

ing, as to receive considerable applause, and from that moment his fate was decidedly fixed on the theatrical profession, and he remained under the management of his elder brother at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and the other places within his theatrical circuit. At length, Mr. S. Kemble, though deriving essential support from his brother Charles, liberally conceiving that his talents were worthy of protection in the metropolis, recommended him to the managers of Drury-lane Theatre, where he procured an engagement, and made his first appearance before a London audience in the humble part of *Malcolm*, in the tragedy of "*Macbeth*." His classical attainments and gentlemanly character soon attracted the attention of the late Mr. Sheridan, who saw that his talents were ripening into excellence, and therefore gave him due encouragement. The part of *George Barnwell* was next assigned to him, and he performed it with such feeling and powerful expression, that Mrs. Siddons, who represented *Millwood*, declared that she was hardly able to do justice to her part, on account of the sympathy which his well-painted distresses impressed upon her mind. We cannot pretend to trace his course through all the characters which he assumed, and in which he displayed such conspicuous merit, that he soon became one of the chief favourites of the public, who testified their respect for his talents by a warm greeting whenever he appeared. He was soon after the hero of the Haymarket Theatre, and remained there for several seasons, under the management of the Younger Colman, increasing his reputation by the truth, force, and variety of his performances. When his brother John Kemble quitted Drury-lane Theatre, and became a proprietor of Covent-garden, Charles naturally followed his fortunes; and though precluded from the higher range of characters in tragedy, yet on several occasions, when he appeared in any of those characters, it was acknowledged that he displayed first rate abilities. But Mr. Charles Kemble's powers were by no means confined to tragedy; for in the genteel and spirited parts of comedy he also appeared to very great advantage, and proved himself to be one of the best general actors on the London boards.

His *Prince of Wales*, *Falconbridge*, and *Benedict*, were admirable specimens of histrionic truth, taste, and spirit. His *Young Mirabel*, in "*The Inconstant*," was another proof of comic grace, ease, and elegance, that was highly applauded; while, in tragedy, his *Hamlet* and *Jaffier* were critically correct, and deeply impressive. In fact, no character, as the phrase is, ever "came amiss to him," and in all he displayed the judgment of the scholar, and the animation of true genius. One circumstance peculiar to his style of acting deserves to be noticed. Though most of the great actors of his time were the subject of imitation, no attempts of that kind were ever made respecting him: a proof that his acting is founded on truth and nature. He does not, however, appear to have been always treated with impartiality, as many characters have been withheld from him, which would have rendered him still more prominent on the theatrical canvas; and have afforded him new claims to public favour. He is now one of the very best actors of his day, and would have stood high in the proudest periods of our dramatic annals. It is with no less pleasure than truth that we can also turn to his domestic character, and find him still acting with exemplary merit as the husband and father; the affectionate relative, and the sincere friend. We know not precisely at what period he entered into the marriage state; but it must be universally admitted, that his choice of a partner for life was marked by the same good sense and correct taste which characterize his professional exertions: having married Miss De Camp, a lady of congenial talents and attainments, and deservedly high in public favour as an accomplished actress. There are, we believe, four children the offspring of this union: the elder of whom, according to report, already manifest promising signs of hereditary ability. But it is not only as the actor, the scholar, and the gentleman, that we are to view the character of Mr. C. Kemble:—He has displayed literary talents, which if they had been employed in original composition, would have added fresh laurels to his character. He gave a spirited translation of "*Le Deserteur*" of Mercier to the public, judiciously altered, and adapted to the English

stage under the title of "*The Point of Honour*," and another piece, also a translation, entitled, "*The Wanderer*," which introduced the perils that attended the flight of the Pretender to the throne of this country, under the designation of a Swedish Prince; both of which were very successful dramas. Mrs. C. Kemble has also shewn her literary skill in several little pieces translated from the French, and in an interesting and amusing comedy, entitled "*Smiles and Tears*," partly founded on Mrs. Opie's celebrated tale of "*Father and Daughter*."

