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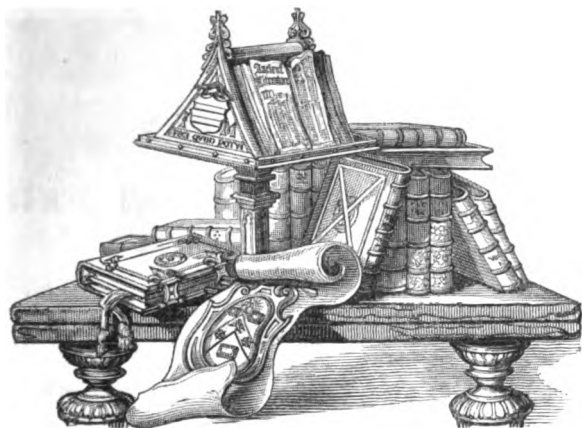
REMINISCENCES

OF

A LITERARY LIFE;

BY THE REVEREND

THOS. FROGNALL DIBDIN, D.D.



" These are the Masters that teach without scolding and chastise without stripes "
 RICHARD DE BURY.

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FROGNALL DIBDIN, D. D.

FROGNALL

Engraved by J. P. White, from a Picture in
the possession of the Rev. Mr. D. D.

CHAPTER II.

SCHOOLBOY DAYS.

“The tear forgot as soon as shed ;
The sunshine of the breast.”

So says—or rather sings—the celebrated GRAY. It may be however a questionable dictum, whether in verse or in prose. In five out of eight parties in which I remember the truth of the above position to have been doubted and impugned, the decision was *against* the tear being quickly forgotten, and the sunshine being uniformly unclouded. It is a mere matter of personal experience, and is not worth the mooting. The sequel will at least prove that “sunshine” was paramount to *shower*.

It will be seen, from the conclusion of the preceding chapter, that, if I was not to be exactly considered as

“The child of misery, baptised with tears,”

yet my infancy was one of incessant solicitude to my parents ; a solicitude, not bereft however of many hours, and days, and months of unspeakable transport to sympathising and grateful bosoms. There is always *hope* where there is *offspring*. In essaying to lift up the veil of futurity, as to the probable des-

tiny of a child, wishes are reasons ; and reasons are too frequently as transparent and unsubstantial as the dews of the morning. My mother's letters are a striking exemplification of this truism. It is evident that, while her heart was half breaking from the gloomiest forebodings, her spirits assumed an artificial and even joyous tone. She calls the attention of her husband, when absent, to their only child—to what a comfort and blessing that child might one day be to them ; and yet, while hanging over his cradle, or caressing him in her arms, it is evident that she was secretly indulging a wish, or pouring forth a prayer, that the miseries of the parent might be for ever unknown to the offspring—

“ No sigh that rends thy father's heart and mine ! ”

Never was a limited and united family broken up more speedily and more sadly. Indeed, I have frequently compared myself to a floating piece of timber, in a wreck, which has accidentally and luckily reached the shore. I was brought over from Middleburgh, very shortly after my mother's death, by a total stranger, one Captain Smith, who took care to charge enough for the voyage. If he had taken as good care of the *object* for which the charge was made, it had been a little more creditable to his character. My person was almost wholly neglected. Ardent spirits, (the potent *Schedam*, in some of its varieties!) however diluted, had made sad havoc with a young stomach ; and when I was landed, I have

been told that I presented a melancholy spectacle, with scarcely half a dozen hairs upon my head. I could walk with difficulty; and had no appetite. Most fortunate it was that I was consigned to ONE, who never ceased, from the moment I came under his roof, to make my wants, and wishes, and comforts, commensurate with all the means which he had in his power to gratify them: who, from my fourth to my twenty-first year, proved himself to be a GUARDIAN in deed as well as by name. That "one" was my mother's younger brother, Mr. WILLIAM COMPTON; appointed in her Will to that office. On receiving me, it was necessary to adopt immediate measures for conveying me into the country, for the establishment of my health, and placing me in some small retired school, where, when that health was established, the common rudiments of education might be taught. But every thing necessarily depended on the kind feeling and constant care of those with whom I might be placed.

I was again fortunate. My mother's aunt, the widow of Captain Frognall (both of whom have been mentioned in the preceding pages) had quitted Plympton, in Devonshire, for Reading, the capital of Berkshire. Here she had a comfortable house in Castle-street, and lived very respectably on a handsome income. She was at this time in her seventy-sixth year;—and for the last five years was bed-ridden. Her temper was soured—probably from her long confinement; but she had an ever vigilant and rest-

less suspicion ; and loved sometimes to act the part of a tyrant with inflexible rigour. Her sister feared her, and her niece, about thirty-five, trembled under her threat of castigation. She never had the least personal affection for me : the only child of a niece, whom she affected sometimes to extol to the skies "for her talents and her virtues." Her delight was to thwart and tantalise me. But I believe the main spring of this conduct to have been a knowledge that a third of her income was to come to *me* at her decease. Add to which, my uncle had discovered that she was a debtor of some 150*l.* to my father's estate. In consequence, she undertook to get me clothed, educated, and boarded, at the least possible expense, in order that she might have a longer period for the payment of the debt. My clothing and education cost only 20*l.* per annum. I had but one suit of clothes a-year, all of the same colour, and of the stoutest cloth that could be procured ; and on the first day of wear, a sedan chair was always sent to convey me from school to spend the whole day at her house. It was in vain that I protested against this mode of conveyance, as a confinement wholly disagreeable and abhorrent to my feelings. She persisted in it, saying "it was the proper way to shew that I was come of genteel parents." I once broke a window to obtain a little air, and in consequence narrowly escaped the "extreme punishment" of domestic discipline. To this was added a determination to deduct the amount of the reparation of the

damage from my quarterly payment. I remember, there was a large cupboard, and a small beaufet, in the room in which she sat, or rather lived: a bedroom upon the first floor. These were well filled with *plate* and *china*; and my attention, especially as I got on towards my tenth year, was usually and perhaps naturally directed to them.

On taking now and then a sly peep, she used to observe it, and invariably to chide me for it: sometimes saying, "what! because you see a *Frog* for the crest, you think all these fine things will one day be *yours*: which they shall *never* be—" and then she would command me to leave her presence. It must in truth be confessed that she was a sad old tyrant*.

