From the Persian.

MUTE COURTSHIP.

By Thomas More, Esq.

Love hath a language of his own,—
A voice that goes
From heart to heart,—whose mystic tone
Love only knows.

The lotus-flower, whose leaves I now
Kiss silently,
Far more than words will tell me how
I worship thee.

The mirror which to thee I hold,—
Which, when impress'd
With thy bright looks, I turn and fold
To this fond breast,—

Doth it not speak, beyond all spells
Of poet's art,
How deep thy hidden image dwells
In this hush'd heart?

UTILITY OF THE EARTH-WORM.

The worm-casts, which so much annoy the gardener by deforming his smooth-shaven lawns, are of no small importance to the agriculturist; and this despised creature is not only of great service in loosening the earth and rendering it permeable by air and water, but is also a most active and powerful agent in adding to the depth of the soil, and in covering comparatively barren tracts with a superficial layer of wholesome mould. In a paper 'On the Formation of Mould,' read before the Geological Society of London, by Charles Darwin, Esq., F. G. S., now one of the secretaries, the author commenced by remarking on two of the most striking characters by which the superficial layer of earth, or, as it is commonly called, vegetable mould, is distinguished. These are, its nearly homegenous nature, although overlying different kinds of subsoil, and the uniform fineness of its particles. The latter fact way be well observed in any gravelly country, where, although in a ploughed field, a large proportion of the soil consists of small stones, yet in old pasture-land not a single pebble will be found within some inches of the surface. The author's attention was called to this subject by Mr. Wedgwood, of Maer Hall in Staffordshire, who showed him several fields, some of which, a few years before, had been covered with lime, and others with burnt marl and cinders. These substances, in every case, are now buried to the depth of some inches beneath the turf. Three fields were examined with care: the first consisted of good pasture-land, which had been limed, without having been ploughed, about twelve years and a half before; the turf was about half an inch thick; and two inches and a half beneath it was a layer or row of small aggregated lumps of the lime, forming, at an equal depth, a well-marked white line. The soil beneath this was of a gravelly nature, and differed very considerably from the mould nearer the surface. About three years since cinders likewise were spread on this field: these are now buried at the depth of one inch, forming a line of black spots parallel to and above the white layer of lime. Some other cinders, which had been scattered in another part of the same field, were either still lying on the surface or entangled in the roots of the grass. The second field examined was remarkable only from the cinders being now buried in a layer, nearly an inch thick, three inches beneath the surface. This layer was in parts so continuous, that the superficial mould was only attached to the subsoil of red clay by the longer roots of the grass.

The history of the third field is more complete. Previously to fifteen years since it was waste land; but at that time it was drained, harrowed, ploughed, and well covered with burnt marl and cinders. It has not since been disturbed, and now supports a tolerably good pasture. The section here was—turf half an inch, mould two inches and a half; a layer one and a half inch thick, composed of fragments of burnt marl (conspicuous from their bright red colour, and some of considerable size, namely, one inch by half an inch broad, and a quarter thick), of cinders, and a few quartz pebbles mingled with earth; lastly, about four inches and a half beneath the surface was the original black peaty soil. Thus beneath a layer (nearly four inches thick) of fine particles of earth, mixed with some vegetable matter, those substances now occurred, which, fifteen years before, had been spread on the surface. Mr. Darwin stated that the appearance in all cases was as if the fragments had, as the farmers believe, worked themselves down. It does not however appear at all possible that either the powdered lime or the fragments of burnt marl and the pebbles could sink through compact earth to some inches beneath the surface, and still remain in a continuous layer; nor is it probable that the decay of the grass, although adding to the surface some of the constituent parts of the mould, should separate in so short a time the fine from the coarse earth, and accumulate the former on those objects which so lately were strewed on the surface. Mr. Darwin also remarked that near towns, in fields which did not appear to have been ploughed, he had often been surprised by finding pieces of pottery and bones some inches below the turf. On the mountains of Chile he had been perplexed by noticing elevated marine shells, covered by earth, in situations where rain could not have washed it on them.

