

## PAST AND PRESENT.

## II.

"*αἰρέων αἰνῆτά.*"—Pindar.

It does not appear a very long time since I was an Undergraduate. The habits and ideas happily contracted in *Academia*—clinging to one through life—friendships tried and strong bring one back in recollection imperceptibly to *Alma Mater*. The fragmentary remains of a treatise on *Logarithms*, all that is left deservedly in hand or head of what cost so much time and patience, snugly curled up in an out-of-the-way corner of your box, an old letter, a disabled pipe—each the witness of young confidences—a casual remark, casting its shadow of the past—all memory provokers—dead leaves of youth's spring-time. Days gone, you reflect; time wasted, perhaps. Yet through the confused mass of recollections—intangible product of your University life—the clear outline of the Three Towers is always present, and with it the feeling that you owe the fruit to the shell. *In statu pupillari*: ay, but patriotism is bred of discipline and respect by a delicately attuned distance. What means have you within yourself, my brother Bachelor, of softening the lights and shades of this afterlife, whose beginnings were not laid in College days? 'The disabled pipe'—the first symptom of your most pardonable weakness; but surely Pigeon's muscular mutton and the laboured efforts of digestion, bred a predisposition to the disease. An easy chair, your slippers and dressing-gown, a grate fire, light and warmth in your pipe and heart—well (never mind a few grey hairs), you are in Trinity again. A briar with a bone stem—no merschaum—a modest friend that none will covet. Watching the coal fire, alone with a friend who hangs upon your lips and owes to you his life's breath, your creature, verily, yet no worry, whose society is cheerful, whose intimacy and dependance is real, sociability without talk—no word but the gentle remonstrance when the bowl is emptied—your whims humoured in his airiness, ashes to sympathize with your gloom and his rich autumnal hue chasing from you all but mature reflections—pray whither fly your thoughts if not to the third year corridor and the snug little den of long ago? *Bruyère* and wing-bone—a dainty engraftment—an emblem in a way—a strange union of stability and fickleness. I had such an one once: others, they say, such an experience. Ay, one whose sweetness, I had thought, would never be tasted by other lips—something I called my own—and I would smoke and follow thoughts chasing a shadow till the heel of 'perique' (thought 'the thing' in my day) smouldered, and the flickering images in the grate took quaint forms—for the fire burned low—the blue tongues of flame, fluttering on the last coal, looked strangely through the haze—shall I confess it?—a pair of dancing eyes seen through a tangle of fair hair—teazing me—*Bruyère* and bone! retrospect, beginning and ending in smoke.

(To be continued.)

## THE REVOLT OF ISLAM.

BY A. LAMPMAN.

What a delicate thing to be entrusted to this stern world's keeping is a poet's nature, a nature like Shelley's; gentle yet proud, boldly imaginative, deeply passionate, intensely sensitive, and ever striving to raise itself above the level of the world in its lofty aspirations. How easily it may be spoiled, embittered, and turned away from truth in an unaided struggle with the unsympathetic coldness and

heartless oppression of society, and to what a sacred height may it attain, if it be nourished with the pure warmth of faithful friendship, and turned always towards the brighter side of human life. Shelley was destined to see the world only in its gloomiest colours. He was exposed in his extreme youth to the cruelty of school fellows, who knew no sympathy with his proud sensitive heart, and afterwards in college days to the unrelenting persecution of narrow bigotry, and the coldness of natures whose feelings and aspirations were utterly incongenial to his own. Even in after life, when the light of his burning genius had struggled into notice, and cast its scorching rays on the tottering fabric of a system of oppression and cold blind servitude which was soon to die away, he experienced in the strange persecution and malevolent misrepresentation, which continually followed him, the bitter truth of those heartfelt words of his own in *Queen Mab*:

Ah! to the stranger soul, when first it peeps  
From its new tenement, and looks abroad  
For happiness and sympathy, how stern  
And desolate a tract is this wide world!

Thus it was that in his earlier days he withdrew himself almost entirely from the society of those about him, and gave himself up to that wondrous study of nature, which as the reader learns from every page of his marvellous poetry, has made him one of her peculiar priests. His truly poetical education, he himself in the preface to the *Revolt of Islam*, describes in the following words: "I have been familiar from boyhood with mountains, and lakes, and the sea, and the solitudes of forests. Danger, which sports upon the brink of precipices, has been my playmate. I have trodden the glaciers of the Alps, and lived under the eye of Mont Blanc. I have been a wanderer among distant fields. I have sailed down mighty rivers, and seen the sun rise and set, and the stars come forth, while I have sailed night and day down a rapid stream among mountains. I have seen populous cities, and have watched the passions which rise and spread, and sink and change, among assembled multitudes. I have seen the theatre of the more visible ravages of tyranny and war, cities and villages reduced to scattered groups of black and roofless houses, and the naked inhabitants sitting famished upon their desolate thresholds. I have conversed with living men of genius. The poetry of Ancient Greece and Rome, and Modern Italy, and our own country, has been to me like external nature, a passion and an enjoyment. Such are the sources from which the materials for the imagery of my poem have been drawn."

He was indeed a pure worshipper of nature, and during those long days of his early life which he spent in solitary reading, rambling, and meditation, when his mind turned in weariness from the contemplation of what he had already seen of the deep-rooted evils of the world's society to a groping search after the truth, the real secret of human hopes and human destiny, he conceived that intense hatred of all existing forms of government, all restraint on the natural impulses of men whom he believed to be by nature good, which found impassioned vent in the wild and immature but beautiful language of *Queen Mab*.

Do you remember the following lines from the *Revolt of Islam*?

The spirit whom I loved in solitude  
Sustained her child: the tempest-shaken wood,  
The waves, the fountains, and the hush of night—  
These were his voice, and well I understood  
His smile divine, when the calm sea was bright  
With silent stars, and heaven was breathless with delight.