Our restricted limits compel us to close this biographic sketch; but we cannot conclude without expressing our regret that, in consequence of some difference with the Chief Proprietor of Covent Garden, Mr. C. Kemble is not at present engaged there. We do not pretend to know the grounds of this difference; but we may fairly say, that if the Manager should ultimately lose so excellent an actor, it will appear that he is not duly sensible of his own interest, nor sufficiently attentive to the taste and judgment of the public; so constantly evinced in Mr. Kemble's favour.

ON THE CRITERION OF POETICAL PRE-EMINENCE.

UNTIL Poetry is properly and clearly defined, and it's nature and objects distinctly ascertained, it is impossible to determine the relative merits of rival poets. Homer, Virgil, Shakspeare, and Milton, have been universally admired; but this universal admiration, so far from enabling us to pronounce with certainty, which of them has approached nearest to perfection in his art, only involves the question in greater difficulty. Each of them possessed a genius truly original; but then a different character was impressed upon each; and consequently each of them had peculiar excellencies of his own, to which the rest could not attain. One had more genius, another more judgment, another more feeling, and another more imagination; but neither of them possessed these four endowments in perfection. Homer's strength lay in his genius and imagination: in judgment he was inferior to Virgil; in delicacy of feeling to Virgil and Shakspeare; though in the vigour and enthusiasm of his feelings he excelled them all. Judgment and feeling are the characteristic excellencies of Virgil: in genius and imagination he was inferior to the other three. Shakspeare was deficient in judgment alone, and Milton, perhaps, in feeling alone. It is impossible, therefore, to determine which is the greatest poet, till we first ascertain what it is that renders a poem most highly interesting, or, in other words, with which we are most delighted, the penetrating acumen and ardent energies of genius, the refined taste and critical discrimination of judgment,

the heart-rending pathos of feeling, or the sublime conceptions and daring excursions of imagination. It is with poetry as it is with eloquence: all nations have admired the orations of Cicero and Demosthenes; but before the seventeenth century, no critic ventured to decide which of them should be acknowledged the prince of Orators. Fenelon was the first who decided the question in favour of Demosthenes; but if he had simply stated it as his opinion, that the latter was the greater orator, I doubt whether his authority, highly and deservedly as it is esteemed, would have completely removed all doubts on the subject. Fenelon, however, acted differently: he knew, that to determine such a question, it was necessary, first to ascertain in what the soul of eloquence consisted, and that he who has not this knowledge to direct his judgment is unqualified to decide. He entered, accordingly, into a philosophical examination of the principal aim, or object, of eloquence; and having ascertained this object, he had little difficulty in determining which of those illustrious rivals was the most distinguished orator.

He who would venture to decide upon the relative merits of rival poets, must proceed as Fenelon has done: he must ascertain the object which the poet proposes to himself; or, in other words, he must find out wherein poetry consists, what it has in common with, and wherein it differs from, eloquence, and every other species of composition. Without this antecedent knowledge, he may write volumes on the

subject, and leave the world as undecided as ever. To what purpose would he compare parallel passages from their works with each other: the most poetic passage is not always that which will endure the most critical investigation. The orator has one object in view, the critic another, the philosopher another, and the poet another. It would be therefore absurd to compare two different passages with each other, to know which of them is the most poetic, without previously knowing in what the poetry of a passage consisted. Each of them may be written in verse, and each of them have excellencies peculiar to itself; but neither of them may be poetical. The excellence of one may consist in its critical accuracy, the excellence of the other in its philosophic truth; but many passages may be quoted from Homer and Shakspeare that are neither critically correct, nor philosophically true, which, notwithstanding, are highly poetical. To compare passages, or entire poems, from authors, will not, therefore, enable us to determine their relative poetical merits, without the knowledge of which we have spoken. The predominant characteristic of an entire poem may consist, not in its poetic beauty, but in the beauty of its sentiments, the keenness of its wit, or the perspicuity of its style; but a prose writer may be as sentimental, as witty, and as perspicuous as a poet. How, then, are we to compare what is purely sentimental with what is purely poetical. We cannot say that one is more sentimental than the other, because the latter is not sentimental at all; neither can we say one is more poetical than the other, for the same reason. When Dr. Johnson, in his parallel between Pope and Dryden, says, that, "in acquired knowledge, the superiority must be allowed to Dryden," this does not enable us, in the least, to determine which is the greater poet. Many writers have surpassed Pope and Dryden in acquired knowledge, who had no genius for poetry. Neither do we approach to a nearer acquaintance with the poetic character, much less the relative excellence of either, when he tells us, that "the notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation, and those of Pope by minute attention;" for the speculations of Newton were

