

would be evidently disconcerted if he did not sit by her, desired Ellen to go next him, as he, of course, sat by the lady whom he had handed down stairs, and she tried to be happy. But Charles did not, as he had to do at R—, turn his back

for her sake on the lady, whoever she was, that sat on the other side of him, and she felt glad when the ladies retired, that she might go to her own room, and relieve her full heart by weeping.

(To be concluded in our next.)

THE FEATURES THAT CAPTIVATE IN POETRY.

ONCE the subject of Poetry has undergone disquisition, we do not know that any writing ever met our eyes, in which its composition is, as it were, chymically analyzed, and its different component parts exposed and laid bare to the view. It shall be our study, therefore, to point out those regular parts which naturally go to the structure of Poetry, and which present in themselves the means, by possessing which, a man may aspire to the identified character of a poet. As the requisites which are in our contemplation are such as are decidedly of the first order, and have the greatest share in the interest excited in the mind, we think the title is not inappropriate which we have chosen for them—of the Features which captivate in Poetry.

We have ever considered the great ingredients of Poetry to resolve themselves into these three distinct heads:—Sublimity, Simplicity, and Elegance. Beauty is the effect of the whole; Genius is the parent of all. Each of the three comprises, respectively, two parts, conception and expression; and these must never be divided. It is our intention to consider each head in its order. And first we turn to sublimity, because this is certainly the highest qualification of verse, and the greatest test of a poet's genius: for though it is not necessary in every species of verse, yet the species which does not require it is one of inferior order to that which calls for it.

As to sublimity, the writers on rhetoric, and on the dispositions of the human mind, are at variance about the definition to be given of it. Dr. Blair utterly rejects the idea

that sublimity in the visible world depends on greatness or immensity alone; and yet we argue that none can be shewn among the objects of nature, possessing the property or attribute of greatness, which does not raise great and lofty ideas in the mind. The theories of other rhetoricians throw no greater light upon the subject. Longinus, in general, a man of great observation, sadly confounds its component parts; as, amongst the five *springes** he assigns to it, he includes two which stand entirely independent of it, and which are plainly definitions of rhetoric in general. These are a splendid elocution and a magnificent composition, which he appends to the other sources, thus described, a happy boldness in the powers of perception, an impetuosity conceived and half-inspired feeling, and a peculiar use of figures.

To form our own opinion we should say, that sublimity in the visible world depends, not on the immensity of the object alone, but on the assistance which it meets in the ignorance of the human mind, or, to speak more soothingly, in the incapacity of the mind to comprehend, embrace or unravel it. When, therefore, we averred that there was no vast object in nature which did not awaken sublime thoughts in the soul, it was equivalent to our saying that there was none of those objects really great, which the intellect of man could wholly comprehend. Thus, in a clear night, we cast our eyes up to the vault of Heaven, and behold it studded with numberless sun-balanced and well-arranged stars of different magnitudes, and "differing in glory," and our minds are

filled with amazement. But could we, but for a moment, imagine that the whole was the effect of art, that the sky was but a mere constructed machine, and that the stars were merely studs of silver placed in it, our astonishment would cease. But no—the span of the arch is too broad to be inspected by the eye at one view; and considering, as we do, that the things which we call stars are so many worlds, suspended by infinite wisdom, in an inconceivable manner, with continual revolutions, and that it is only owing to their prodigious distance that they appear so small to us, our wonder rises into admiration, and our minds are conscious of sublimity. It is the same with the contemplation of a stupendous mountain, or of the ocean—it is the consciousness of our own littleness, compared with the wonders of nature, and weighed in the balance with the other great works which flow from the Creator's hand, which adds to the effect produced. It is the littleness of man which strikes us, and makes us feel surprised that, we so little and they so great, he should bestow his attention upon us also.

A reflecting person walking upon the beach of the sea is thoroughly awake to this feeling. Ocean is an object calculated to call up the most tremendous ideas. He is fabled to be a sovereign, turbulent, resistless, and bound; his bounds are no where visible, his waves are innumerable, and the force of his billows is, but in part, obvious to the view. We will add another instance from our own experience. We well remember, while we were yet very young, beholding a regiment of horse, a detachment of the hussars, enter our native town; the couriers, at some distance, preceded; the trumpeters and buglemen, four a-breast, brought up the van, blowing loud notes of war; the band also, mounted on chargers, followed, making concert with the trumpeters; then came the commanding officers a-breast, men of noble port and manly appearance; last came the body of men, riding erect, with swords drawn, magnificently equipped, on steeds nobly caparisoned. As the horses paced and the martial strain resounded, our soul within us

