labubs. The world is wide enough without them ; nor is there any lack in London of witty men and pretty women, of decent books and cooks, wherewith to sharpen his intellect and refine his taste. If Boz neglects these hints, then, as Sam Slick says, 'He don't know the valy of his diamond.'

## SELF DEVOTION.

Humble life ! how many beautiful and noble virtues spring up unnoticed and unknown in the midst of thee ! What rank of society could produce an instance of loftier self-denial, for a more touching purpose, than the self devotion of Bartley O' Reilly ?

The farm-house of Shawn Butler lay almost in a direct line between Bartley's father's and his late brother's. It was one of those serene and tranquil spots to which a man who becomes sick of human villiany, would wish to retire and forget the guilty crowds and heartless tumults of life. The house was plain, neat and comfortable. Before the door stretched a small green, in the middle of which was a clear spring-well, overshadowed by a single spreading hawthorn. A little below this, a sweep of meadows spread out, divided by a clear stream, on whose banks, during the calm evenings of summer, many a harmless pass-time took place. Behind the house, at about a distance of half a mile, lay a small but beautiful lake, and before it, rising gradually from the meadows, the green and fertile pastures of F——s. From the door could be seen "the Glen," which, well wooded and deep, swept round till it melted away into the meadows, pouring at the same time a tributary stream into the larger river that ran through them. Behind all stood a range of peaked mountains, which, as the farm lay facing the east, formed a semi-circle around the landscape which they bounded.

About the hour of twelve o'clock, Bartley, resolved, but sorrowful, reached the farm-stead of Shawn Butler. A bend in the road brought him within a few perches of the house, ere he saw it, and as it was milking time the sweet voice of Ellen Butler fell upon his ear and heart as she sang the old Irish air of *Slaghum Varragha*. A turnstile opened from the road into a paddock adjoining the house, in one corner of which the cattle that they milked were gathered together.

Bartley had not arrived thus far without having experienced in all its powers that blighting of the heart which arose from a consciousness that the object on which its final cast for happiness had been set, was lost to him for ever. The struggle in his spirit was indeed as painful as it was singular, and altogether unusual in those combinations of human feeling, which weave our individual interests into those of society in general. In his case it was love as a sentimental passion against natural affection, and rarely indeed, do those contingencies of life present themselves in which the passion and the affection are arrayed against each other.

Imagination on the one hand, drew in colors the most vivid, all those beautiful traits of love and quiet happiness which shed so blessed a charm over humble life. In the foreground of the picture stood Ellen in the calm serenity of a wife and mother. He knew Ellen's value, her modesty, her virtue, and what was most trying of all, her attachment to himself. Nay, more, he knew that the wedding day had been appointed, and that their marriage would have taken place, were it not for the melancholy death of his brother and his wife. Ellen already looked upon him as her husband and so did her family ; yet now was he on his way to blight her hopes and crush her affections. He then thought of the power with which his heart, fresh and unwasted, loved the fair girl who had selected him as the man with whom she perferred to pass through life, he remembered all the acknowledgments of attachment and tenderness that had passed between them ; and when, in addition to this, he looked into the future, and saw himself like a barren tree,—his spirit sank, from an apprehension that he had undertaken a task which he feared was beyond his strength. On the other hand, domestic affection, holy and strong, like a good spirit, came to his aid. He remembered his brother whose head lay low—his Eveleen, meek and affectionate, both taken away by the mysterious hand of God, from the children whom they loved. But their orphans ! the little innocent brood, left without one single individual on whom they could depend, and in such a world as this !—he pictured them conversing about their hearth, in sorrow and in tears, the eldest herself a child, attempting to act the mother to the rest—he fancied he saw them as the shades of evening fell, getting pale with dread—he saw them asleep in the depth of night, with none to tend their wants or their sickness—who was to feed—who was to clothe them ? The picture altogether overcame him ; his heart melted at their sorrows, and he repeated to himself once more—"No—I will never forsake them—my brother's orphans !" Strong in this determination, he approached Ellen and her mother, as they milked their cows in the corner of the little paddock.

