we are both agreed as to the main point of the argument. You will admit the existence of the faculties in their different degrees of perfection, and give them 'a local habitation' in various bumps on the skull—I also admit their existence, but have not as yet made up my mind where I shall place them.

I am not deeply versed in the science of phrenology, and of course cannot with any consistency scoff at it: nor am I so inclined. There is one objection to the doctrine, however, which has occurred to me, in which I know not whether I have been anticipated by any of its opposers, nor do I know after all that it can have very much weight as it is only opposing one theory to another. Anatomists generally describe the centre of the brain as containing various cavities, and as having a more complicated organization than any other part of it; and, if I have not mis-

* See pages 73-4.

taken them, have described the *ventricles* as the place where the principal nerves of sensation either take their rise, or have their termination. Moreover, the older Physiologists have fixed upon a certain small gland in the very middle of the brain as the probable seat of the soul. Now is it not more likely, that if there are such separate organs as produce the various phenomena of mind, their seat should be in these central parts, instead of being at the less organized and less intricately formed surface of the brain?

I ought, perhaps, to offer some apology, Mr Editor, for occupying your pages with such abstruse matter. It is easy to make a show of learning, when treating of subjects whose very names carry importance along with them, and to make the uninitiated stare; but to him who has watched the shallowness of pretenders to philosophy, and perhaps seen something of the hollowness of learning itself, it is by far the wisest course, and the most rational amusement, either to smile at the follies of Captain Fooling or grin at the ludicrous blunders of Saunders M Knockie.

I remain, Your obedient Servant,

X.

P. S.—I send you two quires of Manuscript, which I hope you will print as soon as you can; as after I have read your numbers they serve a second purpose, viz lighting my pipe in an evening. I have heard it said, they should go down to posterity, but I do not intend they shall go that way. The principal subjects are—An Essay on Galing—The Philosophy of scandal—Lights and shadows of Elgia life. The decline and fall of tea parties—and Deacon Demagogue's Memoirs of his own times.

NOCTES KNOCKBREANAÆ.

There studious thought would wear the day
 In each instructive page;
 Or happier speed the hours away
 In converse with the sage.

Cunningham.

OUR readers are already aware of the means which the Dominic of Knockbrae used to regain the friendship of the parishioners, which he had lost in the Psalmody warfare. Forgetting then the days of gloom and darkness which preceded this happy reconciliation, and taking no farther notice of the method adapted to the accomplishment of the same, he now proceeds to fulfil a promise which he formerly made, namely, that he would introduce the readers of the *Ephemeræ* into the immediate presence of the sages and humourists of the parish, during our evening conversations. Those were the Attic nights of our weary pilgrimage through life—(*weary* we say for we have been a probationer for upwards of thirty years)—altho' grandeur may listen to our annals with the forbidding smile of disdain. The recollection of them is precious, and should not be rashly squandered away: yet we will not hoard up our treasure like misers:—we will cause it to circulate for the good of the realm, and the edification of the lieges.

No two characters were more diametrically opposite to one another than the Poet and the Sexton, the former of whom was now the frequent inmate of our lowly roof. Notwithstanding this dissimilarity, we contrived to bring them frequently together, and by the collision of minds so differently constituted, a spirit would be often elicited which, when rightly fanned, and supplied with proper fuel would blaze out into the most fantastic shapes, and illumine the loneliness of our humble dwelling with the gayest and the most ludicrous forms. Without further preamble then, let the reader transport himself in thought to

the fireside of the Dominie of Knockbrae, and there seated in a venerable arm-chair, he may behold the tank, cadaverous person of the Schoolmaster "laughing like a magpie at a bagpiper," as Knockie, who is seated opposite to him, and whose rotundity of visage forms a strange contrast to his own, is trying to inflame the spirit of the minstrel, by uttering his "jeers and gibes" at this extraordinary individual. A block of fir, which served as fire and light, is now rolling out volumes of smoke, the prelude to a blaze of splendour; and the eyes of the bard are sparkling like an *ignis fatuus* in a dreary marsh, when the Sexton, enveloped in a tabernacle of mist, thus begins:—

"Aweel Maister Homer, altho' T——r is your name as I can depone, have you in the course of your daunderings collected any uncocs to day? Have you been preaching or scraghing out your bits o' ballads, or railing against the paper ministers, or—" "Venerate the harp, interrupted the poet in a tone of voice which indicated that he was in no joking mood,—venerate the harp and speak not lightly of the minstrel, although poverty may have cast ashes on his fires, which still have warmth, although they blaze not; as a production which I am about to read will prove. Thou man of gross humours, thou canst not enter into my feelings, for thou art a creature of earth while I hold converse with the chaste lady moon which her beams chequer through the trees, and sport with the fair Finnhorn. Did you ever lestride Pegasus, casting the reins on his neck, and disdainig to curb the *speed* of the noble *steed*, which is what we poets call rhyme. Did your brain even in its wildest workings, ever burn with aught stronger and more overpowering than the tears which drop from cheeks of Esopet Tipple's whisky pot. The waters of Helicon never came near those long-black-bearded-unrazorable-lips of thine, which is a compound epithet, for which both I and my namesake are remarkable. Thou companion of worms, thou *rudis indigestaq. moles*, "venerate the harp, and speak not lightly of the

minstrel." "The Deil's in the body 'heard ane ever the like o' that' I wish we had the Belfast or Aberdeen Almanack here that we might see the age of the moon (for he's nae canny at times) Bstride Pegasus! a rude and digested mole! deil be in me if I would gi' sic a name as that to a colly dog, let alone me who am a christian, tho' a rough ane as the minister honest man says, but we have a' our failings. Aweel Homer, which is the name of a Jewish measure, ye have not called me so muckle amiss as I thought; for the mole and the grave-digger baith make their livelihood under ground. With regard to that horse Pegasus that you are aye speaking o' he seems to be a kittle brute and deemous ill to meddle wi'. And as I am about as broad as long, I would be nonplused to keep my seat, for my stubble end (as the grieve of Shirra-tonn named it when following his mistress) was never made for saddles. Ye should remember the proverb, 'Set a beggar on horse-back and he'll ride,' ye ken whare—for we should not take the foul thief's name in our mouths; for they say that if we speak of him he'll appear, but deil abit o' that do I believe." "If you mean any thing personal by that vulgar proverb of thine, said the poet, know, "*kai sesi balloo phresi*," cast it down into your mind, by which my great ancestor means—ponder it well that I am no beggar. Was the bard, whose footsteps I wish to follow in all things,—being "smit with the love of song"—a beggar? He—for the honour of whose nativity seven states of old contended, and perhaps in after times as many will contend for the honour of having given birth to me. Did he not remunerate them a thousand fold for their paitry alms-giving by feeding them with divine ambrosia, and exalting their spirits by infusing into them the-never-to-be too-highly-prized (which is a compound epithet)—Nectar of Olympus?" "I canna speak precesely on that point, replied the Sexton, for I have only the glimmering of the meaning of what you would be at. I have in the course of my experience seen heasty brose, which

like MacNab's glyster-pipe, are tough to swallow; and kail brose, and Athol brose, which is the king of the three, and of which I wish that I had a life-rent, but of the brose which you call *ambrosia*, poetically no doubt as usual, not as cuttyful did Knockie ever taste."—"You taste the divine ambrosia! exclaimed the poet, speak not profanely, thou concoction of putridity, thou M'Eagh, thou son of the mist, the food which I speak of was the sustenance of the gods of Paganism, and was prepared in the brains of the-ivy-and-laurel-crowned-sons-of-the-harp, which is a beautiful compound epithet; and I employed the word figuratively to designate the supereminent superiority of song to every thing else. But I know by that vacant stare of thine that thou understandest me not: you have not intellect to comprehend the figurative language of poetry."—"Ou aye, man, said the Sexton, I understand what is meant by figurative language, and the figures of the multiplication table too, which John M'Phail says is the summit of human knowledge: and if the ambrosia which you misca' be cooked in the way you mention, it would be but light food for my stomach. With regard to my lack of understanding, I believe the pot need not call the pan black face—and to shew you that I hae a groff-guess o' figurative language, listen to an example: Some years ago when the Missionars were sae rife in this parish, and the eggs so scarce, for every wile was hauling them to these preachers"—"That was according to Fiaccus, '*ab ovo usque ad mala*,' said the poet—"Dinna interrupt me wi' your blethering galamathias, said the Sexton;—aweel as I was expounding—the wives fed their Missionar-holders forth wi' sae many carnal comforts in the shape o' hen's eggs and the like, that they came flocking frae Forres, and even frae Elgin, like nice to a melder. Ae day there came a loud-toutin-skirl-screagh-pulpit-thumping chiel (which is a compound epithet, for which my great ancestor was as remarkable as yours, Mr Homer) who I was told was a sticket tailor, and he was

said to be sae greatly gifed, that I had the curiosity to go and hear him, as my trade was dull, for the crops that year were extraordinar good, and I had plenty of time. Jock Rocheal, who was a great enemy of mine, had lengthened out his face into the shape of a precentor's, and was to officiate in that capacity to the Missionar.—Aweel the sermon began as follows : My dearly beloved, ye are a set of wild restive rams, and hae muckle need of a shepherd, for the fox is among ye ; and as I'm the boy for old reynard, I'm to be the shepherd. This book is to be my tar barrel, and ye'll be weel marked fear na, and John Rocheal, who is my precentor, may be spiritualized as my dog, for he can bark bath loud and long, and—” “ Deil abit o' your dog will I be, said Jock, looking up in a passion.” Oh John, said the preacher, I spoke figuratively—‘ Ye speak falsely, ye fause loon, said Jock’—and left the meeting in a fury. And was not this what you call figurative language, Mr. Homer, altho' I——r is your name, as I can depone, for your father”——“ I have often told you, interrupted the minstrel, that I am a *terrafilius*—the child of nature—the founder of the family—‘ no tenth transmitter of a foolish face.’ ‘ My ancient, but ignoble blood—hath crept through scoundrils ever since the flood.’ I was ‘ stampt in the mint of Nature's ecstasy.’ The muse is my spouse, and the works of her inspiration will be everlasting monuments of our lives, *exegi monumentum* &c.—Interrupt me not. Knockie, while I recite to the Dominie my poetic Epistle to James Archibald, the Barflethill bard : it was composed this last Spring—*favete*.

Auld Neighbour,

While now the birds on ilka tree
Chirm o'er their pleasant raunts,
While Nature a' sae bounylie
Now decks the rising plants ;

And while the bee wi' careless hum
 Sucks honey frae the thyme,
 I'll flinch my muse, that she may spin
 A line or twa in rhyme,

To you this day,

Indeed my trusty fiar I'm glad
 To hear you court the Muse,
 And tho' she mayna gain your bread,
 Yet mind you winna lose.
 When friends are few—when friends are fause,
 When disappointments tease you,
 When fortune hard your rumple gnaws,
 I swear the muse will please you

On ilka day.

My brither bard, come to my arms!
 We'll lay our heads thegither,
 And we will sing the lasses' charms
 That dwell among the heather.
 Our buirdly lads, sae strong and stout,
 Our maids wi' lily skin,
 "Fair as the blushing rose without,
 And pure of heart within"

By night or day.

And we will sing that glorious night
 Of mirth and fun the scene,
 When corn-stacks are made trig and tight,
 I mean the Halloween;
 When lasses, castocks, brose and kail,
 Cheer up the gleesome crackin';
 And when the foam'n nappy ale
 Our drouthy lips are smackin'

Fu' sweet that night.

—Or Christmas, when the driving sleet
 About the windows gingle,
 When twa three bosom cronies meet,
 Around the blazin' ingle.

When toddy's mirth-inspiring steam
 We carelessly indulge in,
 While good fat fir wi' blazing gleam
 Burns on the hearth refulgin',
 And shines that night.

And now my brither bard adieu,
 My muse wi' wrath is starin';
 But we our chanters yet will screw
 Till a' the hills be rairin'.
 Then mind the rhymes you promised me
 You speedily must send me,
 And-----

But here the voice of the minstrel was drowned by a loud voice proceeding from two more, seemingly in earnest discussion. As they drew nearer the door we heard the words. "I do insist, Dr Bowie, that though your method of cure may do very well after a dose of kail, yet—"

The reader will have an explanation of this in a future number.

(To be continued.)

A Constant Reader's account of Halloween adds so little to what has been already written on the subject that we must decline it.

The Copy of Verses from the portfolio if they are *original* will be inserted—if otherwise we do not wish to print in our pages what has been already published.

F. from Forres will please take this hint, and not pester us with stolen stories dressed up in a new garb.

THE

EPHEMERA,

No. XI.

Monday, 23d December, 1822.

NOCTES KNOCKBREANAÆ—(Continued.)

‘HYLAX in limine latrat’—some swart dogs of darkness bark in the threshold? indignantly exclaimed the minstrel when interrupted in the manner we have already mentioned. “I bear the shrill voice of the fiend of discord entering this spirit of mine; and the muse who is the friend of peace is pruning her wings to fly into the azure fields of air and with her will fly the sweetness and the loveliness of the song. “Parce precor parce non sum talis &c.” spare me I beseech you spare me ye—eternally—contending—sons of Hippocrates which is a compound——”

“A compound of hypocrisy in good truth interrupted the sexton, you have said a wise word noo, as a’ fools will do betimes, altho’ you should never say another in your life again Mr Homer: and if that hullebeloo come na frae Willie Asher and Robie Bowie who insist noo that they must be doctored forsooth I’m sair mistaen. My conscience! do you hear the rout they’re making, ’tis enough

to disturb the mortal remains of Jamie Hearill who was as deaf as a door nail when living, let him alane noo when dead and buried as I ken to my cost, for we had a cauld Januar lifting o' him and I had only a sixpence for my pains, but we had a noble splore at the dirgie, and wo to him that winna gie ane a friendly lift at a push: but clash goes the door, and here they are, my certy! we'll hae some notable sport."

