VARIOUS

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Содержание

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MY NOVEL; OR, VARIETIES IN ENGLISH LIFE

BY PISISTRATUS CAXTON

BOOK II. – CHAPTER VII

In spite of all his Machiavellian wisdom, Dr Riccabocca had been foiled in his attempt to seduce Leonard Fairfield into his service, even though he succeeded in partially winning over the widow to his views. For to her he represented the worldly advantages of the thing. Lenny would learn to be fit for more than a day-labourer; he would learn gardening, in all its branches – rise some day to be a head gardener. "And," said Riccabocca, "I will take care of his book learning, and teach him whatever he has a head for."

"He has a head for everything," said the widow.

"Then," said the wise man, "everything shall go into it."

The widow was certainly dazzled; for, as we have seen, she highly prized scholarly distinction, and she knew that the Parson looked upon Riccabocca as a wondrous learned man. But still, Riccabocca was said to be a Papist, and suspected to be a conjuror. Her scruples on both these points the Italian, who was an adept in the art of talking over the fair sex, would no doubt have dissipated, if there had been any use in it; but Lenny put a dead stop to all negotiations. He had taken a mortal dislike to Riccabocca; he was very much frightened by him – and the spectacles, the pipe, the cloak, the long hair, and the red umbrella; and said so sturdily, in reply to every overture, – "Please, sir, I'd rather not; I'd rather stay along with mother" – that Riccabocca was forced to suspend all farther experiments in his Machiavellian diplomacy. He was not at all cast down, however, by his first failure; on the contrary, he was one of those men whom opposition stimulates. And what before had been but a suggestion of prudence, became an object of desire. Plenty of other lads might no doubt be had, on as reasonable terms as Lenny Fairfield; but the moment Lenny presumed to baffle the Italian's designs upon him, the special acquisition of Lenny became of paramount importance in the eyes of Signor Riccabocca.

Jackeymo, however, lost all his interest in the traps, snares, and gins which his master proposed to lay for Leonard Fairfield, in the more immediate surprise that awaited him on learning that Dr Riccabocca had accepted an invitation to pass a few days at the Hall.

"There will be no one there but the family," said Riccabocca. "Poor Giacomo, a little chat in the servants' hall will do you good; and the Squire's beef is more nourishing, after all, than the sticklebacks and minnows. It will lengthen your life."

"The Padrone jests," said Jackeymo statelily, "as if any one could starve in his service."

"Um," said Riccabocca. "At least, faithful friend, you have tried that experiment as far as human nature will permit;" and he extended his hand to his fellow-exile with that familiarity which exists between servant and master in the usages of the Continent. Jackeymo bent low, and a tear fell upon the hand he kissed.

"*Cospetto!*" said Dr Riccabocca, "a thousand mock pearls do not make up the cost of a single true one! The tears of women, we know their worth; but the tear of an honest man – Fie, Giacomo! – at least I can never repay you this! Go and see to our wardrobe."

So far is his master's wardrobe was concerned, that order was pleasing to Jackeymo; for the Doctor had in his drawers suits which Jackeymo pronounced to be as good as new, though many a long year had passed since they left the tailor's hands. But when Jackeymo came to examine the state of his own clothing department, his face grew considerably longer. It was not that he was without other clothes than those on his back – quantity was there, but the quality! Mournfully he gazed on two suits, complete in the three separate members of which man's raiments are composed: the one suit extended at length upon his bed, like a veteran stretched by pious hands after death; the other brought piecemeal to the invidious light – the *torso* placed upon a chair, the limbs dangling down from Jackeymo's melancholy arm. No bodies long exposed at the Morgue could evince less sign of resuscitation than those respectable defuncts! For, indeed, Jackeymo had been less thrifty of his apparel – more *profusus sui*– than his master. In the earliest days of their exile, he preserved the decorous habit of dressing for dinner – it was a respect due to the Padrone – and that habit had lasted till the two habits on which it necessarily depended had evinced the first symptoms of decay; then the evening clothes had been taken into morning wear, in which hard service they had breathed their last.

The Doctor, notwithstanding his general philosophical abstraction from such household details, had more than once said, rather in pity to Jackeymo, than with an eye to that respectability which the costume of the servant reflects on the dignity of the master – "Giacomo, thou wantest clothes: fit thyself out of mine!"

And Jackeymo had bowed his gratitude, as if the donation had been accepted: but the fact was, that that same fitting-out was easier said than done. For though – thanks to an existence mainly upon sticklebacks and minnows – both Jackeymo and Riccabocca had arrived at that state which the longevity of misers proves to be most healthful to the human frame, – viz., skin and bone – yet, the bones contained in the skin of Riccabocca all took longitudinal directions; while those in the skin of Jackeymo spread out latitudinally. And you might as well have made the bark of a Lombardy poplar serve for the trunk of some dwarfed and pollarded oak – in whose hollow the Babes of the Wood could have slept at their ease – as have fitted out Jackeymo from the garb of Riccabocca. Moreover, if the skill of the tailor could have accomplished that undertaking, the faithful Jackeymo would never have had the heart to avail himself of the generosity of his master. He had a sort of religious sentiment, too, about those vestments of the Padrone. The ancients, we know, when escaping from shipwreck, suspended in the votive temple the garments in which they had struggled through the wave. Jackeymo looked on those relics of the past with a kindred superstition. "This coat the Padrone wore on such an occasion. I remember the very evening the Padrone last put on those pantaloons!" And coat and pantaloons were tenderly dusted, and carefully restored to their sacred rest.

But now, after all, what was to be done? Jackeymo was much too proud to exhibit his person, to the eyes of the Squire's butler, in habiliments discreditable to himself and the Padrone. In the midst of his perplexity the bell rang, and he went down into the parlour.

Riccabocca was standing on the hearth under his symbolical representation of the "Patriæ Exul."

"Giacomo," quoth he, "I have been thinking that thou hast never done what I told thee, and fitted thyself out from my superfluities. But we are going now into the great world: visiting once begun, Heaven knows where it may stop! Go to the nearest town and get thyself clothes. Things are dear in England. Will this suffice?" And Riccabocca extended a £5 note.

Jackeymo, we have seen, was more familiar with his master than we formal English permit our domestics to be with us. But in his familiarity he was usually respectful. This time, however, respect deserted him.

"The Padrone is mad!" he exclaimed; "he would fling away his whole fortune if I would let him. Five pounds English, or a hundred and twenty-six pounds Milanese![1] Santa Maria! Unnatural father! And what is to become of the poor Signorina? Is this the way you are to marry her in the foreign land?"

"Giacomo," said Riccabocca, bowing his head to the storm; "the Signorina to-morrow; to-day, the honour of the house. Thy small-clothes, Giacomo. Miserable man, thy small-clothes!"

"It is just," said Jackeymo, recovering himself, and with humility; "and the Padrone does right to blame me, but not in so cruel a way. It is just – the Padrone lodges and boards me, and gives me handsome wages, and he has a right to expect that I should not go in this figure."

"For the board and the lodgment, good," said Riccabocca. "For the handsome wages, they are the visions of thy fancy!"

"They are no such thing," said Jackeymo, "they are only in arrear. As if the Padrone could not pay them some day or other – as if I was demeaning myself by serving a master who did not intend to pay his servants! And can't I wait? Have I not my savings too? But be cheered, be cheered; you shall be contented with me. I have two beautiful suits still. I was arranging them when you rang for me. You shall see, you shall see."

