

gay Sophia, who is playing with Dick, or fix our admiration on Olivia who is practising an air against the young Squire comes—while we see the sturdy Burchell crossing the stile, and striding on at his hearty pace with his oak cudgèl cutting circles in the air ; nay, while we ride with Moses to make his bargains, and prick up our ears when Mr. Jenkinson begins with “ Ay, Sir ! the world is in its dotage ;” while in recalling the characters of that immortal tale, we are recalling the memory of so many living persons with whom we have dined, and walked, and chatted ; we see in the gloomy Rasselas of Goldsmith’s sager cotemporary, a dim succession of shadowy images without life or identity, mere machines for the grinding of morals, and the nice location of sonorous phraseology.

That delightful egotist—half good fellow, half sage, half rake, half divine, the pet gossip of philosophy, the—in one word—inimitable and unimitated Montaigne insists upon it in right earnest, with plenty to support him, that *continual* cheerfulness is the most indisputable sign of wisdom, and that her estate, like that of things in the regions above the moon, is always calm, cloudless and serene. And in the same essay he recites the old story of Demetrius the grammarian, who, finding in the Temple of Delphos a knot of philosophers chatting away in high glee and comfort, said “ I am greatly mistaken, gentlemen, or by your pleasant countenances you are not engaged in any very profound discourse.”—Whereon Heracleon answered the grammarian with a “ Pshaw, my good friend ! it does very well for fellows who live in a perpetual anxiety to know whether the future tense of the verb *Bullo* should be spelt with one l or two, to knit their brows and look solemn, but we who are engaged in discoursing true philosophy, are cheerful as a matter of course !” Ah, those were the philosophers who had read the world aright ; give me Heracleon the magician, for a fellow who knew what he was about when he resolved to be wise. And yet, after all, it is our constitution and not our learning, that makes us one thing or the other—grave or gay, lively or severe !

For my own part I candidly confess that, in spite of all my endeavours, and tho’ all my precepts run the contrary way, I cannot divest myself at times of a certain sadness when I recall the lessons the world has taught me. It is true that I now expect little or nothing from mankind, and I therefore forgive offences against me with ease, but that ease which comes from contempt is no desirable acquisition of temper. I should like to feel something of my old indignation at every vice, and my old bitterness at every foe.

After all, as we know, or fancy that we know mankind, there is a certain dimness that falls upon the glory of all we see. We are not so confiding of our trust—and that is no petty misfortune to some of us ; without growing perhaps more selfish, we contract the circle of our enjoyments. We do not hazard—we do not