It is now time to notice the school, and to make mention of SCHOOLBOY DAYS. I have said that I was "fortunate" in having been transplanted to Reading—in spite of the tyrannical worryings of an old aunt. I was eminently so: for had I been

* She died at the advanced age of eighty-three, in the year 1788. A handsome square stone monument, encircled by an iron railing, in St. Mary's churchyard, attests the place of her interment. She is there described as CLEMENTIA FROGNALL, widow of the late CAPTAIN FROGNALL, commander of the Duke of Dorset East Indiaman. The inscription concludes with the following quaint line: "What she *was*, the last day will shew." As to the "fine things" of plate and china above alluded to, I am in utter ignorance of their present destination. As my great uncle was a frequent trader to the East, it is probable that the china was of a superior description. But the crest of a *frog* seemed to be so naturally the property of a *Frognall*, that its *leaping* into other quarters may be fairly regretted without the slightest imputation of selfishness. For its *own* sake, I should have preferred it to the *plate*.

placed with the leading school of the town, at that time rising into considerable distinction under the magisterial hands of Dr. Valpy, I might not have been able, from my then extremely delicate state of health and tender age, to have braved the buffetings of a hundred boys, and endured the hardships, in whatever mitigated form, of fagging. I was placed, therefore, with a Mr. JOHN MAN, who lived in an obscure part of the town, called *Hosier's-lane*. His establishment was small, and his terms were proportionably moderate. He was a singular, naturally clever, and kind-hearted, man: had a mechanical turn; and could construct electrifying apparatuses, and carve a picture frame. His *studio*, of this description, was at the top of the house; and many an hour do I remember to have spent therein, gazing with surprise and delight upon the mysteries of turning, planing, and chisselling. He had married a Miss Baker, and succeeded to the school of his father-in-law. Old Mr. Baker lived in the house, occupying a study. He wore what was called a buzz-wig, and usually appeared in a large, flowered, dark green camlet-gown. He would frequently admit me within his study; give me books; and once, seeing me very attentively engaged over a large family Bible, with cuts*, came up to me with a solemn, measured

* Of these cuts, ONE almost scared me out of my wits: and what is rather curious, I do not remember to have seen another impression of the same plate, although (as the pages of the *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*

pace, and stooping down, and patting my head, thus addressed me : “ Mind your learning, my child, and you may become what you please.” I knew nothing of the import of these words at the time spoken ; but, although I do not think I was eight years of age, they made a very particular impression upon me. I thought much of them, wrote them down, and showing them to his daughter, my mistress, was told that they implied—“ mind and always get your lessons well, or else you will be sure to be whipped.” *This* was sufficiently intelligible.

The preceding is, perhaps, a little out of the order of time ; but having dispatched the father-in-law, let it be permitted me to indulge in fond remembrance of the daughter, and of her husband, my first schoolmaster, MR. JOHN MAN. Their unremitting attention and kindness perhaps saved my life. Often do I remember to have heard my mistress say, that on passing through the boys’ bed-rooms, the last thing at night, and seeing me asleep, (in the same bed with her eldest son*) she would “ wonder

and *Bibliographical Decameron* may attest) my researches in this particular department of art have not been very limited. The cut in question consisted of the *order* or *degrees of demons*, according to their horrible forms, and supposed power of working evil. Lucifer, with a crown upon his head, sitting, was marked No. 1 ; a huge and dreadfully convoluted serpent, with his mouth open, and an elongated sting, was No. 2——but enough.

* His Christian name was HENRY. Our attachment was as that of brothers. It “ grew with our growth and strengthened with our strength.” We were also class-fellows : but, as he himself would often,

whether I should live to see the morning light?"—so weak and emaciated appeared to be my condition. But, when up and stirring, few could be more alive to what was passing around me; and the boys delighted to make me sing them a Dutch song*. Mrs. Man had four small children. Hearing them address their parents by the familiar titles of father and mother, it seemed to me to be natural to do the same; and their tenderness fully justified the appellation. Here I remained six years, making little progress in anything but writing, arithmetic, and French.

But, so strangely are our habits formed, from *some* early impressions which take deeper root than others—so oddly do we appear to see, think, reason, and act, in this plastic state of existence, from sources which seem now to be wholly unintelligible, if not forgotten—that, in after-life, I know of few things

in after-life, readily and cheerfully admit, we were unequally yoked; for I generally outstripped him in getting the lesson first, and he would cry dreadfully if I "went up to say" without him. In the month of January, 1808, I married him to a widow with a small family, and he survived his marriage only a few years. He had a fine manly spirit, with an affectionate heart, and had a sincere regard for me. He died prematurely of an erysipelas in the arm.

* As I came over in a Dutch vessel from the Cape (see p. 42, *ante*), on board of which not a single creature of the crew could talk English—and as I remained some time in Middleburgh, where the Dutch language was necessarily the only one spoken—I became so familiarised to it that I spoke it almost as fluently as English. The lads, who always love something out of the ordinary course of things, were constantly putting me upon singing one of these songs—of which all traces of recollection both of words and tune have long ago perished.

which have had a more *decided* effect upon me than some of those which occurred during my "schoolboy days" at Reading. Towards my eighth year, my health became settled and strong and my constitution good; and any bodily exertion, for that season of life, could be successfully encountered. There were few big lads, and none exceeding their fifteenth or sixteenth year. If I was petted by the senior boys, I affected great superiority over my juniors—not so much in years, as from their being in an inferior grade in the school. As I reached my tenth year, I seem to have become enthusiastically enamoured of *Soldiery* and of *Letter-writing*. From my weekly allowance of threepence, I regularly deducted one halfpenny for a sheet of foolscap paper, and the ponderous residue was as regularly devoted to the purchase of laths, and scraps of deal, to make swords for my troops. These troops were wheeled, marched, and countermarched—in column and in line—to the number of about twenty-five, with incessant clatter and din, especially of a half-holiday. And when, by means of my weekly allowance, the hostile weapons were all completed, that sum was regularly devoted to the *commissariat* department, in the purchase of cakes for my faithful followers—nothing, however, preventing me from the weekly acquisition of the said folio sheet of foolscap. Upon *that* sheet, strange as it may appear, I was in the habit of writing accounts of the conquests of coun-

tries, by means of British valour, led on by the scribe himself; and when it came to the turns of France and Spain, I took care to make the subjugation of those countries sufficiently complete. I read this enormous mass of absurdity, which I had concocted, every Monday morning at the head of my regiment, with a loud voice, and it was received with three hurras. My reading, out of school-hours, was wholly of the same complexion. I was allowed to go into my master's private room whenever I pleased. It was sufficiently well filled with books. A large arm-chair was near the fire-place, with a set of Hume and Smollett's History of England, with cuts, close at hand. I was for ever taking down these volumes, and reading nothing but the battles of Henry V., Edward III., and John Duke of Marlborough. The engraved portraits of those illustrious warriors, with that of the Black Prince, seemed to rivet what I had read more strongly upon my memory. At this time of day, I ought to have been second only to WELLINGTON!

Let me not, however, quit the *sanctum sanctorum* of my indulgent master, without just mentioning that, it was *here*, for the first time, I caught, or fancied I caught, the electric spark of the BIBLIOMANIA. My master was now and then the purchaser of old books by the *sack-full*; these were tumbled out upon the floor, the arm-chair, or a table, just as it might happen. The work that first caught my

eye, and fixed my attention, (although I could not read a word of the text), was the small octavo edition of *Sandby's Horace*, with cuts *. How

“ I long'd to call the sparkling treasure mine !”

