

PATRONAGE—ITS USEFULNESS—ITS EVILS.

BY W. P. C.

"This, this, is then the world!"

MRS. MOODIE.

It is interesting to note the many constituent elements that go to form society. Friendship and hatred—union and strife—argument and rivalry, all mingled in the great mental and moral organization of mankind, afford us the fact, that parts apparently incongruous may often form the most compact whole. Systems of government founded on the hypothetic principle of absolute equality, are but pillars of sand on bases of water; and the great laws that govern their impossibility, are as immutable as the prospect of eternity itself. Even in those lands where the most extravagant notions of civil and religious liberty have been originated, the idea of perfect uniformity in rank has never yet been realized. Mutual dependance is necessary to human existence. A scheme for levelling every earthly distinction may indeed appear plausible, if viewed through the medium of a deeply disordered and too luxuriant fancy; but the crudest common sense rejects at once the supposition of its practicability, and the analogy of nations encounters the chimera with unlimited contradiction. Yet though the most obvious truths—among which is the *necessity of dependance*—have been deduced from analytical, analogical and inductive reasoning, there still exist in every community certain individuals, whose spirits are imbued with a longing desire after dangerous nonentities. These raise their voices against long-established usages, and constantly disseminate the seeds of destructive innovation. They cry down all diversity of rank, reflecting not upon the imperative conditions of subordination and superior power. They do not consider, that though all may have equal *legal* rights, all are not blessed with equal talents; and that this circumstance alone would naturally elevate one above another, thus constituting the co-relative situations of patronage and dependance. They see nothing—they will be convinced of nothing that approaches to a contradiction of their darling principle. With the utmost arrogance of human nature, blinded in their conception, they would almost bring the Creator to the level of the creature. They expatiate on the propriety of immediately reducing mankind to such a level, that

the patron and the patronized hitherto may hereafter exist independently of each other. It is of this that we wish to speak—of those certain tendencies that patronage, generous and judicious or otherwise, exerts upon individuals commencing the career of life. Although the theme be not *entirely* new, its has not yet received the attention it deserves.

Nearly every commencement in life is difficult; and whether tyros act in a professional, literary or political sphere, under similar circumstances, corresponding results will universally ensue. To all, every effort at first seems fraught with ill-success. Each relies upon himself alone, and toils patiently to remove the obstacles that beset his course. The lack of opportunity for displaying talent, or, after this is obtained, of appreciation on the part of others, is by every one without a patron for a while most perseveringly endured. Vanity may feed on air, for its nourishment is seldom derived from aught more stable. But the noble consciousness of innate ability seeks always a season for its development, when that which now lies comparatively hidden and obscure, shall be exposed, in the ruddiest glare of criticism, to the gaze of an admiring world. The journey of life lies through devious and desultory paths. At first, perhaps fertile plains are seen, where the murmur of each gliding stream finds an echo in the rustling woodlands; wheresmiling fields produce their harvests of plenty and luxuriance; where all is peace and happiness and quietude. Thence a thousand ways branch off, and all present allurements to the traveller. Unadvised and unprotected, he chooses one and then another. His march lies here and there, and almost seems without an end. Clambering up the mountain steep, he sinks again into the vale. Seas and lakes and rushing rivers, impede his progress. Fearful gulfs yawn beneath him; and these appear to forbid escape from ruin. A few—and truly, they are very few—successfully encounter these terrors alone. But others, hand in hand with experienced directors, pass safely onward, acquiring diversified knowledge at every step they make; and when these guides are gone, they