And Jackeymo hurried from the room, hurried back into his own chamber, unlocked a little trunk which he kept at his bed head, tossed out a variety of small articles, and from the deepest depth extracted a leathern purse. He emptied the contents on the bed. They were chiefly Italian coins, some five-franc pieces, a silver medallion enclosing a little image of his patron saint – San Giacomo – one solid English guinea, and two or three pounds' worth in English silver. Jackeymo put back the foreign coins, saying prudently, "One will lose on them here;" he seized the English coins, and counted them out. "But are you enough, you rascals?" quoth he angrily, giving them a good shake. His eye caught sight of the medallion – he paused; and after eyeing the tiny representation of the saint with great deliberation, he added, in a sentence which he must have picked up from the proverbial aphorisms of his master —

"What's the difference between the enemy who does not hurt me, and the friend who does not serve me? *Monsignore San Giacomo*, my patron saint, you are of very little use to me in the leathern bag. But if you help me to get into a new pair of small-clothes on this important occasion, you will be a friend indeed. *Alla bisogna, Monsignore.*" Then, gravely kissing the medallion, he thrust it into one pocket, the coins into the other, made up a bundle of the two defunct suits, and, muttering to himself, "Beast, miser that I am, to disgrace the Padrone, with all these savings in his service!" ran down stairs into his pantry, caught up his hat and stick, and in a few moments more was seen trudging off to the neighbouring town of L – .

Apparently the poor Italian succeeded, for he came back that evening in time to prepare the thin gruel which made his master's supper, with a suit of black – a little threadbare, but still highly respectable – two shirt fronts, and two white cravats. But, out of all this finery, Jackeymo held the small-clothes in especial veneration; for as they had cost exactly what the medallion had sold for, so it seemed to him that San Giacomo had heard his prayer in that quarter to which he had more exclusively directed the saint's direction. The other habiliments came to him in the merely human process of sale and barter; the small-clothes were the personal gratuity of San Giacomo!

[1] By the pounds Milanese, Giacomo means the Milanese lira.

CHAPTER VIII

Life has been subjected to many ingenious comparisons; and if we do not understand it any better, it is not for want of what is called "reasoning by illustration." Amongst other resemblances, there are moments when, to a quiet contemplator, it suggests the image of one of those rotatory entertainments commonly seen in fairs, all known by the name of "whirligigs or roundabouts," in which each participator of the pastime, seated on his hobby, is always apparently in the act of pursuing some one before him, while he is pursued by some one behind. Man, and woman too, are naturally animals of chase; the greatest still finds something to follow, and there is no one too humble not to be an object of prey to another. Thus, confining our view to the village of Hazeldean, we behold in this whirligig Dr Riccabocca spurring his hobby after Lenny Fairfield; and Miss Jemima, on her decorous side-saddle, whipping after Dr Riccabocca. Why, with so long and intimate a conviction of the villany of our sex, Miss Jemima should resolve upon giving the male animal one more chance of redeeming itself in her eyes, I leave to the explanation of those gentlemen who profess to find "their only hooks in woman's looks" Perhaps it might be from the over-tenderness and clemency of Miss Jemima's nature; perhaps it might be that, as yet, she had only experienced the villany of man born and reared in these cold northern climates; and in the land of Petrarch and Romeo, of the citron and myrtle, there was reason to expect that the native monster would be more amenable to gentle influences, less obstinately hardened in his iniquities. Without entering farther into these hypotheses, it is sufficient to say, that on Signor Riccabocca's appearance in the drawing-room, at Hazeldean, Miss Jemima felt more than ever rejoiced that she had relaxed in his favour her general hostility to man. In truth, though Frank saw something quizzical in the old-fashioned and outlandish cut of the Italian's sober dress; in his long hair, and the *chapeau bras*, over which he bowed so gracefully, and then pressed it, as if to his heart, before tucking it under his arm, after the fashion in which the gizzard reposes under the wing of a roasted pullet; yet it was impossible that even Frank could deny to Riccabocca that praise which is due to the air and manner of all unmistakeable gentleman. And certainly as, after dinner, conversation grew more familiar, and the Parson and Mrs Dale, who had been invited to meet their friend, did their best to draw him out, his talk, though sometimes a little too wise for his listeners, became eminently animated and agreeable. It was the conversation of a man who, besides the knowledge which is acquired from books and life, had studied the art which becomes a gentleman – that of pleasing in polite society. Riccabocca, however, had more than this art – he had one which is often less innocent – the art of penetrating into the weak side of his associates, and of saying the exact thing which hits it plump in the middle, with the careless air of a random shot.

The result was, that all were charmed with him; and that even Captain Barnabas postponed the whist-table for a full hour after the usual time. The Doctor did not play – he thus became the property of the two ladies, Miss Jemima, and Mrs Dale.

Seated between the two, in the place rightfully appertaining to Flimsey, who this time was fairly dislodged, to her great wonder and discontent, the Doctor was the emblem of true Domestic Felicity, placed between Friendship and Love.

Friendship, as became her, worked quietly at the embroidered pocket-handkerchief, and left Love to its more animated operations. "You, must be very lonely at the Casino," said Love, in a sympathising tone.

"Madam," replied Riccabocca, gallantly, "I shall think so when I leave you."

Friendship cast a sly glance at Love – Love blushed or looked down on the carpet, which comes to the same thing. "Yet," began Love again – "yet solitude, to a feeling heart – "

Riccabocca thought of the note of invitation, and involuntarily buttoned his coat, as if to protect the individual organ thus alarmingly referred to.

"Solitude, to a feeling heart, has its charms. It is so hard even for us, poor ignorant women, to find a congenial companion – but for *you*!" Love stopped short, as if it had said too much, and smelt confusedly at its bouquet.

Dr Riccabocca cautiously lowered his spectacles, and darted one glance, which, with the rapidity and comprehensiveness of lightning, seemed to envelope and take in it, as it were, the whole inventory of Miss Jemima's personal attractions. Now, Miss Jemima, as I have before observed, had a mild and pensive expression of countenance, and she would have been positively pretty had the mildness looked a little more alert, and the pensiveness somewhat less lackadaisical. In fact, though Miss Jemima was constitutionally mild, she was not *de naturâ* pensive; she had too much of the Hazeldean blood in her veins for that sullen and viscid humour called melancholy, and therefore this assumption of pensiveness really spoilt her character of features, which only wanted to be lighted up by a cheerful smile to be extremely prepossessing. The same remark might apply to the figure, which – thanks to the same pensiveness – lost all the undulating grace which movement and animation bestow on the fluent curves of the feminine form. The figure was a good figure, examined in detail – a little thin, perhaps, but by no means emaciated – with just and elegant proportions, and naturally light and flexible. But that same unfortunate pensiveness gave the whole a character of inertness and languor; and when Miss Jemima reclined on the sofa, so complete seemed the relaxation of nerve and muscle, that you would have thought she had lost the use of her limbs. Over her face and form, thus defrauded of the charms Providence had bestowed on them, Dr Riccabocca's eye glanced rapidly; and then moving nearer to Mrs Dale – "Defend me" (he stopped a moment, and added,) "from the charge of not being able to appreciate congenial companionship."

"Oh, I did not say that!" cried Miss Jemima.

"Pardon me," said the Italian, "if I am so dull as to misunderstand you. One may well lose one's head, at least, in such a neighbourhood as this." He rose as he spoke, and bent over Frank's shoulder to examine some Views of Italy, which Miss Jemima (with what, if wholly unselfish, would have been an attention truly delicate) had extracted from the library in order to gratify the guest.

"Most interesting creature, indeed," sighed Miss Jemima, "but too – too flattering!"

"Tell me," said Mrs Dale gravely, "do you think, love, that you could put off the end of the world a little longer, or must we make haste in order to be in time?"

"How wicked you are!" said Miss Jemima, turning aside.

Some few minutes afterwards, Mrs Dale contrived it so that Dr Riccabocca and herself were in a farther corner of the room, looking at a picture said to be by Wouvermans.

Mrs Dale. – "She is very amiable, Jemima, is she not?"

Riccabocca. – "Exceedingly so. Very fine battle-piece!"

Mrs Dale. – "So kind-hearted."

Riccabocca. – "All ladies are. How naturally that warrior makes his desperate cut at the runaway!"

