

Poetry.

THOUGHTS IN SICKNESS.

BY LORD JOHN MANNERS.

I know not how it is—but man ne'er sees
The glory of this world, its streams and trees,
Its thousand forms of beauty, that delight
The soul, the sense, and captivate the sight,—
So long as laughing health vouchsafes to stay,
And charm the traveller on his joyous way.

No! Man can ne'er appreciate this earth
Which he had lived and joyed in from his birth,
Till pain or sickness from his sight removes
All that in health he valued not, yet loves!
Then, then it is he learns to feel the ties
Of earth, and all its sweetest sympathies.

Then he begins to know how fair, how sweet
Are all those flowers that bloomed beneath his feet,
Then he confesses that, before, in vain
The wild flowers blossomed on the lowly plain;
Then he remembers that the larks would sing,
Making the heavens with their music ring,
And he, unmindful, never cared to hear
Her tuneful orisons at day-break clear,
While all the glories that enrich this earth
Crowd on his brain, and magnify its worth,
Till transient fancy quits the couch of pain,
To rove in health's gay fields and woods again!
But when some pang his wandering sense recalls,
And chains the sufferer to his prison walls
What to his misery adds a sharper sting,
And plumes the feathers on affliction's wing?
What, but the thought, that in his hour of health,
He slighted these for glory, power, or wealth?
And oh! how trivial when compared with these,
Seem all the pleasures which are said to please!

At morn, when through the open lattice float
Wild hymns of love from many a warbler's throat,
The sick man turns with pained and feverish start,
And groans in abject bitterness of heart.
Whence, say ye vain ones, whence that soul-drawn groan?
Comes it from anguish, or from pain, alone?
Think ye, Reflection was not there?
Born on that sunbeam—wafted by the air
That speaks upbraidings in its balmy breath,
Though whispering sweetly of returning health?

So feel I now; and if bright health once more
Glow in my frame, as it hath glowed of yore,
Oh! may I prove my thankfulness! and show
I feel the glory of all things below!

Literary.

NIGHT MUSING.

WHAT stupendous phenomena surround mortals, without attracting a moment's observation, from more than one in a thousand. The circumambient air, the variegated and varied earth, the abyss of ocean, are each vast magazines of mysteries. Some of these attract investigation; others, by their indefinite impalpable character, defy the clumsy touch of man; and others, by their frequent occurrence, and apparent simplicity, are not heeded as they pass in review. Creation, in all its laws, and materials, is one stupendous wonder,—an emanation from that Hand whose power we talk of, but cannot comprehend,—an exhibition claiming the continued scrutiny and admiration of man, the lord of earth.

The return of night.—What more familiar than

this phrase?—It merely denotes, to common ears, the resting-hour of the labourer; the noon of drawing-room life; the dawn of the vicious,—who, wrapping themselves in shade, prowl abroad, free from crime-abashing light, and from the myriad eyes of a scrutinizing world.—Who notices the day's decline, except as the termination of business, the commencement of rest, or recreation?—Yet this hour, as well as the devotion-inspiring dawn, should lead to heart-stirring, heart-ennobling thoughts.

To the First Man how solemn was the first night-fall. Was nature relaxing into its primeval sleep? Had the sun indeed sank into unimaginable depths? Would the fair face of earth, the green fields, the blue waters, never more throw off this sable mantle? To the contemplative man of every age, how continually interesting are the evening shades. They speak eloquently of the ever-active superintendence of the Maker,—of laws of nature still inflexible,—of the great globe having once more revolved on that axis, whose unknown centre, some say, is water; some fire; and some marble thrice compressed! Once more has its vast circumference—with all its mountains and oceans, and the thousand features of each—spun round, equable as the top of the school-boy, bearing its vast tribes unconsciously along!

In the solitudes of nature, where the wanderer stands alone,—where the marsh is too tangled for the bittern,—the forest too savage for the wild fox,—the plain too arid for the agile deer,—where dusk produces an unfamiliar chaos,—and the hum of that which is called profound silence, is as the noise of innumerable conflicting atoms,—what a chilling annihilating feeling pervades the Night,

But in a rural district,—by the fragrant garden and the pebbly brook, and the cottage-shading tree, the hour of darkness comes in its gentlest guise. The blending of the characteristics of nature and art, of solitude and society, produces that delightful state between gloom and gaiety, that semi-melancholy akin to cheerfulness, which is so favourable to the pathos of enjoyment.—The deep bay of the village mastiff, answering the guardian of another hamlet,—the trumpet note of the lord of the hen-roost, bidding defiance to some scarcely heard fellow in a rival farm yard,—the monotonous gurgle of the mill race, and perhaps the intermitting murmur of the billows on a distant beach;—the perfume which rises from the hay-field, the hawthorn hedge, the blossoming bean-rows, and the thousand aromatics which the home-stead collects;—the outlines of the cottage, visible against the less dark sky,—the serrated grove which gets massiveness and depth from the indistinctness,—the fine blossoming swell of the half seen half imagined hill; all these indications of a picturesque scenery, calling on the imagination by a thousand delicate suggestions, soothe, and interest, and temper the loneliness, and chasten the gaiety of him who watches the night among the fields.

Neither is the strongly contrasting City without its romance of the night watches. The scenes and sounds of evening have passed away;—the domestic lights