Warm and affectionate was the greeting he received from the whole family, especially from the artless and simple hearted Ellen. The composure of his manner, which was sorrowful, did not surprise them. They knew that grief after such a brother as Fergus, was not likely to pass away soon. Shawn Butler, when Bartley arrived, had been sent for, and in a few minutes he came in from the field together with his two sons. When they were all assembled Bartley, in a simple earnest manner, addressed them as follows :—

"I think it right to bring you all together, that you may hear what I have to say ; and when you hear it you'll be able to feel that it's a hard trial to me. Don't think that the heart-broken look you see in my face, is owing entirely to the death of poor Fergus. No : it's owing to an intention I've made to give up my own hopes an' happiness in this world, that I may be a father an' a friend to my brother's orphans. What's to become of them, if I or some one, doesn't save the poor young helpless creatures from destruction, and poverty, and the frown of a bad world ? I will never marry ; and my heart is breaking while I say so, for God, that is hearin' me, knows, Shawn Butler, how I loved—how I love, an' ever will love—your daughter ! My heart—my heart ! Oh, may Heaven support me—it's a sore, sore crush to me !"

He was here so much overcome by his feelings that he could not proceed for a time ; and nothing but his sobs were heard, for those whom he addressed uttered not a word. At length he went on :—

"Yes, it is a sore crush to me to give you up, Ellen, but I think that whatever I and you may suffer, you're too kind-hearted a girl to blame me for what I believe, before God, to be right, ay, and my duty besides. I am sure God will support you, as I hope and trust that he will give strength to myself. I have only now to say that if poor Fergus was alive, no earthly thing could prevent me from fulfillin' my intentions towards you; my *gra* Ellen. But he is not, an' if I don't support his and Eveleen's orphans, they're lost. I say then to you all as I said twice before, may God desert me if I don't love, and guard, and work for them, as if they were my own, or as Fergus would do if he was still over them."

There is a dignity in noble and virtuous resolutions that impresses a sense of their worth upon all, without distinction, who come within reach of their influence.

It might have been supposed, that old Butler and his wife would have expressed themselves with warmth, if not with passion, upon a determination which fell so heavily upon the affections and prospects of their daughter. There was something, however, in the short explanation of Bartley, that awed them, for it exhibited the truth, firmness, and virtue of his character. From the moment he began to speak, Ellen's eyes were fixed upon him, and her breath came and went thickly. As he proceeded, her countenance changed, the blood forsook her cheeks, and by the time he had concluded, she sat incapable of speech, and as pale as ashes. This proof of her distress did not escape the notice of her family, and for a moment brows were bent, and eyes lightened ; but on looking on Bartley, his calm but sorrowful countenance once more awed them, and repressed what they were about to utter.

"Ellen," said her eldest brother, "as this strange business touches you nearest, what do you say to it ?"

She looked full upon her brother for more than two minutes, and her lips moved, but no sound issued from them.

"Did you hear what I said, Ellen dear ?"

"Bartley is right—he is doing what is right," was the reply which the admirable girl gave him.

"He *is* right," said her father, "an' may God give you an' him strength to bear the sorrow that it brings upon you both. We part with Bartley in good will and friendship ; an', what is more, with honor. He's right, an' it's a noble act in him that ought never to be forgotten."

The eldest son grasped his hand. "Bartley," said he, "God bless you ; we are, and, I hope, ever will be, friends."

They all shook hands with him, except Ellen, who in fact was not able to extend her hand towards him. She sat, as before, pale and silent.

"Ellen," said he, "I will kiss your lips for the last time—but tell me once more before I go, that you agree with me in what I'm doin'."

"I don't blame you," she replied, in the same almost inaudible voice, "you have done what is right."

Bartley pressed the passive girl to his bosom, and after kissing her lips with a breaking heart, it was observed that a large tear lay upon her cheek. It was not hers, however, for she could not weep, although her mother did bitterly.

Bartley then once more bade farewell to the Butlers, and departed. His feelings for a time were confused and tumultuous, as may naturally be supposed, when we consider that he had forgone *his own* hopes, in behalf of the young, and sorrowful, and the distressed. On reaching his brother's house, he found the elder orphans in tears, and the younger, who were ignorant of their loss, at play. This latter circumstance touched him most. He assumed, however, a cheerful look, and told the lonely brood that he was then come to live with them and protect them.

"You shall never want, my poor darlings," said he, "while I am able to work and support you. I have given up the world for your sakes. Night and day I'll be along with you—we'll get a steady, kind servant woman to look to you, and I hope that we'll all be yet happy."