We ought to have informed the reader; that the Dominie of Knockbrae was at the time in question ill of a sore throat, a disease to which men of his profession are very liable; and who would require to have this part of their animal economy of the same material as was that of the stentor of antiquity, "a throat of brass and adamantine lungs."

This explanation will account for the visit of the two medical practitioners, and likewise for the little share which the Dominie took in the conversation. "That may be a vera true, vera true, Dr Bowie, and your method of cure may do vera weel in its ain way as it wur, yet '*conjux atque parens infans patruelis et hæres*' as the great Latin physicians say which meaneth, for ye are not skilled in the learned tongues, which must be a great draw-back to your skeel. my brother,—that kail is a radical cure for man, woman, and brute bestial, and Mr Thumpbotton him that was, tauld me when I was advising him to take a cooling decoction of cauld kail to remove a scalded stomach occasioned by a dram-drinking splore wi the Dominie of Ronalbell, that a great Greek physician named Longinus followed my method of cure, and that he has even left a

book called the *kalon*” or a treatise on kail, said Dr Asher, whose gigantic figure now darkened the threshold of the apartment accompanied by Dr Bowie an old man with grey locks and grey sparkling eyes, and whose natural shortness of stature was still more curtailed by the stooping manner in which he walked.

“I affirm, replied Dr B. who, as the reader knows despised the efficacy of all remedies except prayer, “that what you say Dr Asher shews that notwithstanding the clear expounding which I held forth on the subject, you have still a carnal confiding in self-righteousness, a belief in the earthly efficacy of human wisdom, whereas we should be bumble and prostrate in the dust.” “How’s a’ wi you Robie, I’m glad to see you man,” interrupted Knockie, holding out his hand to the speaker, who returned the friendly salutation with a look of offended dignity: “silence you menseless bethrel, and learn to behave yourself distinctly when in the presence of your betters; robie me nae robies, and man me nae mans, and if you hae a doctor in your pouch you had better hae it between your teeth when you pronounce my name,—aweel as I said, my brother before I was interrupted by that ill-mannered brute we should be humble and put nae trust in the lear, and the wisdom, and the honours, and the dignities, and the skill of man’s cunning. And I have often tauld you that you should not pollute your lips wi that Babylonish jargon called Latin or satan, for they are six and half a dozen in as much as the abominable harlot of idolatrous Rome doth mix the cup of her enchantment, and draws to her lure the blinded nations around her, and transmogrifies them into porkers and other unclean bestials, by means of in-

cantations sung in the words of that apostate tongue. So brutified indeed is this same Latin that I have read that it is the usual language of that man of sin, the Pope's *bulls*, and no doubt it is particularly spoken by those horned nolt that are fed for the immediate use of the sinner's table himsell: so ye see that it is clear that it is in a manner throwing of one's self on the horns of the enemy to intro-
 nist.—” “Vera true, vera true, interrupted Dr Asher into whose head, by strength of hand the grammar of the Latin language, had been beaten, and which, both in his own estimation and that of the parishioners, except those of them who were very superstitious, gave him a decided superiority over his brother of the trade “but nevertheless it is a vera difficult thing for us who are men of erudition to keep it concealed from the eyes of an admiring world. Hæc dat vannus, as the great Dr Watt says; and besides I am powerfully persuaded that my medicines hæe a greater degree o' pith and efficacy when prescribed wi a sklipe o' Latin than when administred in the vulgar tongue; as for instance, and by way of proof ‘*omne marem signans nomen decet esse viride*’ which I translate to my patients because they are ignorant thus: ‘Let a poultice of curly kail be applied to the part affected.’ Well Saunders, continued he addressing himself to the Sexton, I hope that Elspet the gudewife is in the way of mending since I saw her, I trust that she followed my prescription. “The Deil abit o’ that did she do, said the sexton who was always on the watch for a pun, or she would hæe found a watery grave, I threw it into the mill-dam Doctor.” “Ye were right Knockie, said Dr Bowie, and your conduct in this case shews that you have a humble mind, and put no

trust in carnal means, for even if he had cured her body, her mind would have been corrupted by the language which that infatuated man employs; preserve us a' if it were not for me who am the pillar of this parish, having a just sense of my own insignificance, Knockbrae would long before now have been a kail yard for Roman Catholic cabbages to grow in." "Dr Bowie, said his brother, harshly, this antipathy to my method of cure proceeds from the most paltry motives, videlicet, a mean spirit of envy at my success and my great erudition. It is a *triste supple negotium*, a woful spectacle to behold, as Ruddiman a great Latin physician aptly expresses it when speaking of such characters. But I'll give you immediate proof of the virtues of this gracious plant, and the Dominie will be enabled to add his testimony to the experience of multitudes." With these words the Doctor set himself to examine his patient not without many interruptions from his brother physician, and having finished his questioning, he gave his opinion of the cause of the disease and prescribed as follows. "There can be nae manner o' doubt or hesitation, Mr Dominie that the disordered state of your functions is owing to, or arises from a sort of curmurring in the wind pipe, which is occasioned by an overstraining of the organs of speech. "Of the organs of singing, interrupted Dr Bowie, his flesh is tormented because of the iniquity whilk he hath brought on this once righteous parish, by singing and causing to be sung those songs of the Philistines and popish puggies or monks which are fallen spirits, instead of the pious canticles of our fathers; and of what use, answer me this question Dr Asher, of what use are a' your poultices and plaisters and potions that would make a dog

spew to.”—“You ill-tongued body, I’ll call you to account for your rudeness you ignorant quack” said Dr Asher, as he brandished his walking stick, and meditated an attack on his brother physician who started back thro’ fear, with such violence that his well-shod heels came in contact with the shins of the poet who, starting on his legs, exclaimed, “Think you, carnifex, that I am one of my great ancestors euknemides Achaioi—one of the well-greaved Greeks who had their legs incased in brass that you thus apply the *ictus metricus* to my poor poetic shins, with these abominable hob-nails of thine! Or do you mistake my *tibia* for one of the ancient tetra chords, that you thus unmercifully lay on your plectrum? Or do you intend to convert the majesty of my poetic pace into one of the ancient sazones, which were so called from their limping nature! But I hurl thee from me like a thunder-bolt, from the red-flaming-right-hand of the *Dios aigio-chaio*-of-egis-bearing-Jove, which is a beautiful compound epithet, for which both I and my great ancestor are remarkable.” With these words the enraged poet seized by the collar the trembling son of Æsculapius, and he would certainly have thrown him from him, had not the Sexton who had hitherto enjoyed the scene with ineffable delight interposed. “Come Mr Homer, ye’ll forget and forgive, show me him and I’ll manage him, that’s a good man. Faith Dr. Robie you should take care how you come near thir poetry-gentry, for they are firey cattle; be quiet noo till Dr Asher be done, deil’s in the body will you not be quiet till he be done and then you and he may fight it out like gentlemen. Ye needna fear the poet any longer for the fit is over; see how his eyes are rolling—noo he’s

laughing—he's in his exies I ken by his muttering in that way to himsel, my certv! he's wild when the moon is full." The poet did indeed seem as if he breathed in a world of his own creation, forgetful of what had happened and unmindful of every thing around him: and the sexton having secured his charge, the sapient Dr Asher thus proceeded. "As I was saying, Dominic before I was interrupted by that ignorant quack, who is a disgrace to the profession, and who has no perception of the *kalon*, your disorder is owing to a curmurring which must be removed by a proper *anecdote*, videlicet, a gargle of the brie of curly kail, but without salt: and then you must apply a poultice of kail-porridge spread an inch thick neither more nor less, for that would be dangerous on a kail blade: after this you must swallow a pot-ful of spurtle-kail: and lastly, having bathed your feet in kail brie, go instantly to bed, and I'll wager the worth of my kail-yard that in the morning you'll be as sound as a kail stock." "'Tis a filthy confiding in fleshly means, exclaimed Dr Bowie, whom no efforts of the sexton could any longer restrain, and I lift up my voice to bear testimony against a' sic iniquitous backsliding on account of which, the land mourneth. It is not by such earthly resources that the pestilence will be withdrawn from your throat, Dominic you must give us back our tunes, which our fathers sung and for the loss of which a lamentation hath gone out." "And you had better go out too, or we'll hae lamentation enough, said the sexton; for I see Dr Asher is shaking his cudgel, and it would be as well that there should be nae bones breaking here, for that would be an exerceeding of fleshly means by which this parish often mourneth." "*Percello-*

percuti &c., said Dr Asher, which means that I have laid aside all malice against the outward man of Dr Bowie, who might hae kent that my bark is waur than my bite, come my good friend, let's be jogging, for we have to go six miles before supper-time to mend the skull of muckle Jock, who it seems has gotten an ill-looking clure frae the gauger.' With these words the two medical men departed, "kail, vera true, self-righteousness," &c. were heard for some minutes after they had left the house.

Y.

(To be continued.)

MR. EDITOR,

I am not a member of the Morayshire Coursing Club, though on the occasion of the last meeting I felt the general 'note of preparation,' together with the splendid doings of the after part of the day, to be of such an exhilarating nature, that I felt an anxious desire to participate. This to me of the unrolled could be the case only in a limited degree, yet excluded as I was from the high revelries of the evening, *the field was still open* to me, in consequence of the Club offering no obstruction to strangers enjoying the pleasure of spectators of the chase. Fraught with the hope then of spending one day in the unmixed delight of the spirit-stirring exercise, I mounted my pad, and set out for the Spindle muir, which was destined to be the scene of the day's sport.—The morning was fine, and the face of nature exhibited that vivid, yet soft variety of rich colouring which it only knows about the latter end of Autumn, in the woods, and distant fields, and hills, while a transparent mist flitted along the surface and glittered in the sun-beam. The

fields being partly ploughed up somewhat resembled the appearance of Spring, but the *moral expression* was different;—there was not the lively buoyant feeling of youth, but the melancholy of decaying nature, as verging on the time when

“Pale, concluding, Winter comes at last,
And shuts the scene.”

This melancholy is a species that rather diffuses itself over the surface of the soul, than sinks deeply into it; and the effort of transition is not so great from this plaintiveness to the emotions of gaiety. I did not therefore feel myself incapacitated from enjoying my promised pleasure of a different kind on approaching the Spindle muir—but alas! the game was up, or rather had never been down. The Club had *thrown themselves off* in some other quarter, of which I could get no intelligence. And as it appeared, in place of hare-coursing I had come on a *wild goose chase*. The consideration came to be, what was to be done in such a situation, when it may be said that, though you have come far from home, you are no further advanced than when you set out. As I had to return to the ancient city, it seemed as well not “to go back the way I came again,” and I resolved to mak a circuit through the valley of Duffus in my way homewards. The ‘granary of Moray’ appears in the distance, as an extensive uninteresting flat. When you traverse it, however, you find it covered with gently swelling hillocks, with occasionally a group of trees (rather scanty perhaps), and thickly studded with neat farm-houses, surrounded with well-divided fields, in good order—while the shelter of the hills, and the sun beaming over the hill of Quarrywood, gives a *lythe* cheerfulness to the whole. The prospect westward is that of a long continued level ground, which, besides its other charms, and they are not few, has that of novelty in the “north countrie”; and the Forres Tower on its wood topt hills, and the bold outlines of the mountains of Braemora, afford a striking termination.

On the north side of the vale are "the Cairns," resembling in shape and structure those remnants of a rude age which in other places have given rise to such conflicting conjectures among the learned. The appearance of vitrification seems to support either the idea of watch fires, or the altars of the Druids, when according to popular belief they became the scene of human sacrifices. The falacy of this belief seems satisfactorily exposed by Toland and others, by shewing the practices of the Druids in using *tumuli* on lofty eminences as places of punishment for criminals; or rather, I believe, as an ordeal of their guilt or innocence. This took place on occasion of high festivals, and the victim was made to pass so many times round the cairn between a blazing fire on its summit, and another round its side,—while the appearance at a distance of this ceremony to the soldiers of Cæsar (the Druids preserving the most inviolable secrecy on the meaning of their mysteries) might well be supposed to give rise to the notion in question. Possibly it may without presumption be advanced, that both the theories are correct, and what may have at once served for a Druidical altar, at an after period came to be used for a Beacon to alarm the country on the approach of invasion. It is generally understood that the chain of hills which is surmounted by these *tumuli*, formed at one period an island, though one of the arguments in support of such an idea is perhaps inconclusive, the name of 'Roseisle'—it being difficult apparently to reconcile the language with the early period at which such a circumstance must have existed. So far back as the time of Ptolemy the Geographer, Burghead was known to the Greeks under the name of Ptoroton, though it might be said by any one arguing against the antiquity of this great revolution of the sea, that Burghead itself was then in all likelihood another island. Before however this happened, the fertile valley of Duffus was then an arm of the sea; and where its honest men, thrifty wives, and bonny lasses now have their dwellings,—the cod and the ling—the herring and the haddock, have passed through

from sea to sea, in shoals innumerable, or sported amid the billows in promiscuous maze.

