LIVES

THE

OF THE MOST EMINENT

NGLISH POETS:

WITH

Critical Observations

ON THEIR

WORKS.

BY SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D.

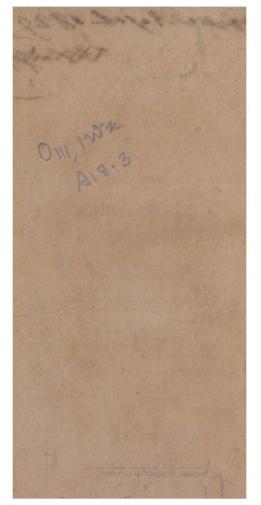
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LIVES

OF THE MOST EMINENT

ENGLISH POETS.

CONGREVE.

WILLIAM CONGREVE descended from a family in Staffordshire, of so great antiquity that it claims a place among the few that extend their line beyond the Norman Conquest; and was the son of William Congreve, second son of Richard Congreve, of Congreve and Stratton. He visited, once at least, the residence of his ancestors; and, I believe, more places than one are still shown, in groves and gardens, where he is related to have written his 'Old Bachelor,'

Neither the time nor place of his birth are certainly known; if the inscription upon his monument be true, he was born in 1672. For the place; it was said by himself, that he owed his nativity to England, and by every body else that he was born you. In

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in Ireland. Southern mentioned Jum with sharp censure, as a man that meanly disowned his native country. The biographers assign his nativity to Bardsa, near Leeds in Yorkshire, from the account given by himself, as they suppose, to Jacob.

To doubt whether a man of eminence has told the truth about his own birth, is, in appearance, to be very deficient in candour; yet nobody can live long without knowing that falsehoods of convenience or vanity, falsehoods from which no evil immediately visible ensues, except the general degradation of human testimony, are very lightly uttered, and once uttered are sullenly supported. Boileau, who desired to be thought a rigorous and steady moralist, having told a petty lie to Lewis XIV. continued it afterwards by false dates; "thinking himself obliged *in honour*," says his admirer, "to maintain what, when he said it, was so well received."

Wherever Congreve was born, he was educated first at Kilkenny, and afterwards at Dublin, his father having some military employment that stationed him in Ireland: but, after having passed through the usual preparatory studies, as may be reasonably supposed, with great celerity and success, his father thought it proper to assign him a profession, by which something might be gotten ; and about the time of the Revolution sent him, at the age of sixteen, to study law in the Middle Temple, where he lived for several years, but with very little attention to Statutes or Reports.

His disposition to become an author appeared very

carly, as he ve., early felt that force of imagination, and possessed that copiousness of sentiment, by which intellectual pleasure can be given. His first performance was a novel, called 'Incognita, or Love and Duty reconciled:' it is praised by the biographers, who quote some part of the Preface, that is, indeed, for such a time of life, uncommonly judicious. I would rather praise it than read it.

His first dramatic labour was 'The Old Bachelor;' of which he says, in his defence against Collier, " that the comedy was written, as several know, some years before it was acted. When I wrote it, I had little thoughts of the stage; but did it to amuse myself in a slow recovery from a fit of sickness. Afterwards, through my indiscretion, it was seen, and in some little time more it was acted; and I, through the remainder of my indiscretion, suffered myself to be drawn into the prosecution of a difficult and thankless study, and to be involved in a perpetual war with knaves and fools."

There seems to be a strange affectation in authors of appearing to have done every thing by chance. The Old Bachelor' was written for amusement in the languor of convalescence. Yet it is apparently composed with great elaborateness of dialogue, and incessant ambition of wit. The age of the writer considered, it is indeed a very wonderful performance; for, whenever written, it was acted (1693) when he was not more than twenty-one years old; and was then recommended by Mr. Dryden, Mr. Southerr, and Mr. Maynwaring. Dryden said that

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he never had seen such a first play : but they found it deficient in some things requisite to the success of its exhibition, and by their greater experience fitted it for the stage. Southern used to relate of one comedy, probably of this, that, when Congreve read it to the players, he pronounced it so wretchedly, that they had almost rejected it; but they were afterwards so well persuaded of its excellence, that, for half a year before it was acted, the manager allowed its author the privilege of the house.

Few plays have ever been so beneficial to the writer; for it procured him the patronage of Halifax, who immediately made him one of the commissioners for licensing coaches, and soon after gave him a place in the pipe-office, and another in the customs of six hundred pounds a year. Congreve's conversation must surely have been at least equally pleasing with his writings.

Such a comedy, written at such an age, requires some consideration. As the lighter species of dramatic poetry professes the imitation of common life, of real manners, and daily incidents, it apparently presupposes a familiar knowledge of many characters, and exact observation of the passing world; the difficulty therefore is, to conceive how this knowledge, can be obtained by a boy.

But if 'The Old Bachelor' be more nearly examined, it will be found to be one of those comedies which may be made by a mind vigorous and acute, and furnished with comic characters by the perusal of other poets, without much actual commerce with

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mankind. The dialogue is one constant reciprocation of conceits, or clash of wit; in which nothing flows necessarily from the occasion or is dictated by nature. The charactors both of men and women are either fictitious and artificial, as those of Heartwell and the Ladies; or easy and common, as Wittol a tame idiot, Bluff a swaggering coward, and Fondlewife a jealous puritan; and the catastrophe arises from a mistake not very probably produced, by marrying a woman in a mask.

Yet this gay comedy, when all these deductions are made, will still remain the work of very powerful and fertile faculties; the dialogue is quick and sparkling, the incidents such as seize the attention, and the wit so exuberant that it " o'er-informs its tenement."

Next year he gave another specimen of his abilities in 'The Double Dealer,' which was not received with equal kindness. He writes to his patron the lord Halifax a dedication, in which he endeavours to reconcile the reader to that which found few friends among the audience. These apologies are always useless: "de gustibus non est disputandum;" men may be convinced, but they cannot be pleased, against their will. But, though faste is obstinate, it is very variable: and time often prevails when arguments have failed.

Queen Mary conferred upon both those plays the honour of her presence; and when she died soon after, Congreve testified his gratitude by a despicable

effusion of elegiac pastoral; a composition in which all is unnatural, and yet nothing is new.

In another year (1695) his prolific pen produced 'Love for Love;' a comedy of nearer alliance to life, and exhibiting more real manners than either of the former. The character of Foresight was then common. Dryden calculated nativities; both Cromwell and King William had their lucky days; and Shaftesbury immself, though he had no religion, was said to regard predictions. The Sailor is not accounted very natural, but he is very pleasant.

With this play was opened the New Theatre, under the direction of Betterton the tragedian; where he exhibited two years afterwards (1687) 'The Mourning Bride,' a tragedy, so written as to show him sufficiently qualified for either kind of dramatic poetry.

In this play, of which, when he afterwards revised it, he reduced the versification to greater regularity, there is more bustle than sentiment; the plot is busy and intricate, and the events take hold on the attention; but, except a very few passages, we are rather amused with noise, and perplexed with stratagem, than entertained with any true delineation of natural characters. This, however, was received with more benevolence than any other of his works, and still continues to be acted and applauded.

But whatever objections may be made either to his comic or tragic excellence, they are lost at once in the b¹aze of admiration, when it is remembered that he had produced these four plays before he had

passed his twenty-fifth year, before other men, even such as are some time to shine in eminence, have passed their probation of literature, or presume to hope for any other notice than such as is bestowed on diligence and inquiry. Among all the efforts of early genius which literary history records, I doubt whether any one can be produced that more surpasses the common limits of nature than the plays of Congreve.

About this time began the long-continued controversy between Collier and the poets. In the reign of Charles the First the Puritans had raised a violent clamour against the drama, which they considered as an entertainment not lawful to Christians, an opinion held by them in common with the church of Rome; and Prynne published ' Histrio-mastix,' a huge volume, in which stage-plays were censured. The outrages and crimes of the Puritans brought afterwards their whole system of doctrine into disrepute, and from the Restoration the poets and players were left at quiet; for to have molested them would have had the appearance of tendency to puritannical malignity.

This danger, however, was worn away by time; and Collier, a fierce and implacable Nonjuror, knew that an attack upon the theatre would never make him suspected for a Puritan; he therefore (1698) published 'A short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage,' I believe with no other motive than religious zeal and honest indignation. He was formed for a controvertist;

with sufficient learning; with diction vehement and pointed, though often vulgar and incorrect; with unconquerable pertinacity; with wit in the highest degree keen and sarcastic; and with all those powers, exalted and invigorated by just confidence in his cause.

Thus qualified, and thus incited, he walked out to battle, and assailed at once most of the living writers, from Dryden to D'Urfey. His onset was violent; those passages, which, while they stood single had passed with little notice, when they were accumulated and exposed together, excited horror; the wise and the pious caught the alarm; and the nation wondered why it had so long suffered irreligion and licentiousness to be openly taught at the public charge.

Nothing now remained for the poets but to resist or fly. Dryden's conscience, or his prudence, angry as he was, withheld him from the conflict: Congreve and Vanbrugh attempted answers. Congreve, a very young man, elated with success, and impatient of censure, assumed an air of confidence and security. His chief artifice of controversy is to retort upon his adversary his own words; he is very angry, and, hoping to conquer Collief with his own weapons, allows himself in the use of every term of contumely and contempt; but he has the sword without the arm of Scanderbeg; he has his antagonist's coarseness, but not his strength. Collier replied; for contest was his delight, he was not to be frighted from his purpose or his prey.

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The cause of Congreve was not tenable; whatever glosses he might use for the defence or palliation of single passages, the general tenor and tendency of his plays must always be condemned. It is acknowledged, with universal conviction, that the perusal of his works will make no man better; and that their ultimate effect is to represent pleasure in alliance with vice, and to relax those obligations by which life ought to be regulated.

The stage found other advocates, and the dispute was protracted through ten years: but at last Comedy grew more modest; and Collier lived to see the reward of his labour in the reformation of the theatre.

Of the powers by which this important victory was achieved, a quotation from 'Love for Love,' and the remark upon it, may afford a specimen:

^c Sir Samps. Sampson's a very good name; for your Sampsons were strong dogs from the beginning. ^c Angel. Have a care—If you remember, the strongest Sampson of your name pull'd an old house over his head at last.^c

' Here you have the Sacred History burlesqued; and Sampson once more brought into the house of Dagon, to make sport for the Philistines ?

Congreve's last play was " The Way of the World;" which, though as he hints in his dedication it was written with great labour and much thought, was received with so little favour, that, being in a high degree offended and disgusted, he resolved to commit his quiet and his fame no more to the caprices of an audience.

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From this time his life ceased to the public; he lived for himself and for his friends; and among his friends was able to name every man of his time whom wit and elegance had raised to reputation. It may be therefore reasonably supposed that his manners were polite, and his conversation pleasing.

He seems not to have taken much pleasure in writing, as he contributed nothing to the Spectator, and only one paper to the Tatler, though published by men with whom he might be supposed willing to associate; and though he lived many years after the publication of his 'Miscellaneous Poems,' yet he added nothing to them, but lived on in literary indolence; engaged in no controversy, contending with no rival, neither soliciting flattery by public commendations, nor provoking emnity by malignant criticism, but passing his time among the great and splendid, in the placid enjoyment of his fame and fortune.

Having owed his fortune to Halifax, he continued always of his patron's party, but, as it seems, without violence or acrimony; and his firmness was naturally esteemed, as his abilities were reverenced. His security therefore was never violated; and when, upon the extrusion of the Whigs, some intercession was used lest Congreve should be displaced, the earl of Oxford made this answer:

> "Non obtusa adeo gestamus pectora Pœni, Ne tam aversus equos Tyria sol jungit ab urbe."

He that was thus honoured by the advorse party

might naturally expect to be advanced when his friends returned to power, and he was accordingly made secretary for the island of Jamaica; a place, I suppose, without trust or care, but which, with his post in the customs, is said to have afforded him twelve hundred pounds a year.

His honours were yet far greater than his profits. Every writer mentioned him with respect ; and, among other testimonies to his merit, Steele made him the patron of his Miscellany, and Pope inscribed to him his translation of the Iliad.

But he treated the Muses with ingratitude; for, having long conversed familiarly with the great, he wished to be considered rather as a man of fashion than of wit; and, when he received a visit from Voltaire, disgusted him by the despicable foppery of desiring to be considered not as an author but a gentleman; to which the Frenchman replied, " that, if he had been only a gentleman, he should not have come to visit him."

In his retirement he may be supposed to have applied himself to books; for he discovers more literature than the poets have commonly attained. But his studies were in his latter days obstructed by cataracts in his eyes, which at last terminated in blindness. This melancholy state was aggravated by the gout, for which he sought relief by a journey to Bath; but, being overturned in his chariot, complained from that time of a pain in his side, and died at his house in Surrey-street in the Strand, Jan. 29, 1728-9. Having lain in state in the Jerusalemchamber, he was buried in Westminster-abbey, where a monument is erected to his memory by Henrietta, dutchess of Marlborough, to whom, for reasons either not known or not mentioned, he bequeathed a legacy of about ten thousand pounds; the accumulation of attentive parsimony, which though to her superfluous and useless, might have given great assistance to the ancient family from which he descended, at that time, by the imprudence of his relation, reduced to difficulties and distress.

Congreve has merit of the highest kind ; he is an original writer, who borrowed neither the models of his plot nor the manner of his dialogue. Of his plays I cannot speak distinctly : for since I inspected them many years have passed ; but what remains upon my memory is, that his characters are commonly fictitious and artificial, with very little of nature, and not much of life. He formed a peculiar idea of comic excellence, which he supposed to consist in gay remarks and unexpected answers : but that which he endeavoured, he seldom failed of performing. His scenes exhibit not much of humour, imagery, or passion; his personages are a kind of intellectual gladiators ; every sentence is to ward or strike ; the contest of smartness is never intermitted ; his wit is a meteor playing to and fro with alternate coruscations. His comedies have therefore, in some degree, the operation of tragedies ; they surprise rather than divert, and raise admiration oftener than merriment. But they ale the works of a mind replete with images, and quick in combination.

CONGREVE,

Of his miscellaneous poetry I cannot say any thing very favourable. The powers of Congreve seem to desert him when he leaves the stage, as Antæus was no longer strong than when he could touch the ground. It cannot be observed without wonder, that a mind so vigorous and fertile in dramatic compositions should on any other occasion discover nothing but impotence and poverty. He has in these little pieces neither elevation of fancy, selection of language, nor skill in versification: yet, if I were required to select from the whole mass of English poetry the most poetical paragraph, I know not what I could prefer to an exclamation in 'The Mourning Bride:'

Alm. It was a fancy'd'noise; for all is hush'd. Leo. It bure the accent of a human voice. Alm. It was thy fear, or else some transient wind Whistling through hollows of this vaulted isle; We'll listen—

Leo. Hark !

He who reads these lines enjoys for a moment the powers of a poet; he feels what he remembers to have felt before; but he feels it with great increase of sensibility; he recognizes a familiar image, but meets it again amplified and expanded, embellished with beauty, and enlarged with majesty.

Yet could the author, who appears here to have enjoyed the confidence of Nature, lament the death of queen Mary in lines like these :

The rocks are cleft, and new-descending rills Furrow the brows of all the impending hills. The water-gods to floods their rivulets turn. And each, with streaming eyes, supplies his wanting urn. The Fauns forsake the woods, the Nymphs the grove, And round the plain in sad distractions rove: In prickly brakes their tender limbs they tear, And leave on thorns their locks of golden hair. With their sharp nails, themselves the Satyrs wound, And tug their shaggy beards, and bite with grief the ground. Lo Pan himself, beneath a blasted oak, Dejected lies, his pipe in pieces broke. See Pales weeping too, in wild despair, And to the piercing winds her bosom bare-And see yon fading myrtle, where appears The Queen of Love, all bath'd in flowing tears : See how she wrings her hands, and beats her breast, And tears her useless girdle from her waist ! Hear the sad murmurs of her sighing doves ! For grief they sigh, forgetful of their loves.

And, many years after, he gave no proof that time had improved his wisdom or his wit; for, on the death of the marquis of Blandford, this was his song:

And now the winds, which ha? so long been still, Began the swelling air with sighs to fill ! The water nymphs, who motionless remain'd, Like images of ice, while she complain'd, Now loos'd their streams; as when descending rains Roll the steep torrents her ilong o'er the plains. The prone creation, who so long had gar'd, Ch 'm'd with her cries, and at her griefs amz'd, Began to roar and how! with horrid yell, Dusmal to hear, and terrible to tell ! Nothing but groans and sighs were heard around, And Echo multiplied each mournful sound.

CONGREVE,

In both these funeral poems, when he has yelled out many syllables of senseless dolour, he dismisses his reader with senseless consolation: from the grave of Pastora rises a light that forms a star; and where Amaryllis wept for Amyntas, from every tear sprung up a violet.

But William is his hero, and of William he will sing:

The hovering winds on downy wings shall wait around, And catch, and waft to foreign lands, the flying sound.

It cannot but be proper to show what they shall have to catch and carry :

'Twas now when flowery lawns the prospect made, And flowing brooks beneath a forest shade, A lowing brooks beneath a forest shade, A lowing heifer, loveliest of the herd, Stood feeding by; while two ferce bulls prepar'd Their armed heads for fight, by fate of war to prove The vietor worthy of the fair-one's love; Unthought presaged what met next my view; For soon the shady seeme withdrew. And now, for woods and fields, and springing flowers, Behold a town arise, bullwark'd with walls and lofty towers; Two rivial armise all the plain o'erspred, Each in battalia rang'd, and shining arms array'd; With eager eyes beholding both from far Namur, the prize and mistress of the wa,

The 'Birth of the Muse' is a miserable fiction. One good line it has, which was borrowed from Dryden. The concluding verses are these:

This said, no more remain'd. Th' etherid host Again impatient crowd the crystal coast, The father, now, within his spacious hands; Encompass'd all the mingled mass of seas and lands; And, having heav'd aloft the ponderous sphere, Ue launch'u they world to foat in ambie't air. Of his irregular poems, that to Mrs. Arabella Hunt seems to be the best; his ode for St. Cecilia's Day, however, has some lines which Pope had in his mind when he wrote his own.

His imitations of Horace are feebly paraphrastical, and the additions which he makes are of little value. He sometimes retains what were more properly omitted, as when he talks of *vervain* and *gums* to propitiate Venus.

Of his translations, the satire of Juvenal was written very early, and may therefore be forgiven though it have not the massiness and vigour of the original. In all his versions strength and sprightliness are wanting: his Hymn to Venus, from Homer, is perhaps the best. His lines are weakened with expletives, and his rhymes are frequently imperfect.

His petty poems are seldom worth the cost of criticism; sometimes the thoughts are false, and sometimes common. In his verses on lady Gethin, the latter part is in initiation of Dryden's ode on Mrs. Killigrew; and Doris, that has been so lavishly, flattered by Steele, has indeed some lively stanzas, but the expression might be mended; and the most striking part of the character had been already shown in 'Love for Love.' His 'Art of Pleasing' is founded on a vulgar, but perhaps impracticable principle, and the staleness of the sense is not concealed by any novelty of illustration or elegance of diction.

This tissue of poetry, from which he seems to have hoped a lasting name, is totally neglected, and known only as appended to his plays.

While comedy or while tragedy is regarded, his.
's plays are likely to be read; but, except what relates in to the stage, I know not that he has ever written a stanza that is sung, or a couplet that is quoted. The d, general character of his 'Miscellanies' is, that they e, show little wit, and little virtue.

Yet to him it must be confessed, that we are init debted for the correction of a national error, and for the cure of our Pindaric madness. He first taught t the English writers that Pindar's odes were regular; sh and though certainly he had not the fire requisite for al. the higher species of lyric poetry, he has shown us, re that enthusiasm has its rules, and that in mere conp⁸ fusion there is neither grace nor greatness.

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DUKE OF

HEFFIELD.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

JOHN SHEFFIELD, descended from a lot a series of illustrious ancestors, was born in 1649, the son of Edmund earl of Mulgrave, who died in 163. The young lord was put into the hands of a turb with whom he was so little satisfied, that he got r of him in a short time, and, at an age not exceed to twelve years, resolved to educate himself. Such purpose, formed at such an age, and successful to prosecuted, delights as it is strange, and instructor as it is real.

His literary acquisitions are more wonderful, we those years in which they are commonly made we spent by him in the tunnult of a military life, or the gaiety of a court. When war was declared agains the Dutch, he went at seventeen on board the share in which Prince Rupert and the Duke of Albemark sailed, with the command of the fleet , but by co rariety of winds they were restrained from action. Its zeal for the king's service was recompensed by he command of one of the independent troops of orse, then raised to protect the coast.

Next year he received a summons to Parliament, chich as he was then but eighteen years old, the earl f Northumberland censured as at least indecent, and is objection was allowed. He had a quarrel with he earl of Rochester, which he has perhaps too osentatiously related, as Rochester's surviving sister, he lady Sandwich, is said to have told him, with ary sharp reproaches.

When another Dutch war (1672) broke out, he tent again a volunteer in the ship which the celelor rated lord Ossory commanded; and there made, as the relates, two curious remarks:

65 "I have observed two things, which I dare affirm, unbough not generally believed. One was, that the trind of a cannon bullet, though flying never so dimear, is incapable of doing the least harm ; and inacheed were it otherwise, no man above deck would full scape. The other was, that a great shot may be recometimes avoided, even as it flies, by changing one's round a little; for, when the wind sometimes blew d, way the smoke, it was so clear a sun-shiny day, that were could easily perceive the bullets (that were half-r thent) fall into the water, and from thence bound up angain among us, which gives sufficient time for making a step or two on any side : though, in so swift a numbion, 'tis hard to judge well in what line the bul-

COD

SHEFFIELD.

let comes, which if mistaken, may by removing a man his life, instead of saying it."

His behaviour was so favourably represented tralord Ossory, that he was advanced to the commante of the Catharine, the best second-rate ship in som navy.

He afterwards raised a regiment of foot, and cone manded it as colonel. The land-forces were shro ashore by Prince Rupert: and he lived in the caMo very familiarly with Schomberg. He was then a I pointed colonel of the old Holland regiment, togethiou with his own, and had the promise of a garter, whivit he obtained in his twenty-fifth year. He was liner wise made gentleman of the bed-chamber. He terwards went into the French service, to learn had art of war under Turenne, but staid only a sha ec time. Being by the Duke of Monmouth opposed A his pretensions to the first troop of horse-guards, intiin return, made Monmouth suspected by the dibelo of York. He was not long after, when the unlushir Monmouth fell into disgrace, recompensed with gath lieutenancy of Yorkshire, and the government point Hull priv

Thus rapidly did he make his way both to mace tary and civil honours and employments; yet, but as as he was, he did not neglect his studies, but at let's cultivated poetry; in which he must have been emitte considered as uncommonly skilful, if it be true whitest is reported, that when he was yet not twenty ye Fai old, his recommendation advanced Dryden to Oric laurel.

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The Moors having besieged Tangier, he was sent (680) with two thousand men to its relief. A d trange story is told of the danger to which he was mantentionally exposed in a leaky ship, to gratify tome resentful jealousy of the king, whose health to the therefore would never permit at his table, till ente saw himself in a safer place. His voyage was sprosperously performed in three weeks; and the amoors without a contest retired before him.

In this voyage he composed the 'Vision;' a licenthious poem, such as was fashionable in those times, which little power of invention or propriety of sentilinent.

• At his return he found the king kind, who perhaps thad never been angry ; and he continued a wit and the courtier as before.

ed At the succession of king James, to whom he was intimately known, and by whom he thought himself libeloved, he naturally expected still brighter sunwhine; but all know how soon that reign began to igather clouds. His expectations were not disappointed; he was immediately admitted into the privy council, and made lord chamberlain. He maccepted a place in the high commission, without hanowledge, as he declared after the Revolution, of eits illegality. Having few religious scruples, he mattended the king to mass, and kneeled with the prest; but had no disposition to receive the Romish Faith, or to force it upon others; for when the priests, encouraged by his appearances of compliance, attempted to convert him, he told them, as

Burnet has recorded, that he was willing to receive instruction, and that he had taken much pairs is believe in God who had made the world and thi men in it; but that he should not be easily prasuaded "that man was quits, and made God againg A pointed sentence is bestowed by success the transmission to the last whom it will fit; this esan sure of transubstantiation, whatever be its valwas uttered long ago by Anne Askew, one of to first sufferers for the Protestant religion, who, in hig time of Henry VIII. was tortured in the Townan concerning which there is reason to wonder thaten was not known to the Historian of the Reformather

In the Revolution he acquiesced, though he abornot promote it. There was once a design of a Duciating him in the invitation of the prince of Oranche but the earl of Shrewsbury discouraged the attentot by declaring that Mulgrave would never com a This king William afterwards told him; and as bor what he would have done if the proposal had belies made? "Sir," said he, "I would have discoveron to it to the king whom I then served." To which Eng William replied, "I cannot blame you."

Finding king James irremediably excluded he voted for the conjunctive sovereignty, upon thui principle, that he thought the title of the princip and his consort equal, and it would please the princip their protector to have a share in the sovereignma. This vote gratified king William ; yet, either by curking's distrust, or his own discontent, he lived so he years without employment. He looked on the king Qu see with malevolence, and, if his verses or his prose may ins we credited, with contempt. He was, notwithstanding id his aversion or indifference, made marquis of Norpannby (1694), but still opposed the Court on some gamportant questions; yet at last he was received into each cabinet council, with a pension of three thoucsand pounds.

val At the accession of queen Anne, whom he is said of to have courted when they were both young, he was in highly favoured. Before her coronation (1702) she ownade him lord privy-seal, and soon after lord lieuhatenant of the North Riding of Yorkshire. He was at then named commissioner for treating with the Scots he about the Union; and was made next year, first, asDuke of Normanby, and then of Buckinghamshire, and there being suspected to be somewhere a latent claim emto the title of Buckingham.

Soon after, becoming jealous of the Duke of Marlashorough, he resigned the privy-seal, and joined the hidiscontented Tories in a motion, extremely offensive were the Queen, for inviting the princess Sophia to a bringland. The Queen courted him back with an offer no less than that of the chancellorship; which is d, he refused. He now retired from business, and a built that house in the Park which is now the Queen's, primupon ground granted by the Crown.

When the ministry was changed (1710), he was ignimate lord chamberlain of the household, and concurred in all transactions of that time, except that he endeavoured to protect the Catalans. After the he of Queen's death, he became a constant opponent of the Court; and, having no public business, is supposes to have amused himself by writing his two tragedies He died February 24, 1720-21.

He was thrice married; by his two first wives in had no children; by his third, who was the daug t ter of King James by the countess of Dorchest and the widow of the earl of Anglesey, he had, if sides other children that died early, a son, born 1716, who died in 1735, and put an end to the if of Sheffield. It is observable, that the duke's the wives were all widows. The dutchess died in 174

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His character is not to be proposed as worthy imitation. His religion he may be supposed to ha learned from Hobbes; and his morality was such naturally proceeds from loose opinions. His ser ments with respect to women he picked up in t court of Charles; and his principles concerning pr perty were such as a gaming-table supplies. He w censured as covetous, and has been defended by instance of inattention to his affairs, as if a man mig not at once be corrupted by avarice and idlene He is said, however, to have had much tenderne and to have been very ready to apologise for b violences of passion.

He is introduced into this collection only as poet; and if we credit the testimony of his conter poraries, he was a poet of no vulgar rank. But fava and flattery are now at an end; criticism is no long softened by his bounties, or awed by his splendor and, being able to take a more steady view, discove him to be a writer that sometimes glimmers, but rare

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SHEFFIELD.

25

shines, feebly laborious, and at best but pretty. His
 die songs are upon common topics; he hopes, and grieves, and repents, and despairs, and rejoices, like any other
 maker of little stanzas; to be great, he hardly tries;
 ug to be gay, is hardly in his power.

In the Essay on Satire he was always supposed to have had the help of Dryden. His Essay on Poetry is the great work for which he was praised by Roscommon, Dryden, and Pope; and doubtless by many more whose eulogies have perished.

Upon this piece he appears to have set a high value; for he was all his lifetime improving it by succesive revisals, so that there is scarcely any poem to be found of which the last edition differs more from the first. Amongst other changes mention is made of some compositions of Dryden, which were written after the first appearance of the Essay.

At the time when this work first appeared, Milton's fame was not yet fully established, and therefore Tasso and Spenser were set before him. The two last lines were these. The Epic Poet, says he,

Must above Milton's lofty flights prevail, Succeed where great Torquato, and where greater Spenser, fail.

The last line in succeeding editions was shortened, and the order of names continued; but now Milton is at last advanced to the highest place, and the passage thus adjusted :

Must above Tasso's lofty flights prevail, Succeed where Spenser, and even Milton, fail.

VOL. III.

Amendments are seldom made without some token of a rent : lofty does not suit Tasso so well as Mil. ton.

One celebrated line seems to be borrowed. The Essay calls a perfect character

A faultless monster which the world ne'er saw.

Scaliger, in his poems, terms Virgil sine labe monstrum. Sheffield can scarcely be supposed to have read Scaliger's poetry, perhaps he found the word in a quotation.

Of this Essay, which Dryden has exalted so highly it may be justly said that the precepts are judiciou sometimes new, and often happily expressed; but there are, after all the emendations, many weal lines, and some strange appearances of negligence h as, when he gives the laws of elegy, he insists upo connexion and coherence; without which, says he

'Tis epigram, 'tis point, 'tis what you will ; But not an elegy, nor writ with skill, No Panegyric, nor a Cooper's Hill.

Who would not suppose that Waller's Panegynche and Denham's Cooper's Hill were elegies?

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His verses are often insipid; but his memoirs at lively and agreeable; he had the perspicuity and elegance of an historian, but not the fire and fancy of the of a poet.

26

MATTHEW PRIOR is one of those that have burst out from an obscure original to great eminence. He was born July 21, 1664, according to some, at Winburn in Dorsetshire, of I know not what parents; others say, that he was the son of a joiner of London: he was perhaps willing enough to leave his birth unsettled, * in hope, like Don Quixote, that the historian of his actions might find him some illustrious alliance.

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> He is supposed to have fallen, by his father's death, into the hands of his uncle, a vintner + near Charingcross, who sent him for some time to Dr. Busby at Westminster; but, not intending to give him any education beyond that of the school, took him, when inhe was well advanced in literature, to his own house,

The difficulty of settling Prior's birth-place is great. In the register of his College he is called, at his admission by the President, Matthew Prior of Winharm in Middlexer; by himself next day, Matthew Prior of Doractkire, in which county, not in Middlesex, Winhorn, or Winharme as it stands in the Villare, is found. When he stood candidate for his fellowship, five years afterwards, he was registered again by himself as of Middlexer, The last record rught to be preferred, because it was made upon oath. It is observable, that as anative of Winhorne, he is styled Filmu Georgii Prior generari; hot consistently with the common account of the meanness of his birth.

+ Samuel Prior kept the Rummer Tavern, near Charing-Cross, in 1685.

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where the Earl of Dorset, celebrated for $patrona_{OI}$ of genius, found him by chance, as Burnet related reading Horace, and was so well pleased with h w proficiency, that he undertook the care and cost is his academical education.

He entered his name in St. John's College at Ca to bridge in 1682, in his eighteenth year; and it m hi be reasonably supposed that he was distinguish among his contemporaries. He became a Bachel th as is usual, in four years; * and two years afterwan wrote the poem on the DEITY, which stands first d his volume.

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It is the established practice of that College, send every year to the earl of Exeter some poe upon sacred subjects, in acknowledgment of a be faction enjoyed by them from the bounty of his a cestor. On this occasion were those verses write which, though nothing is said of their success, se to have recommended him to some notice; for praise of the countess's music, and his lines on famous picture of Seneca, afford reason for imaging that he was more or less conversant with t family.

The same year he published the 'City Mouses' Country Mouse,' to ridicule Dryden's 'Hind and Pa ther,' in conjunction with Mr. Montague. There a story t of great pain suffered, and of tears she

* He was admitted to his Bachelor's degree in 1686; and to his Mass by mandate, in 1700.

+ Spence.

son this occasion, by Dryden, who thought it hard othat "an old man should be so treated by those to whom he had always been civil." By tales like these is the envy, raised by superior abilities, every day gratified: when they are attacked, every one hopes to see them humbled; what is hoped is readily believed; and what is believed is confidently told. Dryden had been more accustomed to hostilities, than that such enemies should break his quiet; ard, if we can suppose him vexed, it would be hard to deny him sense enough to conceal his uneasiness.

The 'City Mouse and Country Mouse' procured its authors more solid advantages than the pleasure of fretting Dryden; for they were both speedily preferred. Montague, indeed, obtained the first notice, with some degree of discontent, as it seems, in Prior, who probably knew that his own part of the performance was the best. He had not, however, much reason to complain ; for he came to London, and obtained such notice, that (in 1691) he was sent to the Congress at the Hague as secretary to the embassy. In this assembly of princes and nobles, to which Europe has perhaps scarcely seen any thing equal, was formed the grand alliance against Lewis, which at last did not produce effects proportionate to the magnificence of the transaction. The conduct of Prior, in this splendid initiation into public business, was so pleasing to king William, that he made him one of the gentlemen of his bed-chamber; and he is supposed to have passed

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some of the next years in the quiet cultivation of h b terature and poetry.

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The death of queen Mary (in 1695) produced subject for all the writers: perhaps no funeral wa f ever so poetically attended. Dryden, indeed, as man discountenanced and deprived, was silent : b scarcely any other maker of verses omitted to brin his tribute of tuneful sorrow. An emulation of eleg was universal. Maria's praise was not confined t the English language, but fills a great part of the 'Musæ Anglicanæ.'

Prior, who was both a poet and a courtier, wa too diligent to miss this opportunity of respect. H wrote a long ode, which was presented to the king by whom it was not likely to be ever read.

In two years he was secretary to another embass at the treaty of Ryswick (in 1697); * and next year had the same office at the court of France, where h is said to have been considered with great distinction

As he was one day surveying the apartment at Versailles, being shown the Victories of Louis painted by Le Brun, and asked whether the king England's palace had any such decorations ; "The monuments of my master's actions," said he, "an to be seen every where but in his own house."

The pictures of Le Brun are not only in themselves sufficiently ostentations, but were explained

* He received a present of two hundred guineas from the lords justices, for his trouble in bringing over the treaty of peace.

PRIOR.

by inscriptions so arrogant, that Boileau and Racine thought it necessary to make them more simple.

He was in the following year at Loo with the king; from whom, after a long audience, he carried orders to England, and upon his arrival became under-secretary of state in the Earl of Jersey's office; a post which he did not retain long, because Jersey was removed; but he was soon made commissioner of trade.

This year (1700) produced one of his longest and most splendid compositions, the 'Carmen Seculare,' in which he exhausts all his powers of celebration. I mean not to accuse him of flattery: he probably thought all that he writ, and retained as much veracity as can be properly exacted from a poet professedly encomiastic. King William supplied copious materials for either verse or prose. His whole life had been action, and none ever denied him the resplendent qualities of steady resolution and personal courage. He was really in Prior's mind what he represents him in his verses; he considered him as a hero, and was accustomed to say, that he praised others in compliance with the fashion, but that in celebrating King William he followed his inclination. To Prior, gratitude would dictate praise, which reason would not refuse.

Among the advantages to arise from the future years of William's reign he mentions a Society for useful Arts, and among them

> Some that with care true eloquence shall teach, And to just idioms fix our doubtful speech;

PRIOR.

That from our writers distant realms may know The thanks we to our ionarchs owe, And schools profess our tongue through every land That has invok'd his aid, or bless'd his hand.

Tickell, in his ' Prospect of Peace,' has the same hope of a new academy:

> In happy chains our daring language bound, Shall sport no more in arbitrary sound.

Whether the similitude of those passages which exhibit the same thought on the same occasion proceeded from accident or imitation, is not easy to determine. Tickell might have been impressed with his expectation by Swift's 'Proposal for ascertaining the English Language,' then lately published.

In the parliament that met in 1701, he was chosen representative of East Grinstead. Perhaps it was about this time that he changed his party; for he voted for the impeachment of those lords who had persuaded the King to the Partition-treaty, a treaty in which he had himself been ministerially employed.

A great part of Queen Anne's reign was a time of war, in which there was little employment for negotiators, and Prior had therefore leisure to make or to polish verses. When the battle of Blenheim called forth all the versemen, Prior, among the rest, took care to show his delight in the increasing honour of his country by an Epistle to Boileau.

He published, soon afterwards, a volume of poems, with the encomiastic character of his deceased patron the Duke of Dorset: it began with the College Exercise, and ended with the 'Nut-brown Maid.'

32

The battle of Ramillies soon afterwards (in 1706) excited him to another effort of poetry. On this occasion he had fewer or less formidable rivals; and it would be not easy to name any other composition produced by that event which is now remembered.

Every thing has its day. Through the reigns of William and Anne no prosperous event passed undignified by poetry. In the last war, when France was disgraced and overpowered in every quarter of the globe, when Spain, coming to her assistance, only shared her calamities, and the name of an Englishman was reverenced through Europe, no poet was heard amidst the general acclamation; the fame of our counsellors and heroes was entrusted to the Gazetteer.

The nation in time grew weary of the war, and the Queen grew weary of her ministers. The war was burdensome, and the ministers were insolent. Harley and his friends began to hope that they might, by driving the Whigs from court and from power, gratify at once the Queen and the people. There was now a call for writers, who might convey intelligence of past abuses, and show the waste of public money, the unreasonable *Conduct of the Allies*, the avarice of generals, the tyranny of minions, and the general danger of approaching ruin.

For this purpose a paper called the 'Examiner' was periodically published, written, as it happened, by any wit of the party, and sometimes, as is said, by Mrs. Manley. Some are owned by Swift; and one, in ridicule of Garth's verses to Godolphin upon the loss of his place, was written by Prior, and answered by Addison, who appears to have known the author either by conjecture or intelligence.

The Tories, who were now in power, were in haste to end the war; and Prior, being recalled (1710) to his former employment of making treaties, was sent (July 1711) privately to Paris with propositions of peace. He was remembered at the French court; and, returning in about a month, brought with him the Abbé Gaultier, and M. Mesnager, a minister from France, invested with full powers.

This transaction not being avowed, Mackay, the master of the Dover packet-boat, either zealously or officiously, seized Prior and his associates at Canterbury. It is easily supposed that they were soon released.

The negotiation was begun at Prior's house, where the Queen's ministers met Mesnager (Sep. 20, 1711) and entered privately upon the great business. The importance of Prior appears from the mention made of him by St. John in his Letter to the Queen.

"My Lord Treasurer moved, and all my Lords were of the same cpinion, that Mr. Prior should be added to those who are empowered to sign; the reason for which is, because he, having personally treated with Monsieur de Torcy, is the best witness we can produce of the sense in which the general preliminary engagements are entered into: besides which, as he is the best versed in matters of trade of all your Majesty's servants who have been trusted in this secret, if you should think fit to employ

him in the future treaty of commerce, it will be of consequence that he has been a party concerned in concluding that convention, which must be the rule of this treaty."

The assembly of this important night was in some degree clandestine, the design of treating not being yet openly declared, and when the Whigs returned to power, was aggravated to a charge of high treason; though, as Prior remarks in his imperfect answer to the Report of the *Committee of Secrecy*, no treaty ever was made without private interviews and preliminary discussions.

My business is not the history of the peace, but the life of Prior. The conferences began at Utrecht on the first of January (1711-12), and the English plenipotentiaries arrived on the fifteenth. The ministers of the different potentates conferred and conferred; but the peace advanced so slowly, that speedier methods were found necessary; and Bolingbroke was sent to Paris to adjust differences with less formality; Prior either accompanied him or followed him, and, after his departure, had the appointments and authority of an ambassador, though no public character.

By some mistake of the Queen's orders, the court of France had been disgusted; and Bolingbroke says in his Letter, "Dear Mat, hide the nakedness of thy country, and give the best turn thy fertile brain will furnish thee with to the blunders of thy countrymen, who are not much better politicians than the Frenchare poets."

Soon after, the Duke of Shrewsbury went on a formal embassy to Paris. It is related by Boyer, that the intention was to have joined Prior in the commission, but that Shrewsbury refused to be associated with a man so meanly born. Prior therefore continued to act without a title till the duke returned next year to England, and then he assumed the style and dignity of ambassador.

But, while he continued in appearance a private man, he was treated with confidence by Lewis, who sent him with a letter to the Queen, written in favour of the elector of Bavaria. "I shall expect," says he, "with impatience, the return of Mr. Prior, whose conduct is very agreeable to me." And while the Duke of Shrewsbury was still at Paris, Bolingbroke wrote to Prior thus: "Monsieur de Torcy has a confidence in you; make use of it, once for all, upon this occasion, and convince him thoroughly, that we must give a different turn to our parliament and our people according to their resolution at this crisis."

Prior's public dignity and splendour commenced in August, 1713, and continued till the August following; but I am afraid that, according to the usual fate of greatness, it was attended with some perplexities and mortifications. He had not all that is customarily given to ambassadors: he hints to the Queen, in an imperfect poem, that he had no service of plate; and it appeared, by the debts which he had contracted, that his remittances were not punctually made.

On the first of August, 1714, ensued the downfall

of the Tories, and the degradation of Prior. He was recalled; but was not able to return, being detained by the debts which he had found it necessary to contract, and which were not discharged before March, though his old friend Montague was now at the head of the treasury.

He returned then as soon as he could, and was welcomed on the 25th of March by a warrant, but was, however, suffered to live in his own house. under the custody of the messenger, till he was examined before a committee of the Privy Council, of which Mr. Walpole was chairman, and Lord Coningsby, Mr. Stanhope, and Mr. Lechmere, were the principal interrogators; who, in this examination, of which there is printed an account not unentertaining, behaved with the boisterousness of men elated by recent authority. They are represented as asking questions sometimes vague, sometimes insidious, and writing answers different from those which they received. Prior, however, seems to have been overpowered by their turbulence ; for he confesses that he signed what, if he had ever come before a legal judicature, he should have contradicted or explained away. The oath was administered by Boscawen, a Middlesex justice, who at last was going to write his attestation on the wrong side of the paper.

They were very industrious to find some charge against Oxford; and asked Prior, with great earnestness, who was present when the preliminary articles were talked of or signed at his house? He told them, that either the Earl of Oxford or the Duke of Shrewsbury was absent, that he could not remember which; an answer which perplexed them, because it supplied no accusation against either. "Could any thing be more absurd," says he, "or more inhuman, than to propose to me a question, by the answering of which I might, according to them, prove myself a traitor? And notwithstanding their solemn promise, that nothing which I could say should hurt myself, I had no reason to trust them: for they violated that promise about five hours after. However, I owned I was there present. Whether this was wisely done or no, I leave to my friends to determine."

When he had signed the paper, he was told by Walpole, that the committee were not satisfied with his behaviour, nor could give such an account of it to the Commons as might merit favour: and that they now thought a stricter confinement necessary than to his own house. "Here," says he, "Boscawen played the moralist, and Coningsby the Christian, but both very awkwardly." The messenger, in whose custody he was to be placed, was then called, and very decently asked by Coningsby, " if his house was secured by bars and bolts?" The messenger answered "No," with astonishment. At which Coningsby very angrily said, "Sir, you must secure this prisoner; it is for the safety of the nation: if he escape you shall answer for it."

They had already printed their report; and in this examination were endeavouring to find proces.

He continued thus confined for some time; and Mr. Walpole (June 10, 1715.) moved for an impeach-

ment against him. What made him so acrimonious does not appear: he was by nature no thirster for blood. Prior was a week after committed to close custody, with orders that "no person should be admitted to see him, without leave from the Speaker,"

When, two years after, an Act of Grace was passed, he was excepted, and continued still in custody, which he had made less tedious by writing his 'Alma.' He was, however, soon after discharged.

He had now his liberty, but he had nothing else. Whatever the profits of his employments might have been, he had always spent it; and at the age of fiftythree was, with all his abilities, in danger of penury, having yet no solid revenue but from the fellowship of his college, which, when in his exaltation he was censured for retaining it, he said, he could live upon at last.

Being however generally known and esteemed, he was encouraged to add other poems to those which he had printed, and to publish them by subscription. The expedient succeeded by the industry of many friends, who circulated the proposals, * and the care of some, who, it is said, withheld the money from him lest he should squander it. The price of the volume was two guineas ; the whole collection was four thousand; to which Lord Harley, the son of the Earl of Oxford, to whom he had invariably adhered, added an equal sum for the purchase of Down-hall,

* Swift obtained many subscriptions for him in Ireland.

which Prior was to enjoy during life, and Harley after his decease.

He had now, what wits and philosophers have often wished, the power of passing the day in contemplative tranquillity. But it seems that busy men seldom live long in a state of quiet. It is not unlikely that his health declined. He complains of deafness; "for," says he, "I took little care of my ears, while I was nct sure if my head was my own."

Of any occurrences in his remaining life I have found no account. In a letter to Swift, "I have," says he, "treated Lady Harriot at Cambridge (a Fellow of a College treat!) and spoke verses to her in a gown and cap! What, the plenipotentiary, so far concerned in the damned peace at Utrecht; the man that makes up half the volume of terse prose, that makes up the report of the committee, speaking verses! Sic est, homo sum."

He died at Wimpole, a seat of the Earl of Oxford, on the eighteenth of Sept. 1721, and was buried in Westminster; where on a monument, for which, as the "last piece of human vanity," he left five hundred pounds, is engraven this epitaph :

> SUI TENPORIS HISTORIAM MEDITANTI, PAULATIM CBREPENS FEBRIS OPERI SINUL ET VITE PILUM ABRUPIT, SEPT. 18. AN. DOM. 1721. ÆTAT, 57. H. S. E. VIR EXIMUS SERENISSIMIS RKGI GULIELMO BEGINÆQUE MARIÆ IN CONGRESSIONE FUEDERATORUM HAGÆ ANNO 1630 CELEBRATA, DELIDE MAGNÆ BRITATINE LEGATIS TUM 115.

