

ed the innovators. To find proper masters and mistresses for their purpose, appeared to be their greatest difficulty—but by their patient and unwearied exertions in qualifying persons for the office, they at length surmounted this and every other impediment.”

The next great object which engaged Mrs. M's attention was her cheap publications, written for the purpose of counteracting French principles, which at this time began to make much stir in Britain. It is not to be denied, however, that in these tracts, of which several millions were circulated over England, there is a tampering with the truths of scripture, for the purpose of serving a political end. She imagined she was doing God service by her zeal against the revolutionists of France, whose principles were certainly to be execrated by all good men. Nevertheless, in the conflict with one species of error, it is needful to beware lest we fall into another not less pernicious, namely, mixing earthly politics and levity with the truths of the gospel, and we fear that this censure applies in no small degree to not a few of these productions. Mrs. More herself seems not to have been fully satisfied with the propriety of this undertaking, though she afterwards continued it, to the extent of three volumes. A high dignitary of the church, she tells us, persuaded her to the task. But we give her own words:—

“As soon as I came to Bath, our dear Bishop of London came to me with a dismal countenance, and told me that I should repent it on my death bed, if I who knew so much of the lower order of people did not write some little thing tending to open their eyes under their present wild impression of liberty and equality. It must be something level to their apprehensions, or it would be of no use. In an evil hour, against my will and my judgment, I scribbled a little pamphlet, called ‘Village Politics, by Will Clup;’ and the very next morning after I had just conceived the idea, I sent it off to Rivington, changing my bookseller, in order the more surely to escape detection. It is as vulgar as heart can wish; but it is only designed for the most vulgar class of readers. I heartily hope I shall not be discovered; as it is a sort of writing repugnant to my nature; though indeed it is rather a question of peace than of politics.”

Though Mrs. More's strictness in religion had driven from her diverse of the “fashionables” with whom she had associated in former years, the publication of these tracts again raised her to favour, and she was courted and carressed by the highest in the land. Writing from London in 1799, she says:—

“I have been rather loyal lately. On Monday I spent the morning at the pavilion at Hampton Court, with the Duchess of Gloucester; and yesterday passed the morning with little Princess Charlotte, at Carlton House. She is the most sensible and genteel little creature you would wish to see. I saw Carlton House and Gardens in company with the pretty Princess, who had great delight in opening the drawers, uncovering the furniture, curtain lustres, &c. to show me; my visit was to Lady Elgin, who has been spending some days here. For the Bishop of London's entertainment and mine the Princess was made to exhibit all her learning and accomplishments; the first consisted of her repeating ‘the little busy bee;’ the next in dancing very gracefully, and in singing ‘God save the King,’ which was really af-

fecting (all things considered) from her little voice. Her understanding is so forward that they really might begin to teach her many things. It is perhaps the highest praise after all to say, that she is exactly like the child of a private gentleman; wild and natural, but sensible, lovely and civil.”

The following passage in another letter (1794) refers to an interview with the same high personages:—

“I paid my visit to Gloucester house yesterday. Lady Waldegrave presented me to the Duchess. We had two hours of solid rational religious conversation. It would be too little to say, that the Duchess' behaviour is gracious in the extreme. She behaved to me with the affectionate familiarity of an equal; and though I took the opportunity of saying stronger things of a religious kind than perhaps she had ever heard, she bore it better than any great person I ever conversed with and seemed not offended at the strictness of the Gospel. I was resolved to preserve the simplicity of my own character, and conversed with the greatest ease. It was Thursday the Great Court day on the Royal Marriage. The Duchess presented me to Princess Sophia, and Prince William. The manners of these two young personages were very agreeable. They found many kind things to say to me, and conversed with the greatest sweetness and familiarity. I strongly recommended Mr. Gisborne's book. The Duchess quoted the ‘Shepherd of Salisbury Plain’\* two or three times, and told me of a little adventure she had. She desired Lady Mary Mordaunt, (one of her ladies of the bed chamber), to stop an orange woman, and ask her if she ever sold ballads? ‘No, indeed,’ said the woman, ‘I don't do any thing so mean. I don't even sell apples!’ This diverted them, as they did not know there were so many ranks and gradations in life. With some difficulty, however, they prevailed on her to condescend to sell some of our little books, and in a few hours she came back, shewing them two shillings she had cleared by her new trade.”

After the example of many good men Mrs. More for sometime kept a journal of her religious experiences. It is published in the volume now before us, and occupies a considerable portion of its contents. We shall quote a few passages to shew the watch she kept over her heart and ways. We may remark, however, that we are far from recommending the keeping of a journal of this sort as necessarily leading to spirituality of mind. We much fear that not a few of these journals in which the writer professes to commune with his own soul and to discover his sins before God, are after all written with an eye to public approbation, and if so, this is a root of bitterness which must greatly detract from any advantage which they might otherwise possess. If it had been uniformly made a rule by survivors, to suppress all such documents as were never intended by the deceased for the public eye, then doubtless the temptation to spiritual vanity would scarcely, if at all, have existed; but seeing it is not so, and such documents are spread abroad to such an extent that “christian experience” and “the experience of a christian”†

\* One of Mrs. More's cheap Tracts.

† See a Treatise on Christian Experience, by a learned and amiable Minister of the Church of Scotland—we mean Dr. Watson, of Burntisland.