Even within these few years the valley was almost covered with water, which insulating the Castle of Duffus must have constituted it a place of great strength. Little of the latter now remains, though the period at which it was deserted for a modern structure is not so far distant. The learned and ingenious author of the "Provence of Moray," mentions the existence of an old woman at the time he wrote, who had been a servant in the castle in early youth, and she recollects the Viscount Dundee, (otherwise the famous Claverhoe) coming on a visit to its lord, and by way of a set off to that face which "linners loved to peep and ladies look upon," he wore his hair oiled up in cakes of lead, a fashion that, however extraordinary it might seem to our modern beaux, would, I have no doubt (such is the beauty-giving power of fashion) appear sufficiently *becoming* in those days.*

The water has now left the Castle by the operation of draining the loch of Spynie,—and though I am not prepared to argue, that the pleasure to be derived from the beauty of scenery should not give place to profit from the culture of land, yet since the latter end has not been attained, I may be permitted at all events to regret, that this beautiful sheet of water has ceased to enliven and vary the prospect in the direction of the eastern outlet of the Strath—and to have as it were floating on its waters in the distance, the ruined episcopal Palace, next the modern Palace of Pitgaveny, and a variety of pleasant natural objects terminating in the Binhill, appearing in the distance between the lofty perpendicular Banks of the loch.

On reaching the city, I found the Coursers had arrived after great sport, which I by no means regretted having

* *Quere*—Has our correspondent been perusing *The Art of Gulling*?

lost the participation of—for to tell you the truth, Mr. Ephemera, I am satisfied my enjoyment was just as great though of a different kind. And I am induced to send you this epistle *to tell you so*, and thereby to afford an example of these *important truths*,—that disappointment in a favourite pursuit is not a necessary cause of unhappiness, and the pleasure to be derived from its substitute is heightened in a wonderful degree by its being unexpected and unlooked for.

He that thou knowest (not) thine

HAMLET.

Elgin—1222.

EVENING.

Oft have I sat upon the mountain's head,
 When day drooped o'er the waters wearily,
 Like glory pillowed on a dying bed
 It fainted down upon the peaceful sea,
 Shedding its farewell smiles o'er tower and tree,
 While rose, like hope, the evening planets ray
 And of gone greatness like the memory,
 A hallowed light survived its dark decay,
 Dun and immeasurable ocean slept,
 Dream like the murmurs of its distant flood,
 Scarce thro' the woodland dark the breezes crept
 Where the lone cuckoo plained in solitude.
 The Hymn of woods and waters where I stood,
 Rose like a dirge for the departed day,
 All softly sad, as voice of grief subdued
 By time, that steals our joys and woes away.

Cupar—1822.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. XII.

Monday, 6th January, 1823.

THE PARTING.*

“ In the morning of our days, when the senses are unworn and tender, when the whole man is awake in every part and the gloss of novelty fresh upon all the objects that surround us—how lively at that time are our sensations!” *Burke.*

IT appears but as yesterday, as through a long series of years, I call up the recollection of the day when I first left the paternal roof to join the bustle of the world. I had spent the long summer evening in rambling over all my well-known haunts and in taking a last look of every favourite object; and after a short and almost sleepless night, I joined the family in the parlour, to partake of an early breakfast. Here many sage advices from old aunts,

* We have to apologize for delaying this so long, which was received along with another piece already inserted.

and many counsellings as to future conduct were poured into my listless ears; and my purse was filled with all varieties of strange coins, as keepsakes from aunts, cousins and other relatives. During breakfast, I was fitful, and felt a strange throbbing at my breast, many awkward attempts at gaiety were made but they uniformly failed. I asked for sugar one moment and complained of my tea being too sweet the next. As the meal drew towards a close my embarrassment became greater, and the bustle of the corded trunks carrying to the passage, and all the busy notes of preparation cast a chilling damp upon my spirits. Hitherto I had behaved heroically, and had taken leave of part of the circle with fortitude, but when I encountered the soft and solicitous looks and felt the tender pressure of the female part of it, my feelings well nigh overcame me and I dashed out of the room brushing the involuntary tear from my cheek. I took my departure accompanied by a servant (in appearance another Cuddy Headrig) who carried my trunks swung behind him on horseback. The day was beautiful; and with Cæsar, Pompey, and Rollo, my canine favourites gambolling around me, I regained somewhat of my usual spirits as I rode along; not however without casting many a longing lingering look behind. But the time was arriving when even with these old friends I must part, and turning from the last wistful looks of the poor animals, who required compulsion to make them desist from accompanying me, and receiving the last kindly squeeze of the horny-handed rustic, I found myself indeed, lonely and forsaken. I joined a train of fellow travellers; regardless of the desultory conversation that passed around me, and the bustle of each attending

to his individual interest, I sat in silence and my thoughts were with those I had left. I pictured to myself their situations, and called up in my imagination the image of each individual. I saw each resume with reluctance his accustomed amusement or employment, but many things were omitted or done in mistake, for one thought was still uppermost, and absorbed the whole attention. They assemble to dinner, but the food had that day lost its relish, there is a deep silence; conversation is not free and easy as usual, although occasionally there is an attempt to express something. One conjectures what progress I have made in my journey, and the answer is but the prelude to a long and silent pause. I imagined I saw at the close of a day, which had appeared unusually long, each retire to repose; but the accustomed sound sleep was that night wanting, disturbed dreams usurped its place, or they awakened under the delusion that I had again returned—such dreams had I, and my fancy I am persuaded did not flatter me when I painted them thus.

Behold me then launched into the immense bustling eddying tide of the 'Great Babel'. I was stupified with the vast, ceaseless, noisy estrangement of the scene. I had heard of the greatness and magnificence of the Metropolis its varied pleasures and numerous enjoyments; Good heavens! I would not then have given a ramble on the banks of my native stream, a fresh draught of the pure air of heaven, and a look of the clear and soft summer sky, for all the wealth, and accumulated boast of human art around me. I recollected the lines of a poet for whose works I cannot help entertaining a strong partiality—

" Unhappy he, who friendless, poor, unknown,
 Wanders a stranger 'mid the bustling town;
 Far from his friends, perhaps, and much loved home,
 Forced by hard fortune sorrowing to roam.
 Often he looks around with anxious eye,
 Some pitying look, or friendly face to spy,
 But 'mid the unheeding crowd he looks in vain;
 Him they regard not, or but with disdain,
 There he may starve, tho' stores profuse abound,
 And lonely feel, tho' thousands bustle round,
 Did not the soothing flattering thought remain,
 That still some kindred bosoms entertain
 An anxious care about his present state,
 And tenderly participate his fate.
 His life, amid such disregard and scorn,
 Would be a load too grievous to be borne,
 And down he'd sink dejected and forlorn." }

Such are generally the feelings at that period, when as Burke observes. "the senses are unworn and tender." But as the man mixes more in the world, encounters its various vicissitudes, and experiences all the casualties incident to existence, he becomes less alive, either to the deep-felt sensations of pain, or the no less lively feelings of pleasure, which belong to boyhood.

— M'D. —

THE VISION OF MATTHEW GRUMBLE.

“ Happy? My tenants breaking on my hand;
 Unstock'd my pastures, and untill'd my land;
 Sugar and rum a drug, and mice and moths
 The sole consumers of my good broad cloths.—
 Happy? Why cursed war and racking tax
 Have left us scarcely raiment to our backs.”—— *Scott.*

MR. EDITOR,

During our last public Fair, in the course of my wanderings through this weary world, I joined the crowd not from having any business to transact, but that by joining the busy multitude I might find a solace from the fatigue of my own thoughts. I heard the responsive grumblings of the agriculturists resounding on all sides; and as such complainings are congenial with my disposition, I mused upon the subject so long after supper that my mind was completely absorbed in it, and during my sleep I had the following dream.

Methought I was placed in such a situation as to command a view of the whole country round; and such a view presented itself as completely realized my most gloomy anticipations. I saw the tillers of the soil, after in vain struggling through a variety of hardships, and draining out the last essence of the land to satisfy their insatiate masters, at last yield to stern necessity, and expelled from their desolate dwellings, creeping into holes and dying like rats. Thousands of once snug and comfortable biggings now cease to pour out the blue smoke from their chimnies—the ploughshare no longer glitters amid the dark-

brown fallow, the sower, full of hope, is no longer seen scattering the grain into the fertile bosom of the earth; nor are the joyful reapers heard any more returning at evening 'with a choral sound.' The whole country is one void and desolate wilderness. The towns and villages too, linked to the country in one dependent fate, show a similar change. The sale shops of the citizens are silent, the smith's hammer no longer resounds on the anvil, and he has but too long time to stand gaping to swallow the news of the villagers. The pale-faced weaver has no longer any inducement to ply his shuttle—nor the ingenious to waste his nights at the midnight lamp in the exercise of his curious labours. The furnishers of luxurious trifles, and injurious follies, have no longer a demand for their commodities. To procure a bare subsistence now becomes the principal object of attention; and hundreds of luxuries which were once thought the absolute necessities of life must now be dispensed with.

As I thus sat, I further saw the lords and masters of the soil, after having remained at home and devoured every thing around them. at last compelled by the irresistible cravings of hunger to sally forth in search of subsistence. Stern necessity compelled them to assume the 'spade, the mattock, and the hoe.' By and by all distinctions of rank, title, and fortune, were lost—the Radical Millenium was consummated—and he was the greatest man whose bodily strength more nearly approximated to that of a horse, who could best endure the labours of the field, the heat of the mid-day sun, or who could track the wild deer most cunningly to his lair.

I saw also, in my dream, that, to those masters who

had in them a feeling of humanity, but whose good deeds were rendered of no avail, in consequence of the different conduct of their peers—to them even some good sprung out of the general evil. In consequence of the change, gout, lumbago, and all the dreadful host of diseases which luxury introduces, fled from their abodes. The whole tribe of the Sons of Galen, after lingering about their gates with wistful and hungry looks, at last retired in despair, tossing their peel-boxes into the air, and dashing their useless potions on the ground—and even physicians themselves became at length but as drugs. I next in the course of my vision began to see dimly, and as in the distance the remote effect that such a change of things would have on the existence of the State itself, and the glory and renown of the British Nation—but my attention was suddenly withdrawn from this to a much more important subject, viz. Myself. Methought that I, Matthew Grumble, having sat and viewed all these things (I believe I was seated on the top of the only remaining corn-rick in the country) for a considerable space of time,—at last began to be alarmed for my own safety; and in the general appearance of famine around me, I, that had never known what it was to feel hunger for a long series of years, began like the Nightingale in the fable,

“ ————— To feel as well I might
The keen desires of appetite.

Every twinge that my stomach gave, plunged me deeper and deeper into apprehensions—I looked around and there was no help for me remaining—at that moment I would have given all I was worth for a mouthful of bread;

when my terror increasing, it became too much for me longer to endure, and the agitation awoke me. Reader, if ever you have, during the visions of the night when deep sleep 'cometh upon men,' found yourself whirled about in the middle of a boundless ocean, and ready to sink to the bottom every moment—if ever you have found yourself pursued by banditti, and felt your limbs stiffen as you attempted to escape from their grasp—if you have in imagination been hurled adown the rough and precipitous twig, and just as you had got hold of the saving twig, found it loosen from its roots and leave you to your fate—If ever you have experienced all or any of these, you will be able to form some estimate of my sensations, when on awakening I found all was but a dream; and the first object that met my eyes was a large loaf cut into slices, and the breakfast laid at my bedside by the careful hands of Grizzly. I arose instantly, sat down to table, and eat a heartier meal than I have done for a long series of years. I am, Your's, &c &c.

MATTHEW GRUMBLE.

*From my Cottage on the Banks of the Lossie,
1st January, 1823.*

HONOURED SIR,

I see ye make frequent mention o' my friend Willie T——r, surnamed Homer—I had na seen the tit body or heard a cheep frae him for a lang time back, and I was langing unco saer to see him, for notwithstanding that some may say he has got a bit flaw in the upper

story yet he is the primest company that ane could wish and between oursells, I wad rather hae some talk wi' sic originals than wi' many ithers wha think themselves wiser folk, tho' at the same time they may be desperate dull at the uptak and lame hands at a joke. But as I was going to say, ere yestreen, just as I had returned frae the woods wi' a load o' whin roots on my back, wha' should I see but the foresaid Homer wi' our neighbour the poet o' Barflethills coming jogging the way o' my bigging. I gave them a hearty welcome; and it being the last night o' the year according to the new way o' reckoning we sat down and resolved to be merry. Ye ken weel enough that folk canna' lick dry meal, and for a' ye say about it, that water is but a cauld liquor for the stammach, so the kail pot being on wi' a cows head in it to season the bree, we had a bicker o' prime brose, and after that a drap o' the real aquavite to wash them down. I then produced my fiddle and gave them my best set o' Tullochgorum, and wi' this and snatches o' auld sangs frae the twa poets we had a merry night o' it. Homer was sae well pleased wi' my meesick, which he said equalled the harpings of the bard of Cheese, (Chios) that he volunteered to write an ode upon my fiddle, and accordingly, I having ripped out twa old backs of letters, he wrote down the following, which I send you. It perhaps may not suit the taste o' your readers, nor do I think that your towns-folk care meickle eithar about the skraich o' a fiddle, a bit o' an auld ballad, or ony thing o' the kind, but sic as it is I send it.*

And rest your humble Servant to command,
 JOHN LAING.

* We are astonished that John, in the plenitude of his sapience.

P. S.—I will attend the meeting o' the Club, as desired, wi' plenty o' rosin and a splect new bow. J. L.

—
ODE TO A FIDDLE.