Mrs Dale. – "She is not what is called regularly handsome, but she has something very winning."

Riccabocca, with a smile. – "So winning, that it is strange she is not won. That gray mare in the foreground stands out very boldly!"

Mrs Dale, distrusting the smile of Riccabocca, and throwing in a more effective grape charge. – "Not won yet; and it is strange! – she will have a very pretty fortune."

Riccabocca. – "Ah!"

Mrs Dale. – "Six thousand pounds, I daresay – certainly four."

Riccabocca, suppressing a sigh, and with his wonted address. – "If Mrs Dale were still single, she would never need a friend to say what her portion might be; but Miss Jemima is so good that I am quite sure it is not Miss Jemima's fault that she is still – Miss Jemima!"

The foreigner slipped away as he spoke, and sate himself down beside the whist-players.

Mrs Dale was disappointed, but certainly not offended. – "It would be such a good thing for both," muttered she, almost inaudibly.

"Giacomo," said Riccabocca, as he was undressing, that night, in the large, comfortable, well-carpeted English bedroom, with that great English four-posted bed in the recess which seems made to shame folks out of single-blessedness – "Giacomo, I have had this evening the offer of probably six thousand pounds – certainly of four thousand."

"*Cosa meravigliosa!*" exclaimed Jackeymo – "miraculous thing!" and he crossed himself with great fervour. "Six thousand pounds English! why, that must be a hundred thousand – blockhead that I am! – more than a hundred and fifty thousand pounds Milanese!" And Jackeymo, who was considerably enlivened by the Squire's ale, commenced a series of gesticulations and capers, in the midst of which he stopped and cried, "But not for nothing?"

"Nothing! no!"

"These mercenary English! – the Government wants to bribe you."

"That's not it."

"The priests want you to turn heretic."

"Worse than that," said the philosopher.

"Worse than that! O Padrone! for shame!"

"Don't be a fool, but pull off my pantaloons – they want me never to wear *these* again!"

"Never to wear what?" exclaimed Jackeymo, staring outright at his master's long legs in their linen drawers – "never to wear – "

"The breeches," said Riccabocca laconically.

"The barbarians!" faltered Jackeymo.

"My nightcap! – and never to have any comfort in this," said Riccabocca, drawing on the cotton head-gear; "and never to have any sound sleep in that," pointing to the four-posted bed. "And to be a bondsman and a slave," continued Riccabocca, waxing wroth; "and to be wheedled and purred at, and pawed, and clawed, and scolded, and fondled, and blinded, and deafened, and bridled, and saddled – bedevilled and – married."

"Married!" said Jackeymo, more dispassionately – "that's very bad, certainly; but more than a hundred and fifty thousand *lire*, and perhaps a pretty young lady, and" —

"Pretty young lady!" growled Riccabocca, jumping into bed and drawing the clothes fiercely over him. "Put out the candle, and get along with you – do, you villanous old incendiary!"

CHAPTER IX

It was not many days since the resurrection of those ill-omened stocks, and it was evident already, to an ordinary observer, that something wrong had got into the village. The peasants wore a sullen expression of countenance; when the Squire passed, they took off their hats with more than ordinary formality, but they did not return the same broad smile to his quick, hearty "Good day, my man." The women peered at him from the threshold or the casement, but did not, as was their wont, (at least the wont of the prettiest,) take occasion to come out to catch his passing compliment on their own good looks, or their tidy cottages. And the children, who used to play after work on the site of the old stocks, now shunned the place, and, indeed, seemed to cease play altogether.

On the other hand, no man likes to build, or rebuild, a great public work for nothing. Now that the Squire had resuscitated the stocks, and made them so exceedingly handsome, it was natural that he should wish to put somebody into them. Moreover, his pride and self-esteem had been wounded by the Parson's opposition; and it would be a justification to his own forethought, and a triumph over the Parson's understanding, if he could satisfactorily and practically establish a proof that the stocks had not been repaired before they were wanted.

Therefore, unconsciously to himself, there was something about the Squire more burly, and authoritative, and menacing than heretofore. Old Gaffer Solomons observed, "that they had better mind well what they were about, for that the Squire had a wicked look in the tail of his eye – just as the dun bull had afore it tossed neighbour Barnes's little boy."

For two or three days these mute signs of something brewing in the atmosphere had been rather noticeable than noticed, without any positive overt act of tyranny on the one hand, or rebellion on the other. But on the very Saturday night in which Dr Riccabocca was installed in the four-posted bed in the chintz chamber, the threatened revolution commenced. In the dead of that night, personal outrage was committed on the stocks. And on the Sunday morning, Mr Stirn, who was the earliest riser in the parish, perceived, in going to the farmyard, that the nob of the column that flanked the board had been feloniously broken off; that the four holes were bunged up with mud; and that some Jacobinical villain had carved, on the very centre of the flourish or scroll work, "Dam the stoks!" Mr Stirn was much too vigilant a right-hand man, much too zealous a friend of law and order, not to regard such proceedings with horror and alarm. And when the Squire came into his dressing-room at half-past seven, his butler (who fulfilled also the duties of valet) informed him, with a mysterious air, that Mr Stirn had something "very partikler to communicate, about a most howdacious midnight 'spiracy and 'sault."

The Squire stared, and bade Mr Stirn be admitted.

"Well?" cried the Squire, suspending the operation of stropping his razor.

Mr Stirn groaned.

"Well, man, what now?"

"I never knowed such a thing in this here parish afore," began Mr Stirn, "and I can only 'count for it by s'posing that them foreign Papishers have been semminating" —

"Been what?"

"Semminating" —

"Disseminating, you blockhead – disseminating what?"

"Damn the stocks," began Mr Stirn, plunging right *in medias res*, and by a fine use of one of the noblest figures in rhetoric.

"Mr Stirn!" cried the Squire, reddening, "did you say 'Damn the stocks?' – damn my new handsome pair of stocks!"

"Lord forbid, sir; that's what *they* say: that's what they have digged on it with knives and daggers, and they have stuffed mud in its four holes, and broken the capital of the elewation."

The Squire took the napkin off his shoulder, laid down strop and razor; he seated himself in his arm-chair majestically, crossed his legs, and in a voice that affected tranquillity, said —

"Compose yourself, Stirn; you have a deposition to make, touching an assault upon – can I trust my senses? – upon my new stocks. Compose yourself – be calm. NOW! What the devil is come to the parish?"

"Ah, sir, what indeed?" replied Mr Stirn; and then, laying the forefinger of the right hand on the palm of the left, he narrated the case.

"And whom do you suspect? Be calm now, don't speak in a passion. You are a witness, sir – a dispassionate, unprejudiced witness. Zounds and fury! this is the most insolent, unprovoked, diabolical – but whom do you suspect, I say?"

Stirn twirled his hat, elevated his eyebrows, jerked his thumb over his shoulder, and whispered – "I hear as how the two Papishers slept at your honour's last night."

"What, dolt! do you suppose Dr Rickeybockey got out of his warm bed to bung up the holes in my new stocks?"

"Noa; he's too cunning to do it himself, but he may have been semminating. He's mighty thick with Parson Dale, and your honour knows as how the Parson set his face again the stocks. Wait a bit, sir – don't fly at me yet. There be a boy in this here parish" —

"A boy! – ah, fool, now you are nearer the mark. The Parson write 'Damn the stocks,' indeed! What boy do you mean?"

"And that boy be cockered up much by Mister Dale; and the Papisher went and sat with him and his mother a whole hour t'other day; and that boy is as deep as a well; and I seed him lurking about the place, and hiding hisself under the tree the day the stocks was put up – and that ere boy is Lenny Fairfield."

