

# THE WEEKLY MIRROR.

Vol. I.]

HALIFAX, FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 1835.

[No. 3.]

## LITERATURE.

### REVIEW.

*Reflections and Advisory Hints of the Principal of a Seminary, on retiring from the Duties of the Station.*

MR. JOHN FAWCETT, Author of this well-meaning and conscientious little book, was at the head of a respectable seminary, for fifty years, and educated nearly two thousand youths during that period, principally residents under his care. There is something very honourable to the old man's feelings in this endeavour to perpetrate his moral lessons, and make his retirement from the busy world subservient to a useful purpose. The frontispiece it is true, is somewhat whimsical, and the admonition itself, rather solemn; but we can readily overlook these things in the laudible intention of the writer. The following reflections are very touching:—

“On looking over the names of those who were once endeared to him, as being part of his family—and not a few of them still more by their commendable conduct—collected from almost every part of the kingdom, and some from foreign realms, how many are there of the numerous assemblage who are gone before him to the grave—to that place whence they shall not return! Though once gay with hope, by fancy led, rosy with health, and flattering themselves with a long succession of years, they have been cut off, some in the bloom of youth, like the flower, beautiful in the morning, and withering ere 'tis night, while the bereaved parents are left to mourn; others who attained to a more advanced period of life, while engaged in busy cares, and it has arrested in their career, and called away from connections to whom their assistance here appeared most desirable. This is no ideal picture; it has been realised, not only in the instances now referred to, but in others almost innumerable. What a solemn warning, is thus given to the survivors! With many even of those who remain in the land of the living, distance of residence and other circumstances will, in all probability, prevent any further personal inter-course; but should the perusal of these pages in any respect beneficial to them, he will feel the satisfaction of not having laboured in vain. The pathetic language of the psalmist David, in the 71st Psalm, he is to apply, at this period of his life, and labours, will apply, in some respects to himself. O

God, thou hast taught me from my youth up; now, also, when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not, until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to that which is to come.”

A fine poem might be composed on the retrospect of an aged teacher. How great his responsibility in training 2000 human beings for their career in life, and how important the consequences not to them, but tens of thousands whom circumstances must involve in their sphere of action! And, again, the sad and fearful episodes that the fate of some must furnish; the contrasts between the rosy boy full of hope, and the pale exhausted man; between the living and the innocent child, and perhaps, the dying criminal. The vision of Mirza realized, and with a personal knowledge of all the passengers; how melancholy, but for the reflection that the old man was himself at the end of the bridge!

### OLIVER CROMWELL.

The figure of Oliver Cromwell was, as is generally known, in no way prepossessing. He was of middle stature, strong and coarsely made, with harsh and severe features, indicative, however, of much natural sagacity and depth of thought. His eyes were grey and piercing, his nose too large in proportion to his other features.

His manner of speaking, when he had the purpose to make himself distinctly understood, was energetic and forcible, though neither graceful nor eloquent. No man could on such occasion put his meaning into fewer and more decisive words. But when, as it often happened, he had a mind to play the orator, for the benefit of the people's ears, without enlightening their understanding, Cromwell was wont to visit his meaning, or that which seemed to be his meaning, in such a mist of words, surrounding it with so many exclusions and exceptions, and fortifying it with such labyrinth of parenthesis, that though one of the most shrewd in England, he was perhaps one of the most unintelligible speakers that ever perplexed an audience. It has long been said by the historian, that a collection of the Protector's speeches would make, with few exceptions, the most nonsensical book in the world; but he ought to have added, that nothing could be more nervous, concise, and intelligible, than what he really intended should be understood.

It was also remarked of Cromwell, that though born of a good family, both by father and mother, and although he had the usual opportunities of education and breed-

ing, connected with such an advantage, the fanatic democratic ruler could never acquire, or else disdained to practise, the courtesies usually exercised among the higher classes, in their intercourse with each other. His demeanour was so blunt as sometimes might be termed clownish, yet there was in his language and manner, a force and energy corresponding to his character, which impressed awe, if it did not impose respect; and there were even times when that dark and subtle spirit expanded itself, so as almost to conciliate affection. The turn for humour, which displayed itself by fits, was broad, and of a low and sometimes of a practical character. Something there was in his disposition congenial to that of his countrymen; a contempt of folly, a hatred of affectation, and a dislike of ceremony, which joined to the strong intrinsic qualities of sense and courage, made him in many respects not an unfit representative of the Democracy of England.

His religion must always be a subject of much doubt, and probably of doubt which he himself could hardly have cleared up.—Unquestionably there was a time in his life when he was sincerely enthusiastic, and when his natural temper, slightly subject to hypochondria, was strongly agitated by the same fanaticism which influenced so many persons of the time. On the other hand, there were periods during his political career, when we certainly do him no justice in charging him with hypocritical affectation. We shall probably judge him, and others of the same age, most truly, if we suppose that their religious professions were partly influential in their own breast, partly assumed in compliance with their own interest. And so ingenious is the human heart in deceiving itself as well as others, that it is probable that neither Cromwell himself, nor those making similar pretensions to distinguished piety, could exactly have fixed the point at which their enthusiasm terminated and their hypocrisy commenced; or rather, it was a point not fixed in itself, but fluctuating with the state of health, of good and bad fortune, of high or low spirits, affecting the individual at the period.

BUFFON.—Buffon the celebrated naturalist, always rose with the sun; and used often to tell by what means he had accustomed himself to this habit. In his youth he was very fond of sleep; but finding it robbed him of much valuable time, he promised his servant a crown every time he could get him up at six o'clock. Joseph persevered, for some days, in defiance of opposition, and succeeded. To this circumstance, Buffon says that he owed ten or twelve volumes of his works.