O for Geddesia:† numbers most sublime!
 With simile thick strung on simile,
 Where sound doth war with nonsense, I would chime
 A strain o' FIDDLE! well befitting thee.

Kind gods of fun, when first on earth
 You sent this soul-inspiring toy,
 To drown the hearts of men in mirth,
 The blind man's bliss—the rabble's joy.
 Who'd thought that catgut, which long while
 Could only grumble colic pains,
 Should quickly leave its durance vile,
 And vibrate in harmonious strains;—
 Or that the filaments which once
 Flow'd on the agile rump so fair,
 Should now o'er twisted tight-ropes dance,
 In all the harmony of hair.

But hark a sound!

Screw round, screw round—

Twing twang—twing twang—twing twee—

should advance any thing of the kind. As an instance of the musical taste of Elgin,—see, or rather hear George King's Strains, and the Shoemaker's Shops *Passim*. As to the literary gusto,—the immense sale of Belfast and Aberdeen Almanacks, daily Newspapers, Shorter and Longer Catechisms—not to mention the weekly consumpt of Ephemeris—bears ample testimony.

† For this Poet's works—see 'British Poets,' new edition.

Thrimp, thrimp—thrupp, thrupp—

Sound A—hump, hump—

Diddle, diddle—diddle, diddle dee.

Now slow, slow, slow—the lagging notes flow,

In strains dismal, dull, and do-lo-rous;—

Or light, light, light, as the touch of a sprite—

Then end in a crash of a chorus.

But now in loud sounding measures away,

With majestic march strides the grand strathspey ;

Or the prest string-pant,

With M Rorie's rant—

Then umph deedle, humph deedle;

Saltzing, Waltzing,

Alto secondo, thump goes the Rondo,

In hitches and twitches so curious ;

Now one while 'tis slow, and now it is low—

Then striddle-dum straddle-dum *furious*.

Next alto, depresso, diverso, equale,

'Till the whole is wound up with a twirling finale.

To St. Cecilia thanks belong,

Cecilia with her organ song,

A saint from heaven drew :

But fiddling strains boast more than that,

For fiddling strains an *ænta*ey Cat

Into hysterics threw !

Lines written on the top of Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh.

A—— now we have gained the highest brow
 Of the steep hill—how glorious to look down
 On all the varied, noble scenes below—
 The calm, smooth firth, the vales and busy town.
 How we exult the destin'd spot t' have gained,
 Now that the dangers of th' ascent are o'er;
 Hard tho' we toiled and every sinew strained,
 We now enjoy the pleasing scene the more.
 Hard toil indeed—and if the ascents to fame,
 As sages tell, such dire surmounts require;
 Even tho' to reach it be a favourite aim,
 From the pursuit I fear I must retire.
 And harder 'tis, you'll say, for only here
 'Gainst passive Nature's steeps we have to strive;
 But there 'mid the rough crags full oft appear
 Demons, who toiling trav'lers downward drive.
 Some in mere frolic pull them down amain,
 And some give envious thrusts, and thousands stab for gain.

BETA.

The communicat^{twan}ion Forres shall appear next number.

hip
 —. JOHNSTON, PRINTER, ELGIN.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. XIII.

Monday, 20th January, 1823

ON LITERARY DESCENT.

MR EDITOR,

M. D'Israeli in his laborious and curious researches into the history and peculiarities of the literary character, has afforded an immense fund of entertainment, peculiarly interesting to the man of literary pursuits, and also to every one who wishes to see human nature in all its forms and under its various modifications. There is one circumstance however in the history of genius, which seems to have escaped his observation—I mean the hereditary descent of mental talents. You may perhaps smile at the idea of deducing genius from a parent stock, as a jockey at Newmarket sums up the pedigree of a favourite hunter;—or that mental abilities can be propagated to the third or fourth generation, like red hair, black eyes, &c.—I do not mean exactly to carry the matter

thus far; but by adducing some facts, and giving the result of observations thereon, I think I shall be able to establish, that what is called genius, and the higher kinds of mental superiority, are in some degree hereditary. I am aware that it will be immediately objected, that all the great lights of antiquity, the geniuses of more modern times, and even the eminent men of our own day, have almost uniformly failed in producing offspring at all equal, or even approaching to the perfection of their respective parents. A great proportion of these have left no race behind. The eloquent and classical Cicero had a son, who, notwithstanding the extreme pains taken in his education by a solicitous parent, proved an absolute dunce; and the descendants of some others, though they may have approached, have seldom surpassed a mediocrity of talent. Rousseau has somewhere observed, though I forget the exact words, that a man given to deep thoughts and to *scribbling* is an unnatural and degenerate being;—and Sir John Sinclair, by observing that he has more children than generally falls to the lot of a literary man,* would seem to insinuate that such persons are not the most proper or likely to continue the species. Setting aside then the idea that the descendants of men of very eminent abilities, are to go on progressively increasing until they arrive at the very acme of mental superiority; or even that the descendants of such men will equal their immediate progenitors: the proposition to be advanced is —that no men of extraordinary talents will be found to have been descended of parents whose intellects were below mediocrity; but, on the contrary, that such men have

* Code of Health and Longevity.

inherited their parts from either parent, whose mental powers exceed, in a greater or less degree, the general standard of mankind. From a number of facts, a few of which we shall select for the purpose of illustration, it will appear remarkably striking that such an inheritance is more generally derived from the *maternal* than the *paternal* side. In the examples to be adduced, a selection has been made with a view to the different varieties of mental superiority; and the following comprehend philosophers, poets, historians, and orators:—

LOPE BACON.—His mother was daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke; she was skilled in many languages, and translated and wrote several works, which displayed learning, acuteness, and taste.

HUME, the Historian, mentions his mother, daughter of Sir D. Falconer, President of the College of Justice, as a woman of ‘singular merit’, and who, although in the prime of life, devoted herself entirely to his education.

SIR W. JONES, was much attached to his mother, who was a woman of parts; and attended particularly to his education.

R. B. SHERIDAN.—Mrs Francis Sheridan was a woman of considerable abilities. It was writing a pamphlet in his defence, which first introduced her to Mr. Sheridan, afterwards her husband.

SCHILLER, the German Poet.—His mother was an amiable woman; she had a strong relish for the beauties of nature, and was passionately fond of music and poetry. Schiller was her favourite child.

THOMSON the Poet.—Mrs T. was a woman of uncommon natural endowments, possessed of every social and

domestic virtue, with a warmth and vivacity of imagination scarcely inferior to her son's.

SIR WALTER SCOTT — His mother, Elizabeth, daughter of D Rutherford, W S. was a woman of great accomplishments and virtue; she had a good taste for, and wrote poetry, which appeared in print in 1789.

These are a few examples from the most familiar and well known names of men of eminent parts; and they might be multiplied with the greatest ease. It often happens that both parents have been distinguished for their abilities, and in the above list two such cases occur — Hume remarks that his father also “passed for a man of parts”; and the father of Sheridan was conspicuous for his taste, erudition, and natural abilities. If farther observation would confirm the circumstance, that the maternal side most generally gives the peculiar cast to the mind of genius, it would be a subject of some interest to enquire how far the after converse and example of the mother had an effect in moulding and giving a tone to the feelings and perceptions of the child. This influence most probably would be found to be strongest in the poetical temperament; and many of the most amiable propensities, as well as many of the inveterate prejudices and strange inconsistencies of the Sons of Song, might by this means be accounted for. I am, Your's, &c. X.

P. S.—What has become of my old friends Philo-Philosophus and P. Y.? I thought they both promised a second epistle. I hope the first has not fallen head and ears among the *debris* of the Wernerian Strata, nor the Phrenologist found that he is destitute of the bump of combativeness. X.

Frigora mitescunt Zephyris: ver proterit Ætas

Interitura Simul,

Pomifer Autumnus fruges effunderit; et mox

Bruma recurrit iners.

Horace.

MR. EDITOR,

As you most probably may never have been addressed by a personage like me before, I beg leave to introduce myself to you, by giving you a brief sketch of my birth, parentage, and character; in hopes that it may not be uninteresting to you and your readers, who must all have heard of, and indeed must be pretty well acquainted, both with myself, and connections.

I am the first-born of a family of twelve, consisting of sons and daughters of various tempers and dispositions, from the mild, serene, and cheerful, to the gloomy, morose, and boisterous. My family, I will venture to say, is the most ancient at present in existence. Without attempting to go farther back, I can with certainty deduce my descent from the one thousand eight hundred and twenty-third generation, and this in a direct and unimpaired line; for although the members of our family may have lived a shorter period than the usual term of man's existence, yet there has been a uniform succession; and, with some pride I can say it, they have all been more or less conspicuous in their day. As I am the oldest, I am also allowed to be the most jovial and merry of my family. The hour of my birth is eagerly watched by all; and a general shout of congratulation and joy hails my entrance into the world. My birth-day is the signal for the commencement of festivities; the young and old, the rich

and the poor, lay aside their cares, and celebrate it as a holiday. Disdaining the simple fare of puling infancy, even from the first hour of my birth, I delight to be regaled with the huge and smoking sirloin—The fish of the sea, the fowls of the air, and every delicacy which art has invented, I revel upon unrestrained. The fattened goose, the oldest cup of ale, and the most generous wines are brought forth to welcome me; a variety of games, and all sorts of amusements, are invented to divert me—and in short, I am more carressed than it is possible for me to mention. Having spoke so much of myself, I may be allowed to say a few words of the rest of my family. I have a sister, the fourth in the order of birth from me, whose mild, temperate and bland manners render her a general favourite; her birth is hailed with joy by all the youths and maidens—the old smile at her approach, and the most gloomy feel their hearts gladden within them in her presence. Her temper is more equable and steady than her elder sister, who is continually varying between a smile and a tear; and she has not the glow of passion, sometimes approaching to excess, which some reckon as the fault of her younger sister. All these three maidens delight in green groves, beautiful landscapes, favonian gales, the singing of birds, and all the frolicksome gaiety of the animal creation; whereas, I would not give a snug parlour, a glowing fire heaped up with crackling faggots, with a friend to share my generous cheer, and listen with me to the howling tempest without, for all the groves and gales and summer landscapes in the world. I shall speak but briefly of another sedate and matronly sister, who delights in feeding the hungry and destitute, and in gladden-

ing the hearts of the poor with bread—of a morose and sullen brother whose only pleasure is in dense and heavy fogs, in gloomy and moody musings, which lead to despair and suicide; and I now come to the last of our house and the most moral, rigid and thoughtful of all our family. He continually suggests the idea of the fleeting vanity of time—the summing up of existence, and the conclusion of all things. A thousand good resolutions and purposings formed at my birth and determined to be followed up, may most probably be deferred till this youngest brother of the family closes his career, and yet none of them be put into execution. His continual exclamation is “Time flies!”—I myself am already in the middle of my career, and by and by will be fast hastening to my close—by some perhaps, my character may be accused of too much levity, I will venture however to give your readers this one advice—whatever good resolutions they may have formed, let them not delay longer putting them in execution, so that when the foresaid gentleman is about to expire they may not have to exclaim, “Time has fled in vain”

I am, Your most obedient Servant,

JANUARY.

[Mr. Editor—You and your readers may recollect seeing it mentioned in the public papers some years ago, that an old arm chair had been discovered in England, which had belonged to the Poet, GAY. In a secret drawer contained in the same, there were found several Manuscripts of the Poet, in his own hand writing. What they consisted of was never given to the public, and they remained in the possession of the finder for some time without being particu-

larly examined. Lately was put into my hands, the poem which I now send you, and which is said to be a copy of one of the manuscripts just mentioned—It, most probably, was a juvenile performance, but it certainly bears internal evidence, both as to the subject and manner of treating it, of coming from the same hand that wrote “Trivia, or the Art of Walking the Streets.” At all events it is not a production of the present day—being founded on the school of Pope, and having no allusions to the passing manners, &c. ; nor having the slightest tincture of the poetical styles at present in vogue.—If it serves to add any interest to the pages of the Ephemera, I shall be most happy, as I was the means of rescuing it from the grasp of another periodical. Your’s, &c. T. Y.]

————, near Edinburgh, 1st Oct. 1822.

The Bacchanals, A HEROI-COMIC POEM—IN FOUR BOOKS.

*Ille ego qui quondam, gracile modulatus avena
Carmen ;* —————

at nunc horrentia Martis. VIROIL.

“Lo I the man! whose muse whilome did maske,
As time her taught, in lowly shepherds’ weeds,
Am now enforc’d, a far unfitter task,
For trumpets stern to change mine oaten reeds.” SPENCER.

BOOK I.

ARGUMENT.

The subject proposed—Invocation—In the dead of night Riotus and his band rushing from the Tavern assemble in the street—Riotus addressing them proposes that they should sally forth and make themselves masters of the town, by attacking and putting to flight all whom they should meet—Pugilus approves of the motion and joins the rest in raising a shout of approbation—Timidus attempts to dissuade them from the project—But a crowd of tailors who had just come out from a py shop appearing now before them, Riotus and the rest rush forward and attack them with great fury—The engagement described.

OF Bacchanalian revels, and the fight
Of drunken heroes for their lawful right,

To scour the streets thro' night, and to obtain
 Of all the town the undisputed reign,
 I sing. O Muse! th' advent'rous theme inspire, 5
 And breathe into my song heroic fire!