OUL ANNO 1697 PACEM RYSWICKI CONFECERUNT TUM HS. QUID APUD GALLOS ANNIS PROXIMIS LEGATIONEM OBIERUNT : EODEM ETIAM ANNO 1697 IN HIBERNIA SECRETARIUS: NECNON IN UTROQUE HONORABILI CONCESSU EORUM. OUI ANNO 1700 ORDINANDIS COMMERCII NEGOTIIS. QUIQUE ANNO 1711 DIRIGENDIS PORTORII REBUS. PRÆSIDEBANT. COMMISSIONARIUS : POSTREMO AB ANNA FELICISSIME MEMORIE REGINA AD LUDOVICUM XIV. GALLIÆ REGEM MISSUS ANNO 1711 DE PACE STABILIENDA. (PACE ETIAMNUM DURANTE DIUQUI UT BONI JAM OMNES SPERANT DURATURAT CUM SUMMA POTESTATE LEGATUS. MATTHÆUS PRIOR, ARMIGER: OIII HOS OMNES, QUIBUS CUMULATUS EST, TITULOS HUMANITATIS, INGENII, ERUDITIONIS LAUDE CUI ENIM NASCENTI FACILES ARRISERANT MUSE HUNC PUERAM SCHOLA HIC REGIA PERPOLIVIT: -JUVENEM IN COLLEGIO S'TI JOHANNIS CANTABRIGIA OPTIMIS SCIENTITS INSTRUXIT : VIRUM DENIQUE AUXIT: ET PERFECIT MULTA CUM VIRIS PRINCIPIBUS CONSUETUDO ; ITA NATUS, ITA INSTITUTUS. A VATUM CHORO AVELLI NUMQUAM POTUIT. SED SOLEBAT SÆPE RERUM CIVILIUM GRAVITATEM AMENIORUM LITERARUM STUDIES CONDIRE : ET CUM OMNE ADEO POETICES GENUS HAUD INFELICITER TENTARET, TUM IN FABELLIS CONCINNE LEPIDEQUE TEXENDIS MIRUS ARTIFEX NEMINEM HABUIT PAREM. HÆC-LIBERALIS ANIMI OBLECTAMENTA: QUAM NULLO ILLI LABORE CONSTITERINT. FACILE II PERSPEXERE, QUIBUS USUS EST AMICI : APUD QUOS URBANITATEM ET LEFORUM PLENUS CUM AD REM. QUÆCUNQUE FORTE INCIDERAT. APTE VARIE COPIOSEQUE ALLUDERET, INTEREA NIHIL QUÆS. TUM, NIHIL VI EXPRESSUM VIDEBATUR,

SED OMNIA ULTRO EFFLUERE. ET QUASI JUGI E FONTE AFFATIM EXUBERARE. ITA SUOS TANDEM DUBIOS RELIQUIT. ESSETNE IN SCRIPTIS, POETA ELEGANTIOR, AN IN CONVICTU, COMES JUCUNDIOR.

Of Prior, eminent as he was, both by his abilitie and station, very few memorials have been left by his contemporaries; the account therefore must now be destitute of his private character and familiar practices. He lived at a time when the rage of party detected all which it was any man's interest to hide: and, as little ill is heard of Prior. it is certain that not much was known. He was not afraid of prot voking censure; for, when he forsook the Whigs," under whose patronage he first entered the world 8 he became a Tory so ardent and determinate, that 7 he did not willingly consort with men of different opinions. He was one of the sixteen Tories who met weekly, and agreed to address each other by the title of Brother; and seems to have adhered, not only by concurrence of political designs, but by pe culiar affection, to the Earl of Oxford and his family, With how much confidence he was trusted has been already told.

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He was, however, in Pope's + opinion, fit only ŧ to make verses, and less qualified for business that Addison himself. This was surely said without consideration. Addison, exalted to a high place, was forced into degradation by the sense of his own incapacity; Prior, who was employed by men very t

+ Ibid.

* Spence,

capable of estimating his value, having been secretary to one embassy, had, when great abilities were again wanted, the same office another time; and was, after so much experience of his knowledge and dexterity, at last sent to transact a negotiation in the highest degree arduous and important, for which he was qualified, among other requisites, in the opinion of Bolingbroke, by his influence upon the French minister, and by skill in questions of commerce above other men.

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Of his behaviour in the lighter parts of life, it is at too late to get much intelligence. One of his an-0 swers to a boastful Frenchman has been related; and to an impertinent one he made another equally proper. During his embassy, he sat at the opera by at a man, who, in his rapture, accompanied with his own voice the principal singer. Prior fell to railing at the performer with all the terms of reproach that by he could collect, till the Frenchman ceasing from his song, began to expostulate with him for his harsh censure of a man who was confessedly the ornament. of the stage. "I know all that," says the ambassador, "mais il chante si haut, que je ne scaurois vous ly entendre."

In a gay French company, where every one sang a little song or stanza, of which the burden was, "Bannissons la Melancholie ;" when it came to his turn to sing, after the performance of a young lady y that sat next him, he produced these extemporary lines;

Mais cette voix, et ces beaux yeux, Font Cupidon trop dangereux; Et je suis triste quand je cric, Bannissons la Melancholie,

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Tradition represents him as willing to descend from the dignity of the poet and statesman to the low delights of mean company. His Chloe probably was sometimes ideal: but the woman with whom he cohabited was a despicable drab * of the lowest species. One of his wenches, perhaps Chloe, while he was absent from his house, stole his plate, and ran away, as was related by a woman who had been his servant. Of this propensity to sordid converse I have seen an account so seriously ridiculous, that it seems to deserve insertion. †

" I have been assured that Prior, after having spent the evening with Oxford, Bolingbroke, Pope, and Swift, would go and smoke a pipe, and drink a bottle of ale, with a common soldier and his wife, in Long-Acre, before he went to bed; not from any remains of the lowness of his original, as one said, but I suppose, that his faculties,

> ".....Strain'd to the height, In that celestial colloquy sublime, Dazzled and spent, sunk down, and sought repair."

Poor Prior, why was he so *strained*, and in such *want* of *repair*, after a conversation with men, not, in the opinion of the world, much wiser than himself: But such are the conceits of speculatists, who *strain*

* Spence; and see Gent. Mag. vol. LVII. p. 1059. + Richardsoniana. their *faculties* to find in a mine what lies upon the surface.

His opinions, so far as the means of judging are left us, seem to have been right; but his life was, it seems, irregular, negligent, and sensual.

Prior has written with great variety, and his variety has made him popular. He has tried all styles, from the grotesque to the solemn, and has not so failed in any as to incur derision or disgrace.

His works may be distinctly considered, as comprising Tales, Love Verses, Occasional Poems, Alma, and Solomon.

His Tales have obtained general approbation, being written with great familiarity and great sprightliness; the language is easy, but seldom gross, and the numbers smooth, without appearance of care. Of these tales there are only four. The 'Ladle;' which is introduced by a Preface, neither necessary nor pleasing, neither grave nor merry. ' Paulo Porganti :' which has likewise a Preface, but of more value than the Tale. 'Hans Carvel,' not over decent; and ' Protogenes and Apelles,' an old story, mingled, by an affectation not disagreeable, with modern images. The 'Young Gentleman in Love' has hardly a just claim to the title of a Tale. I know not whether he be the original author of any Tale which he has given us. The adventure of 'Hans Carvel' has passed through many successions of merry wits; for it is to be found in Ariosto's Satires, and is perhaps yet older. But the merit of such stories is the art of telling them.

In his Amorous Effusions he is less happy; for

they are not dictated by nature or by passion, and have neither gallantry nor tenderness. They have the coldness of Cowley, without his wit, the dull exercises of a skilful versifier, resolved at all adventures to write something about Chloe, and trying to be amorous by dint of study. His fictions therefore are mythological. Venus, after the example of the Greek Epigram, asks when she was seen naked ard bathing. Then Cupid is mistaken; then Cupid is disarmed; then he loses his darts to Ganymede; then Jupiter sends him a summons by Mercury. Then Chloe goes a-hunting, with an ivory quiver graceful at her side ; Diana mistakes her for one of her nymphs, and Cupid laughs at the blunder. All this is surely despicable; and even when he tries to act the lover, without the help of gods or goddesses, his thoughts are unaffecting or remote. He talks not "like a man of this world."

The greatest of all his amorous essays is 'Henry and Emma;' a dull and tedious dialogue, which excites neither esteem for the man, nor tenderness for the woman. The example of Emma, who resolves to follow an outlawed murderer wherever fear and guilt shall drive him, deserves no imitation; and the experiment by which Henry tries the lady's constancy, is such as must end either in infamy to her, or in disappointment to himself.

His Occasional Poems necessarily lost part of their value, as their occasions, being less remembered, raised less emotion. Some of them, however, are preserved by their inherent excellence. The burlesque of Boileau's Ode on Namur has, in some we parts, such airiness and levity as will always procure it readers, even among those who cannot compare it with the original. The Epistle to Boileau is not so happy. The Poems to the King are now perused only by young students, who read merely that they may learn to write; and of the 'Carmen Seculare,' if cannot but suspect that I may praise or censure it by caprice, without danger of detection; for who can be supposed to have laboured through it? Yet the time has been when this neglected work was so popular, that it was translated into Latin by no common master.

His poem on the Battle of Ramillies is necessarily tedious by the form of the stanza; a uniform mass of ten lines thirty-five times repeated, inconsequential and slightly connected, must weary both the ear and the understanding. His imitation of Spenser, which consists principally in I ween and I weet, without exclusion of latter modes of speech, makes his poem neither ancient nor modern. His mention of Mars and Bellona, and his comparison of Marlborough to the eagle that bears the thunder of Jupiter, are all puerile and unaffecting; and yet more despicable is the long tale told by Lewis in his despair of Brute and Troynovante, and the teeth of Cadmus, with his similies of the raven and eagle, and wolf and lion. By the help of such easy fictions and vulgar topics, without acquaintance with life, and without knowledge of art or nature, a poem of any length, cold

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and lifeless like this, may be easily written on an subject.

In his Epilogues to Phædra and to Lucius he very happily facetious; but in the Prologue befor the queen, the pedant has found his way, with M nerva, Perseus, and Andromeda.

His Epigrams and lighter pieces are, like the of others, sometimes elegant, sometimes trifling, ar cometimes dull; amongst the best are the 'Cam leon.' and the epitaph on 'John and Joan.'

Scarcely any one of our poets has written so mut and translated so little: the version of Callimachus sufficiently licentious; the paraphrase on St. Paul Exhortation to Charity is eminently beautiful.

"Alma' is written in professed imitation of H dibras, and has at least one accidental resemblance Hudibras wants a plan, because it is left imperfect "Alma' is imperfect, because it seems never to hav had a plan. Prior appears not to have proposed himself any drift or design, but to have written th casual dictates of the present moment.

What Horace said, when he imitated Lucilic might be said of Butler by Prior; his numbers we not smooth nor neat. Prior excelled him in versit cation; but he was, like Horace, *inventore minor;* h had not Butler's exuberance of matter and variety illustration. The spangles of wit which he coul afford, he knew how to polish; but he wanted th bullion of his master. Butler pours out a neglige profusion, certain of the weight, but careless of th stamp. Prior has comparatively little, but with the

little he makes a fine show. Alma has many admirers, and was the only piece among Prior's works of which Pope said that he should wish to be the author.

'Solomon' is the work to which he entrusted the protection of his name, and which he expected succeeding ages to regard with veneration. His affection was natural; it had undoubtedly been written with great labour; and who is willing to think t^bat he has been labouring in vain? He had infused into it much knowledge and much thought; had often polished it to elegance, often dignified it with splendour, and sometimes heightened it to sublimity : he perceived in it many excellences, and did not discover that it wanted that without which all others are of small avail, the power of engaging attention and alluring curiosity.

Tediousness is the most fatal of all faults; negligences or errors are single and local, but tediousness pervades the whole; other faults are censured and forgotten, but the power of tediousness propagates itself. He that is weary the first hour, is more weary the second; as bodies forced into motion contrary to their tendency, pass more and more slowly through every successive interval of space.

Unhappily this pernicious failure is that which an author is least able to discover. We are seldom tiresome to ourselves; and the act of composition fills and delights the mind with change of language and succession of images; every couplet when produced is new, and novelty is the great source of VOL III. C pleasure. Perhaps no man ever thought a line superfluous when he first wrote it, or contracted his work till his ebullitions of invention had subsided. And even if he should controul his desire of immediate renown, and keep his work *nine years* unpublished, he will be still the author, and still in danger of deceiving himself: and if he consults his friends, he will probably find men who have more kirdness than judgment, or more fear to offend than desire to instruct.

The tediousness of this poem proceeds not from the uniformity of the subject, for it is sufficiently diversified, but from the continual tenor of the narration; in which Solomon relates the successive vicissitudes of his own mind, without the intervention of any other speaker, or the mention of any other agent, unless it be Abra; the reader is only to learn what he thought, and to be told that he thought wrong. The event of every experiment is foreseen, and therefore the process is not much regarded.

Yet the work is far from deserving to be neglected. He that shall peruse it will be able to mark many passages, to which he may recur for instruction or delight; many from which the poet may learn to write, and the philosopher to reason.

If Prior's poetry be generally considered, his praise will be that of correctness and industry, rather than of compass of comprehension, or activity of fancy. He never made any effort of invention : his greater pieces are only tissues of common thoughts;

and his smaller, which consist of light images or single conceits, are not always his own. I have traced him among the French Epigrammatists, and have been informed that he poached for prey among obscure authors. The 'Thief and Cordelier' is, I suppose, generally considered as an original production; with how much justice this Epigram may tell, which was written by Georgius Sabinus, a poet now little known or read, though once the friend of Luther and Melancthon;

De Sacerdote Furem consolante.

Quidam sacrificus furem comitatus cuntem Huc ubi dat sontes carnificina neci, Ne sis mostus, ait; suumi conviva Tonantis Jam cum collitibus (si modo credis) crislle gemens, si vern mihi solatia præbes, Hospes apud superos sis meus oro, refert. Sacrificus contra; mihi non convivia fas est Ducere, jejumas hac edo luce nihil.

What he has valuable he owes to his diligence and his judgment. His diligence has justly placed him amongst the most correct of the English poets; and he was one of the first that resolutely endeavoured at correctness. He never sacrifices accuracy to haste, nor indulges himself in contemptuous negligence, or impatient idleness: he has no careless lines, or entangled sentiments; his words are nicely selected, and his thoughts fully expanded. If this part of his character ruffers an abatement, it must be from the disproportion of his rhymes, which have not always sufficient consonance, and from the admission of

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broken lines into his 'Solomon;' but perhaps he thought, like Cowley, that hemistichs ought to be admitted into heroic poetry.

He had apparently such rectitude of judgment as secured him from every thing that approached to the ridiculous or absurd ; but as laws operate in civil agency not to the excitement of virtue, but the repression of wickedness, so judgment in the operations of intellect can hinder faults, but not produce excellence. Prior is never low, nor very often sublime It is said by Longinus of Euripides, that he forces himself sometimes into grandeur by violence of effort. as the lion kindles his fury by the lashes of his own tail Whatever Prior obtains above mediocrity seems the effort of struggle and of toil. He has many vigorous but few happy lines ; he has every thing by purchase, and nothing by gift ; he had no nightly visitations of the Muse, no infusions of sentiment or felicities of fancy.

His diction, however, is more his own than of any among the successors of Dryden; he borrowsno lucky turns, or commodious modes of language, from his predecessors. His phrases are original, but they are sometimes harsh; as he inherited no elegances, none has he bequeathed. His expression has every mark of laborious study; the line seldom seems to have been formed at once; the words did not come till they were called, and were then put by constraint into their places, where they do their duty but do it sullenly. In his greater compositions there may be found more rigid stateliness than graceful dignity

Of versification he was not negligent: what he received from Dryden he did not lose; neither did he increase the difficulty of writing by unnecessary severity, but uses Triplets and Alexandrines without scruple. In his preface to Solomon he proposes some improvements by extending the sense from one couplet to another, with variety of pauses. This he has attempted, but without success; his interrupted lines are unpleasing, and his sense, as less distinct, is bas striking.

He has altered the stanza of Spenser, as a house is altered by building another in its place of a different form. With how little resemblance he has formed his new stanza to that of his master, these specimens will show :

SPENSER,

She flying fast from Heaven's hated face, And from the world that her discover'd wide, Fled to the wasteful widemess apace, From living eyes her open shame to hide, And lunk'd in rocks and caves long unespy'd-But that fair erew of knights, and Una fair, Did in that castle afterwards abide, To rest themselves, and weary powers repair, Where store they found of all, that dainty was and rare.

PRIOR.

To the close rock the frighted raven flies, Soon as the rising eagle cuts the air; The shaggy wolf unseen and trembling lies, When the hearse roar proclaims the lion near-Ill-stard did we our forts and lines forskee, To dare our British foes to open fight: Our conquest we by stratagem should make : Our triumph had been founded in our flight. "Tis ours, by eraft and by surprise to gain: "Tis theirs, to meet in arms, and battle in the plain.

By this new structure of his lines he has avoided difficulties; nor am I sure that he has lost any of the power of pleasing, but he no longer imitates Spenser.

Some of his poems are written without regularity of measure; for, when he commenced poet, he had not recovered from our Pindaric infatuation; but he probably lived to be convinced, that the essence of verse is order and consonance.

His numbers are such as mere diligence may attain; they seldom offend the ear, and seldom sooth it; they commonly want airiness, lightness, and facility: what is smooth is not soft. His verses always roll, but they seldom flow.

A survey of the life and writings of Prior may exemplify a sentence which he doubtless understood well, when he read Horace at his uncle's: " the vessel long retains the scent which it first receives." In his private relaxation he revived the tavern, and in his amorous pedantry, he exhibited the college, But on higher occasions and nobler subjects, when habit was overpowered by the necessity of reflection, he wanted not wisdom as a statesman, or elegance as a poet.

BLACKMORE.

SIR RICHARD BLACKMORE is one of those men whose writings have attracted much notice, but of whose life and manners very little has been communicated, and whose lot it has been to be much oftener mentioned by enemies than by friends.

He was the son of Robert Blackmore of Corsham in Wiltshire, styled by Wood Gentleman, and supposed to have been an attorney. Having been for some time educated in a country-school, he was sent at thirteen to Westminster : and in 1668 was entered at Edmund-Hall in Oxford, where he took the degree of M. A. June 3, 1676, and resided thirteen years; a much longer time than it is usual to spend at the university; and which he seems to have passed with very little attention to the business of the place; for in his poems, the ancient names of nations or places, which he often introduces, are pronounced by chance. He afterwards travelled : at Padua he was made doctor of Physic ; and, after having wandered about a year and a half on the Continent, returned home.

In some part of his life, it is not known when, his indigence compelled him to teach a school, a humiliation with which, though it certainly lasted but a little while, his enemies did not forget to reproach him when he became conspicuous enough to excite malevolence; and let it be remembered for his honour, that to have been once a schoolmaster is the only reproach which all the perspicacity of malice, animated by wit, has ever fixed upon his private life,

When he first engaged in the study of physic, he inquired, as he says, of Dr. Sydenham, what authors he should read, and was directed by Sydenham to Pon Quixote; "which," said he, " is a very good book; I read it still." The perverseness of mankind makes it often mischievous in men of eminence to give way to merriment; the idle and the illiterate will long shelter themselves under this foolish apophthegm.

Whether he rested satisfied with this direction, or sought for better, he commenced physician, and obtained high eminence and extensive practice. He became Fellow of the College of Physicians, April 12, 1687, being one of the thirty which, by the new charter of king James, were added to the former Fellows. His residence was in Cheapside, * and his friends were chiefly in the city. In the early part of Blackmore's time, a citizen was a term of reproach; and his place of abode was another topic to which his adversaries had recourse in the penury of scandal.

Blackmore, therefore, was made a poet not by necessity but inclination, and wrote not for a livelihood but for fame; or, if we may tell his own motives, for a nobler purpose, to engage poetry in the cause of Virtue.

I believe it is peculiar to him, that his first public work was a heroic poem. He was not known as a maker of verses till he published (in 1695) 'Prince Arthur,' in ten books, written, as he relates, "by such catches and starts, and in such occasional uncertain hours as his profession afforded, and for the greatest part in coffee-houses, or in passing up and down the streets." For the latter part of this apology he was accused of writing "to the rumbling of his chariot-wheels." He had read, he says, "but little poetry throughout his whole life; and for fifteen years before had not written a hundred verses, except one copy of Latin verses in praise of a friend's book."

He thinks, and with some reason, that from such a performance perfection cannot be expected; but he finds another reason for the severity of his censurers, which he expresses in language such as Cheapside easily furnished. "I am not free of the Poets Company, having never kissed the governor's hands: mine is therefore not so much as a permission poem, but a downright interloper. Those gentlemen who carry on their poetical trade in a joint stock, would certainly do what they could to sink and ruin an unlicensed adventurer, notwithstanding I disturbed none of their factories, nor imported any goods they have ever dealt in." He had lived in the city till he had learned its note.

That 'Prince Arthur' found many readers is certain; for in two years it had three editions; a very uncommon instance of favourable reception, at a time when literary curiosity was yet confined to particular classes of the nation. Such success naturally raised animosity; and Dennis attacked it by a formal criticism, more tedious and disgusting than the work which he condemns. To this censure may be opposed the approbation of Locke and the admiration of Molineux, which are found in their printed Letters. Molineux is particularly delighted with the song of *Mopas*, which is therefore subjoined to this narrative.

It is remarked by Pope, that what "raises the hero, often sinks the man." Of Blackmore it may be said, that, as the poet sinks, the man rises : the animadversions of Dennis, insolent and contemptuous as they were, raised in him no implacable resentment : he and his critic were afterwards friends; and in one of his latter works he praises Dennis as " equal to Boileau in poetry, and superior to him in critical abilities."

He seems to have been more delighted with praise than pained by censure, and, instead of slackening, quickened his career. Having in two years produced ten books of 'Prince Arthur,' in two years more (1697) he sent into the world 'King Arthur' in twelve. The provocation was now doubled, and the resentment of wits and critics may be supposed to have increased in proportion. He found, however, advantages more than equivalent to all their outrages; he was this year made one of the physicians in ordinary to king William, and advanced

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by him to the honour of knighthood, with the present of a gold chain and a medal.

The malignity of the wits attributed his knighthood to his new poem; but king William was not very studious of poetry; and Blackmore perhaps had other merit, for he says, in his Dedication to 'Alfred,' that "he had a greater part in the succession of the House of Hanover than ever he had boasted."

What Blackmore could contribute to the Succession, or what he imagined himself to have contributed, cannot now be known. That he had been of considerable use, I doubt not but he believed, for I hold him to have been very honest; but he might easily make a false estimate of his own importance : those whom their virtue restrains from deceiving others, are often disposed by their vanity to deceive themselves. Whether he promoted the succession or not, he at least approved it, and adhered invariably to his principles and party through his whole life.

His ardour of poetry still continued; and not long after (1700) he published a 'Paraphrase on the Book of Job,' and other parts of the Scripture. This performance Dryden, who pursued him with great malignity, lived long enough to ridicule in a Prologue.

The wits easily confederated against him, as Dryden, whose favour they almost all courted, was his professed adversary. He had besides given them reason for resentment, as, in his Preface to 'Prince Arthur,' he had said of the Dramatic Writers almost.

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all that was alleged afterwards by Collier; but Blackmore's censure was cold and general, Collier's was personal and ardent; Blackmore taught his reader to dislike what Collier excited him to abhor.

In his preface to 'King Arthur' he endeavoured to gain at least one friend, and propitiated Congreve by higher praise of his 'Mourning Bride,' than it has obtained from any other critic.

The same year he published a 'Satire on Wit;' a proclamation of defiance which united the poets almost all against him, and which brought upon him lampoons and ridicule from every side. This he doubtless foresaw, and evidently despised; nor should his dignity of mind be without its praise, had he not paid the homage to greatness which he denied to genius, and degraded himself by conferring that authority over the national taste, which he takes from the poets, upon men of high rank and wide influence, but of less wit and not greater virtue.

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Here is again discovered the inhabitant of Cheapside, whose head cannot keep his poetry unmingled with trade. To hinder that intellectual bankruptcy which he affects to fear, he will erect a *Bank for Wit*.

In this poem he justly censured Dryden's impurities, but praised his powers; though in a subsequent edition he retained the satire, and omitted the praise. What was his reason, I know not; Dryden was then no longer in his way.

His head still teemed with heroic poetry; and (1705) he published 'Eliza,' in ten books. I am afraid that the world was now weary of contending

about Blackmore's heroes; for I do not remember, that by any author, serious or comical, I have found Eliza either praised or blamed. She "dropped," as it seems, "dead-born from the press." It is never mentioned, and was never seen by me till I borrowed it for the present occasion. Jacob says, "it is corrected and revised for another impression;" but the labour of revision was thrown away.

From this time he turned some of his thoughte to the celebration of living characters; and wrote a poem on the 'Kit-cat Club,' and, 'Advice to the Poets how to celebrate the Duke of Marlborough;' but, on occasion of another year of success, thinking himself qualified to give more instruction, he again wrote a poem of 'Advice to a Weaver of Tapestry.' Steele was then publishing the 'Tatler;' and looking round him for something at which he might laugh, unluckily lighted on Sir Richard's work, and treated it with such contempt, that, as Fenton observes, he put an end to the species of writers that gave *Advice to Painters*.

Not long after (1712) he published 'Creation,' a philosophical Poem, which has been by my recommendation inserted in the late collection. Whoever judges of this by any other of Blackmore's performances, will do it injury. The praise given it by Addison (Spec. 339) is too well known to be transcribed; but some notice is due to the testimony of Dennis, who calls it a "philosophical Poem, which has equalled that of Lucretius in the beauty of its versi-

fication, and infinitely surpassed it in the solidity and strength of its reasoning."

Why an author surpasses himself, it is natural to inquire. I have heard from Mr. Draper, an eminent bookseller, an account received by him from Ambrose Philips, "That Blackmore, as he proceeded in this poem, laid his manuscript from time to time before a club of wits with whom he associated; and that every man contributed, as he could, either improvement or correction; so that," said Philips, "there are perhaps no where in the book thirty lines together that now stand as they were originally written."

The relation of Philips, I suppose, was true; but when all reasonable, all credible allowance is made for this friendly revision, the author will still retain an ample dividend of praise; for to him must always be assigned the plan of the work, the distribution of its parts, the choice of topics, the train of argument, and, what is yet more, the general predominance of philosophical judgment and poetical spirit. Correction seldom effects more than the suppression of faults: a happy line, or a single elegance, may perhaps be added; but of a large work the general character must always remain; the original constitution can be very little helped by local remedies; inherent and radical dulness will never be much invigorated by extrinsic animation.

This poem, if he had written nothing else, would have transmitted him to posterity among the first favourites of the English Muse; but to make verses

was his transcendant pleasure, and, as he was not deterred by censure, he was not satiated with praise,

He deviated, however, sometimes into other tracks of literature, and condescended to entertain his readers with plain prose. When the 'Spectator' stopped, he considered the polite world as destitute of entertainment ; and, in concert with Mr. Hughes, who wrote every third paper, published three times a-week the 'Lay Monastery,' founded on the opposition that some literary men, whose characters are described, had retired to a house in the country to enjoy philosophical leisure, and resolved to instruct the public, by communicating their disquisitions and amusements. Whether any real persons were concealed under fictitious names, is not known. The hero of the club is one Mr. Johnson : such a constellation of excellence, that his character shall not be suppressed, though there is no great genius in the design, nor skill in the delineation.

"The first I shall name is Mr. Johnson, a gentleman that owes to nature excellent faculties and an elevated genius, and to industry and application many acquired accomplishments. His taste is distinguishing, just and delicate; his judgment clear, and his reason strong, accompanied with an imagination full of spirit, of great compass, and stored with refined ideas. He is a critic of the first rank; and, what is his peculiar ornament he is delivered from the ostentation, malevolence, and supercilious temper, that so often blemish men of that character. His remarks result from the nature and reason of things, and

are formed by a judgment free, and unbiassed by the 55 authority of those who have lazily followed each -21 other in the same beaten track of thinking, and are b arrived only at the reputation of acute grammarians of and commentators ; men, who have been copying m one another many hundred years, without any improvement, or, if they have ventured farther, have only applied in a mechanical manner the rules of ancient critics to modern writings, and with great labour discovered nothing but their own want of Ir judgment and capacity. As Mr. Johnson penetrates to the bottom of his subject, by which means his po observations are solid and natural, as well as delicate. he so his design is always to bring to light something un useful and ornamental : whence his character is the reverse to theirs, who have eminent abilities in insignificant knowledge, and a great felicity in finding wł out trifles. He is no less industrious to search out the merit of an author, than sagacious in discerning his errors and defects ; and takes more pleasure in Aur commending the beauties, than exposing the blemishes of a laudable writing : like Horace, in a long work, he can bear some deformities, and justly lay them on the imperfection of human nature, which is incapable of faultless productions. When an excellent est Drama appears in public, and by its intrinsic worth Bla attracts a general applause, he is not stung with envy lan and spleen ; nor does he express a savage nature, in dar fastening upon the celebrated author, dwelling upon and his imaginary defects, and passing over his conspi- acc cuous excellences. He treats all writers upon the

same impartial footing; and is not, like the little eritics, taken up entirely in finding out only the beauties of the ancient, and nothing but the errors of the modern writers. Never did any one express more kindness and good-nature to young and unfinished authors; he promotes their interests, protects their reputation, extenuates their faults, and sets off their virtues, and by his candour guards them from the severity of his judgment. He is not like those themselves, but is himself master of a good vein in poetry; and though he does not often employ it, yet he has sometimes entertained his friends with his unpublished performances."

The rest of the *Lay Monks* seem to be but feeble mortals, in comparison with the gigantic Johnson; who yet, with all his abilities, and the help of the fraternity, could drive the publication but to forty papers, which were afterwards collected into a vonume, and called in the title 'A Sequel to the Spectators.'

Some years afterwards (1716 and 1717) he published two volumes of Essays in prose, which can be commended only as they are written for the highest and noblest purpose, the promotion of religion. Blackmore's prose is not the prose of a poet; for it is languid, sluggish, and lifeless; his diction is neither daring nor exact, his flow neither rapid nor easy, and his periods neither smooth nor strong. His account of 'Wit' will show with how little clearness he is content to think, and how little his though are recommended by his language.

" As to its efficient cause, Wit owes its production to an extraordinary and peculiar temperament in the constitution of the possessor of it, in which is found a concurrence of regular and exalted ferments, and an affluence of animal spirits, refined and rectified to a great degree of purity; whence, being endowed with vivacity, brightness, and celerity, as well in their reflections as direct motions, they become proper instruments for the sprightly operations of the mind; by which means the imagination can, with great facility, range the wide field of Nature, com template an infinite variety of objects, and, by ob serving the similitude and disagreement of their a veral qualities, single out and abstract, and the suit and unite, those ideas which will best serve its purpose. Hence beautiful allusions, surprising t metaphors, and admirable sentiments, are always I ready at hand: and while the fancy is full of imges, collected from innumerable objects and theil different qualities, relations, and habitudes, it ca at pleasure dress a common notion in a strange be a becoming garb; by which, as before observed, the same thought will appear a new one, to the gre a delight and wonder of the hearer. What we ad genius results from this particular happy complet si ion in the first formation of the person that enjoy se it, and is Nature's gift, but diversified by various specific characters and limitations, as its active hep is blended and allayed by different proportions (I

phlegm, or reduced and regulated by the contrast of opposite ferments. Therefore, as there happens in the composition of a facetious genius a greater or less, though still an inferior, degree of judgment and prudence, one man of wit will be varied and distinguished from another."

In these Essays he took little care to propitiate the wits; for he scorns to avert their malice at the expense of virtue or of truth.

" Several, in their books, have many sarcastical and spiteful strokes at religion in general; while others make themselves pleasant with the principles of the Christian. Of the last kind, this age has seen a most audacious example in the book entitled 'A Tale of a Tub.' Had this writing been published in a Pagan or Popish nation, who are justly impatient of all indignity offered to the established religion of their country, no doubt but the author would have received the punishment he deserved. But the fate of this impious buffoon is very different; for in a Protestant kingdom, zealous of their civil and religious immunities, he has not only escaped affronts and the effects of public resentment, but has been caressed and patronized by persons of great figure and of all denominations. Violent party-men, who differed in all things besides, agreed in their turn to show particular respect and friendship to this insolent derider of the worship of his country, till at a last the reputed writer is not only gone off with imiopunity, but triumphs in his dignity and preferment. I do not know that any inquiry or search was ever

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made after this writing, or that any reward was ever offered for the discovery of the author, or that the infamous book was ever condemned to be burnt in public: whether this proceeds from the excessive esteem and love that men in power, during the late reign, had for wit, or their defect of zeal and concern for the Christian religion, will be determined best by those who are best acquainted with their character."

In another place he speaks with becoming abhorrence of a *godless author*, who has burlesqued a Psalm. This author was supposed to be Pope, who published a reward for any one that would produce the coiner of the accusation, but never denied it; and was afterwards the perpetual and incessant enemy of Blackmore.

One of his Essays is upon the Spleen, which is treated by him so much to his own satisfaction, that he has published the same thoughts in the same words first in the 'Lay Monastery;' then in the 'Essay; and then in the Preface to a 'Medical Treatise on the Spleen.' One passage, which I have found already twicc, I will here exhibit, because I think it better imagined, and better expressed, than could be expected from the common tenor of his prose :

"—As the several combinations of splenetic madness and folly produce an infinite variety of irregular understanding, so the amicable accommodation and alliance between several virtues and vices produce an equal diversity in the dispositions and manner of mankind; whence it comes to pass, that as many monstrous and absurd productions are found in the

moral as in the intellectual world. How surprising is it to observe, among the least culpable men, some whose minds are attracted by Heaven and Earth with a seeming equal force ; some who are proud of humility ; others who are censorious and uncharitable. vet self-denying and devout; some who join contempt of the world with sordid avarice; and others who preserve a great degree of piety, with ill-nature and ungoverned passions! Nor are instances of this inconsistent mixture less frequent among bad men, where we often, with admiration, see persons at once generous and unjust, impious lovers of their country, and flagitious heroes, good-natured sharpers, immoral men of honour, and libertines who will sooner die than change their religion; and though it is true that repugnant coalitions of so high a degree are found but in a part of mankind, yet none of the whole mass, either good or bad, are entirely exempted from some absurd mixture "

He about this time (Aug. 22, 1716) became one of the *Elects* of the College of Physicians: and was soon after (Oct. 1) chosen *Censor*. He seems to have arrived late, whatever was the reason, at his medical honours.

Having succeeded so well in his book on 'Creation,' by which he established the great principle of all Religion, he thought his undertaking imperfect, unless he likewise enforced the truth of Revelation; and for that purpose added another poem on 'Redemption.' He had likewise written, before his 'Creation,' three books on the 'Nature of Man.'

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BLACKMORE.

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The lovers of musical devotion have always wished for a more happy metrical version than they have yet obtained of the book of Psalms: this wish the piety of Blackmore led him to gratify; and he produced (1721) 'A new Version of the Psalms of David, fitted to the Tunes used in Churches;' which, being recommended by the archbishops and many bishops, obtained a license for its admission into public worship; but no admission has it yet obtained, nor has it any right to come where Brady and Tate have got possession. Blackmore's name must be added to those of many others, who, by the same attempt, have obtained only the praise of meaning well.

He was not yet deterred from heroic poetry. There was another monarch of this island, (for he did not fetch his heroes from foreign countries,) whom he considered as worthy of the Epic Muse; and he dignified 'Alfred' (1723) with twelve books. But the opinion of the nation was now settled; a hero introduced by Blackmore was not likely to find either respect or kindness; *Alfred* took his place by *Eliza*, in silence and darkness: Benevolence was ashamed to favour, and Malice was weary of insulting. Of his four Epic poems, the first had such reputation and popularity as enraged the critics; the second was at least known enough to be ridiculed; the two last had neither friends nor enemies.

Contempt is a kind of gangrene, which, if it seizes we one part of a character, corrupts all the rest by degrees. Blackmore, being despised as a poet, was in time neglected as a physician; his practice, which d

was once invidiously great, forsook him in the latter part of his life; but being by nature, or by principle, averse from idleness, he employed his unwelcome leisure in writing books on physic, and teaching others to cure those whom he could himself cure no longer. I know not whether I can enumerate all the treatises by which he has endeavoured to diffuse the art of healing; for there is scarcely any distemper, of dreadful name, which he has not taught the reader how to oppose. He has written on the small-pox, with a vehement invective against inoculation; on consumptions, the spleen, the gout, the rheumatism, he king's-evil, the dropsy, the jaundice, the stone, the diabetes, and the plague.

Of those books, if I had read them, it could not be expected that I should be able to give a critical account. I have been told that there is something in them of vexation and discontent, discovered by a perpetual attempt to degrade physic from its sublinity, and to represent it as attainable without much previous or concomitant learning. By the transient glances which I have thrown upon them, I have observed an affected contempt of the Ancients, and a supercilious derison of transmitted knowledge. Of this indecent arrogance the following quotation from his Preface to the Treatise on the Small-pox will afford a specimen ; in which, when the reader finds, what I fear is true, that, when he was censuring Hippocrates, he did not know the difference between aphorism and apophthegm, he will not pay

much regard to his determinations concerning ancient learning.

"As for his book of Aphorisms, it is, like my lord Bacon's of the same title, a book of jests, or a grave collection of trite and trifling observations; of which though many are true and certain, yet they signify nothing, and may afford diversion, but no instruction; most of them being much inferior to the sayings of the wise men of Greece, which are yet so low and mean, that we are entertained every day with more valuable sentiments at the table conversation of ingenious and learned men."

I am unwilling, however, to leave him in total digrace, and will therefore quote from another Prefax a passage less reprehensible.

"Some gentlemen have been disingenuous and unjust to me, by wresting and forcing my meaning in the Preface to another book, as if I condemned and exposed all learning, though they knew I de clared that I greatly honoured and esteemed all meaof superior literature and erudition; and that I only undervalued false or superficial learning, that signifies nothing for the service of mankind; and that a to physic, I expressly affirmed that learning musbe joined with native genius to make a physician o the first rank; but if those talents are separated, asserted, and do still insist, that a man of nativ sagacity and diligence will prove a more able an useful practiser, than a heavy national scholar, ercumbered with a heap of confused ideas."

He was not only a poet and a physician, but pro-

duced likewise a work of a different kind, 'A true and impartial History of the Conspiracy against King William, of glorious Memory, in the Year 1695.' This I have never seen, but suppose it at least compiled with integrity. He engaged likewise in theological controversy, and wrote two books against the Arians; ' Just Prejudices against the Arian Hypothesis ;' and ' Modern Arians unmasked.' Another of his works is ' Natural Theology, or Moral Duties considered apart from Positive; with some Observations on the Desirableness and Necessity of a supernatural Revelation.' This was the last book that he published. He left behind him 'The accomplished Preacher, or an Essay upon Divine Floquence;' which was printed after his death by Mr. White of Nayland in Essex, the minister who attended his death-bed, and testified the fervent piety of his last hours. He died on the eighth of October, 1729.

Blackmore, by the unremitted enmity of the wits, whom he provoked more by his virtue than his dulness, has been exposed to worse treatment than he deserved. His name was so long used to point every epigram upon dull writers, that it became at last a by-word of contempt: but it deserves observation, that malignity takes hold only of his writings, and that his life passed without reproach, even when his boldness of reprehension naturally turned upon him many eyes desirous to espy faults, which many tongues would have made haste to publish. But VOL. IU. D

those who could not blame could at least forbear to praise, and therefore of his private life and domestic character there are no inemorials.

As an author he may justly claim the honours of magnanimity. The incessant attacks of his enemies, whether serious or merry, are never discovered to have disturbed his quiet, or to have lessened his confidence in himself: they neither awed him to silence nor to caution; they neither provoked him to petulance, nor depressed him to complaint. While the distributors of literary fame were endeavouring to depreciate and degrade him, he either despised or defied them, wrote on as he had written before, and never turned aside to quiet them by civility, or repress them by confutation.

He depended with great security on his own powers, and perhaps was for that reason less diligent in perusing books. His literature was, I think, but small. What he knew of antiquity, I suspect him to have gathered from modern compilers: but, though he could not boast of much critical knowledge, his mind was stored with general principles, and he left minute researches to those whom he considered as little minds.

With this disposition he wrote most of his poems. Having formed a magnificent design, he was careless of particular and subordinate elegances; he studied no niceties of versification; he waited for no felicities of fancy; but caught his first thoughts in the first words in which they were presented : nor does it appear that he saw beyond his own performances, or had ever elevated his views to that ideal perfection which every genius born to excel is condemned always to pursue, and never overtake. In the first suggestions of his imagination he acquiesced; he thought them good, and did not seek for better. His works may be read a long time without the occurrence of a single line that stands prominent from the rest.

The poem on 'Creation' has, however, the appearance of more circumspection; it wants neither harmony of numbers, accuracy of thought, nor elegance of diction; it has either been written with great care, or, what cannot be imagined of so long a work, with such felicity as made care less necessary.

Its two constituent parts are ratiocination and description. To reason in verse, is allowed to be difficult; but Blackmore not only reasons in verse, but very often reasons poetically; and finds the art of uniting ornament with strength, and ease with closeness. This is a skill which Pope might have condescended to learn from him, when he needed it so much in his Moral Essays.

In his descriptions both of life and nature, the poet and the philosopher happily co-operate; truth is recommended by elegance, and elegance sustained by truth.

In the structure and order of the poem, not only the greater parts are properly consecutive, but the didactic and illustrative paragraphs are so happily mingled, that labour is relieved by pleasure, and the attention is led on through a long succession of varied excellence to the original position, the fundamental principle of wisdom and of virtue.

As the heroic poems of Blackmore are now little read, it is thought proper to insert, as a specimen from 'Prince Arthur,' the song of Mopas, mentioned by Molineux.

But that which Arthur with most pleasure heard Were noble strains, by Monas sung, the bard Who to his harp in lofty verse began, And through the secret maze of Nature ran. He the Great Spirit sung, that all things fill'd, That the tumultuous waves of Chaos still'd : Whose nod dispos'd the jarring seeds to peace. And made the wars of hostile Atoms cease. All Beings, we in fruitful Nature find, Proceeded from the Great Eternal Mind ; Streams of his inexhausted spring of power, And, cherish'd with his influence, endure, He spread the pure cerulean fields on high, And arch'd the chambers of the vaulted sky. Which he, to suit their glory with their height. Adorn'd with globes, that reel, as drunk with light. His hand directed all the tuneful spheres, As turn'd their orbs, and polish'd all the stars. He fill'd the Sun's vast lamp with golden light. And bid the silver Moon adorn the night. He spread the airy Ocean without shores. Where birds are wafted with their feather'd oars. Then sung the bard how the light vapours rise From the warm earth, and cloud the smiling skies. He sung how some, chill'd in their airy flight. Fall scatter'd down in pearly dew by night ; How some, rais'd higher, sit in secret steams On the reflected points of bounding beams, Till, chill'd with cold, they shade the ethereal plain. Then on the thirsty earth descend in rain : How some, whose parts a slight contexture show. Sink hovering through the air in fleecy snow: How part is spun in silken threads, and clings - How others stamp to stones, with rushing sound Fall from their crystal quarries to the ground ;

BLACKMORE.

How some are laid in trains, that kindled fly. In harmless fires by night, about the sky : How some in winds blow with impetuous force. And carry ruin where they bend their course. While some conspire to form a gentle breeze. To fan the air, and play among the trees: How some, enrag'd, grow turbulent and loud. Pent in the bowels of a frowning cloud. That cracks, as if the axis of the world Was broke, and Heaven's bright towers were downwards hurbd. He sung how earth's wide ball, at Jove's command. Did in the midst on airy columns stand ; And how the soul of plants, in prison held, And bound with sluggish fetters, lies conceal'd. Till with the Spring's warm beams, almost releas'd From the dull weight, with which it lay opprest. Its vigour spreads, and makes the teeming earth Heave up, and labour with the sprouting birth . The active spirit freedom seeks in vain, It only works and twists a stronger chain; Urging its prison's sides to break a way, It makes that wider, where 'tis forc'd to stay : Till, having form'd its living house, it rears Its head, and in a tender plant appears. Hence springs the oak, the beauty of the grove. Whose stately trunk fierce storms can scarcely move, Hence grows the cedar, hence the swelling vine Does round the elm its purple elusters twine. Hence painted flowers the smiling gardens bless, Both with their fragrant scent and gaudy dress. Hence the white lily in full beauty grows, Hence the blue violet, and blushing rose. He sung how sunbeams brood upon the earth, And in the glebe hatch such a numerous birth : Which way the genial warmth, in Cummer storms. Turns putrid vapours to a bed of worms ; How rain, transform'd by this prolific power, Falls from the clouds an animated shower. He sung the embryo's growth within the womb. And how the parts their various shapes assume ; With what rare art the wonderous structure's wrought. From one crude mass to such perfection brought ; That no part useless, none mispla?'d we see, None are forgot, and more would monstrous be,

THE brevity with which I am to write the account of ELIJAH FENTON, is not the effect of indifference or negligence. I have sought intelligence among his relations in his native country, but have not obtained it.

He was born near Newcastle in Staffordshire, of an ancient family, * whose estate was very considerable; but he was the youngest of eleven children, and being therefore necessarily destined to some lucrative employment was sent first to school, and afterwards to Cambridge, † but, with many other wise and virtuous men, who at that time of discord and debate consulted conscience, whether well or ill informed, more than inferest, he doubted the legality of the government, and refusing to qualify himself for public employment by the oaths required, left the university without a degree; but I never heard that the enthu-

* He was born at Shelton, near Neweastle, May 20, 1685, and was the youngest of eleven children of John Fenton, an attorney at law, and one of the corners for the county of Stafford. His father died in 1694; and his grave, in the churchyard of Stoke upon Trent, is distinguished by an slegant Latie inscription from the pen of his son.

+ He was entered of Jesus College, and took a Bachelor's degree in 1704; but it appears that he removed in 1726 to Tunity Hall.

siasm of opposition impelled him to separation from the Church.

By this perverseness of integrity he was driven out a commoner of Nature, excluded from the regular modes of profit and prosperity, and reduced to pick up a livelihood uncertain and fortuitous; but it must be remembered that he kept his name unsullied, and never suffered himself to be reduced, like too many of the same sect, to mean arts and dishonoarable shifts. Whoever mentioned Fenton, mentioned him with honour.

The life that passes in penury must necessarily pass in obscurity. It is impossible to trace Fenton from year to year, or to discover what means he used for his support. He was a while secretary to Charles Earl of Orrery in Flanders, and tutor to his young son, who afterwards mentioned him with great esteem and tenderness. He was at one time assistant in the school of Mr. Bonwicke in Surrey; and at another kept a school for himself at Sevenoaks in Kent, which he brought into reputation; but was persuaded to leave it (1710) by Mr. St. John, with promises of a more honourable employment.

His opinions, as he was a Nonjuror, seem not to have been remarkably rigid. He wrote with great zeal and affection the praises of Queen Anne, and very willingly and liberally extolled the Duke of Marlborough, when he was (1707) at the height of his glory.

He expressed still more attention to Marlborough and his family by an elegiac Pastoral on the Marquis

of Blandford, which could be prompted only by respect or kindness; for neither the Duke nor Dutchess desired the praise, or liked the cost of patronage.

The elegance of his poetry entitled him to the company of the wits of the time, and the amiableness of his manners made him loved wherever he was known. Of his friendship to Southern and Pope there are lasting monuments.

He published in 1707 a collection of poems.

By Pope he was once placed in a station that might have been of great advantage. Craggs, when he was advanced to be secretary of state (about 1720), feeling his want of literature, desired Pope to procure him an instructor, by whose help he might supply the deficiences of his education. Pope recommended Fenton, in whom Craggs found all that he was seeking. There was now a prospect of ease and plenty, for Fenton had merit, and Craggs had generosity: but the small-pox suddenly put an end to the pleasing expectation.

When Pope, after the great success of his Iliad, undertook the Odyssey, being, as it seems, weary of translating, he determined to engage auxiliaries. Twelve books he took to himself, and twelve he distributed between Broome and Fenton: the books allotted to Fenton were the first, the fourth, the nineteenth, and the twentieth. It is observable, that he did not take the eleventh, which he had before translated into blank verse; neither did Fope claim it, but committed it to Broome. How the two associates performed their parts is well known

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to the readers of poetry, who have never been able to distinguish their books from those of Pope.