was distended; we admired and wondered, and were distressed, and ultimately wept. Others in company with us were similarly affected. It occurred to us as very strange that such a spectacle should excite our tears, and we pondered over it, young as we were, for several hours. At last we concluded in referring it to sublimity, and explained it thus; that the mind, amazed at the sight of such grandeur, such power, and such awful preparations, and reflecting what great things they may perform, is lost in wonder as to the extent to which they may be effective; it traces their progress to a certain height, but its prospect is then bounded; and it is the feeling of restraint imposed upon the excursions of our souls which excites the agitation of the breast, and the effusion of tears. If this be a new theory, let it at least have the benefit of deliberate consideration.

It remains but to trace this effect, produced by objects amenable to the senses, onward, to the operation of such as consist in sentiment; that is, the sentiment conveyed in particular allusions, or forms of words; eternity, infinity, omnipotence, ubiquity, immensity of size, immensity of space, are all objects which involve sublimity; and these, if tried by the standard which I have proposed, will all be found to confirm its legitimacy. Hence also may be perceived the judicious choice which Milton made, when he attached himself to objects and things, which cannot be divested of the sublimity, which, in their nature, they carry with them.

Of this sublimity, when worked up into composition, be it prose or poetry, we will adduce a few specimens, and the first shall be from Thomson, in the exclamation with which he opens his ode to the memory of Sir Isaac Newton; an effort of genius alone sufficient, though he had written no more, to insure him immortality.

"Shall the great soul of Newton quit
this earth
To join his kindred stars, and every
muse,
Astonish'd into silence, shun the weight
Of honours due to his illustrious name?
But what can man."

* Πηγαι. De Sublim. § 8.

We shall select the next quotation from Cowper, the philanthropic bard, who has interwoven into his instructive lines all the beauties that adorn the poet. 'Tis where it would perhaps little be expected, in a didactic treatise on conversation.

"Well—what are ages and the lapse of time,
Mark'd against truths, as lasting as
sublime?
Can length of years on God himself
exact,
Or make that fiction, which was once
a fact?
Nor marble and recording brass decay,
And like the graver's memory, pass
away;
The works of man inherit, as is just,
Their author's frailty, and return to
dust.
But truth divine for ever stands secure,
Its head is guarded, as its base is sure:
Fix'd in the rolling flood of endless
years,
The pillar of th' eternal plan appears,
The raving storm and dashing wave
defies,
Built by that architect, who built the
skies."

We have here sublimity of conception and sublimity of expression together, embodied towards the conclusion in a most noble and masterly figure.

But if we speak of sublimity in conception, none has yet appeared in the circle of poetry superior to that which Lord Byron has disclosed to the world in a late production; the thought of the carnivorous and rapacious vultures, receding from the glance of the human eye in Mazeppa, though his body lay exhausted and powerless an easy prey.

Were we asked to concentrate the poets of our own country most remarkable for sublimity of thought and expression, they would be pretty nearly the following. Milton, beyond question, occupies the first place among the poets, ancient or modern, who have adorned English poesy. Lord Byron makes his claim the next, and half disputes the palm. We should award the succeeding places to Thomson, Burns, and Cowper.

We come now to speak of simplicity as a characteristic in poetry; one which must be entirely inborn,

and depends not on art or study, for any attempts here at adventitious excellence sit unbecomingly and unnatural on the individuals in whom they originate. A learned and venerable writer expresses the following sentiments respecting simplicity. "In all the sciences, in every valuable profession, in the common intercourse of life, and to me add, even in the sublimest subjects, simplicity is that which, above every thing else, touches and delights; without it, indeed, all else is feeble and unaffecting. Where simplicity is wanting men may be dazzled for a moment. More splendour will strike them at first, but on reflection they will soon discover that splendour itself, like every other idol, is nothing. On the other hand where simplicity, the sister of truth, appears, the attraction is eternal.

The species of pleasure excited in the breast by simplicity is not such as overpowers, or astonishes, or subdues; but is in its nature gentle and mild; lively, indeed, but ever moderate; and is best expressed by the epithet of cheerful. Indeed, simplicity in external objects, and cheerfulness in the emotions of the soul, hold the same places; they are analogous, and answer correctly to each other.

We are inclined to think simplicity the most important constituent in poetry, for its presence is necessary where that of the others may be dispensed with. It is admissible into sublime and into elegant writings, and is indeed essential to the purity and effect of both. An ode may be deserving of admiration without sublimity, or without fine finishing; but it cannot be good if it want simplicity. Simplicity is the garment in which all writings should be arrayed; sublimity is a sumptuous robe only occasionally required.