'Twas now that time when night lays down her sway,
 And yields her station to the infant day;
 In balmy slumbers busy men were drowned,
 Still were the streets, and all was silence round, 10
 Save when the watchman, with hoarse drawling roar,
 Called as he went his rounds the passing hour;
 The glimmering lamps emit a feeble ray,
 And only serve the darkness to display—
 When, from their haunts, rush out a drunken band, 15
 And on the streets in order take their stand;
 Fierce were their looks, their brows defiance wore,
 And each in 's hand a knotty bludgeon bore—
 As is the din which geese and ducklings make,
 And other feathery people of the lake, 20
 When foes draw near, or scaring sounds invade;
 Aoon, with outstretched neck they raise the head,
 Flap their broad wings, then pour their pealing cries;
 And with harsh screams and quackings rend the skies.

Such was the tumult and discordant noise, 25
 As each above the other raised his voice,
 When great Riotus, leader of the rest,
 Commanding silence, thus his friends address.
 "Dear friends, companions of my midnight broils,
 Associates of my pleasures and my toils, 30
 Together oft we've drunk till dawn of day,
 Oft come victorious from a midnight fray;
 Where is the tavern, gaming house or stew,
 Which I have not explored along with you?
 While sober mortals, on the downy bed, 35
 Sunk in dull sleep ingloriously are laid,
 'Tis ours to ramble thro' the spacious town,
 And taste of excasies to them unknown.
 O! with what rapture now my breast 's inspir'd!

And to what great achievements am I fir'd! 40
 I could embattel'd legions overthrow,
 And mow down armies at one dreadful blow.
 I burn, I burn my powerful might to try,
 And overcome or nobly fighting die!
 Then let us sally forth with all our might, 45
 And challenge every minion to the fight,
 Who may oppose, or impiously dare
 With us the empire of the streets to share.
 And having mauled and heat our numerous foes—
 (For where find mortals proof against our blows.) 50
 We'll walk triumphant round and round the town,
 And claim all fame and glory as our own."

Thus spoke Riotus, and the drunken band
 Approved the scheme with shouts and clap of hand;
 When Pugilus advancing, thus began— 55
 "O noble hero, brave undaunted man!
 Wise is thy speech, and noble thy design;
 And powerful for the work that arm of thine.
 Methinks already I behold around,
 Our num'rous foes laid vanquish'd on the ground, 60
 On then brave friends! for battle let's prepare,
 Come flourish our dread cudgels in the air!"
 He said. Then loud a pealing shout they raise,
 Hats fly in air, huzzas succeed huzzas;
 The city thro' its whole extent resounds, 65
 And spacious domes re-echo back the sounds.

Soon as he could be heard Timidus tries
 To stop them from the dang'rous enterprise;
 Presaging many fears within his breast,
 He to his fellows thus his speech address: 70
 "Will ye, unmindful of your former toils,
 Again engage in wild and dang'rous broils,
 Where nought but blows and bruises you can gain,
 Perhaps be levell'd lifeless on the plain;
 Or to the num'rous watchmen forced to yield, 75
 After vain fight the ill disputed field,

In triumph to the round house ye'll be borne,
 There to remain inglorious till the morn;
 And there alas! too late ye will repent,
 The foolish feats on which ye now are bent. 80

If it is fame to which your breasts aspire,
 And from the world a warlike name acquire;
 Consider that there's no one now to view,
 The mighty feats which ye propose to do;
 But with ourselves it rests to spread our fame, 85
 And to the skies to raise each others name
 And oft ye know, when we've been soundly beat;
 Forced from our foes inglorious to retreat,
 Next day we've bragged that we the battle won,
 And boasted of the havoc each had done. 90
 Thus tho' we should not now in strife engage,
 Nor needlessly a dang'rous warfare wage;
 Could not we say that we a victory gain'd,
 And fought till none of all our foes remain'd;
 Thus safely could we gain a warlike name, 95
 And without toils or dangers purchase fame."

He ceased. But with the motion nothing pleased,
 The warriors a hiss contemptuous raised;
 When thro' the gloom before them now they view'd,
 A crowd, which on the neighb'ring pavement stood, 100
 Knights of the needle and the goose were they,
 Who after all the labours of the day,
 At the near pye-shop had been to regale
 Themselves on smoaking mutton pyes and ale;
 And now a while in conversation stay, 105
 Ere to their sev'ral homes they take their way.

As when the sportsman, with assiduous care,
 Has beat up every bush with anxious stare,
 For the sly fox at last his victim spies,
 As by the neighb'ring hedge he skulking lies; 110
 Exultingly he raises the loud cry,
 And in the pursuit his fleet beagles fly,
 So when Riotus first the foe espied,

He rushed along and to his fellows cried,
 "Now! now! brave friends let's on with all our might; 115
 And gain immortal glory in the fight!"
 They eager run, when starting from the ground,
 Where prostrate he had fallen with headlong bound,
 Timidus with a wild and ghastly stare,
 Thus cries again, "O! friends beware! beware! 120
 What dire infatuation seizes you.
 To do what soon believe me ye will rue?
 Alas! how fool-hardy ye all are grown
 To run where you are sure to be knock'd down."

Vain were his words, for now they'd met their foes, 125
 And without preface quick proceed to blows.
 The tailors, at this unprovoked offence,
 Instant assume a posture of defence
 Those who had any, wield their knotty sticks,
 And others grasp huge stones and pointed bricks; 130
 Thus armed, the hosts in mighty conflict close,
 With dreadful fury every bosom glows.
 Blows follow blows, on bludgeons bludgeons sound,
 And missile stones and bricks fly thick around,
 Such was the din as when in unetel rage, 135
 A set of barking curs in fight engage;
 They tug, and tear, and snarl, and scream and howl,
 And in the mire and dust each other roll;
 While the delighted boys the fight entice,
 And with the screams and howlings mix their cries. 140

End of Book I.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. XIV.

Monday, 17th February, 1823.

REMARKS ON
PEVERIL OF THE PEAK,

By the Author of *Waverly*.—(From a Correspondent.)

As our limits will not permit us to make any extracts from this work, we must therefore take it for granted that our readers have already read it—and we recommend to those who have not done so, to set about it immediately, for it is a work which we think will in general exceed their expectation. Perhaps the rumour that there was a falling off in his latter works led the Author to bestow more pains on this. But be this as it may, we see from the Prefatory letter that even the Author of *Waverly* shows deference to public opinion: there is an evident anxiety displayed throughout to give satisfaction; and we have a great deal more of contrivance in the plot of this, than in many of his other novels.

* The above paper was received several weeks ago, but from the interruption of the *Ephemera*, in consequence of the other pressing engagements of the Printer, has been delayed until it has now scarcely the interest of novelty. The general observations will be found judicious, although we think the merits of the novel have been perhaps over-rated.

E.

There is indeed something in the sensual and bloody reign of the second Charles peculiarly fitted for such an Author: it affords a very fine field for the display of that propensity to the mysterious which we have always observed in him. Throughout the reign the vessel of the State was completely at the command of a parcel of crafty political intriguers: all the civil discord which was experienced—all the innocent blood which was shed—and all the groundless terrors which perpetually haunted the people,—were the results of their successful or unsuccessful efforts to obtain Court favour and personal aggrandisement—while they did not care a single fig for the interests of the nation. There was a constant cry of “Catholic Plot” “Catholic Plot,” while in fact what we have mentioned were the only existing plots. There was a continual rumbling heard under ground, and the attention of people was always on the watch to learn where it was to break out, while nothing farther than the noise existed,—and the forgiving, good-hearted, weak, voluptuous monarch, with his equally weak ministry, had not the power to quash or even detect the machinations of the adventurers, and were in consequence almost equally blindfolded as the people. At least such was the state of the Kingdom, and the disposition of the King during the era of Peveril of the Peak. There were more serious plots, and the King became more tyrannical afterwards, but with these we have nothing to do.

We have a most judicious selection of characters, and the situations in which they are placed are admirably calculated to give a just and striking picture of such times. Peveril of the Peak is chiefly valuable for the lively repre-

sentation it gives of the profligate Court of Charles II. Stern moralists will perhaps find fault with the way in which this part of the work is treated, and say that it is calculated to lead young minds astray from the right path and to fill them, if not with ambitious, at least with such romantic ideas, as will disgust them with the more homely situations in life in which they are likely to be placed; and stern metaphysicians will perhaps affirm, that such works as this authors are unworthy the notice of a grave and philosophical people. They may say so; but we doubt much whether it will have the effect of making these works less popular. It is a very great, and we are sorry to add, a very common mistake, to suppose that if an author treats of bad characters we must cling to the evil and become enamoured of the scenes in which we have seen these immoral characters placed. We allow that it is possible for an author to shew things in such distorted forms as to make even immorality have charms; but we do not think that this is at all a frequent occurrence; at least it is not frequent in the publications of the present day, and it is certainly very far from being the case with the author now before us. He does occasionally depict such characters and scenes as those alluded to, but he always shews them in their *proper colours* and we invariably find him avoiding the phraseology current at the times he writes of, when it is of a cast to give offence to the most refined ears; and we deny that immorality will draw forth our love or admiration when virtue is set beside. We may admire an author's talents when he draws even vile characters with effect; but there are very few so weak, as to be led to admire the characters themselves. Who for instance would strive to imitate the

Chiffinches, or Christian, or even Buckingham, when they have such models before them as the Peverils and Alice Bridgenorth. We conceive too, that the laying open the Courts of James VI. and Charles II. in the way that this author has done, is a better lesson to monarchs of the present day, and will make them more anxious about the opinions posterity shall entertain of them, than a whole cart-load of Newspaper abuse, which is the general admonisher of Courts now-a-days.

As to the Metaphysicians, they may pore and hunt after occult qualities, and innate ideas, and sensation, and perception, and abstraction, and all the rest,—but their sole object is to find out the springs of action in the human breast (or in the *cranium* as some will have it) and to reason about these,—and we humbly conceive there is more of the principles of our constitution displayed in the work now before us, than in very many of the abstruse and frequently unintelligible volumes of the Metaphysicians. We of course do not wish to be understood as giving our unqualified assent to novel-readers: we look upon the habitual novel reader as a most despicable misspender of time; and upon the generality of novels as trash, but those of the author of *Waverly* are exceptions. It is only after a long time spent in the more arduous and useful studies that we turn to these, and then we do so as to a most pleasing and harmless relaxation.

We have however more of the author's morality and we believe metaphysics too, in this, than in most of his other works. It abounds also with beautiful metaphor and as usual a great many of the author's own striking mottos at the beginning of the chapters under the titles of "Old

Play" "Chieftain" &c. When we heard what was the subject of it, we were apprehensive that he could not have avoided giving us a repetition of the same characters he described when treating of the Scottish Covenanters, but we were happy to find our fears quite groundless.

We are often amused with the mystery which this author seems so fond of throwing over the different incidents which fall under his notice. It is a very principal ingredient in a good story-teller, but in general it is miserably perverted and where we find mystery we may almost safely conclude that we are on the verge of some most dreadful catastrophe; whereas the author of *Waverly* has so much drollery along with his mystery that it is generally employed to give more effect to pleasing incidents; and it is a rare occurrence to catch him exciting our feelings to a very high pitch.

The plan which our author adopts of rendering his novels into a form so very nearly Dramatic, and connecting them so closely with History,* is attended with very pleasing consequences: It throws every thing upon the "dramatis personæ" themselves (if we may use that expression) the author is kept mostly out of view, and the reader is not troubled in every paragraph with his opinions of the motives from which the actions of his characters proceed, or with tame descriptions of their actions: he makes them act and speak themselves, and in such a way as that there can be little mistaking of the motives, while at the same time there is just so much left for conjecture as to make

* We must refer those who object to his not keeping strictly to historical truth, to the author's Prefatory Letter, where he pleads his own cause in a way much better than we could do.

the reader mightily pleased with himself in comprehending them ; and the different incidents are brought in, in such a simple way, to explain each other, as to make the whole appear quite natural. This is the true way to give satisfaction : place human actions before us, and there is little doubt of the meanest capacities entering into the wit or the feeling of them ; but give us only a description of how a person has acted, what pity he has felt, or what resentment, or how he has loved. &c. and we will say he is very bold that pronounces himself confident of the writer's meaning, for it is a fact that when we come to define any of the operations of mind, either owing to individuals having the same mental elements in such different degrees, or to some other cause, we shall not pretend to solve the enigma ; but nevertheless it is a fact, that scarcely two men can be found to agree in their definitions of any of our emotions, sensations. &c. : and hence the eternal cavilling we have about the proper meaning of the words which are used to denote qualities of mind. But we begin to get a little metaphysical ourselves.

Julian Peveril and Alice Bridgenorth, the hero and heroine of the piece, are both amiable and interesting characters ; and after tracing them through their various adventures and escapes, we are not a little pleased to find them at length safely moored in the haven of Wedlock. Alice is superior to many of his female characters but not yet equal to Rebecca. Julian, though a very good young man, and brave enough too, is not just what we should have liked the hero to be ; but it is an old trick of the Author of Waverly, to make his heroes subordinate.

Most attention seems to have been paid to the characters of Christian, Buckingham, and the King. We have seldom seen two brought together better calculated to elucidate each other's characters, and be each other's dupes than the two former. The enterprising, vacillating, ambitious Duke, is most admirably portrayed in the scene where he is first presented to the reader. The description of those who are waiting on him—the conversations with Jerningham—and the subsequent meetings with Christian, are all exquisite. The scene where the King, Buckingham, Alice, Julian and Fenella, are drawn together at Chiffinch's, is perhaps the one where most interest is excited.—But we shall not attempt to describe it or point out its beauties. The interview between the Duke and Zarah is also excellent.