In 1723 was performed his tragedy of 'Mariamne:' to which Southern, at whose house it was written, is said to have contributed such hints as his theatrical experience supplied. When it was shown to Cibber, it was rejected by him, with the additional insolence of advising Fenton to engage himself in some employment of honest labour, by which he might obtain that support which he could never hope from his poetry. The play was acted at the other theatre; and the brutal petulance of Cibber was confuted, though, perhaps, not ashamed, by general applause. Fenton's profits are said to have amounted to near a thousand pounds, with which he discharged a debt contracted by his attendance at Court.

Fenton seems to have had some peculiar system of versification. 'Mariamne' is written in lines of ten syllables, with few of those redundant terminations which the drama not only admits but requires, as more nearly approaching to real dialogue. The tenor of his verse is so uniform that it cannot be thorght casual; and yet upon what principle he so constructed it, is difficult to discover.

The mention of his play brings to my mind a very triffing occurrence. Fenton was one day in the company of Broome his associate, and Ford, a clergyman, at that time too well known, whose abilities, instead of furnishing convivial merriment to the voluptuous and dissolute, might have enabled him to excel among the virtuous and the wise. They determined all to see

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the 'Merry Wives of Windsor,' which was acted that night; and Fenton, as a dramatic poet, took them to the stage-door; where the door-keeper inquiring who they were, was told that they were three very necessary men, Ford, Broome, and Fenton. The name in the play, which Pope restored to *Brook*, was then *Broome*.

It was perhaps after his play that he undertook to revise the punctuation of Milton's poems, which, as the author neither wrote the original copy nor corrected the press, was supposed capable of amendment. To this edition he prefixed a short and elegant account of Milton's life, written at once with tenderness and integrity.

He published likewise (1729) a very splendid edition of Waller, with notes often useful, often entertaining, but too much extended by long quotations from Clarendon. Illustrations drawn from a book so easily consulted, should be made by reference rather than transcription.

The latter part of his life was calm and pleasant. The relict of Sir William Trumbull invited him, by Pope's recommendation, to educate her son; whom he first instructed at horne, and then attended to Cambridge. The lady afterwards detained him with her as the auditor of her accounts. He often wandered to London, and amused himself with the conversation of his friends.

He died in 1730, at Easthampstead in Berkshire, the scat of Lady Trumbull; and Pope, who had been

always his friend, honoured him with an epitaph, of which he borrowed the two first lines of Crashaw.

Fenton was tall and bulky, inclined to corpulence, which he did not lessen by much exercise; for he was very sluggish and sedentary, rose late, and when he had risen, sat down to his book or papers. A woman that once waited on him in a lodging, told him, as she said, that he would "lie a-bed, and be fed with a spoon." This, however, was not the worst that might have been prognosticated; for Pope says, in his Letters, "that he died of indolence;" but his immediate distemper was the gout.

Of his morals and his conversation the account is uniform: he was never named but with praise and fondness, as a man in the highest degree amiable and excellent. Such was the character given him by the Earl of Orrery, his pupil; such is the testimony of Pope;* and such were the suffrages of all who could boast of his acquaintance.

By a former writer of his life a story is told, which ought not to be forgotten. He used, in the latter part of his time, to pay his relations in the country a yearly visit. At an entertainment made for the family by his elder brother, he observed, that one of his sisters, who had married unfortunately, was absent; and found, upon inquiry, that distress had made her thought unworthy of invitation. As she was at no great distance, he refused to sit at the table till she was called, and, when she had taken

her place, was careful to show her particular attention.

His collection of poems is now to be considered. The ode to the 'Sun' is written upon a common plan, without uncommon sentiments; but its greatest fault is its length. No poem should be long of which the purpose is only to strike the fancy, without enlightening the understanding by precept, ratiocination, or narrative. A blaze first pleases, and then tires the sight.

Of 'Florelio' it is sufficient to say, that it is an occasional pastoral, which implies something neither natural nor artificial, neither comic nor serious.

The next ode is irregular, and therefore defective. As the sentiments are pious, they cannot easily be new; for what can be added to topics on which successive ages have been employed !

Of the 'Paraphrase on Isaiah' nothing very favourable can be said. Sublime and solemn prose gains little by a change to blank verse; and the paraphrast has deserted his original, by admitting images not Asiatic, at least not Judaical:

Of his petty poems some are very triffing, without any thing to be praised either in the thought or expression. He is unlucky in his competitions; he tells the same idle tale with Congreve, and does not tell it so well. He translates from Ovid the same epistle as Pope; but I am afraid not with equal happiness.

To examine his performances one by one would be tedious. His translation from Homer into blank verse will find few readers, while another can be had in rhyme. The piece addressed to Lambarde is no disagreeable specimen of epistolary poetry; and his ode to the Lord Gower was pronounced by Pope the next ode in the English language to Dryden's Cecilia. Fenton may be justly styled an excellent versifier and a good poet.

Whatever I have said of Fenton is confirmed by Pope in a letter, by which he communicated to Broome an account of his death.

" TO

"THE REV. MR. BROOME,

" AT PULHAM, NEAR HARLESTONE

" NOR

"[BY BECCLES BAG.] "SUFFOLKE.

" Dr SIR,

"I intended to write to you on this melancholy subject, the death of Mr. Fenton, before y^{rs} came; but stay'd to have inform'd myself and you of y^e circumstances of it. All I hear is, that he felt a Gradual Decay, tho so early in Life, & was declining for 5 or 6 months. It was not, as I apprehended, the Gout in his Stomach, but I believe rather a complication first of Gross Humours, as he was naturally corpulent, not discharging themselves, as he used no sort of Exercise. No man better bore y^e approaches of his dissolution (as I am told) or with less ostentation yielded up his Being. The great Modesty w^{eh} you know was natural to him and y^e great Contempt he had for all sorts of Vanity & Parade, never appeared more than in his last moments: He had a conscious Satisfaction (no doubt) in acting right, in feeling himself honest, true, & unpretending to more than was his own. So he died, as he lived, with that secret, vet sufficient, Contentment.

"As to any Papers left behind him, I dare say they can be but few; for this reason, he never wrote out of Vanity, or thought much of the Applause of men. I know an instance where he did his utmost to conceal his own merit that way; and if we join to this his natural Love of Ease, I fancy we must expect little of this sort: at least I hear of none except some few further remarks on Waller, (w^{ch} his cautious integrity made him leave an order to be given to Mr. Tonson) and perhaps, tho' tis many years since I saw it, a Translation of y^c first book of Oppian. He had begun a Tragedy of Dion, but made small progress in it.

"As to his other affairs, he died poor, but honest, leaving no Debts, or Legacies; except of a few p^{dc} to Mr. Trumbull and my Lady, in token of respect, Gratefulness, and mutual Esteem.

" I shall with pleasure take upon me to draw this amiable, quiet, deserving, unpretending Christian and Philosophical character, in his Epitaph. There Truth may be spoken in a few words: as for Flourish, & Oratory, & Poetry, I leave them to younger and more

lively Writers, such as love writing for writing sake, and w^d rather show their own Fine Parts, y^n report the valuable ones of any other man. So the Elegy I renounce.

"I condole with you from my heart, on the loss of so worthy a man, and a Friend to us both. Now he is gone, I must tell you he has done you many a good office, & set your character in the fairest light to some who either mistook you, or knew you not. I doubt not he has done the same for me.

"Adieu: Let us love his memory, and profit by his example. I am very sincerely,

> " Dr Sir, " Your affectionate "& real Servant

> > "A. POPE."

"Aug. 29, 1730.

GAY.

JOHN GAY, descended from an old family that had been long in possession of the manor of * Goldworthy in Devonshire, was born 1688, at or near Barnstaple, where he was educated by Mr. Luck, who taught the school of that town with good reputation, and, a little before he retired from it, published a volume of Latin and English verses. Under such a master he was likely to form a taste for poetry. Being born without prospect of hereditary riches, he was sent to London in his youth, and placed apprentice with a silk-mercer.

How long he continued behind the counter, or with what degree of softness and dexterity he received and accommodated the Ladies, as he probably took no delight in telling it, is not known. The report is, that he was soon weary of either the restraint or servility of his occupation, and easily persuaded his master to discharge him.

The dutchess of Monmouth, remarkable for inflexible perseverance in her demand to be treated as a princess, in 1712 took Gay into her service as a

* Goldworthy does not appear in the Villare

secretary ; by quitting a shop for such service he might gain leisure, but he certainly advanced little in the boast of independence. Of his leisure he made so good use, that he published next year a poem on 'Rural Sports,' and inscribed it to Mr. Pope, who was then rising fast into reputation. Pope was pleased with the honour ; and when he became acquainted with Gay, found such attractions in his manners and conversation, that he seems to have received him into his inmost confidence ; and a friendship was formed between them which lasted to their separation by death, without any known abatement on either part. Gay was the general favourite of the whole association of wits; but they regarded him as a play-fellow rather than a partner, and treated him with more fondness than respect.

Next year he published ' The Shepherd's Week,' six English pastorals, in which the images are drawn from real life, such as it appears among the rustics in parts of England remote from London. Steele, in some papers of the 'Guardian,' had praised Ambrose Philips, as the Pastoral writer that yielded only to Theocritus, Virgil, and Spenser. Pope, who had also published pastorals, not pleased to be overlooked, drew up a comparison of his own compositions with those of Philips, in which he covertly gave himself the preference, while he seemed to disown it. Not content with this, he is supposed to have incited Gay to write 'The Shepherd's Week,' to show, that if it be necessary to copy nature with minuteness, rural life must be exhibited such as gressness and ignorance have made it, So far the plan was reasonable; but the Pastorals are introduced by a *Proeme*, written with such imitation as they could obtain of absolete language, and by consequence, in a style that was never spoken nor written in any age or in any place.

But the effect of reality and truth became conspicuous, even when the intention was to show them grovelling and degraded. These Pastorals became popular, and were read with delight, as just representations of rural manners and occupations, by those who had no interest in the rivalry of the poets, nor knowledge of the critical dispute.

In 1713, he brought a comedy called 'The Wife of Bath' upon the stage, but it received no applause: he printed it, however, and seventeen years after, having altered it, and, as he thought, adapted it more to the public taste, he offered it again to the town; but though he was flushed with the success of the 'Beggar's Opera,' had the mortification to see it again rejected.

In the last year of queen Anne's life, Gay was made secretary to the earl of Clarendon, ambassador to the Court of Hanover. This was a station that naturally gave him hopes of kindness from every party; but the queen's death put an end to her favours, and he had dedicated his 'Shepherd's Week' to Bolingbroke, which Swift considered as the crime that obstructed all kindness from the House of Hanover.

He did not, however, omit to improve the right which his office had given him to the notice of the

royal family. On the arrival of the princess of Wale's, he wrote a poem, and obtained so much favour, that both the prince and princess went to see his 'What d' ye call it,' a kind of mock-tragedy, in which the images were comic, and the action grave ; so that, as Pope relates, Mr. Cromwell, who could not hear what was said, was at a loss how to reconcile the laughter of the audience with the solemnity of the scene.

Of this performance the value certainly is but little; but it was one of the lucky trifles that give pleasure by novelty, and was so much favoured by the audience, that envy appeared against it in the form of criticism; and Griffin, a player, in conjunction with Mr. Theobald, a man afterwards more remarkable, produced a pamphlet called ' The Key to the What d' ye call it ;' which, says Gay, ' calls me a blockhead, and Mr. Pope a knave.'

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But Fortune has always been inconstant. Not long afterwards (1717) he endeavoured to entertain the town with 'Three Hours after Marriage ;' a comedy written, as there is sufficient reason for believing, by the joint assistance of Pope and Arbuthnot. One purpose of it was to bring into contempt Dr. Woodward the Fossilist, a man not really or justly contemptible. It had the fate which such outrages deserve : the scene in which Woodward was directly and apparently ridiculed, by the introduction of a mummy and a crocodile, disgusted the audience, and ht the performance was driven off the stage with general condemnation.

Gay is represented as a man easily incited to hope, and deeply depressed when his hopes were disappointed. This is not the character of a hero; but it may naturally imply something more generally welcome, a soft and civil companion. Whoever is apt to hope good from others is diligent to please them; but he that believes his powers strong enough to force their own way, commonly tries only to please himself.

He had been simple enough to imagine that those who laughed at the 'What d' ye call it ' would raise the fortune of its author ; and, finding nothing done, sunk into dejection. His friends endeavoured to divert him. The earl of Burlington sent him (1716) into Devonshire ; the year after, Mr. Pulteney took him to Aix ; and in the following year lord Harcourt invited him to his seat, where, during his visit, the two rural lovers were killed with lightning, as is particularly told in Pope's Letters.

Being now generally known, he published (1720) his Poems, by subscription, with such success, that he raised a thousand pounds; and called his friends to a consultation, what use might be best made of it Lewis the steward of lord Oxford, advised him to intrust it to the funds, and live upon the interest; Arbuthnot bade him to intrust it to Providence, and live upon the principal; Pope directed him, and was seconded by Swift, to purchase an annuity. Gay in that disastrous year * had a present from

* Spence,

young Craggs of some South-sea stock, and once supposed himself to be master of twenty thousand pounds. His friends persuaded him to sell his share; but he dreamed of dignity and splendour, and could not bear to obstruct his own fortune. He was then importuned to sell as much as would purchase an hundred a-year for life, "which," says Fenton, " will make you sure of a clean shirt and a shoulder of mutton every day." This counsel was _jecced; the profit and principal were lost, and Gay sunk under the calamity so low that his life became in danger.

By the care of his friends, among whom Pope appears to have shown particular tenderness, his health was restored; and, returning to his studies, he wrote a tragedy called 'The Captives,' which he was invited to read before the princess of Wales. When the hour came, he saw the princess and her ladies all in expectation, and advancing with reverence, too great for any other attention, stumbled at a stool, and falling forwards, threw down a weighty Japan screen. The princess started, the ladies screamed, and poor Gay, after all the disturbance, was still to read his play.

The fate of 'The Captives,' which was acted at Drury-lane in 1723-4, I know not, * but he now thought himself in favour, and undertook (1726) to write a volume of Fables for the improvement of

* It was acted seven nights, the Author's third night being by command of their Royal Highnesses. the young duke of Cumberland. For this he is said to have been promised a reward, which he had doubtless magnified with all the wild expectations of indigence and vanity.

Next year the prince and princess became king and queen, and Gay was to be great and happy; but upon the settlement of the household he found himself appointed gentleman usher to the princess Locisa. By this offer he thought himself insulted, and sent a message to the queen, that he was too old for the place. There seems to have been many machinations employed afterwards in his favour; and diligent court was paid to Mrs. Howard, afterwards countess of Suffolk, who was much beloved by the king and queen, to engage her interest for his promotion, but solicitations, verses, and flatteries, were thrown away; the lady heard them, and did nothing.

All the pain which he suffered from the neglect, or, as he perhaps termed it, the ingratitude of the court, may be supposed to have been driven away by the unexampled success of the 'Beggar's Opera' This play, written in ridicule of the musical Italian Drama, was first offered to Cibber and his brethren at Drury-Lane, and rejected : it being then carried to Rich, had the effect, as was ludicrously said, of making Gay rich, and Rich gay.

Of this lucky piece, as the reader cannot but wish to know the original and progress, I have inserted the relation which Spence has given in Pope's words "" Dr. Swift had been observing once to Mr. Gay,

what an odd pretty sort of a thing a Newgate Pastoral might make. Gay was inclined to try at such a thing for some time; but afterwards thought it would be better to write a comedy on the same plan. This was what gave rise to the Beggar's Opera. He began on it : and when first he mentioned it to Swift. the Doctor did not much like the project. As he carried it on, he showed what he wrote to both of us. and we now and then gave a correction, ca word or two of advice ; but it was wholly of his own writing .- When it was done, neither of us thought it would succeed. We showed it to Congreve ; who, after reading it over, said, it would either take greatly or be damned confoundedly .- We were all, at the first night of it, in great uncertainly of the event ; till we were very much encouraged by overhearing the Duke of Argyle, who sat in the next box to us, say, "It will do-it must do! I see it in the eyes of them." This was a good while before the first act was over, and so gave us ease soon; for that duke (besides his own good taste) has a particular knack, as any one now living, in discovering the taste of the public. He was quite right in this, as usual; the good-nature of the audience appeared stronger and stronger every act, and ended in a clamour of applause."

Its reception is thus recorded in the notes to the *Dunciad*.

"This piece was received with greater applause than was ever known. Besides being acted in London sixty-three days without interruption, and re-

newed the next season with equal applause, it spread into all the great towns of England ; was played in many places to the thirtieth and fortieth time : at Bath and Bristol fifty, &c. It made its progress into Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, where it was performed twenty-four days successively. The ladies carried about with them the favourite songs of it in fans, and houses were furnished with it in screens, The fame of it was not confined to the author only. The person who acted Polly, till then obscure, became all at once the favourite of the town; her pictures were engraved, and sold in great numbers; her Life written, books of letters and verses to her published, and pamphlets made even of her savings and jests. Furthermore, it drove out of England (for that season) the Italian Opera, which had carried all before it for ten years."

Of this performance, when it was printed, the reception was different, according to the different opinion of its readers. Swift commended it for the excellence of its morality, as a piece that "placed all kinds of vice in the strongest and most odious light;" but others, and among them Dr. Herring, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, censured it as giving encouragement not only to vice but to crimes, by making a highwayman a hero, and dismissing him at last unpunished. It has been even said, that, after the exhibition of the 'Beggar's Opera,' the gangs of robbers were evidently multiplied.

Both these decisions are surely exaggerated. The play, like many others, was plainly written only to

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divert, without any moral purpose, and is therefore not likely to do good; nor can it be conceived, without more speculation than life requires or admits, to be productive of much evil. Highwaymen and house-breakers seldom frequent the play-house, or mingle in any elegant diversion; nor is it possible for any one to imagine that he may rob with safety, because he sees Macheath reprieved upon the stage.

This objection, however, or some ot ather political than moral, obtained such prevalence, that when Gay produced a second part under the name of *Polly*, it was prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain; and he was forced to recompense his repulse by a subscription, which is said to have been so liberally bestowed, that what he called oppression ended in profit. The publication was so much favoured, that though the first part gained him four hundred pounds, near thrice as much was the profit of the second. *

He received yet another recompense for this supposed hardship, in the affectionate attention of the duke and dutchess of Queensberry, into whose house he was taken, and with whom he passed the remaining part of his life. The duke, considering his want of economy, undertook the management of his money and gave it to him as he wanted it. † But it is supposed that the disconntenance of the court sunk deep into his heart, and gave him more discontent than the applauses or tenderness of his friends could over-

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power. He soon fell into his old distemper, an habitual cholic, and languished, though with many intervals of ease and cheerfulness, till a violent fit at last seized him, and hurried him to the grave, as Arbuthnot reported, with more precipitance than he had ever known. He died on the fourth of December, 1732, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The letter, which brought an account of his death to Svie, was laid by for some days unopened, because when he received it he was impressed with the preconception of some misfortune.

After his death was published a second volume of Fables, more political than the former. His opera of 'Achilles' was acted, and the profits were given to two widow sisters, who inherited what he left, as his lawful heirs: for he died without a will, though he had gathered * three thousand pounds. There have appeared likewise under his name a comedy called the 'Distrest Wife,' and the 'Rehearsal at Gotham,' a piece of humour.

The character given him by Pope is this, "that he was a natural man, without design, who spoke what he thought, and just as he thought it ;" and that "he was of a timid temper, and fearful of giving offence to the great :" which caution however, says Pope, was of no avail. †

As a poet, he cannot be rated very high. He was, as I once heard a female critic remark, "of a lower order." He had not in any great degree the

+ Ibid.

* Spence.

mens divinior, the dignity of genius. Much however must be allowed to the author of a new species of composition, though it may be not of the highest kind. We owe to Gay the Ballad Opera; a mode of comedy which at first was supposed to delight only by its novelty, but has now, by the experience of half a century, been found so well accommodated to the disposition of a popular audience, that it is likely to keep long possession of the stage. Whether this new drama was the product of judgment or of luck, the praise of it must be given to the inventor ; and there are many writers read with more reverence, to whom such merit or originality cannot be attributed.

His first performance, the 'Rural Sports,' is such as was easily planned and executed ; it is never contemptible, nor ever excellent. The 'Fan' is one of those mythological fictions which antiquity delivers ready to the hand, but which, like other things that lie open to every one's use, are of little value. The attention naturally retires from a new tale of Venus, Diana, and Minerva.

His Fables seem to have been a favourite work; for, having published one volume, he left another behind him. Of this kind of Fables, the authors do not appear to have formed any distinct or settled notion. Phædrus evidently confounds them with Tales; and Gay both with Tales and Allegorical Prosopopæias. A Fable or Apologue, such as is now under consideration, seems to be, in its genuine state, a narrative in which beings irrational, and sometimes inanimate, arbortes loguantar, non tantum

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feræ, are, for the purpose of moral instruction, feigned to act and speak with human interests and passions. To this description the compositions of Gay do not always conform. For a Fable he gives now and then a Tale, or an abstracted Allegory; and from some, by whatever name they may be called, it will be difficult to extract any moral principle. The; are, however, told with liveliness; the versification is smooth; and the diction, though now and then a little constrained by the measure or the rhyme, is generally happy.

To 'Trivia' may be allowed all that it claims ; it is sprightly, various, and pleasant. The subject is of that kind which Gay was by nature qualified to adorn; yet some of his decorations may be justly wished away. An honest blacksmith might have done for Patty what is performed by Vulcan. The appearance of Cloacina is nauseous and superfluous; a shoe-boy could have been produced by the casual co-habitation of mere mortals. Horace's rule is broken in both cases; there is no dignus vindici nodus, no difficulty that required any supernatural interposition. A patten may be made by the hammer of a mortal, and a bastard may be dropped by a human strumpet. On great occasions, and on small, the mind is repelled by useless and apparent falsehood

Of his little Poems the public judgment seems to be right; they are neither much esteemed, nor totally despised. The story of the Apparition is borrowed from one of the tales of Poggio. Those that please least are the pieces to which Gulliver gave occasion; for who can much delight in the echo of an unnatural fiction?

'Dione' is a counterpart to Amynta, and Pastor Fido, and other trifles of the same kind, easily imitated, and unworthy of imitation. What the Italians call comedies from a happy conclusion, Gay calls a tragedy from a mournful event ; but the style of the Italians and of Gay is equally tragical. There is something in the poetical Arcadia so remote from known reality and speculative possibility, that we can never support its representation through a long work. A Pastoral of a hundred lines may be endured; but who will hear of sheep and goats, and myrtle bowers and purling rivulets, through five acts ? Such scenes please Barbarians in the dawn of literature, and children in the dawn of life; but will be for the most part thrown away, as men grow wise and nations grow learned.

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VALDEN.

THOMAS YALDEN, the sixth son of Mr. John Yalden, of Sussex, was born in the city of Exeter in 1671. Having been educated in the grammar-school belonging to Magdalen College in Oxford, he was in 1690, at the age of nineteen, admitted commoner of Magdalen Hall, under the tuition of Josiah Pullen, a man whose name is still remembered in the university. He became next year one of the scholars of Magdalen College, where he was distinguished by a lucky accident.

It was his turn, one day, to pronounce a declamation; and Dr. Hough, the president, happening to attend, thought the composition too good to be the speaker's. Some time after, the doctor finding him a little irregularly busy in the library, set him an exercise for punishment; and, that he might not be deceived by any artifice, locked the door. Yalden, as it happened, had been lately reading on the subject given, and produced with little difficulty a composition which so pleased the president, that he told him his former suspicions, and promised to favour him.

Among his contemporaries in the college were Addison and Sacheverell, men who were in these

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time friends, and who both adopted Yalden to their intimacy. Yalden continued, throughout his life, to think as probably he thought at first, yet did not forfeit the friendship of Addison.

When Namur was taken by king William, Yalden made an ode. There never was any reign more celebrated by the poets than that of William, who had very little regard for song himself, but happened to employ ministers who pleased themselves with the praise of patronage.

Of this ode mention is made in a humourous poem of that time, called 'The Oxford Laureate;' in which, after many claims had been made and rejected, Yalden is represented as demanding the laurel, and as being called to his trial instead of receiving a reward.

> His crime was for being a felon in verse, And presenting his theft to the king; The first was a trick not uncommon or scarce, But the last was an impudent thing; Yet what he has stol'nt was so little worth stealing, They forgave him the damage and cost; Had he ta'en the whole ode, as he took it piece-mealing, They had find him but ten-pence at most-

The poet whom he was charged with robbing was Congreve.

He wrote another poem on the death of the Duke of Gloucester.

In 1700 he became fellow of the college; and next year, entering into Orders, was presented by the society with a living in Warwickshire, * consistent

* The vicarage of Willoughby, which he resigned in 1708.

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with the fellowship; and chosen lecturer of Moral Philosophy, a very honourable office.

On the accession of queen Anne he wrote another poem; and is said by the author of the 'Biographia' to have declared himself of the party who had the honourable distinction of High-churchmen.

In 1706 he was received into the family of the duke of Beaufort. Next year he became doctor in divinity, and soon after resigned his fellowship and lecture; and, as a token of his gratitude, gave the college a picture of their founder.

He was made rector of Chalton and Cleanville, * two adjoining towns and benefices in Hertfordshire; and had the prebends, or sinecures, of Deans, Hains, and Pendles, in Devonshire. He had before † been chosen, in 1698, preacher of Bridewell Hospital, upon the resignation of Dr. Atterbury, ‡

From this time he seems to have led a quiet and inoffensive life, till the clamour was raised about Atterbury's plot. Every loyal eye was on the watch for abettors or partakers of the horrid conspiracy; and Dr. Talden, having some acquaintance with the bishop, and being familiarly conversant with Kelly his secretary, fell under suspicion, and was taken into custody.

Upon his examination he was charged with a

* By the duke of Beaufort.

† Not long after.

‡ Atterbury retained the office of preacher at Bridewell till his promotion those see of Rochester. Yalden succeeded him as preacher in June, 1715.

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dangerous correspondence with Kelly. The correspondence he acknowledged; but maintained that it had no treasonable tendency. His papers were seized ; but nothing was found that could fix a crime upon him, except two words in his pocket-book, thoroughpaced doctrine. This expression the imagination of his examiners had impregnated with treason, and the doctor was enjoined to explain. Thus pressed, he told them that the words had lain unbeded in his pocket-book from the time of queen Anne, and that he was ashamed to give an account of them ; but the truth was, that he had gratified his curiosity one day by hearing Daniel Burgess in the pulpit, and those words were a memorial hint of a remarkable sentence by which he warned his congregation to " beware of thorough-paced doctrine, that doctrine which, coming in at one ear, paces through the head, and goes out at the other."

Nothing worse than this appearing in his papers, and no evidence arising against him, he was set at liberty.

It will not be supposed that a man of his character attained high dignities in the Church; but he still retained the friendship, and frequented the conversation of a very numerous and splendid set of acquaintance. He died July 16, 1736, in the 66th vear of his age.

Of his poems, many are of that irregular kind, which, when he formed his poetical character, was supposed to be Pindaric. Having fixed his attention on Cowley as a model, he has attempted in some sort to rival him, and has written a 'Hymn to Darkness,'evidently as a counter-part to Cowley's 'Hymn to Light.'

This hymn seems to be his best performance, and is, for the most part, imagined with great vigour, and expressed with great propriety. I will not transcribe it. The seven first stanzas are good; but the third, fourth, and seventh, are the best; the eighth seems to in olve a contradiction; the tenth is exquisitely beautiful; the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth, are partly mythological, and partly religious, and therefore not suitable to each other; he might better have made the whole merely philosophical.

There are two stanzas in this poem where Yalden may be suspected, though hardly convicted, of having consulted the *Hymnus ad Umbram* of Wowerus, in the sixth stanza, which answers in some sort to these lines :

> Illa suo præest nocturnis numine sacris-Perque vias errare novis dat spectra figuris, Manesque excitos medios ululars per agros Sub noctern, et questu notos complere penates.

And again, at the corclusion:

Illa suo senium seeludit corpore toto Haud numerans jugi fugientia secula lapsu, Ergo ubi postremum inuudi compage soluta Hanc retum inolem suprema absumpserit hora Jpsa leves cineres nube amplectetur opaca, Et prisco inperio rursus dominabitur Umbra.

His 'Hymn to Light' is not equal to the other. He seems to think that there is an East absolute and positive where the Morning rises.

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In the last stanza, having mentioned the sudden eruption of new-created Light, he says,

Awhile th' Almighty wond'ring stood.

He ought to have remembered that Infinite Knowledge can never wonder. All wonder is the effect of novelty upon ignorance.

Of his other poems it is sufficient to say, that they deserve perusal, though they are not always exactly polished, though the rhymes are sometimes very ill sorted, and though his faults seem rather the omissions of idleness than the negligences of enthusiasm.

THOMAS TICKELL, the son of the reverend Richard Tickell, was born in 1686, at Bridekirk, in Cumberland; and in 1701 became a member of Queen's college in Oxford; in April 1708 he was made Master of Arts; and, two years afterwards was chosen Fellow; for which, as he did not comply with the statutes by taking orders, he obtained a dispensation from the Crown. He held his Fellowship till 1726, and then vacated it, by marrying, in that year, at Dublin.

Tickell was not one of those scholars who wear away their lives in closets; he entered early into the world, and was long busy in public affairs; in which he was initiated under the patronage of Addison, whose notice he is said to have gained by his verses in praise of 'Rosamond.'

To those verses it would not have been just to deny regard; for they contain some of the most elegant encomiastic strains; and, among the innumerable poems of the same kind, it will be hard to find one with which they need to fear a comparison. It may deserve of observation, that when Pope wrote

long afterwards in praise of Addison, he has copied, at least has resembled, Tickell.

Let joys salute fair Rosamonda's shade, And wreaths of myrtle crown the lovely maid. While now perhaps with Dido's ghosts he roves, And hears and tells the story of their loves, Alike they mourn, alike they bless their fate₄ Since Love, which made them wretched, made them great. Nor longer that relentless doom bemoan, Which gained a Virgil and an Addison.

TICKELL.

Then future ages with delight shall see How Plato's, Bacon's, Newton's, looks agree; Or in fair series laurel'd bards be shown, A Virgil there, and here an Addison.

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He produced another piece of the same kind at the appearance of 'Cato,' with equal skill, but not equal happiness.

When the ministers of queen Anne were negotiating with France, Tickell published 'The Prospect of Peace,' a poem, of which the tendency was to reclaim the nation from the pride of conquest to the pleasures of tranquillity. How far Tickell, whom Swift afterwards mentioned as *Whiggissimus*, had then connected himself with any party, I know not; this poem certainly did not flatter the practices, or promote the opinions, of the men by whom he was afterwards befriended.

Mr. Addison, however he hated the men then in power, suffered his friendship to prevail over his public spirit, and gave in the 'Spectator' such praises of Tickell's poem, that when, after having

long wished to peruse it, I laid hold on it at last, I thought it unequal to the honours which it had received, and found it a piece to be approved rather than admired. But the hope excited by a work of genius, being general and indefinite, is rarely gratified. It was read at that time with so much favour, that six editions were sold.

At the arrival of king George he sang 'The Royal Progress; which, being inserted in the 'Spectator,' is well known; and of which it is just to say, that it is neither high nor low.

The poetical incident of most importance in Tickell's life was his publication of the first book of the 'Iliad,' as translated by himself, an apparent opposition to Pope's Homer, of which the first part made its entrance into the world at the same time.

Addison declared that the rival versions were both good; but that Tickell's was the best that ever was made; and with Addison, the wits, his adherents and followers, were certain to concur. Pope does not appear to have been much dismayed; "for," says he, "I have the town, that is, the mob on my side." But he remarks, "that it is common for the smaller party to make up in diligence what they want in numbers; he appeals to the people as his proper judges; and, if they are not inclined to condemn him, he is in little care about the high-flyers at Button's."

Pope did not long think Addison an importial judge; for he considered him as the writer of Tick-

ell's version. The reasons for his suspicion I will literally transcribe from Mr. Spence's Collection.

"There had been a coldness (said Mr. Pope) between Mr. Addison and me for some time; and we had not been in company together, for a good while, any where but at Button's coffee-house, where I used to see him almost every day .- On his meeting me there, one day in particular, he took me aside, and said he should be glad to dine with me, at such a tavern, if I staid till those people were gone (Budgell and Philips.) He went accordingly; and after dinner Mr. Addison said, ' That he had wanted for some time to talk with me ; that his friend Tickell had formerly, whilst at Oxford, translated the first book of the Iliad ; that he designed to print it, and had desired him to look it over ; that he must therefore beg that I would not desire him to look over my first book, because, if he did, it would have the air of double-dealing.' I assured him that I did not at all take it ill of Mr. Tickell that he was going to publish his translation ; that he certainly had as much right to translate any author as myself; and that publishing both was entering on a fair stage. I then added that I would not desire him to look over my first book of the Iliad, because he had looked over Mr. Tickell's : but could wish to have the benefit of his observations on the second, which I had then finished, and which Mr. Tickell had not touched upon. Accordingly I sent him the second book the next morning ; and Mr. Addison, a few days after, returned it, with very high commendations. Soon

after it was generally known that Mr. Tickell was publishing the first book of the Iliad, I met Dr. Young in the street; and upon our falling into that subject, the Doctor expressed a great deal of surprize at Tickell's having had such a translation so long by him. He said, that it was inconceivable to him, and that there must be some mistake in the matter : that each used to communicate to the other whatever verses they wrote, even to the least things ; that Tickell could not have been busied in so long a work there without his knowing something of the matter ; and that he had never heard a single word on it till on this occasion. This surprize of Dr. Young, together with what Steele has said against Tickell in relation to this affair, make it highly probable that there was some underhand dealing in that business; and indeed Tickell himself, who is a very fair worthy man, has since, in a manner, as good as owned it to me. When it was introduced into a conversation between Mr. Tickell and Mr. Pope, by a third person, Tickell did not deny it; which, considering his honour, and zeal for his departed friend, was the same as owning it."

Upon these suspicions, with which Dr. Warburton hints that other circumstances concurred, Pope always in his 'Art of Sinking' quotes this book as the work of Addison.

To compare the two translations would be tedious; the palm is now given universally to Pope; but I think the first lines of Tickell's were rather to be

preferred : and Pope seems to have since borrowed something from them in the correction of his own.

When the Hanover succession was disputed; Tickell gave what assistance his pen would supply. His 'Letter to Avignon' stands high among party poems; it expresses contempt without coarseness, and superiority without insolence. It had the success which it deserved, being five times printed.

He was now intimately united to Mr. Addison, who, when he went into Ireland as secretary to the lord Sunderland, took him thither and employed him in public business; and when (1717) afterwards he rose to be secretary of state, made him under-secretary. Their friendship seems to have continued without abatement; for, when Addison died, he left him the charge of publishing his works, with a solemn recommendation to the patronage of Craggs.

To these works he prefixed an elegy on the author, which could owe none of its beauties to the assistance which might be suspected to have strengthened or embellished his earlier compositions; but neither he nor Addison ever produced nobler lines than are contained in the third and fourth paragraphs; nor is a more sublime or more elegant funeral-poem to be found in the whole compass of English literature.

He was afterwards (about 1725) made secretary to the Lords Justices of Ireland, a place of great honour; in which he continued till 1740, when he died on the twenty-third of April at Bath.

Of the poems yet unmentioned the longest is 'Ken-

sington Gardens,' of which the versification is smooth and elegant, but the fiction unskillfully compounded of Grecian Deities and Gothic Fairies. Neither species of those exploded Beings could have done much: and, when they are brought together, they only make each other contemptible. To Tickell,' however, cannot be refused a high place among the minor poets; nor should it be forgotten that he was one of the contributors to the Spectator. With respect to his personal character, he is said to have been a man of gay conversation, at least a temperate lover of wine and company, and in his domestic relations without censure.

HAMMOND.

OF MR. HAMMOND, though he be well remembered as a man esteemed and caressed by the elegant and the great, I was at first able to obtain no other memorials than such as are supplied by a book called ' Cibber's Lives of the Poets:' of which I take this opportunity to testify that it was not written, nor, I believe, ever seen, by either of the Cibbers ; but was the work of Robert Shields, a native of Scotland, a man of very acute understanding, though with little scholastic education, who, not long after the publication of his work, died in London of a consumption. His life was virtuous, and his end was pious. Theophilus Cibber, then a prisoner for debt, imparted, as I was told, his name for ten guineas. The manuscript of Shields is now in my possession.

I have since found that Mr. Shields, though he was no negligent inquirer, had been misled by false accounts; for he relates that James Hammond, the author of the Elegies, was the son of a Turkey merchant, and had some office at the prince of Wales's count, till love of a lady, whose name was Dashwood, for a time disordered his understanding. He was unextinguishably amorous, and his mistress inexorably cruel.

Of this narrative, part is true, and part false. He was the second son of Anthony Hammond, a man of note among the wits, poets, and parliamentary orators, in the beginning of this century, who was allied to Sir Robert Walpole by marrying his sister.* He was born about 1710, and educated at Westminsterschool; but it does not appear that he was of any university. He was equerry to the prince of Wales, and seems to have come very early into public notice, and to have been distinguished by those whose friendships prejudiced mankind at that time in favour of the man on whom they were bestowed; for he was the companion of Cobham, Lyttleton, and Chesterfield. He is said to have divided his life between pleasure and books; in his retirement forgetting the town, and in his gaiety losing the student. Of his literary hours all the effects are here exhibited, of which the Elegies were written very early, and the Prologue not long before his death.

In 1741, he was chosen into parliament for Truro in Cornwall, probably one of those who were elected by the Prince's influence; and died next year, in June, at Stowe, the famous seat of Lord Cobham. His mistress long outlived him, and in 1779 died unmarried. The character which her lover bequeathed her was, indeed, not likely to attract courtship.

Our author was of a different family, the second son of Anthony Hammond, of Somersham place, in the county of Huntingdon, Esq.

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The Elegies were published after his death ; and, while the writer's name was remembered with fondness, they were read with a resolution to admire them.

The recommendatory preface of the editor, who was then believed, and is now affirmed by Dr. Maty, to be the Earl of Chesterfield, raised strong prejudices in their favour.

But of the prefacer, whoever he was, it may be reasonably suspected that he never read the poems : for he professes to value them for a very high species of excellence, and recommends them as the genuine effusions of the mind, which expresses a real passion in the language of nature. But the truth is, these Elegies have neither passion, nature, nor manners. Where there is fiction, there is no passion : he that describes himself as a shepherd, and his Neæra or Delia as a shepherdess, and talks of goats and lambs, feels no passion. He that courts his mistress with Roman imagery deserves to lose her; for she may with good reason suspect his sincerity. Hammond has few sentiments drawn from nature, and few images from modern life. He produces nothing but frigid pedantry. It would be hard to find in all his productions three stanzas that deserve to be remembered.

Like other lovers, he threatens the lady with dying; and what then shall follow?

> Wilt thou in tears thy lover's corse attend; With eyes averted light the solemn pyre. Till all around the doleful flames ascend, Then, slowly sinking, by degrees expire.

HAMMOND.

To sooth the hovering soul be thine the care, With plaintive cries to lead the mournful band ; In sable weeds the golden vase to bear, And cull my ashes with thy trembling hand.

Panchaia's odours be their costly feast, And all the pride of Asia's fragrant year; Give them the treasures of the farthest East, And, what is still more precious, give thy tear.

Surely no blame can fall upon a nymph who rejected a swain of so little meaning.

His verses are not rugged, but they have no sweetness; they never glide in a stream of melody. Why Hammond or other writers have thought the quatrain of ten syllables elegiac, it is difficult to tell. The character of the Elegy is gentleness and tenuity; but this stanza has been pronounced by Dryden, whose knowledge of English metre was not inconsiderable, to be the most magnificent of all the measures which our language affords. OF MR. SOMERVILE'S life I am not able to say any hing that can satisfy curiosity.

OMERVILI

He was a gentleman whose estate was in Warwickshire; his house where he was born, in 1692, is called Edstone, a seat inherited from a long line of ancestors; for he was said to be of the first family in his county. He tells of himself that he was born near the Avon's banks. He was bred at Winchester-school, and was elected fellow of New College. It does not appear that in the places of his education he exhibited any uncommon proofs of genius or literature. His powers were first displayed in the 20untry, where he was distinguished as a poet, a gentleman, and a skilful and useful justice of the peace.

Of the close of his life, those whom his poems have delighted will read with pain the following account, copied from the Letters of his friend Shenstone, by whom he was too much resembled.

"—Our old friend Somervile is dead! I did not imagine I could have been so sorry as I find myself on this occasion.—*Sublatum quærimus.* I can now excuse all his foibles; impute them to age, and to distress of circumstances: the last of these considations wrings my very soul to think on. For a mo of high spirit, conscious of having (at least in one p duction) generally pleased the world, to be plagaand threatened by wretches that are low in evsense; to be forced to drink himself into pains of body, in order to get rid of the pains of the mind a miserv."

He died July 19, 1742, and was buried at We ton, near Henley on Arden.

His distresses need not be much pitied; his est is said to have been fifteen hundred a year, which his death devolved to Lord Somervile of Scotla His mother, indeed, who lived till ninety, had a join ture of six hundred.

It is with regret that I find myself not bett enabled to exhibit memorials of a writer, who least must be allowed to have set a good exampler men of his own class, by devoting part of his tim to elegant knowledge; and who has shown, by the subjects which his poetry has adorned, that it practicable to be at once a skilful sportsman and man of letters.

Somervile has tried many modes of poetry; an though perhaps he has not in any reached such a cellence as to raise much envy, it may commonly b said at least, "that he writes very well for a gentle man." His seriors pieces are sometimes elevated and his trifles are sometimes elegant. In his verse to Addison, the couplet which mentions Clio is write

SOMERVILE.

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ten with the most exquisite delicacy of praise; it exhibits one of those happy strokes that are seldom attained. In his Odes to Marlborough there are beautiful lines; but in the second Ode he shows that he knew little of his hero, when he talks of his private virtues. His subjects are commonly such as require no great depth of thought or energy of expression. His Fables are generally stale, and therefore excite no curiosity. Of his favoarite, 'The Two Springs,' the fiction is unnatural, and the moral inconsequential. In his Tales there is too much coarseness, with too little care of language, and not sufficient rapidity of narration.

His great work is his 'Chase,' which he undertook in his maturer age, when his ear was improved to the approbation of blank verse, of which, however, his two first lines gave a bad specimen. To this poem praise cannot be totally denied. He is allowed by sportsmen to write with great intelligence of his subject, which is the first requisite to excellence; and though it is impossible to interest the common readers of verse in the dangers or pleasures of the chase, he has done all that transition and variety could easily effect; and has with great propriety enlarged his plan by the modes of hunting used in other countries.

With still less judgment did he choose blank verse as the vehicle of 'Rural Sports.' If blank verse be not cumid and gorgeous, it is crippled prose; and familiar images in laboured language have nothing

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to recommend them but absurd novelty, which, wanting the attractions of Nature, cannot please long. One excellence of the 'Splendid Shilling' is, that it is short. Disguise can gratify no longer than it deceives.

IT has been observed in all ages, that the advantages of nature or of fortune have contributed very little to the promotion of happiness ; and that those whom the splendour of their rank, or the extent of their capacity, have placed upon the summits of human life, have not often given any just occasion to envy in those who look up to them from a lower station ; whether it be that apparent superiority incites great designs, and great designs are naturally liable to fatal miscarriages; or that the general lot of mankind is misery, and the misfortunes of those, whose eminence drew upon them a universal attention, have been more carefully recorded, because they were more generally observed, and have in reality been only more conspicuous than those of others, not more frequent, or more severe.

That affluence and power, advantages extrinsic and adventitious, and therefore easily separable from those by whom they are possessed, should very often flatter the mind with expectations of felicity which they cannot give, raises no astonishment; but it seems rational to hope, that intellectual greatness should produce better effects; that minds qualified for great attainments should first endeavour their own benefit; and that they who are most able to teach others the way to happiness, should with most certainty follow it themselves.

But this expectation, however plausible, has been very frequently disappointed. The heroes of literary as well as civil history have been very often no less remarkable for what they have suffered, than for what they have achieved; and volumes have been written only to enumerate the miseries of the learned, and relate their unhappy lives and untimely deaths.

To these mournful narratives, I am about to add the Life of RICHARD SAVAGE, a man whose writings entitle him to an eminent rank in the classes of learning, and whose misfortunes claim a degree of compassion, not always due to the unhappy, as they were often the consequences of the crimes of others, rather than his own.

In the year 1697, Anne Countess of Macclesfield, having lived some time upon very uneasy terms with her husband, thought a public confession of adultery the most obvious and expeditious method of obtaining her liberty; and therefore declared, that the child, with which she was then great, was begotten by the Earl Rivers. This, as may be imagined, made her husband no less desirous of a separation than herself, and he prosecuted his design in the most effectual manner; for he applied not to the ecclesiastical courts for a divorce, but to the parliament for an act, by which his marriage might be dissolved, the nuptial contract totally annulled, and the children of his wife illegitimated. This act, after the usual deliberation,

SAVAGE,

he obtained, though without the approbation of some, who considered marriage as an affair only cognizable by ecclesiastical judges; * and on March 3d was separated from his wife, whose fortune, which was very great, was repaid her, and who having, as well as her husband, the liberty of making another choice, was in a short time married to Colonel Brett.

While the Earl of Macclesfield was prosecuting this affair, his wife was, on the 10th of January. 1697-8, delivered of a son; and the Earl Rivers, by appearing to consider him as his own, left none any reason to doubt of the sincerity of her declaration : for he was his godfather, and gave him his own name, which was by his direction inserted in the register of St. Andrew's parish in Holborn, but unfortunately left him to the care of his mother, whom, as she was now set free from her husband, he probably imagined likely to treat with great tenderness the child that had contributed to so pleasing an event. It is not indeed easy to discover what motives could be found to overbalance that natural affection of a parent, or what interest could be promoted by neglect or cruelty. The dread of shame or of poverty, by which some wretches have been incited to aban-

Because we conceive that this is the first bill of that nature that hath passed, where there was not a divorce first obtained in the Spiritual Court; which we look upon as an ill precedent, and may be of dangerous consequence in the future, a Halifax. Rechaiter.

^{*} This year was made remarkable by the dissolution of a marriage solemnized in the face of the Church. Salmon's Review.

The following protest is registered in the books of the House of Lords, Dissentient,

don or to murder their children, cannot be supposed to have affected a woman who had proclaimed her crimes and solicited reproach, and on whom the clemency of the legislature had undeservedly bestowed a fortune, which would have been very little diminished by the expenses which the care of her child could have brought upon her. It was therefore not likely that she would be wicked without temptation : that she would look upon her son from his birth with a kind of resentment and abhorrence; and, instead of supporting, assisting, and defended him, delight to see him struggling with misery, or that she would take every opportunity of aggravating his misfortunes, and obstructing his resources, and with an implacable and restless cruelty continue her persecution from the first hour of his life to the last.

But whatever were her motives, no sooner was her son born, than she discovered a resolution of disowning him; and in a very short time removed him from her sight, by committing him to the care of a poor woman, whom she directed to educate him as her own, and injoined never to inform him of his true parents.