"Whew," said the Squire, whistling, "you have not your usual senses about you to-day, man. Lenny Fairfield – pattern boy of the village. Hold your tongue. I dare say it is not done by any one in the parish, after all; some good-for-nothing vagrant – that cursed tinker, who goes about with a very vicious donkey – whom, by the way, I caught picking thistles out of the very eyes of the old stocks! Shows how the tinker brings up his donkeys! Well, keep a sharp look-out. To-day is Sunday; worst day of the week, I'm sorry and ashamed to say, for rows and depredations. Between the services, and after evening church, there are always idle fellows from all the neighbouring country about, as you know too well. Depend on it, the real culprits will be found gathering round the stocks, and will betray themselves: have your eyes, ears, and wits about you, and I've no doubt we shall come to the rights of the matter before the day's out. And if we do," added the Squire, "we'll make an example of the ruffian!"

"In course," said Stirn; "and if we don't find him, we must make an example all the same. That's where it is, sir. That's why the stocks ben't respected; they has not had an example yet – we wants an example."

"On my word, I believe that's very true; and the first idle fellow you catch in anything wrong we'll clap in, and keep him there for two hours at least."

"With the biggest pleasure, your honour – that's what it is."

And Mr Stirn, having now got what he considered a complete and unconditional authority over all the legs and wrists of Hazeldean parish, *quoad* the stocks, took his departure.

CHAPTER X

"Randal," said Mrs Leslie, on this memorable Sunday – "Randal, do you think of going to Mr Hazeldean's?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered Randal. "Mr Egerton does not object to it; and as I do not return to Eton, I may have no other opportunity of seeing Frank for some time. I ought not to fail in respect to Mr Egerton's natural heir!"

"Gracious me!" cried Mrs Leslie, who, like many women of her cast and kind, had a sort of worldliness in her notions, which she never evinced in her conduct – "gracious me! – natural heir to the old Leslie property!"

"He is Mr Egerton's nephew, and," added Randal, ingenuously letting out his thoughts, "I am no relation to Mr Egerton at all."

"But," said poor Mrs Leslie, with tears in her eyes, "it would be a shame in the man, after paying your schooling and sending you to Oxford, and having you to stay with him in the holidays, if he did not mean anything by it."

"Anything, mother – yes – but not the thing you suppose. No matter. It is enough that he has armed me for life, and I shall use the weapons as seems to me best."

Here the dialogue was suspended, by the entrance of the other members of the family, dressed for church.

"It can't be time for church! No! it can't!" exclaimed Mrs Leslie. She was never in time for anything.

"Last bell ringing," said Mr Leslie, who, though a slow man, was methodical and punctual. Mrs Leslie made a frantic rush at the door, the Montfydget blood being now in a blaze – whirled up the stairs – gained her room, tore her best bonnet from the peg, snatched her newest shawl from the drawers, crushed the bonnet on her head, flung the shawl on her shoulders, thrust a desperate pin into its folds, in order to conceal a buttonless yawn in the body of her gown, and then flew back like a whirlwind. Meanwhile the family were already out of doors, in waiting; and just as the bell ceased, the procession moved from the shabby house to the dilapidated church.

The church was a large one, but the congregation was small, and so was the income of the Parson. It was a lay rectory, and the great tithes had belonged to the Leslies, but they had been long since sold. The vicarage, still in their gift, might be worth a little more than £100 a-year. The present incumbent had nothing else to live upon. He was a good man, and not originally a stupid one; but penury and the anxious cares for wife and family, combined with what may be called *solitary confinement* for the cultivated mind, when, amidst the two-legged creatures round, it sees no other cultivated mind with which it can exchange an extra-parochial thought – had lulled him into a lazy mournfulness, which at times was very like imbecility. His income allowed him to do no good to the parish, whether in work, trade, or charity; and thus he had no moral weight with the parishioners beyond the example of his sinless life, and such negative effect as might be produced by his slumberous exhortations. Therefore his parishioners troubled him very little; and but for the influence which, in hours of Montfydget activity, Mrs Leslie exercised over the most tractable – that is, the children and the aged – not half-a-dozen persons would have known or cared whether he shut up his church or not.

But our family were seated in state in their old seignorial pew, and Mr Dumdrum, with a nasal twang, went lugubriously through the prayers; and the old people who could sin no more, and the children who had not yet learned to sin, croaked forth responses that might have come from the choral frogs in Aristophanes. And there was a long sermon *apropos* to nothing which could possibly interest the congregation – being, in fact, some controversial homily, which Mr Dumdrum had composed and preached years before. And when this discourse was over, there was a loud universal grunt, as if of

release and thanksgiving, and a great clatter of shoes – and the old hobbled, and the young scrambled, to the church door.

Immediately after church, the Leslie family dined; and, as soon as dinner was over, Randal set out on his foot journey to Hazeldean Hall.

Delicate and even feeble though his frame, he had the energy and quickness of movement which belongs to nervous temperaments; and he tasked the slow stride of a peasant, whom he took to serve him as a guide for the first two or three miles. Though Randal had not the gracious open manner with the poor which Frank inherited from his father, he was still (despite many a secret hypocritical vice, at war with the character of a gentleman) gentleman enough to have no churlish pride to his inferiors. He talked little, but he suffered his guide to talk; and the boor, who was the same whom Frank had accosted, indulged in eulogistic comments on that young gentleman's pony, from which he diverged into some compliments on the young gentleman himself. Randal drew his hat over his brows. There is a wonderful tact and fine breeding in your agricultural peasant; and though Tom Stowell was but a brutish specimen of the class, he suddenly perceived that he was giving pain. He paused, scratched his head, and glancing affectionately towards his companion, exclaimed —

"But I shall live to see you on a handsomer beastis than that little pony, Master Randal; and sure I ought, for you be as good a gentleman as any in the land."

"Thank you," said Randal. "But I like walking better than riding – I am more used to it."

"Well, and you walk bra'ly – there ben't a better walker in the county. And very pleasant it is walking; and 'tis a pretty country afore you, all the way to the Hall."

Randal strode on, as if impatient of these attempts to flatter or to soothe; and, coming at length into a broader lane, said – "I think I can find my way now. Many thanks to you, Tom;" and he forced a shilling into Tom's horny palm. The man took it reluctantly, and a tear started to his eye. He felt more grateful for that shilling than he had for Frank's liberal half-crown; and he thought of the poor fallen family, and forgot his own dire wrestle with the wolf at his door.

He staid lingering in the lane till the figure of Randal was out of sight, and then returned slowly. Young Leslie continued to walk on at a quick pace. With all his intellectual culture, and his restless aspirations, his breast afforded him no thought so generous, no sentiment so poetic, as those with which the unlettered clown crept slouchingly homeward.

As Randal gained a point where several lanes met on a broad piece of waste land, he began to feel tired, and his step slackened. Just then a gig emerged from one of these by-roads, and took the same direction as the pedestrian. The road was rough and hilly, and the driver proceeded at a foot's-pace; so that the gig and the pedestrian went pretty well abreast.

"You seem tired, sir," said the driver, a stout young farmer of the higher class of tenants, and he looked down compassionately on the boy's pale countenance and weary stride. "Perhaps we are going the same way, and I can give you a lift?"

It was Randal's habitual policy to make use of every advantage proffered to him, and he accepted the proposal frankly enough to please the honest farmer.

"A nice day, sir," said the latter, as Randal sat by his side. "Have you come far?"

"From Rood Hall."

"Oh, you be young Squire Leslie," said the farmer, more respectfully, and lifting his hat.

"Yes, my name is Leslie. You know Rood, then?"

"I was brought up on your father's land, sir. You may have heard of Farmer Bruce?"

Randal. – "I remember, when I was a little boy, a Mr Bruce, who rented, I believe, the best part of our land, and who used to bring us cakes when he called to see my father. He is a relation of yours?"

Farmer Bruce. – "He was my uncle. He is dead now, poor man."

Randal. – "Dead! I am grieved to hear it. He was very kind to us children. But it is long since he left my father's farm."