There is sometimes stealing across one—it is stealing across me at this moment—a recollection of the pure, keen, exhilarating joyfulness, relished in early youth, by the participation of pleasures which are not only gone, never to return, but of which the *sources*, in after-life, seem to be scarcely credible. And yet what, in after-life, from sources however deemed more rational and permanent, has been equal to the rapture of those of early, unsuspecting, uncontaminated YOUTH? Where are now the soft, sweet, moonlight nights, when the whoop of “ *I spy high †*” re-echoed through their stillness,

* I have mentioned this anecdote, with some trifling but most true *additamenta*, in the *Bibliographical Decameron*, vol. iii. p. 376. For an account of Sandby's Horace, see *Introduction to the Classics*, vol. ii. p. 109 ; fourth edition.

† It was the custom, at the time of which I am speaking, for young ladies—the children of respectable tradesmen in the immediate neighbourhood—to take evening lessons of reading, writing, and arithmetic, at boys' schools. There were several at the above school, and after our pedagogical task was at an end, the girls and boys would unite in bands, or circles, of a moonlight night, to partake of the above game, singing the well-known invitation, thus:—

“ Girls and boys come out to play,
The moon doth shine as bright as day ;
Come with a whoop, come with a call,
Come with a good will, or not at all.”

Then followed the game itself—carried on sometimes till nine o'clock. My late friend, Mr. Douce, once shewed me a most curious note upon these homely lines—which he loved to repeat emphatically.

and made the heart of the hearer throb with ecstasy? —the warm and golden sunsets, after bathing in the salient stream *, and coursing each other along the adjacent meads?—the bright and beautiful mornings, when, after a night of tempest, the yellow pear and the ruddy apple, plentifully strewn upon the grass, invited the ready trespass, and repaid the hazard of the enterprise? And all this while, I speak nothing of the ordinary *Games* † of boyhood; which need not be particularised. And then came the *Holidays*—the approach to which was marked by the notched stick, by the formal letter of announcement, by the indulgence of hopes and schemes too wild even to take more than momentary possession of the most ardent youthful imagination.

* This "salient stream" was a branch from Pope's "*Kennett* swift, for silver eels renowned." It divides the town of Reading into nearly two equal parts, and is soon lost in the Thames, just below. The place of bathing was called *Old Orchard*, not far from Coly Park.

† I am not sure whether there were not *some* amusements for which the *preparation* was as joyous as the participation. I speak of *kite-making*, and more particularly of slate, or *dump-melting*; the latter a dangerous, and always a doubtful, process. On leaving school, I had no rival in this art. My *cocks* and *dumps* used to come out from the melting process perfect and sparkling:—attested by the screams of joy of the bystanders. In anticipation of pleasure, what could exceed *that* of the fire and fireworks on the *fifth of November*? I have sat from morn till night, on a style, watching the progress of each rising cloud, from the apprehension of an unfavourable evening:—and then, on that same evening, whatever caused such heart-boundings, such shouts of delight, as the blazing tar-barrel, the crackling faggots, and the coruscations of the squib, cracker, catherine wheel, roman candle, and skyrocket—as the fire of the two latter intersected each other in their radiant but quickly perishable orbits!

I know not how it is, but, in hanging upon the remembrance (if I may so speak) of these rapturous days, it should seem as if the individual describing them could not have been *the same* human being with him who is described. It should seem as if, like the snake, we had slipped a slough, and come out a fundamentally altered creature. It is with the *mind* as with the *features*; the alteration is marvellous, and, in some countenances, traces of what the features were in early youth are scarcely discernible. Yet it is the *same heart* that has been beating; they are the same sinews and muscles that have been put in constant motion; the same eyes which have contemplated; the same hands which have grasped. Well is it for us, if changes, more serious than those which affect the *external* form, have not been wrought within us; well is it, if that heart's blood has not been dried up by sordid avarice—those hands not been active in the commission of irreparable mischief—those eyes not been prone to gaze only upon what is vicious and worthless. I apologise for this digression; but there are *SOME*, yet living, to whom it will not be altogether considered as a mere “flourish” of words.

Before quitting this scene of earliest youth, I cannot help noticing one or two more things which may at least be considered as important as those which have preceded them. My passion for *drawing* commenced before I had attained my ninth year; and that passion was much gratified, if, in

distributing *copy books*, my master happened to give me one which possessed (as it was then the fashion) a picture, or engraving, more *taking* than that of my comrades *. I instantly set about copying it—but was too poor to have any thing beyond a slate pencil: though once, with a *pen*, I had the audacity to strive to grapple with the head of *Dilworth* or *Vyse* (I forget which) prefixed to the boys' spelling-books †. I remember to have mastered the velvet-cap quickly enough; but the solemn and sour visage of the sage defied my powers of imitation. My master's brother, a very original character, Mr. Henry Man ‡, Secretary of the South Sea House, came

* By a curious coincidence, one of the pictures or prints which used to make a great impression upon me, was that of a grenadier, with the Cumberland-cap—beneath which was this ballad line:

“He would be a soldier, would sweet Willy O!”

In a book, with this very print, my mother wrote all her little poetical pieces; and in another book, with the *same* ornamented exterior, my father made copies of his correspondence in India.

† In these spelling-books was the well-known tale of *Brown, Jones, and Robinson*: a tale which I believe to have never been surpassed in its *hold* upon young minds. A wood-cut of the drowned youth (I now forget which it was) had always the strongest claim upon my attention, and called forth many a vain effort at copying.

‡ This “original character” lived in Fenchurch-street. He was rather a wag than a wit—but was very much above the ordinary inhabitants of his locality. He had a small, dark, brilliant eye—what Thomson calls a “roguish twinkling, in each eye”—and a dry, but droll tone of voice. His pen was in constant exercise, upon topics not always connected with matters of the “South Sea.” The speculators in lotteries—at a time when Bonaparte was elbowing all the neighbouring potentates—used to employ him to write lottery puffs, to be placarded in large letters in the streets. I remember *one*—singularly quaint and

now and then from London to pay us a visit. He used to notice me very much—knowing the peculiarity of my situation ; and seeing me fond of drawing, asked me if I should like to have some *colours* ? I jumped with joy at the proposal, and asked for blue, red, and yellow. The first use I made of them was to paint paper *flags for my soldiers* ! But I did not always make this legitimate use of them ; for a due portion of cunning and conceit frequently induced me to get sly possession of those books of my schoolfellows which contained *prints*, and unmercifully to daub and disguise them with the use of these primitive colours.

I totally forget what Latin grammar we made use of, but I think it was the *Westminster* ; where there is a wood-cut of boys clambering up a tree and shaking the fruit down into the laps of their com-

original. Tickets were *sixteen guineas* each. The author makes sundry suppositions—supposing Bonaparte to defeat, or to be defeated ? Again, supposing the Austrians to make an onward, or a retrograde movement ? Again, supposing Prussia to be more or less influenced by this forward or backward operation ? The reader, wondering what will be the result, is called upon to say “ What *then* will be the price of the lottery ticket ? Answer : *SIXTEEN GUINEAS.* ”—Mr. Henry Man (who was the elder brother) wrote some amusing pieces of poetry, which will be found in two volumes of posthumous works, published in 1802. Among these, a parody upon the song of “ *Jolly Dick the Lamplighter,* ” contains a few good hits. It begins thus :

“ I ’m Billy P—t, the minister, Lord Ch——m was my dad ;

Though both our views were sinister, yet mine were the more sad.”

