

modern Satirists, Boileau for playful wit, excellent sense and happiness of stile comes the nearest to Horace. But for sound morality, and I think for a noble and elevated eloquence likewise, Cowper in my opinion, ranks above them all. In these respects he is second alone to the inspired writers, and by comparison even Pope with all his wit and brilliancy may be considered but as a sayer of smart and lively things. Nor must I forget the deep pathos and fervor of Young, as a Satirist and Moralist. If you will condescend after poetry then to accept my humble sketches in prose, I send you the following sample, in some of which perhaps you may perceive some little imitation of the stile of La Bruyère.

On Satirists.

Zoilus hunts out the vices and foibles of the world with all the ardour of the keenest and most inveterate sportsman, caring as little to reform his fellow men as himself.

Lacon was a moralist and a marker down of folly—moral only when he wrote morality, and

wise only when he lectured others, himself a mass of profligacy and its victim.

I allow your right to censure others, if in the very same scales, and with the same even-handed justice, you weigh also your own vices and infirmities, and thus to search into their failings if it be your pleasure, with microscopic eye, if you will also carry a glass with you that shall reflect your own. But to apply the lash so unmercifully to the shoulders of your neighbour, and never let it light even gently upon your own—to be severe where some indulgence would be charitable, and indulgent where a little more severity would be a proof of a better knowledge of yourself—to cry out against those particular vices the most loudly, the temptation to commit which you are exempted from yourself—to pounce upon others like some bird of prey, pluck feather and strip them bare as Æsop's crow—why than thus to indulge yourself in your misanthropic spleen, I tell you you would act wiser to search amidst the world for something you might learn to copy and admire—to honour wisdom rather than scoff at folly, and to reverence examples

of virtue rather than amuse yourself in railing at vice.

Judging of Men's Characters.

At one of the crowded dinner parties of a London season, you meet the usual miscellaneous assembly. Here is a Dowager rouged and wrinkled, mad after balls and condescending to open her shrivelled lips on no other subject. There sits a compound of pedant and coxcomb gabbling about quartz, silica and mammoth's bones: opposite an M. P. as important and loquacious out of the house, as he is silent and meek within it. Modestus, who is one of the guests, sits silent and perhaps constrained amidst every one else ambitious of shewing himself off. You set him down at once for a person of singular stupidity, or pride, or reserve. Had you but seen him the evening before, how different had been your opinion of him?—the life and soul of a circle of his attached and admiring friends. With the same hastiness of judgment on the other hand, you laud to the skies that dinner-hunting Gnatho for his frankness and openness of disposition—this selfish

worldly-minded parasite, with whom were you condemned to pass an hour tête à tête, you would in vain attempt to pierce through his real character, for he shelters himself from all nearer scrutiny beneath the shield of an impenetrable reserve. Timon sarcastic, contradictory and un-courteous to a stranger, you denounce as a Cynic and a Misanthrope. And yet I tell you that amidst all those who assent to all you say with a ready and smiling acquiescence, tickle your ear with flattery, and make tender to you of a thousand good offices and civilities—not one of them, were you a solitary and unbefriended stranger in his neighbourhood, would offer you a corner at his hearth but this very Timon. With the same erroneous hastiness you look down upon one who has unfortunately a degree of timidity in society, for a person of a mean and poor spirit—yet the hour of danger might perhaps rouse this very man into a hero; while that petit-mâitre of drawing-room valour, has fled the field ere the first trumpet sounded to the charge. Again bluntness with you passes for a proof of honesty, and yet there is often as much knavery masqued

beneath bluntness, as in the most smooth-tongued rogue that ever lied and flattered ; nor does lack of wit and intellect, let me assure you, necessarily imply absence of cunning ; nor is a fool necessarily less a knave ; nor is the dunce without those *petit talens* which advance him in the world, and enable him too often to rise over the heads of men of genius, learning and accomplishments.

Sir Theophilus is regular at church, and decorous in his deportment, nor has the prying world hitherto discovered in his life any subject matter of scandal. He has obtained the character of a religious man. I confess I never yet knew him sacrifice his interest to his conscience, or cease to pay court to the great, or offer up his daily incense at the shrine of power, nor ever to be uninflated with self-importance and worldly pride. He is the zealous champion too of the reigning establishment. Once he sacrificed his political principles to serve his ambition ; but he assured the world that he had first GONE DOWN ON HIS KNEES BEFORE HIS GOD TO DIRECT HIM WHICH WAY HE WAS TO VOTE.