far more comprehensive, and those of Locke far more minute, than either, and yet neither Locke nor Newton were poets.

It is, indeed, a misfortune, that words which are in common use appear to a great portion of mankind perfectly clear and intelligible; for, as every one attaches some vague idea of his own to them, every one thinks he knows what they mean. This delusion, however, is easily detected; for if fifty different people were asked, what is poetry, not three of them, probably, would agree in their reply. Some will confine it's definition to one or more of it's distinguishing qualities; others to qualities which it possesses in common with eloquence, or prose compositions in general; others will define it by terms as vague and equivocal as itself; and some will have a difficulty in making any reply, for having never attached any fixed idea to the term, they are unable to grasp the vague conception that floats in their minds, and consequently to express it in words, though it would be difficult to convince them that this hesitation arises from their ignorance.

If it should be said, that the idea of poetry is not so involved in mystery as we would represent it, and that those who differ in their ideas of it are only the illiterate part of mankind, we reply, that the most eminent writers have been at a loss to define either it's nature, or it's object. We may easily conclude, that Locke knew little of either, from the panegyric which he has bestowed on one of Blackmore's epics; and yet no one could assert, that this panegyric was ill bestowed, who could not tell, at the same time, in what poetry consisted. Pascal, then whom few have taken a more expanded range in the walks of science, maintained, that Poetry had no settled object, merely because he could perceive no object pursued by the poet, which did not equally belong to prose writers, particularly when their subject was fiction or romance. Dr. Blair has examined, and rejected, the definitions of all his predecessors; and yet his own will not endure the slightest investigation. "Poetry," according to him, "is the language of passion;" but if so, are not the *Philippics* of Demosthenes poems in the most rigid sense, and not to be confound-

ed with that resistless eloquence, which

"Wielded at will the fierce democracy."

The professions of a lover would be always poetical, though he were ignorant of the first elements of language; and whoever would frequent Billingsgate, would be frequently gratified with fragments of the most passionate, and consequently of the most genuine, Poetry. Besides, as passion, in all it's stages, is a high tone of feeling, and as this definition would confine poetry to this tone alone, it necessarily separates it from every commerce with all the gentler modifications of feeling which it is so happily fitted to excite in well regulated and well informed minds.

In order to arrive at a just idea of what distinguishes Poetry from all other species of writing, we must previously observe, that the communication of knowledge appears to be the great object of all kinds of writing. The philosopher, the metaphysician, the poet, the historian, the biographer, the fabulist, and every description of writers, profess to tell us something of which we were before ignorant, or to renew our acquaintance with things which we have already forgotten. In the communication of knowledge, however, writers are guided by different motives; some aiming solely to furnish the mind with useful knowledge, others addressing themselves solely to the feelings, sympathies, sensibilities, and general affections of the heart; and a third class, uniting both these objects, are equally desirous of imparting pleasure and instruction at the same moment. These are the only possible motives that can induce any man to become a writer, because they are those only that induce us to become readers. No person will read a work which imparts neither pleasure nor instruction, and consequently no person will attempt to write such a work. It is true, indeed, that one half of the works published neither please nor instruct; but it is equally true, that they glide fast into oblivion; nor would it be doing justice to their authors to say, that they were not so desirous of pleasing the public as Homer or Virgil, had they equal powers, or equal genius, to effect it. In distinguishing poetry, therefore,