At page 208 of vol. ii. there is a short poem upon “ *Delicacy,* ” which is, in parts, as original as it is sweet and tender.

panions *. This was my *favourite* page ; but when I was told that it was a representation of the tree of knowledge, of which the fruit could not be obtained without cultivation and gathering, I seemed to gaze upon it with a yet more intense interest. In Latin authors, I reached *Cornelius Nepos* before my departure, with an occasional acquaintance with *Corderius*, *Esop*, and *Phædrus* ; authors, not the best calculated to smooth the ruggedness of classical literature to the understanding of early youth †. I have mentioned the word *Holidays* : but to me they were known only as a cessation from book-toil, and

* Some notion of this print may be gathered from a fac simile of the same sort of subject in the *Bibliographical Decameron*, vol. I. p. 101. I rather think the English original is in *Lilly's Grammar*.

† Surely, some more facile and successful method of instructing youth in the Latin tongue is yet a desideratum ? The dry compression of *Cornelius Nepos*, and the downright crabbedness of some parts of *Phædrus*, are not calculated to allure young minds to become enamoured of the Roman classics. Grammar, the *philosophy* of language, is a terribly spiked six-bar gate to scramble over at the very threshold of our efforts. What abstract notion has the sharpest youth of a *noun-substantive*, an *adjective*, a *gerund*, a *supine*, &c. ? But he must plunge chin-deep into them ere he turn over the pages of the first author. And in translating, might not easy literal versions of popular passages, of a graphic or dramatic description, in *ENGLISH HISTORY*, be made subservient to a quicker mastery of the language itself ? What does a lad of nine years of age care, or understand, about consuls, ædiles, lictors, and *Heathen Mythology* ? Of the latter, a quiet word, in sober sadness. Why are the names (but these are nothing compared with the recorded *actions*) of gods and goddesses transferred, in a body, to the end of *Latin Dictionaries* ? Why are youthful eyes suffered to glance over such details of absurd and vicious narratives !—such a compound of fraud, profligacy, and monstrosity ! Were I to narrate my own experience, in others as well as myself, these remarks might assume the sterner form of an unanswerable monitor.

not by locomotive change. I spent them uniformly *at school*; and had the *option* been granted me (which it was *not*) I should have made it my deliberate choice: for the society of my master's children, with the uniform kindness of their parents, was, to my habits and disposition, infinitely preferable to the strait-laced discipline and snappish severity of a great aunt. During those holidays I was occasionally taken on a visit to the family of one of my schoolfellows, of the name of SHEERWOOD, a farmer at Purley, about four miles off. The impression received on these visits, from the kindness and courtesy of the parents, together with a personal affection for one of the sons, of the name of JOHN, was never, for a moment, diverted or weakened during a course of forty years. Although I left Reading in my twelfth year, and never afterwards saw the father or mother, yet, so deeply was a sense of their kind conduct impressed upon me, together with my unceasing attachment to their son, that, in my fifteenth year, the worth of THAT family was made one of the subjects of my earliest hobbling muse*.

* The kind-hearted reader, taking the will for the deed, will endure what follows, as the crude conceptions of a grateful heart. The "hobbling" verses, above alluded to, are comprised in a "PASTORAL" divided into two parts; and supported, after the fashion of our forefathers, by certain characters, hight *Damon*, *Thyrsis*, *Phyllis*, *Corydon*, and others. In the first part—the scene being laid altogether at Purley—Thyrsis thus descants upon the virtues of the worthy farmer.

He, that is bless'd with every generous art;
Who acts the husband's and the parent's part:

There was also another schoolfellow, very much my senior, of the name of *Billinghurst*—a sharp, pro-

He, who can see the helpless group appear,
 And with relief bestow the pitying tear!
 He, that is bless'd with an ennobled mind
 To cheer the wretched, and the oppressor bind.

Assist me, swains, inspire me, every muse,
 To sing for SHERWOOD, who shall dare refuse?
 For whom do swains with early vigour rise,
 Pour forth their prayers and vows with ardent eyes?
 For whom do annual ploughshares cut the land,
 And numerous rustics toil, a willing band?
 For whom do cornfields wave their golden grain,
 And herds and flocks stretch far along the plain?
 For whom doth heaven refresh'ning show'rs distill,
 Why roars the torrent, and why flows the rill?
 For whom do sheep their grateful voices raise,
 And faithful shepherds tune their sylvan lays?
 For whom do sing the rustic nut-brown maids,
 And deep-grown bow'rs, and thickets, from their shades?
 All, all, for SHERWOOD. See the lark on high,
 In praise of Sherwood, warbling mount the sky!
 For him, the birds in airs melodious sing,
 For him, doth bursting nature tell the spring:
 For him, the rosy maids their garlands bind,
 For him, the wreath is round their brow entwined:
 For him, in praise of him, I've bent my way,
 For him, to Phillis have I tuned my lay!

The second part of this motley effort opens with "SCENE, a Wood: Moonlight." Thyrsis is leaning on the tomb of Sherwood. He gives vent to his sorrows in a protracted strain, of which the following may be considered a sufficient specimen.

Ah Cynthia! now in luckless hour you rise,
 In mournful time you mount your silver car;
 Alas! you traverse through the enamell'd skies,
 In Damon's woe, or Thyrsis' grief to share.
 Thou wood, that strik'st with gloomy awe the mind,
 Involved in deep and everlasting shade—
 No comfort here my restless sorrows find,
 For here, in your retreat, a SHERWOOD'S laid.

mising youth, and very partial to me. He preceded me in my removal to London, and closed a prema-

Ah Philomel! begin your warbling strain,
Swell every note, and tune a sadder lay;
Our master's gone; has left the rural plain;
And silent sleeps, inanimated clay.

Ye nymphs, and swains, that used at noon-tide hour
To dance with jocund pipe, and heart-felt glee,
Leave, leave your rosy garlands in the bow'r,
View Sherwood's tomb, and sigh and weep with me!

Come then, and tread the consecrated ground,
And softly bring your fav'rite hooks and reeds;
Here swains and nymphs, now stand in order round,
And leave, for sadder rites, your flow'ry meads.

Or if ye wish, with downcast look, to strew
With fragrant flow'rs his tomb, ye nymphs advance;
For here, shall morn her choicest gifts renew,
And nightly fairies round his grave shall dance.

Ah why delay! Begin ye rustic maids,
Be present shepherds, tune a mournful lay;
Pour solemn music through the gloomy glades,
For Sherwood sleeps, inanimated clay.

* * * * *

No more the village shall with joy abound,
Or peace and pleasure lead their jovial train;
No more shall vocal mirth and songs resound,
Or gay contentment laugh along the plain.