We are not merely pleased, we are filled with astonishment when we think of the wonderful facility which this author displays throughout of entering into all characters from the highest to the lowest. Altho' we have not had room to speak of many of the subordinate characters in the novel, we look upon them as masterly sketches: Mrs Debbitch, Ellesmere, Lance Outram, are all stamped with life. It certainly displays a mighty mind and a wonderful combination of powers: it seems as if he had so much of the elements of all characters in himself that the representation of any one comes natural to him. In this respect we do not hesitate to assign the Author of *Waverley* a niche near the immortal Shakespeare.

The Bacchanals,

A HEROI-COMIC POEM—IN FOUR BOOKS.

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT.

Apology for the want of machinery in the poem—The battle continued—The overthrow of Lapboard, Bodkin, Buckram, Twist, and many others—Ebrius is knocked down by a random brick—The acts of Riotus—he is overthrown by Cabbage, recovering addresses his friends and inspires them with new courage—They beat off the Tailors—Timidus who had laid himself down in the street and fallen asleep while his friends were in the engagement, is awakened by the Tailors running over him in their flight—he alarms the watch, who coming to his assistance, and finding Cabbage lying beside him, accuses him of an attempt to murder—Cabbage exculpates himself and implores protection from his foes, who had now come up to the place—The rest of the watchmen arriving, a new battle is commenced—Riotus and his companions are made prisoners and carried to the watch house.

O that I had the gods of Homer's day!
 To rule my fight, and mingle in the fray;
 Now 'gainst their foes the weapon to direct,
 Now from dread wounds their fav'rites to protect;
 Here the huge bludgeon with effect to wield, 5
 And there to interpose the saving shield;
 Some with inspiring heavenly words to cheer,
 And to sink others with dismay and fear.
 These I have not; nor Sylphs to won the day,
 Nor evil gnome, nor fairy or light fay; 10
 But of themselves with their inherent might,
 Without immortal aid the warriors fight.
 The mighty stick they raise with their own force,
 Then downwards by its weight it falls, of course.
 And oft indeed with dol'rous force it fell, 15
 On many, whom it well nigh sent to hell.
 First a huge bludgeon Lapboard met thy head;
 And stunn'd, and sprawling on the pavement laid;

Then Bodkin follows with tremend'ous groan,
 Struck on the ear with a rough pointed stone, 20
 Buckram and Twist, and many others fall,
 And rolling in the dust with torture bawl.
 But gathering strength, again with tenfold rage
 They rise, and grasping stones new warfare wage.
 A mighty brick, by some fierce tailor sent, 25
 Swift thro' the air with hissing fury went,
 Ebrius receives it, down he falls supine,
 Ebrius famed for swallowing draughts of wine;
 When prostrate on the floor in one vast heap
 His peers have fallen, some puking, some asleep, 30
 All by the mighty force of wine subdued,
 Firm as a rock he still collected stood.
 Ah! what avails that he could triumph o'er
 His friends, and overcome wine's conquering power,
 Now in the dust he lies, one puny stone 35
 Has brought about what wine could ne'er have done.

But now with dreadful rage Riotus glows,
 Now here, now there resound his mighty blows;
 As falls the grain before the reaper's blade,
 And on the field in frequent heaps is laid, 40
 So wheresoe'er he turns, foes fall around,
 And heaps on heaps of vanquished strew the ground.
 This sight with grief and sorrow, Cabbage view'd,
 As from the horrid fight aloof he stood,
 And rushing onward for revenge prepares; 45
 With all his might his knotted club he rears,
 Full at the mighty leader of the foe,
 Unseen he aims the well directed blow;
 Just on that ridge where grows a canopy
 Of hair, which serves to shade the better eye, 50
 With whizzing force the weapon huge descends,
 Sounds on the bone, the flesh asunder rends;
 He rees—he staggers—senseless on the ground
 He falls, his fall makes all the streets resound;
 Then slowly coming to himself again, 55

He furious roars aloud with rage and pain;
 And starting up, to his companions cries,
 While rage impetuous flashes from his eyes—
 “How long shall we these miscreants allow,
 “Thus daringly to deal the fatal blow? 60
 “Come let us now our utmost might put forth,
 “And quick exterminate them from the earth!

Thus to the warriors he his speech address,
 Which with fresh courage reinspired each breast;
 With tenfold fury they renew the fray— } 65
 Their foes are seized with terror and dismay,
 And instantly on every hand give way.
 As homeward from the field with fury run
 A herd of bullocks, by the swain drove on,
 Who, often as he can with stick bestows } 70
 On their tough hides, profusion of good blows,
 So fierce the tailors run, and so pursue their foes.
 And now they came where on the pavement lay
 Timidus, for he had not joined the fray;
 Fearing th' event, and not yet tired of life, 75
 He, when his friends rushed forward to the strife,
 Down on the pavement laid himself for rest,
 Stretched at full length with wine and sleep oppress.
 Him in their flight they from his slumbers wake,
 Some running hastily across his back, 80
 While others stumbling, o'er his carcass bound
 Headlong, and with their faces met the ground.
 He, thinking that 'twas the victorious foe,
 Who thus were dealing round their dreadful blows,
 Starts sudden from the ground with wild surprise, 85
 And “murder! murder! watch! ho, watchman” cries.
 Th' alarming cry the slumbering watchman hears,
 In haste before his suppliant he appears;
 And running up to Cabbage, whom he found
 Sprawling beside Timidus on the ground, 90
 With his strong fist he seized him by the breast,
 And to him thus his angry speech address:

" Ah! miscreant, how dar'st thou the laws thus break,
 Thus impiously a human life to take—
 Thank heaven to stop the deed I came in time, 95
 Yet thou shalt suffer for th' attempted crime!"
 He said, and roughly tugging made him rise,
 When Cabbage, filled with horror and surprise,
 While his whole frame with fear and trembling shook,
 And his eyes wildly stared thus vehement spoke: 100
 " As heaven shall bear me witness. I'm as free
 Of murd'rous thoughts as any child can be,
 God knows at any time my peaceful breast,
 Was ne'er with such infernal thoughts possess'd;
 Much less just now: for being bruised and beat, 105
 By ruffians unprovoked in our retreat,
 I stumbling o'er the person headlong fell,
 How here, or who he is, I cannot tell;
 But see where our relentless foes pursue,
 Again to beat and bruise our bones anew; 110
 O! if you pity or compassion have,
 In mercy from their cruel clutches save!"
 Scarce had he finished when the band drew near,
 And shouting, to renew the fight prepare,
 The watchman seeing the advancing foes, 115
 Too many for him single to oppose,
 His loud resounding rattle speeds to spring,
 His brother watchmen to his aid to bring.
 Wide thro' the city spreads the thund'ring sound,
 And furious wakes the slumb'ring echoes round; 120
 And with them too the snoring watchmen wake,
 Who quick their batons and their lanthorns take,
 And where the alarm sprung with speed they make. }
 Fierce at Ri-tus and his mighty crew
 They rush, their vanquish'd brother to rescue; 125
 As fierce to meet the charge advance their foes,
 And both the troops in awful conflict close.
 Thick in the air the whizzing cudgels ply,
 And in a thousand shivers lanthorns fly;
 Foemen on foemen rush, arms clash on arms, 130

The streets re-echo with the loud alarms !
 Full many a blow is given, and many a wound,
 And many a mighty warrior press'd the ground.

But now, to seize Riotus by the breast,
 The leader of the watch with fury prest 135
 Thro' the thick fight ; the chiefs in haste make way,
 And in mute silence wait the coming fray
 Now they both meet with instantaneous grasp,
 Around the body they each other clasp ;
 To this side and to that they furious bound— 140
 At last they fall together on the ground ;
 But the stern son of night his grasp still held,
 And pressing down his foe, him thus revil'd,
 " Now wield your mighty arms and spend your rage,
 Vain fool ! who thought with us the fight to wage ; 145
 From past experience you might well have known,
 What 'tis by us to be in fight o'erthrown ;
 But to the round house hence with your mad crew,
 And pay the forfeit to your rashness due."
 When now the Bacchanals their leader view'd, 150
 Prone in the dust, and all his force subdued,
 Their spirits sink—their hearts within them die
 They hesitate, or to resist, or fly ;
 At last they yield themselves an easy prey,
 And to the watch-house all are dragg'd away. 155

End of Book II.

THE
EPHEMERA,

No. XV.

Monday, 10th March, 1828

'Tis pleasant through the loop-holes of retreat
To peep at such a world ; to see the stir
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd.—*Cowper.*

MR. EDITOR,

In some of your early numbers, there is rather an unfavourable impression given of the society of small towns : I am inclined to be of a different opinion, and think that there are many advantages in a provincial situation. Removed from the bustle of a metropolis, and the various conflicting passions with which it is agitated, the inhabitant of a small community lives in peaceful tranquillity, and learns to despise the more turbulent enjoyments of the city. He is removed from the great drama of the world—from its more bustling scenes, and intense excitements, and acts a more subordinate, and more tranquil part in life's tragi-comic representation—The jarring interests of Whig and Tory—the rise and fall of stocks—and the dread or expectation of new wars, ex-

cite in his breast little emotion. Seated snugly at his fireside, and dozing over the last newspaper, the political partizans who divide the State, confronting each other in intellectual gladiatorship, and rising into rhetorical vehemence, as love of place, love of country, or love of popular applause actuate their bosoms,—seem but as so many puppets set agoing for his amusement. Every post brings him columns of such intelligence—every month pours out its Magazines and Reviews—novels, tales, sermons and histories innumerable;—a thousand heads are hourly spinning out their stores for his entertainment, while he has nothing to do but look on—and read, laugh, or sleep over them as he pleases. In his small community he is known to every body around—and he himself knows every body; whereas in a city you may live for years without ever speaking to, or knowing any thing about your next door neighbour. You may be sick, sorrowful, or dead before he ever thinks of enquiring after you. All the little enquiries about who you had at your last party—what you have got for dinner—when you are going to be married—or when it is probable you will die—with many other peepings into your private affairs, which, by the ill-natured, commonly go under the name of scandal, are really gratifying and not unacceptable. It makes you appear of some consequence when you see so many people thus concerning themselves about you; whereas in a large town if you are not a great man, with a great title—if you are not an astonishing genius, or what is much better, unless you are possessed of immense wealth, you dwindle into that hated thing called *Nobody*. In a small town, on the other hand, you may be ‘passing rich’ with a few

hundreds a-year—Five hundred or a thousand will quite ennoble you; it will draw around your table hosts of sycophants who will devour your cheer as fast as it can be placed before them, who will flatter you into the belief that you are mighty genteel, an exceeding fine fellow—and all that sort of thing. You can look down with contempt on the ignoble crowd, the *profanum vulgus*, and viewing them with scorn exclaim, “O what wretches!”—(Ahem! Ahem!!)—‘The one-eyed monarch of the blind, the Triton of the minnows’!

Lastly, in a small town you are freed from many of the teasing caprices and innovations of that most fickle of all phantoms, Fashion. There you are allowed to wear out your coat to the full term of its years, without its shape appearing antiquated—the revolution of *taste* does not compel you to get a new one every month—a thousand *cuts* are adopted and laid aside ere they reach you, and when a stray one is carried off by some would-be-fashionable tailor, or milliner, you retain it so long that in the mean time a thousand other modes have had their brief day and are forgotten.

I am aware, Mr Editor, that some may be inclined to dissent from the foregoing observations of mine; and to maintain that a small community is but a large one in miniature (pardon the approach to an Iricism,) and that it has all the faults, with not nearly so many advantages as the other. Petty cabals and party spirit, they will say, prevail every whit as inveterately in small, as in large cities; with the additional aggravation, that, in the former, the objects of dispute must, of consequence, be more insignificant; the minds of the opponents must be more

narrowed and prejudiced, and not have the general importance and enlarged liberality of those of the latter.— There may be some truth in such objections, I will not deny; and to shew that I wish to be candid, I shall quote Madam De Stael's opinion of small towns, one whose opinion on any subject must have always considerable weight.

“ In winter we lived in the neighbouring town, if town it can be called, in which there were neither theatres, monuments of art, music, nor paintings. It was merely a scene of gossiping and lassitude. Imagine to yourself how one, such as I was, would feel seated at a tea table for several hours after dinner in the company of my mother-in-law. Our Society consisted of seven of the gravest women of the county. Two of them were maidens of fifty, as timid as if they had been fifteen, but much less gay than at that age. One of them would say to the other: ‘ Do you think the water boils for tea,’ ‘ I believe ’ replied another, ‘ it will be too soon to make the tea, for the gentlemen are not yet ready to come.’ ‘ Do you think they mean to stop long at table to day?’ Said a third. ‘ I cannot tell,’ replied a fourth; ‘ but as the general election is coming on, they will probably stop to talk about it.’ No, no, said a fifth, ‘ I daresay they are rather talking about the fox chase, which has engaged them so much for a week past; I daresay, however, they will soon be done. ‘ Ah! they will never rise from table ’ said a sixth, with a sigh, and then silence commenced. I have been in Italian convents, but they appeared to me full of life compared to this circle. Every quarter of an hour some voice broke silence to ask an insipid question which received a cold answer, and all

sunk again into a dullness, the weight of which would have been insupportable, had not habit accustomed these women to bear it from their infancy. At last the gentlemen came, but this event so impatiently expected did not produce any remarkable change of manner among the Ladies. The men took the seats next the fire, and continued their own conversation: the women ranged themselves at the opposite end of the room, and proceeded to distribute the tea. When the usual hour of departure arrived, they went home with their husbands, ready to recommence the same course of life on the following day, which differed in nothing from that which preceded it, except in its date in the Calender.—There is then no longer any enjoyment, except in a certain regularity, which is very convenient for those who wish to efface every kind of superiority, and reduce all the world to their level, for in vain do we assert such a man is unworthy to judge of me, such a woman is incapable of comprehending my character. The human countenance exercises a powerful dominion over the human heart; and when we read in that countenance a secret disapprobation it always disturbs our repose, even in defiance of our firmest resolves. The circle which surrounds us, sooner or later, conceals from us the rest of the world. The most diminutive object placed before the eye intercepts the sun.—Thus it is with the petty Society amidst which we live. Neither the regards of Europe nor posterity can make us insensible to the paltry vexation of a bad neighbour; and he who wishes to be happy, and to give full scope to his inclinations, should, above all things, make a right choice of the atmosphere by which he is to be more immediately encompassed.”*

* Corinna pp. 366. 374.