from all other species of writing, it must obviously appear, that it belongs to the second of the classes here enumerated; that is, that it addresses itself solely to the feelings, the sympathies, the sensibilities, and the intuitive perceptions of man. But some difficulty will still remain in distinguishing it from every other species of writing, that aims like itself to please the heart and it's affections alone, as novels, romances, and all works of fiction. The first and most obvious distinction that presents itself to our view is, that the prose writer of fiction communicates only half the pleasure which language is capable of imparting, while the poet communicates the whole. If the novelist pleases us more than other writers, it is not owing to any peculiarity in his language, but to the incidents which he relates, the characters which he invents, and the situations and catastrophes which he imagines. So far as language is concerned, we cannot distinguish him from the historian or biographer: he differs from them only in sacrificing reality to appearance. But the poet goes a step farther, and, not satisfied with pleasing us by the variety and beauty of his images and descriptions, he gratifies our ear by the peculiar melody and harmony of his language. No philosophic reason can be adduced for the use of numbers, measure, quantity, and rhyme, in poetry, but the influence which music of itself, and without any aid from words or images, exercises over the sympathies of the heart, and the gratification which it affords the ear, an organ which, next to the eye, affords the most refined and intellectual delights. The melody of language conveys no meaning to the understanding, but it conveys something more than mere sensual pleasure to the sensitive faculties. It is obvious, then, that the pleasure which ideas, images, situations, and events, can impart of themselves, abstracted from the language through which they are presented to the mind, must be greatly increased when accompanied by the corresponding emotions of melody, harmony, and all the train of mingled emotions which the music of poetic numbers can of themselves awaken in the mind. Hence it is, that poetry alone holds an absolute

dominion over the passions and general affections of man, and consequently over man himself, who is the slave of his passions. It is only he whose indurated feelings repel all the finer sympathies of humanity, who has no passion to indulge because he has long ceased to indulge any, and who has finally succeeded in triumphing over his own nature, that can read without emotion the impassioned language of the pathetic muse. Human distress, however exquisitely painted, will never move the heart so powerfully as when the sound appears "an echo to the sense." Without the music of poetry, we can only be affected by the images of distress which are presented to the mind; but when to the influence of these images is superadded the sweet but resistless influence of plaintive numbers, which of themselves, and without any image of distress whatever, infuse a secret, sacred melancholy, how greatly must the pathetic effect be increased. It is an error, then, to suppose, that the influence of poetic numbers is confined to the mere gratification of the ear; for though the external sense is first affected by them, it communicates the sensation to all the internal senses, and thus becomes capable of exciting all the diversified modifications of feeling that belong to the heart and its affections. Of all the poets, Pope seems to have been best acquainted with the power of numbers. The following lines from his "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day," appear to me one of the finest instances, how far the influence of images, mournful and pensive in themselves, is increased by the adaptation of plaintive or desponding musical numbers.

"Now under hanging mountains,
Beside the falls of fountains,
Or where Hebrus wanders,
Rolling in meanders,
All alone,
Unheard, unknown,
He makes his moan;
And calls her ghost,
For ever, ever, lost!
Now with furies surrounded,
Despairing, confounded,
He trembles, he glows,
Amidst Rhodope's snows:
See, wild as the winds, o'er the desert he
flies;
Hark! Hemus resounds with the Bacchanal's cries."

In the first nine lines, the syllables are long and heavy, and seem to be breathed with difficulty. The lines are short, and seem to indicate that the desponding voice is unable to continue the pause longer. The ninth line is lengthened to express the final effort of desperation, and the word "ever" repeated three times, as the last image that brooded over the mind, and terminated the prospects of a distracted lover. But the moment distraction has begun to take possession of his mind, the mellifluous softness of the numbers are changed, in the next four lines, into a harsher note, and the cadences are varied to correspond with the tumult of his mind, when suddenly the measure is altogether changed to express the sudden start of the wild infuriate.