Farmer Bruce, apologetically. – "I am sure he was very sorry to go. But, you see, he had an unexpected legacy – "

Randal. – "And retired from business?"

Farmer Bruce. – "No. But, having capital, he could afford to pay a good rent for a real good farm."

Randal, bitterly. – "All capital seems to fly from the lands of Rood. And whose farm did he take?"

Farmer Bruce. – "He took Hawleigh, under Squire Hazeldean. I rent it now. We've laid out a power o' money on it. But I don't complain. It pays well."

Randal. – "Would the money have paid as well, sunk on my father's land?"

Farmer Bruce. – "Perhaps it might, in the long run. But then, sir, we wanted new premises – barns and cattle-sheds, and a deal more – which the landlord should do; but it is not every landlord as can afford that. Squire Hazeldean's a rich man."

Randal. – "Ay!"

The road now became pretty good, and the farmer put his horse into a brisk trot.

"But which way be you going, sir? I don't care for a few miles more or less, if I can be of service."

"I am going to Hazeldean," said Randal, rousing himself from a reverie. "Don't let me take you out of your way."

"Oh, Hawleigh Farm is on the other side of the village, so it be quite my way, sir."

The farmer then, who was really a smart young fellow – one of that race which the application of capital to land has produced, and which, in point of education and refinement, are at least on a par with the squires of a former generation – began to talk about his handsome horse, about horses in general, about hunting and coursing: he handled all these subjects with spirit, yet with modesty. Randal pulled his hat still lower down over his brows, and did not interrupt him till past the Casino, when, struck by the classic air of the place, and catching a scent from the orange trees, the boy asked abruptly – "Whose house is that?"

"Oh, it belongs to Squire Hazeldean, but it is let or lent to a foreign Mounseer. They say he is quite the gentleman, but uncommonly poor."

"Poor," said Randal, turning back to gaze on the trim garden, the neat terrace, the pretty belvidere, and (the door of the house being open) catching a glimpse of the painted hall within – "poor, the place seems well kept. What do you call poor, Mr Bruce?"

The farmer laughed. "Well, that's a home question, sir. But I believe the Mounseer is as poor as a man can be who makes no debts and does not actually starve."

"As poor as my father?" asked Randal openly and abruptly.

"Lord, sir! your father be a very rich man compared to him."

Randal continued to gaze, and his mind's eye conjured up the contrast of his slovenly shabby home, with all its neglected appurtenances! No trim garden at Rood Hall, no scent from odorous orange blossoms. Here poverty at least was elegant – there, how squalid! He did not comprehend at how cheap a rate the luxury of the Beautiful can be effected. They now approached the extremity of the Squire's park pales; and Randal, seeing a little gate, bade the farmer stop his gig, and descended. The boy plunged amidst the thick oak groves; the farmer went his way blithely, and his mellow merry whistle came to Randal's moody ear as he glided quick under the shadow of the trees.

He arrived at the Hall, to find that all the family were at church; and, according to the patriarchal custom, the church-going family embraced nearly all the servants. It was therefore an old invalid housemaid who opened the door to him. She was rather deaf, and seemed so stupid that Randal did not ask leave to enter and wait for Frank's return. He therefore said briefly that he would just stroll on the lawn, and call again when church was over.

The old woman stared, and strove to hear him; meanwhile Randal turned round abruptly, and sauntered towards the garden side of the handsome old house.

There was enough to attract any eye in the smooth greensward of the spacious lawn – in the numerous parterres of varying flowers – in the venerable grandeur of the two mighty cedars, which threw their still shadows over the grass – and in the picturesque building, with its projecting mullions and heavy gables; yet I fear that it was with no poet's nor painter's eye that this young old man gazed on the scene before him.

He beheld the evidence of wealth – and the envy of wealth jaundiced his soul.

Folding his arms on his breast, he stood awhile, looking all around him with closed lips and lowering brow; then he walked slowly on, his eyes fixed on the ground, and muttered to himself —

"The heir to this property is little better than a dunce; and they tell me I have talents and learning, and I have taken to my heart the maxim, 'Knowledge is power.' And yet, with all my struggles, will knowledge ever place me on the same level as that on which this dunce is born? I don't wonder that the poor should hate the rich. But of all the poor, who should hate the rich like the pauper gentleman? I suppose Audley Egerton means me to come into Parliament, and be a Tory like himself. What! keep things as they are! No; for me not even Democracy, unless there first come Revolution. I understand the cry of a Marat – 'More blood!' Marat had lived as a poor man, and cultivated science – in the sight of a prince's palace."

He turned sharply round, and glared vindictively on the poor old hall, which, though a very comfortable habitation, was certainly no palace; and with his arms still folded on his breast, he walked backward, as if not to lose the view, nor the chain of ideas it conjured up.

"But," he continued to soliloquise – "but of revolution there is no chance. Yet the same wit and will that would thrive in revolutions should thrive in this commonplace life. Knowledge is power. Well, then, shall I have no power to oust this blockhead? Oust him – what from? His father's halls? Well – but if he were dead, who would be the heir of Hazeldean? Have I not heard my mother say that I am as near in blood to this Squire as any one, if he had no children? Oh, but the boy's life is worth ten of mine! Oust him from what? At least from the thoughts of his uncle Egerton – an uncle who has never even seen him! That, at least, is more feasible. 'Make my way in life,' sayest thou, Audley Egerton. Ay – and to the fortune thou hast robbed from my ancestors. Simulation – simulation. Lord Bacon allows simulation. Lord Bacon practised it – and" —

Here the soliloquy came to a sudden end; for as, rapt in his thoughts, the boy had continued to walk backwards, he had come to the verge where the lawn slided off into the ditch of the ha-ha – and, just as he was fortifying himself by the precept and practice of my Lord Bacon, the ground went from under him, and slap into the ditch went Randal Leslie!

It so happened that the Squire, whose active genius was always at some repair or improvement, had been but a few days before widening and sloping off the ditch just in that part, so that the earth was fresh and damp, and not yet either turfed or flattened down. Thus when Randal, recovering his first surprise and shock, rose to his feet, he found his clothes covered with mud; while the rudeness of the fall was evinced by the fantastic and extraordinary appearance of his hat, which, hollowed here, bulging there, and crushed out of all recognition generally, was as little like the hat of a decorous hard-reading young gentleman —*protégé* of the dignified Mr Audley Egerton – as any hat picked out of a kennel after some drunken brawl possibly could be.

Randal was dizzy, and stunned, and bruised, and it was some moments before he took heed of his raiment. When he did so, his spleen was greatly aggravated. He was still boy enough not to like the idea of presenting himself to the unknown Squire, and the dandy Frank, in such a trim: he resolved at once to regain the lane and return home, without accomplishing the object of his journey; and seeing the footpath right before him, which led to a gate that he conceived would admit him into the highway sooner than the path by which he had come, he took it at once.

It is surprising how little we human creatures heed the warnings of our good genius. I have no doubt that some benignant Power had precipitated Randal Leslie into the ditch, as a significant hint of the fate of all who choose what is, now-a-days, by no means an uncommon step in the march of intellect – viz., the walking backwards, in order to gratify a vindictive view of one's neighbour's property! I suspect that, before this century is out, many a fine fellow will thus have found his ha-ha, and scrambled out of the ditch with a much shabbier coat than he had on when he fell into it. But Randal did not thank his good genius for giving him a premonitory tumble; – and I never yet knew a man who did!