It should be observed that to such an intelligent, tasteful, and stirring genius as M. De Stael, the monotony of a country town must have appeared peculiarly irksome; and on this account her representation must be taken with some allowance; it is only to the sons and daughters of mediocrity, to the lovers of peace quiet, something approaching to "gentle dullness" and to something which is better, domestic virtue and enjoyments, that such places will be found congenial.

B.

The Bacchanals,

A HEROI-COMIC POEM—IN FOUR BOOKS.

BOOK III.

ARGUMENT.

A city morning described—the situation of the prisoners in the Watch-house—Riotus awakes from a disturbed sleep, his spirits being now as much depressed as they were before elevated—He deplores their unfortunate situation—relates a terrible vision which he saw in his sleep—and laments the folly which hurried them on to last night's riots—he is reproached for his want of spirit by Pugilus, who gives them the history of an escape which he and his companions once made after having been secured by the Watchmen—Riotus replies—But the door of the prison now opens, six Watchmen enter and conduct them into the presence of the Magistrate.

Now chasing darkness hence grey morn appears,
 Mild in the east her rosy front she rears,
 Scared at the sight the thief his search gives o'er,
 The murd'rer sheathes his dagger red with gore.
 The watchman's time of duty now expires,

And homeward from his station he retires.
 Thick from the stews and tippling houses come
 The satiate guests, and stagg'ring make for home ;
 And rattling chariots rapid drive along,
 Filled with the ball-room's gaudy tired-out throng. 10
 While others rise, these now retire to rest ;
 Th' Assembly's joys in dreams once more to taste.
 And now from chimney tops black fumes arise
 In curling spires, and darken all the skies ;
 The Scavengers now ply their early toil, 15
 And thick beside them steaming dunghills pile.
 The workmen too their daily tasks begin,
 And all the town is bustle, noise, and din

Sol thro' the watch-house window shot his ray,
 And shewed where round their chief the heroes lay ; 20
 Some kept awake by fear sat on the ground,
 Others lay stretched full length and snored profound.
 When starting sudden from a short repose,
 Riotus pale, and in wild fright arose.
 Round the damp cell he gazed with fearful look ; 25
 Then to his watchful comrades thus he spoke :
 " O friends how glad that I have seen the morn,
 E'en tho' it finds us pris'ners and forlorn.
 For such a night I've passed of fearful woes,
 As chilled my breast, and all my heart's blood froze ; 30
 Methought that I had left the midnight feast,
 And on my couch had laid myself to rest,
 When lo ! impending o'er my head appeared
 Dozens of port, in rows above rows reared ;
 Brimful they seemed, and horrible to view ! 3
 Each cork was transfix'd with a twisted screw !
 At once their mouths the bottles down incline,
 The corks fly out—then rushes forth the wine ;
 From many a mouth the purple currents pour,
 And loud like foaming cataracts they roar.
 Quick from the floor, with horror and surprise, 4
 Up o'er my bed I see the deluge rise ;

Oft to escape I try with all my might,
 But something still restrains my limbs from flight ;
 At last my slumbers one fierce struggle broke, 45
 And from the threatened danger I awoke.
 But only woke from visionary ill,
 Imprisonment, and real woes to feel.
 O ! what presaging doubts now fill my breast ;
 My spirits flag, and my whole frame's depress'd. 50
 Would that we had from last night's broils refrain'd ;
 And sober at our peaceful homes remain'd ;
 Then should we from our beds this morn have rose,
 Gay as the larks, refreshed with sweet repose,
 While here we restless lie, with throbbing head 55
 Oppress'd, and of our midnight dreams afraid,
 The violated laws decrees t' await,
 And the harsh taunts of the stern magistrate."

Thus he. When to him Pugilus replies :
 " How much unlike the valient and the wise, 60
 Thus to give up your mind to grief and fear,
 When dangers, or when threatening ills are near,
 You, as the mighty leader of our host,
 A more undaunted courage ought to boast ;
 Then dissipate your fears and thoughtful gloom, 65
 And all your wonted cheerfulness resume ;
 Henceforth it will delight us to compare,
 Our future pleasures with our present care,
 When in an evening we're together met,
 And at the festive table joyful set, 70
 While pleasing friends and potent sparkling wine,
 And merry tales to cheer our souls combine,
 Then will our present fears and looks distress'd,
 Furnish good matter for a roaring jest.

Yet where is all our present cause of dread ? 75
 What reason have we to be so afraid ?
 By bribes the monster law may be subdued,
 Or by some arts we may its fangs elude.

Hear how in sim'lar circumstances placed,
 I and my friends once got ourselves releas'd, 80
 All night, within the tavern, 'till 'twas late,
 In social mood carousing, we had sat;
 Each man had drunk 'till he could hold no more,
 And some were so well filled, that they run o'er.
 Thus with the potent god of wine inspired, 85
 And our keen breasts to any exploit fired,
 Out all at once we sally to the street,
 Anxious with some great enterprise to meet;
 When lo! a row of lamps with glim'ring light,
 Placed in the neighb'ring street first met our sight, 90
 Which to our wav'ring, multiplying eyes,
 Appeared some monster of enormous size;
 Then Quixote-like we summon all our might,
 And rush along to face the foe in fight.
 Full at the lamps our knotty sticks we rear, 95
 And in one mighty crash they disappear;
 Down falls the splintered glass, the wicks and oil:
 And the whole pavement groans beneath the spoil;
 But suddenly, before we were aware,
 Or could for our defence ourselves prepare, 100
 A crowd of watchmen compass us around,
 And in their arms each finds himself fast bound;
 Resistance was in vain, we calmly yield,
 To our stern foes, the undisputed field;
 Here we are brought, and in this cell immured; 105
 The massy doors are shut and well secured.
 A while we stand, and cautiously debate
 How best we may escape our threatened fate;
 Then having fixed, we raise a horrid yell,
 And with loud cries of murder fill the cell; 110
 Amazed the watchmen hasten to explore
 The dreadful cause of all the wild uproar;
 When, just as they the massy bolts unbarred,
 We for th' event being previously prepared,
 Rush fiercely out, knock down whoe'er we meet, 115

And soon in safety gain the friendly street.
 Thus once from Justice' clutches I did fly,
 And so we might just now did we but try.
 Then let us to 't, for we can nought atchieve,
 While here we sit and at our troubles grieve." 120
 He ceased. The rest applaud the specious plan;
 When rising up, Riotus thus began:
 " Much Pugilus, my ever-faithful friend,
 Thy spirit and thy genius I commend;
 But you're to blame, that did not speak before, 125
 For now the time to 'scape from hence is o'er;
 'Tis now broad day, and the unfriendly light,
 Would aid our followers, and betray our flight.
 Here then to meet our doom we must await,
 And patient suffer the decrees of fate; 130
 Perhaps the Judge is not obdurate made,
 And tempting gold is powerful to persuade."

Scarce had they finished speaking when they heard
 The clanging sound of massy bolts unbarr'd;
 'Then loud as is the rumbling thunder's roar, 135
 Harsh grating on its hinges bursts the door.
 Twice three armed Heralds enter and declare,
 Their message, that the pris'ners should repair
 Immediately before the Magistrate,
 Who in the hall, dispensing justice, sat. 140
 With hearts appall'd the chiefs the summons hear,
 And slow proceed along, oppress'd with doubt and fear.

End of Book III.

To the Editor of the Ephemera.

MR EDITOR,

Anxious to acknowledge the receipt this morning of two sportive effusions, (from one and the same quarter I suspect) I have to solicit for the following lines a corner of your much esteemed Magazine—if they obtain a place there, they *must* meet the eye of my Fair Incog, who I will venture to hope having once deigned to notice, will still, and for ever, continue in the same dear strain, to

REMEMBER ME,

Castle Clunie—Valentine day, 1823.

While seated here in sober mood,
 Not thinking much of love,
 In flew two pretty Billet-doux
 On wings of turtle dove.
 A power unseen—soft whisper'd me,
 'Twas love—I knew his voice :
 "Thou favour'd mortal—kneel thee down—
 "And from thy heart rejoice—
 "Open and read—what this conveys."
 Resum'd the god of love :
 "Believe me—the true resemblance is
 "Of happiness above—
 "And this from her who destined is
 "O'er thousand hearts to reign—
 "Ah! who that knows her—does not love
 "Sweet—Eve—of Valentine !—"
 Grateful I knelt—I read and kiss'd—

Then press'd them to my heart—
 Oh love Omnipotent! I cry'd,
 I feel thy powerful dart.
 "Thou'lt feel it more"—the god replied,
 "And be supremely blest,
 "Send to the Ephemera this address,
 "And leave to me the rest."

P. S. On looking over my letter to you Mr Editor, I find that, carried away by the *dear—sweet—subject*, I quite forgot to conclude it in the usual complimentary way—but never mind, my dear fellow, be assured, altho' I said nothing about it, I am not the less

Obediently, truly, and devotedly,

Your's, R. M.

N. B. If fortunately you should happen to be the means of *bringing matters about*, the best pair of the *Gloves*, depend upon it, shall be placed on your Desk.

to open the case for the pursuer. He felt considerable diffidence, he said, considering the high merits of the subject, to appear before such a learned and venerable assembly as the champion of his celebrated client in the present case; more especially as his pursuits and studies might seem to have lain in a different tract. "But I consider, my Lord," he continued, "that the man who unfortunately has not a relish for, or he who lets other occupations entirely alienate his taste from such productions, is deprived of many of the most delightful and exhilarating pleasures of a refined mind. I reflect with singular complacency on the many times, when unbending my mind from severer studies, I have luxuriated on the vivid sallies of imagination, the touching pathos, the poignant wit and pure morality contained in the volumes of my illustrious client. I need scarcely enlarge on the fame of this celebrated authour; he has received the united and enthusiastic admiration of his own countrymen, and of all those of other countries, who are capable of appreciating his excellencies. It has been beautifully observed by one of his admirers, that if it should so happen that the race of men became extinct, a being of another species would have a sufficient idea of what human nature was from Shakespeare's works alone. Every shade of character, every amiable propensity—every dark, gloomy and turbulent passion is pourtrayed with such singular truth and minuteness.

"Each change of many coloured life he drew,
Exhausted worlds and then imagined new:
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
And panting Time toil'd after him in vain!"

Thus has his name floated down the stream of public opinion emblazoned by the applauding voice of successive ages; without a rival or even an approach of a competitor; till at last one has arisen, who, similarly gifted in many respects, treads close in his path, and in the eyes of many seems to proceed with equal footsteps. Far be it from me to attempt to underrate the merits of the De-

fender. I admire and honour his genius: but still that genius may be great, without being the greatest; he may shine a star of the first magnitude, without rivalling the sun in his splendour. In fertility and vigour of imagination—in felicity of painting to the life, in simple and natural pathos, and almost in humour and wit, he is little, if at all, inferior to his rival. He paints a variety of characters with true consistency and originality; so distinctly are they brought out that we seem to recognize them as individuals, and in time come to reckon them in the list of our acquaintances. So far as he depicts he does so with life, and the pictures please and amuse us. But we in vain look for those awfully deep protraitures of humanity, those sympathetic delineations of feeling, and gradual risings, insidious changes, and “tempests and whirlwinds” of passion, coming so closely home to men’s business and bosoms, which are to be found in Shakspeare. If we come to consider the language in which the respective authors clothe their ideas and descriptions, we will find an immense superiority on the side of the dramatist. There is an indescribable charm in the flow and harmony of measured lines which much enhances the sentiments they express; together with a dignity and conciseness of expression, which prose can never equal, and never approach. Shakspeare’s volumes teem with passages of beauty in which are crowded and concentrated maxims, reflections, and turns of expression, which have become incorporated with our very thoughts, and which we borrow like a second language on all occasions, either of seriousness or levity. His works can bear to be perused again and again, and always with renewed or additional pleasure.”

The illustrious counsel, after observing that it was almost needless to call any witnesses on the part of his client, although hosts of them were in attendance, concluded a learned and eloquent speech by craving from the Jury a verdict in his favour.