So far, then, as we can trace the true nature and object of poetry, the character that distinguishes it from all other species of writing, except novels and romances, appears to be, that it addresses itself solely to the passions, feelings, and sympathies of the heart. Novels and romances, it is true, make as little appeal to the understanding as poetry; but then their dominion over the passions is much more confined. Poetry, indeed, is an individual belonging to the same species with novels and romances; but it's individual, distinctive character is, that it avails itself of all the possible means by which it's empire over the passions may be established and confirmed. If it be asked, what are these means, I have no hesitation to reply, that they are the music, harmony, and variety, of it's numbers. These are the proper guardians of it's dominion, and the emblems of it's sovereignty. I agree, indeed, with Pope, in rejecting the idea of Poetry formed by those, who

"By numbers judge a poet's song,
And smooth or rough with them is right
or wrong;"

for if it had no charms but those of music or harmony alone, Selden would not have been mistaken when he compared a poet to a lord sitting on a stall in Fleet-street, twirling a band, or playing with a rush. But though it certainly embraces all the charms of fine writing, I would defy the most generalizing philosopher to point out one charm exclusively belonging to Poetry,

try, and with which the prose writer can never embellish his descriptions, excepting the charms of music and harmony only; and when Pope himself, in a few lines after, comes to shew that poetry combines many attractions besides that of it's harmony, is it not obvious that all these attractions belong to the prose writer as well as to the poet? In shewing that mere music does not constitute poetry, he commences by observing, that

"True ease in writing comes from art,
not chance,
As those move easiest who have learned
to dance."

But is not this truth as applicable to the orator and the historian, as it is to the poet? He next observes, that

"Tis not enough no harshness gives
offence,
The sound must seem an echo to the
sense."

But this "sound" that "seems an echo to the sense," is nothing but the adaptation of music to the nature of the emotion which the poet intends to excite; and again, when he directs us to hear,

"How Timotheus' varied lays surprise,
And bid alternate passions fall and rise;"

this conflict of the passions, so far as it is excited by the poetry of Timotheus, is entirely effected by the mere influence of the music; for though it was partly influenced by the ideas or images conveyed by the words, this part could have been excited by the prose writer as well as the poet, as he could present to the mind of Alexander the same ideas and images, as clearly and distinctly as the poet; and Pope himself seems to attribute the entire effect to the music alone, when he adds:

"Persians and Greeks like turns of nature
found,
And the world's victor stood subdued by
sound!"

It was, then, the "sound," it was the mere music of Timotheus' numbers, that chiefly excited this rapid succession of alternate emotions. It is true, the music, if unaccompanied by words, would not have called into existence this variety of emotions; for, as Horace observes on a different occasion,

"Alterius sic
Altera precit opem res, et conjurat amice."
Eur. Mag. Vol. 80. Dec. 1821.

But give the prose writer the super-added influence of music, and he will rouse into existence every passion that ever slumbered in the human breast. If it be replied, that prose is no longer prose, if it be modulated by the melody of poetic numbers, I answer, that this argument would prove the position which I wish to maintain; namely, that the poet differs essentially from the prose writer only in the harmony, or music of his numbers.

I am, however, aware, that mere words set to music will not constitute poetry; but I contend,

"In the bright muse though thousand
charms conspire;"

that these thousand charms, with the exception of music or harmony alone, are capable of being transferred to prose descriptions by a refined and elegant writer. The finest descriptions in prose, it is true, will never bear a comparison with the finest descriptions in poetry, but the superiority of the poet can always be traced to the enthusiasm of the music that accompanies the ideas or images which he presents to the mind.

