

From Bentley's Miscellany.

## ON CONTEMPLATING THE HEAVENS.

By Mrs. CORNWELL BARON WILSON.

Tell me, ye brightly-burning orbs of night,  
Now shining down on our terrestrial sphere,  
If to your realms the spirit takes its flight  
When it throws off its mortal covering here?—  
Does it take wing and to the skies aspire,  
And breathe forth songs in heaven to some melodious lyre?

Tell me, fair Moon, that sail'st in ether's space,  
Art thou some world, peopled with creatures free,  
Where sunder'd spirits shall meet face to face,  
Lifting the veil of immortality?—  
Shall we there know, ev'n as on earth we're known,  
And shall Affection clasp hearts made again its own?

Tell me, ye clouds, that o'er the azure heaven  
Float like the streamers of some bridal vest,  
When by the breeze of midnight ye are driven,—  
Say, do ye canopy some place of rest,  
Some peaceful bourn to which the spirit flies  
To join the lost of earth and re-unite its ties?

Ye cannot answer! and it is not meet  
Such mysteries should be sol'd us. Why should man,  
With blinded gaze and travel-wearied feet,  
Attempt to penetrate what angels scan  
With heavenly eyes but dimly?—let him bend,  
Adoring what nor sense nor sight can comprehend!

## AUCTIONEER ELOQUENCE.

There is still something like character left in this level world. The London auctioneers are characters. The celebrated Christie, who flourished about half a century ago, still figures in the records of auctioneer eloquence. The hammer in his hand was his thunderbolt; with it he knocked down more oaks, hills, palaces, and parks, than he of Olympus ever smote with his fires. His tongue was the cestus that embellished, graced and coloured all that it touched. It was he who rounded a description of a hut in view of Tyburn, by pronouncing that it had the advantage of a hanging wood in view, and talked of a running stream in the neighbourhood of a mansion—the mansion being a warehouse, and the stream Fleet Ditch. It was he who found the perfumes of Arabia in the neighbourhood of a coffee-shop, and promised the beauties of a tropical landscape in a field planted half with potatoes and half with tobacco. But if he was eloquent, descriptive, and Irish, he was, notwithstanding, an honest man. To expect him to be a man of his word was out of the question, yet he was faithful to his engagements, and though estates slipped through his fingers as fast as through those of Lord Barrymore or Hughes Ball, he made money. George Robins is now the successor to the fame of this celebrated personage. George Robins is now by far the most eloquent man of his own profession. The famous Maugraby, who now figures in Alexandria, to the astonishment of the Quarterly Review and of all the loungers of the Mediterranean, is a bungler compared with the dexterous touch, the quick prediction, and the unhesitating dexterity of George Robins's skill in the deal. His fame is, like Mr Green's, above the earth; like Mr. Ingilby, he is the prince of conjurors; and, like the late George Canning, for fancy, figure, and fiction is unsurpassable. As an evidence that our panegyric is not ill-founded, we shall give three examples of his eloquence which have met our eye in one column of a newspaper. The first is a cottage in Devon, which he "offers for public competition," the word sale being altogether below the subject. He declares that this cottage is situated "in a spot which even those accustomed to the varied loveliness of this beautiful county, universally admitted to be the garden of South Devon; that it is completely imbedded in its own wild, luxurious grounds; it stands," says George Robins, "in need of no auxiliary beauties, for nature hath most liberally gifted it; it is inaccessible to the sight, save only from the sea, upon which it peeps, and obtains a view of the limpid bay of Babbicombe, which has, with great truth and justice, been likened to the bay of Naples." This is pretty well for a cottage.

We now come to something of a higher order—an estate in the same county. "This property," says George, "needs not the artificial aid of ornament throughout the county, for it is too well known to require panegyric; but the following concise and imperfect statement is intended with a view to illumine only those at a distance:—It is seated in a luxuriant valley; protected during the inclement season by an amphitheatre of hills; surrounded by park scenery of surpassing beauty, with a never-ending combination of hill and dale; and adorned by majestic woods, the constant undulation of the grounds combining to form a perfect claude scene. The abundance of fish caught within sight of the drawing-room would render the vocation of a neighbouring fishmonger a work of supererogation. The winter appears a stranger to the estate, and the climate is so congenial to longevity, that even an East Indian valetudinarian, who in despair had resigned himself to a very limited period of years, may here find a solace, arising out of the salubrity of the air, that will awaken to him the cheering prospect of a renewed lease of health and vigour."