The counsel for the defender now rose. When the question was first agitated, he said, it was not with the view of making invidious comparisons. His client had not the presumption to attempt to be thought to excel the great master spirit of his age, Shakspeare. The present discussion was forced upon him, and he hoped it would not be considered as arrogance on his part, if he attempted to defend his client. Comparisons of all kinds, but especially of literary merit were often very vague and inconclusive. Of two persons attempting the same walk, one might excel in qualifications of one kind, and one in another, and it was a matter of much nicety to adjust the balance between them. The noble and learned counsel on the other side, with much candour had admitted, that in what must be considered the essentials of genius, the Author of Waverly was little or nowise inferior to his great prototype,—in imaginative power—in felicity of description, and in depth of feeling. That he had not pourtrayed many of the passions and feelings which are most remarkable, and most prevalent in humanity, may perhaps be owing to the circumstance, that Shakspeare lived before him. The great minds of the days that are past, have seized upon the most striking and most important subjects, and have left little to their successors but imitation and amplification. There is no farther room to point the workings of ambition leading on to guilt and cruelty, after the characters of Macbeath and King Richard. Groundless jealousy, revenge, and the love of malice purely for its own sake, is already depicted in Othello and Iago—the melancholy wreck of a noble and sensitive mind in Hamlet, and youthful passion in the loves of Romeo and Juliet. It perhaps may be said that striking out new paths, and seizing on incidents not obvious to the common eye, and therefore not suspected to exist, is a principal characteristic of genius. Human nature, though diversified is not inexhaustible—the general properties and primitive passions and affections have already been sufficiently pourtrayed. The Author of Waverly, then to be

original, had to take these general passions of our nature, and represent them when under peculiar circumstances, situations, and states of civilization; as is exemplified in the Covenanters under the sway of religious enthusiasm, the Celts in a semi-barbarous state, &c. these characters then, being peculiar, and confined to a sectory nation, though they may not be so generally or individually interesting, display not the less art and power in their construction. In his historical characters, the Author of *Waverly* will bear an equal comparison with Shakspeare, in his truth of painting and power of illustrating and amplifying the conceptions of history. In pathos, the history and trial of *Effie Deans*, the catastrophe of the *Bride of Lam:nermuir*, and several other passages vie with the finest scenes of Shakspeare. The ludicrous humour of *Baillie Jarvie* has few counterparts in the pages of the other; and the Cavalier, *Dugal Dalgetty*, need not be ashamed to shake hands with the sack-loving *Sir John Falstaff*. *Rebecca* in *Ivanhoe*, and the sisterly affection of *Minna* and *Brenda* in the *Pirate*, equal the most lovely creations of Shakspeare. In short there would be no end to enumerating his various beauties. And we shall now proceed to bring forward proofs of the universal admiration in which the works of the defender are held.

Here a motely crowd of witnesses were examined, consisting of all ranks, degrees, ages, and professions. Old Maids, Bachelors, grave Doctors and Philosophers, striplings, and young Misses, who all bore unequivocal testimony of the pleasure they had derived from the the Author's works. After these, *Voltaire* and some others of his countrymen, his disciples, were brought forawrd in order to give their opinion against the darmas of Shakspeare. But *Voltaire's* evidence was so contradictory, and so plainly shewed, that he was unacquainted with the spirit, and prejudiced against the plan of the Author's works, as to render his testimony of no weight.

Here the pleadings closed; and the venerable Judge

summed up the evidence in a clear and masterly manner. He left the decision entirely to the impartial verdict of the Jury; and if they should give it in favour of the pursuer—in his opinion it would rather be an honour than a disappointment, for the Author of *Waverley* to be thought worthy of competing with the immortal Shakspeare. The Jury after retiring for some time, gave a verdict in favour of Pursuer, on both issues. C.

very good

THE TRIAL.

" Take physic Pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou may'st cast the superfluous to them,
And shew the heavens more just." K. Lear.

MR. EDITOR,

In the course of a tour through part of Scotland some years ago, I happened to be at the county town of ———, the day that the Court of Justiciary was to sit. As I had determined on spending the whole day in the town, I resolved to go and see the proceedings of the Court; more especially as the principal case, and indeed the only one of consequence that was to come before them, seemed on all hands to excite a considerable degree of interest. The history of the case as I gleaned from the information of my landlord, from what came out in course of the trial, and more particularly from a subsequent interview with the prisoner himself, was as follows:

George Symonds occupied a cottage a little to the south of the village, in a hollow spot formed by the doubling of the river, whose thickly wooded banks almost surrounded it on one side. His daily labour was sufficient to maintain a wife and family in comfort, and indeed, in respect to many of the inhabitants of the village, in comparative opulence. He was rather superior in intelligence

and industry to his neighbours, and while seated in front of his snug cottage on a summer evening, with his children sporting around him, he not unfrequently was the object of envy to many pampered sons of fortune, as they listlessly sauntered along the road which overlooked his dwelling. Thus passed he a few happy years, enjoying perhaps as much felicity as life is capable of affording. At one time wages becoming low and employment being difficult to be procured, their means became narrowed; yet even still they endeavoured to be contented, until to crown his misfortunes, a fever at that time prevalent in the neighbourhood, seized upon him and confined him for many weeks: nor after he recovered did it leave him sufficient strength to resume his employment. His family, too, sickened one by one, and, with a feeling of unremitting anguish which none but a parent can sufficiently appreciate, he watched three children pine away and drop successively into the grave without the power of relieving or comforting them. To escape from the sight of miseries which he could not alleviate, he wandered often from home; and his body feeble and emaciated, his mind depressed and enervated, he was in that state which made him but too apt to grasp at the transitory alleviation of sorrow which dissipation affords; and, from one step to another, to join the company of dissolute associates. He fell into the society of wretches who laboured to poison his principles, to make him discontented with the present state of things, to sap his hopes of futurity, and to lay his misfortunes to the cause of any thing rather than the salutary chastening of an over-ruling Being. His cottage and grounds, no longer neat and comfortable, now wore the appearance of neglect and dilapidation; instead of cheerfulness and contentment, it was now the abode of poverty, misery and despair. With little power, and now still less inclination to exert himself, he could not work "and to beg he was ashamed." Penury still pressing harder and harder upon his famishing household, impelled him at last to make some compromise of his independent

feelings. In the neighbourhood of his residence was a mansion—the abode of wealth and gaiety: there did he present himself and reluctantly disclosed his unfortunate condition; but his supplications were unheeded, or if an answer were given it was only an unconcerned and unfeeling denial. Often when returning at night to his melancholy abode, when lingering he has heard the shouts of mirth and jollity resound from within and seen the blazing warm fires and bright gleaming tapers, has he sighed with tenfold bitterness over his own sad lot, and with impious execrations bewailed his existence. Often has he watched there with eager expectation to gather from the dunghill the half-picked bones and bear them to his famishing family; and even the dogs though he seized on their allowance seemed generously to retire on perceiving him, and freely gave up what their hard-hearted masters would not bestow. 'Twas in an evening after a day spent in the pangs of hunger, that his poor family elung around him and cried out for bread or they must die—their famished looks were quite distracting, and the father tore himself from them resolved to bring them food or perish in the attempt. He arrived at the mansion, but had come too late, not even a bone could be found. He watched long in eager expectation, then turned away sick with disappointment, anguish and despair. The selfish world spurns me away, thought he to himself—Providence disowns me—and while the earth is teeming with food, and the wealthy rioting in indulgence, I and my poor babes must starve—I can endure it no longer! Just at that moment he passed a park, belonging to the manor, where the shepherd's flock lay folded up for the night. The Dæmon of Poverty tempted him to what he would otherwise have abhorred—he ran and seized a sheep without thinking on the consequences, and bore it in triumph to his family. They glutted their appetite on the iniquitous spoil; but the rage of hunger soon gave way to the consciousness of guilt; remorse forced itself upon them and preyed upon their vitals, even more terribly than

hunger. It seems the great man took a pleasure in punishing, though he cared not much about relieving the poor. He was one of those who entertained the favourite maxim, so gratifying to their superiority, and exonerating to their self-indolence, that crimes may be lessened more by increasing the severity and frequency of punishment, than by assiduous and soothing preventive measures. Far removed from such temptations himself, he looked with implacable resentment upon the backslidings of a wretch so much beneath him;—the theft was speedily and distinctly traced to the prisoner, and he was hurried from his home, and cast into a dungeon, to await the sentence of his rash violation of the laws. A circumstance may here be mentioned, which seemed to make the prisoner's fate peculiarly unfortunate, and which aggravated his self remorse if any thing could do so. It seems he had a brother, who many years before had gone abroad to push his fortune as he best could. Like many others, for a long while eagerly engaged in the bustle of the world, he had in a considerable degree lost sight of his friends and country; but as his circumstances became more easy, and as years were advancing, he began to turn his thoughts towards his home and the friends of his youth, and no doubt with a glow of self-satisfaction, and full of many fond anticipations, he arrived there just a few days after the calamity already mentioned. His disappointment and anguish may easily be conceived, when instead of meeting a happy family overjoyed to see him, he found them in disgrace and misery. He arrived in time to relieve their distresses, but not to save their honour or good name.

After several weeks of confinement the day at last had arrived on which the prisoner was to appear before the tribunal of his country. The procession of the Judges, clothed in their robes of office, and preceded by the sound of trumpets, the various arrangements of the court, and the awe and solemnity which prevailed, were peculiarly impressive in a part of the country where crimes are few

and the voice of justice venerated. At last the prisoner was brought forth, pale and emaciated, his hollow eye sunk, and an expression of remorse deeply impressed on his countenance. After the indictment was read, and the Judge had demanded whether he was guilty or not guilty, the Prisoner rose, and in a faltering voice said, "My Lord, I will not add falsehood to my crime, I am guil—" here he was interrupted by the Judge, who warned him that his confession subjected him, if not to the extremest punishment of the law, yet at least to expatriation from his country for ever—that if he allowed his trial to go on there might be some extenuating circumstances which would have weight with the court; and therefore advised him to retract his plea. He did so, and the trial proceeded; but the evidence was so conclusive, as to leave no other resort for the prisoner's counsel (one of those young men who generally attend the circuits for the sake of practice in their profession) but to interest the feelings of the jury in commenting upon the peculiar nature of the case; and which he did in an eloquent, feeling, and impressive appeal. The jury could return no other than a verdict of guilty, but they did so with an earnest recommendation of mercy. It had its effect; and such a mitigated punishment was awarded as was sufficient to show, in the words of the Judge, "that no situation or circumstances, however desperate, warranted an infringement of the law, or a departure from the path of rectitude and honour; and that under the heaviest dispensations of life, if a man hold fast his integrity, if he endure with patience to the end, though the powers of darkness should combine against him, yet will a hand from on high bring him deliverance." P. T.

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THE irregular manner in which our numbers have of late made their appearance, may have led the readers of the *Ephemera* to suppose that the literary stock of the Toast and Water Club was well nigh exhausted. This however is by no means the case; and if the pastry cooks, snuff-sellers, or trunk-makers require any supply of old papers, we know not any way where they could be accommodated more to their minds than by applying at the Club-room of our Society. The fact is that their stock is inexhaustible; and if they are now come to a resolution of discontinuing the farther publication of their papers, it is because the original intention is already fulfilled, and the *Elgin Press* is now more usefully employed otherwise. Another event which has, perhaps, had some effect in bringing about this resolution is, the partial dispersion of the Club itself. Nothing in this world is permanent, but all things are subject to change. Now although water is an element which we believe is in its nature pretty steady, yet why should we be surprised if those who drink it should be liable to the ups and downs, and various chances, and changes of other mortals? To those who have followed their lucubrations thus far, and are disposed to take any farther interest in them, we may mention the destinations of some, and the future views of others of the members. The worthy and venerable Dominic of Knockbrae, after long practising the virtue of patience, and after tasting of the "bitterness of hope deferred," has at last, in consequence of his writings in the

Ephemera, attracted the attention of a Patron, who has presented him to a Kirk—

“ Omnia carminibus vestrum servasse Menalcan ”—

so that he has now sufficient employment on his hands in patching up his old sermons to make them look as well as new. And in the intervals of such employment—in that blest haven of all clerical hopes and fears—in that snug Elysium, a Manse, there is no doubt he will be most happy to meet with the readers of the Ephemera, to entertain them with “grave or gay” talk—with his stores of humour and fund of ludicrous anecdote. Another of our members has retired from the bustle of the world, and even from the weekly potations of toast and water, to devote his time to his long-projected and great metaphysical work entitled, *De humani intellectus emanatione*, or a New theory on the emanation of the human intellect; of which by the way we wish him much good, and have no doubt it will immortalise his name and talents. A third member, we speak it, “more in sorrow than in anger,” appeared the other night at the Club with a brace of bottles of wine under his belt, and declared, in rather an inarticulate manner, that if we did not change the beverage to something of greater pith than toast and water, he would immediately join the Strong Ale Club of Forres. The consequence was, that by a unanimous vote, he was forbidden the club, and condemned to do penance for six months. Even with this diminution of their number the remaining members of the club will no doubt still continue to meet and enjoy their *glass* and their joke for many years to come; and we hope long survive their Ephe-

meral labours, a copy of which has now become so scarce that, by and by, it is more than probable it will gain place in the Roxburgh collection as a rare and unique volume. We had almost forgot another individual, who though not a member has been conspicuous in the page of the Ephemera—we allude to Miss Oldenough, who solely in consequence of the figure she has made in our pages by her epistolary efforts is a spinster no more, but has become a happy wife! we lately received from her pair of gloves and a letter full of acknowledgements. But our last page is nearly at a close—and now

“ Indulgent reader, you and I must part,
 You with a light, and I with heavy heart;
 You've borne my gabble with indulgence strange;
 I love repose and you are fond of change.
 So here at last like modern friends we sever,
 Good bye t'ye Bill,—Good bye t'ye Tom—for ever.

FINIS.

R. JOHNSTON, PRINTER, ELGIN.