To this theory, a great difficulty may seem to present itself; namely, how it happens that the images and associations of the prose writer are seldom found to be so pleasing, so delightful, or so enchantingly captivating, as those of the poet, if they are even considered abstractedly, and without any reference to the melody of the language in which they are expressed. As this objection is rational, and will appear to many unanswerable, it is highly worthy of investigation.

We have already observed, that the poet addresses himself solely and exclusively to the heart and it's affections. In doing so, he naturally devotes himself to the discovery of such qualities in sensible and intellectual being, as most readily associate with, and elicit the immediate passions or emotions which he intends to excite. All his energies are directed to this contemplation alone: and hence it is, that notwithstanding the enthusiasm and rapidity with which he passes over all the works of nature, and all the creations of art, he is still slow, cautious, and fastidiously delicate, in the selection and combination of his images. He views, it is true, at a glance, all the qualities of an object,

but he finds few of them suited to his purpose, and consequently for the one image which he selects, he rejects a thousand, and immediately passes on in pursuit of other images and associations more congenial to the character of the emotions which he wishes to awaken in the human breast. His progress, therefore, is slow, though his perceptions are clear, his discriminations accurate, his feelings refined, and his imagination rapid and impetuous. With these advantages, and this devoted application to one undivided object, what wonder that his images and associations should be more happily selected, and more intimately allied to the kindred sympathies of the heart, than those of the prose writer: who never applied himself so undividedly to the study of the human passions, or the character of the images and associations that excite certain modifications of feeling or of passion, and no other. For every passion or modification of feeling that ever lay dormant in the human breast, there is some corresponding quality in the works of creation, or in the circumstances and situations of human life. When this quality or circumstance is presented to the mind, the corresponding sensation or emotion is immediately called forth; and had it never been presented, the sensation would have eternally slumbered, unfelt and unknown. The poet, therefore, whose sole object is to excite emotions of all kinds, must study to select only such particular images, circumstances, or qualities, as are fitted to call forth the particular passion or feeling which he intends to excite; and it is easy to perceive, that he must be more happy in this selection than the prose writer, who generally addresses himself to the understanding only, and to whom the heart and its affections are, in a great measure, unknown. But of all the causes that tend to render poetic images more delightful and captivating than those of prose, is the ardour and enthusiasm of the poet himself. Entirely devoted to the study and contemplation of human feeling, he identifies himself with all the affections, sympathies, and sensibilities of the heart; and by thus placing himself in the situation of others, he feels intuitively, without labour or research, by what circum-

stances and affections the heart is most easily moved under certain situations. Hence it is, that poetry has been called the language of inspiration, because the poet discovers by the mere force of sympathy, and consequently is enabled to describe, certain movements of the heart, which all the philosophy and abstract researches of the human mind could never discover. The images of poetry are, therefore, more delightful than those of prose; not because there is any thing in the nature of prose that prevents all its images from being equally captivating, but because the poet devotes himself solely and exclusively to the study of the human heart; because he appeals to the heart alone; because he rejects every image that does not accord with such emotions of the heart as he intends to excite; and because his own feelings are more exquisitely refined, and more delicately susceptible of sympathizing, and consequently of becoming acquainted with the feelings of others. If the prose writer possessed all these advantages, and addressed himself like the poet to the feelings alone, his images and associations would be in themselves as enchanting and delightful as those of the poet; but still they could not exercise the same influence over the passions, because the music of poetry, as I have already observed, infuses of itself a variety of feelings and emotions, which rise to rapture and enthusiasm when accompanied by the magic creations and associations of the poet. Poetry, then, differs materially from prose in the harmony or music of its language alone. No other radical difference can be traced; for though its images are more delightful, there is nothing in the internal nature or structure of prose, that prevents its images from being equally so. We find, accordingly, that many prose descriptions are embellished with all the charms, images, associations, creations, qualities, circumstances, and embellishments of poetry, and want nothing to render them truly poetical, but the music of poetic numbers.