Such was the beginning of the life of Richard Savage. Born with a legal claim to honour and to affluence, he was in two months illegitimated by the parliament, and disowned by his mother, doomed to poverty and obscurity, and launched upon the ocean of life, only that he might be swallowed by its auicksands, or dashed upon its rocks.

His mother could not indeed infect others with

the same cruelty. As it was impossible to avoid the inquiries which the curiosity or tenderness of her relations made after her child, she was obliged to give some account of the measures she had taken; and her mother the Lady Mason, whether in approbation of her design, or to prevent more criminal contrivances, engaged to transact with the nurse, to pay her for her care, and to superintend the education of the child.

In this charitable office she was assisted by his godmother Mrs. Loyd, who, while she lived, always looked upon him with that tenderness which the barbarity of his mother made peculiarly necessary ; but her death, which happened in his tenth year, was another of the misfortunes of his childhood ; for though she kindly endeavoured to alleviate his loss by a legacy of three hundred pounds, yet, as he had none to prosecute his claim, to shelter him from oppression, or call in law to the assistance of justice, her will was eluded by the executors, and no part of the money was ever paid.

He was however, not yet wholly abandoned. The Lady Mason still continued her care, and directed him to be placed at a small grammar-school near St. Alban's, where he was called by the name of his nurse, without the least intimation that he had a claim to any other.

Here he was initiated in literature, and passed through several of the classes with what rapidity or with what applause cannot now be known. As he always spoke with respect of his master, it is

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probable that the mean rank, in which he then appeared, did not hinder his genius from being distinguished, or his industry from being rewarded: and if in so low a state he obtained distinction and rewards, it is not likely that they were gained but by genius and industry.

It is very reasonable to conjecture, that his application was equal to his abilities, because his improvement was more than proportioned to the opportunities which he enjoyed; nor can it be doubted that if his earliest productions, had been preserved, like those of happier students, we might in some have found vigorous sallies of that sprightly humour which distinguishes 'The Author to be let,' and in other strong touches of that ardent imagination which painted the solemn scenes of 'The Wanderer.'

While he was thus cultivating his genius, his father the Earl of Rivers was seized with a distemper, which in a short time put an end to his life. * He had frequently inquired after his son, and had always Leen amused with fallacious and evasive answers; but, being now in his own opinion on his death-bed, he thought it his duty to provide for him among his other natural children, and therefore demanded a positive account of him, with an importunity not to be diverted or denied. His mother, who could no longer refuse an answer, determined at least to give such as should cut him off for ever from that

happiness which competence affords, and therefore declared that he was dead; which is perhaps the first intance of a lie invented by a mother to deprive her son of a provision which was designed him by another, and which she could not expect herself, though he should lose it.

This was therefore an act of wickedness which could not be defeated, because it could not be suspected; the Earl did not imagine there could exist in a human form a mother that would ruin her son without enriching herself, and therefore bestowed upon some other person six thousand pounds, which he had in his will bequeathed to Savage.

The same cruelty which incited his mother to intercept this provision which had been intended him, prompted her in a short time to another project, a project worthy of such a disposition. She endeavoured to rid herself from the danger of being at any time made known to him, by sending him secretly to the American Plantations. *

By whose kindness this scheme was counteracted, or by whose interposition she was induced to lay aside her design, I know not; it is not improbable that the Lady Mason might persuade or compel her to desist, or perhaps she could not easily find accomplices wicked enough to concur in so cruel an action; for it may be conceived, that those who had by a long gradation of guilt hardened their hearts against the sense of common wickedness, would yet be

* Savage's Preface to his Miscellanies,

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shocked at the design of a mother to expose her son to slavery and want, to expose him without interest, and without provocation; and Savage might on this occasion find protectors and advocates among those who had long traded in crimes, and whom compassion had never touched before.

Being hindered, by whatever means, from banishing him into another country, she formed soon after a scheme for burying him in poverty and obscurity in his own; and that his station of life, if not the place of his residence, might keep him for ever at a distance from her, she ordered him to be placed with a shoe-maker in Holborn, that, after the usual time of trial, he might become his apprentice. *

It is generally reported, that this project was for some time successful, and that Savage was employed at the awl longer than he was willing to confess; nor was it perhaps any great advantage to him, that an unexpected discovery determined him to quit his occupation.

About this time his nurse, who had always treated him as her own son. died; and it was natural for him to take care of those effects which by her death were, as he imagined, become his own: he therefore went to her house, opened her boxes, and examined her papers, among which he found some letters written to her by the Lady Mason, which informed him of his birth, and the reasons for which it was concealed.

* Savage's Preface to his Miscellanies.

He was no longer satisfied with the employment which had been allotted him, but thought he had a right to share the affluence of his mother; and therefore without scruple applied to her as her son, and made use of every art to awaken her tenderness, and attract her regard. But neither his letters, nor the interposition of those friends which his merit or his distress procured him, made any impression upon her mind. She still resolved to neglect, though she could no longer disown him.

It was to no purpose that he frequently solicited her to admit him to see her; she avoided him with the most vigilant precaution, and ordered him to be excluded from her house, by whomsoever he might be introduced, and what reason soever he might give for entering it.

Savage was at the same time so touched with the discovery of his real mother, that it was his frequent practice to walk in the dark evenings * for several hours before her door, in hopes of seeing her, as she might come by accident to the window, or cross her apartment with a candle in her hand.

But all his assiduity and tenderness were without effect, for he could neither soften her heart nor open her hand, and was reduced to the utmost miseries of want, while he was endeavouring to awaken the affection of a mother. He was therefore obliged to seek some other means of support; and, having no profession, became by necessity an author.

At this time the attention of the literary world was engrossed by the Bangorian controversy, which filled the press with pamphlets, and the coffee-houses with disputants. Of this subject, as most popular, he made choice for his first attempt, and, without any other knowledge of the question than he had casually collected from conversation, published a poem against the Bishop. *

What was the success or merit of this performance I know not: it was probably lost among the innumerable pamphlets to which that dispute gave occasion. Mr. Savage was himself in a little time ashamed of it, and endeavoured to suppress it, by destroying all the copies that he could collect.

He then attempted a more gainful kind of writing, + and in his eighteenth year offered to the stage a comedy borrowed from a Spanish plot, which was refused by the players, and was therefore given by him to Mr. Bullock, who, having more interest, made some slight alterations, and brought it upon the stage, under the title of 'Woman's a Riddle,' ‡ but allowed the unhappy author no part of the profit.

Not discouraged however at his repulse, he wrote two years afterwards 'Love in a Veil,' another comedy, borrowed likewise from the Spanish, but with little better success than before : for though it was received and acted, yet it appeared so late in the

* The Battle of the Pamphlets.

Jacob's Lives of the Dramatic Poets.

 \ddagger This play was printed first in Svo ; and afterwards in 12mo, the fifth edition.

year, that the author obtained no other advantage from it, than the acquaintance of Sir Richard Steele, and Mr. Wilks, by whom he was pitied, caressed, and relieved.

Sir Richard Steele, having declared in his favour with all the ardour of benevolence which constituted his character, promoted his interest with the utmost zeal, related his misfortunes, applauded his merit, took all the opportunities of recommending him, and asserted, that " the inhumanity of his mother had given him a right to find every good man his father." *

Nor was Mr. Savage admitted to his acquaintance only, but to his confidence, of which he sometimes related an instance too extraordinary to be omitted, as it afforded a very just idea of his patron's character.

He was once desired by Sir Richard, with an air of the utmost importance, to come very early to his house the next morning. Mr. Savage came as he had promised, found the chariot at the door, and Sir Richard waiting for him, and ready to go out. What was intended, and whither they were to go, Savage could not conjecture, and was not willing to inquire ; but immediately seated himself with Sir Richard. The coachman was ordered to drive, and they hurried with the utmost expedition to Hydeparl. corner, where they stopped at a petty tavern, and retired to a private room. Sir Richard then

informed him, that he intended to publish a pamphlet, and that he had desired him to come thither that he might write for him. They soon sat down to the work. Sir Richard dictated, and Savage wrote, till the dinner that had been ordered was put upon the table. Savage was surprized at the meanness of the entertainment, and after some hesitation ventured to ask for wine, which Sir Richard, not without reluctance, ordered to be brought. They then finished their dinner, and proceeded in their pamphlet, which they concluded in the afternoon.

Mr. Savage then imagined his task over, and expected that Sir Richard would call for the reckoning, and return home ; but his expectations deceived him, for Sir Richard told him that he was without money, and that the pamphlet must be sold before the dinner could be paid for ; and Savage was therefore obliged to go and offer their new production for sale for two guineas, which with some difficulty he obtained. Sir Richard then returned home, having retired that day only to avoid his creditors, and composed the pamphlet only to discharge his reckoning.

Mr. Savage related another fact equally uncommon, which, though it has no relation to his life, ought to be preserved. Sir Richard Steele having one day invited to his house a great number of persons of the first quality, they were surprized at the number of liveries which surrounded the table ; and after dinner, when wine and mirth had set them free from the observation of rigid ceremony, one of them inquired of Sir Richard, how such an expensive train

of domestics could be consistent with his fortune. Sir Richard very frankly confessed, that they were fellows of whom he would very willingly be rid. And being then asked why he did not discharge them, declared that they were bailiffs, who had introduced themselves with an execution, and whom, since he could not send them away, he had thought it convenient to embellish with liveries, that they might do him credit while they staid.

His friends were diverted with the expedient, and by paying the debt discharged their attendance, having obliged Sir Richard to promise that they should never again find him graced with a retinue of the same kind.

Under such a tutor Mr. Savage was not likely to learn prudence or frugality; and perhaps many of the misfortunes which the want of those virtues brought upon him in the following parts of his life, might be justly imputed to so unimproving an example.

Nor did the kindness of Sir Richard end in common favours. He proposed to have established him in some settled scheme of life, and to have contracted a kind of alliance with him, by marrying him to a natural daughter, on whom he intended to bestow a thousand pounds. But, though he was always lavish of future bounties, he conducted his affairs in such a manner, that he was very seldom able to keep his promises, or execute his own intentions : and, as he was never able to raise the sum which he had offered, the marriage was delayed. In the mean time

he was officiously informed, that Mr. Savage had ridiculed him; by which he was so much exasperated, that he withdrew the allowance which he had paid him, and never afterwards admitted him to his house.

It is not indeed unlikely that Savage might by his imprudence expose himself to the malice of a tale bearer; for his patron had many follies, which. as his discernment easily discovered, his imagination might sometimes incite him to mention too ludicrously. A little knowledge of the world is sufficient to discover that such weakness is very common, and that there are few who do not sometimes, in the wantonness of thoughtless mirth, or the heat of transient resentment, speak of their friends and benefactors with levity and contempt, though in their cooler moments they want neither sense of their kindness, nor reverence for their virtue : the fault therefore of Mr. Savage was rather negligence than ingratitude. But Sir Richard must likewise be acquitted of severity, for who is there that can patiently bear contempt from one whom he has relieved and supported, whose establishment he has laboured, and whose interest he has promoted?

He was now again abandoned to fortune without any other friend than Mr. Wilks; a man, who, whatever were his abilities or skill as an actor, deserves at least to be remembered for his virtues, * which are

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As it is a loss to mankind when any good action is forgotten, I shall insert another instance of Mr. Wilks's generosity, very little known. Mr. Smith, a gentleman educated at Dublin, being hindered by an impediment

not often to be found in the world, and perhaps less often in his profession than in others. To be humane, generous, and candid, is a very high degree of merit in any case; but those qualities deserve still greater praise, when they are found in that condition which makes almost every other man, for whatever reason, contemptuous, insolent, petulant, selfish, and brutal.

As Mr. Wilks was one of those to whom calamity seldom complained without relief, he naturally took an unfortunate wit into his protection, and not only assisted him in any casual distresses, but continued an equal and steady kindness to the time of his death.

By this interposition Mr. Savage once obtained from his mother * fifty pounds, and a promise of one hundred and fifty more; but it was the fate of this unhappy man, that few promises of any advantage to him were performed. His mother was infected,

in his pronunciation from engaging in orders, for which his friends designed him, left his own country, and came to London in quest of employment, but found his solicitations fruitless, and his necessitise every day more pressing. In this distress he wrote a tragedy, and offered it to the players, by whom it was rejected. Thus were his last hopes defeated, and he had no other prospect than of the most deplorable poyerty. But Mr. Wills thought his performance, though not perfect, at least worthy of some reward, and therefore offered him a benefit. This favour he improved with so much diligence, that the house afforded him a considerable sum, with which he went to Leyden, applied himself to the study of physic, and prosecuted his desired by the Czarina to recommend proper persons to introduce into Russia to practice and study of physic, Dr. Smith was one of those whom he had selected. He had a considerable pension settled on him at his arrival, and was one of the chief physicians at the Russian court.

* This I write upon the credit of the author of his life, which was published 1727.

among others, with the general madness of the Southsea traffic; and, having been disappointed in herexpectations, refused to pay what perhaps nothing but the prospect of sudden affluence prompted her to promise.

Being thus obliged to depend upon the friend. ship of Mr. Wilks, he was consequently an assiduous frequenter of the theatres; and in a short time the amusements of the stage took such possession of his mind, that he never was absent from a play in several years.

This constant attendance naturally procured him the acquaintance of the players, and among others, of Mrs. Oldfield, who was so much pleased with his conversation, and touched with his misfortunes, that she allowed him a settled pension of fifty pounds a year, which was during her life regularly paid.

That this act of generosity may receive its due praise, and that the good actions of Mrs. Oldfield may not be sullied by her general character, it is proper to mention what Mr. Savage often declared, in the strongest terms, that he never saw her alone, or in any other place than behind the scenes.

At her death he endeavoured to show his gratitude in the most decent manner, by wearing mourning as for a mother; but did not celebrate her in elegies, * because he knew that too great a profusion of praise would only have revived those faults, which

Chetwood in his History of th€ Stage, has printed a Poem on her
 death, which he ascribes to Mr. Savage.

his natural equity did not allow him to think less because they were committed by one who favoured him: but of which, though his virtue would not endeavour to palliate them, his gratitude would not suffer him to prolong the memory or diffuse the censure.

In his 'Wanderer,' he has indeed taken an opportunity of mentioning her; but celebrates her not for her virtue, but her beauty, an excellence which none ever denied her; this is the only encomium with which he has rewarded her liberality, and perhaps he has even in this been too lavish of his praise. He seems to have thought, that never to mention his benefactress would have an appearance of ingratitude, though to have dedicated any particular performance to her memory would have only betrayed an officious partiality, that, without exalting her character, would have depressed his own.

He had sometimes, by the kindness of Mr. Wilks, the advantage of a benefit, on which occasions he often received uncommon marks of regard and compassion; and was once told by the Duke of Dorset, that it was just to consider him as an injured nobleman, and that in his opinion, the nobility ought to think themselves obliged, without solicitation, to take every opportunity of supporting him by their countenance and patronage. But he had generally the mortification to hear that the whole interest of his mother was employed to frustrate his applications, and that she never left any expedient untried, by which he might be cut off from the possibility of

supporting life. The same disposition she endeavoured to diffuse among all those over whom nature or fortune gave her any influence, and indeed succeeded too well in her design: but could not always propagate her effrontery with her cruelty; for, some of those, whom she incited against him, were ashamed of their own conduct, and boasted of that relief which they never gave him.

In this censure I do not indiscriminately involve all his relations; for he has mentioned with gratitude the humanity of one lady, whose name I am now unable to recollect, and to whom therefore I cannot pay the praises which she deserves for having acted well in opposition to influence, precept, and example.

The punishment which our laws inflict upon those parents who murder their infants is well known, nor has its justice ever been contested ; but, if they deserve death who destroy a child in its birth, what pains can be severe enough for her who forbears to destroy him only to inflict sharper miseries upon him; who prolongs his life only to make him miserable: and who exposes him, without care and without pity, to the malice of oppression, the caprices of chance, and the temptations of poverty; who rejoices to see him overwhelmed with calamities; and, when his own industry, or the charity of others, has enabled him to rise for a short time above his miseries. planges him again into his former distress !

• The kindness of his friends not affording him any •constant supply, and the prospect of improving his

fortune by enlarging his acquaintance necessarily leading him to places of expense, he found it necessary * to endeavour once more at dramatic poetry, for which he was now better qualified by a more extensive knowledge, and longer observation. But having been unsuccessful in comedy, though rather for want of opportunities than genius, he resolved now to try whether he should not be more fortunate in exhibiting a tragedy.

The story which he chose for the subject, was that of Sir Thomas Overbury, a story well adapted to the stage, though perhaps not far enough removed from the present age to admit properly the fictions necessary to complete the plan; for the mind, which naturally loves truth, is always most offended with the violation of those truths of which we are most certain; and we of course conceive those facts most certain, which approach nearest to our own time.

Out of this story he formed a tragedy, which, if the circumstances in which he wrote it be considered, will afford at once an uncommon proof of strength of genius, and evenness of mind, of a serenity not to be ruffled, and an imagination not to be suppressed.

During a considerable part of the time in which he was employed upon this performance, he was without lodging, and often without meat; nor had he any other conveniences for study than the fields or the streets allowed him; there he used to walk and form his speeches, and afterwards step into a shop,

beg for a few moments the use of the pen and ink, and write down what he had composed upon paper which he had picked up by accident.

If the performance of a writer thus distressed is not perfect, its faults ought surely to be imputed to a cause very different from want of genius, and must rather excite pity than provoke censure.

But when under these discouragements the tragedy was finished, there yet remained the labour of introducing it on the stage, an undertaking, which, to an ingenuous mind, was in a very high degree vexatious and disgusting; for, having little interest or reputation, he was obliged to submit himself wholly to the players, and admit, with whatever reluctance, the emendations of Mr. Cibber, which he always considered as the disgrace of his performance.

He had indeed in Mr. Hill another critic of a very different class, from whose friendship he received great assistance on many occasions, and whom he never mentioned but with the utmost tenderness and regard. He had been for some time distinguished by him with very particular kindness, and on this occasion it was natural to apply to him as an author of an established character. He therefore sent this tragedy to him, with a short copy of verses,* in which he desired his correction. Mr. Hill, whose humanity and politeness are generally known, readily complied with his request; but as he is remarkable for singularity of sentiment, and bold experiment

* Printed in the late Collection of his Porms.

in language, Mr. Savage did not think this play much paproved by his innovation, and had even at that time the courage to reject several passages which he could not approve; and, what is still more laudable, Mr. Hill had the generosity not to resent the neglect of his alterations, but wrote the prologue and epilogue in which he touches on the circumstances of the author with great tenderness.

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After all these obstructions and compliances, he was only able to bring his play upon the stage in the summer, when the chief actors had retired, and the rest were in possession of the house for their own advantage. Among these, Mr. Savage was admitted to play the part of Sir Thomas Overbury, * by which he gained no great reputation, the theatre being a province for which nature seems not to have designed him; for neither his voice, look, nor gesture, were such as were expected on the stage; and he was so much ashamed of having been reduced to appear as a player, that he always blotted out his name from he list, when a copy of his tragedy was to be shown o his friends.

In the publication of his performance he was more ccessful, for the rays of genius that glimmered in , that glimmered through all the mists which poerty and Cibber had been able to spread over it, occured him the notice and esteem of many persons ninent for their rank, their virtue, and their wit.

* It was acted three nights, the first on June 12, 1725. In the winter season it was once more performed, for the author's benefit, Oct. 2: Of this play, acted, printed, and dedicated, the ac cumulated profits arose to a hundred pounds, which he thought at that time a very large sum, having been never master of so much before.

In the Dedication, * for which he received ter guineas, there is nothing remarkable. The Prefac contains a very liberal encomium on the bloomin excellence of Mr. Theophilus Cibber, which Mr. Sa vage could not in the latter part of his life see hi friends about to read without snatching the play out of their hands. The generosity of Mr. Hill did not end on this occasion ; for afterwards, when Mr. Savage's necessities returned, he encouraged a subscription to a Miscellany of Poems in a very extraordinary manner, by publishing his story in the ' Plain Dealer,' + with some affecting lines, which he asserts to have been written by Mr. Savage upon the treat. ment received by him from his mother, but of which he was himself the author, as Mr. Savage aftorward declared. These lines, and the paper in which they were inserted, had a very powerful effect upon all but his mother, whom, by making her cruelty more public, they only hardened in her aversion.

Mr. Hill not only promoted the subscription u the Miscellany, but furnished likewise the greates

† The 'Plain Dealer' was a periodical paper, written by Mr. Hill an Mr. Bond, whom Savage called the two contending powers of light and darkness. They wrote by turns each six Essays; and the character of the work was observed regularly to rise in Mr. Hill's weeks, and fall in Mr? Bond's.

^{*} To Herbert Tryst, Esq. of Herefordshire.

part of the poems of which it is composed, and particularly 'The Happy Man,' which he published as a specimen.

The subscriptions of those whom these papers should influence to patronize merit in distress, without any other solicitation, were directed to be left at Button's Coffee-house; and Mr. Savage going thither a few days afterwards, without expectation of any effect from his proposal, four d to his surprise seventy guineas, * which had been sent him in consequence of the compassion excited by Mr. Hill's pathetic representation.

To this Miscellany he wrote a Preface, in which he gives an account of his mother's cruelty in a very uncommon strain of humour, and with a gaiety of imagination, which the success of his subscription probably produced.

The Dedication is addressed to the Lady Mary. Wortley Montagu, whom he flatters without reserve, and, to confess the truth, with very little art. + The

* The names of those who so generously contributed to his relief, having been mentioned in a former account, ought not to be omitted here. They were the Dutchess of Cleveland, Lady Cheyney, Lady Castlemain, Lady Gower, Lady Lechmere, the Dutchess Dowager and Dutchess of Rutland, Lady Stafford, the Countess Dowager of Warwick, Mrs. Mary Floyer, Mrs. Sofuel Noel, Duke of Rutland, Lord Gainsborough, Lord Milsington, Mr. John Savage.

+ This the following extract from it will prove:

"Since our country have been honoured with the glory of your wit, as elevated and immortal as your soul, it no longer remains a doubt whet' ar your sex have strength of mind in proportion to their sweetness. There is something in your verses as distinguished as your air.—They are as strong as truth, as deep as reason, as clea. as innocence, and as smooth as beauty. —They contain a namelees and peculiar mixture of force and grace which

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same observation may be extended to all his dedications; his compliments are constrained and violent, heaped together without the grace of order, or the decency of introduction: he seems to have written his panegyrics for the perusal only of his patrons, and to imagine that he had no other task than to pamper them with praises however gross, and that flattery would make its way to the heart, without the assistance of elegance or invention.

Soon afterwards the death of the king furnished a general subject for a poetical contest, in which Mr. Savage engaged, and is allowed to have carried the prize of honour from his competitors: but I know not whether he gained by his performance any other advantage than the increase of his reputation; though it must certainly have been with farther views that he prevailed upon himself to attempt a species of writing, of which all the topics had been long before exhausted, and which was made at once difficult by the multitudes that had failed in it, and those that had succeeded.

He was now advancing in reputation, and though frequently involved in very distressful perplexities, appeared however to be gaining upon mankind, when both his fame and his life were endangered by an

is at once so movingly serene, and so majestically lovely, that it is too amiable to appear any where but in your eyes and in your writings-

[&]quot; As fortune is not more my enemy than I am the enemy of flattery, I know not how I can forbear this application to your Ladyship, because there is scarce a possibility that I should say more than I believe, when I am speaking of your excellence."

event, of which it is not yet determined whether it ought to be mentioned as a crime or a calamity.

On the 20th of November, 1727, Mr. Savage came from Richmond, where he then lodged, that he might pursue his studies with less interruption, with an intent to discharge another lodging which he had in Westminster; and accidentally meeting two gentlemen his acquaintances, whose names were Merchant and Gregory, he went in with them to a neighbouring coffee-house, and sat drinking till it was late, it being in no time of Mr. Savage's life any part of his character to be the first of the company that desired to separate. He would willingly have gone to bed in the same house; but there was not room for the whole company, and therefore they agreed to ramble about the streets, and divert themselves with such amusements as should offer themselves till morning.

In this walk they happened unluckily to discover a light in Robinson's coffee-house, near Charing-cross, and therefore went in. Merchant with some rudeness demanded a room, and was told that there was a good fire in the next parlour, which the company were about to leave, being then paying their reckoning. Merchant, not satisfied with this answer, rushed into the room, and was followed by his companions. He then petulantly placed himself between the company and the fire, and soon after kicked down the table. This produced a quarrel, swords were drawn on both sides, and one Mr. James Sinclair was killed. Savage, having likewise wounded a maid that held him, forced his way with Merchant out of the house: but being intimidated and confused, without resolution either to fly or stay, they were taken in a back court by one of the company, and some soldiers, whom he had called to his assistance.

Being secured and guarded that night, they were in the morning carried before three justices, who committed them to the Gate-house, from whence, upon the death of Mr. Sinclair, which happened the same day, they were removed in the night to Newgate, where they were however treated with some distinction, exempted from the ignominy of chains, and confined, not among the common criminals, but in the press-yard.

When the day of trial came, the court was crowded in a very unusual manner; and the public appeared to interest itself as in a cause of general concern. The witnesses against Mr. Savage and his friends were, the woman who kept the house, which was a house of ill fame, and her maid, the men who were in the room with Mr. Sinclair, and a woman of the town, who had been drinking with them, and with whom one of them had been seen in bed. They swore in general, that Merchant gave the provocation, which Savage and Gregory drew their swords to justify; that Savage drew first, and that he stabbed Sinclair when he was not in a posture of defence, or while Gregory commanded his sword; that after he had given the thrust he turned pale, and would have retired, but the maid clung round him, and one of the company endeavoured to detain him, from whom

he broke, by cutting the maid on the head, but was afterwards taken in a courf.

There was some difference in their depositions; one did not see Savage give the wound, another saw it given when Sinclair held his point towards the ground; and the woman of the town asserted, that she did not see Sinclair's sword at all: this difference, however, was very far from amounting to inconsistency; but it was sufficient to show, that the hurry of the dispute was such, that it was not easy to discover the truth with relation to particular circumstances, and that therefore some deductions were to be made from the credibility of the testimonies.

Sinclair had declared several times before his death, that he had received his wound from Savage: nor did Savage at his trial deny the fact, but endeavoured partly to extenuate it, by urging the suddenness of the whole action, and the impossibility of any ill design or premeditated malice; and partly to justify it by the necessity of self-defence, and the hazard of his own life, if he had lost that opportunity of giving the thrust: he observed, that neither reason nor law obliged a man to wait for the blow which was threatened, and which, if he should suffer it, he might never be able to return; that it was allowable to prevent an assault, and to preserve life by taking away that of the adversary by whom it was endangered.

With regard to the violence with which he endeavoured to escape, he declared, that it was not his design to fly from justice, or decline a trial, but to

avoid the expenses and severities of a prison; and that he intended to have appeared at the bar without compulsion.

This defence, which took up more than an hour, was heard by the multitude that thronged the court with the most attentive and respectful silence: those who thought he ought not to be acquitted, owned that applause could not be refused him; and those who before pitied his misfortunes, now reverenced his abilities.

The witnesses which appeared against him were proved to be persons of characters which did not entitle them to much credit; a common strumpet, a woman by whom strumpets were entertained, and a man by whom they were supported: and the character of Savage was by several persons of distinction asserted to be that of a modest inoffensive man, not inclined to broils or to insolence, and who had, to that time, been only known for his misfortunes and his wit.

Had his audience been his judges, he had undoubtedly been acquitted; but Mr. Page, who was then upon the bench, treated him with his usual insolence and severity, and when he had summed up the evidence, endeavoured to exasperate the jury; as Mr. Savage used to relate it, with this eloquent harangue:

"Gentlemen of the jury, you are to consider that Mr. Gavage is a very great man, a much greater man than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; that he wears very fine clothes, much finer clothes than you or I,

gentlemen of the jury; that he has abundance of money in his pocket, much more money than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; but, gentlemen of the jury, is it not a very hard case, gentlemen of the jury, that Mr. Savage should therefore kill you or me, gentlemen of the jury?"

Mr. Savage, hearing his defence thus misrepresented, and the men who were to decide his fate incited against him by invidious comparisons, resolutely asserted, that his cause was not candidly explained, and began to recapitulate what he had before said with regard to his condition, and the necessity of endeavouring to escape the expenses of imprisonment; but the judge, having ordered him to be silent, and repeated his orders without effect, commanded that he should be taken from the bar by force.

The jury then heard the opinion of the judge, that good characters were of no weight against positive evidence, though they might turn the scale where it was doubtful; and that though, when two men attack each other, the death of either is only manslaughter; but where one is the aggressor, as in the case before them, and, in pursuance of his first attack, kills the other, the law supposes the action, however sudden, to be malicious. They then deliberated upon their verdict, and determined that Mr. Savage and Mr. Gregory were guilty of murder; and Mr. Merchant, who had no sword, only of manslaughter.

Thus ended this memorable trial, which lasted eight hours. Mr. Savage and Mr. Gregory were conducted back to prison, where they were more closely confined, and loaded with irons of fifty pounds weight: four days afterwards they were sent back to the court to receive sentence; on which occasion Mr. Savage made, as far as it could be retained in memory, the following speech:

" It is now, my Lord, too late to offer any thing by way of defence or vindication; nor can we expect from your Lordships, in this court, but the sentence which the law requires you, as judges, to pronounce against men of our calamitous condition .- But we are also persuaded, that as mere men, and out of this seat of rigorous justice, you are susceptive of the tender passions, and too humane not to commiserate the unhappy situations of those, whom the law sometimes perhaps-exacts-from you to pronounce upon. No doubt you distinguish between offences which arise out of premeditation, and a disposition habituated to vice or immorality, and transgressions, which are the unhappy and unforeseen effects of casual absence of reason, and sudden impulse of passion: we therefore hope you will contribute all you can to an extension of that mercy, which the gentlemen of the jury have been pleased to show Mr. Merchant, who (allowing facts as sworn against us by the evidence) has led us into this our calamity. I hope this will not be construed as if we meant to reflect upon that gentleman, or remove any thing from us upon him or that we repine the more at our fate, because he has no participation of it : No, my Lord ! For my part. I declare nothing could more soften my grief,

than to be without any companion in so great a misfortune." *

Mr. Savage had now no hopes of life, but from the mercy of the crown, which was very earnestly solicited by his friends, and which, with whatever difficulty the story may obtain belief, was obstructed only by his mother.

To prejudice the Queen against him, she made use of an incident, which was omitted in the order of time, that it might be mentioned together with the purpose which it was made to serve. Mr. Savage, when he had discovered his birth, had an incessant desire to speak to his mother, who always avoided him in public, and refused him admission into her house. One evening walking, as it was his custom, in the street that she inhabited, he saw the door of her house by accident open; he entered it, and, finding no person in the passage to hinder him, went up stairs to salute her. She discovered him before he entered her chamber, alarmed the family with the most distressful outcries, and, when she had by her screams gathered them about her, ordered them to drive out of the house that villain, who had forced himself in upon her, and endeavoured to murder her. Savage, who had attempted with the most submissive tenderness to soften her rage, hearing her utter so detestable an accusation, thought it prudent to retire; and, I believe, never attempted afterwards to cpeak to her.

But, shocked as he was with her falsehood and her cruelty, he imagined that she intended no other use of her lie, than to set herself free from his embraces and solicitations, and was very far from suspecting that she would treasure it in her memory as an instrument of future wickedness, or that she would endeavour for this fictitious assault to deprive him of his life.

But when the Queen was solicited for his pardon, and informed of the severe treatment which he had suffered from his judge, she answered, that, however unjustifiable might be the manner of his trial, or whatever extenuation the action for which he was condemned might admit, she could not think that man a proper object of the King's mercy, who had been capable of entering his mother's house in the night, with an intent to murder her.

By whom this atrocious calumny had been transmitted to the Queen; whether she that invented had the front to relate it; whether she found any one weak enough to credit it, or corrupt enough to concur with her in her hateful design; I know not: but methods had been taken to persuade the Queen so strongly of the truth of it, that she for a long time refused to hear any one or those who petitioned for his life.

Thus had Savage perished by the evidence of a bawd, a strumpet, and his mother, had not justice and compassion procured him an advocate of rank too great to be rejected unheard, and of virtue too emirent to be heard without being believed. His

merit and his calamities happened to reach the ear of the Countess of Hertford, who engaged in his support with all the tenderness that is excited by pity, and all the zeal which is kindled by generosity; and, demanding an audience of the Queen, laid before her the whole series of his mother's cruelty, exposed the improbability of an accusation by which he was charged with an intent to commit a murder that could produce no advantage, and soon convinced her how little his former conduct could deserve to be mentioned as a reason for extraordinary severity.

The interposition of this Lady was so successful, that he was soon after admitted to bail, and on the 9th of March, 1728, pleaded the King's pardon.

It is natural to inquire upon what motives his mother could persecute him in a manner so outrageous and implacable; for what reason she could employ all the arts of malice, and all the snares of calumny, to take away the life of her own son, of a son who never injured her, who was never supported by her expense, nor obstructed any prospect of pleasure or advantage: why she would endeavour to destroy him by a lie—a lie which could net gain credit, but must vanish of itself at the first moment of examination, and of which only this can be said to make it probable, that it may be observed from her conduct, that the most execrable crimes are sometimes committed without apparent temptation.

This mother is still alive * and may perhaps even

* She died October 11, 1753, in Old Bond-street, aged above fours ore.

yet, though her malice was so often defeated, enjoy the pleasure of reflecting, that the life, which she often endeavoured to destroy, was at least shortened by her maternal offices; that though she could not transport her son to the plantations, bury him in the shop of a mechanic, or hasten the hand of the public executioner, she has yet had the satisfaction of embittering all his hours, and forcing him into exigencies that hurried on his death.

It is by no means necessary to aggravate the enormity of this woman's conduct, by placing it in opposition to that of the Countess of Hertford; no one can fail to observe how much more amiable it is to relieve, than to oppress, and to rescue innocence from destruction, than to destroy without an injury.

Mr. Savage, during his imprisonment, his trial, and the time in which he lay under sentence of death, behaved with great firmness and equality of mind, and confirmed by his fortitude the esteem of those who before admired him for his abilities.* The peculiar circumstances of his life were made more generally known by a short account, t which was then published, and of which several thousands were

* During his confinement he wrote a letter to his mother; which he searto Theophilus Cibber, that it might be transmitted to her through Mr. Wilks.—In his letter to Cibber, he says.—'As to death, I am easy, and dare meet it like a man—all that touches me is the concern of my friends, and a reconcilement with my mother—I cannot express the agony I felt when I wrote the letter to her.—If you can-find any decent excuse for showing it to Mrs. Oldfield, do; for I would have all my friends (and that admirable lady in particular) be satisfied I have done my duty towards it—Dr. Young Dday sent me a letter most passionately kind."

† Written by Mr. Beckingham and another gentleman-

in a few weeks dispersed over the nation: and the compassion of mankind operated so powerfully in his favour, that he was enabled, by frequent presents, not only to support himself, but to assist Mr. Gregory in prison; and, when he was pardoned and released, he found the number of his friends not lessened.

The nature of the act for which he had been tried was in itself doubtful; of the evidences which appeared against him, the character of the man was not unexceptionable, that of the woman notoriously infamous; she, whose testimony chiefly influenced the jury to condemn him, afterwards retracted her assertions. He always himself denied that he was drunk, as had been generally reported. Mr. Gregory, who is now (1744) Collector of Antigua, is said to declare him far less criminal than he was imagined, even by some who favoured him; and Page himself afterwards confessed, that he had treated him with uncommon rigour. When all these particulars are rated together, perhaps the memory of Savage may not be much sullied by his trial.

Some time after he obtained his liberty, he met in the street the woman who had sworn with so much malignity against him. She informed him, that she was in distress, and with a degree of confidence not easily attainable, desired him to relieve her. He, instead of insulting her misery, and taking pleasure in the calamities of one who had brought his lifinto danger, reproved her gently for her perjury;

and changing the only guinea that he had, divided it equally between her and himself.

This is an action which in some ages would have made a saint, and perhaps in others a hero, and which, without any hyperbolical encomiums, must be allowed to be an instance of uncommon generosity, an act of complicated virtue; by which he at once relieved the poor, corrected the vicious, and forgave an enemy; by which he at once remitted the strongest provocations, and exercised the most ardent charity.

Compassion was indeed the distinguishing quality of Savage; he never appeared inclined to take advantage of weakness, to attack the defenceless, or to press upon the falling: whoever was distressed, was certain at least of his good wishes: and when he could give no assistance to extricate them from misfortunes, he endeavoured to sooth them by sympathy and tenderness.

But when his heart was not softened by the eight of misery, he was sometimes obstinate in his resentment, and did not quickly lose the remembrance of an injury. He always continued to speak with anger of the insolence and partiality of Page, and a short time before his death revenged it by a satire. *

It is natural to inquire in what terms Mr. Savage spoke of this fatal action, when the danger was over, and he was under no necessity of using any art to set his conduct in the fairest light. He was not willing the dwell upon it; and, if he transiently mentioned it,

* Printed in the late collection.

appeared neither to consider himself as a murderer, nor as a man wholly free from the guilt of blood. * How much and how long he regretted it, appeared in a poem which he published many years afterwards. On occasion of a copy of verses, in which the failings of good men were recounted, and in which the author had endeavoured to illustrate his position, that "the best may sometimes deviate from virtue," by an instance of murder committed by Savage in the heat of wine, Savage remarked, that it was no very just representation of a good man, to suppose him liable to drunkenness, and disposed in his riots to cut throats.

He was now indeed at liberty, but was, as before, without any other support than accidental favours and uncertain patronage afforded him; sources by which he was sometimes very liberally supplied, and which at other times were suddenly stopped; so that he spent his life between want and plenty; or, what was yet worse, between beggary and extravagance; for, as whatever he received was the gift of chance, which might as well favour him at one time as another, he was tempted to squander what he had, because he always hoped to be immediately supplied.

Another cause of his profusion was the absurd kindness of his friends, who at once rewarded and enjoyed his abilities, by treating him at taverns, and habituating him to pleasures which he could not afford to enjoy, and which he was not able to den-

* In one of his letters he styles it " a fatal quarrel, but too well known."

himself, though he purchased the luxury of a single night by the anguish of cold and hunger for a week.

The experience of these inconveniences determined him to endeavour after some settled income, which, having long found submission and intreaties fruitless. he attempted to extort from his mother by rougher methods. He had now, as he acknowledged, lost that tenderness for her, which the whole series of her cruelty had not been able wholly to repress, till he found, by the efforts which she made for his destruction, that she was not content with refusing to assist him, and being neutral in his struggles with poverty, but was ready to snatch every opportunity of adding to his misfortunes; and that she was now to be considered as an enemy implacably malicious, whom nothing but his blood could satisfy. He therefore threatened to harass her with lampoons, and to publish a copious narrative of her conduct. unless she consented to purchase an exemption from infamy, by allowing him a pension.

This expedient proved successful. Whether shame still survived, though virtue was extinct, or whether her relations had more delicacy than herself, and imagined that some of the darts which satire might point at her would glance upon them; Lord Tyrconnel, whatever were his motives, upon his promise to lay aside his design of exposing the cruelty of his mother, received him into his family, treated him as is equal, and engaged to allow him a pension of two hundred pounds a year.

This was the golden part of Mr. Savage's life;

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and for some time he had no reason to complain of fortune ; his appearance was splendid, his expenses large, and his acquaintance extensive. He was courted by all who endeavoured to be thought men of genius, and caressed by all who valued themselves upon a refined taste. To admire Mr. Savage, was a proof of discernment; and to be acquainted with him. was a title to poetical reputation. His presence was sufficient to make any place of public entertainment popular; and his approbation and example constituted the fashion. So powerful is genius, when it is invested with the glitter of affluence ! Men willingly pay to fortune that regard which they owe to merit. and are pleased when they have an opportunity at once of gratifying their vanity, and practising their duty.

This interval of prosperity furnished him with opportunities of enlarging his knowledge of human nature, by contemplating life from its highest gradations to its lowest; and, had he afterwards applied to dramatic poetry, he would perhaps not have had many superiors; for, as he never suffered any scene to pass before his eyes without notice, he had treasured in his mind all the different combinations of passions, and the innumerable mixtures of vice and virtue, which distinguish one character from another; and, as his conception was strong, his expressions were clear, he easily received impressions from objects, and very forcibly transmitted them to others. Of his exact observation on human life he has left a proof, which would do honour to the greatest

names, in a small pamphlet, called 'The Author top be Let,' * where he introduces Iscariot Hackney, e prostitute scribbler, giving an account of his birth, his education, his disposition and morals, habits of life, and maxims of conduct. In the introduction the are related many secret histories of the petty writers of that time, but sometimes mixed with ungenerous a reflections on their birth, their circumstances, or those to of their relations; nor can it be denied, that some to passages are such as Iscariot Hackney might himself le have produced.

He was accused likewise of living in an appearance of friendship with some whom he satirised, and of making use of the confidence which he gained by a seeming kindness, to discover failings and expose them: it must be confessed, that Mr. Savage's esteem was no very certain possession, and that he would lampoon at one time those whom he had praised at another.

It may be alleged, that the same man may change his principles; and that he, who was once deservedly commended, may be afterwards satirised with equal justice: or, that the poet was dazzled with the appearance of virtue, and found the man whom he had celebrated, when he had an opportunity of examined him more narrowly, unworthy of the panegyric which he had too hastily bestowed; and that, as a false satire ought to be recanted, for the sake of him whose reputation may be injured, false

* Printed in his Works, V ol. II. 123.

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to praise ought likewise to be obviated, lest the distincerion between vice and virtue should be lost, lest a th, bad man should be trusted upon the credit of his enof comiast, or lest others should endeavour to obtain on the like praises by the same means.

But though these excuses may be often plausible, and sometimes just, they are very seldom satisfactory to mankind; and the writer, who is not constant to his subject, quickly sinks into contempt, his satire all loses its force, and his panegyric its value; and he is only considered at one time as a flatterer, and as a r- calumniator at another.

To avoid these imputations, it is only necessary to billow the rules of virtue, and to preserve an unvaned regard to truth. For though it is undoubtedly possible that a man, however cautious, may be sometimes deceived by an artful appearance of virtue, or by false evidences of guilt, such errors will not be frequent; and it will be allowed, that the name of an author would never have been made contemptible, had no man ever said what he did not think, or misled others but when he was himself deceived.

The Author to be Let' was first published in a single pamphlet, and afterwards inserted in a collection of pieces relating to the Dunciad, which were addressed by Mr. Savage to the Earl of Middlesex, in a * dedication which he was prevailed upon to sign, though he did not write it, and in which there are some positions, that the true author would

* See his Works, Vol. II. p. 253.

perhaps not have published under his own naminuc and on which Mr. Savage afterwards reflected wirsrit no great satisfaction ; the enumeration of the bawrit effects of the uncontrouled freedom of the press, an A the assertion that the "liberties taken by the write dica of Journals with their superiors were exorbitant an whi unjustifiable," very ill became men, who have then sert selves not always shown the exactest regard to thatte laws of subordination in their writings, and whistra have often satirised those that at least thought them selves their superiors, as they were eminent for their Mr. hereditary rank, and employed in the highest office that of the kingdom. But this is only an instance a com that partiality which almost every man indulge was with regard to himself: the liberty of the press i and a blessing when we are inclined to write agains info others, and a calamity when we find ourselves over borne by the multitude of our assailants; as the hy power of the crown is always thought too great by an those who suffer by its influence, and too little by him those in whose favour it is exerted ; and a standing fan army is generally accounted necessary by those why ag command, and dangerous and oppressive by thos who support it.

Mr. Savage was likewise very far from believing that the letters annexed to each species of bad poet in the Bathos were, as he was directed to assert, "set down at random ;" for when he was charged by on of his friends with putting his name to such an improbability, he had no other answer to make than "that "he did not think of it ;" and his friend had to

mnuch tenderness to reply, that next to the crime of vibriting contrary to what he thought, was that of bawriting without thinking.

an After having remarked what is false in this detedication, it is proper that I observe the impartiality an which I recommend, by declaring what Savage asmerted; that the account of the circumstances which that attended the publication of the Dunciad, however the strange and improbable, was exactly true.

The publication of this piece at this time raised Mr. Savage a great number of enemies among those that were attacked by Mr. Pope, with whom he was considered as a kind of confederate, and whom he was suspected of supplying with private intelligence and secret incidents: so that the ignominy of an informer was added to the terror of a satirist.

That he was not altogether free from literary hypocrisy, and that he sometimes spoke one thing and wrote another, cannot be denied; because he himself confessed, that, when he lived with great familiarity with Dennis, he wrote an epigram * against him.

Mr. Savage, however, set all the malice of all the

* This epigram was, I believe, never published.

⁴⁴ Should Dennis publish you had stabb'd your brother, Lampoon'd your monarch, or debauch'd your mother; Say, what revenge on Dennis can be had, Too dull for laughter, for reply too mad? ⁵ On one so poor you cannot take the law, On one so old your swort ou draw.

Uncaged then, let the harmless monster rage, Secure in dulness, madness, want and age,³⁹ pigmy writers at defiance, and thought the frien (ship of Mr. Pope cheaply purchased by being event posed to their censure and their hatred; nor had oth any reason to repent of the preference, for he four the Mr. Pope a steady and unalienable friend almost that the end of his life.

About this time, notwithstanding his avowed net trality with regard to party, he published a panegyr of to on Sir Robert Walpole, for which he was rewarded in by him with twenty guineas, a sum not very large no if either the excellence of the performance, or the obl affluence of the patron, be considered: but greatefue than he afterwards obtained from a person of ye of higher rank, and more desirous in appearance of mi being distinguished as a patron of literature.

As he was very far from approving the conduct of con Sir Robert Walpole, and in conversation mentione eff him sometimes with aerimony, and generally with contempt : as he was one of those who were always ro zealous in their assertions of the justice of the late opposition, jealous of the rights of the people, and is alarmed by the long-continued triumph of the Court it was natural to ask him what could induce him to employ his poetry in praise of that man who was, his opinion, an enemy to liberty, and an oppressor of his country. He alleged, that he was then dependent upon the Lord Tyrconnel, who was an implicit follower of the ministry ; and that being enjoined by him, not without menaces, to write in praise of his leader, he had not resolution sufficient to sacrifice the pleasure of affluence to that of integrity.

en On this and on many other occasions, he was exceedy to lament the misery of living at the tables of dhother men, which was his fate from the beginning to unthe end of his life; for I know not whether he ever at thad, for three months together, a settled habitation, in which he could claim a right of residence.

To this unhappy state it is just to impute much read the inconstancy of his conduct; for though a readed dimess to comply with the inclinations of others was ge no part of his natural character, yet he was sometimes the obliged to relax his obstinacy, and submit his own trajudgment, and even his virtue, to the government ye of those by whom he was supported : so that if his a miseries were sometimes the consequences of his faults, he ought not yet to be wholly excluded from a compassion, because his faults were very often the effects of his misfortunes.

In this gay period * of his life, while he was surys rounded by affluence and pleasure, he published to 'The Wanderer,' a moral poem, of which the design may is comprized in these lines:

> I fly all public care, all venal strife; To try the still compared with active life; To prove, by these, the sons of men may owe The fruits of bliss to bursting flouds of wo; That even calamity, by thought refined, Inspirits and adorns the thinking mind.