Noble youth ! for he was but a youth—how many of the great and wealthy rot under the lying inscriptions of the marble monuments, whilst thy only record of virtue, before which, however, grandeur may sink, is from the feeble pen of one who is humbler than thyself.

With a heroism which even affection could not shake, he carried his resolution into effect ; saw the girl he deeply loved become the wife of another, but never for a moment regretted the high-minded course he had taken. As might be expected, his brother's children soon transferred their affections to himself ; he wrought for them, he educated them, reared them up virtuously and industriously, and at this very moment is an honoured man, living among them as a father.

## CHANGE IN PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.

BY THEODORE HOOK, ESQ.

### MASQUERADES.

Masquerades have, in these days, been superseded by fancy balls, which seem to be a bad substitute, inasmuch as the natural *mauvaise honte* of the English renders the assumption of a character exceedingly embarrassing ; and nothing in the world looks more absurd than a respectable gentleman and his wife, dressed up as Swiss peasants, with their eyebrows corked, and their faces painted, talking gravely about their domestic affairs, just as if they were in their natural costume ; or a Greek chieftain and a pasha of three tails lounging with a lovely Whang-fong from China, discussing the merits, or more probably the demerits, of the last night's party somewhere else. The mask, besides the consciousness of concealment, and the consequent confidence, gives the desired character to the countenance ; and in the olden time, the fun of "hunting down," and "finding out" friends in disguise, was really good.

### DANCING.

As to balls themselves, thirty years ago, country-dances (now expelled, except by way of joke) were the fashion ; and fifty years ago, preceded by the minuet, were the dances of the court. A lady and gentleman "walking" a minuet (as it is called) now-a-days, would be considered typical of Adam and Eve before the fall.

Here, however, is a double mutation ; for the quadrille, which has superseded the country or *contre-danse*, is but the revival of the cotillion ; while the *game* of quadrille, once all the rage, has been driven from society by that refined edition of "all-fours"—"*Ecarte.*" The Waltz, which invaded our shores in war time, and frightened the sober and sedate from their propriety, seems to have been also a mere revivification of a dance described, with singular point and animation, by the old gentleman in the "Spectator," who says, "I suppose this diversion was first invented to keep up a good understanding between young men and women ; but I am sure had you been here you would have seen great matter for speculation."

Lady Blessington, in her interesting and entertaining work, "The Idler in Italy," recently published, informs us that the French mode of dancing the Waltz is entirely free from the imputations which the fastidious still cast upon the method of performing it in England. As to dancing, generally speaking, it appears to be reduced to a fashion rather than an amusement, for two reasons : one, because if there is room left in a ball-room for dancing, the party is considered dull ; and the other, because if there be adequate space, the figures are walked, or rather slept through by the performers, as if the whole affair was a "bore," and that the appearance of being either entertained or excited, was something too shocking to be thought of.

### PUBLIC GARDENS.

Formerly Kensington Gardens were quite good enough for the Sunday promenade, which was open for all respectable persons who delighted in mingling with those with whom they could not elsewhere be associated—now nobody goes to Kensington Gardens, except to hear one of the splendid bands of the Household Cavalry regiments play—and this is always on what is called a "week-day," and lest anybody beyond the "chosen few" should benefit by the amusement, the day, and even hour of the performance is kept a secret from all but what Mrs. Trollope calls "*La Creme*," as closely and securely as was in the days of pugilism the place at which the fight was to come off.

A quarter of a century ago the fashionable drive was up and down what is called Rotten-row ; now the drive is across the Park from Piccadilly to Cumberland-gate, a change infinitely for the better, as it affords a junction of drivers, riders, and walkers, which was never effected on the old and exploded system.

Seventy years ago a fashionable place, called "Marybone Gardens," existed, where now stand Weymouth street, Upper Harley-street, and that of the surrounding buildings ; nothing remains to mark this once favourite spot but a small public-house, still extant in High street. The entrance to the gardens having been the site of a large dwelling, once a ladies' seminary, and now in the occupation of Mr. Tilbury.

Ranelagh, sixty years since, was the very *acme* of fashion—it was the indispensable comfort and support of society—its amusements consisted of walking round the rotunda, like a horse in a