* * * * *

But—"Claudite jam rivos pueri, sat prata bibérunt." Such, in after-life, continued to be the deep impression made from acts of kindness shewn to me in early youth, that, in the infatuated moment when I resolved upon the publication of a certain volume of poetry, I designed a vignette for the title-page, in which there is a tomb with the word SHERWOOD inscribed, and over which the branches of a tree are drooping. JOHN, the second son of the above lamented parent, died about four years ago, leaving behind substantial property, and a name worthy of all the virtues of his father. He was my particular crony—but I had not seen him for twenty years before his decease. His eldest brother,

ture career of ignominy and disgrace, in a foreign land, as a common malefactor *. Such are sometimes our *beginnings*—who shall predict our *endings*? I cannot, at this moment, recollect any other

EDWARD, died several years previously. The youngest son, RICHARD, after being the most successful practitioner of surgery, for many years, at Reading, has now retired to the immediate neighbourhood of that town—in the full enjoyment of character, competency, health, and five hunters: his eye yet retaining the sparkling lustre and good humoured expression of his early youth.

* He was apprenticed in London, with a Mr. Baker of Salisbury-square; a respectable apothecary, and the brother of Mrs. Man. He was sufficiently expert in Latin, and soon made himself useful to his master. He had also a very pretty patrimonial estate, and might have been about seventeen when he found me out at my second school, at Stockwell. We corresponded briskly together. One day I was surprised by the sudden appearance of a post-chaise at the door of the school, and by two gentlemen immediately leaping out, and inquiring for me. It was Mr. Baker with a friend. My letters (as it should seem) were left open in Billinghamurst's desk—Billinghamurst himself having *run away*. It was supposed that I might have been privy to his decamping, and I was asked what I knew about it?—and what was the purport of his *last* letter to me? I had then scarcely entered upon my fourteenth year; and replied, immediately, that I knew “nothing about his movements”—and that his last letter to me contained an earnest request that I would write for him “AN ESSAY UPON LOVE!” The words no sooner escaped me than Mr. Baker and his friend, laughing heartily, sought their post-chaise, and returned. I never saw my old schoolfellow again.

Poor fellow!—thorny and perilous as is sometimes the path of *love*, it had been well for him if he had chosen it in preference to *that* which he afterwards so pertinaciously pursued. He became embued with all the wild principles of the French revolution, in its maddest days; went over to America, I know not upon what account; attempted to disseminate the same principles there; and even assumed the character of a *spy* for that object. He was seized, tried, and hung up under the branch of an oak!

. quis talia fando
Temperet a lacrimis?

favourites or cronies in this, the first, stage of my SCHOOLBOY DAYS.

At length came the moment of departure. It was necessary, in the opinion of my uncle, that an onward movement should be made; and that the insufficiency of the discipline of an obscure school should be exchanged for something near London, which might give an immediate polish to the young candidate for learning. The terms of a new school, at *Stockwell*, were brought down and read aloud by my uncle himself. They were minute and elaborate; and never was the well-known adage, "*omne ignotum pro magnifico*," more strictly applicable than on this occasion. I seemed to stare with my understanding as well as with my eyes as I heard these terms. A new world of intelligence was opened to me; "Globes"—"lectures"—"a covered playground"—"merchant's accounts"—"the Spectator" and "dancing"—were as magical words, heard for the first time. I rubbed my hands with ecstasy, and longed for the day of departure. My uncle accompanied me to give my master the necessary previous quarter's notice: and on leaving me I sought my bed—but found not its repose. I was about to take leave of THOSE, who seemed to have supplied the place of *parents*; and the next morning my swollen eyes and dejected visage told a tale that could not be mistaken. I then began to *hate* the thought of departure; but the day and the hour came in due course—and I broke away with loud

sobs from those who, for upwards of six years, had performed the parts of faithful guardians and vigilant preceptors. My old aunt declared she would not see me on quitting, as she disliked "taking leave;" but magnanimously sent me *half a guinea* to mitigate the supposed agony of separation! Of *all* my earlier schoolfellows, THREE ONLY, to my knowledge, now survive*.

I arrived at Stockwell; situate within three miles of London Bridge on the Surrey side—a flat and not very picturesque portion of the beautiful county at the foot of which it stands. It was *then* only a small village, with a small chapel. It is now almost merged in the densely inhabited neighbourhood of Kennington and Brixton; and two spacious churches may be said to attest at once the populousness and devotion of the inhabitants. In point of size and external respectability, my late school-residence shrunk into insignificance compared with that of my new one. The Master was assisted by his son, fast growing up to maturity; and a regular usher (as it is called,) who taught Latin and French. His "terms"

* These are, Messrs. Mark and James Morrell, brothers; now resident, the one a brewer, the other a banker, at Oxford: men of affluence and respectability. The third is the second son of my master, Mr. William Man, resident in the old town of his nativity. His sister, the only other surviving branch of their parents, lives in the same town. If friendliness of disposition, and amenity of temper, entitle any man to respect and esteem, my old schoolfellow is entitled to the largest possible share of it from myself. He loves science, and he loves books; and solaces the necessarily tedious hours of *bachelorship* by a due portion of reading and reflection, and ingenious mechanical exercise.

were a piece of pompous inanity. You would have supposed that education was only to be obtained under his roof. He wrote a sort of stiff, copper-plate hand, and *that* was almost his only acquirement. His lectures upon geography were of the veriest common-place description, and they were "few and far between." He was a coxcomb in the dress of that day; although he must have been little short of fifty. His cocked hat, powdered queue-peruke, black satin breeches, and silk stockings, were objects of mingled admiration and respect with the boys. He was a great man for *effect*; making pauses, and clearing his voice before he commenced those monitory addresses which used to precede evening prayers. And of what common-place materials were those addresses composed! He loved to inspire awe; knowing that he could not generate affection. He was a tyrant, without being exactly cruel; but his manner of inflicting "the extreme penalty" for disobedience, ill-conduct, or rebellion, was provokingly and unnecessarily severe*.

* The punishment, here obviously alluded to, took place in a private apartment: half a dozen of the upper boys—of which, to my horror, I was invariably selected as *one*—being called upon to be spectators. The senior boy preceded; holding upright, before him, the awful instrument of castigation. The culprit was in his immediate rear; and the other boys, followed by the master, closed the solemn procession. The culprit stript, and knelt by the side of a chair; and we stood with mixed fear and disgust around him. The master was a left handed man, and struck deliberately and heavily; and the *evidence* of his power was simultaneous with the stroke. But he had a sad method of torturing, by prolonging the punishment between each stroke with quota-

Meanwhile, whether the merits or demerits of my Master were the greater, I was conscious of a sudden and strong progress in intellectual attainments. My master's son took to me with great kindness, and never withdrew his affectionate and, as it were, patronizing attention. He taught me French and drawing. The Usher, educated at Westminster school (a yet better French scholar) was also exceedingly attentive; telling me he would never let me have any rest till I read Voltaire and Virgil with equal facility. I now began to buy paper and pens on a comparatively wholesale scale; and whenever the cupboard, containing new school-books, was opened, I usually contrived to take a peep at its miscellaneous contents:—Chambaud, Wanostrocht, and Perrin: my old friends Dilworth and Vyse: Phædrus, Selectæ, Ovid, and Virgil: Ainsworth and Young: Addison and Johnson: slates, slate-pencils, and copy-books: writing paper, drawing-paper, and black-lead pencils. All these seemed, to my inexperienced eyes, to be inexhaustible treasures of incalculable value. The accidental possession of an odd volume of Shakspeare, containing Macbeth, the Midsummer Night's Dream, and the

tions of trite sentences from the Book of Proverbs—as, among others, “He that spareth his rod hateth his son,” &c. Once, on making this quotation, a spirited boy, in the agony of pain, turned his head round, and bellowed out, “Yes, sir, but YOU are not MY FATHER!” The weapon seemed to drop powerless from the operator's hand, and the punishment instantly ceased.

