

"Styll an I-bey bok assemblynge,
For to have plenty it is a pleasant thyng
In my conceit, and to have them ay in hand,
But what they mene do I not understonde."

When we survey our well furnished book-shelves, the first thought that suggests itself is, the immortality of intellect. Here repose the living monuments of those master-spirits destined to sway the empire of mind; the historian, the philosopher, and the poet, "of imagination all compact!" and while the deeds of mighty conquerors hurry down the stream of oblivion, the works of these men survive to after-ages, are enshrined in the memories of a grateful posterity, and finally stamp upon national character the permanent impress of their genius.

Happy we who are early taught to cherish the society of these silent friends, ever ready to amuse without importunity, and instruct without the austerity of reproof. Let us rest assured that it is "mind that makes the body rich," and that in the cultivation of our intellect we secure an inexhaustible store of present gratification, and a source of pleasurable recollection which will never fail to cheer the evening of life.

MANIAC WIT.

A witty gentleman, of the name of Doubleday, was taking a solitary walk, when he was rudely accosted by a man in a boxing attitude, whose manner and wild looks declared him at once to be a maniac. The gentleman, thinking to divert the madman's attention to some other subject than fistic, went good-naturedly up to him and said, "I am a Double day." "Well, then," quickly replied the lunatic, "I am a man beside myself, so we are equal, come on."

While the late Edmund Burke was making preparation for the indictment before the House of Lords, of Warren Hastings, Governor General of India, he was told that a person who had long resided in the East Indies, but who was then an inmate of Bedlam, could supply him with much useful information. Burke went accordingly to Bedlam; was taken to the cell of the maniac, and received from him, in a long, rational, and well-conducted conversation, the result of much and various knowledge and experience in Indian affairs, and much instruction for the process then intended. On leaving the cell, Burke told the keeper who attended him, that the poor man whom he had just visited was most inquisitively practised upon; for that he was as much in his senses as man could be. The keeper assured him that there was sufficient warranty and very good cause for his confinement. Burke, with what a man in office once called, "Irish impetuosity," known to be one of Burke's characteristics, insisted that it was an infamous affair, threatened to make the matter public, or even bring it before parliament. The keeper then said, "Sir, I should be sorry for you to leave this house under a false impression: before you do so, be pleased to step back to the poor gentleman's cell, and ask him what he had for breakfast." Burke could not refuse compliance with a request so reasonable and easily performed. "Pray, sir," said he to his Indian counsellor, "be so obliging as to tell me what you had for breakfast." The other, immediately putting on the wild stare of the maniac, cried out, "Hobnails, sir! It is shameful to think how they treat us! They give us nothing but hobnails!" and went on with a "descant wild" on the horrors of the cookery of Bethlehem Hospital. Burke stayed no longer than that his departure might not seem abrupt; and, on the advantage of the first pause in the talk, was glad to make his escape.

THE ELOQUENT AND THE FAMILIAR.

In almost every age, when a people have become readers, there are two schools of composition;—the one closely resembling the language commonly spoken; the other constructed upon the principle, that what is written should be something nobler or lovelier than what is spoken;—that fine writing ought not so much literally to resemble, as spiritually to idealize good talking;—that the art of composition, like every other art, when carried to its highest degree, is not the representation, but, as Browne expresses it, "the perfection of nature;"—and that as music to sound, so is composition to language. A great writer of either school reaches the same shore, and must pass over the same stream; but the one is contented with the ferry, the other builds up a bridge—one goes along the stream—the other above it. Of these two schools of composition, the eloquent and the familiar, the last, often lightly esteemed in its time, and rather commanding a wide than a reverent audience, passes with little change and little diminution of popularity, from generation to generation. But the first stands aloof—the edifice of its age—copied not for ordinary uses, however well formed by scholars, in exact and harmonious symmetry. Royal, but unprolific, it is a monarch without a dynasty. It commands, is obeyed, adored—dies and leaves no heir. Gibbon and Junius are imitated but by schoolboys, and correspondents to provincial newspapers; but the homely Locke, the natural Defoe, the familiar Swift, the robust if not boorish manliness of Cobbett, leave their successors; and find (perhaps unconsciously) their imitators, as long as the language lasts. This is no detraction