The explanation of these circumstances, which occurred to Mr. Wedgwood, although at first it may appear trivial, the author does not doubt is the correct one, namely, that the whole is due to the digestive process by which the common Earth-worm is supported. On carefully examining between the blades of grass in the fields above described, the author found that there was scarcely a space of two inches square without a little heap of the cylindrical castings of worms. It is well known that worms swallow earthy matter, and that, having separated the serviceable portion, they eject at the mouth of their burrows the remainder in little intestine shaped heaps. The worm is unable to swallow coarse particles; and as it would naturally avoid pure lime, the fine earth lying beneath either the cinders and burnt marl, or the powdered lime, would, by a slow process, be removed and thrown up to the surface. This supposition is not imaginary, for in the field in which cinders had been spread out only half a year before, Mr. Darwin actually saw the castings of the worms heaped on the smaller fragments. Nor is the agency so trivial as it at first might be thought, the great number of Earth-worms (as every one must be aware who has ever dug in a grass-field) making up for the insignificant quantity of work which each performs.

On the above hypothesis, the great advantage of old pasture land, which farmers are always particularly averse from breaking up, is explained; for the worms must require a considerable length of time to prepare a thick stratum of mould, by thoroughly mingling the original constituent parts of the soil, as well as the manures added by man. In the peaty field, in fifteen years, about three inches and a half had been well digested. It is probable, however, that the process is continued, though at a slow rate, to a much greater depth; for as often as a worm is compelled by dry weather or any other cause to descend deep, it must bring to the surface, when it empties the contents of its body, a few particles of earth. The author concluded by remarking, that it is probable that every particle of earth in old pasture land has passed through the intestines of worms, and hence that in some senses the term "animal mould" would be more appropriate than "vegetable mould." The agriculturist, in ploughing the ground, follows a method strictly natural; and he only imitates in a rude manner, without being able either to bury the pebbles or to sift the fine from the coarse soil, the work which nature is daily performing by the agency of the earth-worm.

Since this paper was read Mr. Darwin has received from Staffordshire the two following statements:—1. In the spring of 1835 a boggy field was so thickly covered with sand that the surface appeared of a red colour, but the sand is now overlaid with three-quarters of an inch of soil. 2. About eighty years ago a field was manured with marl, and it has been since ploughed, but it is not known at what exact period. An imperfect layer of the marl now exists at a depth, very carefully measured from the surface, of twelve inches in some places and fourteen in others, the difference corresponding to the top and hollows of the ridges or butts. It is certain that the marl was buried before the field was ploughed, because the fragments are not scattered through the soil, but constitute a layer which is horizontal, and therefore not parallel to the undulations of the ploughed surface. No plough, moreover, could reach the marl in its present position, as the furrows in this neighbourhood are never more than eight inches in depth. In the above paper it is shown that three inches and a half of mould had been accumulated in fifteen years; and in this case, within eighty years (that is, on the supposition, rendered probable from the agricultural state of this part of the country, that the field had never before been marled) the Earth-worms have covered the marl with a bed of earth averaging thirteen inches in thickness.

From "Heads of the People."

THE MONTHLY NURSE.

"The Monthly Nurse—taking the class in the lump, without such exceptions as will be noticed before we conclude—is a middle-aged, motherly sort of a gossiping, hushing, flattering, dictatorial, knowing, ignorant, not very delicate, comfortable, uneasy, slip-slop kind of a blinking individual, between asleep and awake, whose business it is—under Providence and the doctor—to see that a child be not ushered with too little officiousness in the world, nor brought up with too much good sense during the first month of its existence. All grown people, with her, (excepting her own family,) consist of wives who are brought to bed, and husbands who are bound to be extremely sensible of the supremacy of that event; and all the rising generation are infants in laced caps, not five weeks old, with incessant thirst, screaming faces, thumpable backs, and red little minnikin hands tipped with hints of nails. She is the only maker of caudle in the world. She takes snuff ostentatiously, drams advisedly, tea incessantly, advice indignantly, a nap when she can get it, cold whenever there is a crick in the door, and the remainder of whatsoever her mistress leaves to eat or drink, provided it is what somebody else would like to have. But she drinks rather than eats. She has not the relish for a 'bit o' dinner' that the servant-maid has; though nobody but the washer-woman beats her at a 'dish 'o tea,' or at that which 'keeps cold out of the stomach,' and puts weakness into it. If she is thin, she is generally straight as a stick, being of a condition of body that not even drams will tumefy. If she is fat, she is one of the fubsiest of the cosy; though rheumatic withal, and requiring a complexional good-nature to settle the irritabilities of her position, and turn the balance in favour of comfort or hope. She is the victim of watching; the arbitress of her superiors; the servant, yet rival, of doctors; the opposer of innovations; the regretter of all old household religions as to pap-boats, cradles, and swathes; the inhabitant of a hundred bed-rooms; the Juno Lucina of the ancients, or goddess of child-birth, in the likeness of a cook-maid. Her greatest consolation under a death (next to the corner-cupboard, and the not having had her advice taken about a piece of flannel,) is the handsomeness of the corpse; and her greatest pleasure in life, is when lady and baby are both gone to sleep, the fire bright, the kettle boiling, and her corns quiescent. She then first takes a pinch of snuff, by way of pungent anticipation of bliss, or as a sort of concentrated essence of satisfaction; then a glass of spirits—then puts the water in the tea-pot—then takes another glass of spirits (the last having been a small one, and the coming tea affording a 'counteraction')—then smoothes down her apron, adjusts herself in her arm-chair, pours out the first cup of tea, and sits for a minute or two staring at the fire, with the solid complacency of an owl,—perhaps not without something of his snore, between wheeze and snuff-box.