Merry Wives of Windsor, excited me almost to delirium:—and oh! yet more fatal result, to try my pen at a *drama*! I shunned the ordinary games of youth; rose early, sometimes at five, to pursue alternately drawing and dramatic composition; and, ere my fourteenth year, was the author of three exceedingly bloody tragedies. A simple but severe incident* entirely cured me of this mania; but my love of *art* was, if possible, increasing every day. I cannot describe what I used to feel on looking over the engravings by Heath, from the pencil of Stothard, in the volumes of *Harrison's Novelist's Magazine*. Indeed they merit the closest attention and the warmest admiration of maturer life†. Among the

* It was this. I had brought these plays (of which I now recollect only the names of two—viz. *Jasmin* and *The Distressed Brothers*;) home to my aunt, Mrs. William Compton; a lively and sensible woman, and much disposed to humour my vagaries in many ways. I begged she would read them, and challenged her approbation. She *did* read them, or as much as she *liked* of them; but studiously pronounced no opinion. One evening, on retiring to rest, and receiving the bed-chamber candlestick from the servant, I found a piece of paper at the bottom of the candle, to keep it steady in the stick, upon which my hand-writing was but too visible. I stopped—and read "*Act III., scene V.,*" and found it to be a fragment of my beloved *Jasmin*! Retracing my steps with a precipitancy which may be well conceived, I enquired of the servant "*where* she had got this?" "Sir," said she, "my mistress gave it me as WASTE PAPER to light the fire."

† The designer and the engraver of these charming little specimens of their earlier efforts in art, have recently paid the debt of nature—each "well stricken in years." Those who would lay the foundations, "strong and deep," of a collection of the *British School of Art*, will do well to furnish themselves with choice proofs, when obtainable, of the above specimens. To commend the talents, or to declare the reputation of

latest occupations at my new school, connected with art, was the assisting my master's son in scene-painting, for the performance of little after-pieces on half-holidays. But this was sometimes a very severe operation; as I used frequently to be called up by him, in the depth of winter, at five, and even four, in the morning, that we might do a good stroke of work together before school-hours. Even at this very moment do I remember how often my knees trembled, my teeth chattered, and my whole frame "shook to its very centre," as I dressed myself—looking out upon a sky studded with a million stars, and feeling an atmosphere which seemed to convert my very marrow into ice*. Perhaps the evidences of an early

STOTHARD, our *domestic Raffaele*, were equally a waste of words and of time. Had his colouring even approached that of Watteau, his compositions had been invaluable. Loveliness, grace, and innocence, seem to be impressed on every female countenance and figure which he delineated. His productions are almost countless. My friend Mr. Masquerier possesses about 1000 engravings from his pencil. Mr. James Heath was, to Stothard, what Woollett was to Wilson, and Bartolozzi to Cipriani and Kauffman. He once told me that he rescued the two most precious pieces of his property from a devouring fire, in carrying off his child, and the plate of *The Death of Major Pearson*; while the late Mr. Duppa did his utmost to refrain him, from an apprehension of its proving fatal to himself—and tore his coat into two.

* Our scene of operations was in a back brick kitchen, with now and then scarcely any thing better than the semblance of a fire to warm and cheer us. The cook left some cold tea, the night before, to be warmed up, and we had a sufficient quantity of bread and butter: but we had only one wretched candle to work by. The scenes were almost entirely architectural. The afterpieces acted, were chiefly translations from *Berquin*. In rehearsals, I remember I was a most severe disciplinarian.

enthusiasm, in one particular pursuit, were never more strongly indicated.

My residence at Stockwell continued two years ; and in spite of the shallow pretensions of my master, it was neither unprofitably nor unpleasantly spent : for I had perfected myself in writing, and hated “ merchant’s accounts ” more lustily on leaving than on commencing them. Having just got enough of French and Latin to make me emulous of a more intimate acquaintance with them, it was deemed advisable to remove me to what was called a *Classical Academy*. There was, to be sure, a neighbouring school of that description at hand, called *Loughborough House*—but the very approach to that mansion of learning struck a timid man, like my uncle, with a sort of awe. On a board, shaped in the segment of a circle, and supported by two posts, was read this exceedingly emphatic inscription : “ *Loughborough House : for the education of noble-men and gentlemen’s sons.* ” These were the quack days of education.

I almost forget now by whose instrumentality it was that I went to my third and last school—but I think it was through a Mr. Sutherland, a public notary, in Birchin-lane, that my uncle was persuaded to remove me to a Mr., afterwards Dr. GREENLAW : whose seminary was situated between Brentford and Isleworth ; and, as a prelude, we were asked to meet him at dinner. He was a Scotchman, as was his

friend Mr. Sutherland. I was much pleased with him at the first interview; for he had a sort of manly, joyous air about him, so very opposite to the starch priggism of my late master, that, keeping my eyes and ears exclusively occupied with what he might do and say, I was resolved to bring home a pretty accurate remembrance of that day's symposium. It was then the fashion to drink lustily after dinner. At dinner, he spoke to me across the table, and challenged me to drink a glass of wine with him. It was for the first time I had been so challenged, and I thought it a solemn point of duty to fill my glass deliberately to the brim. He smiled, and said, he hoped we should always be good friends. We continued so throughout the whole of our connexion. When he told my uncle and myself, after dinner, apart, that he had lads of thirteen and fourteen who had mastered Horace and Virgil, and could write hexameters by the score, I could not help feeling secretly ashamed of my own backwardness.

I now approach that period of my youthful career, when, as the imaginative and reasoning faculties take a ready spring and a wide range, the passions begin to assume an intelligible, and sometimes a very formidable, aspect. Had these faculties and passions received a luckless bias, by indiscriminate indulgence on the one hand, or by irrepressible severity on the other, there is no saying whether a result, at least as fatal, although assuredly not so disgraceful, as that

recorded in a preceding page *, might not have been the consequence with myself. I could trust my own heart thus far—as to be incapable of vindictive passion, and sordid, base desire—as well as of everything which had a tendency to meanness of spirit, sly suspicion, or insolent tyranny. I entered my new school with a determination to excel, and in the end to stand quite at its top. There were between threescore and seventy boys, many of whom were much my superior in size, age, and understanding. I had a long lea-way to make up, having been grounded scarcely in anything. For the first time, the *Greek* (Eton) *grammar* was put into my hand; and although I do not pretend to have looked at it with a secret assurance, like a *Brind* †, as if I should master it by inspiration, yet I got briskly on, and, in due course, was admitted to Homeric honours. It were difficult to describe the secret swellings of pride and gratification in my

* Page 60.

