

is the stare of a coterie, he is the 'observed of all observers;' and that every body else is as intensely conscious of his minute merits as a happy vanity has rendered himself. Nor are there, on the other hand, many specimens, now-a-days, of a still sadder species of illusion,—a man of fancied genius, dividing his days between the study and the tavern, emulating the part of Savage and Dermody, without a ray of their talent. This disgusting kind of absurdity is dead and buried, Genius, in our time, is up and doing, 'working while it is day.' The most vigorous are now also the most active, and may we not say, the most virtuous of minds.

"And were we to name one quality amid the assemblage of peculiarities distinguishing the subject of this sketch, as more than another his, it would be that of activity; of restless, burning, unappeasable activity. Some necessity of action seems laid upon him. Some invisible scourge seems suspended over his head, urging him onwards. We see this quality as strong on him at this hour, when the gray hairs of age are beginning, like a crown of glory, to gather round his head, as it was in his fiery youth. A great river, in its ordinary state, is equal to a small one when swollen into a torrent. So the aged and ordinary state of Dr. Chalmers' feelings is equal to the extremes, the paroxysms, the juvenile raptures of less energetic minds. What others shrink from as the very brink of insanity, is his starting point,—the first step of his aspiring spirit.

The extract which follows, displays the powers of our Author to much advantage; both in critical discernment, and eloquent amplification:

"Demosthenes, every body knows, had immense energy, but his *Deinotes* was broken, interrupted, and had rarely the rushing fluency we mean to ascribe to Chalmers. Cicero is ornate and elaborate; he is a river cut through an artificial bed, rather than a mountain torrent. Jeremy Taylor's stream meanders, 'gliding at its own sweet will,' rather than sweeps right onward to the sea of its object. Barrow, to vary the figure, takes sometimes the gallop in grand style, but his eye never gets red in the race, nor do his nostrils breathe fire, or spring blood. Howe makes every now and then a noble leap, and then subsides into a quiet and deliberate pace. Burke is next him in this quality. Curran, Grattan, Sheil, and Phillips, frequently exhibit this rapid and involuntary movement of mind and style; but it is marred in the first by diffusion; in the two next by a certain irregular and starting motion, springing from their continual antithesis; and in the last by the enormous degree in which he possesses his country's diseases, of intellectual incontinence, and *diabetes verborum*. Hall occasionally rises to this style; but is too fastidious and careful of minute elegancies to sustain it long or reach it often. Irving shines in brief and passionate bursts, but never indulges in long and strong sweeps through the gulfs of ether. But with Chalmers such perilous movement is a mere necessity of his mind; his words read like one great sentence; a unique enthusiasm inspires with one deep glow all his sermons, and all his volumes; and, so far from needing to lash, or sting himself into this rapid rate, he must pursue a break-neck pace, or come to a full stop. Anti-

mation is a poor word for describing either his style or manner. Excitement, convulsion, are fit, yet feeble terms for his appearance, either at the desk or the pulpit. And yet, what painter has ever ventured to draw him preaching? And hence the dullness and paltriness of almost all the prints; they show the slybl off the stool, the eye dim and meaningless, not shot with excitement, and glaring at vacancy; the lion sleeping, not the mane-slaking, tail-tossing, and sand-spurning lord of the desert. In repose, neither his face nor form are much better than an unstrung bow, or an unlighted lustre.

"After all that Chalmers has written, the 'Astronomical Discourses' are, as we have stated already, in our opinion, his best and greatest work. They owe not a little, it is true, to their subject—Astronomy, that 'star-eyed science,' which, of all others, most denotes the grandeur of our destiny, and plumes our wing for the researches and the flights of unembodied existence; which, even in its infancy, has set a crown upon the head of man, worthy of an angelic brow—a crown of stars; which has recently made such marvellous revelations of the firmaments scattered throughout immensity, their multitude, their strange shapes, and the obscure laws which seem to regulate their motions, and explain their forms; of the double stars and their supposed *Annus Magnus* of revolution round each other, a period which dwarfs even the Chinese chronologies into insignificance; of those changes which appear to be going on above, on a scale so amazing, by which sheeted heavens are seemingly split or splitting up into individualized portions, suns torn away by handfuls from an abyss or ocean of kindred orbs, other chaoses curling into existence, old stars extinguished by a power of which we cannot even conceive, and others hurried to and fro, at a rate so swift, and on a stream of energy so prodigious, as to bewilder and appal us; of the Milky Way, that unbanked river of stars; of the Nebulae, and their unutterable revelations as to the growth of the universe, and the dim light they cast on its past and future history; of the Sun, and that faint train of zodiacal light which he carries as a finger pointing back to the mode of his creation, and how wonderful it is that he has retained so many thousands of years the heat which he received from the one Breath, which bade him Be—he bright, he warm, and shine till time be no more; of the Telescope, that angel-eye, by which man converses with the 'loftiest star of unseeded heaven,' of Comets, those nondescript births of our system; of the probable size of the Creation, a size so stupendous, as to justify the figure of the poet, who compares all we see of it, even through the telescope, to 'a drop of dew, filling in the morning new, some eyed flower, whose young leaves waken on an unimagined world.'—Astronomy, which is advancing at a ratio of speed and splendour that promises results of which gravitation was only the germ, and even the discoveries of Herschell, like the May blade to the September corn; which, even as we write, is telling us, through the approximate solution of the problem of the Stellar Parallax, of suns which are going faster than their own light, and of others, so distant from us, that the distance betwixt the earth and Sirius is but one unit in the awful sum of their surpassing and ineffable