Poetry, then, addresses itself to the feelings and passions alone; and to render its appeal more effectual than all other species of writing, that have a similar object in view, it conveys its ideas and images through the medium

of musical sounds, or measured cadences. It is, therefore, evident, that the great object of poetry is to afford the highest possible gratification to the mind, by presenting it with such objects and images as awake the slumbering emotions of the heart, and give it a sort of renewed and re-animating existence. If this be the object of poetry, we can have little difficulty in determining the relative merits of rival poets; as it is obvious, that he who has most happily succeeded in eliciting and powerfully calling forth the latent emotions of the heart, who always addresses the understanding through the medium of the heart, but never the heart through that of the understanding, whose numbers are sweet and musical, whose cadences, images, and associations, are adapted to the character of the passions or emotions which they are intended to excite, and who, in a word, shews himself to be intimately acquainted with all the secret movements and vibrations of the heart, and the more secret causes by which it is variously affected, is he who has attained to the highest poetical pre-eminence. The greatest poet must, therefore, be he whose feelings are most exquisitely alive to all the sympathies, sensibilities, emotions, passions, and affections of the human heart, because

"He best can paint them who shall feel them most."

Without this deep and intense feeling, this profound acquaintance with human nature, all the powers of fancy and imagination can avail but little. For, to what purpose would the poet's imagination explore and detect all the qualities of animate and inanimate being, or traverse regions of imaginary existence in pursuit of new images and associations, unless he possess, at the same time, that exquisite feeling that enables him to know what passion or feeling these images are fitted to excite in the human breast. Without this feeling, neither fancy nor imagination can avail the poet. On the contrary, too active and volatile an imagination, where it is not tempered and regulated by a chaste and refined feeling, is only qualified to produce delirium; and therefore the poet whose feelings do not keep pace with his

imagination, is, perhaps, of all men not actually insane, he who approaches nearest to the fearful confines of insanity, and who sees most frequently

"the unreal scene,

While fancy lifts the veil between."

When the imagination presents a crowd of images and associations to the mind, they cannot distract it in the least, if we possess that just feeling which teaches us what to select, and what to reject; but where this feeling is wanted, where we cannot exercise the power of selecting and rejecting, we must necessarily admit all the phantasies of the imagination indiscriminately, which must unavoidably produce that mental distraction described by Horace, when he says,

"Aut insanit homo, aut veras facit."

In estimating, therefore, the relative merits of poets, he always will stand highest whose feelings respond to all the secret harmonies of nature, and who, consequently, displays the most profound acquaintance with the human heart: and he who does not always keep this criterion of poetic excellence in view, will never be qualified to determine either the relative merits of rival poets, or the degree of positive excellence to which any individual poet has attained, or how nearly he has approached to perfection in his art. He who judges of poetry by the mere correctness of the poet's sentiments will judge erroneously, even though those sentiments should be expressed in sweet and harmonious numbers; for, as Horace justly observes,

"Non satis est pulchra esse poemata,
dulcia sunt;
Et quocumque volent animum auditoris
agunto,"

The hero of the tragic muse may speak with all the wisdom of a philosopher, and with all the precautions circumspection of a logician; but if his character, and the vicissitudes of his life, have no alliance with the sympathies of the heart, he may be as wise and as cautious as he please, but we turn from him with indifference. It is only he who places his personages in such situations as interest and affect our feelings that can ever rise to the true dignity of a poet. This, however, as I have

already observed, can be done by the prose writer of fiction as well as the poet; and therefore the latter must always consider the harmony of numbers as the distinguishing characteristic of his art. It is music that properly constitutes his superiority over all other writers; for the same images and associations will have infinitely more influence over the mind, when expressed in musical numbers, than they have in prose, because music addresses itself to the feelings alone, and consequently gives all its own influence to that of the images which it presents to the mind. Poetry, may, therefore, be defined *the language of feeling expressed in musical numbers*. Without this mode of expression, we could not distinguish it from works of fiction in prose which address themselves to the feelings as well as poetry; and by calling it the language of passion, with Dr. Blair, we confine it to one modification of feeling, whereas it embraces all the