CHAPTER XI

The Squire was greatly ruffled at breakfast that morning. He was too much of an Englishman to bear insult patiently, and he considered that he had been personally insulted in the outrage offered to his recent donation to the parish. His feelings, too, were hurt as well as his pride. There was something so ungrateful in the whole thing, just after he had taken so much pains, not only in the resuscitation, but the embellishment of the stocks. It was not, however, so rare an occurrence for the Squire to be ruffled, as to create any remark. Riccabocca, indeed, as a stranger, and Mrs Hazeldean, as a wife, had the quick tact to perceive that the host was glum and the husband snappish; but the one was too discreet and the other too sensible, to chafe the new sore, whatever it might be; and shortly after breakfast the Squire retired into his study, and absented himself from morning service.

In his delightful *Life of Oliver Goldsmith*, Mr Foster takes care to touch our hearts by introducing his hero's excuse for not entering the priesthood. He did not feel himself good enough. Thy Vicar of Wakefield, poor Goldsmith, was an excellent substitute for thee; and Dr Primrose, at least, will be good enough for the world until Miss Jemima's fears are realised. Now, Squire Hazeldean had a tenderness of conscience much less reasonable than Goldsmith's. There were occasionally days in which he did not feel good enough – I don't say for a priest, but even for one of the congregation – "days in which, (said the Squire in his own blunt way,) as I have never in my life met a worse devil than a devil of a temper, I'll not carry mine into the family pew. He shan't be growling out hypocritical responses from my poor grandmother's prayer-book." So the Squire and his demon staid at home. But the demon was generally cast out before the day was over; and, on this occasion, when the bell rang for afternoon service, it may be presumed that the Squire had reasoned or fretted himself into a proper state of mind; for he was then seen sallying forth from the porch of his hall, arm-in-arm with his wife, and at the head of his household. The second service was (as is commonly the case, in rural districts) more numerously attended than the first one; and it was our Parson's wont to devote to this service his most effective discourse.

Parson Dale, though a very fair scholar, had neither the deep theology nor the archæological learning that distinguish the rising generation of the clergy. I much doubt if he could have passed what would now be called a creditable examination in the Fathers; and as for all the nice formalities in the rubric, he would never have been the man to divide a congregation or puzzle a bishop. Neither was Parson Dale very erudite in ecclesiastical architecture. He did not much care whether all the details in the church were purely gothic or not: crockets and finials, round arch and pointed arch, were matters, I fear, on which he had never troubled his head. But one secret Parson Dale did possess, which is perhaps of equal importance with those subtler mysteries – he knew how to fill his church! Even at morning service no pews were empty, and at evening service the church overflowed.

Parson Dale, too, may be considered, now-a-days, to hold but a mean idea of the spiritual authority of the Church. He had never been known to dispute on its exact bearing with the State – whether it was incorporated with the State, or above the State – whether it was antecedent to the Papacy, or formed from the Papacy, &c., &c. According to his favourite maxim, *Quieta non movere*, (not to disturb things that are quiet), I have no doubt that he would have thought that the less discussion is provoked upon such matters, the better for both church and laity. Nor had he ever been known to regret the disuse of the ancient custom of excommunication, nor any other diminution of the powers of the priesthood, whether minatory or militant; yet for all this, Parson Dale had a great notion of the sacred privilege of a minister of the gospel – to advise – to deter – to persuade – to reprove. And it was for the evening service that he prepared those sermons, which may be called, "sermons that preach *at* you." He preferred the evening for that salutary discipline, not only because the congregation was more numerous, but also because, being a shrewd man in his own innocent way, he knew that people bear better to be preached at after dinner than before; that you arrive more insinuatingly at the heart

when the stomach is at peace. There was a genial kindness in Parson Dale's way of preaching at you. It was done in so imperceptible fatherly a manner, that you never felt offended. He did it, too, with so much art that nobody but your own guilty self knew that you were the sinner he was exhorting. Yet he did not spare rich nor poor: he preached at the Squire, and that great fat farmer, Mr Bullock the churchwarden, as boldly as at Hodge the ploughman, and Scrub the hedger. As for Mr Stirn, he had preached at *him* more often than at any one in the parish; but Stirn, though he had the sense to know it, never had the grace to reform. There was, too, in Parson Dale's sermons, something of that boldness of illustration which would have been scholarly if he had not made it familiar, and which is found in the discourses of our elder divines. Like them, he did not scruple, now and then, to introduce an anecdote from history, or borrow an allusion from some non-scriptural author, in order to enliven the attention of his audience, or render an argument more plain. And the good man had an object in this, a little distinct from, though wholly subordinate to the main purpose of his discourse. He was a friend to knowledge – but to knowledge accompanied by religion; and sometimes his references to sources not within the ordinary reading of his congregation would spirit up some farmer's son, with an evening's leisure on his hands, to ask the Parson for farther explanation, and so be lured on to a little solid or graceful instruction under a safe guide.

Now on the present occasion, the Parson, who had always his eye and heart on his flock, and who had seen with great grief the realisation of his fears at the revival of the stocks; seen that a spirit of discontent was already at work amongst the peasants, and that magisterial and inquisitorial designs were darkening the natural benevolence of the Squire; seen, in short, the signs of a breach between classes, and the precursors of the ever inflammable feud between the rich and the poor, meditated nothing less than a great Political Sermon – a sermon that should extract from the roots of social truths a healing virtue for the wound that lay sore, but latent, in the breast of his parish of Hazeldean:

And thus ran —

The Political Sermon of Parson Dale.

CHAPTER XII

"For every man shall bear his own burden."

Galatians, c. vi. v. 5.

"Brethren, every man has his burden. If God designed our lives to end at the grave, may we not believe that he would have freed an existence so brief from the cares and sorrows to which, since the beginning of the world, mankind has been subjected? Suppose that I am a kind father, and have a child whom I dearly love, but I know by a divine revelation that he will die at the age of eight years, surely I should not vex his infancy by needless preparations for the duties of life. If I am a rich man, I should not send him from the caresses of his mother to the stern discipline of school. If I am a poor man, I should not take him with me to hedge and dig, to scorch in the sun, to freeze in the winter's cold: why inflict hardships on his childhood, for the purpose of fitting him for manhood, when I know that he is doomed not to grow into man? But if, on the other hand, I believe my child is reserved for a more durable existence, then should I not, out of the very love I bear to him, prepare his childhood for the struggle of life, according to that station in which he is born, giving many a toil, many a pain to the infant, in order to rear and strengthen him for his duties as man? So is it with our Father that is in Heaven. Viewing this life as our infancy, and the next as our spiritual maturity, where 'in the ages to come, he may show the exceeding riches of his grace,' it is in his tenderness, as in his wisdom, to permit the toil and the pain which, in tasking the powers and developing the virtues of the soul, prepare it for 'the earnest of our inheritance, the redemption of the purchased possession.' Hence it is that every man has his burden. Brethren, if you believe that God is good, yea, but as tender as a human father, you will know that your troubles in life are a proof that you are reared for an eternity. But each man thinks his own burden the hardest to bear: the poor man groans under his poverty, the rich man under the cares that multiply with wealth. For, so far from wealth freeing us from trouble, all the wise men who have written in all ages, have repeated with one voice the words of the wisest, 'When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?' And this is literally true, my brethren; for, let a man be as rich as was the great King Solomon himself, unless he lock up all his gold in a chest, it must go abroad to be divided amongst others; yea, though, like Solomon, he make him great works – though he build houses and plant vineyards, and make him gardens and orchards – still the gold that he spends feeds but the mouths he employs; and Solomon himself could not eat with a better relish than the poorest mason who builded the house, or the humblest labourer who planted the vineyard. Therefore, 'when goods increase, they are increased that eat them.' And this, my brethren, may teach us toleration and compassion for the rich. We share their riches whether they will or not; we do not share their cares. The profane history of our own country tells us that a princess, destined to be the greatest queen that ever sat on this throne, envied the milk-maid singing; and a profane poet, whose wisdom was only less than that of the inspired writers, represents the man who by force and wit had risen to be a king, sighing for the sleep vouchsafed to the meanest of his subjects – all bearing out the words of the son of David – 'The sleep of the labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.'