And more distinctly in the following passage :

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By wo, the soul to daring action swells; By wo, in plaintless patience it excels:

* 1729.

From patience, prudent clear experience springs, And traces knowledge through the course of things ! Thence hope is formed, thence fortitude, success, Renown.--whate'er men covet and caress.

This performance was always considered by himself as his master-piece; and Mr. Pope, when he asked his opinion of it, told him, that he read it once over, and was not displeased with it; that it gave him more pleasure at the second perusal, and delighted him still more at the third.

It has been generally objected to 'The Wanderer,' that the disposition of the parts is irregular, that the design is obscure, and the plan perplexed; that the images, however beautiful, succeed each other without order: and that the whole performance is not so much a regular fabric, as a heap of shining materials thrown together by accident, which strikes rather with the solemn magnificence of a stupendous ruin, than the elegant grandeur of a finished pile.

This criticism is universal, and therefore it is reasonable to believe it at least in a great degree just; but Mr. Savage was always of a contrary opinion, and thought his drift could only be missed by negligence or stupidity, and that the whole plan was regular, and the parts distinct.

It was never denied to abound with strong representations of nature, and just observations upon life; and it may easily be observed, that most of his pictures have an evident tendency to illustrate his first great position, "that good is the consequence of evil." The sun that burns up the mountains, fruc, tifies the vales; the deluge that rushes down the

broken rocks with dreadful impetuosity, is separated into purling brooks; and the rage of the hurricane purifies the air.

Even in this poem he has not been able to forbear one touch upon the cruelty of his mother, which, though remarkably delicate and tender, is a proof how deep an impression it had upon his mind.

This must be at least acknowledged, which ought to be thought equivalent to many other excellences, that this poem can promote no other purposes than those of virtue, and that it is written with a very strong sense of the efficacy of religion.

But my province is rather to give the history of Mr. Savage's performances than to display their beauties, or to obviate the criticisms which they have occasioned; and therefore I shall not dwell upon the particular passages which deserve applause: I shall neither show the excellence of his descriptions, nor expatiate on the terrific portrait of suicide, nor point out the artful touches, by which he has distinguished the intellectual features of the rebels, who suffer death in his last canto. It is, however, proper to observe, that Mr. Savage always declared the characters wholly fictitious, and without the least allusion to any real persons or actions.

From a poem so diligently laboured, and so successfully finished, it might be reasonably expected that he should have gained considerable advantage; nor can it, without some degree of indignation and concern, be told, that he sold the copy for ten guineas, of which he afterwards returned two, that the

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two last sheets of the work might be reprinted, of which he had in his absence intrusted the correction to a friend, who was too indolent to perform it with accuracy.

A superstitious regard to the correction of his sheets was one of Mr. Savage's peculiarities; he often altered, revised, recurred to his first reading or punctuation, and again adopted the alteration; he was dubious and irresolute without end, as on a question of the last importance, and at last was seldom satisfied : the intrusion or omission of a comma was sufficient to discompose him, and he would lament an error of a single letter as a heavy calamity. In one of his letters relating to an impression of some verses, he remarks, that he had, with regard to the correction of the proof, " a spell upon him ;" and indeed the anxiety with which he dwelt upon the minutest and most trifling niceties, deserved no other name than that of fascination.

That he sold so valuable a performance for so small price, was not to be imputed either to necessity, by which the learned and ingenious are often obliged to submit to very hard conditions; or to avarice, by which the booksellers are frequently incited to oppress that genius by which they are supported; but to that intemperate desire of pleasure, and habitnal slavery to his passions, which involved him in many perplexities. He happened at that time to be engaged in the pursuit of some trifling gratification, and, being without money for the present occasion, sold his poem to the first

bidder, and perhaps for the first price that was proposed, and would probably have been content with less, if less had been offered him.

This poem was addressed to the Lord Tyrconnel, not only in the first lines, but in a formal dedication filled with the highest strains of panegyric, and the warmest professions of gratitude, but by no means remarkable for delicacy of connexion or elegance of style.

These praises in a short time he found himself inclined to retract, being discarded by the man on whom he had bestowed them, and whom he then immediately discovered not to have deserved them. Of this quarrel, which every day made more bitter, Lord Tyrconnel and Mr. Savage assigned very different reasons, which might perhaps all in reality concur, though they were not all convenient to be alleged by either party. Lord Tyrconnel affirmed, that it was the constant practice of Mr. Savage to enter a tavern with any company that proposed it, drink the most expensive wines with great profusion, and, when the reckoning was demanded, to be without money : if, as it often happened, his company were willing to defray his part, the affair ended without any ill consequences ; but, if they were refractory, and expected that the wine should be raid for by him that drank it, his method of composition was, to take them with him to his own apartment, assume the government of the house, and order the butler in an imperious manner to set the best wine in the cellar before his company, who often drank till they

forgot the respect due to the house in which they were entertained, indulged themselves in the utmost extravagance of merriment, practised the most licentious frolics, and committed all the outrages of drunkenness.

Nor was this the only charge which Lord Tyrconnel brought against him : Having given him a collection of valuable books, stamped with his own arms, he had the mortification to see them in a short time exposed to sale upon the stalls, it being usual with Mr. Savage, when he wanted a small sum, to take his books to the pawn-broker.

Whoever was acquainted with Mr. Savage easily credited both these accusations: for having been obliged, from his first entrance into the world, to subsist upon expedients, affluence was not able to exalt him above them ; and so much was he delighted with wine and conversation, and so long had he been accustomed to live by chance, that he would at any time go to the tavern without scruple, and trust for the reckoning to the liberality of his company, and frequently of company to whom he was very little known. This conduct indeed very seldom drew upon him those inconveniences that might be feared by any other person; for his conversation was so entertaining, and his address so pleasing, that few thought the pleasure which they received from him dearly purchased by paying for his wine. It was his peculiar happiness, that he scarcely ever found a stranger, whom he did not leave a friend ; but it

must likewise be added, that he had not often a friend long, without obliging him to become a stranger.

Mr. Savage, on the other hand, declared, that Lord Tyrconnel * quarrelled with him, because he would not subtract from his own luxury and extravagance what he had promised to allow him, and that his resentment was only a plea for the violation of his promise. He asserted, that he had done nothing that ought to exclude him from that subsistence which he thought not so much a favour as a debt, since it was offered him upon conditions which he he had never broken ; and that his only fault was, that he could not be supported with nothing.

He acknowledged, that Lord Tyrconnel often exhorted him to regulate his method of life, and not to spend all his nights in taverns, and that he appeared desirous that he would pass those hours with him, which he so freely bestowed upon others. This demand Mr. Savage considered as a censure of his conduct, which he could never patiently bear, and which in the latter and cooler parts of his life, was so offensive to him, that he declared it as his resolution, "to spurn that friend who should presume to dictate to him ;" and it is not likely, that in his earlier years he received admonitions with more calmness.

He was likewise inclined to resent such expecta-

* His expression in one of his letters was, "that Lord Tyrconnel had involved his estate, and therefore poorly sought an occasion to quarrel with him."
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tions, as tending to infringe his liberty, of which he was very jealous, when it was necessary to the gratification of his passions, and declared, that the request was still more unreasonable, as the company to which he was to have been confined was insupportably disagreeable. This assertion affords another instance of that inconsistency of his writings with his conversation, which was so often to be observed. He forgot how lavishly he had in his dedication to 'The Wanderer.' extolled the delicacy and penetration, the humanity and generosity, the candour and politeness of the man whom, when he no longer loved him, he declared to be a wretch without understanding, without good-nature, and without justice: of whose name he thought himself obliged to leave no trace in any future edition of his writings; and accordingly blotted it out of that copy of 'The Wanderer' which was in his hands

During his continuance with the Lord Tyrconnel, he wrote 'The Triumph of Health and Mirth,' on the recovery of Lady Tyrconnel from a languishing illness. This performance is remarkable, not only for the gaiety of the ideas, and the melody of the numbers, but for the agreeable fiction upon which it is formed. Mirth overwhelmed with sorrow, for the sickness of her favourite, takes a flight in quest of her sister Health, whom she finds reclined upon the brow of a lofty mountain, amidst the fragrance of perpetual spring, with the breezes of the morning sporting about her. Being splicited by her sister Mirth, she readily promises her assistance, flies away

in a cloud, and impregnates the waters of Bath with new virtues, by which the sickness of Belinda is relieved.

As the reputation of his abilities, the particular circumstances of his birth and life, the splendour of his appearance, and the distinction which was for some time paid him by Lord Tyrconnel, entitled him to familiarity with persons of higher rank than those to whose conversation he had been before admitted ; he did not fail to gratify that curiosity. which induced him to take a nearer view of those whom their birth, their employments, or their fortunes, necessarily place at a distance from the greatest part of mankind, and to examine whether their merit was magnified or diminished by the medium through which it was contemplated ; whether the splendour with which they dazzled their admirers was inherent in themselves, or only reflected on them by the objects that surrounded them : and whether great men were selected for high stations, or high stations made great men.

For this purpose he took all opportunities of conversing familiarly with those who were most conspicuous at that time for their power or their influence; he watched their looser moments, and examined their domestic behaviour, with that acuteness which nature had given him, and which the uncommon variety of his life had contributed to increase, and that inquisitiveness which must always be produced in a vigorous mind, by an absolute freedom from all pressing or domestic engagements. His discernment was quick, and therefore he soon found in every person, and in every affair, something that deserved attention; he was supported by others, without any care for himself, and was therefore at leisure to pursue his observations.

More circumstances to constitute a critic on human life could not easily concur; nor indeed could any man, who assumed from accidental advantages more praise than he could justly claim from his real merit, admit any acquaintance more dangerous than that of Savage; of whom likewise it must be confessed, that abilities really exalted above the common level, or virtue refined from passion, or proof against corruption, could not easily find an abler judge, or a warmer advocate.

What was the result of Mr. Savage's inquiry, though he was not much accustomed to conceal his discoveries, it may not be entirely safe to relate, because the persons whose characters he criticised are powerful; and power and resentment are seldom strangers; nor would it perhaps be wholly just, because what he asserted in conversation might, though true in general, be heightened by some momentary ardour of imagination, and, as it can be delivered only from memory, may be imperfectly represented; so that the pictures at first aggravated, and then unskilfully copied, may be justly suspected to retain no great resemblance of the original.

•It may, however, be observed, that he did not appear to have formed very elevated ideas of those to whom the administration of affairs, or the conduct

of parties, has been intrusted; who have been considered as the advocates of the crown, or the guardians of the people; and who have obtained the most implicit confidence, and the loudest applauses. Of one particular person, who has been at one time so popular as to be generally esteemed, and at another so formidable as to be universally detested, he observed, that his acquisitions had been small, or that his capacity was narrow, and that the whole range of his mind was from obscenity to politics, and from politics to obscenity.

But the opportunity of indulging his speculations on great characters was now at an end. He was banished from the table of Lord Tyrconnel, and turned again adrift upon the world, without prospect of finding quickly any other harbour. As prudence was not one of the virtues by which he was distinguished, he had made no provision against a misfortune like this. And though it is not to be imagined but that the separation must for some time have been preceded by coldness, peevishness, or neglect, though it was undoubtedly the consequence of accumulated provocations on both sides; yet every one that knew Savage will readily believe, that to him it was sudden as a stroke of thunder; that, though he might have transiently suspected it. he had never suffered any thought so unpleasing to sink into his mind, but that he had driven it away by amusements, or dreams of future felicity and affluence, and had never taken any measures by

which he might prevert a precipitation from plenty to indigence.

This quarrel and separation, and the difficulties to which Mr. Savage was exposed by them, were soon known both to his friends and enemies ; nor was it long before he perceived, from the behaviour of both, how much is added to the lustre of genius by the ornaments of wealth.

His condition did not appear to excite much compassion; for he had not been always careful to use the advantages he enjoyed with that moderation which ought to have been with more than usual caution preserved by him, who knew, if he had reflected, that he was only a dependant on the bounty of another, whom he could expect to support him no longer than he endeavoured to preserve his favour by complying with his inclinations, and whom he nevertheless set at defiance, and was continually irritating by negligence or encroachments.

Examples need not be sought at any great distance to prove, that superiority of fortune has a natural tendency to kindle pride, and that pride seldom fails to exert itself in contempt and insult; and if this is often the effect of hereditary wealth, and of honours enjoyed only by the merits of others, it is some extenuation of any indecent triumphs to which this unhappy man may have been betrayed, that his prosperity was heightened by the force of novalty, and made more intoxicating by a sense of the misery in which he had so long languished, and perhaps of the insults which he had formerly borne, and which

he might now think himself entitled to revenge. It is too common for those who have unjustly suffered pain, to inflict it likewise in their turn with the same injustice, and to imagine that they have a right to treat others as they have themselves been treated.

That Mr. Savage was too much elevated by any good fortune, is generally known ; and some passages of his Introduction to 'The Author to be Let' sufficiently show, that he did not wholly refrain from such satire, as he afterwards thought very unjust when he was exposed to it himself; for, when he was afterwards ridiculed in the character of a distressed poet, he very easily discovered, that distress was not a proper subject for merriment, or topic of invective. He was then able to discern that if misery be the effect of virtue, it ought to be reverenced; if of ill-fortune, to be pitied; and if of vice, not to be insulted, because it is perhaps itself a punishment adequate to the crime by which it was produced. And the humanity of that man can deserve no panegyric, who is capable of reproaching a criminal in the hands of the executioner.

But these reflections, though they readily occurred to him in the first and last parts of his life, were, I am afraid, for a long time forgotten; at least they were, like many other maxims, treasured up in his mind rather for show than use, and operated very little upon his conduct, however elegantly he might sometimes explain, or however forcibly he might inculcate them.

His degradation, therefore, from the condition

which he had enjoyed with such wanton thoughtlessness, was considered by many as an occasion of triumph. Those who had before paid their court to him without success, soon returned the contempt which they had suffered; and they who had received favours from him, for of such favours as he could bestow he was very liberal, did not always remember them. So much more certain are the effects of resentment than of gratitude: it is not only to many more pleasing to recollect those faults which place others below them, than those virtues by which they are themselves comparatively depressed: but it is likewise more easy to neglect, than to recompense; and though there are few who will practise a laborious virtue, there will never be wanting multitudes that will indulge in easy vice.

Savage, however, was very little disturbed at the marks of contempt which his ill fortune brought upon him, from those whom he never esteemed, and with whom he never considered himself as levelled by any calamities: and though it was not without some uneasiness that he saw some, whose friendship he valued, change their behaviour; he yet observed their coldness without much emotion, considered them as the slaves of fortune and the worshippers of prosperity, and was more inclined to despise them, than to lament himself.

It does not appear that, after this return of his wants, he found mankind equally favourable to him, as at his first appearance in the world. His story, though in reality not less melancholy, was less af-

fecting, because it was no lorger new; it therefore procured him no new friends: and those that had formerly relieved him, thought they might now consign him to others. He was now likewise considered by many rather as criminal, than as unhappy; for the friends of Lord Tyrconnel, and of his mother, were sufficiently industrious to publish his weaknesses, which were indeed very numerous; and nothing was forgotten, that might make him either hateful or ridiculous.

It cannot but be imagined, that such representations of his faults must make great numbers less sensible of his distress; many, who had only an opportunity to hear one part, made no scruple to propagate the account which they received; many assisted their circulation from malice or revenge; and perhaps many pretended to credit them, that they might with a better grace withdraw their regard, or withhold their assistance.

Savage, however, was not one of those who suffered himself to be injured without resistance, nor was less diligent in exposing the faults of Lord Tyrconnel, over whom he obtained at least this advantage, that he drove him first to the practice of outrage and violence; for he was so much provoked by the wit and virulence of Savage, that he came with a number of attendants, that did no honour to his courage, to beat him at a coffee-house. But it happened that he had left the place a few minutes; and his lordship had, without danger, the pleasure of boasting how he would have treated him. Mr. Savage went next day to repay his visit at his own house; but was prevailed on, by his domestics, to retire without insisting upon seeing him.

Lord Tyrconnel was accused by Mr. Savage of some actions, which scarcely any provocation will be thought sufficient to justify; such as seizing what he had in his lodgings, and other instances of wanton cruelty, by which he increased the distress of Savage, without any advantage to himself.

These mutual accusations were retorted on both sides, for many years, with the utmost degree of virulence and rage; and time seemed rather to augment than diminish their resentment. That the anger of Mr. Savage should be kept alive, is not strange, because he felt every day the consequences of the quarrel; but it might reasonably have been hoped, that Lord Tyrconnel might have relented, and at length have forgot those provocations, which, however they might have once inflamed him, had not in reality much hurt him.

The spirit of Mr. Savage indeed never suffered him to solicit a reconciliation; he returned reproach for reproach, and insult for insult; his superiority of wit supplied the disadvantages of his fortune, and enabled him to form a party, and prejudice great numbers in his favour.

But though this might be some gratification of his yanity, it afforded very little relief to his necessities; and he was very frequently reduced to uncommon hardships, of which, however, he never made any mean or importunate complaints, being formed rather

to bear misery with fortitude, than enjoy prosperity

He now thought himself again at liberty to expose the cruelty of his mother; and therefore, I believe, about this time, published 'The Bastard,' a poem remarkable for the vivacious sallies of thought in the beginning, where he makes a pompous enumeration of the imaginary advantages of base birth; and the pathetic sentiments at the end, where he recounts the real calamities which he suffered by the crime of his parents.

The vigour and spirit of the verses, the peculiar circumstances of the author, the novelty of the subject, and the notoriety of the story to which the allusions are made, procured this performance a very favourable reception; great numbers were immediately dispersed, and editions were multiplied with unusual rapidity.

One circumstance attended the publication, which Savage used to relate with great satisfaction. His mother, to whom the poem was with "due reverence" inscribed, happened then to be at Bath, where she could not conveniently retire from censure, or conceal herself from observation; and no sooner did the reputation of the poem begin to spread, than she heard it repeated in all places of concourse; nor could she enter the assembly-rooms, or cross the walls, without being saluted with some lines from 'The Bastard.'

This was perhaps the first time that she ever discovered a sense of shame, and on this occasion the

power of wit was very conspicuous; the wretch who had, without scruple, proclaimed herself an adulteress, and who had first endeavoured to starve her son, then to transport him, and afterwards to hang him, was not able to bear the representation of her own conduct; but fled from reproach, though she felt no pain from guilt, and left Bath in the utmost haste, to shelter herself among the crowds of London.

Thus Savage had the satisfaction of finding, that, though he could not reform his mother, he could punish her, and that he did not always suffer alone.

The pleasure which he received from this increase of his poetical reputation, was sufficient for some time to overbalance the miseries of want, which this performance did not much alleviate; for it was sold for a very trivial sum to a bookseller, who, though the success was so uncommon that five impressions were sold, of which many were undoubtedly very numerous, had not generosity sufficient to admit the unhappy writer to any part of the profit.

The sale of this poem was always mentioned by Savage with the utmost elevation of heart, and referred to by him as an incontestible proof of a general acknowledgment of his abilities. It was indeed the only production of which he could justly boast a general reception.

But though he did not lose the opportunity which success gave him of setting a high rate on his abilities, but paid due deference to the suffrages of mankind when they were given in his favour, he did not suffer his esteem of himself to depend upon others,

nor found any thing sacred in the voice of the people when they were inclined to censure him; he then readily showed the folly of expecting that the public should judge right, observed how slowly poetical merit had often forced its way into the world; he contented himself with the applause of men of judgment, and was somewhat disposed to exclude all those from the character of men of judgment who did not applaud him.

But he was at other times more favourable to mankind than to think them blind to the beauties of his works, and imputed the slowness of their sale to other causes; either they were published at a time when the town was empty, or when the attention of the public was engrossed by some struggle in the parliament, or some other object of general concern; or they were by the neglect of the publisher not diligently dispersed, or by his avarice not advertised with sufficient frequency. Address, or industry, or liberality, was always wanting; and the blame was laid rather on any person than the author.

By arts like these, arts which every man practises in some degree, and to which too much of the little tranquillity of life is to be ascribed, Savage was always able to live at peace with himself. Had he indeed only made use of these expedients to alleviate the loss or want of fortune or reputation, or any other advantages which it is not in a man's power to bestow upon himself, they might have been justly mentioned as instances of a philosophical mind, and very properly proposed to the imitation of multitudes, who, for want of deterting their imaginations with the same dexterity, languish under afflictions which might be easily removed.

It were doubtless to be wished, that truth an reason were universally prevalent; that every thing were esteemed according to its real value; and that men would secure themselves from being disappoint cd, in their endeavours after happiness, by placing it only in virtue, which is always to be obtained; but, if adventitious and foreign pleasures must be pursued, it would be perhaps of some benefit, since that pursuit must frequently be fruitless, if the practice of Savage could be taught, that folly might be an antidote to folly, and one fallacy be obviated by another.

But the danger of this pleasing intoxication must not be concealed; nor indeed can any one, after having observed the life of Savage, need to be cautioned against it. By imputing none of his miseries to himself, he continued to act upon the same principles, and to follow the same path; was never made wiser by his sufferings, nor preserved by one misfortune from falling into another. He proceeded throughout his life to tread the same steps on the same circle; always applauding his past conduct, or at least forgetting it, to amuse himself with phantoms of happiness, which were dancing before him; and willingly turned his eyes from the light of reason, when it would have discovered the illusion, and shown him, what he never wished to see, his real state.

He is even accused, after having lulled his ima-

gination with those ideal opiater, of having tried the same experiment upon his conscience; and, having accustomed himself to impute all deviations from the right to foreign causes, it is certain that he was upon every occasion too easily reconciled to himself; and that he appeared very little to regret those practices which had impaired his reputation. The reigning error of his life was, that he mistook the love for the practice of virtue, and was indeed not so much a good man, so the friend of goodness.

This at least must be allowed him, that he always preserved a strong sense of the dignity, the beauty, and the necessity, of virtue; and that he never contributed deliberately to spread corruption amongst mankind. His actions, which were generally precipitate, were often blameable; but his writings, being the productions of study, uniformly tended to the exaltation of the mind, and the propagation of morality and piety.

These writings may improve mankind, when his failings shall be forgotten; and therefore he must be considered, upon the whole, as a benefactor to the world: nor can his personal example do any hurt, since whoever hears of his faults will hear of the miseries which they brought upon him, and which would deserve less pity, had not his condition been such as made his faults pardonable. He may be considered as a child exposed to all the temptations of indigence, at an age when resolution was not yet strengthened by conviction, nor virtue confirmed by

habit; a circumstance which, in his 'Bastard,' hG laments in a very affecting manner:

> -----No Mother's care Shielded my infant innocence with prayer; No father's guardian hand my youth maintain'd, CalPd forth my virtues, or from vice restrain'd.

' The Bastard,' however it might provoke or mor. th tify his mother, could not be expected to melt her la to compassion, so that he was still under the same of want of the necessaries of life; and he therefore ex. o erted all the interest which his wit, or his birth, or t his misfortunes, could procure, to obtain, upon the t death of Eusden, the place of Poet Laureate, and b prosecuted his application with so much diligence. t that the King publicly declared it his intention to bestow it upon him; but such was the fate of Savage, that even the King, when he intended his advantage, was disappointed in his schemes; for the Lord Chamberlain, who has the disposal of the laurel, as one of the appendages of his office, either did not know the King's design, or did not approve it, or thought the nomination of the Laureate an encroachment upon his rights, and therefore bestowed the laurel upon Colley Cibber.

Mr. Savage, thus disappointed, took a resolution of applying to the Queen, that, having once given him life, she would enable him to support it, and therefore published a short poem on her birth-day, to which he gave the odd title of 'Volanteer Laureate.' The event of this essay he has himself related in the following letter, which he prefixed to the

poem, when he afterwards reprinted it in 'The hegentleman's Magazine,' whence I have copied it entire, as this was one of the few attempts in which Mr. Savage succeeded.

" MR. URBAN,

" In your Magazine for February, you published r, the last 'Volunteer Laureate,' written on a very meer lancholy occasion, the death of the royal patroness ne of arts and literature in general, and of the author x. of that poem in particular; I now send you the first of that Mr. Savage wrote under that title .- This gentleman, notwithstanding a very considerable interest. being, on the death of Mr. Eusden, disappointed of the Laureate's place, wrote the following verses ; which were no sooner published, but the late Queen sent to a bookseller for them. The author had not at that time a friend either to get him introduced, or his poem presented at Court ; yet, such was the unspeakable goodness of that princess, that, notwithstanding this act of ceremony was wanting, in a few days after publication, Mr. Savage received a Bankbill of fifty pounds, and a gracious message from her Majesty, by the Lord North and Guildford, to this effect: ' That her Majesty was highly pleased with the verses; that she took particularly kind his lines there relating to the King; that he had permission to write annually on the same subject; and that he should yearly receive the like present, till something better (which was her Majesty's intention) could be done for him,' After this he was permitted to pre-

sent one of his annu. I poems to her Majesty, had the v honour of kissing her hand, and met with the most g gracious reception.

"Yours, &c."

Such was the performance, * and such its reception; a reception, which though by no means unkind, was yet not in the highest degree generous: to chain down the genius of a writer to an annual panegyric, showed in the Queen too much desire of hearing her own praises, and a greater regard to herself than to him on whom her bounty was conferred. It was a kind of avaricious generosity, by which flattery was rather purchased than genius rewarded.

Mrs. Oldfield had formerly given him the same allowance with much more heroic intention: she had no other view than to enable him to prosecute his studies, and to set himself above the want of assistance, and was contented with doing good without stip alating for encomiums.

Mr. Savage, however, was not at liberty to make exceptions, but was ravished with the favours which he had received, and probably yet more with those which he was promised: he considered himself now as a favourite of the Queen, and did not doubt but a few annual poems would establish him in some profitable employment.

He therefore assumed the title of 'Volunteer Laureate,' not without some reprehensions from Cibber,

* This poem is inserted in the late collection.

the who informed him, that the ticle of 'Laureate' was lost a mark of honour conferred by the bang, from whom fall honour is derived, and which therefore no man had a right to bestow upon himself; and added, that he might with equal propriety style himself a Volunteer Lord or Volunteer Baronet. It cannot be denied ep. that the remark was just; but Savage did not think ad any title, which was conferred upon Mr. Cibber, so ain honourable as that the usurpation of it could be imic. puted to him as an instance of very exorbitant vaniler ty, and therefore continued to write under the same title, and received every year the same reward. 1 3

He did not appear to consider these encomiums as tests of his abilities, or as any thing more than annual hints to the Queen of her promise, or acts ne of ceremony, by the performance of which he was he entitled to his pension, and therefore did not labour them with great diligence, or print more than fifty each year, except that for some of the last years he regularly inserted them in ' The Gentleman's Macazine,' by which they were dispersed over the kingdom.

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Of some of them he had himself so low an opinion. that he intended to omit them in the collection of poems, for which he printed proposals, and solicited subscriptions; nor can it seem strange, that, being confined to the same subject, he should be at some times indolent, and at others unsuccessful; that he should sometimes delay a disagreeable task till it was too late to perform it well; or that he should sometimes repeat the same sentiment on the same occasion, or at others be misled, by an attempt after novelty, to forced cocceptions and far-fetched images.

He wrote indeed with a double intention, which supplied him with some variety; for his business was, to praise the Queen for the favours which he had received, and to complain to her of the delay of those which she had promised: in some of his pieces, therefore, gratitude is predominant, and in some discontent; in some, he represents himself as happy in her patronage; and, in others, as disconsolate to find himself neglected.

Her promise, like other promises made to this unfortunate man, was never performed, though he took sufficient care that it should not be forgotten. The publication of his 'Volunteer Laureate' procured him no other reward than a regular remittance of fifty pounds.

He was not so depressed by his disappointment as to neglect any opportunity that was offered of advancing his interest. When the Princess Anne was married, he wrote a poem * upon her departure, only, as he declared, " because it was expected from him," and he was not willing to bar his own prospects by any appearance of neglect.

He never mentioned any advantage gained by this poem, or any regard that was paid to it; and therefore it is likely that it was considered at Court as an act of duty, to which he was obliged by his

* Printed in the late collection.

dependence, and which it was therefore not necessary to reward by any new "avour; or perhaps the Queen really intended his advancement, and therefore thought it superfluous to lavish presents upon a man whom she intended to establish for life.

About this time not only his hopes were in danger of being frustrated, but his pension likewise of being obstructed, by an accidental calumny. The writer of ' The Daily Courant,' a paper then published under the direction of the ministry, charged him with a erime, which, though not very great in itself, would have been remarkably invidious in him, and might very justly have incensed the Queen against him. He was accused by name of influencing elections against the court, by appearing at the head of a Tory mob ; nor did the accuser fail to aggravate his crime, by representing it as the effect of the most atrocious ingratitude, and a kind of rebellion against the Queen, who had first preserved him from an infamous death, and afterwards distinguished him by her favour and supported him by her charity. The charge, as it was open and confident, was likewise by good fortune very particular. The place of the transaction was . mentioned, and the whole series of the rioter's conduct related. This exactness made Mr. Savage's vindication easy; for he never had in his life seen the place which was declared to be the scene of his wickedness, nor ever had been present in any town when its representatives were chosen. This answer he therefore made haste to publish, with all the circumstances necessary to make it credible; and very

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reasonably demanded, that the accusation should be retracted in the same paper, that he might no longer suffer the imputation of sedition and ingratitude. This demand was likewise pressed by him in a private letter to the author of the paper, who, either trusting to the protection of those whose defence he had undertaken, or having entertained some personal malice against Mr. Savage, or fearing least, by retracting so confident an assertion, he should impair the credit of his paper, refused to give him that satisfaction.

Mr. Savage therefore thought it necessary, to his own vindication, to prosecute him in the King's Bench; but as he did not find any ill effects from the accusation, having sufficiently cleared his innocence, he thought any farther procedure would have the appearance of revenge; and therefore willingly dropped it.

He saw soon afterwards a process commenced in the same court against himself, on an information in which he was accused of writing and publishing an obscene pamphlet.

It was always Mr. Savage's desire to be distinguished; and, when any controversy became popular, he never wanted some reason for engaging in it with great ardour, and appearing at the head of the party which he had chosen. As he was never celebrated for his prudence, he had no sooner taken his side, and informed himself of the chief topics of the dispute, than he took all opportunities of assering and propagating his principles, without much regard to his own interest, or any other visible design

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than that of drawing upor himself the attention of mankind.

The dispute between the Bishop of London and the Chancellor is well known to have been for some time the chief topic of political conversation; and therefore Mr. Savage, in pursuance of his character, endeavoured to become conspicuous among the controvertists with which every coffee-horse was filled on that occasion. He was an indefatigable opposer of all the claims of ecclesiastical power, though he did not know on what they were founded; and was therefore no friend to the Bishop of London. But he had another reason for appearing as a warm advocate for Dr. Rundle; for he was the friend of Mr. Foster, and Mr. Thomson, who were the friends of Mr. Savage.

Thus remote was his interest in the question which, however, as he imagined, concerned him so nearly, that it was not sufficient to harangue and dispute, but necessary likewise to write upon it.

He therefore engaged with great ardour in a new poem, called by him, 'The Progress of a Drvine;' in which he conducts a profligate priest, by all the gradations of wickedness, from a poor curacy in the country to the highest preferments of the Church; and describes, with that humour which was natural to him, and that knowledge which was extended to all the diversities of human life, his behaviour in every station; and insimuates, that this priest, thus accomplished, found at last a patron in the Bishop of London. When he was asked, by one of his friends, on what pretence he could charge the Bishop with suck an action; he had no more to say than that he had only inverted the accusation; and that he thought it reasonable to believe, that he who obstructed the rise of a good man without reason, would for bad reasons promote the exaltation of a villain.

The clergy were universally provoked by this satire; and Savage, who, as was his constant practice, had set his name to his performance, was censured in ' The Weekly Miscellany '* with severity, which he did not seem inclined to forget.

* A short satire was likewise published in the same paper in which were the following lines.

> " For cruel murder doom'd to hempen death, Savage, by royal grace, prolong'd his breath. Well might you think he spent his future years In prayer, and fasting, and repentant tears. --But, O vain hope:--the truly Savage cries, ' Priests and their slavish doctrines, I despise. 'hall I ----

Who, by freethinking to free action fird, In midnight brawls a deathless name acquird, Now stoop to learn of ceclesiastic men ----No, arm'd with rhyme, at priests I'll take my aim, Though prudence bids me murder but their fame." Weelby Miccellant.

An answer was published in 'The Gentleman's Magazine,' written by an unknown hand, from which the following lines are selected :

> "Transform'd by thoughtless rage, and midnight wine, From malice free, and push'd without design; In equal bravi if Savage lung'd a threat, And brought the youth a victim to the dust; So strong the hand of accident appears, The royal hand from guilt and vengeance clears. "Instead of wasting all thy future years, Savage, in prayer and vain repentant tears, Exert thy pen to mend a viccious age,

To curb the priest, and sink his high church rage ;

But a return of invective was not thought a suffirient punishment. The court of King's Bench was therefore moved against him; and he was obliged to return an answer to a charge of obscenity. It was urged in his defence, that obscenity was criminal when it was intended to promote the practice of vice; but that Mr. Savage had only introduced obscene ideas, with the view of exposing them to detestation, and of amending the age by showing the deformity of wickedness. This plea was admitted; and Sir Philip Yorke, who then presided in that court, dismissed the information with encomiums upon the purity and excellence of Mr. Savage's writings. The prosecution, however, answered in some measure the purpose of those by whom it was set on foot; for Mr. Savage was so far intimidated by it, that, when the edition of his poem was sold, he did not venture to reprint it; so that it was in a short time forgotten, or forgotten by all but those whom it offended.

And made the youth its shining vengeance feel; My soul abhors the act, the man detests, But more the bigotry of priestly breasts." *Genitoman's Magazine, May*, 1765It is said that some endeavours were used to incense the Queen against him, but he found advocates to obviate at least part of their effect; for, though he was never advanced, he still continued to receive his pension.

This poem drew more infamy upon him than any incident of his life; and, as his conduct cannot be vindicated, it is proper to secure his memory from reproach, by informing those whom he made his enemies, that he never intended to repeat the provocation; and that, though whenever he thought he had any reason to complain of the clergy, he used to threaten them with a new edition of ' The Progress of a Divine,' it was his calm and settled resolution to suppress it for ever.

He once intended to have made a better reparation for the folly or injustice with which he might be charged, by writing another poem, called 'The Progress of a Freethinker,' whom he intended to lead through all the stages of vice and folly, to convert him are written to wickedness, and from religion to infidency, by all the modish sophistry used for that purpose; and at last to dismiss him by his own hand into the other world.

That he did not execute this design is a real loss to mankind; for he was too well acquainted with all the scenes of debauchery to have failed in his representations of them, and too zealous for virtue not to have represented them in such a manner as should expose them either to ridicale or detestation.

But this plan was, like others, formed and laid a-

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side, till the vigour of his imagination was spent, and the effervescence of invention had subsided; but soon gave way to some other design, which pleased by its novelty for a while, and then was neglected like the former.

He was still in his usual exigencies, having no certain support but the pension allowed him by the Queen, which, though it might have kept an exact economist from want, was very far from being sufficient for Mr. Savage, who had never been accustomed to dismiss any of his appetites without the gratification which they solicited, and whom nothing but want of money withheld from partaking of every pleasure that fell within his view.

His conduct with regard to his pension was very particular. No sooner had he changed the bill, than he vanished from the sight of all his acquaintance, and lay for some time out of the reach of all the inquiries that friendship or curiosity could make after him. At length he appeared again penyle, as before, but never informed even those whom he cented to regard most, where he had been; nor was me retreat ever discovered.

This was his constant practice during the whole time that he received the pension from the Queen: he regularly disappeared and returned. He, indeed, affirmed that he retired to study, and that the money supported him in solitude for many months; but his friends declared, that the short time in which it was spent sufficiently confuted his own account of his conduct.

His politeness and his wit still raised him friends, who were desirous of setting him at length free from that indigence by which he had been hitherto oppressed; and therefore solicited Sir Robert Walpole in his favour with so much earnestness, that they obtained a promise of the next place that should become vacant, not exceeding two hundred pounds a year. This promise was made with an uncommon declaration, " that it was not the promise of a minister to a petitioner, but of a friend to his friend."

Mr. Savage now concluded himself set at ease for ever, and, as he observes in a poem written on that incident of his life, trusted and was trusted; but soon found that his confidence was ill grounded, and this friendly promise was not inviolable. He spent a long time in solicitations, and at last despaired and desisted.

He did not indeed deny that he had given the minister some reason to believe that he should not strengt ien his own interest by advancing him, for he had taken care to distinguish himself in coffeehouses as an advocate for the ministry of the last years of Queen Anne, and was always ready to justify the conduct, and exalt the character, of Lord Bolingbroke, whom he mentions with great regard in an epistle upon authors, which he wrote about that time, but was too wise to publish, and of which only some fragments have appeared, inserted by him in the ' Magazine' after his retirement.

To despair was not, however, the character of Savage; when one patronage failed he had recourse to another. The Prince was now extremely popular, and had very liberally rewarded the merit of some writers, whom Mr. Savage did not think superior to himself, and therefore he resolved to address a poem to him.

or this purpose he made choice of a subject which could regard only persons of the highest rank and greatest affluence, and which was therefore proper for a poem intended to procure he patronage of a prince; and, having retired for some time to Richmond, that he might prosecute his design in full tranquillity; without the temptations of pleasure, or the solicitations of creditors, by which his meditations were in equal danger of being disconcerted, he produced a poem, 'On Public Spirit, with regard to Public Works.'

The plan of this poem is very extensive, and comprises a multitude of topics, each of which might furnish matter sufficient for a long performance, and of which some have already employed more entiment writers; but as he was perhaps not fully. Aquaented with the whole extent of his own design, and was writing to obtain a supply of wants too pressing to admit of long or accurate inquiries, he passes negligently over many public works, which, even in his own opinion, deserved to be more elaborately treated.

But, though he may sometimes disappoint his reader by transient touches upor these subjects, which have often been considered, and therefore naturally, raise expectations, he must be allowed amply to compensate his omissions, by expatiating, in the conclusion of his work, upon a kind of beneficence not vet celebrated by any eminent poet, though it now appears more susceptible of embellishments, more adapted to exalt the ideas, and affect the passions, than many of those which have hitherto been thought most worthy of the ornaments of verse. The settlement of colonies in uninhabited countries, the establishment of those in security, whose misfortunes have made their own country no longer pleasing or safe, the acquisition of property without injury to any, the appropriation of the waste and luxuriant bounties of nature, and the enjoyment of those gifts which Heaven has scattered upon regions uncultivated and unoccupied, cannot be considered without giving rise to a great number of pleasing ideas, and bewildering the imagination in delightful prospects; and, therefore, whatever speculations they may produce in those who have confined themselves to political studies, naturally fixed the attention, and excited the applause, of a poet. The politic'an, when he considers men driven into other count ies for shelter, and obliged to retire to forests and deserts, and pass their lives, and fix their posterity, in the remotest corners of the world, to avoid those hardships which they suffer or fear in their native place, may very properly inquire, why the legislature does not provide a remedy for these miseries, rather than encourage an escape from them. He may conclude that the flight of every honest man is a loss to the community; that those who are unhappy wi.bout guilt ought to be relieved ; and the life, which is overburthened by accidental calamities, set at ease

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by the care of the public; and then those, who have by misconduct forfeited their claim to favour, ought rather to be made useful to the society which they have injured, than be driven from it. But the poet is employed in a more pleasing undertaking than that of proposing laws, which, however just or expedient, will never be made; or endeavouring to reduce to rational schemes of government societies which were formed by chance, and are conducted by the private passions of those who preside in them. He guides the unhappy fugitive, from want and persecution, to plenty, quiet, and security, and seats him in scenes of peaceful solitude, and undisturbed repose.

Savage has not forgotten, amidst the pleasing sentiments which this prospect of retirement suggested to him, to censure those crimes which have been generally committed by the discoverers of new regions, and to expose the enormous wickedness of making war upon barbarous nations because they cannot resist, and of invading countries because they are funtful; of extending navigation only to propagate vice, and of visiting distant lands only to lay them ".aste He has asserted the natural equality of mankind, and endeavoured to suppress that pride which inclines men to imagine that right is the consequence of power.

His description of the various miseries which force men to seek for refuge in distant countries, affords another instance of his proficiency in the important and extensive study of human life; and the tenders ness with which he recounts them, another proof of his humanity and benevolence. It is observable that the close of this poem discovers a change which experience had made in Mr. Savage's opinions. In a poem written by him in his youth, and published in his Miscellanies, he declares his contempt of the contracted views and narrow prospects of the middle state of life, and declares his resolution either to tower like the cedar, or be trampled like the shrub; but in this poem, though addressed to a prince, he mentions this state of life as comprising those who ought most to attract reward, those who merit most the confidence of power, and the familiarity of greatness; and, accidentally mentioning this passage to one of his friends, declared, that in his opinion, all the virtue of mankind was comprehended in that state.

In describing villas and gardens, he did not omit to condemn that absurd custom, which prevails among the English, of permitting servants to receive money from strangers for the entertainment that they receive, and therefore inserted in his poem thest lines:

But what the flowfring pride of gardens rare, However royal, or however fair, If gates, which to access should still give way, Ope but, like Peter's paraCas, for pay; If perquisited varlets frequent stand, And each new walk must a new tax demand; What foreign eye but with contempt surveys? What muse shall from oblivion snatch their prise?

But before the publication of his performance he recollected, that the Queen allowed her garden and cave at Richmond to be shown for money; and that she so openly countenanced the practice, that she had

bestowed the privilege of showing them as a place of profit on a man, whose ment the valued herself upon rewarding, though she gave him only the liberty of disgracing his country.

He therefore thought, with more prudence than was often exerted by him, that the publication of these lines might be officiously represented as an insult upon the Queen, to whom he owed his life and his subsistence; and that the propriety of his observation would be no security against the censures which the unseasonableness of it might draw upon him; he therefore suppressed the passage in the first edition, but after the Queen's death thought the same caution no longer necessary, and restored it to the proper place.

The poem was, therefore, published without any political faults, and inscribed to the Prince; but Mr. Savage, having no friend upon whom he could prevail to present it to him, had no other method of attracting his observation than the publication of frequent advertisements, and therefore received no reward from his patron, however generoos on other occasions.

This disappointment he never mentioned without indignation, being by some means or other confident that the Prince was not ignorant of his address to him: and insinuated, that if any advances in popularity could have been made by distinguishing him, he had not written without notice, or without reward.

He was once inclined to have presented his poem

in person, and so it to the printer for a copy with that design; but either his opinion changed, or his resolution deserted him, and he continued to resent neglect, without attempting to force himself into regard.

Nor was the public much more favourable than his patron; for only seventy-two were sold, though the performance was much commended by some whose judgment in that kind of writing is generally allowed. But Savage easily reconciled himself to mankind, without imputing any defect to his work, by observing that his poem was unluckily published two days after the prorogation of the parliament, and by consequence at a time when all those who could be expected to regard it were in the hurry of preparing for their departure, or engaged in taking leave of others upon their dismission from public affairs.

It must be however allowed, in justification of the public, that this performance is not the most excellent of Mr. Savage's works; and that, though it cannot be denied to contain many striking sentiments, majestic lines, and just observations, it is in general not sufficiently polished in the language, or enlivened in the imagery, or digested in the plan.

Thus his poem contributed nothing to the alleviation of his poverty, which was such as very few could have supported with equal patience, but to which, it must likewise be confessed, that few would have been exposed who received punctually fifty pounds a year; a salary which, though by no means equal to the de-

mands of vanity and luxury, is yet found sufficient to support families above want, and was undoubtedly more than the necessities of life require.

But no sooner had he received his pension, than ne withdrew to his darling privacy, from which he returned in a short time to his former distress, and for some part of the year generally lived by chance, eating only when he was invited to the tables of his acquaintances, from which the meanness of his dress often excluded him, when the politeness and variety of his conversation would have been thought a sufficient recompense for his entertainment.

He lodged as much by accident as he dined, and passed the night sometimes in mean houses, which are set open at night to any casual wanderers, sometimes in cellars, among the riot and filth of the meanest and most profligate of the rabble ; and sometimes, when he had not money to support even the expenses, of these receptacles, walked about the streets till he was weary, and lay down in the summer upon a bulk, or in the winter, with his associates in poverty, among the ashes of a glass-house.

In this manner were passed those days and those hights which nature had enabled him to have employed in elevated speculations, useful studies, or pleasing conversation. On a bulk, in a cellar, or in a glass-house, among thieves and beggars, was to be found the Author of 'The Wanderer,' the man of exalted sentiments, extensive views, and curious observations; the man whose remarks on life might have assisted the statesman, whose ideas of virtue might have enlightened the moralist, whose eloquence might have influenced senates, and whose delicacy might have polished courts.

It cannot but be imagined that such necessities might sometimes force him upon disreputable practices; and it is probable that these lines in 'The Wanderer' were occasioned by his reflections on his own conduct.

> Though misery leads to happluess, and truth, Unequal to the load this languid youth, (0, let none censure, if, untried by grief, If, amidst wo, untempted by relief,) He stoop'd reluctant to low arts of shame, Which then, even then, he scom'd, and blush'd to name,

Whoever was acquainted with him was certain to be solicited for small sums, which the frequency of the request made in time considerable; and he was therefore quickly shunned by those who were become familiar enough to be trusted with his necessities; but his rambling manner of life, and constant appearance at houses of public resort, always procured him a new succession of friends, whose kindness had not been exhausted by repeated requests: so that he was seldom absolutely without resources, but had in his utmost exigencies this comfort, that he always imagined himself sure of speedy relief.

It was observed, that he always asked favours of this kind without the least submission or apparent consciousness of dependence, and that he did not seem to look upon a compliance with his request

e as an obligation that deserved any extraordinary acy knowledgments ; but a refusal was resented by him as an affront, or complained of as an injury; nor did he readily reconcile himself to those who either denied to lend, or gave him afterwards any intimation that they expected to be repaid.

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He was sometimes so far compassionated by those who knew both his merit and distresses, that they received him into their families, but they soon discovered him to be a very incommodious inmate : for, being always accustomed to an irregular manner of life, he could not confine himself to any stated hours, or pay any regard to the rules of a family, but would prolong his conversation till midnight, without considering that business might require his friend's application in the morning; and, when he had persuaded himself to retire to bed, was not, without equal difficulty, called up to dinner ; it was therefore impossible to pay him any distinction without the entire subversion of all economy, a kind of establishment which, wherever he went, he always appeared ambitious to overthiev.

It must, therefore, be acknowledged, in justifilation of mankind, that it was not always by the negligence or coldness of his friends that Savage was distressed, but because it was in reality very difficult to preserve him long in a state of ease. To supply him with money was a hopeless attempt; for no cooner did he see himself master of a sum sufficient to set him free from care for a day, than te became profuse and luxurious. When once he had entered a tavern, or engaged in a scheme on pleasure, he never retired till want of money obligered him to some new expedient. If he was entertained in a family, nothing was any longer to be regarded there but amusements and jollity; wherever Savagof entered, he immediately expected that order and business should fly before him, that all should thenceforward be left to hazard, and that no dulf principle of domestic management should be opposed to his inclination, or intrude upon his gaiety.

