

The White Hart.

marched up the side of a hill commanding a fine prospect of terrific Thames, and the islands which had annoyed us, and came in front of a domiciliated spot, which pleased and furnished us with a good opinion of the inhabitants and the country, which improved upon acquaintance.

We stopped at the sign of the White Hart, and unfolding to the admiring gaze of the landlord and waiter our inviting pie, we sat down to regale: all our terrors were forgotten; like the mariner, who welcomes security after a storm, and in the cheerful glass drowns recollection of the past; so we, in the plenitude of our mirth, laughed at our fears, derided each other's want of fortitude, and talked—

"Ye Gods how we did talk."—*Alexander the Great.*

Our cravings amply satisfied, our longings fully gratified, we prepared for our return, well pleased not to encounter new difficulties, content with the discoveries we had made, and only anxious to escape the dangers which of necessity we had to pass: a plentiful repast had imparted new vigour to the rowers. The islands flew, receding from our sight ere monsters could be aroused from their coverts. Isleworth, Brentford, and Kew were distanced; Lion House was lost in the turn of the river; Putney again danced before us. Battersea came fast upon us, and we escaped that horrid gulph, Chelsea reach, ere the dark shades of setting day obscured the objects of the river's edge. And now a storm lowered its black head above us. Clouds, pent with rain, were gathering; chill winds pierced coldly through our garments, but we were cheered with the prospect of approaching home; the clouds began to discharge their full drops, but at the bridge of Westminster we effected a safe landing, and retired to our homes, well satisfied with the success of our expedition.

MODERN POETS.

THERE has arisen within these few years a class of writers who have been distinguished by the title of *simple poets*, who, in their attempts to support their pretensions, have purposely violated those laws which custom and nature have laid down as essential to the excellence of tender or elegant composition, and have disgraced the English language, and the name of poetry, by absurd and unsuccessful endeavours at simplicity.

The greater number of these writers, (who have been so admirably satirized in the *Rejected Addresses*), seem to imagine that to be vulgar is to be simple, provided they violate the established laws of English versification; and reject such words as are used by former poets and in polished society, they rest satisfied with the merit of their productions, and affect to look down with ineffable contempt on that laborious race which has owed its fame to elegance or propriety. In the opinion of their admirers, whatever possesses the appearance of art or harmony, is too polished and too glittering for the language of real passion, and nothing more seems required to gain their favor than a studied ruggedness of verse, and the copious employment of such words and phrases as "Ah! alas! sooth! to say! ah! well-a-day! stop! traveller; and the *arrest one wept*."

These epithets and similes are borrowed from such circumstances as occur the most frequently in common life, and are calculated to destroy all associations of elegance or dignity: it is not sufficient that a beauty should be shaded from the sun, it is absolutely necessary that she should be *parasol'd* and *umbrellad*: and in order to gratify the feelings of the footman and the dairy-maid, her eyes must be watered with tears, and her breath be more sweet than that of the tender cow, or the delicious perfume of the milk-pail.

elegance of language, and propriety of sentiment, are insistent with simplicity. It is as easy to de-
the simple feelings of the heart by smoothness of
bers, and elegance of diction, as by the most lab-
red ruggedness of verse, and the most artificial vul-
ty of sentiment. To express the emotion even of
mon minds by meanness and harshness of language,
task which has no connection whatever with the
gn of poetry, or of any class of composition. The
of poetry is to please, and the same reasons which
uce an author to put his vulgarity into verse should
e induced him to embellish his verse by harmony and
gance. If the poetry of our modern writers be meant
the entertainment of the vulgar, it is too refined and
taphorical; if for the perusal of the learned, it is too
aint, too laboured, too gross, and too affected.

An accurate copy of nature, if such a plea were allow-
, would best have been accomplished by giving us the
, would best have been accomplished by giving us the
rious dialogues of shepherds and shepherdesses in
eir own forcible and natural prose. If Mr. Lloyd, or
y of his disciples, imagined that a violation of nature
as necessary, he might as well have extended the liber-
y a little further, and have rendered his poems consist-
nt with themselves, instead of disgusting us with a con-
sed mixture of meanness and elegance. It is of no
vant that the common people do amuse themselves
with songs and ditties, for if the assertion be true, it only
makes us pity the labour of our industrious anthologists,
and lament, that instead of improving their ballads, they
have not presented us with a few of the originals.

But Mr. Wordsworth and his predecessors have defend-
ed their productions by informing us that they have co-
pied in verse the language of nature and of common life.
It may be useful, therefore, to ask, how far, according to
their own principles, their efforts have succeeded. It
appears that nature is accurately copied by employing
abstract ideas in the place of simple ones, by using epi-

thets or similes taken from such objects as are only re-
membered with disgust, and by the history of devils who
have appeared in human shape; have carried dead bo-
dies from their graves, and have snatched "travellers
from the earth, and conveyed them through rivers and
marshes, through bogs and quagmires, over hedges and
steeples, till at last they have sunk into the ground, and
disappeared from the view, amidst the noise and roarings
of witches and of ghosts."

But perhaps it may be answered that the middle spec-
cies of poetry is adapted to the occurrences of com-
mon life, and the higher kind of it to the more sublime
excursions of the imagination: without examining, there-
fore, the propriety of professed meanness in any endea-
vour at sublimity, I shall produce, for the gratification
of your readers, a few specimens of pathos and magnifi-
cence.

The Natural.

Richard Penluke was a cheerful man,
Cheerful, and frank, and free;
But he led a sad life with Rebecca his wife,
For a terrible shrew was she.
Richard Penluke a scolding would take,
Till patience avail'd no longer;
Then Richard Penluke, his crab-stick would take,
And chew her that he was the stronger.