We seem to pursue the levelling system in our estimation of our neighbours' characters, and either will not, or cannot, recognize in others merits and principles of action which we do not possess, or are not actuated by ourselves. How often call we one who is stricter in his religious duties, methodist, saint, evangelist, hypocrite? Is our neighbour endued with a more scrupulous and conscientious integrity, we call him a well-meaning simpleton; more learned, a pedant and a book-worm: in a word, we turn all his good qualities into their opposite bad ones, rather than consent to the mortification of acknowledging him in any one respect as our superior.

Some few characters seem to be beyond the comprehension of the great majority of mankind, such as the religious without any taint of bigotry and self-interest; the honest, sincere and straightforward without roughness of manner or churlishness of disposition; those who are economical in their personal expenses, yet generous and charitable towards others; those who unite to talents and genius, perseverance, industry, order and regularity: for the world at large gives itself

little trouble to consider that rules have their exceptions; nor is it charitably inclined to concede to any individual a single merit or virtue without at the same time attributing to him the alloy of some antagonist vice. Again I say, such characters are mistaken by the many, who are ever slow to give credit to all human superiority. They delight in drawing a balance between merits and failings. Genuine merit must look within itself, and not in the applause of the world, for its only compensation.

Conversation.

What a misfortune in society when a man of brazen lungs, impregnable confidence, and empty volubility of tongue, gains the ascendant in conversation, and drowns in silence modest merit, unobtrusive learning, and genuine talent!

Garrulus, whose breath is poison, edges his chair almost on your very toes, thrusts his mouth into your face, and catches hold of your button perhaps, while he proceeds to describe each weary mile of one of his hackneyed tours. You make a desperate effort to stop the flood of

his eloquence: "My dear Sir, I was over the very same ground only the last year." He hears you not, for he possesses one faculty at least in great perfection, that of not listening, and fortunate are you if you possess the same.

Speech is one of our noblest gifts, yet too often the most tiresome. For my own part, I had as lief hear the brayings of a jackass, and much rather the cackling of a goose, than the gabble-gabble of that chattering fellow who sits all day in a club-house detailing the reports of the day, true or false, and whose only source of information is that which is open to all, the public journals. He knows exactly, if you will believe him, the exact income, debts and expenditure of a Duke he knows not even by sight; how every noble family is connected; whether the Duchess was *a* Seymour, the Marchioness *a* Fitzroy, the Countess *a* Paget; but as there is a Court Calendar to instruct him, you need not, therefore, without you please, though I dare say he would have no objection, suppose him to be acquainted and connected with half the nobility of the three kingdoms. Hearing him enumerate

the prices at which such a stud of hunters sold, you would naturally set him down for a sportsman; the numbers, pro and con., on such a division, for an M. P.; the price of the different stocks, for a monied man. To my knowledge, however, he never bestrode a horse even in Rotten Row; ever entered even the gallery of the House of Commons; has any money to buy into the funds, or much, indeed, to sell out. He is a collector of flying reports, doubtful scandal, newspaper gossip, and a general register of trifles, who passes the live-long year amidst the contracted circle of some petty club-house.

Though armed with reason against absurdity, you rashly anticipate a triumph in entering the lists of argument with Sir Pertinax; drawn into conversation with so loud and boisterous a talker, and one so notoriously impenetrable to all reason, you will but make yourself a public spectacle to the whole room, and share with him in some degree the ridicule he never fails, though unconsciously, to incur in every society. Besides, you have not calculated the odds against you in the powers of your antagonist; obstinacy proof

against every argument, brains on which nothing but a sledge-hammer can make impression, lungs of brass, and a flood of talk inexhaustible. Your voice will be drowned, be overwhelmed, and you will further expose yourself to the Quixotic folly of combating the opinions of irreclaimable absurdity.

Those who dedicate no hour in private to study and reflexion, but pass their whole lives in the bustle of the world and the turmoil of society, have this advantage in conversation, that they are enabled always to carry it on with impunity. The common-place topics of the day affording them never-failing materials, they are never forced to declare a debatable opinion on any subject, to kindle into the warmth of argument themselves, or provoke it in others.

Fashion and Vulgarity synonymous.

Between Fashion and Vulgarity, paradoxical as it may appear, is not the boundary-line almost imperceptible? for what is Vulgarity but the being undistinguished from the common herd, and participating with the vain, the conceited

and the trifling in all their little passions and petty infirmities? And when you live the subservient tool of Fashion, the imitator of others, when sacrificing perhaps the bent of your real disposition and nature, you are but a mere counterfeit and copy, where is the originality of character and the independence of mind which is to distinguish you from the *many*—the common crowd, the disdained and the ignoble vulgar? Star of Fashion you may *be* and distinguished *in* the world I grant you, but it is a higher honour believe me to be distinguished *from* it. The vulgar in a word whether the high or low, are those who fritter away life in empty pleasures, and unprofitable pursuits, living but to gratify their senses, their passions and their appetites. The distinguished, for I use the word in opposition to the vulgar, are those who looking beyond the present to the future, stand aloof from ease and luxury, and devote themselves to the benefit of their fellow men. They perhaps enjoy not in their generation the praise of their good deeds—but amidst their labours receiving no present compensation or reward, live accom-

