

"He could not stifle the natural impulse which he had to do good, but frequently borrowed money to relieve the distressed ; and when he knew not conveniently where to borrow, he has been observed to shed tears as he passed through the wretched suppliants who attended his gate." . . .

"His simplicity in trusting persons whom he had no previous reasons to place confidence in, seems to be one of those lights of his character which, while they impeach his understanding, do honor to his benevolence. The low and the timid are ever suspicious ; but a heart impressed with honorable sentiments expects from others sympathetic sincerity."¹

His heedlessness in pecuniary matters, which had rendered his life a struggle with poverty even in the days of his obscurity, rendered the struggle still more intense when his fairy gifts had elevated him into the society of the wealthy and luxurious, and imposed on his simple and generous spirit fancied obligations to a more ample and bounteous display.

"How comes it," says a recent and ingenious critic, "that in all the miry paths of life which he had trod, no speck ever sullied the robe of his modest and graceful muse. How amidst all that love of inferior company, which never to the last forsook him, did he keep his genius so free from every touch of vulgarity?"

We answer that it was owing to the innate purity and goodness of his nature ; there was nothing in it that assimilated to vice and vulgarity. Though his circumstances often compelled him to associate with the poor, they never could betray him into companionship with the depraved. His relish for humor and for the study of character, as we have before observed, brought him often into convivial company of a vulgar kind ; but he discriminated between their vulgarity and their amusing qualities, or rather wrought from the whole those familiar pictures of life which form the staple of his most popular writings.

Much, too, of this intact purity of heart may be ascribed to the lessons of his infancy under the paternal roof ; to the gentle, benevolent, elevated, unworldly maxims of his father, who, "passing rich with forty pounds a year," infused a spirit into his child which riches could not deprave nor poverty degrade. Much of his boyhood, too, had been passed in the household of his uncle, the amiable and generous Contarine ; where he talked of literature with the good pastor, and practised music with his daughter, and delighted them both by his juvenile attempts at

¹ Goldsmith's Life of Nash.