"Good and ill nature, as is the case of every one else, make the great difference between the endurability, or otherwise, of this personage in your house; and the same qualities, in the master and mistress, together with the amount of their good sense, or the want of it, have a like re-action. The good or ill, therefore, that is here said of the class in general, becomes applicable to the individual accordingly. But as all people will get what power they can, the pleasant by pleasant means, and the unpleasant by the reverse, so the office of the Monthly Nurse, be her temper and nature what it will, is one that emphatically exposes her to temptation that way; and her first endeavour, when she comes into a house, is to see how far she can establish an undisputed authority on all points. In proportion to her success or otherwise in this subject, she looks upon the lady as a charming, reasonable, fine, weak, cheatable creature, whose husband (as she tells him) 'can never be too grateful for her bearing such troubles on his account;' or as a Frenchified conceited madam, who will turn out a deplorable match for the poor gentleman, and assuredly be the death of the baby with her tantrums about 'natural living,' and her blasphemies against rum, pieces of fat, and Daffy's Elixir. The gentleman in like manner—or 'master,' as the humbler ones call him—is, according as he behaves himself, and receives her revelations for gospel, a 'sweet good man'—quite a gentleman'—'just the very model of a husband for mistress,' etc. etc.; or, on the other hand, he is a 'very strange gentleman'—'quite an oddity—one that is 'not to be taught his own good'—that will 'neither be led nor *druv*'—that will be the death of mistress with his constant *fidge-fidge* in and out of the room'—and his making her 'laugh in that dreadful manner,' and so forth;—and, as to his 'pretending to hold the baby, it is like a cow with a candlestick.' 'Holding the baby,' indeed, is a science, which she reckons to belong exclusively to herself; she makes it the greatest favour to visiter or servant to let them venture upon a trial of it; and affable intimations are given to the oldest mothers of families, who come to see her mistress, how they will do well to receive a little instruction on that head, and not venture to substitute their fine-spun theories for her solid practice; for your Monthly Nurse (next to a positive grandson) is the greatest teacher of your grandmother how to suck eggs in the world, and you may have been forty years in the habit of sticking a pin, and find your competency come to nothing before the explanatory pity of her information.

"Respecting the 'doctor,' her thoughts cannot be so bold or even so patronising. She is confessedly second to him, while he is present; and when he has left the room, a spell remains upon her from his superior knowledge. Yet she has her hearty likes or dislikes of him too, and on the same grounds of self-reference. If she likes him, there 'never *was* such a beautiful doctor" except perhaps Sir William, or Doctor Buttermouth, (both dead,) and always excepting the one that recommended herself. He is a 'fine man'—so patient—so without pride—and yet 'so firm, like;'—nobody comes near him for a difficult case—for a fever case—for the management of a 'violent lady.' If she dislikes him, he is 'queer'—'odd'—'stubborn'—has the 'new ways,'—very proper, she has no doubt, but not what she has been used to, or seen practised by the doctors about court. And whether she likes him or not, she has always a saving grace for herself, of superiority to all other nurses, in point of experience and good luck. She has always seen a case of more difficulty than the one in hand, and knows what was done for it; and Doctor Gripps, who is 'always' called in to such cases, and who is a very pleasant though rough sort of gentleman, calls her his 'other right hand,' and 'the *jewel* that rhymes to *gruel*.'

"Armed with these potential notions in general, and the strongest possible sense of her vice-royalty over master and mistress for the time being, she takes possession of the new room and the new