"Amongst my brethren now present, there is doubtless some one who has been poor, and by honest industry has made himself comparatively rich. Let his heart answer me while I speak: are not the chief cares that now disturb him to be found in the goods he hath acquired? – has he not both vexations to his spirit and trials to his virtue, which he knew not when he went forth to his labour, and took no heed of the morrow? But it is right, my brethren, that to every station there should be its

care – to every man his burden; for if the poor did not sometimes so far feel poverty to be a burden as to desire to better their condition, and (to use the language of the world) 'seek to rise in life,' their most valuable energies would never be aroused; and we should not witness that spectacle, which is so common in the land we live in – namely, the successful struggle of manly labour against adverse fortune – a struggle in which the triumph of one gives hope to thousands. It is said that necessity is the mother of invention; and the social blessings which are now as common to us as air and sunshine, have come from that law of our nature which makes us aspire towards indefinite improvement, enriches each successive generation by the labours of the last, and, in free countries, often lifts the child of the labourer to place amongst the rulers of the land. Nay, if necessity is the mother of invention, poverty is the creator of the arts. If there had been no poverty, and no sense of poverty, where would have been that which we call the wealth of a country? Subtract from civilisation all that has been produced by the poor, and what remains? – the state of the savage. Where you now see labourer and prince, you would see equality indeed – the equality of wild men. No; not even equality there! for there, brute force becomes lordship, and woe to the weak! Where you now see some in frieze, some in purple, you would see nakedness in all. Where stand the palace and the cot, you would behold but mud huts and caves. As far as the peasant excels the king among savages, so far does the society exalted and enriched by the struggles of labour excel the state in which Poverty feels no disparity, and Toil sighs for no ease. On the other hand, if the rich were perfectly contented with their wealth, their hearts would become hardened in the sensual enjoyments it procures. It is that feeling, by Divine Wisdom implanted in the soul, that there is vanity and vexation of spirit in the things of Mammon, which still leaves the rich man sensitive to the instincts of heaven, and teaches him to seek for happiness in those elevated virtues to which wealth invites him – namely, protection to the lowly and beneficence to the distressed.

"And this, my brethren, leads me to another view of the vast subject opened to us by the words of the apostle – 'Every man shall bear his own burden.' The worldly conditions of life are unequal. Why are they unequal? O my brethren, do you not perceive? Think you that, if it had been better for our spiritual probation that there should be neither great nor lowly, rich nor poor, Providence would not so have ordered the dispensations of the world, and so, by its mysterious but merciful agencies, have influenced the framework and foundations of society? But if, from the remotest period of human annals, and in all the numberless experiments of government which the wit of man has devised, still this inequality is ever found to exist, may we not suspect that there is something in the very principles of our nature to which that inequality is necessary and essential? Ask why this inequality! Why? as well ask why life is the sphere of duty and the nursery of virtues. For if all men were equal, if there were no suffering and no ease, no poverty and no wealth, would you not sweep with one blow the half at least of human virtues from the world? If there were no penury and no pain, what would become of fortitude? – what of patience? – what of resignation? If there were no greatness and no wealth, what would become of benevolence, of charity, of the blessed human pity, of temperance in the midst of luxury, of justice in the exercise of power? Carry the question farther; grant all conditions the same – no reverse, no rise and no fall – nothing to hope for, nothing to fear – what a moral death you would at once inflict upon all the energies of the soul, and what a link between the heart of man and the Providence of God would be snapped asunder! If we could annihilate evil, we should annihilate hope; and hope, my brethren, is the avenue to faith. If there be 'a time to weep, and a time to laugh,' it is that he who mourns may turn to eternity for comfort, and he who rejoices may bless God for the happy hour. Ah! my brethren, were it possible to annihilate the inequalities of human life, it would be the banishment of our worthiest virtues, the torpor of our spiritual nature, the palsy of our mental faculties. The moral world, like the world without us, derives its health and its beauty from diversity, and contrast.

"'Every man shall bear his own burden.' True: but now turn to an earlier verse in the same chapter. – 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.' Yes; while Heaven ordains

to each his peculiar suffering, it connects the family of man into one household, by that feeling which, more perhaps than any other, distinguish us from the brute creation – I mean the feeling to which we give the name of *sympathy*– the feeling for each other! The herd of deer shun the stag that is marked by the gunner; the flock heedeth not the sheep that creeps into the shade to die; but man has sorrow and joy not in himself alone, but in the joy and sorrow of those around him. He who feels only for himself abjures his very nature as man; for do we not say of one who has no tenderness for mankind that he is *inhuman*? and do we not call him who sorrows with the sorrowful, *humane*?

"Now, brethren, that which especially marked the divine mission of our Lord, is the direct appeal to this sympathy which distinguishes us from the brute. He seizes, not upon some faculty of genius given but to few, but upon that ready impulse of heart which is given to us all; and in saying, 'Love one another,' 'Bear ye one another's burdens,' he elevates the most delightful of our emotions into the most sacred of his laws. The lawyer asks our Lord, 'Who is my neighbour?' Our Lord replies by the parable of the good Samaritan. The priest and the Levite saw the wounded man that fell among the thieves, and passed by on the other side. That priest might have been austere in his doctrine, that Levite might have been learned in the law; but neither to the learning of the Levite, nor to the doctrine of the priest, does our Saviour even deign to allude. He cites but the action of the Samaritan, and saith to the lawyer, 'Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy unto him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.'

"O shallowness of human judgments! It was enough to be born a Samaritan in order to be rejected by the priest, and despised by the Levite. Yet now, what to us the priest and the Levite, of God's chosen race though they were? They passed from the hearts of men when they passed the sufferer by the wayside; while this loathed Samaritan, half thrust from the pale of the Hebrew, becomes of our family, of our kindred; a brother amongst the brotherhood of Love, so long as Mercy and Affliction shall meet in the common thoroughfare of Life!

"'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.' Think not, O my brethren, that this applies only to almsgiving – to that relief of distress which is commonly called charity – to the obvious duty of devoting, from our superfluities, something that we scarcely miss, to the wants of a starving brother. No. I appeal to the poorest amongst ye, if the worst burdens are those of the body – if the kind word and the tender thought have not often lightened your hearts more than bread bestowed with a grudge, and charity that humbles you by a frown. Sympathy is a beneficence at the command of us all, – yea, of the pauper as of the king; and sympathy is Christ's wealth. Sympathy is brotherhood. The rich are told to have charity for the poor, and the poor are enjoined to respect their superiors. Good: I say not to the contrary. But I say also to the poor, '*In your turn have charity for the rich*;' and I say to the rich, '*In your turn respect the poor*.'

"'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.' Thou, O poor man, envy not nor grudge thy brother his larger portion of worldly goods. Believe that he hath his sorrows and crosses like thyself, and perhaps, as more delicately nurtured, he feels them more; nay, hath he not temptations so great that our Lord hath exclaimed – 'How hardly they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven?' And what are temptations but trials? – what are trials but perils and sorrows? Think not that you cannot bestow your charity on the rich man, even while you take your sustenance from his hands. A heathen writer, often cited by the earliest preachers of the gospel, hath truly said – 'Wherever there is room for a man, there is place for a benefit.'