† My old schoolfellow, Mr. W. Man, mentioned at page 62, ante, writes to me thus, touching this extraordinary character: “Connected as you are with literary men, I should do wrong not to notice that we have here (at Reading) a *brewer’s drayman*, of the name of GEORGE BRIND, between thirty and forty years of age, who had never received other education than that of reading, writing, and the first rudiments of arithmetic, taught by a woman at a child’s school. A few months since, having seen a *Greek book*, of which the characters excited his attention and curiosity, he fancied he could instruct himself in that language; and, as he informs me, has since made so much progress, without any assistance, as to read and understand it pretty well, but finds the greatest difficulty in its pronunciation; or, as he calls it, in sounding it—from never having heard it spoken. He seems quite confident he shall completely master it. He likewise tells me, within the last month he has attempted *Hebrew*, and finds it

bosom when I was called up to receive a copy of *Clarke's Homer* *.

By this time I was not only "well on" (as they say) in the school, but with my schoolfellows. I had not been a twelvemonth before I had *classes* to prepare for the upper usher, an exercise in which I particularly delighted. Meanwhile, nothing could exceed the kind attentions of those to whom the *ménage* was intrusted. The house itself had been a noble one; and had, both within and without, a most cheerful air. The dining-room was large and lofty†, and the sleeping-rooms were spacious and airy; but the play-ground was unworthy of its accessories; yet we always rambled far a-field when a great sport, such as cricket, prisoners' base, or football, was in view. How shall I describe the fluttering emotions of my heart, when, after parading through Twickenham meadows, I first reached the summit of Richmond Hill, and gazed from thence upon a landscape lighted

very easy—much more so than Greek—and does not doubt of succeeding. He thinks of attempting *Latin* next. He is quite a rough subject, such as draymen usually are; but his features remind me of those of Bonaparte." This anecdote is quite a *la Magliabecchi*!

* It is the ONLY school-book which I now possess: sufficiently defaced by interlineations and marginal etymons. At the moment of possessing it, how little could I dream of describing the splendour and rarity of the *first edition* of that work, on LARGE PAPER, of a quarto form, of which an account may be seen in the *Introduction to the Classics*, vol. ii., p. 55, *fourth edition*.

† On the ceiling of this dining-room was painted, delicately and prettily enough, some mythological subject of a marriage, where Venus was sprinkling flowers with a plentiful hand; and upon this painting I would gaze almost as frequently as upon the viands before me. It

up by an autumnal setting sun*! Meanwhile, it may be quietly affirmed, that my academical progress

was once given out as a subject for twenty-four hexameter verses. Alas! the ceiling, the room, the verses, with the whole suite of apartments, have irrevocably perished.

* It is not with an exclusive view of intruding any thing so puerile and imperfect as the strains of an unfledged muse, that, in support of the radiant picture above described, I venture here to state how it affected me—again and again—by a frequent repetition of the view, and as frequent an invocation of the muse. I had now become quite infected with the passion of versifying: “aut insanit homo, aut versus facit:” and there was nothing like RICHMOND or TWICKENHAM MEADOWS to give the vigour of inspiration to my numbers. What follows must therefore be endured—as “part and parcel” of the *Philosophy of the Human Mind*. The poem of “Twickenham Meadows” is the third in a volume to be hereafter described. The motto is happy enough:

“*Quà pinus ingens, albaque populus
Umbram hospitem consociare amant
Ramis.*” HOR. lib. ii. Ode. 3.

Having Denham’s *Cooper’s Hill* in “my mind’s eye,” the following is the attempt to describe the view from that of Richmond Hill.

Lead me, my Muse, to Richmond’s tow’ring Hill,
Where endless plains the mind with transport fill.
“Heavens, what a goodly prospect spreads around!”
With trees, and lawns, and bow’rs, and winding rivulets crown’d.
Yon distant hills aspiring to the skies—
And the whole view in glowing grandeur lies.
The copious THAMES still vindicates his reign,
Now lost, now found, now hid, now seen again.
The num’rous flocks that bleat along the meads,
The lowing herds, and loudly-neighing steeds;
The echoing chant of birds that fill the grove,
Transport my mind with Nature’s bounteous love.
How bright and varied smiles the boundless view!
What glowing tints of carmine’s richest hue
Warm the whole scene! Oh! here my thoughts could stray,
And mark with rapture the departing day.

was decisive, if not rapid. Horace, Virgil, Livy, and Tacitus, Herodotus and Homer, were becoming

From the Hill, the Muse makes a sort of natural digression to Richmond Park; and there she gives vent to rather an impassioned tone of feeling.

Now bear me to some shadowy deep-brown grove,
 Where pale-eyed Contemplation loves to rove;
 Where hooded Silence stalks with measured pace,
 And Meditation shews her solemn face.
 'Tis RICHMOND'S PARK affords this much-loved scene—
 To lie reclined 'midst bow'rs of richest green;
 Where towering elms their beauteous foliage spread,
 And oaks majestic rear their ancient head.
 The well-shaped firs, and deep'ning chesnuts rise,
 The ash, the beech, the poplars seek the skies;
 While the brown nut, and spreading shrub below,
 In firmer beauty, and rich order grow.

Here, wrapt in thought, Philosophy retires,
 And pale-eyed Study feels her native fires;
 Here Peace delights, Contentment holds her seats,
 Wisdom here dwells, and Solitude retreats.

A sort of retrograde movement is then made to TWICKENHAM; and POPE being a kind of poetical synonyme with that place, the bard is thus approached and appreciated.

But haste, and bring me to yon sloping mead,
 Where Twit'nam's self displays her beauteous head.
 Pleased as I pass the winding shore along,
 And cull each flow'r to decorate my song,
 POPE'S peaceful mansion brings my willing mind
 To explore his garden and his grot to find.
 With softest step I'll tread the hallow'd ground,
 Where with immortal bays the Nine their fav'rite crown'd.
 The fairest flowers around the spot shall grow,
 The daisy redden, and the violet blow:
 The rose, the pink, the hyacinth adorn,
 And the rich laurel consecrate his urn.
 Ambrosial fragrance fill the sacred place,
 And lavish Nature pour her happiest grace.

Oh NAME for ever loved! oh bard admired!
 Whom Phœbus warm'd, and all the Nine inspired!

familiar to me ; but nothing took such entire possession of the very strongholds of imagination and reason as the glorious ILIAD ! My little Reading

To whom the sister Graces lent their aid,
 And rural elves fantastic homage paid ;
 For whom the Naiads left their wat'ry bed,
 And Thames, spontaneous, rear'd his hoary head ;
 For whom each swain in sprightliest form advanced,
 And buxom maids in rustic order danced ;
 For whom the Muse hath pour'd her genuine fire,
 Enhanced each theme, and struck her choicest lyre ;
 While ELOISA, in her awful cells,
 Religion's dictates, and Love's passion tells ;
 While airy sylphs around Belinda fly,
 And guard the LOCK that's destined ne'er to die ;
 The critic in thy ESSAY wond'ring sees
 Rules so concise, and maxims sure to please :
 In thee MORALITY assumes her power,
 And Satire stings the breast that never felt before.
 HORACE to thee his classic tribute pays,
 And finds his temples crown'd with British bays.
 O'er unknown-vulgar flight inspired to soar,
 HOMER invites thee to his welcome shore ;
 To thee his harp in generous triumph gives ;
 Adorn'd in British strains, each bard transcendant lives.

