

directly by the praise of morality; for "Comus" is in reality a summing up of the argument *pro* and *con* the life of sensual gratification and the life of virtue. The verdict is given in favor of the latter, and should claim the attention of all who are

"Unmindful of the crown that virtue gives."

At that time *Comus* was a dread and vigorous monster. Too many in England had been lured into his "snares," and had tasted his "orient liquor." With the example of a licentious Court, society was sinking in corruption and sensuality. Milton does not spare the vices of those who were ever ready to

"welcome joy and feast,
Midnight shout and revelry:"

To him they seem to be a crowd of brutes which,

"so perfect is their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement.
But boast themselves more comely than before."

He protests, in all the austerity of Puritanism, against the extravagance, the "gluttony" and "gorgeous feasts" of some that caused others to "pine in want." Especially does he insist upon the exercise of chastity, that "hidden strength," whose possessors are "clad in complete steel." To the souls of such the angels whisper,

"And in clear dream and solemn vision,
Tell them of things that no gross ear can hear."

The poet believes that morality is conducive, not only to the highest earthly happiness, but also to the most complete intellectual development. Such are the utterances of a Puritan: the words of a man who fearlessly defended whatever he believed to be right; the conclusions of a cultured, thoughtful, earnest mind.

By the conclusions which find expression in "Comus," Milton regulated his whole life. His motto seems to have always been,

"Love Virtue; she alone is free."

The minds of too many of our great writers have been degraded by vice; but against the moral character of our second

great English poet, the deepest thinker and one of the most learned men of his time, even his enemies could bring no accusation. To his latest day, he maintained that

"Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt;

and in his old age, when persecuted by his enemies, forsaken by his friends, poor and blind, he proved by his grand epic, what he had asserted years before, that

"He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' centre, and enjoy bright day"

J.

ON TEDIOUS SPEAKERS.

It is related of an ancient writer that he severely criticised another for speaking in three words what might have been said in two. If this principle were more faithfully adhered to at the present time, we would not so often be compelled to listen to long verbose discourses which, if they contain anything attractive, it is almost smothered by its clothing.

It was said of two writers "That if you took a word from one of them you spoiled his eloquence; but if you took a word from the other you spoiled his sense." We frequently have opportunities to apply the first part of this criticism, but especially we are reminded of it in debating societies, when we often listen to ten minute speeches which might have been delivered in two. Some persons seem to be of the opinion that others are as fond of hearing them talk as they are of hearing themselves, and thus succeed in wearying their hearers; no point of wit nor humor will, in conclusion, compensate for the encroachment, and thus the effect of their remarks are weakened.

A tedious speaker fares even worse than the writer of a prolix book. An author may be tossed aside when he becomes tiresome—not so with the speaker who bores his hearers by long and scrupulously nice details, until a feeling of aversion similar to that produced by a distaste-