

MELANCHOLY PARALLELS BETWEEN LORD CHESTERFIELD AND LORD ORFORD.

(From the Christian Observer.)

A valued correspondent lately alluded in our pages (January, p. 19) to the melancholy closing days of Lord Chesterfield, who had, as his Lordship expressed it, "the silly rounds of business and pleasure, and had done with them."

"When I reflect back upon what I have seen, what I have heard, and what I have done, I can hardly persuade myself that all that frivolous hurry and bustle, and pleasure of the world, had any reality; but I look upon all that has passed as one of those romantic dreams which opium commonly occasions, and I do by no means desire to repeat the nauseous dose for the sake of the fugitive dream."

"This, it is to be feared, has been the wretched condition of many who have not, like Lord Chesterfield, left their bitter experience upon durable record. But this wretched man confesses his misery. He does not pretend to bear his "melancholy situation"—so he calls it—with "constancy or resignation."

Contrast this with the language of St. Paul: "I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."

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ing, he might have enjoyed the blessed consolation of assuredly believing that through his Redeemer's merits he was eternally rescued from a world of sin and care, and that the sorrowing father would, when he had patiently waited his change, be translated to the same felicity: "I shall go to him, but he shall not come back to me."

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"I come now to the part of the advice I have to offer to you, which most nearly concerns your welfare, and upon which every good and honourable purpose of your life will assuredly turn. I mean the keeping up in your heart the true sentiments of religion. If you are not right towards God, you can never be towards man: the noblest sentiment of the human breast is here brought to the test. It is gratitude in the number of a man's virtues? If it be, the highest benefactor demands the warmest returns of gratitude, love, and praise. Ingratum qui dixerit, omnia dicit. If a man wants this virtue, where there are infinite obligations to excite and quicken it, he will be likely to want all others towards his fellow-creatures, who to most gifts were poor, compared to those he daily receives at the hands of his never-failing Almighty friend. "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth," is big with the deepest wisdom:—"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and an upright heart, that is understanding." This is eternally true, whether the wits and rakes of Cambridge allow it or not; nay, I must add of this religious wisdom, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Hold fast, therefore, by this sheet anchor of happiness, religion; you will often want it in the times of most danger, the storms and tempests of life. Cherish true religion as preciously as you will fly, with abhorrence and contempt, superstition and enthusiasm. The first is the perfection and glory of human nature, the two last, the deprivation and disgrace of it. Remember, the essence of religion is, a heart void of offence towards God and man; not subtle speculative opinions, but an active vital principle of faith."

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master was or was not the officiating minister of the day; and regulated his course accordingly. If the Rector took the duty, Cherry would at once precede him to the vestry. But if a different arrangement had been entered upon, Cherry would stop short in the aisle, and station himself on a mat before the Rector's pew door. Mr. Richard Heber repeatedly said, "he was sure the dog understood what passed in conversation;" and the Rector would often with a laugh express his fears that Cherry was "over canny," and "had by some unlawful means obtained a clue to the 'universal language!'" Of the charitable disposition of his master, Cherry seemed perfectly cognizant. If in their walks they met with a beggar, Cherry would never allow the poor wretch to pass till he had directed Mr. Heber's attention to him. He would draw up by the side of the wayfarer and there remain without any attempt to bark, growl, or bite, till the Rector came up. If the poor object appeared more than usually ill-clad, wretched, and helpless, Cherry would utter a low whine, but never quit his new acquaintance till Mr. Heber had spoken to him. And rare indeed was the instance when words were all that the applicant received. Another trait, and Cherry shall pass from the page. He invariably accompanied, or rather preceded, Mr. Heber on his morning visit to the Sunday school. When we heard his stealthy pit-pat upon the stairs, we were pretty sure of whom he was the herald. He used to pause upon the highest step, and I have often thought, enjoyed the panic—the transition from considerable hubbub to perfect stillness—which his appearance invariably produced. There was an expression of glee, a look of wicked intelligence, of dog-like triumph, which only Dickens can describe, and Landseer's pencil portray. It said, as clearly as dog-like eyes and nose could say, "So, oh! my masters, I've the upper hand at present."—The Bishop's Daughter.

