

fed, and the fell grandeur of his guilt dwindle beside the lurid beauty and eloquent blasphemy of Lucifer, who becomes the hero of the drama: the Cain of Coleridge appears solitary, bearing his own iniquity like a covering, and seathed by the fire of his own devouring remorse. Byron could not have created that figure of Abel, 'whose feet disturbed not the sands,' nor have written that fearful sentence describing the blasted beauty and might of the pallid murderer, 'whose mighty limbs were wasted as by fire, and whose hair was as the matted locks upon the bison's forehead,' although neither could Coleridge, nor perhaps any being that ever breathed but Byron, have so personified the despair, or talked the sophistry and the eloquence of hell, or carried us up with the grim pair along that sullen, but sublime flight, through the stars, trembling and darkening as the infernal wings swept by, and through the shadowy shapes of former worlds which had arisen, past, and perished, ere the 'infant sun was rolled together, or had tried his beams athwart the gulf profound.'

William Wordsworth appears in imminent danger of being soon as indiscriminately and even fulsomely praised, as he was ever depreciated at the outset of his career. It has become the fashion with a certain school to fall down and worship him. Talfourd's beautiful essay on Wordsworth, for example, is a glowing panegyric, not a criticism. The author of the work before us, however, does not go quite so far. He is a devotee, it is true, but not more so than from his habits of intense admiration, we ought to expect. Wordsworth will find his level in time—a high one, it is true, for we deny him not the visitation of "the loftier mood," the flash of the "finely frenzied eye," but not on the same eminence where stand the shades of Homer, of Dante, of Shakespeare, and of John Milton.

"Wordsworth's mission has been a lofty one, and loftily fulfilled,—to raise the mean, to dignify the obscure, to reveal that natural nobility which lurks under the russet gown and the clouted shoe; to extract poetry from the cottage, and from the turf-fire upon its hearth, and from the solitary shieling, and from the mountain tarn, and from the gray ancestral stone at the door of the deserted mansion, and from the lichens of the rock, and from the furze of the melancholy moor. It is to 'hang a weight of interest'—of brooding, and passionate, and poetical feeling upon the hardest, the remotest, and the simplest objects of nature—it is to unite gorgeousness of imagination with prosaic literality of fact—it is to interweave the deductions of a subtle philosophy with the 'short and simple annals of the poor.' And how to the waste and meaningless parts of creation has he, above all men, given a voice, an intelligence, and a beauty!

"His purpose is to extract what is new, beautiful, and sublime, from his own heart, reflecting its feelings upon the simplest objects of nature, and the most primary emotions of the human soul. And here lies the lock of his strength. It is comparatively easy for any gifted spirit to gather off the poetry crenning upon lofty sub-

jects—to extract the imagination which such topics as heaven, hell, dream-land, fairy-land, Grecian or Swiss scenery, almost involve in their very sounds; but to elude interest out of the every-day incidents of simple life—to make every mood of one's mind a poem—to find an epic in a nest, and a tragedy in a tattered cloak—thus to 'hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear'—to find 'sermons in stones,' and poetry in every thing—to have 'thoughts too deep for tears,' blown into the soul by the wayside flower,—this is one of the rarest and most enviable of powers."

The poetry of Ebenezer Elliott is full of the vigorous, fearless, manly character of the writer. Force of thought and singleness of purpose are the characteristics of his mind:

"Glancing æsthetically at the inspired iron-monger, you see at once that strength is his principal characteristic; nor do you care to settle the question whether it be strength of intellect, or passion, or imagination, or a triple twist of all three. You are tempted, indeed, while looking at him, to believe that a really strong man is strong all around; and whatever fatal flaw may run through all his faculties, they must all support each other—intellect supplying the material, imagination the light, passion, the flame, of the one conflagration. You say as you look at him, whether hammering at a steel-yard or a sonnet—leaving his way through nervous verse or rugged prose, here is a workman that needeth not to be ashamed—a Demiurgus, like those giant-muscled three in Raffaele's Building the Ark, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, sawing at the massive timbers which are to swim the Deluge and rest on Ararat with a force, a gusto, and a majesty suitable to the tenants of an undrowned world; or, like those Vulcanian three, that in smouldering caverns under Mongibello, wrought in fire—Brontes, and black Steropes, and Pyraemon. So stands, leans, labours, growls and curses at times, not loud but deep, with foot firmly planted, and down-bent flaming eye, this

'Titan of the age of tools.'

You see, too, that he has the true vision of the poet—that mysterious eyesight which sees the spiritual as well as the material shadow which falls from off all things, and which to the hard alone is naked and bare. He this penetrating and incommunicable glance a blessing or a curse; and, as in the case of the second sight, it is the one or the other, according to the objects presented—being, if a genial temperament show the unseen border of beauty which edges and flowers all things, one of the greatest of blessings; but if accident or position, or a black bilious medium discover the hulk of misery which invisibly surrounds every object in this strange world, one of the greatest of curses: be it the one or the other, it has, and for ever, sealed his eye. You regret to perceive, on more narrow inspection, that he has fixed his piercing gaze too much on the dark side of things—that his view is singular, not comprehensive—that passion has given his eye now a portentous squint, and now a ferocious glare—that he has seen through 'shame,' not in the sense of seeing what even they contain of good and true, but seen through them as through empty spaces into the vast, black, hollow, and hideous night.