We have sometimes seen a child engaged in the expression of endearments to its nurse, and have also read numerous admired dialogues of love, a comparison between which has only served to show the inferiority of the latter to the impassioned strains of infancy. The words in which a child gives utterance to its affection, as it re-

peats the frequent kiss, are—"I do so love you!" and to dilate on these were to destroy their effect. Dr. Johnson informs us, and our own judgment confirms his decision, that the much admired and brilliant lament of Milton, entitled *Lycidas*, is, in this view, inferior to the strains of sorrow which Cowley devotes to the memory of his companion *Hevey*; for we know not what meaning to attach to the account of Milton, a book learned writer, and his friend, an illustrious member of the church, driving a field together, tending their flocks on the plains, and penning them up at the approach of evening.

The most frequent and exquisite specimens of simplicity are to be found in the compositions of Burns; unhappy Burns, whom we could cite as a specimen of all the three ornaments. No better idea can be conveyed to one to whom it is necessary to describe simplicity, than by pointing out to him the song of "Auld lang syne." How beautiful and natural is the circumstance of calling to recollection, that he and his companion had gone about the banks, and pulled the daisies; and that (so like children, with no other care to distract their minds) they had paddled in the brook from breakfast to dinner time. The "Banks o' Doon" may well be placed side by side with this song. The hapless and deserted lover, in an exquisite strain of nature, appeals to the flowery banks, how they can so unfeelingly bloom, and the little birds how they can find in their hearts to chant, when she is so weary full of care. Then the succeeding burst—"thou'lt break my heart, thou little bird," followed by the reason, that it reminds her of joys gone never to return, is a stroke that cannot be excelled.

In a strain somewhat similar, the

person speaking in a sort of pastoral, by Mr. Henry Mackenzie, introduced in the "Man of Feeling," and entitled "Lavinia," asks with simplicity, how it comes to pass that the face of all nature is changed since his misfortunes commenced.

When I walk'd in the pride of the dawn,
Methought all the region look'd bright,
Has sweetness forsaken the lawn,
For methinks I grow sad at the sight:

When I stood by the stream I have thought
There was mirth in the gurgling soft sound;
But now, 'tis a sorrowful note,
And the banks are all gloomy around.

This is a very natural representation of the feelings of a person under such a state of depression. Well may Scotland make her boast of having given birth to bards who excelled in the first and distinguishing features of a poet.

But when we speak of simplicity, it were injustice to the manes of the unknown bard not to introduce to notice a piece of former times, the author of which has slid into the current of oblivion, but which it will be a merit in any publication to be the medium of restoring. It was on an occasion when we had ascended into the uppermost story of our habitation, and with the avidity of a Vampire were devouring the musty records and various collected manuscripts which had been left there by the former inhabitants, the *virtuosi* of their age, when a corner of this paper met our eye; and we exulted in the opportunity of exercising our critical judgment, and determining the merit and beauty concealed under this humble garb. The song ran thus:—

THE ORPHAN BOY.

Alas! I am an Orphan Boy,
With naught on earth to cheer my heart;
No father's love, no mother's joy,
Nor kin nor friend to take my part.
My lodging is the cold, cold ground,
I eat the bread of charity;
And when the kiss of love goes round,
There is no kiss, alas, for me.

Yet once I had a father dear,
A mother too, I wont to prize;
With ready hand to wipe the tear,
If chanc'd the transient tear to rise.
But cause of tears was rarely found,
For all my heart was youthful glee,
And when the kiss of love went round,
How sweet a kiss there was for me.

But, ah! there came a war they say,
What is a war?—I cannot tell;
But drums and fifes did sweetly play,
And loudly rang our village bell.
In truth it was a pretty sound
I thought,—nor could I thence foresee,
That when the kiss of love went round,
There soon should be no kiss for me.

A scarlet coat my father took,
And sword as bright as bright could be,
And feathers that so gaily look,
All in a shining cap had he.
Then how my little heart did bound,
Alas, I thought it fine to see—
Nor dreamt, that when the kiss went round,
There soon should be no kiss for me.

At length the bell again did ring,
There was a victory they said;
'Twas what my father said he'd bring,
But, ah! it brought my father dead.
My mother shriek'd, her heart was woe,
She clasp'd me to her trembling knee;
O God! that you may never know,
How wild a kiss she gave to me!

But once again, — but once again,
These lips a mother's kisses felt;
That once again,—that once again,
The tale a heart of stone would melt.
'Twas when upon her death-bed laid,
(O God! O God! that sight to see),
"My child, my child," she feebly said,
And gave a parting kiss to me.