from the immortality of greater and more imaginative minds. It is the characteristic of their immortality, that though they inspire, they are not copied—mentally or immediately: the spirit of Milton has had its influence on almost every great poet that has succeeded him—but poets alone have mimicked the machinery of his verse. He who has really caught the mantle of the prophet, is the last man to imitate his walk. As with poets, so with those prose writers who have built up a splendid and unfamiliar style;—after the first rage of contemporary imitation, no one of sound taste or original talent dreams of imitating them.

Edinburgh Review.

THE FLOWER OF FENESTRELLA.

BY MRS. GORE.

Dull vapours fill the joyless air,
And cold the sunbeam falls
Within the courtyard, paved and bare,
'Neath Fenestrella's walls.

While winters upon winters roll,
There hath a captive trod;
His was that madness of the soul
Which knows not of a God.

One morn between the clefts of stone
Two leaflets burst to view;
And day by day, and one by one,
The fragile branches grew.

It grew—nor canker knew, nor blight,
'Neath sun, and storm, and shower:
A blessing to the captive's sight,
It grew—a dungeon flower!

Oh beautiful and gentle thing!
Meek offspring of the sky!
Camest thou, like a breath of spring,
To whisper and to die?

The captive marked its growth, and felt
His soul subdued to tears:
That tender thing had power to melt
The gathered frosts of years.

He who had blindly trod the maze
Of learning and of power,
Stood watching with awakened gaze
The opening of a flower!

He traced the powers of sun, and dew—
The light—the breath that fanned;
And owned at length, to nature true,
His great Creator's hand.

Great God! with pure and wise design,
Still, still 'mid all we see,
Thou blindest thus some mystic sign—
Some voice which breathes of thee!

CHRISTIAN UNION.—No. 2.

Unscriptural Tests—Things as they are.

1. Divisions already existing, have been greatly exasperated and increased by the adoption of unscriptural tests and terms of communion, for the real or pretended purpose of procuring uniformity. True it is that all churches must have some terms of communion; but that any society assuming the name of a church, should establish conditions, distinct from those enjoined by Christ and his apostles, is, one would think, sufficiently presumptuous. That these terms should consist, partly, of things which the imposers themselves acknowledge to be "indifferent and insignificant," seems to add folly to presumption. "To multiply articles," says Bishop Taylor, "and to adopt them into the family of the faith, and to require assent to such articles . . . equal to that assent we give to matters of faith, is to build a tower upon the top of a bulrush; and the farther the effect of such proceedings does extend, the worse they are; the very making of such a law is unreasonable; the inflicting spiritual censures upon them that cannot do so much violence to their understanding as to obey, is ineffectual and unjust." "If they be little things only that we add," says the catholic-spirited Howe, "we must know that there is nothing little in religion. What if, little as they are, many think them sinful, and are thereby thrown off from our communion! The less they are, the greater the sin to make them necessary, to hang so great things upon them, break the church's peace and unity by them, and of them to make a new Gospel, new terms of life and death, a new way to heaven. . . . It is in effect to say, If you will not take Christianity with these additions of ours, you shall not be Christians, you shall have no Christian ordinances, no Christian worship: we will, as far as in us is, exclude you from heaven itself, and all means of salvation. And upon the same ground on which they may be excluded from one communion by such arbitrary measures, they may be excluded another also, and be received nowhere. And if the terms of these communions differ, they all exclude one another; and hence, so many churches, so many Christendoms. If this be sinful, it is a sin of the deepest dye. And if the Holy Scriptures speak with such severity, as we know they do, of the altering of man's landmarks, what may we think of altering God's!"