His distresses, however afflictive, never dejectedin him; in his lowest state he wanted not spirit tof assert the natural dignity of wit, and was alwaysci ready to repress that insolence which the superiorityan of fortune incited, and to trample on that reputate tion which rose upon any other basis than that dind merit : he never admitted any gross familiarities, orh submitted to be treated otherwise than as an equal id Once, when he was without lodging, meat, or clothes, iff one of his friends, a man indeed not remarkable fore rioderation in his prosperity, left a message, that heich desired to see him about nine in the morning. Saton vage knew that his intention was to assist him ; buten was very much disgusted that he should presume that prescribe the hour of his attendance, and, I believe wit refused to visit him, and rejected his kindness.

The same invincible temper, whether firmness of an obstinacy, appeared in his conduct to the Lord Tyrum connel, from whom he very frequently demanded has that the allowance which was once paid him should be be restored; but with whom he never appeared to the

orntertain for a moment the thought of soliciting a edeconciliation, and whom he treated at once with adult the haughtiness of superiority, and all the bitteredness of resentment. He wrote to him, not in a style gof supplication or respect, but of reproach, menace, namd contempt; and appeared determined, if he ever ildregained his allowance, to hold it only by the right ull f conquest.

ed As many more can discover that a man is richer ban that he is wiser than themselves, superiority of edinderstanding is not so readily acknowledged as that tof fortune ; nor is that haughtiness, which the convisciousness of great abilities incites, borne with the ittame submission as the tyranny of affluence : and ta herefore Savage, by asserting his claim to deference ound regard, and by treating those with contempt, owhom better fortune animated to rebel against him, al id not fail to raise a great number of enemies in the es lifferent classes of mankind. Those who thought or lemselves raised above him by the advantages of hiches, hated him because they found no protection arom the petulance of his wit. Those who were 3meemed for their writings feared him as a critic, and tuiligned him as a rival, and almost all the smaller ewits were his professed enemies.

Among these Mr. Miller so far indulged his restentment as to introduce him in a farce, and direct rbin to be personated on the stage, in a dress like dhat which he then wore; a mean insult, which dealy insinuated that Savage had but one coat, and to hich was therefore despired by him rather than resented; for, though he wrote a lampoon agains Miller, he never printed it: and as no other perso ought to prosecute that revenge from which the person who was injured desisted, I shall not pre serve what Mr. Savage suppressed; of which the publication would indeed have been a punishmen too severe for so impotent an assault.

The great hardships of poverty were to Savag ro not the want of lodging or of food, but the neglet and contempt which it drew upon him. He com plained that, as his affairs grew desperate, he foun his reputation for capacity visibly decline ; that h opinion in questions of criticism was no longer re garded, when his coat was out of fashion ; and the those who, in the interval of his prosperity, we always encouraging him to great undertakings b encomiums on his genius and assurances of success now received any mention of his designs with cold ness, thought that the subjects on which he proposed to write were very difficult, and were read to inform him, that the event of a poem was uncer ain, that an author ought to employ much time i the consideration of his plan, and not presume to si down to write in confidence of a few cursory idea and a superficial knowledge ; difficulties were started on all sides, and he was no longer qualified for an h performance but 'The Volunteer Laureate.' p

Yet even this kind of contempt never depresser him; for he always preserved a steady confidence in his own capacity, and believed nothing above his reach which he should at any time earnest?

insendeavour to attain. He formed schemes of the rsol came kind with regard to knowledge and to fortune, and flattered himself with advances to be made in pre science, as with riches, to be enjoyed in some distant period of his life. For the acquisition of knowledge he was indeed far better qualified than for that of riches ; for he was naturally inquisitive, and desivag rous of the conversation of those from whom any glee information was to be obtained, but by no means com solicitous to improve those opportunities that were sometimes offered of raising his fortune; and he was remarkably retentive of his ideas, which, when once ^{re}he was in possession of them, rarely forsook him; a quality which could never be communicated to ver his money.

^{s b} While he was thus wearing out his life in expectation that the Queen would sometime recollect her promise, he had recourse to the usual practice of writers, and published proposals for printing his addy works by subscription, to which he was encouraged works by subscription, to which he was encouraged by the success of many who had not a better right to the favour of the public; but, whatever was dereason, he did not find the world equally inclined to favour him; and he observed, with some discontent, that, though he offered his works at half-a-guinea, he was able to procure but a small number in comparison with those who subscribed twice as much to Duck.

Nor was it without indignation that he saw his proposals neglected by the Queen, who patronised Mr. Duck's with uncommon ardour, and incited a competition, among those who attended the couring who should most promote his interest, and whast should first offer a subscription. This was a distuntinction to which Mr. Savage made no scruple che asserting, that his birth, his misfortunes, and h genius, gave a fairer title, than could be pleaded born him on whom it was conferred.

Savage's applications were, however, not universue sally unsuccessful; for some of the nobility courwh tenanced his design, encouraged his proposals, and subscribed with great liberality. He related of thric Duke of Chandos particularly, that, upon receivintha his proposals, he sent him ten guineas.

But the money which his subscriptions affordesca him was not less volatile than that which he received from his other schemes; whenever a subscription was paid him, he went to a tavern; and, as money so collected is necessarily received in small sums, heve never was able to send his poems to the press, butcel for many years continued his solicitation, and squar, he d'ered whatever he obtained.

The project of printing his works was frequently the revived; and as his proposals grew obsolete, new moones were printed with fresher dates. To form was schemes for the publication, was one of his favourite has amusements; nor was he ever more at ease than when, no with any friend who readily fell in with his schemes, wi he was adjusting the print, forming the advertiseint ments, and regulating the dispersion of his new edition, which he really intended some time to publish, su and which, as long as experience had shown him the his

burimpossibility of printing the volume together, he at what determined to divide into weekly or monthly disnumbers, that the profits of the first might supply he che expenses of the next.

h Thus he spent his time in mean expedients and d bormenting suspense, living for the greatest part in fear of prosecutions from his creditors, and conseverquently skulking in obscure parts of the town, of numbrich he was no stranger to the remotest corners. andut wherever he came, his address secured him thfriends, whom his necessities soon alienated; so in that he had, perhaps, a more numerous acquaintance than any man ever before attained, there being descarcely any person eminent on any account to whom vehe was not known, or whose character he was not in wassome degree able to delineate.

To the acquisition of this extensive acquaintance hevery circumstance of his life contributed. He exoutcelled in the arts of conversation, and therefore willin. hgly practised them. He had seldom any home, or even a lodging in which he could be private; and thy therefore was driven into public-houses for the comsymon conveniences of life and supports of nature. He m was always ready to comply with every invitation, ite having no employment to withhold him, and often n, no money to provide for himself; and by dining s, with one company, he never failed of obtaining an e- introduction into another.

i- Thus dissipated was his life, and thus casual his b, subsistence; yet did not the distraction of his views hinder him from reflection, nor the uncertainty of his condition depress his gaiety. When he had wan dered about without any fortunate adventure by which he was led into a tavern, he sometimes retired into the fields, and was able to employ his mind i study, or amuse it with pleasing imaginations; an seldom appeared to be melancholy, but when som sudden misfortune had just fallen upon him, an even then in a few moments he would disentangl himself from his perplexity, adopt the subject c conversation, and apply his mind wholly to this objects that others presented to it.

This life, unhappy as it may be already imagined was yet imbittered, in 1738, with new calamities. The death of the Queen deprived him of all the prospect of of preferment with which he so long entertained his imagination; and, as Sir Robert Walpole had before given him reason to believe that he never intended the performance of his promise, he was now abandoned again to fortune.

He was, however, at that time, supported by a friend; and as it was not his custom to look out for ciscant calamities, or to feel any other pain than tha which forced itself upon his senses, he was not much afflicted at her loss, and perhaps comforted himself that his pension would be now continued without[the annual tribute of a panegyric.

Another expectation contributed likewise to support him; he had taken a resolution to write a second tragedy upon the story of Sir Thomas Overtury, in which he preserved a few lines of his former play, but made a total alteration of the plan, added new

incidents, and introduced new characters; so that it was a new tragedy, not a revival of the former.

Many of his friends blamed him for not making choice of another subject; but, in vindication of himself, he asserted, that it was not easy to find a better; and that he thought it his interest to extinguish the memory of the first tragedy, which he could only do by writing one less defective upon the same story; by which he should entirely defeat the artifice of the booksellers, who, after the death of any author of reputation, are always industrious to swell his works, by uniting his worst productions with his best.

In the execution of this scheme, however, he proceeded but slowly, and probably only employed himself upon it when he could find no other amusement; but he pleased himself with counting the profits, and perhaps imagined, that the theatrical reputation which he was about to acquire, would be equivalent to all that he had lost by the death of his patroness.

He did not, in confidence of his approaching riches, neglect the measures proper to secure the conti. dence of his pension, though some of his favourers thought him culpable for omitting to write on her death; but on her birth-day next year, he gave a proof of the solidity of his judgment, and the power of his genius. He knew that the track of elegy had been so long beaten, that it was impossible to travel in it without treading in the footsteps of those who had gone before him; and that therefore it was necessary, that he might distinguish himself from the herd vol. III.

of encomiasts, to find out some new walk of funeral panegyric.

This difficult task he performed in such a manner, that his poem may be justly ranked among the best pieces that the death of princes has produced. By transferring the mention of her death to her birthday, he has formed a happy combination of topics, which any other man would have thought it very difficult to connect in one view, but which he has united in such a manner, that the relation between them appears natural; and it may be justly said, that what no other man would have thought on, it now appears scarcely possible for any man to miss.

The beauty of this peculiar combination of images is so masterly, that it is sufficient to set this poem above censure; and therefore it is not necessary to mention many other delicate touches which may be found in it, and which would deservedly be admired in any other performance.

To these proofs of his genius may be added, from the same poem, an instance of his prudence, an exschence for which he was not so often distinguished; he does not forget to remind the king, in the most delicate and artful manner, of continuing his pension.

With regard to the success of this address, he was for some time in suspense, but was in no great degree solicitous about it ; and continued his labour upon his new tragedy with great tranquillity, till the friend who had for a considerable time supported him, removing his family to another place, took occasion to dismiss him. It then became necessary to inquire

more diligently what was determined in his affair, having reason to suspect that no great favour was intended him, because he had not received his pension at the usual time.

It is said, that he did not take those methods of retrieving his interest, which were most likely to succeed ; and some of those who were employed in the Exchequer, cautioned him against too much violence in his proceedings: but Mr. Savage, who seldom regulated his conduct by the advice of others, gave way to his passion, and demanded of Sir Robert Walpole, at his levee, the reason of the distinction that was made between him and the other pensioners of the Queen, with a degree of roughness which perhaps determined him to withdraw what had been only delayed.

Whatever was the erime of which he was accused or suspected, and whatever influence was employed against him, he received soon after an account that took from him all hopes of regaining his pension; and he had now no prospect of subsistence but from his play, and he knew no way of living for the imme required to finish it.

So peculiar were the minfortunes of this man, deprived of an estate and title by a particular law, exposed and abandoned by a mother, defrauded by a mother of a fortune which his father had allotted him, he entered the world without a friend; and though his abilities forced themselves into esteem and reputation, he was never able to obtain any real advantage, and whatever prospects arose were always

intercepted as he began to approach them. The king's intentions in his favour were frustrated; his dedication to the prince, whose generosity on every other occasion was eminent, procured him no reward; Sir Robert Walpole, who valued himself upon keeping his promise to others, broke it to him without regret; and the bounty of the Queen was, after her death, withdrawn from him, and from him only.

Such were his misfortunes, which yet he bore, not only with decency, but with cheerfulness; nor was his gaiety clouded even by his last disappointments, though he was in a short time reduced to the lowest degree of distress, and often wanted both lodging and food. At this time he gave another instance of the insurmountable obstinacy of his spirit; his clothes were worn out; and he received notice, that at a coffee-house some clothes and linen were left for him: the person who sent them did not, I believe, inform him to whom he was to be obliged, that he might spare the perplexity of acknowledging the Lenefit; but though the offer was so far generous, h was made with some neglect of ceremonies, which Mr. Savage so much resented, that he refused the present, and declined to enter the house till the clothes that had been designed for him were taken away.

His distress was now publicly known, and his friends, therefore, thought it proper to concert some measures for his relief; and one of them wrote a letter to him, in which he expressed his concern "for the miserable withdrawing of his pension;" and

gave him hopes, that in a short time he should find himself supplied with a competence, "without any dependence on those little creatures which we are pleased to call the Great."

The scheme proposed for this happy and independent subsistence was, that he should retire into Wales, and receive an allowance of fifty pounds a year, to be raised by a subscription, on which he was to live privately in a cheap place, without aspiring any more to affluence, or having any farther care of reputation.

This offer Mr. Savage gladly accepted, though with intentions very different from those of his friends; for they proposed that he should continue an exile from London for ever, and spend all the remaining part of his life at Swansea; but he designed only to take the opportunity, which their scheme offered him, of retreating for a short time, that he might prepare his play for the stage, and his other works for the press, and then return to London to exhibit his tragedy, and live upon the profits of his own labour.

With regard to his works, he proposed very great improvements, which would have required much time or great application; and, when he had finished them, he designed to do justice to his subscribers, by publishing them according to his proposals.

As he was ready to entertain himself with future pleasures, he had planned out a scheme of life for the country, of which he had no knowledge but from pastorals and songs. He imagined that he should be transported to scenes of flowery felicity like those which one poet has reflected to another; and had projected a perpetual round of innocent pleasures, of which he suspected no interruption from pride, or ignorance, or brutality.

With these expectations he was so enchanted, that when he was once gently reproached by a friend for submitting to live upon a subscription, and advised rather by a resolute exertion of his abilities to support himself, he could not bear to debar himself from the happiness which was to be found in the calm of a cottage, or lose the opportunity of listening, without intermission, to the melody of the nightingale, which he believed was to be heard from every bramble, and which he did not fail to mention as a very important part of the happiness of a country life.

While this scheme was ripening, his friends directed him to take a lodging in the liberties of the Fleet, that he might be secure from his creditors, and sent him every Monday a guinea, which he commonly spent before the next morning, and trusted, after his usual manner, the remaining part of the week to the bounty of fortune.

He now began very sensibly to feel the miseries of dependence. Those by whom he was to be supported began to prescribe to him with an air of authority, which he know not how decently to resent, nor patiently to bear; and he soon discovered, from the conduct of most of his subscribers, that he was yet in the hands of "little creatures."

Of the insolence that he was obliged to suffer, he

gave many instances, of which none appeared to raise his indignation to a greater height, than the method which was taken of furnishing him with clothes. Instead of consulting him, and allowing him to send a tailor his orders for what they thought proper to allow him, they proposed to send for a tailor to take his measure, and then to consult how they should equip him.

This treatment was not very delicate, nor was it such as Savage's humanity would have suggested to him on a like occasion; but it had scarcely deserved mention, had it not, by affecting him in an uncommon degree, shown the peculiarity of his character. Upon hearing the design that was formed, he came to the lodging of a friend with the most violent agonies of rage; and, being asked what it could be that gave him such disturbance, he replied with the utmost vehemence of indignation, "That they had sent for a tailor to measure him."

How the affair ended was never inquired, for fear of renewing his uneasiness. It is probable that, upon recollection, he submitted with a good grade to what he could not avoid, and that he discovered no resentment where he had no power.

He was, however, not humbled to implicit and universal compliance; for when the gentleman, who had first informed him of the design to support him by a subscription, attempted to procure a reconciliaia with the Lord Tyrconnel, he could by no means be prevailed upon to comply with the measures that were proposed.

A letter was written for him * to Sir William Le mon, to prevail upon him to interpose his good offices with Lord Tyrconnel, in which he solicited Sir William's assistance "for a man who really needed it as much as any man could well do;" and informed him, that he was retiring " for ever to a place where he should no more trouble his relations, friends. or enemies ;" he confessed, that his passion had betraved him to some conduct, with regard to Lord Tyrconnel, for which he could not but heartily ask his pardon; and as he imagined Lord Tyrconnel's passion might be yet so high that he would not " receive a letter from him," begged that Sir William would endeavour to soften him; and expressed his hopes that he would comply with this request, and that " so small a relation would not harden his heart against him."

That any man should presume to dictate a letter to him, was not very agreeable to Mr. Savage; and therefore he was, before he had opened it, not much inclined to approve it. But when he read it, he found it contained sentiments entirely opposite to his own, and, as he asserted, to the truth; and therefore, instead of copying it, wrote his friend a letter full of masculine resentment and warm expostulations. He very justly observed, that the style was too supplicatory, and the representation too abject, and that he ought at least to have made him complain with "the dignity of a gentleman in distress." He declared the

he would not write the paragraph in which he was to ask Lord Tyrconnel's pardon ; for, "he despised his pardon, and therefore could not heartily, and would not hypocritically ask it." He remarked that his friend made a very unreasonable distinction between himself and him; for, says he, "when you mention men of high rank in your own character," they are "those little creatures whom we are pleased to call the Great ;" but when you address them " in mine," no servility is sufficiently humble. He then with great propriety explained the ill consequences which might be expected from such a letter, which his relations would print in their own defence, and which would for ever be produced as a full answer to all that he should allege against them ; for he always intended to publish a minute account of the treatment which he had received. It is to be remembered, to the honour of the gentleman by whom this letter was drawn up, that he yielded to Mr. Sovage's reasons, and agreed that it ought to be suppressed.

After many alterations and delays, a subscription was at length raised, which did not amount to fifty pounds a year, though twenty were paid by one gentleman; * such was the generosity of mankind, that what had been done by a player without solicitation, could not now be effected by application and interest; and Savage had a great number to court and to obey for a pension less than that which Mrs. Oldfield paid 'im without exacting any servilities.

> Pope. K 5

Mr. Savage, however, was satisfied, and willing to retire, and was convinced that the allowance, though scanty, would be more than sufficient for him, being now determined to commence a rigid economist, and to live according to the exactest rules of frugality; for nothing was in his opinion more contemptible than a man, who, when he knew his income, exceeded it; and yet he confessed, that instances of such folly were too common, and lamented that some men were not to be trusted with their own money.

Full of these salutary resolutions, he left London in July 1739, having taken leave with great tenderness of his friends, and parted from the author of this narrative with tears in his eyes. He was furnished with fifteen guineas, and informed, that they would be sufficient, not only for the expense of his journey, but for his support in Wales for some time; and that there remained but little more of the first collection. He promised a strict adherence to his maxims of parsimony, and went away in the stage-coach; nor the his friends expect to hear from him till he informed there of his arrival at Swansea.

But, when they least expected, arrived a letter dated the fourteenth day after his departure, in which he sent them word, that he was yet upon the road, and without money; and that he therefore could not proceed without a remittance. They then sent him the money that was in their hands, with which he was enabled to reach Bristol, from whence he was to σ_3 to Swansea by water.

At Bristol he found an embargo laid upon the

shipping, so that he could not immediately obtain a passage; and being therefore obliged to stay there some time, he with his usual felicity ingratiated himself with many of the principal inhabitants, was invited to their houses, distinguished at their public feasts, and treated with a regard that gratified his vanity, and therefore easily engaged his affection.

He began very early after his retirement to complain of the conduct of his friends in London, and irritated many of them so much by his letters, that they withdrew, however honourably, their contributions; and it is believed, that little more was paid him than the twenty pounds a year, which were allowed him by the gentleman who proposed the subscription.

After some stay at Bristol he retired to Swansea, the place originally proposed for his residence, where he lived about a year, very much dissatisfied with the diminution of his salary; but contracted, as in other places, acquaintance with those who were most distinguished in that country, among whom he has celebrated Mr. Powel and Mrs. Jones, by some verses which he inserted in 'The Gentleman's Magazire.'

Here he completed his tragedy, of which two acts were wanting when he left London; and was desirous of coming to town, to bring it upon the stage. This design was very warmly opposed; and he was advised, by his chief benefactor, to put it into the hands of Mr. Thomson and Mr. Mallet, that it might be fitted for the stage, and to allow his friends to receive the profits, out of which an annual pension should be paid him. This proposal he rejected with the utmost contempt. He was by no means convinced that the judgment of those, to whom he was required to submit, was superior to his own. He was now determined, as he expressed it, to be "no longer kept in leading-strings," and had no elevated idea of "his bounty, who proposed to pension him out of the profits of his own labours."

He attempted in Wales to promote a subscription for his works, and had once hopes of success; but in a short time afterwards formed a resolution of leaving that part of the country, to which he thought it not reasonable to be confined, for the gratification of those who, having promised him a liberal income, had no sooner banished him to a remote corner, than they reduced his allowance to a salary scarcely equal to the necessities of life.

His resentment of the treatment, which, in his own opinion at least, he had not deserved, was such, that he broke off all correspondence with most of his contributors, and appeared to consider them as persecutors and oppressors; and in the latter part of his life declared, that their conduct toward him since his departure from London "had been perfidiousness improving on perfidiousness, and inhumanity on inhumanity."

It is not to be supposed, that the necessities of Mr. Savage did not sometimes incite him to satirical exaggerations of the behaviour of those by whom he thought himself reduced to them. But it must be granted, that the diminution of his allowance

was a great hardship, and that those who withdrew their subscription from a man; who, upon the faith of their promise, had gone into a kind of banishment, and abandoned all those by whom he had been before relieved in his distresses, will find it no easy task to vindicate their conduct.

It may be alleged, and perhaps justly, that he was petulant and contemptuous; that he more frequently reproached his subscribers for not giving him more, than thanked them for what he received; but it is to be remembered, that this his conduct, and this is the worst charge that can be drawn up against them, did them no real injury, and that it therefore ought rather to have been pitied than resented; at least, the resentment it might provoke ought to have been generous and manly; epithets which his conduct will hardly deserve that starves the man whom he has persuaded to put himself into his power.

It might have been reasonably demanded by Savage, that they should, before they had taken away what they promised, have replaced him in his former state, that they should have taken no advantages from the situation to which the appearance of their kindness had reduced him, and that he should have been recalled to London before he was abandoned. He might justly represent, that he ought to have been considered as a lion in the toils, and demand to be released before the dogs should be loosed upon rim.

He endeavoured, indeed, to release himself, and

with an intent to return to London, went to Bristol, where a repetition of the kindness which he had formerly found invited him to stay. He was not only caressed and treated, but had a collection made for him of about thirty pounds, with which it had been happy if he had immediately departed for London; but his negligence did not suffer him to consider, that such proofs of kindness were not often to be expected, and that this ardour of benevolence was in a great degree the effect of novelty, and might, probably, be every day less; and therefore he took no care to improve the happy time, but was encouraged by one favour to hope for another, till at length generosity was exhausted, and officiousness wearied.

Another part of his misconduct was the practice of prolonging his visits to unseasonable hours, and disconcerting all the families into which he was admitted. This was an error in a place of commerce, which all the charms of his conversation could not compensate; for what trader would purchase such airy satisfaction by the loss of solid gain, which must be the consequence of midnight merriment, as those hours which were gained at night were generally lost in the morning?

Thus Mr. Savage, after the curiosity of the inhabitants was gratified, found the number of his friends daily decreasing, perhaps without suspecting for what reason their conduct was altered; for he still continued to harass, with his nocturnal intrusions, those that yet countenanced him, and admitted him to their houses.

But he did not spend all the time of his residence at Bristol in visits or at taverns; for he sometimes returned to his studies; and began several considerable designs. When he felt an inclination to write, he always retired from the knowledge of his friends, and lay hid in an obscure part of the suburbs, till he found himself again desirous of company, to which it is likely that intervals of absence made him more welcome.

He was always full of his design of returning to London, to bring his tragedy upon the stage; but, having neglected to depart with the money that was raised for him, he could not afterwards procure a sum sufficient to defray the expenses of his journey; nor perhaps would a fresh supply have had any other effect than, by putting immediate pleasures into his power, to have driven the thoughts of his journey out of his mind.

While he was thus spending the day in contriving a scheme for the morrow, distress stole upon him by imperceptible degrees. His conduct had already wearied some of those who were at first enamoured of his conversation; but he might, perhaps, still have devolved to others, whom he might have entertained with equal success, had not the decay of his clothes made it no longer consistent with their vanity to admit him to their tables, or to associate with him in public places. He now began to find every man from home at whose house he called; and was therefore no longer able to procure the necessaries of life, but wandered about the town, slighted and neglected, in quest of a dinner, which he did not always obtain.

To complete his misery, he was pursued by the officers for small debts which he had contracted; and was therefore obliged to withdraw from the small number of friends from whom he had still reason to hope for favours. His custom was, to lie in hed the greatest part of the day, and to go out in the dark with the utmost privacy, and, after having paid his visit, return again before morning to his lodging, which was the garret of an obscure inn.

Being thus excluded on one hand, and confined on the other, he suffered the utmost extremities of poverty, and often fasted so long that he was seized with faintness, and had lost his appetite, not being able to bear the smell of meat, till the action of his stomach was restored by a cordial.

In this distress, he received a remittance of five pounds from London, with which he provided himself a decent coat, and determined to go to London, but unhappily spent his money at a favourite tavern. Thus was he again confined to Bristol, where he was every day hunted by bailiffs. In this exigence he once more found a friend, who sheltered him in his house, though at the usual inconveniences with which his company was attended; for he could neither be persuaded to go to bed in the night, nor to rise in the day.

It is observable, that in these various scenes of misery, he was always disengaged and cheerful, he at some times pursued his studies, and at others con-

d, tinued or enlarged his epistolary correspondence; in mor was he ever so far dejected as to endeavour to ofprocure an increase of his allowance by any other ad methods than accusations and reproaches.

all He had now no longer any hopes of assistance to from his friends at Bristol, who as merchants, and he by consequence sufficiently studious of profit, canrk not be supposed to have looked with much compasis sion upon negligence and extravagance, or to think g, any excellence equivalent to a fault of such consequence as neglect of economy. It is natural to imagine, that many of those, who would have relieved of his real wants, were discouraged from the exertion d of their benevolence by observation of the use which g was made of their favours, and conviction that relief would only be momentary, and that the same necessity would quickly return.

At last he quitted the house of his friend, and returned to his lodging at the inn, still intending to set out in a few days for London; but on the 10th of January 1742-3, having been at supper with two of his friends, he was at his return to his lodgings arrested for a debt of about eight pounds, which he owed at a coffee-house, and conducted to the house of a sheriff's officer. The account which he gives of this misfortune, in a letter to one of the gentlemen with whom he had supped, is too remarkable to be omitted.

" I. was not a little unfortunate for me, that I spent yesterday's evening with you; because the hour hindered me from entering on my new lodge ing; however, I have now got one, but such a on La as I believe nobody would choose.

" I was arrested at the suit of Mrs. Read, just and I was going up stairs to bed, at Mr. Bowyer's; bu fri taken in so private a manner, that I believe nobod yo at the White Lion is apprised of it; though I ls wi the officers know the strength, or rather weakness th of my pocket, yet they treated me with the utnos civility; and even when they conducted me to con th finement, it was in such a manner, that I verily be yo lieve I could have escaped, which I would rathed be ruined than have done, notwithstanding the of whole amount of my finances was but three-pene pohalfpenny.

"In the first place, I must insist, that you will industriously conceal this from Mrs. S——s, becaus th I would not have her good-nature suffer that pain th which, I know, she would be apt to feel on this or casion.

"Next I conjure you, dear Sir, by all the ties of all friendship, by no means to have one uneasy thought al on my account; but to have the same pleasantry of I countenance, and unruffled serenity of mind, which p (God be praised!) I have in this, and have had in a much severer calamity. Furthermore, I charge you if you value my friendship as truly as I do yours in not to utter, or even harbour, the least resentment a against Mrs. Read. I believe she has ruined me, but I freely forgive her; and (though I will never more have any intimacy with her) I would, at a due distance, rather do her an act of good, than ill will h ^{OB} Lastly, (pardon the expression), I absolutely command you not to offer me any pecuniary assistance, to nor to attempt getting me any from any one of your bufriends. At another time, or on any other occasion, of you may, dear friend, be well assured, I would rather buffer to you in the submissive style of a request, than event that of a peremptory command.

¹⁰⁵ "However, that my truly valuable friend may not ¹⁰⁶ think I am too proud to ask a favour, let me intreat ¹⁰⁵ you to let me have your boy to attend me for this ¹⁰⁶ day, not only for the sake of saving me the expense ¹⁰⁷ day, not only for the delivery of some letters to ¹⁰⁸ people whose names I would not have known to strangers.

"The civil treatment I have thus far met from those whose prisoner I am, makes me thankful to in the Almighty, that though he has thought fit to visit me (on my birth-night) with affliction, yet (such is his great goodness!) my affliction is not without of alleviating circumstances. I murmur not; but am all resignation to the divine will. As to the world, I hope that I shall be endued by Heaven with that presence of mind, that serene dignity in misfortune, that constitutes the character of a true nobleman; a dignity far beyond that of coronets; a nobility arising from the just principles of philosophy, refined and exalted by those of Christianity."

• He continued five days at the officer's, in hopes • that he should be able to procure bail, and avoid • the necessity of going to prison. The state in which he passed his time, and the treatment which he re-

the

ceived, are very justly expressed by him in a letton which he wrote to a friend : " The whole day," same he, " has been employed in various people's filli son my head with their foolish chimerical systems, which has obliged me coolly (as far as nature will admit) lec digest, and accommodate myself to every differe " person's way of thinking; hurried from one wigg system to another, till it has quite made a chaos me my imagination, and nothing done-promised-dite appointed-ordered to send, every hour, from out part of the town to the other."

When his friends, who had hitherto caressed an hit applauded, found that to give bail and pay the de ha was the same, they all refused to preserve him for fin a prison at the expense of eight pounds ; and there his fore, after having been for some time at the officer mi house "at an immense expense," as he observes i his letter, he was at length removed to Newgate. sh

This expense he was enabled to support by the generosity of Mr. Nash at Bath, who, upon receivinging from him an account of his condition, immediately sont him five guineas, and promised to promote h th subscription at Bath with all his interest.

By his removal to Newgate, he obtained at least br freedom from suspense, and rest from the disturbin vicissitudes of hope and disappointment : he nor me found that his friends were only companions, whe were willing to share his gaiety, but not to partake of his misfortunes; and therefore he no longer es. pected any assistance from them.

It must, however, be observed, of one gentleman,

that he offered to release him by paying the debt; ettbut that Mr. Savage would not consent, I suppose, savecause he thought he had before been too burthen-

hie He was offered by some of his friends that a colt) lection should be made for his enlargement; but he are "treated the proposal," and declared * "he should wi again treat it, with disdain. As to writing any somendicant letters, he had too high a spirit, and dedistermined only to write to some ministers of state, out the try to regain his pension."

He continued to complain + of those that had sent an him into the country, and objected to them, that he de had "lost the profits of his play, which had been for finished three years;" and in another letter declares ere his resolution to publish a pamphlet, that the world ²⁰ might know how "he had been used."

This pamphlet was never written; for he in a very short time recovered his usual tranquillity, and chcertheily applied himself to more inoffensive studies. He mandeed steadily declared, that he was promised a yearely allowance of fifty pounds, and never received half the sum; but he seemed to resign himself to that as well as to other misfortunes, and lose the rememt brance of it in his amusements and employments.

^{m.} The cheerfulness with which he bore his confine-^{or}ment, appears from the following letter, which he

* In a letter after his confinement.† Letter, January 15.

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wrote, January the 30th, to one of his friends London.

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"I now write to you from my confinement in Nemat gate, where I have been ever since Monday last where se'nnight, and where I enjoy myself with much me any tranquillity than I have known for upwards of to twelvemonth past; having a room entirely to myse tak and pursuing the amusement of my poetical studie has uninterrupted, and agreeable to my mind. I that un the Almighty, I am now all collected in myself; and though my person is in confinement, my mind age expatiate on ample and useful subjects with all thus freedom imaginable. I am now more conversant wi eff the Nine than ever, and if, instead of a Newgate-bin im I may be allowed to be a bird of the Muses, I assur ne you, Sir, I sing very freely in my cage; sometime indeed in the plaintive notes of the nightingale: b wh at others in the cheerful strains of the lark." ma

In another letter he observes, that he ranges for tes one subject to another, without confining himself to have any particular task; and that he was employed on proweek upon one attempt, and the next upon another to

Surely the fortitude of this man deserves, at leas er, to be mentioned with applause; and, whatever fauh jai may be imputed to him, the virtue of suffering we cannot be denied him. The two powers which, i so the opinion of Epictetus, constituted a wise man, ar dir those of bearing and forbearing; which it canno indeed be affirmed to have been equally possesse. by Savage; and indeed the want of one obliged him de very frequently to practise the other. ^s He was treated by Mr. Dagge, the keeper of the prison, with great humanity; was supported by him evaluation in the support of the support of the support we peake; had a room to himself, to which he could at any time retire from all disturbance; was allowed of to stand at the door of the prison, and sometimes at taken out into the fields; so that he suffered fewer in hardships in prison than he had been accustomed to an undergo in the greatest part of his life.

The keeper did not confine his benevolence to a cogentle execution of his office, but made some overthe tures to the creditor for his release, though without effect; and continued, during the whole time of his in imprisonment, to treat him with the utmost tenderum ness and civility.

¹⁰ Virtue is undoubtedly most laudable in that state which makes it most difficult; and therefore the humanity of a jailer certainly deserves this public attestation; and the man, whose heart has not been thardened by such an employment, may be justly proposed as a pattern of benevolence. If an inscripet ion was once engraved " to the honest toll-gatherster," less honours ought not to be paid " to the tender i jailer."

Mr. Savage very frequently received visits, and sometimes presents, from his acquaintances; but they did not amount to a subsistence, for the greater part of which he was indebted to the generosity of this keeper; but these favours, however they might endear to him the particular persons from whom he received them, were very far from impressing upon his mind any advantageous ideas of the people of Bristol, and therefore be thought he could not more properly employ himself in prison, than in writing a poem called 'London and Bristol delineated.'*'

When he had brought this poem to its presen state, which, without considering the chasm, is a perfect, he wrote to London an account of his de sign, and informed his friend, + that he was deter mined to print it with his name, but enjoined his not to communicate his intention to his Bristol acquaintance. The gentleman, surprised at his resolution, endeavoured to dissuade him from publishin it, at least from prefixing his name; and declared that he could not reconcile the injunction of secret, with his resolution to own it at its first appearante To this Mr. Savage returned an answer agreeable t his character, in the following terms:

" I received yours this morning; and not withou a little surprise at the contents. To answer a quetion with a question, you ask me concerning London and Bristol, why will I add *delineated*? Why did M Woolaston add the same word to his RELIGION & NATURE? I suppose that it was his will and pleasur to add it in his case; and it is mine to do so in m own. You are pleased to tell me, that you under stand not why secrecy is enjoined, and yet I intento set my name to it. My answer is—I have m

^a The Author preferred this title to that of 'London and Bristol compared ;' which, when he began the piece, he intended to prefix to .t.

+ This friend was Mr. Cave the printer.

private reasons, which I am not obliged to explain to any one. You doubt my friend Mr. S ---- * would not approve of it-And what is it to me whether he does or not? Do you imagine that Mr. S---- is to dictate to me? If any man who calls himself my friend should assume such an air, I would spurn at his friendship with contempt. You say, I seem to think so by not letting him know it-And suppose I do, what then? Perhaps I can give reasons for that disapprobation, very foreign from what you would imagine. You go on in saving, Suppose I should not put my name to it-My answer is, that I will not suppose any such thing, being determined to the contrary: neither, Sir, would I have you suppose, that I applied to you for want of another press: nor would I have you imagine, that I owe Mr. S____ obligations which I do not."

Such was his imprudence, and such his obstinate adherence to his own resolutions, however absurd ! A prisoner ! supported by charity ! and, whatever insults he might have received during the latter part of his stay at Bristol, once caressed, esteened, and presented with a liberal collection, he could forget on a sudden his danger and his obligations, to gratify the petulance of his wit, or the eagerness of his resentment, and publish a satire, by which he might reasonably expect that he should alienate those who then supported him, and provoke those whom he could neither resist nor escape.

This resolution, from the execution of which it is probable that only his death could have hindered him, is sufficient to show, how much he disregarded all considerations that opposed his present passions, and how readily he hazarded all future advantages for any immediate gratifications. Whatever was his predominant inclination, neither hope nor fear hindered him from complying with it; nor had opposition any other effect than to heighten his ardow, and irritate his vehemence.

This performance was however laid aside, while he was employed in soliciting assistance from several great persons; and one interruption succeeding another, hindered him from supplying the chasm, and perhaps from retouching the other parts, which he can hardly be imagined to have finished in his own opinion; for it is very unequal, and some of the lines are rather inserted to rhyme to others, than to support or improve the sense; but the first and last parts are worked up with great spirit and elegance. His time was spent in the prison for the most part in study, or in receiving visits; but sometimes he descended to lower amusements, and diverted himself in the kitchen with the conversation of the criminals; for it was not pleasing to him to be much without company; and, though he was very capable of a judicious choice, he was often contented with the first that offered; for this he was sometimes reproved by, his friends, who found him surrounded with felons: but the reproof was on that, as on other occasions,

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thrown away; he continued to gratify himself, and to set very little value on the opinion of others.

But here, as in every other scene of his life, he made use of such opportunities as occurred of benefiting those who were more miserable than himself, and was always ready to perform any office of humanity to his fellow-prisoners.

He had now ceased from corresponding with cny of his subscribers except one, who yet continued to remit him the twenty pounds a year which he had promised him, and by whom it was expected that he would have been in a very short time enlarged, because he had directed the keeper to inquire after the state of his debts.

However, he took care to enter his name according to the forms of the court, that the creditor might be obliged to make him some allowance, if he was continued a prisoner, and, when on that occasion he appeared in the hall, was treated with very unusual respect.

But the resentment of the city was afterwards raised, by some accounts that had been spread of the satire; and he was informed that some of the merchants intended to pay the allowance which the law required, and to detain him a prisoner at their own expense. This he treated as an empty menace; and perhaps might have hastened the publication, only to show how much he was superior to their insults, had not all his schemes been suddenly destroyed.

When he had been six months in prison, he ro-

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ceived from one of his friends, * in whose kindness he had the greatest confidence, and on whose assistance he chiefly depended, a letter, that contained a charge of very atrocious ingratitude, drawn up in such terms as sudden resentment dictated. Henley in one of his advertisements, had mentioned ' Pope's treatment of Savage.' This was supposed by Pope to be the consequence of a complaint made by Sayage to Henley, and was therefore mentioned by him with much resentment. Mr. Savage returned a very solemn protestation of his innocence, but, however, appeared much disturbed at the accusation. Some days afterwards he was seized with a pain in his back and side, which as it was not violent, was not suspected to be dangerous; but growing daily more languid and dejected, on the 25th of July he confined himself to his room, and a fever seized his spirits. The symptoms grew every day more formidable, but his condition did not enable him to procure any assistance. The last time that the keeper saw him was on July the 31st, 1743, when Savage, seeing him at his bedside, said, with an uncommon earnestness, "I have something to say to you, Sir;" but after a pause, moved his hand in a melancholy manner; and, finding himself unable to recollect what he was going to communicate, said, "'Tis gone !" The keeper soon after left him ; and the next morning he died. He was buried in the churchyard of St. Peter, at the expense of the keeper.

* Mr. Pope,

Such were the life and death of Richard Savage, a man equally distinguished by his virtues and vices; and at once remarkable for his weaknesses and abilities.

He was of a middle stature, of a thin habit of body, a long visage, coarse features, and melancholy aspect; of a grave and manly deportment, a solemn dignity of mien, but which, upon a nearer acquaintance, softened into an engaging easiness of manners. His walk was slow, and his voice tremulous and mournful. He was easily excited to smiles, but very seldom provoked to laughter.

His mind was in an uncommon degree vigorous and active. His judgment was accurate, his apprehension quick, and his memory so tenacious, that he was frequently observed to know what he had learned from others, in a short time, better than those by whom he was informed; and could frequently recollect incidents, with all their combination of circumstances, which few would have regarded at the present time, but which the quickness of his apprehension impressed upon him. He had the peculiar felicity that his attention never deserted him; he was present to every object, and regardful of the most trifling occurrences. He had the art of escaping from his own reflections, and accommodating himself to every new scene.

To this quality is to be imputed the extent of his knowledge, compared with the small time which he spent in visible endeavours to acquire it. He mingled in cursory conversation with the same steadilises

of attention as others apply to a lecture; and amidst the appearance of thoughtless gaiety, lost no new idea that was started, nor any hint that could be improved. He had therefore made in coffee-houses the same proficiency as others in their closets: and it is remarkable, that the writings of a man of little education and little reading have an air of learning scarcely to be found in any other performances, but which perhaps as often obscures as embellishes them.

His judgment was eminently exact both with regard to writings and to men. The knowledge of life was indeed his chief attainment; and it is not without some satisfaction, that I can produce the suffrage of Savage in favour of human nature, of which he never appeared to entertain such odious ideas as some, who perhaps had neither his judgment nor experience, have published, either in ostentation of their sagacity, vindication of their crimes, or gratification of their malice.

His method of life particularly qualified him for conversation, of which he knew how to practice all the graces. He was never vehement or loud, but at once modest and easy, open and respectful; his language was vivacious and elegant, and equally happy upon grave and humorous subjects. He was generally censured for not knowing when to retire; but that was not the defect of his judgment, but of his fortune: when he left his company, he was frequently to spend the remaining part of the night in the street, or at least was abandoned to gloomy reflections, which it is not strange that he delayed as

long as he could; and sometimes forgot that he gave others pain to avoid it himself.

It cannot be said, that he made use of his abilities for the direction of his own conduct; an irregular and dissipated manner of life had made him the slave of every passion that happened to be excited by the presence of its object, and that slavery to his passion reciprocally produced a life irregular and dissipated. He was not master of his own motions, nor cculd promise any thing for the next day.

With regard to his economy, nothing can be added to the relation of his life. He appeared to think himself born to be supported by others, and dispensed from all necessity of providing for himself; he therefore never prosecuted any scheme of advantage, nor endeavoured even to secure the profits which his writings might have afforded him. His temper was, in consequence of the dominion of his passions, uncertain and capricious; he was easily engaged, and easily disgusted; but he is accused of retaining his hatred more tenaciously than his benevolence.

He was compassionate both by nature and principle, and always ready to perform offices of humanity; but when he was provoked (and very small offences were sufficient to provoke him), he would prosecute his revenge with the utmost acrimony till his passion had subsided.

His friendship was therefore of little value; for, though he was zealous in the support or vindication of those whom he loved, yet it was always dangerous

to trust him, because he considered himself as discharged by the first quarrel from all ties of honour and gratitude; and would betray those secrets which in the warmth of confidence had been imparted to him. This practice drew upon him a universal accusation of ingratitude: nor can it be denied that he was very ready to set himself free from the load of an obligation; for he could not bear to conceive himself in a state of dependence, his pride being equally powerful with his other passions, and appearing in the form of insolence at one time, and of vanity at another. Vanity, the most innocent species of pride, was most frequently predominant : he could not easily leave off, when he had once begun to mention himself or his works; nor ever read his verses without stealing his eyes from the page, to discover in the faces of his audience, how they were affected with any favourite passage.

A kinder name than that of vanity ought to be given to the delicacy with which he was always careful to separate his own merit from every other man's, and to reject that praise to which he had no claim. He did not forget, in mentioning his performances, to mark every line that had been suggested or amended; and was so accurate, as to relate that he owed *three words* in 'The Wanderer' to the advice of his friends.

His veracity was questioned, but with little reason; his accounts, though not indeed always the same, were generally consistent. When he loved any man, he suppressed all his faults; and, when he

had been offended by him, concealed all his virtues: but his characters were generally true, so far as he proceeded, though it cannot be denied, that his partiality might have sometimes the effect of falsehood.

In cases indifferent, he was zealous for virtue, truth, and justice: he knew very well the necessity of goodness to the present and future happiness of mankind; nor is there perhaps any writer, who has less endeavoured to please by flattering the appetites, or perverting the judgment.

As an author, therefore, and he now ceases to influence mankind in any other character, if one piece which he had resolved to suppress be excepted, he has very little to fear from the strictest moral or religious censure. And though he may not be altogether secure against the objections of the critic, it must however be acknowledged, that his works are the productions of a genius truly poetical; and, what many writers who have been more lavishly applauded cannot boast, that they have an original air, which has no resemblance of any foregoing writer, that the versification and sentiments have a cast peculiar to themselves, which no man can imitate with success, because what was nature in Savage would in another be affectation. It must be confessed, that his descriptions are striking, his images animated, his fictions justly imagined, and his allegories artfully pursued ; that his diction is clevated, though sometimes forced, and his numbers sonorous and majestic. though frequently sluggish and encumbered. Of his style, the general fault is harshness, and its general

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excellence is dignity; of his sentiments, the prevailing beauty is simplicity, and uniformity the prevailing defect.

For his life, or for his writings, none, who candid. ly consider his fortune, will think an apology either necessary or difficult. If he was not always sufficiently instructed in his subject, his knowledge was at least greater than could have been attained by others in the same state. If his works were some times unfinished, accuracy cannot reasonably be expected from a man oppressed with want, which he has no hope of relieving but by a speedy publication. The insolence and resentment of which he is accused were not easily to be avoided by a great mind, irritated by perpetual hardships, and constrained hourly to return the spurns of contempt, and repress the insolence of prosperity; and vanity surely may be readily pardoned in him, to whom life afforded no other comforts than barren praises, and the consciousness of deserving them.

Those are no proper judges of his conduct, who have slumbered away their time on the down of plenty; nor will any wise man easily presume to say, "Had I been in Savage's condition, I should have lived or written better than Savage."

This relation will not be wholly without its use, if those, who languish under any part of his sufferings, shall be enabled to fortify their patience, by reflecting that they feel only those afflictions from which the abilities of Savage did not exempt bin; of those, who, in confidence of superior capacities or

attainments, disregard the common maxims of life, shall be reminded, that nothing will supply the want of prudence; and that negligence and irregularity, long continued, will make knowledge useless, wit ridiculous, and genius contemptible.

WILLIAM BROOME was born in Cheshire, as is said, of very mean parents. Of the place of his birth, or the first part of his life, I have not been able to gain any intelligence. He was educated upon the foundation at Eton, and was captain of the school a whole year, without any vacancy, by which he might have obtained a scholarship at King's College. Being by this delay, such as is said to have happened very rarely, superannuated, he was sent to St. John's College by the contributions of his friends, where he obtained a small exhibition.

At his college he lived for some time in the same chamber with the well known Ford, by whom I have formerly heard him described as a contracted scholar and a mere versifier, unacquainted with life, and unskilful in conversation. His addiction to metre was then such, that his companions familiarly called him Poet. When he had opportunities of mingling with mankind, he cleared himself, as Ford likewise owned, from great part of his scholastic rust.

He appeared early in the world as a translator of the 'Iliads' into prose, in conjunction with Ozell and Oldisworth. How their several parts were dis-

tributed is not known. This is the translation of which Ozell boasted as superior, in Toland's opinion, to that of Pope: it has long since vanished, and is now in no danger from the critics.

He was introduced to Mr. Pope, who was then visiting Sir John Cotton at Madingley near Cambridge, and gained so much of his esteem, that he was employed, I believe, to make extracts from Eustathius for the notes to the translation of the 'Iliad;' and in the volumes of poetry published by Lintot, commonly called 'Pope's Miscellanies,' many of his early pieces were inserted.

