

quainted with the experience, ideas, and feelings of men of past ages, renowned for wisdom, and elevated by genius. With *them* he has held familiar intercourse, and garnered in stores of their wisdom. He has asked them for the keys of the intellectual treasure-house, and by entering into their inmost character, seeking the origin of their conceptions, and striving to assimilate himself to them, in every particular, he has been enabled to draw forth things new and old.

“For out of olde felde’s, as men saieth,
Cometh all this newe wine from yere to yere,
And out of olde boke’s in gode faichth,
Cometh all this newe science that men lere,”

Thus, by carrying his mind back, to the time in which they lived, by placing himself in their situation, by becoming possessed of the same spirit, and actuated by the same living principle, he now “thinks and feels, only with the thoughts and feelings of the noblest beings.”

From such sources, then, his knowledge proceeds. A clear conception of *beauty*, as it exists around, about, and *within* him, is deeply impressed upon his mind. Its *open* signification, as well as *deep* and *hidden* meaning having possessed him, he comes forth, to mingle in the business of this every day life, to participate in its joys, to share its sorrows, as well as to refine its pleasures. Imbued with the love of *truth*, and the desire of diffusing it, he is effectively prepared to unfold the beauties within himself, to open mines of instruction and delight for mankind, and to impart to others the genial influences of love and good will.

But *where* does he find those, upon whom it is incumbent to comprehend his high nature? Is it not *foremost* among the ranks of his opponents? Do they remember the many cares and obstructions he has been necessitated to encounter. In the place of stimulating men of genius, and granting them liberal indulgence, do they not rather oppose them, with the view to injure their feelings, and destroy the reputation of their labours.

Happy, however, for those who met with such a reception, this opposition had, at times, an effect contrary to anticipation. Literary men were induced to peruse the works of authors, hitherto unheard of, and discover the reason of so much unbecomingly and unmitigated severity. Ofttimes it occurred that amongst those who examined for themselves, were a few, who, judging not so much by any outward adornment, as by the inward and spiritual meaning bodied forth, perceived as on the banks of the majestic Rhine, “a blending of all beauties,” recognized their high and lofty genius, and ever after continued their intimate friends and steady assistants. By such discerning minds, these authors, (the energies of whose moral and intellectual natures, were enlarged by deep insight into the myste-

ries of creation, and whose souls were the peculiar habitations of glowing and ennobling thoughts) were cherished and encouraged.

Between such men, there is usually a strong bond of union, from the consciousness that they are pursuing one path, and have a single aim constantly in view. The same divine original is indelibly engraved in the hearts of each, so that one spirit appears in both, and the like pure motives actuate them.

The influences, which such high-minded, and generous men exerted were usually happy. Authors perceiving that they were esteemed by those capable of judging, were induced to persevere in the track, which unerring nature pointed out to them, and obtained that bright and lasting fame which was their soul’s earnest, and fervent desire.

It must be acknowledged, that severe criticism has been advantageous, when minds, not purely intellectual, were withheld, through fear of depreciation or reprehension, from engaging in those literary pursuits, for which nature had, evidently, not designed them. They became aware that they could not obtain a lasting reputation, as cultivators of literature, and were induced, wisely and judiciously, to make a choice more suitable to their intellectual endowments.

Still, although the severity of criticism was, in some respects beneficial, its influence upon the naturally sensitive, was usually detrimental. Not all possessed a confidence in their own powers, sufficiently firm as to enable them to overlook present discouragements, and to pursue their labours, with a view to more enlightened times. The life of Keates, whose writings abound in passages, “which came home to every bosom, alive to each nobler, and kindlier feeling of the human heart,” was shortened, by base and unfeeling criticism, in which, notwithstanding his beauties were obvious, notice was taken merely of his defects. Passages of true merit were passed over, and parts, faulty in the smallest degree, were treated with unmerited abuse. These critics were of that school which deals liberally in satire and ridicule, but characteristically confines its censures to those authors who care not to attach themselves to any coterie but have independence enough to think for themselves. As the inquisition in Spain, has, in many instances, materially injured delightful productions, so has such *severe* criticism been the chief cause of the loss, not only of the *works* of authors, but even of the authors themselves.

Let us not, however, be understood to intimate, that *such* criticism is dispensed at all times; we only wish to say, that it *has been done*, and experience fully proved it to be *injurious*. It caused those naturally unassuming, but with superior talents and attainments, to shun this fiery ordeal, and instead of spending their lives upon works of profound charac-