variations of which feeling is susceptible. Poetry, when once defined, enables us to determine which is the most powerful instrument in the hands of the poet,—the penetrating accents of genius, the refined discrimination of taste, the heart-rending pathos of feeling, or the sublime conceptions of imagination. None of them, it is true, will enable the poet to attain perfection in his art without the co-operation of the rest; but the pathos of feeling is that which is always expected, and which will always distinguish poetry from every other species of composition; for genius and judgment are as essentially necessary to prose compositions as they are to poetry;—Imagination, when properly regulated, throws its charms over the whole circle of the arts and sciences, and clothes the most abstract subject in the magic vestment of its own enchantment:—but feeling alone creates true Poetry.

M. M. D.

THE HERMIT OF LOCH LOMOND.

The second-sighted boatman of Loch Lomond was living in October 1831.

• • • • •
IT may be that the soul
Comes from that blessed world to which at last
It hopes to pass:—therefore in childhood dwells
A spirit bland and blissful, as the light
Rosy and glowing glances from the east,
Till mingled in the common glare of day;
But in the last sweet hour of quiet eve,
Comes once again.—On Lomond's loneliest isle
There sits an aged man, whose eyes have look'd
On fourscore summer suns, when their best noon
Scarce reach'd amidst brown crags, and knotted pines,
The sullen streamlet murmuring at his door.
And when the shrieking eagle shunn'd the storm,
His oar has guided through dark Lomond's waves
The traveller to his hut: and then his locks,
White as the foam shower'd on them, he would shake
Over his brimming cup, with gleeful tales
Making the long night frolic.—When he hears
The hundred voices of the echoing hills,
He dreams it is the music of a throng
Of happy spirits, waiting to begin
Their fellowship with man. 'Tis thought at eve,
When the dim purple mists of autumn wrap
These giant mountain tops, he sits beneath
The shadow of their thrones, and holds strange talk
With beings not yet earthly in their forms.
And he will tell you how, on the first morn
Of jocund May, he walks among the flowers

That carpet these low dells, and in the core
Of the sky daisy, sees the spirit lurk:
Whose mockness in some distant year will grace
A cottage matron's hearth. Or in the fold
The violet opens, finds the hiding place
Of Beauty yet unborn, whose holy essence
Is wafted on the rosiest cloud of morn;
And long before it fills a maiden's breast,
It is a breathing sweetness in the air,
Which men believe the blessing of the spring,
And feel their hearts grow young, The joyous throng
Of all the innocent spirits meant to dwell
In lovely shapes on earth, he says, were once
With him in heaven, before in it's frail clay
His own was prison'd.—Therefore, though his age
To us seems friendless, and his desolate home
Is far from man's abode, he hath a troop
Of fair and pure companions; and he dwells
Amidst a rich creation, every morn
Peopled for him alone.

One summer night,
When the bright moon stoop'd to look nearer earth,
And wood birds sang their bridal: while the steam
Of fragrance mounted on the dewy dale,
He lean'd on Lomond's brink, and smiled to see
The deep blue waters in their guileful calm
Sparkling like Beauty's eye:—and thus he told
A happy old man's dream.—

"There is upon my brow the weight
Of fourscore years and ten,
Yet I am in my cot more great
Than monarchs among men.

When I the thousand lights behold
That follow yonder star,
I think, although my frame be old,
My soul is older far.

They tell me I shall find my goal
A brighter world than this;
But well I know my busy soul
Came from that place of bliss:

For ever in my childhood glow'd
A rapture in my breast,
As if in some more bright abode
My soul had been a guest.

To all my manhood's toilsome day
That spring of joy was lent,
And now, when strength and life decay,
It is not wholly spent.

I deem'd it once the gladdening glow
From spring's sweet freshness caught,
Or morning's breath,—but now I know
'Twas from my birthplace brought.