Pope and Broome were to be yet more closely connected. When the success of the 'Iliad' gave encouragement to a version of the 'Odyssey,' Pope, weary of the toil, called Fenton and Broome to his assistance; and, taking only half the work upon himself, divided the other half between his partners, giving four books to Fenton, and eight to Broome. Fenton's books I have enumerated in his life; to the lot of Broome fell the second, sixth, eighth, eleventh, twelfth, sixteenth, eighteenth, and twenty-third, together with the burthen of writing all the notes.

As this translation is a very important event in poetical history, the reader has a right to know upon what grounds I establish my narration. That the version was not wholly Pope's, was always known; he had mentioned the assistance of two friends in his proposals, and at the end of the work some account is given by Broome of their different parts, which

however mentions only five books as written by the coadjutors; the fourth and twentieth by Fenton; the sixth, the eleventh, and the eighteenth, by himself; though Pope, in an advertisement prefixed afterwards to a new volume of his works, claimed only twelve. A natural curiosity, after the real conduct of so great an undertaking, incited me once to inquire of Dr. Warburton, who told me, in his warm language, that he thought the relation given in the note "a lie;" but that he was not able to ascertain the several shares. The intelligence which Dr. Warburton could not afford me, I obtained from Mr. Langton, to whom Mr. Spence had imparted it.

The price at which Pope purchased this assistance was three hundred pounds paid to Fenton, and five hundred to Broome, with as many copies as he wanted for his friends, which amounted to one hundred more. The payment made to Fenton I know not but by hearsay; Broome's is very distinctly told by Pope, in the notes to the Dunciad.

It is evident, that, according to Pope's own estimate. Broome was unkindly treated. If four books could merit three hundred pounds, eight and all the notes, equivalent at least to four, had certainly a right to more than six.

Broome probably considered himself as injured, and there was for some time more than coldness between him and his employer. He always spoke of Pope as too much a lover of money; and Pope pursued him with avowed hostility; for he not only

named him disrespectfully in the 'Dunciad,' but quoted him more than once in the 'Bathos,' as a proficient in the 'Art of Sinking;' and in his enumeration of the different kinds of poets distinguished for the profound, he reckons Broome among " the Parrots who repeat another's words in such a hoarse odd tune as makes them seem their own." I have been told that they were afterwards reconciled; but I am afraid their peace was without friendship.

He afterwards published a Miscellany of Poems, which is inserted, with corrections, in the late compilation.

He never rose to a very high dignity in the Church. He was some time rector of Sturston in Suffolk, where he married a wealthy widow; and afterwards when the King visited Cambridge (1728) became Doctor of Laws. He was (in August 1728) presented by the Crown, to the rectory of Pulham, in Norfolk, which he held with Oakely Magna in Suffolk, given him by the Lord Cornwallis, to whom he was chaplain, and who added the vicarage of Eye in Suffolk; he then resigned Pulham, and retained the other two.

Towards the close of his life he grew again poetical, and amused himself with translating Odes of Anacreon, which he published in the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' under the name of Chester.

He died at Bath, November 16, 1745, and was buried in the Abbey Church.

Of Broome, though it cannot be said that he was

a great poet, it would be unjust to deny that he was an excellent versifier, his lines are smooth and sonorous, and his diction is select and elegant. His rhymes are sometimes unsuitable; in his ' Melancholy' he makes breath rhyme to birth in one place. and to earth in another. Those faults occur but seldom; and he had such power of words and numbers as fitted him for translation; but, in his original works, recollection seems to have been his business more than invention. His imitations are so apparent, that it is part of his reader's employment to recal the verses of some former poet. Sometimes he copies the most popular writers, for he seems scarcely to endeavour at concealment : and sometimes he picks up fragments in obscure corners. His lines to Fenton.

> Serene, the sting of pain thy thoughts beguile, And make afflictions objects of a smile,

brought to my mind some lines on the death of Queen Mary, written by Barnes, of whom I should not have expected to find an imitator;

> But thou, O Muse! whose sweet nepenthean tongue Can charm the pangs of death with deathless song, Canst stinging plagues with easy thoughts beguile, Make pains and tortures objects of a smile.

To detect his imitations were tedious and useless. What he takes he seldom makes worse; and he cannot be justly thought a mean man, whom Pope chose for an associate, and whose co-operation was consi-

dered by Pope's enemies as so important, that he was attacked by Henley with this ludicrous distich:

> Pope came off clean with Homer; but they say Broome went before, and kindly swept the way.

THE following life was written at my request, by a gentleman who had better information than I could easily have obtained; and the public will perhaps wish that I had solicited and obtained more such favours from him. *

" DEAR SIR,

" In consequence of our different conversations about authentic materials for the life of Young, I send you the following detail.

" Of great men, something must always be said to gratify curiosity. Of the illustrious author of the 'Night Thoughts' much has been told of which there never could have been proofs; and little care appears to have been taken to tell that, of which proofs, with little trouble, might have been procured."

EDWARD YOUNG was born at Upham, near Winchester, in June, 1681. He was the son of Edward Young, at that time fellow of Winchester College, and rector of Upham; who was the son of Jo. Young, of Woodhay in Berkshire, styled by Wood, gentleman.

* See Gent. Mag. vol. LXX. p. 225.

In September 1682, the Poet's father was collated to the prebend of Gillingham Minor, in the church of Sarum, by bishop Ward. When Ward's faculties were impaired through age, his duties were necessarily performed by others. We learn from Wood, that, at a visitation of Sprat's, July the 12th, 1686, the prebendary preached a Latin sermon, afterwards published, with which the bishop was so pleased, that he told the chapter he was concerned to find the preacher had one of the worst prebends in their church. Some time after this, in consequence of his merit and reputation, or of the interest of Lord Bradford, to whom, in 1702, he dedicated two volumes of sermons, he was appointed chaplain to King William and Queen Mary, and preferred to the deanery of Sarum. Jacob, who wrote in 1720, says "he was chaplain and clerk of the closet to the late Queen, who honoured him by standing godmother to the Poet." His fellowship of Winchester he resigned in avour of a gentleman of the name of Harris, who married his only daughter. The dean died at Sarum, after a short illness, in 1705, in the sixty-third year of his age. On the Sunday after his decease Bishop Burnet preached at the cathedral, and began his sermon with saying, " Death has been of late walking round us, and making breach upon breach upon us, and has now carried away the head of this body with a stroke; so that he, whom you saw a week ago dis-, tributing the holy mysteries, is now laid in the dust. But he still lives in the many excellent directions he " has left us, both how to live and how to die."

The dean placed his son upon the foundation at Winchester College, where he had himself been educated. At this school Edward Young remained till the election after his eighteenth birth-day, the period at which those upon the foundation are superannuated. Whether he did not betray his abilities early in life, or his masters had not skill enough to discover in their pupil any marks of genius for which he merited reward, or no vacancy at Oxford offered them an opportunity to bestow upon him the reward provided for merit by William of Wykeham; certain it is, that to an Oxford fellowship our poet did not succeed. By chance, or by choice, New College cannot claim the honour of numbering among its fellows him who wrote the 'Night Thoughts.'

On the 13th of October, 1703, he was entered an independent member of New College, that he might live at little expense in the Warden's lodgings, who was a particular friend of his father's, till he should be qualified to stand for a fellowship at All Soul In a few months the warden of New College died. He then removed to Corpus College. The president of this society, from regard also for his father, invited him thither, in order to lessen his academical expenses. In 1708, he was nominated to a law-fellowship at All Souls by Archbishop Tenison, into whose hands it came by devolution. Such repeated patronage, while it justifies Burnet's praise of the father, reflects credit on the conduct of the son The manner in which it was exerted seems to prove, that the father did not leave behind him much wealth.

On the 23d of April, 1714, Young took his degree of bachelor of civil laws, and his doctor's degree on the 10th of June, 1719.

Soon after he went to Oxford, he discovered, it is said, an inclination for pupils. Whether he ever commenced tutor is not known. None has hitherto boasted to have received his academical instructions from the author of the ' Night Thoughts.'

It is probable that his College was proud of him no less as a scholar than as a poet; for in 1716, when the foundation of the Codrington Library was laid, two years after he had taken his bachelor's degree, Young was appointed to speak the Latin oration. This is at least particular for being dedicated in English " To the ladies of the Codrington Family." To these ladies he says "that he was unavoidably flung into a singularity, by being obliged to write an epistle dedicatory void of common-place, and such a one was never published before by any author whatever; that this practice absolved them from any obligation of reading what was presented to them; and that the bookseller approved of it because it would make people stare, was absurd enough, and perfectly right."

Of this oration there is no appearance in his own edition of his works; and prefixed to an edition by Curll and Tonson, 1741, is a letter from Young to Curll, if we may credit Curll, dated December the 9th, 1739, wherein he says, that he has not leisure to review what he formerly wrote, and adds, "I have not the 'Epistle to Lord Lansdowne,' If you will take my advice, I would have you omit that, and the oration on Codrington. I think the collection will sell better without them."

There are who relate, that, when first Young found himself independent, and his own master at All Souls, he was not the ornament to religion and morality which he afterwards became.

The authority of his father, indeed, had ceased, some time before, by his death; and Young was certainly not ashamed to be patronized by the infamous Wharton. But Wharton befriended in Young, perhaps, the poet, and particularly the tragedian. If virtuous authors must be patronized only by virtuous peers, who shall point them out?

Yet Pope is said by Ruffhead to have told Warburton, that "Young had much of a sublime genius, though without common sense; so that his genius, having no guide, was perpetually liable to degenerate into bombast. This made him pass a *foolish youth*, the sport of peers and poets: but his having a very good heart enabled him to support the clerical character when he assumed it, first with decency, and afterwards with honour."

They who think ill of Young's morality in the early part of his life, may perhaps be wrong; but Tindal could not err in his opinion of Young's warmth and ability in the cause of religion. Tindal used to spend much of his time at All Souls. "The other boys," said the Atheist, "I can always answer, because I always know whence they have their arguments, which I have read a hundred times; but

that fellow Young is continually pestering me with something of his own."*

After all, Tindal and the censurers of Young may be reconcilable. Young might, for two or three years, have tried that kind of life, in which his natural principles would not suffer him to wallow long. If this were so, he has left behind him not only his evidence in favour of virtue, but the potent testimony of experience against vice.

We shall soon see that one of his earliest productions was more serious than what comes from the generality of unfledged poets.

Young perhaps ascribed the good fortune of Addison to the ' Poem to his Majesty,' presented, with a copy of verses, to Somers; and hoped that he also might soar to wealth and honours on wings of the same kind. His first poetical flight was when Queen Anne called up to the House of Lords the sons of the Earls of Northampton and Aylesbury, and added, in one day, ten others to the number of peers. In order to reconcile the people to one, at least, of the new lords, he published in 1712, ' An Epistle to the Right Honourable George Lord Lansdowne. In this composition the poet pours out his panegyric with the extravagance of a young man, who thinks his present stock of wealth will never be exhausted.

* Every time I called upon Johnson during the time I was employed in collecting materials for this life, he never suffered me to depart without some such fareweil as this: " Don't forget that raseal Tindai, Sir. Be sure to hang up the Atheist." Alluding to this anecdote, which Johnson had mentioned.

The poem seems intended also to reconcile the public to the late peace. This is endeavoured to be done by showing that men are slain in war, and that in peace " harvests wave, and commerce swells her sail." If this be humanity, for which he meant it, is it politics? Another purpose of this enistle appears to have been to prepare the public for the reception of some tragedy he might have in hand. His lordship's patronage, he says, will not let him " repent his passion for the stage;" and the particular praise bestowed on 'Othello' and 'Oroonoko' looks as if some such character as Zanga was even then in contemplation. The affectionate mention of the death of his friend Harrison of New College, at the close of this poem, is an instance of Young's art, which displayed itself so wonderfully some time afterwards in the 'Night Thoughts,' of making the public a party in his private sorrow.

Should justice call upon you to censure this poem, it ought at least to be remembered that he dd not insert it in his works; and that in the letter to Curll, as we have seen, he advises its omission. The booksellers, in the late body of English Poetry, should have distinguished what was deliberately rejected by the respective authors. * This I shall be careful to do with regard to Young. "I think," says he, "the following pieces in *four* volumes to be the most excusable of all that I have written, and I wish *less apology* was needful for these. As there is now

* Dr. Johnson, in many cases, thought and directed differently.

recalling what is got abroad, the pieces here published I have revised and corrected, and rendered them as *pardonable* as it was in my power to do." Shall the gates of repentance be shut only against literary sinners?

When Addison published ' Cato' in 1713, Young had the honour of prefixing to it a recommendatory copy of verses. This is one of the pieces which the author of the ' Night Thoughts' did not republish. On the appearance of his ' Poem on the Last Day.' Addison did not return Young's compliment : but ' The Englishman' of October 29, 1713, which was probably written by Addison, speaks handsomely of this poem. The 'Last Day' was published soon after the peace. The vice-chancellor's imprimatur, for it was printed at Oxford, is dated May the 19th, 1713. From the exordium Young appears to have spent some time on the composition of it. While other bards " with Britain's hero set their souls on fire," he draws, he says a deeper scene. Marlborough had been considered by Britain as her hero: but when the 'Last Day' was published, female cabal had blasted for a time me taurels of Blenheim. This serious poen was finished by Young as early as 1710, before he was thirty; for part of it is printed in the 'Tatler.' It was inscribed to the Queen, in a dedication, which, for some reason, he did not admit into his works. It tells her, that " his only title to the great honour he now does hinself, is the obligation which he formerly received from her royal indulgence."

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Of this obligation nothing is now known, unless he alluded to her being his godmother. He is said, indeed, to have been engaged at a settled stipend as a writer for the Court. In Swift's 'Rhapsody on Poetry' are these lines, speaking of the Court—

> Whence Gay was banish'd in disgrace, Where Pope will never show his face, Where V— must torture his invention To flatter knaves, or lose his pension.

That Y means Young seems clear from four other lines in the same poem:

> Attend, ye Popes, and Youngs, and Gays, And tune your harps, and strew your bays; Your panegyries here provide; You cannot err on flättery's side.

Yet who shall say with certainty, that Young was a pensioner? In all modern periods of this country, have not the writers on one side been regularly called Hirelings, and on the other Patriots?

Of the Dedication the complexion is clearly political. It speaks in the highest terms of the late peace; it gives her majesty praise indeed for her victories, but says, that the author is more pleased to see her rise from this lower world, soaring above the clouds, passing the first and second heavens, and leaving the fixed stars behind her; nor will he lose her there, he says, but keep her still in view through the boundless spaces on the other side of Creation, in her journey towards eternal bliss, till he behold the heaven of heavens open, and angels receiving and conveying her still orward from the stretch of

his imagination, which tires in her pursuit, and falls back again to earth.

The Queen was soon called away from this lower world, to a place where human praise or human flattery, even less general than this, are of little consequence. If Young thought the dedication contained only the praise of truth, he should not have omitted it in his works. Was he conscious of the exaggeration of party? Then he should not have written it. The poem itself is not without a glance towards politics, notwithstanding the subject. The cry that the Church was in danger, had not yet subsided. The 'Last Day,' written by a layman, was much approved by the ministry and their friends.

Before the Queen's death, ' The Force of Religion, or Vanquished Love,' was sent into the world. This poem is founded on the execution of Lady Jane Grey and her husband Lord Guildford, 1554, a story chosen for the subject of a tragedy by Edmund Smith, and wrought into a tragedy by Rowe. The dedication of it to the Countess of Salisbury does not appear in his own edition. He hopes it may be some excuse for his presumption, that the story could not have been read without thoughts of the Countess of Salisbury, though it had been dedicated to another. " To behold," he proceeds, " a person only virtuous stirs in us a prudent regret ; to behold a person only amiable to the sight, warns us with a religious indignation ; but to turn our eyes to a Countess of Salisbury, gives us pleasure and improvement ; it works a sort of miracle, occasions the bias of our nature to

fall off from sin, and makes our very senses and affections converts to our roligion, and promoters of our duty." His flattery was as ready for the other sex as for ours, and was at least as well adapted.

August the 27th, 1714, Pope writes to his friend Jervais, that he is just arrived from Oxford ; that every one is much concerned for the Queen's death. but that no panegyrics are ready yet for the king. Nothing like friendship has yet taken place between Pope and Young: for, soon after the event which Pope mentions, Young published a poem on the Queen's death, and his Majesty's accession to the throne. It is inscribed to Addison, then secretary to the Lords Justices. Whatever were the obligations which he had formerly received from Anne, the poet appears to aint at something of the same sort from George. Of the poem the intention seems to have been, to show that he had the same extravagant strain of praise for a king as for a queen. To discover, at the very onset of a foreigner's reign, that the God's ble s his new subjects in such a king, is something more han praise. Neither was this deemed one of his creusable pieces. We do not find it in his vorks.

Youn, s father had been well acquainted with Lady Anne Wharton, the first wife of Thomas Wharton, Esq. afterwards Marquis of Wharton; a lady celebrated for her poetical talents by Burnet and by Waller:

To the Dean of Sarum's visitation sermon, already mentioned, were added some verses "by that excel-

lent poetess, Mrs. Anne Wharton," upon its being translated into English, at the instance of Waller, by Atwood. Wharton, after he became ennobled, did not drop the son of his old friend. In him, during the short time he lived, Young found a patron, and in his dissolute descendant a friend and a companion. The Marquis died in April, 1715. In the beginning of the next year the young Marquis set out upon his travels, from which he returned in about a twelvemonth. The beginning of 1717 carried him to Ireland ; where, says the 'Biographia,' " on the score of his extraordinary qualities, he had the honour done him of being admitted, thongh under age, to take his seat in the House of Lords."

With this unhappy character, it is not unlikely that Young went to Ireland. From his letter to Richardson on 'Original Composition,' it is clear he was, at some period of his life, in that country. "I remember," says he, in that letter, speaking of Swift, " as I and others were taking with him an evening walk, about a mile out of Dublish he was ped short; we passed on; but perceiving he did out follow us, I went back, and found him used as a statue, and earnestly gazing upward at a noble elm, where and decayed. Pointing at it, he said, 'I shall be like that tree, I shall die at top.'" Is it not probable, that this visit to Ireland was paid when he had an opportunity of going thither with his avowed friend and patron?

From ' The Englishman' it appears that a tragedy by Young was in the theatre so early as 1713. Yet ^c Busiris' was not bronght upon Drury-lane stage till 1719. It was inscribed to the Duke of Newcastle, "because the late instances he had received of his Grace's undeserved and uncommon favour, in an affair of some consequence, foreign to the theatre, had taken from him the privilege of choosing a patron." The Dedication he afterwards suppressed.

'Busiris' was followed, in the year 1721, by 'The Revenge.' He dedicated this famous tragedy to the Duke of Wharton. "Your Grace," says the Dedication, "has been pleased to make yourself accessary to the following scenes, not only by suggesting the most beautiful incident in them, but by making all possible provision for the success of the whole."

That his Grace should have suggested the incident to which he alludes, whatever that incident might have been, is not unlikely. The last mental exertion of the superannuated young man, in his quarters at Lerida in Spain, was some scenes of a tragedy on the story of Mary Queen of Scots.

Dryden dedicated ' Marriage a-la-Mode' to Wharton's infame---- relation Rochester, whom he acknowledges not only as the de"---der of his poetry, but as the promoter of his fortune. Young concludes his address to Wharton thus----- '' My present fortune is his bounty, and my future his care ; which I will venture to say will be always remembered to his honour, since he, I know, intended his generosity as an encouragement to merit, though through his very pardonable partiality to one who bears him so sincere a duty and respect, I happen to receive the benefit of

it." That he ever had such a patron as Wharton, Young took all the pains in his power to conceal from the world, by excluding this dedication from his works. He should have remembered that he at the same time concealed his obligation to Wharton for the most beautiful incident in what is surely not his least beautiful incident in what is surely not his least beautiful composition. The passage just quoted is, in a poem afterwards addressed to Walpole, literally copied:

> Be this thy partial smile from censure free ! 'Twas meant for merit, though it fell on me.

While Young, who, in his 'Love of Fame,' complains grievously how often "dedications wash an Æthiop white," was painting an amiable Duke of Wharton in perishable prose, Pope was, perhaps, beginning to describe the "scorn and wonder of his days" in lasting verse.

To the patronage of such a character, had Young studied men as much as Pope, he would have known how little to have trusted. Young, however, was certainly indebted to it for something meterial; and the Duke's regard for Young, added to his " list of praise," procured to All, Soul College a donation, which was not forgotten by the poet when he dedicated ' The Revenge.'

It will surprise you to see me cite second of Atkins, Case 136, Stiles versus the Attorney-General, March 14, 1740, as authority for the life of a poet. But biographers do not always find such certain guides as the oaths of the persons whom they record. Chancellor Hardwicke was to determine whether two annuities, granted by the Duke of Wharton to Young, were for legal considerations. One was dated the 24th of March, 1719, and accounted for his Grace's bounty in a style princely and commendable, if not legal—" considering that the public good is advanced by the encouragement of learning and the polite arts, and being pleased therein with the attempts of Dr. Young, in consideration thereof, and of the love I bear him," &c. The other was dated the 10th of July, 1722.

Young, on his examination, swore that he quitted the Exeter family, and refused an annuity of £100, which had been offered him for life if he would continue tutor to Lord Burleigh, upon the pressing solicitations of the Duke of Wharton, and his Grace's assurances of providing for him in a much more ample manner. It also appeared that the Duke had given him a bond for £600, dated the 15th of March, 1721, in consideration of his taking several journeys, and being at great expenses, in order to be chosen member of the House'of Commons, at the Duke's desire, and in consideration of his not taking two livings of £200, and £400, in the gift of All Souls College, on his Grace's promises of serving and advancing him in the world.

Of his adventures in the Exeter family I am unable to give any account. The attempt to get into Parliament was at Cirencester, where Young stood a contested election. His Grace discovered in him talents for oratory as well as for poetry. Nor was this judgment wrong. Young, after he took orders,

became a very popular preacher, and was much followed for the grace and animation of his delivery. By his oratorical talents he was once in his life, according to the 'Biographia,' deserted. As he was preaching in his turn at St. James's, he plainly perceived it was out of his power to command the attention of his audience. This so affected the feelings of the preacher, that he sat back in the pulpit, and burst into tears. But we must pursue his poetical life.

In 1719 he lamented the death of Addison, in a Letter addressed to their common friend Tickell. For the secret history of the following lines, if they contain any, it is now vain to seek:

> In joy once join'd, in sorrow, now, for years-Partner in grief, and brother of my tears, Tickell, accept this verse, thy mournful due.

From your account of Tickell it appears that he and Young used to "communicate to each other whatever verses they wrote, even to the least things."

In 1719 appeared a 'Paraphrase on Part of the Book of Job.' Parker, to whom it is dedicated, had not long, by means of the seals, been qualified for a patron. Of this work the ar nor's opinion may be known from his Letter to Card . 'You seem, in the Collection you propose, to have omitted what I think may claim the first place in it; I mean a Translation from Part of Job, printed by Mr. Tonson.'' The Dedication, which was only suffered to appear in Mr. Tonson's edition, while it speaks with satisfaction of his present retirement, seems to make an unusual struggle to escape from retirement. But every one who sings in the dark does not sing from joy. It is addressed, in no common strain of flattery, to a Chancellor, of whom he clearly appears to have had no kind of knowledge.

Of his Satires it would not have been possible to fix the dates without the assistance of first editions, which, as you had occasion to observe in your account of Dryden, are with difficulty found. We must then have referred to the poems, to discover when they were written. For these internal notes of time we should not have referred in vain. The first Satire laments, that "Guilt's chief foe in Addison is fled." The second, addressing himself, asks,

> Is thy ambition sweating for a rliyme, Thou unambitious fool, at this late time? A fool at *forty* is a fool indeed.

The Satires were originally published separately in folio, under the title of 'The Universal Passion.' These passages fix the appearance of the first to about 1725, the time at which it came out. As Young stidom suffered his pen to dry, after he had once dipped it in oetry, we may conclude that he began his Satires soon after he had written the 'Paraphrase on Job.' The last Satire was certainly finished in the beginning of the year 1726. In December 1725, the king, in his passage from Helvoetsluys, escaped with great difficulty from a storm by landing at Rye; and the conclusion of the Satire turns the escape into a miracle, in such an encomiastic strain of compliment as Poetry too often seeks to pay to Royalty.

From the sixth of these poems we learn,

Midst empire's charms, how Corolina's heart Glow'd with the love of virtue and of art ;

since the grateful poet tells us, in the next couplet,

Her favour is diffus'd to that degree, Excess of goodness ! it has dawn'd on me.

Her Majesty had stood godmother, and given her name, to the daughter of the lady whom Young married in 1731; and had perhaps shown some attention to Lady Elizabeth's future husband.

The fifth Satire, 'On Women,' was not published till 1727; and the sixth not till 1728.

To these poems, when, in 1728, he gathered them into one publication, he prefixed a Preface; in which he observes, that "no man can converse much in the world, but at what he meets with he must either be insensible or grieve, or be angry or smile. Now to smile at it, and turn it into ridicule," he adds, "I think most eligible, as it hurts ourselves least, and gives vice and folly the greatest offence. Laughing at the misconduct of the world will, in a great measure, ease us of any more disagreeable passion about it. One passion is more effectually driven out by another than by reason, whatever some teach." So wrote, and so of course thought, the lively and witty Satirist at the grave age of almost fifty, who, many years earlier in life, wrote the 'Last Day.' After all, Swift pronounced of these Satires, that they should either have been more angry or more merry.

Is it not somewhat singular that Young preserved,

without any palliation, this Preface, so bluntly decisive in favour of laughing at the world, in the same collection of his works which contains the mournful, angry, gloomy, 'Night Thoughts?'

At the conclusion of the Preface he applies Plato's beautiful fable of the 'Birth of Love' to modern noetry, with the addition, " that Poetry, like Love, is a little subject to blindness, which makes her mistake her way to preferments and honours ; and that she retains a dutiful admiration of her father's family ; but divides her favours, and generally lives with her mother's relations." Poetry, it is true, did not lead Young to preferments or to honours ; but was there not something like blindness in the flattery which he sometimes forced her, and her sister Prose, to utter? She was always, indeed, taught by him to entertain a most dutiful admiration of riches; but surely Young, though nearly related to Poetry, had no connexion with her whom Plato makes the mother of Love. That he could not well complain of being related to Poverty appears clearly from the frequent bounties which his gratitude records, and from the wealth which he left behind him. By ' The Universal Passion' he acquired no vulgar fortune, more than three thousand pounds. A considerable sum had already been swallowed up in the South-Sea. For this loss he took the vengeance of an author. His Muse makes poetical use more than once of a South-Sea Dream.

It is related by Mr. Spence, in his Manuscript Anecdotes, on the authority of Mr. Rawlinson, that

Young, upon the publication of his 'Universal Passion,' received from the Duke of Grafton two thousand pounds; and that, when one of his friends exclaimed, "two thousand pounds for a poem !" he said it was the best bargain he ever made in his life, for the poem was worth four thousand.

This story may be true; but it seems to have been raised from the two answers of Lord Burghley and Sir Philip Sidney, in Spenser's Life.

After inscribing his Satires, not perhaps without the hopes of preferments and honours, to such names as the Duke of Dorset, Mr. Dodington, Mr. Spencer Compton, Lady Elizabeth Germaine, and Sir Robert Walpole, he returns to plain panegyric. In 1726 he addressed a poem to Sir Robert Walpole, of which the title sufficiently explains the intention. If Young must be acknowledged a ready celebrator, he did not endeavour, or did not choose, to be a lasting one. 'The Instalment' is among the pieces he did rot admit into the number of his *excusable writings*. Yet it contains a couplet which pretends to pant after the power of bestowing immortality.

Oh ! how I long, enkindled by the theme, In deep eternity to launch thy name

The bounty of the former reign seems to have been continued, possibly increased, in this. Whatever it might have been, the poet thought he deserved it; for he was not ashamed to acknowledge what, without his acknowledgment, would now perhaps never have been known: My breast, O Walpole, glows with grateful fire. The streams of royal b unity, turn'd by thee, Refresh the dry domains of poesy.

If the purity of modern patriotism will term Young a pensioner, it must at least be confessed he was a grateful one.

The reign of the new monarch was ushered in by Young with 'Ocean, an Ode.' The hint of it was taken from the royal speech, which recommended the increase and the encouragement of the seamen; that they might be " invited, rather than compelled by force and violence, to enter into the service of their country ;" a plan which humanity must lament that policy has not even yet been able, or willing, to carry into execution. Prefixed to the original publication were an ' Ode to the King, Pater Patria;' and an 'Essay on Lyric Poetry.' It is but justice to confess, that he preserved neither of them; and that the Ode itself, which in the first edition, and in the last, consists of seventy-three stanzas, in the author's own edition is reduced to forty-nine. Among the omitted passages is a 'Wish' that concluded the poem, which few would have suspected Young of forming; and of which few, after having formed it, would confess something like their shame by suppression.

It stood originally so high in the author's opinion, that he entitled the poem, 'Ocean, an Ode. Concluding with a Wish.' This wish consists of thirteen stanzas. The first runs thus :

O may I steat Along the vale Of humble life, scenre-from foes ! My friend sincere, My judgment clear, And gentle business my repose!

The three last stanzas are not more remarkable for just rhymes: but, altogether, they will make rather a curious page in the life of Young:

> Prophetic schemes, And golden dreams, May I, unsanguine, cast away ! Have what I have, And live, not leave, Enamour'd of the present day !

My hours my own ! My faults unknown ! My chief revente in content ! Then leave one beam Of hones: fame ! And seem the labourd monument

Unhurt my ura Till that great turn When mighty Nature's self shall die, Time cease to glidê, With human pridê, Sunk in the ocean of eternity !

ly deserve not much censure for their fondness of what, by their own confession, affords pleasure, and abounds in harmony.

The next paragraph in his Essay did not occur to him when he talked of "that great turn" in the stanza just quoted. "But then the writer must take care that the difficulty is overcome. That is, he must make rhyme consist with as perfect sense and expression, as could be expected if he was perfectly free from that shackle."

Another part of this Essay will convict the following stanza of, what every reader will discover in it, "involuntary burlesque:"

> The northern blast, The shatter'd mast, The synt, the whichool, and the rock, The breaking spont, The boiling streight, the monster's shock.

But would the English poets fill quite so many volumes, if all their productions were to be tried, like this, by an elaborate essay on each particular species of poetry of which they exhibit specimens?

If Young be not a lyric poet, he is at least a critic in that sort of poetry; and, if his lyric poetry can be proved bad, it was first proved so by his own criticism. This surely is candid. n

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Milbourne was styled by Pope " the fairest of critics," only because he exhibited his own version of Virgil to be compared with Dryden's, which he condemned, and with which every reader had it not otherwise in his power to compare it. Young was

surely not the most unfair of prets for prefixing to a lyric composition an Essay on Lyric Poetry, so just and impartial as to condemn himself.

We shall soon come to a work, hefore which we find indeed no critical essay, but which disdains to shrink from the touchstone of the severest critic; and which certainly, as I remember to have heard you say, " if it contain some of the worst, contains also some of the best things in the language."

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Soon after the appearance of 'Ocean,' when he was almost fifty, Young entered into Orders. In April 1728, not long after he had put on the gown, he was appointed chaplain to George the Second.

The tragedy of 'The Brothers,' which was already in rehearsal, he immediately withdrew from the stage. The managers resigned it with some reluctance to the delicacy of the new clergyman. The Epilogue to 'The Brothers,' the only appendages to any of his three plays which he added himself, is, I believe, the only one of the kind. He calls it an historical Epilogue. Finding that "Guilt's dreadful close his narrow scene denied," he, in a manner, continues the tragedy in the Epilogue, and relates how Rome revenged the shade of Demetrius, and punished Perseus " for this night's deed."

Of Young's taking Orders something is told by the biographer of Pope, which places the easiness and simplicity of the poet in a singular light. When he determined on the Church, he did not address himself to Sherlock, to Atterbury, or to Hare, for the best instructions in Theology; but to Pope, who,

in a youthful frolic, advised the diligent perusal of pi Thomas Aquinas. With this treasure Young retired from interruption to an obscure place in the suburbs, or His poetical guide to godliness hearing nothing of to him during half a year, and apprehending he might it, have carried the jest too far, sought after him, and fu found him just in time to prevent what Ruffhead Ti calls "an irretrievable derangement."

That attachment to his favourite study, which de made him think a poet the surest guide to his new profession, left him little doubt whether poetry was w the surest path to its honours and preferments. Not th long indeed after he took Orders, he published, in to prose, 1728, ' A true Estimate of Human Life,' de of dicated, notwithstanding the Latin quotations with sen which it abounds, to the Queen ; and a sermon preached before the House of Commons, 1729, on the the martyrdom of King Charles, entitled, 'An A. 17 pology for Princes, or the Reverence due to Govern. the ment.' But the 'Second Course,' the counterpart of Hi his 'Estimate,' without which it cannot be called 'A acc true Estimate,' though in 1728 it was announced as WI " soon to be published," never appeared; and his Di old friends the Muses were not forgotten. In 1790 lau he relapsed to poetry, and sent into the world 'Im the perium Pelagi: a Naval Lyric, written in imitation of Pindar's Spirit, occasioned by his Majesty's Re hin turn from Hanover, September 1729, and the suc her ceeding Peace.' It is inscribed to the Duke of fern Chandos. In the Preface we are told, that the Oder, is the most spirited kind of poetry, and that the qua

of Pindaric is the most spirited kind of Ode. "This ed I speak," he adds, "with sufficient candour, at my be own very great peril. But truth has an eternal title of to our conffession, though we are sure to suffer by thit." Behold, again, the fairest of poets. Young's and 'Imperium Pelagi' was ridiculed in Fielding's 'Tom and Thumb;' but, let us not forget that it was one of his pieces which the author of the 'Night Thoughts'. ch deliberately refused to own.

Not long after this Pindaric attempt, he published as two Epistles to Pope, ' Concerning the Authors of ot the Age,' 1730. Of these poems one occasion seems in the been an apprehension lest, from the liveliness of this satires, he should not be deemed sufficiently the serious for promotion in the Church.

In July 1730 he was presented by his College to in the rectory of Welwyn in Hertfordshire. In May 1731 he married Lady Elizabeth Lee, daughter of the Earl of Lichfield, and widow of Colonel Lee. of His connexion with this lady arose from his father's a equaintance, already mentioned, with Lady Anne Wharton, who was coheiress of Sir Henry Lee, of Ditchley, in Oxfordshire. Poetry had lately been aught by Addison to aspire to the arms of nobility, though not with extraordinary happiness.

We may naturally conclude that Young now gave misself up in some measure to the comforts of his new connexion, and to the expectations of that preferment which he thought due to his poetical talents, ex, at least, to the manner in which they had so frequently been exerted. The next production of his Muse was ' The Sea piece,' in two odes.

Young enjoys the credit of what is called an ' E_{X} tempore Epigram on Voltaire;' who, when he wa in England, ridiculed, in the company of the jealou at English Poet, Milton's allegory of 'Sin and Death

> You are so witty, profligate, and thin, At once we think thee Milton, Death, and Sin,

From the following passage in the poetical Dedication of his 'Sea-piece' to Voltaire, it seems that this extemporaneous reproof, if it must be extemporaneous, (for what few will now affirm Voltaire to have deserved any reproof?) was something longer than a distich, and something more gentle than the distich just quoted.

> No stranger, Sir, though born in foreign elimes. On *Dorset* downs, when Milton's page. With Sin and Death provok'd thy rage, Thy tage provok'd, who sooth'd with genite rhymes?

By 'Dorset downs' he probably meant Mr. Doding' ton's seat. In Pitt's Poems is 'An Epistle to Dt in Edward Young, at Eastbury in Dorsetshire, on the Review at Sarum, 1722.'

> While with your Dodington retir'd you sit, Charm'd with his flowing Burgundy and wit, &c.

Thomson, in his 'Autumn,' addressing Mr. Dolington, calls his seat the seat of the Muses,

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Where, in the secret bower and winding walk, For virtuous Young and thee they twine the bay.

The praises Thomson bestows but a few lines before on Philips, the second,

> Who nobly durst, in rhyme-unfetter'd verse, With British freedom sing the British song.

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⁰⁰⁰ added to Thomson's example and success, might perth aps induce Young, as we shall see presently, to write his great work without rhyme.

In 1734 he published 'The foreign Address, or the best Argument for Peace, occasioned by the big British Fleet and the Posture of Affairs. Written the the Character of a Sailor.' It is not to be found and the author's four volumes.

He now appears to have given up all hopes of wertaking Pindar, and perhaps at last resolved to arm his ambition to some original species of poetry. This poem concludes with a formal farewell to Ode, which few of Young's readers will regret:

> My shell, which Clio gave, which Kings applaud, Which Europe's bleeding Genius call'd abroad, Adieu !

^{Jr.} In a species of poetry altogether his own, he next ^{br}ried his skill, and succeeded.

Of his wife he was deprived in 1741. Lady Elitabeth had lost, after her marriage with Young, an uniable daughter, by her former husband, just after he was married to Mr. Temple, son of Lord Palmerston. Mr. Temple did not long remain after his wife, though he was married a second time, to a daughter of Sir John Barnard's, whose son is the present peer. Mr. and Mrs. Temple have generally been considered as Philander and Narcissa. Frond the great friendship which constantly subsisted be for tween Mr. Temple and Young, as well as from other had circumstances, it is probable that the poet had bot him and Mrs. Temple in view for these characters, id though at the same time some passages respecting. Philander do not appear to suit either Mr. Temple or any other person with whom Young was know and to be connected or acquainted, while all the circum stances relating to Narcissa have been constantly found applicable to Young's daughter-in-law.

At what short intervals the poet tells us he way needed by the deaths of the three persons particularly lamented, none that has read the 'Night Thoughts' (and who has not read them?) needs to he be informed.

Insatiate Archer ! could not one suffice ? Thy shaft flew thrice ; and thrice my peace was slain ; And thrice, ere thrice yon moon had fill*d her hom.

Yet how is it possible that Mr. and Mrs. Temple, and Lady Elizabeth Young could be these three victims, over whom Young has hitherto been pitied for having to pour the "Midnight Sorrows" of hin religious poetry; Mrs. Temple died in 1736; Mr. Temple four years afterwards, in 1740; and the poet's wife seven months after Mr. Temple, in 1741. How could the insatiate Archer thrice slay his peace, in these three persons, "ere thrice the moon had fill'd her horn?"

But in the short Preface to 'The Complaint' he for seriously tells us, " that the occasion of this poem

vas real, not fictitious; and that the facts mentioned ^{an}did naturally pour these moral reflections on the ^{be}bought of the writer." It is probable, therefore, ^{ter} hat in these three contradictory lines, the poet comlains more than the father-in-law, the friend, or the ³ ridower.

Whatever names belong to these facts, or, if the manual set of the ming a poet's sorrow may have given the facts; to the sorrow Young felt from them, religion and moyality are indebted for the 'Night Thoughts.' There a pleasure sure in sadness which mourners only now !

Of these poems the two or three first have been perused perhaps more eagerly and more frequently han the rest. When he got as far as the fourth or ifth, his original motive for taking up the pen was answered; his grief was naturally either diminished r exhausted. We still find the same pious poet; but we hear less of Philander and Narcissa, and less of the mourner whom he loved to pity.

Mrs. Temple died of a consumption at Lyons, in her way to Nice, the year after her marriage; that is, when poetry relates the fact, " in her bridal hour," It is more than poetically true, that Young accompanied her to the continent:

I flew, I snatch'd her from the rigid North, And bore her nearer to the sun.

But in vain. Her funeral was attended with the diffeultics painted in such animated colours in 'Night the Third.' After her death, the remainder of th party passed the ensuing winter at Nice.

The poet seems pethaps in these compositions to dwell with more melancholy on the death of Philan der and Narcissa, than of his wife. But it is only for this reason. He who runs and reads may remember, that in the 'Night Thoughts' Philander an Narcissa are often mentioned and often lamented To recollect lamentations over the author's wife, the memory must have been charged with distinct passages. This Lady brought him one child, Frederick, now living, to whom the Prince of Wales was gods father.

That domestic grief is, in the first instance, to be thanked for these ornaments to our language, it is impossible to deny. Nor would it be common hardiness to contend, that worldly discontent had no hand in these joint productions of poetry and piety. Yet I am by no means sure that, at any rate, we should not have had something of the same colour from Young's pencil, notwithstanding the liveliness of his satires. In so long a life, causes for discontent and occasions for grief must have occurred. It is not clear to me that his Muse was not sitting upon the watch for the first which happened. ' Night Thoughts' were not uncommon to her, even when first she visited the poet, and at a time when he himself was remarkable neither for gravity nor gloominess. In his ' Last Day,' almost his earliest poem, he calls her ' The Melancholy Maid,'

whom dismal scenes delight, Frequent at tombs and in the realms of Night.

In the prayer which concludes the second book of the same poem, he says-

-Oh! permit the gloom of solemn night To sacred thought may forcibly invite. Oh! how divine to tread the milky way, To the bright palace of Eternal Day!

When Young was writing a tragedy, Grafton is said by Spence to have sent him a human skull, with a candle in it, as a lamp; and the poet is reported to have used it.

What he calls ' The *true* Estimate of Human Life,' which has already been mentioned, exhibits only the wrong side of the tapestry; and, being asked why he did not show the right, he is said to have replied, that he could not. By others it has been told me that this was finished; but that, before there existed any copy, it was torn in pieces by a lady's monkey.

Still, is it altogether fair to dress up the poet for the man, and to bring the gloominess of the 'Night. Thoughts' to prove the gloominess of Young, and to show that his genius, like the genius of Swift, was in some measure the sullen inspiration of discontent?

From them who answer in the affirmative it should not be concealed that, though "Invisibilia non decipiunt" appeared upon a deception in Young's grounds, and "Ambulantes in horto audiêrunt.vocem Dei" on a building in his garden, his parish was indebted to the good humour of the author of

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the 'Night Thoughts' for an assembly and a bowling-green.

Whether you think with me, I know not; but the famous "De mortuis nil nisi bonum" always appeared to me to savour more of female weakness than of manly reason. He that has too much feeling to speak ill of the dead, who, if they cannot defend themselves, are at least ignorant of his abuse, will not hesitate by the most wanton calumny to destroy the quiet, the reputation, the fortune, of the living, Yet censure is not heard beneath the tomb, any more than praise. " De mortuis nil nisi verum-De vivis nil nisi bonum "-would approach much nearer to good sense. After all, the few handfuls of remaining dust which once composed the body of the author of the 'Night Thoughts' feel not much concern whether Young pass now for a man of sorrow, or for a "fellow of infinite jest." To this favour must come the whole family of Yorick. His immortal part, wherever that now dwell, is still less solicitous on this head

But to a son of worth and sensibility it is of some little consequence whether contemporaries believe, and posterity be taught to believe, that his debauched and reprobate life cast a Stygian gloom over the evening of his father's days, saved him the trouble of feigning a character completely detestable, and succeeded at last in bringing his " grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."

The humanity of the world, little satisfied with inventing, perhaps a melancholy disposition for the father, proceeds next to invent an argument in support of their invention, and chooses that Lorenzo should be Young's own son. The 'Biographia,' and every account of Young pretty roundly assert this to be the fact; of the absolute impossibility of which the 'Biographia' itself, in particular dates, contains undeniable evidence. Readers I know there are of a strange turn of mind, who will hereafter peruse the 'Night Thoughts' with less satisfaction; who will wish they had still been deceived; who will quarrel with me for discovering that no such character as their Lorenzo ever yet disgraced human nature, or broke a father's heart. Yet would these admirers of the sublime and terrible be offended, should you set them down for cruel and for sayage.

Of this report, inhuman to the surviving son, if it be true, in proportion as the character of Lorenzo is diabolical, where are we to find the proof? Perhaps it is clear from the poems.

From the first line to the last of the 'Night Thoughts,' no one expression can be discovered which betrays any thing like the father. In the 'Second Night' I find an expression which betrays something else; that Lorenzo was his friend; one, it is possible, of his former companions; one of the Duke of Wharton's set. The Poet styles him "gay friend;" an appellation not very natural from a pious incensed father to such a being as he paints Lorenzo, and that being his son.

But let us see how he has sketched this dreadful portráit, from the sight of some of whose features the artist himself must have turned away with horror. A subject more shocking, if his only child really sat to him, than the crucifixion of Michael Angelo; upon the horrid story told of which, Young composed a short Poem of fourteen lines in the early part of his life, which he did not think deserved to be republished.

In the 'First Night,' the address to the Poet's supposed son is,

Lorenzo, Fortune makes her court to thee.

In the 'Fifth Night'-

And burns Lorenzo still for the sublime Of life ? to hang his airy nest on high ?

Is this a picture of the son of the rector of Welwyn?

' Eighth Night'-

In foreign realms (for thou hast travell'd far)-

which even now does not apply to his son. In 'Night Five'-

> So wept Lorenzo fair Clarissa's fate; Who gave that angel-boy on whom he dotes; And died to give him, orphan'd in his birth !

At the beginning of the 'Fifth Night' we find-

Lorenzo, to recriminate is just, I grant the man is vain who writes for praise.

But, to cut short all inquiry; if any one of these passages, if any passage in the poems, be applicable, my friend shall pass for Lorenzo. The son of the author of the 'Night Thoughts' was not old enough,

when they were written, to recriminate, or to be a father. The 'Night Thoughts' were begun immediately after the mournful event of 1741. The first Nights appear, in the books of the company of Stationers, as the property of Robert Dodsley, in 1742. The Preface to 'Night Seven' is dated July the 7th, 1744. The Marriage, in consequence of which the supposed Lorenzo was born, happened in May 1731. Young's child was not born till June 1733. In 1741 this Lorenzo, this finished infidel, this father, to whose education Vice had for some years put the last hand, was only eight years old.

An anecdote of this cruel sort, so open to contradiction, so impossible to be true, who could propagate? Thus easily are blasted the reputations of the living and of the dead.

Who, then, was Lorenzo, exclaim the readers I have mentioned. If we cannot be sure that he was his son, which would have been finely terrible, was he not his nephew, his cousin?

These are questions which I do not pretend to answer. For the sake of haman nature, I could wish Lorenzo to have been only the creation of the Poet's fancy: like the Quintus of Anti Lucretius, " quo nomine," says Polignac, " quemvis Atheum intellige." That this was the case, many expressions in the ' Night Thoughts' would seem to prove, did not a passage in ' Night Eight' appear to show that he had something in his eye for the ground-work at least of the painting. Lovelace or Lorenzo may N $3 \circ$

be feigned characters; but a writer does not feign a name of which he only gives the initial letter:

Tell not Calista. She will laugh thee dead Or send thee to her hermitage with L____.

The 'Biographia,' not satisfied with pointing out the son of Young, in that son's life-time, as his father's Lorenzo, travels out of its way into the history of the son, and tells of his having been forbidden his college at Oxford for misbehaviour. How such anecdotes, were they true, tend to illustrate the life of Young, it is not easy to discover. Was the son of the author of the 'Night Thoughts,' indeed, forbidden his college for a time, at one of the Universities? The author of 'Paradise Lost' is by some supposed to have been disgracefully ejected from the other. From juvenile follies who is free? But, whatever the 'Biographia' chooses to relate, the son of Young experienced no dismission from his college either lasting or temporary.

