

Still unaware of his powers, he throws off his writings anonymously, to go with the writings of less favoured men: and it is a long time, and after a bitter struggle with poverty and humiliation, before he acquires confidence in his literary talent as a means of support, and begins to dream of reputation.

From this time, his pen is a wand of power in his hand, and he has only to use it discreetly, to make it competent to all his wants. But discretion is not a part of Goldsmith's nature; and it seems the property of these fairy gifts to be accompanied by moods and temperaments to render their effect precarious. The heedlessness of his early days, his disposition for social enjoyment, his habits of throwing the present on the neck of the future, still continue. His expenses forerun his means: he incurs debts on the faith of what his magic pen is to produce, and then, under the pressure of his debts, sacrifices its productions for prices far below their value. It is a redeeming circumstance in his prodigality, that it is lavished oftener upon others than upon himself: he gives without thought or stint, and is the continual dupe of his benevolence, and his trustfulness in human nature. We may say of him as he says of one of his heroes, "He could not stifle the natural impulse which he had to do good, but frequently borrowed money to relieve the distressed; and when he knew not conveniently where to borrow, he has been observed to shed tears as he passed through the wretched suppliants who attended his gate." * *

"His simplicity in trusting persons whom he had no previous reason to place confidence in, seems to be one of those lights of his character which, while they impeach his understanding, do honour to his benevolence. The low and the timid are ever suspicious; but a heart impressed with honourable sentiments expects from others sympathetic sincerity." *

His heedlessness in pecuniary matters, which had rendered his life a struggle with poverty, even in the days of his obscurity, rendered the struggle still more intense when his fairy gifts had elevated him into the society of the wealthy and luxurious, and imposed on his simple and generous

* Goldsmith's "Life of Naaba."