The pastures come in for a share of the panegyric, and are described as possessing the facility of fattening cattle with great

quickness; it being further declared "that Smithfield owes to them a heavy debt of gratitude." The estate has another treasure in "a magnificent rock of marble, which appears interminable; and if profit be in the mind's eye of a purchaser, he will find the rock capable of erecting a second city of Bath." This we look upon as a showy specimen of his grand style; the next and last exhibits his genius in the picturesque and poetic.

This is the delineation of a third estate, the mansion of which is described as being seated, or rather "nestling under the brow of a hill." We are told that "the majestic timber which ornaments the hanging woods includes the monarch of the forest, with pines of stately growth; the rising grounds afford shelter from the wintry wind, while the valley, teeming with wild fertility, refreshes and aids the delightful illusion. The mansion is of stone, a modern elevation, avoiding all the faults of the present school; within there is that which passeth show, for comfort in its most intelligible form prevails throughout."

All this is very clever, and must be very tempting, but George Robins has another bait for the purchaser, a bait for his ambition—and if any man, with a few thousands to throw away, has a desire to figure at a county election, the auctioneer has found out the spot for him. "It may not be amiss," says he, "to allude to the forthcoming contest for this district, when the possessor of this estate will put in very strong claims to be one of the representatives of the county."

We are glad to find that our orator is a conservative, for he insists on this as the qualification of the purchaser for parliamentary honours. "If," says he, "his principles be conservative, and the motto of hospitality be appended to the mansion, it is not impossible he may walk over the course." All this we think irresistible; and after this varied display of his talent, who shall venture to deny that George Robins is the prince of orators and auctioneers?

The question has been disputed whether a man of genius is, or is not, ignorant of his own powers. We contend that he is not, and quote our celebrated auctioneer as an example. The newspapers mention that, some time since, he met a professional brother of provincial fame, of the name of Watkins. "Sir," said the London luminary, "I am happy to recognize in you the George Robins of the West."—"Sir," said the man of the West, "I reciprocate the compliment, and am proud to see in you the Watkins of the metropolis."

There have been hints that he has made large collections for his history; and in an age when every man writes his memoirs, when no great man dies without being instantly pounced upon by a host, that, like the kites or vultures, blacken around his dying hours to pick up all that they can lay hold of, we hope that George Robins will act the great man; make his fame secure; write his own biography, for fear of accidents; and, let what will come of placards, harangues, and hammers, make himself the Shakspeare of all auctioneers to come—*Blackwood's Magazine*.

## MY LIFE.

By Hon. R. H. WILDER.

My life is like the summer rose,  
That opens to the morning sky;  
But ere the shades of evening close,  
Is scattered on the ground to die.  
But on that rose's numble bed  
The sweetest dews of night are shed,  
As if it wept such waste to see,  
But none shall weep a tear for me!

My life is like the autumn leaf,  
That trembles in the moon's pale ray;  
Its hold is frail—its date is brief—  
Restless, and soon to pass away:  
Yet ere that leaf shall fall or fade,  
The parent tree shall mourn its shade—  
The winds bewail the leafless tree,  
But none shall breathe a sigh for me!

My life is like the prints which feet  
Have left on Tampa's desert strand;  
Soon as the rising tide shall beat,  
All trace will vanish from the sand.  
Yet, as if grieving to efface  
All vestige of the human race,  
On that lone shore loud mourns the sea,  
But none, alas! shall mourn for me!

From Miss Martineau's Retrospect of Western Travel.