Yet, were nature to indulge him with a second youth, and to leave him at the same time the experience of that which is past, he would probably spend it differently—who would not ?—he would certainly be the occasion of less uneasiness to his father. But, from the same experience, he would as certainly in the same case be treated differently by his father.

Young was a poet; poets, with reverence be it spoken, do not make the best parents. Fancy and imagination seldom deign to stoop from their heights; always stoop unwillingly to the low level of common duties. Aloof from vulgar life, they pursue their

rapid flight beyond the ken of mortals, and descend not to earth but when compelled by necessity. The prose of ordinary occurrences is beneath the dignity of poets.

He who is connected with the Author of the 'Night Thoughts,' only by veneration for the Poet and the Christian, may be allowed to observe, that Young is one of those, concerning whom, as you remark in your account of Addison, it is proper rather to "say nothing that is false than all that is true."

But the son of Young would almost sooner, I know, pass for a Lorenzo, than see himself vindicated, at the expense of his father's memory, from follies which, if it may be thought blameable in a boy to have committed them, it is surely praiseworthy in a man to lament, and certainly not only unnecessary but cruel in a biographer to record.

Of the 'Night Thoughts,' notwithstanding their author's professed retirement, all are inscribed to great or to growing names. He had not yet weaned o himself from Earls and Dukes, from the Speakers of the House of Commons, Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, and Chancellors of the Exchequer. In 'Night Eight' the politician plainly betrays himself-----

> Think no post needful that demands a knave; When late our civil helm was shifting hands, So P----- thought: think better if you can.

Yet, it must be confessed, that at the conclusion of 'Night Nine,' weary perhaps of courting earthly patrons, he tells his soul,

Henceforth Thy fatron he, whose dir-dem has dropt Yon gems of Heaven; Eterr'ty their plize; And leave the racers of the world their own.

The 'Fourth Night' was addressed by "a much indebted Muse" to the Honourable Mr. Yorke, now Lord Hardwicke, who meant to have laid the Muse under still greater obligation, by the living of Shenfield in Essex, if it had become vacant.

The 'First Night' concludes with this passage-

Dark, though not blind, like thee, Moonides: Or Milton, thee. Ah! could I reach your strain; Or his who made Meonides our own! Man too he sung. Immortal man I sing. Oh had he prest his theme, pursu'd the track Which Opens out of darkness into day! Oh had he mounted on his wing of fire, Soard, where I sink, and sung immortal man--How had it blest mankind, and rescu't me!

To the author of these lines was dedicated, in 1756, the first volume of an 'Essay on the Writings and Gonius of Pope,' which attempted, whether justly or not, to pluck from Pope his 'Wing of Fire,' and to reduce him to a rank at least one degree lower than the first class of English poets. If Young accepted and improved the dedication, he countenanced this attack upon the fame of him whom he invokes as his Muse.

Part of "paper-sparing" Pope's Third Book of the 'Odyssey,' deposited in the Museum, is written upon the back of a letter signed 'E. Young,' which is clearly the hand-writing of our Young. The letter, dated only May the 2d, seems obscure ; but there can be little doubt that the friendship he requests

was a literary one, and that he had the highest literary opinion of Pope. The request was a prologue, I am told.

" May the 2d.

" DEAR SIR,

"Having been often from home, I know not if you have done me the favour of calling on me. But, be that as it will, I much want that instance of your friendship I mentioned in my last; a friendship I am very sensible I can receive from no one but yourself. I should not urge this thing so much but for very particular reasons; nor can you be at a loss to conceive how a "trifle of this nature" may be of serious moment to me; and while I am in hopes of the great advantage of your advice about it, I shall not be so absurd as to make any further step without it. I know you are much engaged, and only hope to hear of you at your entire leisure.

" I am, Sir, your most faithful

" and obedient servant,

" E. Young."

Nay, even after Pope's death, he says, in 'Night Seven,'

Pope, who could'st make immortals, art thou dead ?

Either the 'Essay' then, was dedicated to a patron who disapproved its doctrine, which I have been told by the author was not the case; or Young appears, in his old age, to have bartered for a dedication cn

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opinion entertained of his friend through all that part of life when he must have been best able to form opinions.

From this account of Young, two or three short passages, which stand almost together in 'Night Four,' should not be excluded. They afford a picture by his own hand, from the study of which my readers may choose to form their own opinion of the features of his mind, and the complexion of his life.

> Ah me ! the dire effect Of lottering here, of death defrauded long; Of old so gracious (and let that suffice) My very master knows me not. Vee been so long remember'd, I'm forgot.

When in his courtiers' ears I pour my plaint, They drink it as the nectar of the Great; And squeeze my hand, and beg me come to-morrow.

Twice told the period spent on stubborn Troy, Court-favour, yet untaken, I besiege.

If this song lives, Posterity shall know, One, though in Britain born, with courtiers bred, Who thought even gold might come a day too late; Nor on his subtle death-bed plann?d his scheme For future vacancies in church or state.

Deduct from the writer's age "twice told the period spent on stubborn Troy," and you will still leave, him more than forty when he sat down to the miserable siege of court-favour. He has before told us

A fool at forty is a fool indeed.

After all, the siege seems to have been raised orly in consequence of what the General thought his "death-bed."

By these extraordinary Poems, written after he was sixty, of which I have been led to say so much. I hope, by the wish of doing justice to the living and the dead, it was the desire of Young to be principally known. He entitled the four volumes which he published himself, ' The Works of the Author of the Night Thoughts.' While it is remembered that from these he excluded many of his writings, let it not be forgotten that the rejected pieces contained nothing prejudicial to the cause of virtue, or of religion. Were every thing that Young ever wrote to be published, he would only appear perhaps in a less respectable light as a poet, and more despicable as a dedicator; he would not pass for a worse Christian, or for a worse man. This enviable praise is due to Young. Can it be claimed by every writer? His dedications, after all, he had perhaps no right to suppress. They all, I believe, speak, not a little to the credit of his gratitude, of favours received ; and I know not whether the author, who has once solemnly printed an acknowledgment of a favour should not always print it?

Is it to the credit or to the discredit of Young, as a poet, that of his ' Night Thoughts' the French are • particularly fond ?

Of the 'Epitaph on Lord Aubrey Beauclerk,' dated 1740, all I know is, that I find it in the late body of English Poetry, and that I am sorry to find it here.

Notwithstanding the farewell which he seemed to have taken in the 'Night Thoughts' of every thing which bore the least resemblance to ambition, he dipped again in politics. In 1745 he wrote ' Reflections on the Public Situation of the Kingdom, addressed to the Duke of Newcastle;' indignant, as it appears, to behold

> ______ a Pope-bred Princeling crawl ashore, And whistle cut-throats, with those swords that scrap'd Their barren rocks for wretched sustenance, To cut his passage to the British throne.

This political poem might be called a 'Night Thought.' Indeed it was originally printed as the conclusion of the 'Night Thoughts,' though he did not gather it with his other works.

Prefixed to the second edition of Howe's 'Devout Meditations' is a letter from Young, dated January 19, 1752, addressed to Archibald Macauly, Esq.; thanking him for the book, which he says "he shall never lay far out of his reach; for a greater demonstration of a sound head and a sincere heart he never saw."

In 1753, when 'The Brothers' had lain by him above thirty years, it appeared upon the stage. If any part of his fortune had been acquired by servility of adulation, he now determined to deduct from it no inconsiderable sum, as a gift to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. To this sum he hoped the profits of 'The Brothers' would amount. In his calculation he was deceived; but by the bad success of his play the Society was not a loser. The author made up the sum he originally intended, which was a chousand pounds, from his own pocket.

The next performance which he printed was a prose publication, entitled, "The Centaur not Fabulous, in six Letters to a Friend, on the Life in Vogue." The conclusion is dated November 29, 1754. In the third letter is described the death-bed of the "gay, young, noble, ingenious, accomplished, and most wretched Altamont." His last words were —"My principles have poisoned my friend, my extravagance has beggared my boy, my unkindness has murdered my wife!" Either Altamont and Lorenzo were the twin production of fancy, or Young was unlucky enough to know two characters who bore no little resemblance to each other in perfection of wickedness. Report has been accustomed to call Altamont Lord Euston.

' The Old Man's Relapse,' occasioned by an Epistle to Walpole, if written by Young, which I much doubt, must have been written very late in life. It has been seen, I am told, in a Miscellany published thirty years before his death. In 1758, he exhibited ' The Old Man's Relapse' in more than words, by again becoming a dedicator, and publishing a sermon addressed to the King.

The lively Letter in prose, on 'Original Composition,' addressed to Richardson, the author of 'Clarissa,' appeared in 1759. Though he despair of "breaking through the frozen obstructions of age and care's incumbent cloud, into that flow of thought and brightness of expression which subjects so polite require;" yet is it more like the production of antamed, unbridled youth, than of jaded fourscore.

Some sevenfold volumes put him in mind of Ovid's sevenfold channels of the Nile at the conflagration:

Pulverulenta vocant, septem sine flumine valles.

Such leaden labours are like Lycurgus's iron money, which was so much less in value than in bulk, that it required barns for strong boxes, and a yoke of oxen to draw five hundred pounds.

If there is a famine of invention in the land, we must travel, he says, like Joseph's brethren, far for food; we must visit the remote and rich ancients. But an inventive genius may safely stay at home, that, like the widow's cruse, is divinely replenished from within, and affords us a miraculous delight. He asks why it should seem altogether impossible, that Heaven's latest editions of the human mind may be the most correct and fair? And Jonson, he tells us, was very learned, as Sampson was very strong, to his own hurt. Blind to the nature of tragedy, he pulled down all antiquity on his head, and buried himself under it.

Is this "care's incumbent cloud," or "the frozen obstructions of age?"

In this letter Pope is severely censured for his "fall from Homer's numbers, free as air, lofty and harmonious as the spheres, into childish shackles and tinkling sounds; for putting Achilles into petticoats a second time:" but we are told that the dying swan talked over an Epic plan with Young a few weeks before his decease.

Young's chief inducement to write this letter was, as he confesses, that he might erect a monumental marble to the memory of an old friend. He, who employed his pious pen for almost the last time in thus doing justice to the exemplary death-bed of Addison, might probably, at the close of his own life, afford no unuseful lesson for the deaths of others.

In the postscript he writes to Richardson, that he will see in his next how far Addison is an original. But no other letter appears.

The few lines which stand in the last edition, as "sent by Lord Melcombe to Dr. Young, not long before his Lordship's death," were indeed so sent, but were only an introduction to what was there meant by 'The Muse's latest Spark.' The poem is necessary, whatever may be its merit, since the Preface to it is already printed. Lord Melcombe called his Tusculum 'La Trappe.'

> Love thy country, wish it well, Not with too intense a care, 'Tis enough, that, when it fell, Thou its ruin didst not share-

Envy's censure, Flattery's praise, With unmov'd indifference view; Learn to tread life's dangerous maze, With unerring Virtue's clue.

Void of strong desire and fear, Life's wide ocean trust no more; Strive thy little bark to steer With the tide, but near the shore.

Thus prepar'd, thy shorten'd sail Shall, whene'er the winds increase, Seizing each propitious gale, Waft thee to the Fort of Peace

Keep thy conscience from offence, And tempestuous passions free, So, when thou art call'd from hence, Easy shall thy passage be.

Easy shall thy passage be, Cheerful thy allotted stay, Short th' account 'twixt God and thee : Hope shall meet thee on the way.

Truth shall lead thee to the gate, Mercy's self shall let thee in, Where, its never-changing state, Full perfection shall begin.

The Poem was accompanied by a Letter.

" La Trappe, the 27th of Oct. 1761.

" DEAR SIR,

"You seemed to like the ode I sent you for your amusement; I now send it you as a present. If you please to accept of it, and are willing that our friendship should be known when we are gone, you will be pleased to leave this among those of your own papers that may possibly see the light by a posthumous publication. God send us health while we stay, and an easy journey !

" My dear Dr. Young,

" Yours, most cordially,

" MELCOMBE."

In 1762, a short time before his death, Young published 'Resignation.' Notwithstanding the manner in which it was really forced from him by the world, criticism has treated it with no common severity. If it shall be thought not to deserve the highest praise,

on the other side of fourscore, by whom, except by Newton and by Waller, has praise been merited ?

To Mrs. Montagu, the famous champion of Shakspeare, I am indebted for the history of 'Resignation.' Observing that Mrs. Boscawen, in the midst of her grief for the loss of the admiral, derived consolation from the perusal of the 'Night Thoughts,' Mrs. Montagu proposed a visit to the author. From conversing with Young, Mrs. Boscawen derived still further consolation; and to that visit she and the world were indebted for this poem. It compliments Mrs. Montagu in the following lines:

> Yet write I must. A Lady sues: How shameful her request ! My brain in labour with dull rhyme, Hers teeming with the best !

And again-

And friend you have, and I the same, Whose prudent, soft address Will bring to life those healing thoughts Which died in your distress.

That friend, the spirit of thy theme Extracting for your ease, Will leave to me the dreg, in thoughts Too common; such as these.

By the same lady I was enabled to say, in her own words, that Young's unbounded genius appeared to greater advantage in the companion than even in the author; that the Christian was in him a character till more inspired, more enraptured, more sublime, than the poet; and that, in his ordinary conversation,

> ---- letting down the golden chain from high, He drew his av lience upward to the sky.

Notwithstanding Young had said, in his ' Conjec. I tures on Original Composition,' that " blank verse is in verse unfallen, uncurst; verse reclaimed, re-inthroned io in the true language of the gods;" notwithstanding al he administered consolation to his own grief in this ee immortal language, Mrs. Boscawen was comforted in a rhyme.

While the poet and the Christian were applying if this comfort, Young had himself occasion for comfort, id in consequence of the sudden death of Richardson, ic who was printing the former part of the poem. Of Richardson's death he says

> When Heaven would kindly set us free, And earth's enchantment end; It takes the most effectual means, And robs us of a friend.

To 'Resignation' was prefixed an apology for its the appearance: to which more credit is due than to the ar generality of such apologies, from Young's unusual data anxiety that no more productions of his old age should disgrace his former fame. In his will, dated to February 1760, he desires of his executors, in a pary ticular manner, that all his manuscript books and ar writings whatever might be burned, except his book of accounts.

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In September 1764, he added a kind of codici, wherein he made it his dying intreaty to his house out keeper, to whom he left £1000, "That all his manuscripts might be destroyed as soon as he was dead, but which would greatly oblige her deceased *friend*." If

c. It may teach mankind the uncertainty of worldly is inendships, to know that Young, either by surviving all hose he loved, or by outliving their affections, could g aly recollect the names of two *friends*, his housethe eper and a hatter, to mention in his will; and it in any serve to repress that testamentary pride, which to often seeks for sounding names and titles, to be g formed that the author of the 'Night Thoughts' t, id not blush to leave a legacy to "his friend Henry n, tevens, a hatter at the Temple-gate." Of these *Wave* remaining friends, one went before Young. But, teighty-four, "where," as he asks in 'The Centaur,' is that world into which we were born?"

The same humility which marked a hatter and a ousekeeper for the friends of the author of the Night Thoughts,' had before bestowed the same is the on his footman, in an epitaph, in his ' Churche ard,' upon James Baker, dated 1749; which I am a had to find in the late collection of his works.

Young and his housekeeper were ridiculed, with fore ill-nature than wit, in a kind of novel published y Kidgell in 1755, called 'The Card,' under the mames of Dr. Elwes and Mrs. Fusby.

k In April 1765, at an age to which few attain, a period was put to the life of Young.

He had performed no duty for three or four years, but he retained his intellects to the last.

Much is told in the 'Biographia,' which I know bot to have been true, of the manner of his burial; of the master and children of a charity-school, which

he founded in his parish, who neglected to atten to their benefactor's corpre; and of a bell which was he not caused to toll as often as upon those occasions bells usually toll. Had that humanity, which so here lavished upon things of little consequence eithe to the living or to the dead, been shown in its proper place to the living, I should have had less to sa in about Lorenzo. They who lament that these ms fortunes happened to Young, forget the praise a bestows upon Socrates, in the Preface to ' Night Seven,' for resenting his friend's request about high funeral.

During some part of his life Young was abroad hr but I have not been able to learn any particulars. In his seventh satire he says,

> When, after battle, I the field have seen Spread o'er with ghastly shapes which once were men.

It is known also, that from this or from some other field he once wandered into the camp with a classic in his hand, which he was reading intently of and had some difficulty to prove that he was only n an absent poet, and not a spy.

The curious reader of Young's life will naturally to a inquire to what it was owing, that though he live the almost forty years after he took Orders, which in of cluded one whole reign uncommonly long, and par wh of another, he was never thought worthy of the least as preferment. The author of the ' Night Thoughts' bu ended his days upon a Living which came to him as

fom his College without any favour, and to which he m robably had an eye when he determined on the vashurch. To satisfy curiosity of this kind is, at this istance of time, far from easy. The parties themelves know not often, at the instant, why they are he eglected, or why they are preferred. The neglect f Young is by some ascribed to his having attached sar imself to the Prince of Wales, and to his having is preached an offensive sermon at St. James's. It has been told me that he had two hundred a year in the ^{gh} ate reign, by the patronage of Walpole; and that, his whenever any one reminded the King of Young, the mly answer was, "he has a pension." All the light ad, hrown on this inquiry, by the following Letter rom Secker, only serves to show at what a late peiod of life the author of the ' Night Thoughts' solicited preferment :

" Deanery of St. Paul's, July 8, 1758.

"GOOD DR. YOUNG,

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a, "I have long wondered, that more suitable notice y if your great merit hath not been taken by persons in power. But how to remedy the omission I see not. No encouragement hath ever been given me by mention things of this nature to his Majesty. And etherefore, in all likelihood, the only consequence in of doing it would be weakening the little influence in which else I may possibly have on some other ocat asions. Your fortune and your reputation set you s'above the need of advancement; and your sentiments, above that concern for it, on your own

account, which, on that of the Public, is sincere as felt by

" Your loving Brother, to " THO. CANT. for

At last at the age of fourscore, he was appointed in 1761, Clerk of the Closet to the Princess Dow, no ger.

One obstacle must have stood not a little in the well of that preferment after which his whole life seem reto have panted. Though he took Orders, he never entirely shook off politics. He was always the Line of his master Milton, " pawing to get free his hinder and parts." By this conduct, if he gained some friends, he made many enemies.

Again: Young was a poet; and again, with rear verence be it spoken, poets by profession do not always make the best clergymen. If the author all the ' Night Thoughts' composed many sermons, he did not oblige the public with many.

Besides, in the latter part of life, Young was fon C of holding himsels out for a man retired from thic world. But he seemed to have forgotten that the same verse which contains "oblitus meorum," con" tains also "obliviscendus et illis." The brittle chai v of worldly friendship and patronage is broken a effectually, when one goes beyond the length of a p as when the other does. To the vessel which is sailing from the shore, it only appears that the shore n also recedes; in life it is truly thus. He who retires to from he world will find himself, in reality, deserted

re as fast, if not faster, by the world. The public is not to be treated as the coxcom's treats his mistress; to be threatened with desertion in order to increase NT fondness.

Young seems to have been taken at his word. tel Notwithstanding his frequent complaints of being we neglected, no hand was reached out to pull him from that retirement of which he declared himself we enamoured. Alexander assigned no palace for the emission of Diogenes, who boasted his surly satiswe faction with his tub.

of the domestic manners and petty habits of the denuthor of the 'Night Thoughts,' I hoped to have but given you an account from the best authority: but who shall dare to say, to-morrow I will be wise re or virtuous, or to-morrow I will do a particular mething? Upon inquiring for his housekeeper, I celearned that she was buried two days before I hereached the town of her abode.

In a Letter from Tscharner, a noble foreigner, to m Count Haller, Tscharner says, he has lately spent four days with Young at Welwyn, where the author tastes all the ease and pleasure mankind can desire. " "Every thing about him shows the man, each indiid vidual being placed by rule. All is neat without art. " He is very pleasant in conversation, and extremely polite."

This, and more, may possibly be true; but Tscharrener's was a first visit, a visit of curiosity and admiraestion, and a visit which the author expected.

Of Edward Young an anecdote which wanders

among readers is not true, that he was Fielding Parson Adams. The original of that famous painting was William Young, who was a clergyman. He supported an uncomfortable existence by translating for the booksellers from Greek; and, if he did not seem to be his own friend, was at least no many enemy. Yet the facility with which this report ha gained belief in the world argues, were it not sufficiently known, that the author of the 'Night Thoughts' bore some resemblance to Adams.

The attention which Young bestowed upon the perusal of books is not unworthy imitation. When any passage pleased him, he appears to have folded down the leaf. On these passages he bestowed a second reading. But the labours of man are too frequently vain. Before he returned to much of what he had once approved, he died. Many of his books, which I have seen, are by those notes of approbation so swelled beyond their real bulk, that they will hardly shut.

> What though we wade in wealth, or soar in fame ! Earth's highest station ends in *Here he lies* ! And *dust to dust* concludes her noblest song !

The author of these lines is not without his Hit jacet.

By the good sense of his son, it contains none d that praise which no marble can make the bad of the foolish merit; which, without the direction of a stone or a turf, will find its way, sooner or later, to the deserving.

M. S.

OPTIMI PARENTIS EDWARDI VOUNG, LL.D. HUUS ECCASLE RECT. ET ELIZABETHE FEM. PRENOB. CONJUGIS EJUS AMATISSIME, PIO ET GRATISSIMO ANIMO HOC MARMOR POSUIT F.Y. FILIUS SUPPERS.

Is it not strange that the author of the 'Night Thoughts' has inscribed no monument to the memory of his lamented wife? Yet, what marble will endure as long as the poems?

Such, my good friend, is the account which I have been able to collect of the great Young. That it may be long before any thing like what I have just transcribed be necessary for you, is the sincere wish of,

Dear Sir,

Your greatly obliged Friend,

HERBERT CROFT, JUN.

Lincoln's Inn, Sept. 1780.

P. S. This account of Young was seen by you in manuscript, you know, Sir; and though I could not prevail on you to make any alteration, you insisted on striking out one passage, because it said, that, if I did not wish you to live long for your sake. I did for the sake of myself and of the world. But this postscript you will not see before the printing of it; and I will say here, in spite of you, how I you, III.

feel myself honoured and bettered by your friendship: and that, if I do credit to the Church, after which I always longed, and for which I am now going to give in exchange the Bar, though not at so late a period of life as Young took Orders, it will be owing, in no small measure, to my having had the happiness of calling the author of ' The Rambler' my friend.

H.C.

Oxford, Oct. 1782.

Of Young's Poems it is difficult to give any general character; for he has no uniformity of manner; one of his pieces has no great resemblance to another. He began to write early, and continued long; and at different times had different modes of poetical excellence in view. His numbers are sometimes smooth, and sometimes rugged; his style is sometimes concatenated, and sometimes abrupt; sometimes diffusive, and sometimes concise. His plan seems to have started in his mind at the present moment; and his thoughts appear the effect of chance, sometimes adverse, and sometimes lucky, with very little operation of judgment.

He was not one of those writers whom experience improves, and who, observing their own faults, become gradually correct. His poem on the 'Last Day,' his first great performance, has an equability and propriety, which he afterwards either never endeavoured or never attained. Many paragraphs are

noble, and few are mean, yet the whole is languid; the plan is too much extended, and a succession of images divides and weakens the general conception; but the great reason why the reader is disappointed is, that the thought of the LAST DAY makes every man more than poetical, by spreading over his mind a general obscurity of sacred horror, that oppresses distinction, and disdains expression.

His story of 'Jane Grey' was never popular. It is written with elegance enough; but Jane is too heroic to be pitied.

The 'Universal Passion' is indeed a very great performance. It is said to be a series of Epigrams; but, if it be, it is what the author intended; his endeavour was at the production of striking distichs and pointed sentences; and his distichs have the weight of solid sentiments, and his points the sharpness of resistless truth.

His characters are often selected with discernment, and drawn with nicety; his illustrations are often happy, and his reflections often just. His species of Satire is between those of Horace and Juvenal; and he has the gaiety of Horace without his laxity of numbers, and the morality of Juvenal with greater variation of images. He plays, indeed, only on the surface of life; he never penetrates the recesses of the mind, and therefore the whole power of his poetry is exhausted by a single perusal; his conceits please only when they surprise.

To translate he never condescended, unless his

' Paraphrase on Job' may be considered as a version; in which he has not, I think, been unsuccessful; he indeed favoured himself by choosing those parts which most easily admit the ornaments of English poetry.

He had least success in his lyric attempts, in which he seems to have been under some malignant influence: he is always labouring to be great, and at last is only turgid.

In his 'Night Thoughts' he has exhibited a very wide display of original poetry, variegated with deep reflections and striking allusions, a wilderness of thought, in which the fertility of fancy scatters flowers of every hue and of every odour. This is one of the few poems in which blank verse could not be changed for rhyme but with disadvantage. The wild diffusion of the sentiments, and the digressive sallies of imagination, would have been compressed and restrained by confinement to rhyme. The excellence of this work is not exactness, but copiousness; particular lines are not to be regarded; the power is in the whole; and in the whole there is a magnificence like that ascribed to Chinese plantation, the magnificence of vast extent and endless diversity.

His last poem was 'Resignation;' in which he made, as he was accustomed, an experiment of a new mode of writing, and succeeded better than in his 'Ocean' or his 'Merchant.' It was very falsely represented as a proof of decayed faculties. There is Young in every stanza, such as he often was in the highest vigour.

His tragedies, not making part of the Collection. I had forgotten, till Mr. Stervens recalled them to my thoughts by remarking, that he seemed to have one favourite catastrophe, as his three plays all concluded with lavish suicide ; a method by which, as Dryden remarked, a poet easily rids his scene of persons whom he wants not to keep alive. In 'Busiris' there are the greatest ebullitions of imagination: but the pride of Busiris is such as no other man can have, and the whole is too remote from known life to raise either grief, terror, or indignation. The 'Revenge' approaches much nearer to human practices and manners, and therefore keeps possession of the stage: the first design seems suggested by ' Othello ;' but the reflections, the incidents, and the diction, are original. The moral observations are so introduced. and so expressed, as to have all the novelty that can be required. Of 'The Brothers' I may be allowed to say nothing, since nothing was ever said of it by the public.

It must be allowed of Young's poetry, that it abounds in thought, but without much accuracy or selection. When he lays hold of an illustration, he pursues it beyond expectation, sometimes happily, as in his parallel of Quicksilver with Pleasure, which I have heard repeated with approbation by a Lady, of whose praise he would have been justly proud, and which is very ingenions, very subtle, and almost exact; but sometimes he is less lucky, as when, in his 'Night Thoughts,' having it dropped into his mind, that the orbs, floating in space, might be called the *cluster* of creation, he thinks of a cluster of grapes, and says, that they all hang on the great vine, drinking the "nectareous juice of immortal life."

His conceits are sometimes yet less valuable. In the 'Last Day' he hopes to illustrate the re-assembly of the atoms that compose the human body at the "Trump of Doom," by the collection of bees into a swarm at the tinkling of a pan.

The Prophet says of Tyre, that "her Merchants are Princes." Young says of Tyre in his 'Merchant,'

Her merchants Princes, and each deck a Throne.

Let burlesque try to go beyond him.

He has the trick of joining the turgid and familiar: to buy the alliance of Britain, "Climes were paid down." Antithesis is his favourite, "They for kindness hate:" and " because she's right, she's ever in the wrong."

His versification is his own; neither his blank nor his shyming lines have any resemblance to those of former writers; he picks up no hemistics, he copies no favourite expressions; he seems to have laid up no stores of thought or diction, but to owe all to the fortuitous suggestions of the present moment. Yet I have reason to believe that, when once he had formed a new design, he then laboured it with very patient industry; and that he composed with great labour, and frequent revisions.

His verses are formed by no certain model; he is no more like himself in his different productions than he is like others. He seems never to have studied prosody, nor to have had any direction but from his own ear. But with all his defects, he was a man of genius and a poet.

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THOMSON.

JAMES THOMSON, the son of a minister well esteemed for his piety and diligence, was born September 7, 1700, at Ednam, in the shire of Roxburgh, of which his father was pastor. His mother, whose name was Hume, inherited as coheiress a portion of a small estate. The revenue of a parish in Scotland is seldom large; and it was probably in commiseration of the difficulty with which Mr. Thomson supported his family, having nine children, that Mr. Riccarton, a neighbouring minister, discovering in James uncommon promises of future excellence, undertook to superintend his education, and provide him books.

He was taught the common rudiments of learning at the school of Jedburgh, a place which he delights to recollect in his poem of 'Autumn;' but was not considered by his master as superior to common boys, though in those early days he amused his patron and his friends with poetical compositions; with which, however, he so little pleased bimself, that on every new-year's day he threw into the fire all the productions of the foregoing ycar.

From the school he was removed to Edinburgh, where he had not resided two years when his father lied, and left all his children to the care of their

THOMSON.

mother, who raised upon her little estate what money a mortgage could afford, and, removing with her family to Edinburgh, lived to see her son rising into eminence.

The design of Thomson's friends was to breed him a minister. He lived at ...dinburgh, as at school, without distinction or expectation, till, at the usual time, he performed a probationary exercise by explaining a psalm. His diction was so poetically splendid, that Mr. Hamilton, the professor of Divinity, reproved him for speaking language unintelligible to a popular audience; and he censured one of his expressions as indecent, if not profane.

This rebuke is reported to have repressed his thoughts of an ecclesiastical character, and he probably cultivated with new diligence his blossoms of poetry, which, however, were in some danger of a blast; for, submitting his productions to some who thought themselves qualified to criticise, he head of nothing but faults; but, finding other judges more favourable, he did not suffer himself to sink into despondence.

He easily discovered that the only stage on which a poet could appear, with any hope of advantage, was London; a place too wide for the operation of petty competition and private malignity, where merit might soon become conspicuous, and would find friends as soon as it became reputable to befriend it. A lody who was acquainted with his mother, advised him to the journey, and promised some countenance or assistance, which at last he never received; how-

ever, he justified his adventure by her encouragement, and came to seek in London patronage and fame.

At his arrival he found his way to Mr. Mallet, then tutor to the sons of the Duke of Montrose. He had recommendations to several persons of consequence, which he had tied up carefully in his handkerchief; but as he passed along the street, with the gaping curiosity of a new-comer, his attention was upon every thing rather than his pocket, and his magazine of credentials was stolen from him.

His first want was a pair of shoes. For the supply of all his necessities, his whole fund was his 'Winter,' which for a time could find no purchaser; till, at last, Mr. Millar was persuaded to buy it at a low price: and this low price he had for some time reason to regret; but, by accident, Mr. Whatley, a man not wholly unknown among authors, happening to turn his eye upon it, was so delighted that he ran from place to place celebrating its excellence. Thomson obtained likewise the notice of Aaron Hill, whom being friendless and indigent, and glad of kindness, he courted with every expression of servile adulation.

Winter' was dedicated to Sir Spencer Compton, but attracted no regard from him to the author; till Aaron Hill awakened his attention by some verses, addressed to Thomson, and published in one of the newspapers, which censured the great for their neglect of ingenious men. Thomson then received a present of twenty guineas, of which he gives this account to Mr. Hill:

" I hinted to you in my last, that on Saturday

morning I was with Sir Spencer Compton. A certain gentleman, without my desire, spoke to him concerning me: his answer was, that I had never come near him. Then the gentleman put the question, If he desired that I should wait on him? He returned, he did. On this the gentleman gave me an introductory Letter to him. He received me in what they commonly call a civil manner; asked me some common-place questions; and made me a present of twenty guineas. I am very ready to own, that the present was larger than my performance deserved; and shall ascribe it to his generosity, or any other cause, rather than the merit of the address."

The poem, which, being of a new kind, few would venture at first to like, by degrees gained upon the public; and one edition was very speedily succeeded by another.

Thomson's credit was now high, and every day brought him new friends; among others Dr. Rundle, a man afterwards unfortunately famous, sought his acquaintance, and found his qualities such, that he recommended him to the Lord Chancellor Talbot.

^c Winter ' was accompanied, in many editions, not only with a preface and dedication, but with poetical praises by Mr. Hill, Mr. Mallet (then Malloch), and Mira, the fictitious name of a lady once too well known. Why the dedications are, to ' Winter ' and the other Seasons, contrarily to custom, left out in the collected works, the reader may inquire.

The next year (1727) he distinguished himself by three publications; of 'Summer' in pursuance

of his plan; of 'A Poem on the Death of Sir Isaac Newton,' which he was enabled to perform as an exact philosopher by the instruction of Mr. Gray; and of 'Britannia,' a kind of poetical invective against the ministry, whom the nation then thought not forward enough in resenting the depredations of the Spaniards. By this piece he declared himself an adherent to the opposition, and had therefore no favour to expect from the Court.

Thomson, having been some time entertained in the family of the Lord Binning, was desirous of testifying his gratitude by making him the patron of his 'Summer;' but the same kindness which had first disposed Lord Binning to encourage him, determined him to refuse the dedication, which was by his advice addressed to Mr. Dodington, a man who had more power to advance the reputation and fortune of a poet.

^c Epring' was published next year, with a dedication to the Countess of Hertford: whose practice it was to invite every Summer some poet into the country, to hear her verses, and assist her studies. This honour was one Summer conferred on Thomson, who took more delight in carousing with Lord Hertford and his friends, than assisting her ladyship's poetical operations, and therefore never received another summons.

⁶Autumn,' the season to which the 'Spring' and 'Summer' are preparatory, still remained unsung, and was delayed till he published (1730) his works collected.

He produced in 1727 the tragedy of 'Sophonisba,' which raised such expectation, that every rehearsal was dignified with a splendid audience, collected to anticipate the delight that was preparing for the public. It was observed, however, that nobody was much affected, and that the company rose as from a moral lecture.

It had upon the stage no unusual degree of success. Slight accidents will operate upon the taste of pleasure. There is a feeble line in the play.

O Sophonisba, Sophonisba, O !

This gave occasion to a waggish parody :

O Jammie Thomson, Jammie Thomson, O!

which for a while was echoed through the town.

I have been told by Savage, that of the Prologue to 'Sophonisba' the first part was written by Pope, who could not be persuaded to finish it; and that the concluding lines were added by Mallet.

Thomson was not long afterwards, by the influence of Dr. Rundle, sent to travel with Mr. Charles Talbot, the eldest son of the Chancellor. He was yet young enough to receive new impressions, to have his opinions rectified, and his views enlarged; nor can he be supposed to have wanted that curiosity which is inseparable from an active and comprehensive mind. He may therefore now be supposed to have revelled in all the joys of intellectual luxury; he was every day feasted with instructive novelties; he lived splendidly without expense; and might expect when he returned home a pertain establishment. At this time a long course of opposition to Sir Robert Walpole had filled the nation with clamours for liberty, of which no man felt the want, and with care for liberty, which was not in danger. Thomson, in his travels on the continent, found or fancied so many evils arising from the tyranny of other governments, that he resolved to write a very long poem, in five parts, upon ' Liberty.'

While he was busy on the first book, Mr. Talbot died; and Thomson, who had been rewarded for his attendance by the place of Secretary of the Briefs, pays in the initial lines a decent tribute to his memory.

Upon this great poem two years were spent, and the author congratulated himself upon it as his noblest work ; but an author and his reader are not always of a mind. 'Liberty' called in vain upon her votaries to read her praises, and reward her encommast: her praises were condemned to harbour spiders, and to gather dust: none of Thomson's performances were so little regarded.

The judgment of the public was not erroneous; the recurrence of the same images must tire in time; an enumeration of examples to prove a position which nobody denied, as it was from the beginning superfluous, must quickly grow disgusting.

The poem of 'Liberty' does not now appear in its original state; but, when the author's works were collected after his death, was shortened by Sir George Lyttelton, with a liberty which, as it has a manifest tendency to lessen the confidence of society, and to

confound the characters of authors, by making one man write by the judgment of another, cannot be justified by any supposed propriety of the alteration, or kindness of the friend.—I wish to see it exhibited as its author left it.

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Thomson now lived in ease and plenty, and seems for a while to have suspended his poetry; but he was soon called back to labour by the death of the Chancellor, for his place then became vacant; and, though the Lord Hardwicke delayed for some time to give it away, Thomson's bashfulness or pride, or some other motive, perhaps not more laudable, withheld him from soliciting; and the new Chancellor would not give him what he would not ask.

He now relapsed to his former indigence; but the Prince of Wales was at that time struggling for popularity, and by the influence of Mr. Lyttelton professed himself the patron of wit; to him Thomson was introduced, and being gaily interrogated about the state of his affairs, said, "that they were in a more poetical posture than formerly;" and had a pension allowed him of one hundred pounds a year.

Being now obliged to write, he produced (1758) the tragedy of 'Agamemnon,' which was much shortened in the representation. It had the fate which most commonly attends mythological stories, and was only endured, but not favoured. It struggled with such difficulty through the first night, that Thomson, coming late to his friends with whom he was to sup, excused his delay by telling them how "the sweat of his distress had so disordered his wig, that he could not come till he had been refitted by a harber."

He so interested himself in his own drama, that, if I remember right, as he sat in the upper gallery, he accompanied the players by audible recitation, till a friendly hint frighted him to silence. Pope countenanced 'Agamemnon' by coming to it the first night, and was welcomed to the theatre by a general clap; he had much regard for Thomson, and once expressed it in a poetical epistle sent to Italy, of which however he abated the value, by transplanting some of the lines into his Epistle to 'Arbuthnot.'

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About this time the act was passed for licensing plays, of which the first operation was the prohibition of 'Gustavus Vasa,' a tragedy of Mr. Brooke, whom the public recompensed by a very liberal subscription; the next was the refusal of 'Edward and Eleonora,' offered by Thomson. It is hard to discover why either play should have been obstructed. Thomson likewise endeavoured to repair his loss by a subscription, of which I cannot now tell the success.

When the public nurmured at the unkind treatment of Thomson, one of the ministerial writers remarked, that "he had taken a *liberty* which was not agreeable to *Britannia* in any *Season*."

He was soon after employed, in conjunction with Mr. Mallet, to write the masque of 'Alfred,' which was acted before the Prince at Cliefden-house.

His next work (1745) was 'Tancred and Sirjsmunda,' the most successful of all his tragedies; for it still keeps its turn upon the stage. It may be

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subted whether he was, either by the bent of nature habits of study, much qualified for tragedy. It es not appear that he had much sense of the pathec; and his diffusive and descriptive style produced clamation rather than dialogue.

His friend Mr. Lyttelton was now in power, and nferred upon him the office of surveyor-general of e Leeward Islands; from which, when his deputy as paid, he received about three hundred pounds a ear.

The last piece that he lived to publish, was the Castle of Indolence,' which was many years under s hand, but was at last finished with great accucy. The first canto opens a scene of lazy luxury at fills the imagination.

He was now at ease, but was not long to enjoy it; r, by taking cold on the water between London d Kew, he caught a disorder, which, with some reless exasperation, ended in a fever that put an d to his life, August 27, 1748. He was buried the church of Richmond, without an inscription;* ut a monument has been erected to his memory in vestminster Abbey.

Thomson was of a stature above the middle size, and more fat than bard beseems," of a dull countenance, ad a gross, unanimated, uninviting appearance; siat in mingled company, but cheerful among select

* By the laudable exertions of Thomas Park, Esq. in conjunction with Buchan, a tablet has since been placed on the wall of Richmond Church, enote the spot of Thomson's intervent. friends, and by his friends very tenderly and warm I a beloved.

He left behind him the tragedy of 'Coriolanus jus which was, by the zeal of his patron, Sir Georgeven Lyttelton, brought upon the stage for the benefit door his family, and recommended by a Prologue, which not Quin, who had long lived with Thomson in fond in def timacy, spoke in such a manner as showed him "b cha be," on that occasion, "no actor." The commence ment of this benevolence is very honourable to Quin; her who is reported to have delivered Thomson, the con known to him only for his genius, from an arrest by tha a very considerable present: and its continuance is tow honourable to both ; for friendship is not always the ren sequel of obligation. By this tragedy a considerable of t sum was raised, of which part discharged his debts, wh and the rest was remitted to his sisters, whom, how the ever removed from them by place or condition, he to 1 regarded with great tenderness, as will appear by Liz the following letter, which I communicate with muches pleasure, as it gives me at once an opportunity chac recording the fraternal kindness of Thomson, antru reflecting on the friendly assistance of Mr. Boswellhan from whom I received it. let

> " Hagley in Worcestership October the 4th, 1747

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" My DEAR SISTER,

"I thought you had known me better than to mblis terpret my silence into a decay of affection, especialmer as your behaviour has always been such as rather then increase than dianinish it. Don't imagine, becauswe

I am a bad correspondent, that I can ever prove an ankind friend and brother. I must do myself the usjustice to tell you, that my affections are naturally prevery fixed and constant; and if I had ever reason of it complaint against you (of which by the bye I have him not the least shadow), I am conscious of so many is defects in myself, as dispose me to be not a little "b charitable and forgiving.

"It gives me the truest heart-felt satisfaction to in hear you have a good, kind husband, and are in easy, he contented circumstances ; but were they otherwise, t by that would only awaken and heighten my tenderness reistowards you. As our good and tender-hearted patherents did not live to receive any material testimonies able of that highest human gratitude I owed them, (than by which nothing could have given me equal pleasure,) ow the only return I can make them now is by kindness heto those they left behind them. Would to God poor byLizy had lived longer, to have been a farther wituchess of the truth of what I say, and that I might have y had the pleasure of seeing once more a sister who so antruly deserved my esteem and love ! But she is " rel happy, while we must toil a little longer here below; let us however do it cheerfully and gratefully, supported by the pleasing hope of meeting yet again on a ⁷ safer shore, where to recollect the storms and difficulties of life will not perhaps be inconsistent with that n-blissful state. You did right to call your daughter by lyner name; for you must needs have had a particular rtdender friendship for one another, endeared as you uswere by nature, by having passed the affectionate

years of your youth together; and by that great a softener and engager of hearts, mutual hardship, th That it was in my power to ease it a little, I account be one of the most exquisite pleasures of my life. But enough of this melancholy, though not unpleasing, strain.

" I esteem you for your sensible and disinterested advice to Mr. Bell, as you will see by my letter to him : as I approve entirely of his marrying again. you may readily ask me why I don't marry at all ac My circumstances have hitherto been so variable and an uncertain in this fluctuating world, as induce to keep te me from engaging in such a state : and now, though sl they are more settled, and of late (which you will be of glad to hear) considerably improved, I begin to think or myself too far advanced in life for such youthful un. no dertakings, not to mention some other petty reasons of that are apt to startle the delicacy of difficult old E bachelors. I am, however, not a little suspicious tr that, was I to pay a visit to Scotland, (which I have some thought of doing soon,) I might possibly be a tempted to think of a thing not easily repaired if co done amiss. I have always been of opinion that w none make better wives than the ladies of Scotland; so and yet, who more forsaken than they, while the sn gentlemen are continually running abroad all the th world over? Some of them, it is true, are wise enough to return for a wife. You see I am begin a ning to make interest already with the Scots ladies. v But no more of this infectious subject .- Pray let me w hear from you now and then; and though I am not n

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ar a regular correspondent, yet perhaps I may mend in in that respect. Remember me kindly to your husmt band, and believe me to be

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"Your most affectionate brother,

" JAMES THOMSON."

(Addressed) " To Mrs. Thomson in Lanark."

in, The benevolence of Thomson was fervid, but not all, active; he would give on all occasions what assistnd ance his purse would supply; but the offices of intervention or solicitation he could not conquer his sluggishness sufficiently to perform. The affairs of others, however, were not more neglected than his nk own. He had often felt the inconveniences of idleness, but he never cured it; and was so conscious of his own character, that he talked of writing an he Eastern Tale ' of the Man who loved to be in Disness.'

Among his peculiarities was a very unskilful and inbe articulate manner of pronouncing any lofty or solemm in composition. He was once reading to Dodington, at who, being himself a reader eminently elegant, was is o much provoked by his odd utterance that he he snatched the paper from his hands, and told him he that he did not understand his own verses.

The biographer of Thomson has remarked, that an author's life is best read in 'his works; his obseres vation was not well-timed. Savage, who lived much ne with Thomson, once told me, he heard a lady reof marking that she could gather from his works three parts of his character, that he was a "great Love, a a great Swimmer, and rigorously abstinent;" but in said Savage, he knows not any love but that of the sex; he was perhaps never in cold water in his life; and he indulges himself in all the luxury that comes fit within his reach. Yet Savage always spoke with the most eager praise of his social qualities, his warmth fit and constancy of friendship, and his adherence to his first acquaintance when the advancement of his reputation had left them behind him.

As a writer, he is entitled to one praise of the be highest kind : his mode of thinking, and of expres. sing his thoughts, is original. His blank verse is no h more the blank verse of Milton, or of any other poet, than the rhymes of Prior are the rhymes of Cowley. His numbers, his pauses, his diction, are of his own growth, without transcription, without imitation. He thinks in a peculiar train, and he thinks always as a man of genius; he looks round on nature and on life with the eye which nature bestows only on a poet; the eye that distinguishes, in every thing presented to its view, whatever there is on which imagination can delight to be detained, and with a mind that at once comprehends the vast, and attends to the minute. The reader of the 'Seasons' wonders that he never saw before what Thomson shows him, and that he never yet has felt what Thomson impresses.

His is one of the works in which blank verse seems properly used. Thomson's wide expansion of general views, and his enumeration of circum-

ver stantial varieties, would have been obstructed and out, embarrassed by the frequent intersection of the sense, the which are the necessary effects of rhyme.

fe; His descriptions of extended scenes and general mes ffects bring before us the whole magnificence of the vature, whether pleasing or dreadful. The gaiety mh of Spring, the splendour of Summer, the tranquillity e to of Autumn, and the horror of Wipter, take in their his arms possession of the mind. The poet leads us hrough the appearances of things as they are sucthe essively varied by the vicissitudes of the year, and estimates to us so much of his own enthusiasm, that no air thoughts expand with his imagery, and kindle et, with his sentiments. Nor is the naturalist without ey, is part in the entertainment; for he is assisted to win and to amplify the sphere of his contemplation.

The great defect of the 'Seasons' is want of mend hod; but for this I know not that there was any on remedy. Of many appearances subsisting all at once ng to rule can be given why one should be mentioned ich before another; yet the memory wants the help of 1 a order, and the curiosity is not excited by suspense is or expectation.

h. His diction is in the highest degree florid and uxuriant, such as may be said to be to his images and thoughts "both their lustre and their shade;" such as invest them with splendour, through which berhaps they are not always easily discerned. It is an oo excherant, and sometimes may be charged with willing the ear more than the mind.

These Poems, with which I was acquaint their first appearance, I have since found alterer enlarged by subsequent revisals, as the author posed his judgment to grow more exact, as books or conversation extended his knowledge opened his prospects. They are, I think, impliin general; yet I know not whether they hav lost part of what Temple calls their "race;" a which, applied to wines in its primitive sense, i the flavour of the soil.

' Liberty,' when it first appeared, I tried to and soon desisted. I have never tried again, therefore will not hazard either praise or censu

The highest praise which he has received, a not to be suppressed: it is said by Lord Lytte in the Prologue to his posthumous play, that works contained

" No line which, dying, he could wish to blot."

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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