panied as with their shadows, with envy, jealousy and detraction. “ Quæ verò tam immemor posteritas, (in the words of the Roman orator) quæ tam ingratae literæ reperientur, quæ non eorum gloriam immortalitatis memoria prosequantur?” With further specimens from my Sketch-book I will not in my first letter tax your attention, and perhaps I am too prosy and sententious to claim after all the least share of it. Whether I have at all hit the stile of my model you will judge better than I can do; at all events I cannot accuse myself of any plagiarism in point of matter.

I remain, &c.

To Trelawney Tomkinson, Esq.
Land's End, Cornwall.



LETTER XXII.

A LITTLE LETTER FROM A MIGHTY BIG PATRIOT.

Reform Club.

' O Pylades, what's life without a friend.'

MY DEAREST SIR,

To turn from the strife and bickerings of party politics, and unbosom myself in private to a sincere friend is indeed most consoling and refreshing to a mind so susceptible of the tenderest emotions of friendship as my own. If detraction follows me like my shadow, if every word and action of my life are misconstrued by the foul breath of slander and the falsehood of the most envenomed calumny—you who amidst the peaceful seclusion of your country retirement, preserve a calm and dispassionate judgement, and a mind unembittered by party prejudice, will at least give me credit for all these many personal and pecuniary sacrifices I have offered up on the sacred altar of patriotism. And what, O my God! (I beg pardon for invoking his holy

name) what I repeat has been my reward? Why that I am literally the sacrificed lamb bound to the altar—the daily theme of unceasing abuse—the perpetual subject of ribaldry—the stock in trade of some ‘rude Boreas blustering railer,’ some brazen Salmoneus rattling his mock thunder and outrivalling the fishwomen of Billingsgate. The howlings of this venal turncoat are again taken up and echoed by some Evening scribe, who stuffs his columns with the abuse of some Reverend mountebank, who travels from town to town for the object of vilifying my holy religion — while a Sunday blackguard bespatters me and himself with his weekly off-scourings of obscenity, and the Bull makes an impotent butt at me with his horn-less head. All this I am doomed to endure because I want justice, equal justice for my native land. Oh! my God (I a second time ask pardon for invoking his holy name) it makes my heart bleed (it would draw blood from a flint) to behold my ragged famished countrymen the victims of six centuries of Sassenach misgovernment.

When I turn from what Ireland is to what

she should have been, poverty-struck with the richest soil, and all the advantages of her Western harbours running far inland from the great sea of Commerce, the richly-freighted Atlantic, O! my very soul heaves within me with uncontrollable indignation. All this I say is the curse of misgovernment.

O! there was no Brutus in a former age, or Ireland had never submitted to the curse of English domination. What did she tamely bend her neck to the yoke of Protestant ascendancy without striking a blow? Shame! the brave Highlanders struck down Episcopacy with their good claymores. The Irish why did they not also with their pikes? Rathcormac and Iniskena, bedewed with the tears of fatherless orphans and husbandless widows, bear witness against the hellish tithe system, and the degeneracy of our forefathers. But there *has* arisen a Brutus at length, an Apostle of Liberty, who shall not cease day and night to agitate, agitate, agitate. Hurrah! for a little wholesome agitation I say, which like the storm and the tempest, clears, refreshes, purifies the political atmosphere. And

now my dear Sir, I will confidentially unfold to you the plans I am meditating for the good and tranquillity of my own dear little isle, my emerald darling, the cradle of my birth, the object where all my thoughts centre and converge in one bright glowing focus of ardent and inextinguishable patriotism. Away with the tithes! down with them! I have sworn never to pay a farthing, no not a farthing to a Protestant parson and I'll be d——d if any body else shall. We must be emancipated from this Hellish system—we *will*—spite of Tories, spite of monsters in human form and sucking tigers. A poor-law bill too for Ireland I have been considering, am considering, reconsidering, and will continue to consider. Repeal of the Union I have often threatened, and by Saint Patrick the wolf shall come at last unless we have justice, equal justice. Nay more

I'll have a starling shall be taught to speak

Nothing but justice.