## THE PRISONER'S FRIEND.

The wonderfully successful friend of criminals, Captain Pillsbury, of the Weathersfield Prison, has worked on this principle, and owes his success to it. His moral power over the guilty is so remarkable, that prison-breakers who can be confined no where else, are sent to him to be charmed into staying their term out. I was told of his treatment of two such. One was a gigantic personage, the terror of the country, who had plunged deeper and deeper in crime for seventeen years. Captain Pillsbury told him when he came, that he hoped he would not repeat the attempts to escape which he had made elsewhere. "It will be best," said he, "that you and I should treat each other as well

as we can. I will make you as comfortable as I possibly can, and shall be anxious to be your friend; and I hope you will not get me into any difficulty on your account. There is a cell intended for solitary confinement, but we never use it; and I should be very sorry ever to have to turn the key upon anybody in it. You may range the place as freely as I do, if you will trust me as I shall trust you." The man was sulky; and for weeks showed only very gradual symptoms of softening under the operation of Captain Pillsbury's cheerful confidence. At length information was given to the Captain of the man's intention to break prison. The Captain called him, and taxed him with it: the man preserved a gloomy silence. He was told that it was now necessary for him to be locked up in the solitary cell, and desired to follow the Captain, who went first, carrying a lamp in one hand and the key in the other. In the narrowest part of the passage, the Captain (who is a small, slight man,) turned round and looked in the face of the stout criminal. "Now," said he, "I ask you whether you have treated me as I deserve? I have done every thing I could think of to make you comfortable; I have trusted you, and you have never given me the least confidence in return, and have even planned to get me into difficulty. Is this kind? and yet I cannot bear to lock you up. If I had the least sign that you cared for me..." The man burst into tears, "Sir," said he, "I have been a very devil these seventeen years; but you treat me like a man." "Come, let us go back," said the Captain. The convict had the free range of the prison as before. From this hour he began to open his heart to the Captain, and cheerfully fulfilled his whole term of imprisonment; confiding to his friend, as they arose, all impulses to violate his trust, and all facilities for doing so which he imagined he saw.

The other case was of a criminal of the same character, who went so far as to make the actual attempt to escape. He fell, and hurt his ankle very much. The Captain had him brought in and laid in his bed, and the ankle attended to; every one being forbidden to speak a word of reproach to the sufferer. The man was sullen, and would not say whether the bandaging of his ankle gave him pain or not. This was in the night; and every one returned to bed when all was done. But the Captain could not sleep. He was distressed at the attempt, and thought he could not have fully done his duty to any man who would make it. He was afraid the man was in great pain. He rose, threw on his gown, and went with a lamp to the cell. The prisoner's face was turned to the wall, and his eyes were closed; but the traces of suffering were not to be mistaken. The Captain loosened and replaced the bandage, and went for his own pillow to rest the limb upon; the man neither speaking nor moving all the time. Just when he was shutting the door, the prisoner started up and called him back. "Stop, Sir. Was it all to see after my ankle that you have got up?"

"Yes it was. I could not sleep for thinking of you."

"And you have never said a word of the way I have used you."

"I do feel hurt with you; but I don't want to call you unkind while you are suffering, as I am sure you are now."

The man was in an agony of shame and grief. All he asked was to be trusted again, when he should have recovered. He was freely trusted, and gave his generous friend no more anxiety on his behalf.

Captain Pillsbury is the gentleman who, on being told that a desperate prisoner had sworn to murder him speedily, sent for him to shave him, allowing no one to be present. He eyed the man, pointed to the razor, and desired him to shave him. The prisoner's hand trembled; but he went through it very well. When he had done, the Captain said, "I have been told you meant to murder me; but I thought I might trust you." "God bless you, Sir, you may," replied the regenerated man. Such is the power of faith in man!

EXAMPLES OF FORBEARANCE.—Cesar, having found a collection of letters, written by his enemies to Pompey, burnt them without reading: "For," said he, "though I am upon my guard against anger, yet it is safer to remove its cause."

ANTIGONUS, king of Syria, hearing two of his soldiers reviling him behind his tent, "Gentlemen," said he, opening the curtain, "remove to a greater distance, for your king hears you."

The wife of COWPER, bishop of Lincoln, burnt all the notes which he had been eight years collecting, lest he should kill himself from excess of study; so that he was again eight years in collecting the same materials. But though few greater vexations could overtake a scholar, he never uttered an unkind word to his wife on the subject.

SOCRATES having received a blow on the head, observed that it would be well if people knew when it were necessary to put on a helmet. Being attacked with opprobrious language, he calmly remarked, that the man was not yet taught to speak respectfully. Alcibiades, his friend, talking to him one day about his wife, told him he wondered how he could bear such an everlasting scold in the same house with him. He replied, "I have so accustomed myself to expect it, that it now offends me no more than the noise of the carriages in the streets."