

phy which teaches that there is a great error in saying that there is beauty in a rose or sublimity in the Falls of Niagara. This is a wisdom which is of the schools, and leads to nothing that is fresh and elevating either in feeling or in poetry. It has led those who embraced it into a species of mental abstraction, which bears but little congeniality with the glorious system of things which is around us; and it stript our poetry of all its luxuriance and strength, and made it a tame and artificial thing, until, to use the figurative language of a modern writer, "the vein was fairly wrought out."* The modern school of poetry, which is certainly superior in point of vigour and variety to that which went before it, has acquired this pre-eminence by the masters of song, coming under the influence of this purer mental discipline which I now urge upon you. They had not recourse to the dissertation of the philosopher as to the beautiful forms which charm the eye and imagination, but they went to the living reality. Lord Byron may be considered as illustrating this principle of cultivating our feelings, by looking upon objects as they lie presented to us:—

"To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been—
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen
With the wild flock that never needs a fold,
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean—
This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold
Converse with nature's charms, and view her stores unrolled."

The poet Burns also, to whom allusion has been already made, affords a suitable illustration of the truth of what we have said. At the time that this remarkable man appeared, criticism had become too much a thing of rule. The great poets of the Elizabethan age had sunk into comparative neglect; and the productions which were most esteemed among persons of rank, were so glossed and polished, that nature and genius seemed alike forgotten. It was amid the pedants of this school that the Ayrshire ploughman made his appearance. How far opposed to the Pope school of poetry every one who has paid some attention to the history of our literature must know, were the following verses addressed to a mountain daisy, which the poet had turned up with his plough:—

"Wee modest crimson-tipped flower,
Thou's met me in an evil hour,
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem—
To spare thee now is past my power,
Thou bonnie gem.
Alas! its no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet
Wi' speckl'd breast,
When upward springing, blith to greet
The purpling east."