So now I am an Orphan Boy,
With naught below my heart to cheer;
No mother's love, no father's joy,
Nor kin nor kind to wipe the tear.
My lodging is the cold, cold ground,
I eat the bread of charity;
And when the kiss of love goes round,
There is no kiss, alas, for me.

It is on the last four lines of the fifth verse, ending

"O God! that you may never know,
How wild a kiss she gave to me,"

that we will repose our judgment, willing here to take our stand, and to rest on this our reputation for critical

discernment. We maintain this to be as simple, natural, pathetic and touching a sentiment, and clothed in as unaffected diction, as any to be found in the elegies of the most admired poets. The speaker expatiates not on the particular feeling existing in his mother or himself,

when the kiss was imprinted, but breaks out into an exclamation which, while it deprecates our knowledge of the reality, implies the impossibility of description.—As for the mother's feelings, 'tis merely "her heart was woe;" not the seat of woe, nor distracted by a thousand woes. It is these bursts of nature, these unlaboured starts of genuine sentiment, that constitute the attractions of the simple elegy.

Elegance, neatness, delicacy, are all terms appropriated to express what we mean by the last feature which we have marked out. In order to view the subject of elegance in the light it deserves, it will be necessary to refer to those points which constitute its principles. It is that which, perhaps, most of the three ingredients of poetry, admits of deliberate attempts at its acquisition, and may either present itself in some persons as natural and inborn, or in others as the effect of attention and study. On this account its principles are less obvious or discernible than in the other cases, though not placed beyond the reach of a discriminating mind. They seem chiefly to centre in the following maxims; that there should not be too much nor too little, that propriety and decorum should be sacredly observed, and that harmony should be called in to assist the disposition of words, in themselves pleasing and fluent. The first in consequence among its elements is, that the poet should have a habit of thinking concisely, and of painting his thoughts in words not too numerous nor too scanty for the occasion. This wears a better aspect as a natural gift than in the forms which result from study directed to the subject. The sentence should also be terse and compact, its members should be well joined, and the whole easily pervaded by the line of sense which is to run from the commencement to the end. No disjointed apothegm, after the sense is complete, should be allowed to be tacked to the sentence like a rider to a bill in parliament, and drag along its unnecessary length to the violation of all proportion. Redundancies are to be removed by the pen as vigorously as a tumour by the penknife, and even

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where the sense and matter are too strong and full, it were good to withdraw some of the effective words, and relieve the weight of the verse by substituting a few harmonious epithets. Wherever many parts enter into the composition of a verse the rules of just symmetry are to be observed; and if different members are required to succeed one another in three or more clauses, they should rise on each other to the end with increasing length, and produce a well sounding climax at the close of the period.

Of the poets in the English language, Mr. Thomas Moore, the most illustrious this head; one whom writers were never more happy than in comparing to the learned Catullus. But our concern is not with the ancients, or we might draw unnumbered illustrations from them; it is to our own poets only that we must be understood throughout this writing to confine ourselves. Waller, and Otway and Rowe, poets of a receding age, put in their pretensions, but they have not always the lovely *united* which Mr. Moore's lines display, and we will not countenance the existence of the one of these without the other. Wordsworth is sometimes elegant, and his elegance is the more commendable as it is the elegance of truth, and feeling. The following extract from his works is a testimony of the elegance, both in sentiment and expression.

"Dear native regions, I forget
From what I feel at this farewell,
That wheresoe'er my steps shall tend,
And whencesoe'er my course may end,
My soul shall cast the backward view,
The longing look alone on you."

Thus, when the sun, prepar'd for rest,
Has gain'd the precincts of the West,
Though his departing radiance fail
To illuminate the hollow vale,
A lingering light he fondly throws
On the dear hills where first he rose."

Mr. Montgomery deserves the tribute of admiration: "Notes of sorrow," indeed, he sings, and notes of melancholy; but notes conceived in delicacy, and with delicacy expressed.

These then are the three great springs (to use Longinus's words)

of that which so much captivates mankind. We think that they comprehend all features which enter into the frame of verse, and that there are none which may not, on consideration, be found referable to them. There is a species of poetical writing, which is not directly regarded in this essay, which is best designated the ingenious; but of this we shall observe, that it exists more in wit than genius; light and distinguished by no mark, like an exhalation escaping from the upper story of the brain, and not from the nobler apartments. This has no other recommendation than the mere chicanery of art, and holds the same rank among the orders of writing that a petifogging attorney does among the characters of the world.