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"I come now to the part of the advice I have to offer to you, which most nearly concerns your welfare, and upon which every good and honourable purpose of your life will assuredly turn. I mean the keeping up in your heart the true sentiments of religion. If you are not right towards God, you can never be towards man: the noblest sentiment of the human breast is here brought to the test. It is gratitude in the number of a man's virtues? If it be, the highest benefactor demands the warmest returns of gratitude, love, and praise. Ingratum qui dixerit, omnia dicit. If a man wants this virtue, where there are infinite obligations to excite and quicken it, he will be likely to want all others towards his fellow-creatures, who to most gifts were poor, compared to those he daily receives at the hands of his never-failing Almighty friend. "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth," is big with the deepest wisdom:—"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and an upright heart, that is understanding." This is eternally true, whether the wits and rakes of Cambridge allow it or not; nay, I must add of this religious wisdom, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Hold fast, therefore, by this sheet anchor of happiness, religion; you will often want it in the times of most danger, the storms and tempests of life. Cherish true religion as preciously as you will fly, with abhorrence and contempt, superstition and enthusiasm. The first is the perfection and glory of human nature, the two last, the deprivation and disgrace of it. Remember, the essence of religion is, a heart void of offence towards God and man; not subtle speculative opinions, but an active vital principle of faith."

"We would not willingly do injustice either to Chesterfield or Walpole; and lest we should seem to do so, we remind our readers that remarks occur now and then in their writings which might seem to imply some degree of homage to the Gospel, but which, when taken in connection with their sayings and doings, it is to be feared come to nothing. Both of them were bland hypocrites; men whose artificial politeness did not allow of their affronting their company, so that they would rally a believer in Christianity with polished sarcasm—they took care not to let their infidelity get the better of their good breeding. We have often heard Hannah More mention some of Lord Orford's irrelevant witticisms, which, however, we will not repeat; yet, in apparent seriousness, he presented "Sainted Hannah," as he used to call her, with a splendid Bible, inscribed, "To his excellent friend Miss Hannah More, his book, which he knows to be the dearest object of her study, and by which, to the great relief and comfort of numberless afflicted and distressed individuals, she has profited beyond any person with whom he is acquainted, is offered as a mark of his esteem and gratitude, by her sincere and obliged humble servant, Horace Earl of Orford, 1795." Hannah More gave or bequeathed this Bible to Lord Teignmouth; who, like her, did know how to value it; and for an inspired reason which Walpole did not understand; not merely that it teaches pity for the afflicted, and in general the love of our neighbour, but that "It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

"We might adduce many proofs from Walpole's history that he did not accuse him unjustly of insincerity. We remember, among other passages, a letter to Woodfall, entreating him not to continue to print extracts in his newspaper from his tragedy of the Mysterious Mother, a horrible story of incest and other crimes, saying that it is "a disgusting subject," and that he "has been endeavouring to suppress it as much as lies in his power," and he offers Woodfall money not to quote from it or to mention it. All this sounded well; for what could an author do more than express his sorrow, and try to cancel his book? Yet, at the very time when this letter was written, Walpole had already splendidly printed, at his own press, this very tragedy, in the first volume

of his collected works, intended for sale; so that it would seem that he only wished to prevent the newspaper extracts, that the work itself might not be forestalled.

"We will give another instance of his insincerity more in point to our remarks. He says, in one of his letters, "I go to Church sometimes, in order to induce my servants to go. A good moral sermon may instruct and benefit them; I only set them an example of listening, not of believing."

"We cannot then give Lord Orford credit for religious sincerity, even should a sentiment of somewhat better cast, than ordinary occur in his writings, especially in his letters to Hannah More. We must say the same of Chesterfield, who occasionally writes something which, if it stood alone, might be taken for a recognition of the claims of Christianity. Thus, when he was asked at Brussels, by a lady whom Voltaire invited him to sup with, how it was that the English Parliament, consisting of several hundred well-informed men, could tolerate so great an absurdity as the Christian Religion, he replied, "I suppose because they have not been able to substitute anything better in its stead."

"It may be feared that he had more to heart the shrewdness of the retort than a grave intention to declare his belief that the Gospel is a Divine revelation. Bishop Horne says that he once told Lady Fanny Shirley, in a serious discourse which they had on the evidences of Christianity, that there was one which he thought could not be got over, the present state of the Jews. He might well feel that there is great weight in this argument; it is an argument which must press upon the boldest infidel; and one which acquires force as prophecy becomes gradually unfolded. Chesterfield had heard much Scriptural truth from Lady F. Shirley, and her devout relative, Lady Huntingdon; as Walpole did from Hannah More, who, at her very last interview with him, urged him to read Law's "Serious Call," but whether with any salutary effect, or only to the sealing of their condemnation, no favourable evidence is on record. Hannah More, in mentioning his death in a letter to her sister, could only say: "Poor Lord Orford! I could not help mourning for him, as if I had not expected it; but twenty years' kindness and pleasant correspondence cannot be given up without emotion."

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