I knew an Irishman: to England he
Came every spring a hay-making, and much
Would praise his cabin. By a bog it stood,
And he had store of peats. Without a chimney
Stood the little cabin. Full of warmth and smoke,
It cherish'd its owner. The smoke he lov'd,
Lov'd for the warmth's sake, tho' it *blew'd his eyes*.
Now when the north-east pinches, I bethink me
Of this poor Irishman, and think how *sweet*
It were to house with him, and put his cur,
And peel potatoes 'neath his cabin's smoke.

The Sublime.

What would'st thou with me the third time, he cries,
And a flash of lightning came from his eyes,
And he lifted his griffin-claw in the air,
And the young man had not strength for a prayer;
His eyes with a furious joy were possest,
And he tore the young man's heart from his breast:
He grinned a horrible grin at his prey,
And in a clap of thunder vanish'd away.
Henceforth let all young men take heed,
How in a conjuror's book they read.

Perhaps too it may be proper to present the reader
with an example of

Simplicity.

"Twas a noble ox
That smok'd before us, and the old October
Went merrily in overflowing cans:
But 'twas a *skin-deep* merriment; my heart
Seem'd as it took no share. And when we drink
His health, the thought came over me, and spoil'd the draught.
Poor gentleman! to think, ten months ago
He came of age, and now ——!"

Again:

Poor young man, I loved him
Like my own child;
Came Candlemas, and I have been their servant
For five and forty years.

Such expressions as these passages exhibit might be admitted in a drama where the character is necessary to assist the plot, or to enliven the scene; but to introduce such sentiment and such language, in a poem that contains nothing that is not designed for the closet, may be very convenient to the author, but is certainly disgusting and tiresome to the reader.

If it be urged that this race of poets have adapted their language and their verse to the subjects they have chosen, I have no inclination to contradict the assertion; and can only regret that writers of acknowledged talents

should exercise their pens on such unnatural and disgusting fictions.

It cannot be denied that notwithstanding all their singularities the writers of this class have sometimes produced poems and passages which may be read with pleasure; but these are only occasional instances of the triumph of genius over absurdity. If even under all the disadvantages of a perverted taste, they have sometimes succeeded in pleasing or astonishing the reader, how much more excellent might not their productions have been had they formed and improved them by the established laws of English poetry.

He who has it in his power to do much, and wastes his life in indulging the caprices of a perverted and licentious imagination, will be more despised and neglected, when adventitious circumstances have lost their influence, than he who with moderate abilities arrives at excellence by the judicious cultivation of his powers, and by adherence to those rules which the genius of his language, and the laws of criticism and of nature, have established. That I may exhibit the poetry of these gentlemen to the best advantage, I have contrasted their productions with some of the best ditties I have been able to procure from the most celebrated ballad-singers of London, and will leave the reader to determine their respective excellence.

The Terrific.

From *Annual Anthology*, vol. 2. p. 268.

He laid him down, and closed his eyes,
But soon a scream made him arise;
He started, and saw two eyes of flame,
On his pillow from whence the screaming came.

From "*The Gaspert Tragedy, or the Innocent Damsel betrayed.*"

Thus spoke she to him, with screeches and cries,
The flashes of lightning did start from her eyes,
Which put the ship's crew in a terrible fear,
None saw the ghost, but the voice they did hear.

The Pathetic.

Annual Anthology, Vol. 2. p. 109.

I have no tail to strike and slay,
But I have ears to hear what you say;
I have teeth moreover as you may see,
And I will make a meal of thee.

The Bloody Gardener's Cruelty, or the Shepherd's Daughter Betrayed.

What business have you here, Madam, pray?
Are you come to rob the garden Fay?
Cries she, No thief I am,
But come for that young man,
Who did this night appoint to meet me here.
He spoke no more, but straight a knife he took,
And pierced her heart before one word she spoke.

The Simple or Descriptive.

Annual Anthology, Vol. 2. p. 70.

She was so pale and meagre-eyed,
As scarcely to be known,
When to her father she return'd
From service in the town.

The Bloody Gardener.

Now mind this sad relation, which I do give you here,
'Tis of a maiden fair,
A shepherd's daughter dear,
But love did prove her utter overthrow.

Sentimental.

Anthology, Vol. 2. p. 73.

There from morn till night she sits;
Now God forgive her sin,
For heavy is her crime, and strange
Her punishment hath been:

And now all night at the fire he sits,
And says "now my true lover's come!"
So Lord have mercy on this bad man's wits,
And forgive him the sins he has done!

As many of the gentle readers of the Anthology may be unwilling to wait for another volume from the hands of its celebrated authors, they will no doubt thank me for informing them that the valuable originals I have quoted, may be had of T. Evans, 79, Long-lane, West-Smithfield; where may likewise be had, every celebrated ballad, the Yorkshire tragedy, the cruel murder of Betty Tomkins, and a full and true account how a man was killed by the Lancashire witches, and how he was wonderfully preserved, &c. &c.

THE VARIOUS PROFESSIONS COMPARED.

SIR,

HAVING left the university at the age of twenty-four years, with a respectable character and a moderate property, I determined to extend my fortune and connections by devoting my talents to some lucrative and honourable profession. As London is the stage from which the observer of life and manners looks down with the most perfect view on the morals, the intellectual character, and the vicissitudes of mankind, I hastened to the metropolis of arts, of letters, and of fashion; and having taken chambers in the Temple, determined by daily sitting among the members of the bar, the faculty, and the church, to investigate the comparative reasons for the choice of each profession.