Much of this nature is the parody which we only spare in consideration to the feelings of those higher characters who have occasionally fallen into its use, but have doubtless since regretted it. We, in our humble judgment, consider it unworthy a wise man's pursuit, and we confess that it is occasion of sorrow to us when we see the beacons of human intellect engaged in the prosecution of it. It implies no superiority of genius, but only an exuberant imagination; and the time spent on these light conceits would be well given to some connected work of a higher order, which may wear a character of respectability as well as originality, and lay claim to the serious examination of posterity.

U. U.

AN ELEGY.

HERE calm as the wave of the untroubled ocean,
When tempests that roar have subsided to rest;
Reposes a heart that was torn by commotion,
The fiercest that rises and sinks in the breast.

How mild was that bosom, how lovely that beauty!
Ah, why did she perish so early in life?
Her parent, with sternness, demanded her duty,
Affection was stronger—she sunk in the strife.

O Love! round thy bowers dark cypress is wreathing,
Thy surest interpreter is a deep sigh:
Oh! why is the odour, thy roses are breathing,
So fatal that they who inhale it must die!

No more will the billows of life's stormy ocean
Roll on in their fury to heighten her woes;
She has mingled with seraphs who bend in devotion
Before the bright throne in the land of repose.

E. P.

SKETCHES OF SOCIETY AND MANNERS IN LONDON AND PARIS.

LETTER XIX.

From SIR CHARLES DARNLEY, Bart. to the MARQUIS DE VERMONT.

Paris.

MY DEAR DE VERMONT,

It grieves me to observe, that, in spite of all which this country has suffered from the tyranny of a military government, the taste of the people is unaltered, and that dreams of warlike glory still haunt their imaginations. Apathy and indifference prevail universally on all other topics; but whenever, either in public or in private, the smallest allusion is made to the heroic days of victorious France, the right chord is touched, joy sparkles in every countenance, party distinctions are forgotten and the enthusiasm becomes general. Scarcely a day has passed away since my arrival at Paris, without affording me some fresh proof of this characteristic trait. The old *noblesse*, though indignant if a foreigner speaks with the smallest respect of the genius of Buonaparte, or the talents of his Marshals, will yet condescend, when boasting of the valour of their country, to mention the achievements of both, as demonstrating that under every change of government the French soldier is invincible. If one venture to hint that the battle of Waterloo, to which the present King owes his restoration, contradicts the assertion, they contend that the misfortunes of the hard-fought day were all occasioned by the rashness of the Commander, and the overwhelming force opposed to him.

The most inveterate enemy of the Bourbon dynasty is equally careful not to omit the names of the Chevalier Bayard, Henry IV., or Marshal Turenne, in counting up the heroes of his beloved country; and their glories are no less considered as national, than those of Pichegru, Dommourier, Ney, or Napoleon.

Among various other instances of the unabated passion for military fame which I have remarked, I shall mention what occurred a few evenings since, at the opening of M. Le Compté's new Theatre, in the Rue Mont Thabor, when I happened to

be present. The entertainment consisted of dramatic scenes represented by machinery, affording what you call *des Tableaux Parlants*. While the inventor confined himself to exhibitions of his skill, however ingenious, which had no allusion to France or military fame, his efforts to amuse the spectators were received with chilling indifference, but when at last he brought before them *Les Français au Champ de Mars*, every eye was fixed in mute attention, and every hand was raised to greet with loud applause a scene so flattering to the vanity of the nation. They availed themselves of the first opportunity which occurred of testifying their approbation, and it was one which showed how much all considerations, including even a respect for religion, are undervalued when put in opposition to "desert in arms."

A French soldier, fully accoutred, approaches the cave of a magician, and begs to borrow a candle, which is brought by the devil himself in *propre personâ*, and *le brave militaire*, unawed by the sudden appearance of his *Satanic Majesty*, lights his pipe, with becoming *sang-froid*, at the offered taper, while thunders of enthusiastic applause burst from the well-pleased crowds assembled on the occasion.

Figures of various heroes, beginning with *Henri IV.*, were then brought forward. They were next individually put in motion, and made to march by the delighted audience in military array. All of these received in turn some loud testimony of approbation; but when at length the soldier, who so fearlessly had lighted his pipe at the candle of the devil, exclaimed, *le souvenir de la gloire passée, est la promesse de la gloire à venir*, no language can describe the ardour with which a sentiment, so calculated to raise the drooping spirits of the French, was received.

From this scene, and from many similar ones which I have witnessed during my stay in this capital, I am