But if we suppose the act so sinful, how far, make the same impartial Howe, doth the guilt of it spread? How few among the several sorts and parties of Christians are innocent, if the measures of their several communions were brought under just and severe examination. How few that fly their communion open to visible Christians as such, excluding none of whatsoever denomination; nor receiving any that by Christian rational estimate cannot be judged such! Yes, how few the churches that have not even now their own little Acts of Uniformity extant and in operation! How large the sect of the intolerant in every church—men to whom history relates all the instances of the wickedness and inutility of persecution in vain—who lay great stress on little things, magnifying trifles into matters of grave importance—who flatter themselves that their creed or test includes all truth and excludes all error—that their little enclosure, with its wicket entrance, contains and monopolises the Saviour of the world—who would make their conscience the universal rule, and look on every conscience that differs from it as culpably ignorant and even punishably perverse—and whose millenium consists of a state of unexceptionable conformity to their creed.

The exclusive spirit, is the schismatic spirit; and he who prescribes a term of communion with it of his own devising—however simple in itself and plausible in its appearance—is putting a price on the bread of life, and throwing a bar across the entrance to a city of refuge; and they who continue that term, share his responsibility, and are chargeable with perpetuating the schism of intolerance.

2. An obstinate attachment to things as they are, is another cause of perpetuating divisions. The blind zeal of innovation, we admit, is equally to be condemned. But the spirit of which we now speak is, not that which deprecates revolution, but which refuses improvement. Had it existed under the patriarchal dispensation, it would fain have prolonged that imperfect economy to the present day. It forgets that immutability belongs alone to infinite perfection; and that gradual change is a condition essential to adaptation and finite progression. It may flow from three causes. Sometimes, it arises probably from a reluctance to surrender any thing which was once held dear by our ancestors. But, however chivalrous, and, to a certain extent laudable, such a feeling may be, we should bear in mind that, by correcting an abuse, we are not questioning their piety, but only admitting that they were not perfect; that the will of God is paramount to every other consideration; and that the last tribute we can pay to departed excellence is to try to improve on it. Sometimes it may spring from a selfish regard to temporal emolument. . . . And, in other instances, it doubtless originates in pride. The adoption of a proposed change would imply that we had been wrong; that we were not so wise yesterday as we are to day—a humiliation which our self-importance cannot brook. A spirit of improvement, by marking the signs of the times, taking counsel of wisdom, and correcting obvious defects, would be eminently a spirit of conciliation. By evincing merely a willingness to advance, where improvement was necessary, we should be disarming our bitterest foes, and changing the more estimable of our opponents into friends; we should be rendering that which is good much more efficient; that which is efficient popular; and that which is popular, permanent. But a spirit of blind and bigoted attachment to things as they are, by virtually claiming infallibility, proclaims our infatuation; renders reconciliation hopeless; and furnishes those who differ from us with a ground of self-justification and triumph.

From "Union" by the Author of "Mammon."

CANDOUR.—It is an argument of a candid, ingenuous mind, to delight in the good name and the commendation of others; to pass by their defects, and to take notice of their virtues; and to speak and hear of those willingly, and not to endure either to speak or hear of the other; for in this indeed you may be little less guilty than the evil speaker, in taking pleasure in it, though you speak it not. He that willingly drinks in tales and calumnies, will, from the delight he hath in evil hearing, slide insensibly into the humour of evil speaking. It is strange how most persons dispense with themselves in this point, and that in scarcely any society shall we find a hatred of all this ill, but rather some tokens of taking pleasure in it: and until a christian sets himself to an inward watchfulness over his heart, not suffering in it any thought that is uncharitable, or vain self-esteem, upon the others' failings, he will still be subject to somewhat of this, in the tongue or ear at least.—Leighton.

HOW TO BE RICH.—Nothing is more easy, says Mr. Pauley, than to grow rich. It is only to trust nobody—to befriend none—to get every thing, and save all we get—to stint ourselves, and every body belonging to us—to be the friend of no man, and have no man for our friend—to heap interest upon interest, cent upon cent—to be mean, miserable and despised, for some twenty or thirty years, and riches will come as sure as disease and disappointment.

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.