

buried at Kirby Moorside; and the register, which is still preserved, contains, among other burials, that of "*Gorges vilans, Lord dooke of bookeingum*," as taking place April 17th, 1687.

A death-bed may always be made an instructive lesson to survivors; and the following picture of the state of mind of this celebrated man, drawn by himself, when the world and its follies had ceased to interest him, may not be without its uses. How many thousands upon thousands of God's poorest subjects are there, who have throughout life enjoyed more happiness than this envied favourite owns himself ever to have known; and who, when upon their death-beds, will have a greater and surer reason for the hope that is in them than he ever was able to give. We often need only know the real condition of others, to be cured of all envy.

*From the younger Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, when on his death-bed:—*

DEAR DOCTOR,

I have always looked upon you to be a person of true virtue, and know you to have a sound understanding; for, however I may have acted in opposition to the principles of religion, or the dictates of reason, I can honestly assure you I have always had the highest veneration for both. The world and I shake hands—for I dare affirm we are heartily worthy of each other. O, what a prodigal have I been of that most valuable of all possessions—Time! I have squandered it away with a profusion unparalleled; and now, when the enjoyment of a few days would be worth the world, I cannot flatter myself with the prospect of half a dozen hours. How despicable, oh my dear friend, is that man who never prays to his God but in the time of distress. In what manner can he supplicate that Omnipotent Being in his afflictions, whom, in the time of his prosperity, he never remembered with reverence?

Do not brand me with infidelity when I tell you that I am almost ashamed to offer up my petitions at the throne of grace, or to implore that divine mercy in the next world which I have scandalously abused in this. Shall ingratitude to man be looked upon as the blackest of crimes, and not ingratitude to God, to whom we are indebted for all we have enjoyed? Shall an insult offered to the king be looked upon in the most offensive light, and yet no notice be taken when the King of kings is treated with indignity and disrespect?

The companions of my former libertinism would scarcely believe their eyes were you to show this epistle. They would laugh at me as a dreaming enthusiast, or pity me as a timorous wretch, who was shocked at the appearance of futurity; but, whoever laughs at me for being right, or pities me for being sensible of my errors, is more entitled to my compassion than my resentment. A future state may well enough strike terror into any man who has not acted well in this life; and he must have an uncommon share of courage indeed, who does not shrink at the presence of God. The apprehensions of death will soon bring the most profligate to a proper use of his understanding. To what a situation am I now reduced! Is this anxiety of mind becoming the character of a Christian? From my rank I might have expected affluence to wait upon my life—from religion and understanding, peace to smile upon my end; instead of which I am afflicted with poverty, and haunted with remorse—despised by my country, and, I fear, forsaken by my God.

There is nothing so dangerous as extraordinary abilities. I cannot be accused of vanity now, by being sensible that I was once possessed of uncommon qualifications, especially as I sincerely regret that I ever had them. My rank in life made these accomplishments still more conspicuous, and, fascinated by the general applause which they procured, I never considered the proper objects to which they should have been applied. Hence, to procure a smile from a black-

head, whom I despised, I have frequently treated virtue with disrespect; and sported with the holy name of Heaven to obtain a laugh from a parcel of fools who were entitled to nothing but contempt.

What a pity that the Holy Writings are not made the criterions of true judgment; or that any person should pass for a fine gentleman in this world, except he that appears solicitous about his happiness in the next.

I am forsaken by all my acquaintances—utterly neglected by the friends of my bosom and the dependents on my bounty; but no matter. I am unfit to converse with the former, and have no ability to serve the latter. Let me not, however, be wholly cast off by the good. Favour me with a visit as soon as possible. Writing to you gives me some ease, especially on a subject I could talk on for ever. I am of opinion that this is the last visit I shall ever solicit from you; my distemper is powerful—come and pray for the departing spirit of the poor unhappy

BUCKINGHAM.

*ASH*

ASH WEDNESDAY.

This is the first day of Lent. It is called *Ash Wednesday*, because, in the Roman Catholic Church, the priest blesses ashes on this day, and puts them on the heads of the people. These ashes are made of the branches of brushwood or palms, consecrated the year before. The ashes are cleaned and dried, and sifted, fit for the purpose. After the priest has given absolution to the people, he prays "Vouchsafe to bless and sanctify these ashes—that whosoever shall sprinkle these ashes upon them for the redemption of their sins, they may obtain health of body and protection of soul," &c. Prayers ended, the priest sprinkles the ashes with holy water, and perfumes them thrice with incense, and the people coming to him and kneeling, he puts ashes on their heads in the form of a cross, with other ceremonies.

Platina, a priest, and librarian to the Vatican, who wrote the lives of the popes, relates that Prochetus, Archbishop of Geneva, being at Rome on Ash Wednesday, he fell at the feet of pope Boniface VIII., who blessed and gave out the ashes on that day, in order to be signed with the blessed ashes, as others had been. Thinking him to be his enemy, instead of uttering the usual form, "Remember, O man, because thou art dust, thou shalt return to dust," &c., the pope parodied the form, and said, "Remember thou art a Ghibelline, and with the Ghibellines thou shalt return to ashes," and then his holiness threw the ashes in the archbishop's eyes.

It is observed by Mr. Fosbroke that ladies wore friars' girdles in Lent. This gentleman quotes, from "Camden's Remains," that Sir Thomas More, finding his lady scolding her servants during Lent, endeavoured to restrain her; "Tush, tush, my lord," said she, "look, here is one step to heavenward," showing him a friar's girdle. "I fear me," said he, "that one step will not bring you up one step higher." There are various instances of belief in the virtues of garments that had been worn by monks and friars; some of them almost surpassing belief.

Ash Wednesday is observed in the Church of England by reading publicly the curses denounced against impenitent sinners; to each malediction the people being directed to utter, amen. Many, who consider this as cursing their neighbour, keep away from church on the occasion; which absence, from these motives, Mr. Brand regards as "a folly and superstition worthy of the after-midnight, the spirit-walking time of popery." On this eloquent remark, and Mr. Brand is seldom warned to eloquence, it may be observed, that persons far removed from superstition, and who have never approached "the valley of the shadow of popery," deem the commination of the "Common Prayer Book" a departure from the Christian dispensation, and its injunctions of brotherly kindness.