Justice shall resound through the land, Justice shall be halloed in the Sassenach ear, Justice shall make herself heard at length with the tone

of a trumpet. O Justice! Justice! Justice! But imagine not my dear Sir, that I have a soul so narrow and contracted as to be confined merely to the love of Ireland: no it overflows with a general philanthropy; I am the universal Liberator—in whatever clime or country there are wrongs to right, grievances to redress, there will I stand up righter of wrongs, redresser of grievances, father to the fatherless orphan, husband to the husbandless widow. Can I behold you and your countrymen my dearest Sir, the slaves of a base and domineering Oligarchy, and my spirit not rise within me to free you from your tyrants? Down with your tyrants? Down with your rotten-hearted Lords—let them no longer encumber the British soil which they trample beneath their feet—these drags upon the wheel of Improvement that stop the progress of the state machine, even rolling *down* the hill. I will reform them, I shall remodel them, I have said it. ‘*Sic volo sic jubeo.*’ What is to follow on the heel of this great measure I say not. ‘*C’est le commencement de la fin.*’ as would observe that old diplomatic boy Talley-

rand. I could write volumes, had I leisure to detail to you all my glowing anticipations from this great, this pregnant, this teaming, this eventful measure—but as I seldom indulge myself in writing letters, and those I do indulge myself in are proverbial for their characteristic *brevity*, I shall only add my prayer, for the continuance of your health and happiness, (for I swear a prayer now and then, even for the soul of old Harry the Eighth) and my earnest hope that you will not refuse my request of permitting me to inscribe your name in the Candidate book of our Reform Club, where you may dine in the highest society in England, in the most sumptuous manner, wine included, for four shillings a head, and no money to the waiter.

Believe me, my dearest Sir,

Ever faithfully and unalterably yours,

P. S. Pardon me my most excellent friend, but should the people of Cornwall be charitably disposed (charity as Gray says ‘that lives beyond the grave,’) a Subscription (Hurrah! for Sub-

scriptions) not for *myself* I beg you will mark that, but for my poor countrymen, for five million of Beggars, would bind me eternally to them and secure my everlasting prayers in their behalf.

To Trelawney Tomkinson, Esq.

Land's End, Cornwall.

TO THE COURTEOUS READER.

“ Omnes composui. Felices. Nunc ego resto.”
I have thus edited the donations of my contributors, happy if your approbation shall encourage any of them to continue their task; and I, the Editor, now remain happy also if your smile shall encourage me to a renewal of my Editorial office. I shall not want ample materials for succeeding volumes, and perhaps the gentle reader might even himself contribute something, and something that would be no misapplication of his talents. If it be anything in the shape of a novel, or a tale of fiction, I trust the contribution will come from some fair reader, and that it will undergo the utmost process of condensation, so that there may be almost as many ideas in it as words: if a piece of criticism, that it will be candid, liberal and free from all taint of politics, and be stingingly applied to affectation, vulgarity, betrayal of private confidence, and to the productions of venal and unprincipled scribblers.

Although it seems my favourite Horace whom Byron hated so, mistook himself when he penned Ode XXX. Lib. 3. ‘*Exegi monumentum ære perennius,*’ since he is now discovered to be no poet, yet I cannot help continually recurring to him. In his words therefore I say to any courteous contributor, if any there shall be—

‘ubi plura nitent . . . non ego paucis
Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit
Aut humana parum cavit natura.’

No, I will not act towards you the part of a severe and unjust censor; but for the critics I will not answer, for I know not how many angry passions you may rouse among them, if like Paul ‘you speak the words of truth and soberness,’ since truth is indeed in many cases the bitterest of libels, and the words of soberness are not acceptable to all. It did once occur to a friend of mine, who as he named not himself shall be nameless by me, to be abused by one Salmoeneus, for not adopting all the stale and hackneyed and vulgar terms of abuse, which had been repeated daily usque ad nauseam, in addressing himself

to a certain public character. He did not consider it discreet to attack that personage with a hatchet, for he knew that personage could wield a hatchet better than any man living. Instead of vituperating him he gave him credit (*ironically*) for the honesty of his intentions. The critic either *did* misunderstand the writer, or *wilfully* misunderstood him, and let me observe there is no more insidious method of decrying an author, than this affecting to misunderstand him. I will by no means then lead you to expect but that you yourself may be treated in the same way, and further I warn you that you may chance to have the very worst extract your work will afford exhibited as the only specimen of it, and that if a foolish thing has escaped your pen, it may not be produced as setting you down for a fool at once. If you fear criticism contribute not to me; but I tell you if you speak truth, fear it not ‘sed contra audentior ito, Quà tua te fortuna ferat.’ It is not the critics that can damn you, if the public will stand by you. Write for the public, address yourself to the common sense and liberality, and justice of your countrymen,

to the great mass of them and not to any exclusive portion of them, neither courting the favour of any particular political party or faction, nor offering up your servile incense to the world of fashion.

THE EDITOR.