No more, ye trees, no more his lay shall sound !
 No more, ye bowers, his swelling note rebound !
 No more, ye winding paths, ye deep-grown shades,
 Ye grots umbrageous, and ye mossy glades,
 No more, responsive to each well-wrought tale—
 In sadness now with drooping head bewail !
 Mute is his strain, his once-loved lyre unstrung,
 Fate stops his voice, and Silence seals his tongue.
 Here, as I tread, with solemn pace, the ground,
 A deathlike awe and stillness breathe around ;

&c. &c. &c.

It is just possible that these verses, the production of a lad of little more than fifteen, may possess some other claim to attention than that of having been taken from a very rare volume.

regiment* seemed to be resuscitated, and marshalled in array before me as I flew with Hector, or shouted with Diomed, for the battle. I could with difficulty resist the impulse of bespeaking a δολιχόσκιος ἔγχος, and seven-bull-hided shield, of a neighbouring artificer. But these incipient notions cooled in due course; and when I had mastered the first twelve books of that immortal poem, the version of Pope was put into my hands. It filled me with an admiration which I am unable to express; and yet its "Ovidian graces" did not altogether escape my notice and observation. I was for ever "trying my hand" at a rival translation†, which my master would good humouredly endure.

However, a more rational source of rivalry was in *themes*, a didactic English prose composition, every Saturday afternoon (sad inroad upon a half holiday!) upon a given subject, specified by a trite Latin motto; as, "*Carpe diem*"—" *Principiis obsta*"—" *Quo semel*

* See page, 49, ante.

† Especially in the pitched battle between Hector and Ajax; the parting of Hector and Andromache; the storming of the Grecian ships by Hector, and the battle of the Gods. The way in which Homer makes all these fierce conflicting deities take part with their favourite mortals, while the thunders of Jupiter are rolling over their heads in a canopy of dense black clouds, is truly magnificent and sublime. But of mortal heroes, Hector was my favourite—and will always be the favourite of every gallant-hearted schoolboy. I remember reading, long before I got through Homer, *Fitzosborne's Letters* (which awakened many pleasing, and I may add elegant, thoughts), where the comparative merits of the versions of Homer by Dryden, by Addison, and Pope are estimated; and also the *Monthly Review* of Cowper's version, which raised the merits of Pope in a tenfold degree in my humble estimation.

est imbuta recens"—" *Pallida mors equo pulsat,*" &c., and divers others of the like quality. To see, in the upper classes, the solemn, woe-begone countenances with which some lads—indeed, most lads—sat down to master the obvious difficulties of such a task *; the hunt in Addison or Johnson for a successful *crib*; the scratchings out and scratchings in; the feverish restlessness, ending sometimes in tears of absolute despair—were a sad but not uncommon sight. For myself, I generally contrived to illustrate the moral propounded by some *tale* dressed up in the oriental style of fiction, by which I got rid of a great deal of dry, difficult, commonplace remark, and stiffness of diction. Meanwhile, I had so mastered the French language as to carry about me, alternately, *Tele-machus* and *Gil Blas*, as pocket companions: and if there be *one* period of these "SCHOOLBOY DAYS" upon which I look back with the consciousness of

* The "difficulties" are not only obvious, but with some boys necessarily insurmountable. Experience and reflection are the basis of ethical composition, upon which reason is to be exercised; but how are these three requisites obtainable in a lad of from fourteen to sixteen? I have known instances where hours have been spent in the construction of the first sentence. Some few boys, however, had a resolute fancy, and ready diction, to

"advance

Some desperate doctrines, and be right by chance;"

but in secret they had an abhorrence of the task. POETRY, whether in Latin or English, was always a favourite topic of rivalry: especially with those who had a knack at *hexameterising*. I still preserve a Latin prize-poem upon Gold, in which certain hobbling hexameters are eked out to the extent of two hundred lines.

having been more thoroughly happy than another, it is *that*, when, in the last six months of my residence, being a parlour-boarder, and the captain of the school, I used to sit in the branches of the mulberry tree, in my master's garden, alternately plucking the ripe fruit and reading the last-named authors. Never, surely, did the sun, before or since, appear to go down with so golden a hue, or orchard trees to be canopied by so ultramarine a sky!

And yet, although, both with master and boys, nothing could go on more smoothly—and although I was confident, in a short time, of being quite at the top of the first class—I began to be weary of school discipline, and impatient of school confinement. Long walks always brought me back again to the same point whence I *started*. Mulberries were only ripe in September. The clang of the up-rising, ringing-in, school-bell, fixed in an elm tree, became insupportable; and dancing and fencing were miserable afternoon substitutes for fishing, bathing, and cricket. The ploughboy “whistling o’er the lea,” the solemn flight of the crow, or the rapid volition of the pigeon, were absolutely objects of deeply-fixed envy*. But

* It seems absurd, and scarcely credible, that for a schoolboy—never shrinking from getting a task, and having a decided love of learning—such a feeling should possess me, but it *did*. I would sometimes have given anything and everything for a stroll, on a sunny afternoon, to Osterley Park, within the distance of two miles. I loved to look upon its antiquated red-brick exterior—but far more did I enjoy the *aviary*, filled with exotic birds, and situated in a sort of coppice wood, with a small lake of water, into which a fountain sent forth a gushing stream.

the latter months of my residence were rendered more endurable by the establishment of a *debating club* in the upper school-room, of which I had the honour to be elected the first president. My principal adversary in debate, as well as in classical lore, was a youth of the name of KING*. It was now time to think of looking forward to the *line of life* in which my future destinies were to be concentrated: when, after divers anxious consultations between Dr. Greenlaw and my uncle, it was resolved that I should be sent to COLLEGE—a resolution, which, at the time, filled me with something approaching to awe and dread.

This place had an indescribably magic charm for me; and when a parlour-boarder, I was constantly strolling thither, reclining on the grass, and devouring the pages of Thomson, Pope, and Shakspeare. On revisiting this spot some three years ago, I found an entire metamorphosis. The aviary had disappeared: the lake was dried up: the trees were cut down. But, as an antidote to this misery, Lord Jersey, its owner, had given me permission to examine the LIBRARY of the mansion, where *two* volumes (the *Morte d'Arthur* printed by Caxton, and the only thoroughly complete copy of *Coverdale's Bible* of 1535), entirely reconciled me to the disappearance of the feathered tribe. *Two* such volumes cannot fail, in every vicissitude of the BIBLIOMANIA, to hold their heads as high as ever.

* Now a respectable clergyman, and eminent teacher of youth. He was always a well-grounded scholar for his years, and very much my superior in grammatical accuracy.