

(ORIGINAL.)

## A "DISPUTED TERRITORY."

BY A TYRO.

DESIROUS of hearing the continuation of my friend, the Squire's, description of our city, I hunted him out, according to previous arrangement, and found him quartered in a snug little burrow, fitted up with bed, table, shelves filled with a judicious selection of books, more for use than ornament; and, last not least, that "literary lounge's" luxury, an easy chair. Coming suddenly upon him, I caught him reclining in the chair, his brow black with thought; but as soon as I had forced myself upon his notice, his countenance assumed a more cheerful expression, at the prospect of having some one to murder with his prosiness. So, no sooner had I, at his request, taken a seat, than he broke out in the following strain, as surprising as it was unexpected. Thus rattled he on:—

"Whether the study of the ancient classics be useful or not, has been a fruitful subject of discussion in all civilized nations for several centuries; and our little Pedlington, not willing to be behind the rest of the world in polish, has, of course, also attempted to settle the question. But the attempt proved abortive, for the two extreme parties have not, as yet, come to any amicable arrangement; and though there has been no outbreak between them, each has its private prejudices—its partialities in favour of its own view of the case—which it would not yield up to the other for the world. One side upholds the fluent Greek and sturdy Roman tongues to be perfection itself; and the Bentleys, the Porsons, and the Parrs—the sainted guides through the Dædalian intricacies—in their eyes swell out into gods. 'Oh! ye purblind mortals,' do they cry 'why will ye remain in darkness, and not visit these fountains of light which alone can remove your Cimmerian gloom? Though ye should know as many modern languages as did the lamented Sir William Jones, of what consequence is it? Are they to be compared with our favourites? Though ye have passed the Pons Asinorum, and can geometrically construct lasting railroads, bridges, and canals—are ye any thing better than *blockheads* if ye will not consult us! What are all your modern songs, odes, and dramas? Mere sing-song and nonsense, when laid beside the matchless remains of antiquity!"

"Surely the supporters of such doctrines are entitled, by their plausibility, to a hearing! Surely their arguments must convict us of ignorance and induce us to give up all practical employments to become noble antiquarians—diggers for pots and pans, and hunters after the musty relics of authors who wrote before the Christian era, and hence must be of inestimable value! Go to! let us overturn all our late achievements, and retrace our steps from this latter golden age, till we find ourselves plunged

into the former, where we can enjoy as much fighting, luxury, and sloth, as would satisfy even the Neapolitan lazzaroni.

"But since justice requires that we should hear both sides of a case, let us turn to the rivals of these deeply learned gentlemen, and compressing their assertions into narrow compass, see whether they are more sensible than the former.

"These totally deny the efficacy of antique studies, in fitting the mind for the bustle of the present century; they allow that the speculations of these old philosophers may have been good enough in their day, but maintain that they have been exploded by the combined bursts of oxygen and hydrogen, gunpowder, and the other inflammable materials that give a fitful light to our generation, far superior to any that has previously shone on the world. What they want is not *thought*, but *action*. They like to see a man spring into the arena, like that little firework christened "a serpent;" run hither and thither with a whizzing noise; throw out a dim light for a season, and then vanish to be no more heard of.

"You will find this class composed entirely of the practical men, whose time and thoughts are devoted to gain, and who, making the heaping-up of riches their sole aim through life, will not of course admit any pursuits to be useful, but such as tend to further their own interests. They desire to be looked up to as models of great men, who have found out every thing without external assistance—forgetting that their capacious intellects are but the recipients of a stream formed by the confluence of a thousand rills, whose head-fountains are those very classical treasures which they now consider too shallow to water the fields of knowledge."

"But," said I, interrupting him, "what course would you adopt, if you condemn both sides? I fear that even with all your wisdom, you may get into the same scrape as the fox who was soused into a well while striving to get a sip of water."

"Perhaps so," answered he; "and even then, if all other resources fail, can I not be weighed up again by gulls heavier than myself, who may be licking their lips in anticipation of a savoury morsel of moonshine! Yet we need not be put to such shifts. Is not the path plain enough even to a blind man? Clearly defined, it lies between the two extremes, and were it not for the unwillingness of the classical and non classical parties to shift their respective positions, they might see it in the same light as does any unprejudiced person. But no—they are each determined to view it from but one station; and while noting on their respective sides, only what favours their own ideas, they are both partly right and partly wrong. For my part, I have travelled both over and around the road—have viewed it from above, from below, and from every accessible point, and the result of my observations is: that in education, studying the classics is of great advantage,