"And I ask any rich brother amongst you, when he hath gone forth to survey his barns and his granaries, his gardens and orchards, if suddenly, in the vain pride of his heart, he sees the scowl on the brow of the labourer – if he deems himself hated in the midst of his wealth – if he feels that his least faults are treasured up against him with the hardness of malice, and his plainest benefits received with the ingratitude of envy – I ask, I say, any rich man, whether straightway all pleasure in his worldly possessions does not fade from his heart, and whether he does not feel what a wealth of gladness it is

in the power of the poor man to bestow! For all these things of Mammon pass away; but there is in the smile of him whom we have served, a something that we may take with us into heaven. If, then, ye bear one another's burdens, they who are poor will have mercy on the errors, and compassion for the griefs, of the rich. To all men it was said – yes, to the Lazarus as to the Dives – 'Judge not that ye be not judged.' But think not, O rich man, that we preach only to the poor. If it be their duty not to grudge thee thy substance, it is thine to do all that may sweeten their labour. Remember, that when our Lord said 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven,' he replied also to them who asked, 'Who then shall be saved?' 'The things which are impossible with men are possible with God:' that is, man left to his own temptations would fail; but strengthened by God, he shall be saved. If thy riches are the tests of thy trial, so may they also be the instruments of thy virtues. Prove by thy riches that thou art compassionate and tender, temperate and benign; and thy riches themselves may become the evidence at once of thy faith and of thy works.

"We have constantly on our lips the simple precept, 'Do unto others as ye would be done by.' Why do we fail so often in the practice? Because we neglect to cultivate that SYMPATHY which nature implants as an instinct, and the Saviour exalts as a command. If thou wouldst do unto thy neighbour as thou wouldst be done by, ponder well how thy neighbour will regard the action thou art about to do to him. Put thyself into his place. If thou art strong, and he is weak, descend from thy strength, and enter into his weakness; lay aside thy burden for the while, and buckle on his own; let thy sight see as through his eyes – thy heart beat as in his bosom. Do this, and thou wilt often confess that what had seemed just to thy power will seem harsh to his weakness. For 'as a zealous man hath not done his duty, when he calls his brother drunkard and beast,'[2] even so an administrator of the law mistakes his object if he writes on the grand column of society, only warnings that irritate the bold, and terrify the timid: and a man will be no more in love with law than with virtue, 'if he be forced to it with rudeness and incivilities.'[3] If, then, ye would bear the burden of the lowly, O ye great – feel not only *for* them, but *with*! Watch that your pride does not chafe them – your power does not wantonly gall. Your worldly inferior is of the class from which the apostles were chosen – amidst which the Lord of Creation descended from a throne above the seraphs."

The Parson here paused a moment, and his eye glanced towards the pew near the pulpit, where sat the magnate of Hazeldean. The Squire was leaning his chin thoughtfully on his hand, his brow inclined downwards, and the natural glow of his complexion much heightened.

"But" – resumed the Parson softly, without turning to his book, and rather as if prompted by the suggestion of the moment – "But he who has cultivated sympathy commits not these errors, or, if committing them, hastens to retract. So natural is sympathy to the good man, that he obeys it mechanically when he suffers his heart to be the monitor of his conscience. In this sympathy behold the bond between rich and poor! By this sympathy, whatever our varying worldly lots, they become what they were meant to be – exercises for the virtues more peculiar to each; and thus, if in the body each man bear his own burden, yet in the fellowship of the soul all have common relief in bearing the burdens of each other.

"This is the law of Christ – fulfil it, O my flock!"

Here the Parson closed his sermon, and the congregation bowed their heads.

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[2] Jeremy Taylor —*Of Christian Prudence.* Part II.

[3] Ib.

ANCIENT AND MODERN ELOQUENCE

Eloquence, in its highest flights, is beyond all question the greatest exertion of the human mind. It requires for its conception a combination of the most exalted faculties; for its execution, a union of the most extraordinary powers. Unite in thought the most varied and dissimilar faculties of the soul – strength of understanding with brilliancy of imagination; fire of conception with solidity of judgment; a retentive memory with an enthusiastic fancy; the warmth of poetry with the coldness of prose; an eye for the beauties of nature with a command of the realities of life; a mind stored with facts and a heart teeming with impressions – and you will form the elements from which the most powerful style of oratory is to be created. But this is not all. Physical powers, if not essential, are at least a great addition to the mental qualities required for its success. The orator must have at once the lengthened thought which is requisite for a prolonged argument, and the ready wit which can turn to the best advantage any incident which may occur in the course of its delivery. More than all is required the fixity of purpose, the energy in effort, the commanding turn, which, as it is the most valuable and important faculty of the mind, so it is the one most rarely to be met with in any walk of life, and least of all in combination with the brilliant and imaginative qualities, which are the very soul of every art which is to subdue or captivate mankind.

It is not surprising that the art of the orator should require, for its highest flights, so rare a combination of qualities, for of all the efforts of the human mind it is the most astonishing in its nature, and the most transcendent in its *immediate* triumphs. The wisdom of the philosopher, the eloquence of the historian, the sagacity of the statesman, the capacity of the general, may produce more lasting effects upon human affairs; but they are incomparably less rapid in their influence, and less intoxicating from the ascendency they confer. In the solitude of his library the sage meditates on the truths which are to influence the thoughts and direct the conduct of men in future times; amidst the strife of faction the legislator discerns the measures calculated, after a long course of years, to alleviate existing evils or produce happiness yet unborn; during long and wearisome campaigns the commander throws his shield over the fortunes of his country, and prepares in silence and amidst obloquy the means of maintaining its independence. But the triumphs of the orator are immediate; his influence is instantly felt: his, and his alone, it is

> "The applause of listening senates to command,
> The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
> To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
> And read his history in a nation's eyes."

To stand up before a vast assembly composed of men of various passions, habits, and prepossessions; to conciliate their feelings by the art, and carry away their judgment by the eloquence, of the orator; to see every gaze at length turned on his countenance, and every ear intent on the words which drop from his lips; to see indifference turn into excitement, and aversion melt away amidst enthusiasm; to hear thunders of applause at the close of every sentence, and behold the fire of enthusiasm kindled in every eye, as each successive idea is brought forth; and to think that all this is the creation of the moment, and has sprung extempore from the ardour of his conceptions, and the inspiration they have derived from what passes around him, is perhaps the greatest triumph of the human mind, and that in which its divine origin and immortal destiny is most clearly revealed.

It is the magnitude of the combination requisite for its greatest efforts which renders eloquence of the loftiest kind so extremely rare among mankind. It is less frequent than the highest flights in epic or dramatic poetry. Greece produced three great tragedians, but only one Demosthenes; Cicero stands alone to sustain by his single strength the fame of Roman oratory. Antiquity could not boast

of more than five or six persons who, by the common consent of their contemporaries, had attained the highest rank in forensic eloquence; it is doubtful if modern times could count as many: as many, we mean, who have attained the very highest place in this noble and difficult art; for, doubtless, in the second class, great numbers of names are to be found; and in the third their name is legion. It is not meant to be asserted that great temporary fame and influence by eloquence may not be, and often has been, acquired by persons who are deficient in many of the qualities above enumerated, as required to form a perfect orator. Without doubt, brilliancy of genius will often, for passing effect, compensate the want of solidity of judgment; and fire of imagination make us for the moment forget a squeaking voice, a diminutive figure, an ungainly countenance. No one, at times, commanded the attention of the House of Commons more entirely than the late Mr Wilberforce, and yet his stature was small, and his voice weak and painfully shrill. But great earnestness of will and brilliancy of fancy are required to compensate such defects; and we are persuaded that none will more readily admit the justice of these observations than those who have laboured under, and, by their powers, in a certain degree surmounted them.

As little is it intended to assert that vast influence may not be acquired, and unbounded celebrity for the time obtained, not merely without the cooperation of such varied and extensive qualities, but by the aid, in many cases, of the very reverse. As temporary influence, not lasting fame, is the immediate and chief end of oratory, its style must be adapted to the prevailing cast of mind, and ruling interests or passions, of the persons to whom it is addressed; and as it will share in elevation of sentiment, if that is their characteristic, so it will be deformed by vulgarity or selfishness when they are vulgar and selfish. It is a common saying, that a speaker must descend to the level of his audience, if he means to command their suffrages or enlist their passions; and we have only to look around us to see how often, in assemblies of an inferior, interested, or impassioned character, the highest celebrity and most unbounded success are attained by persons who not only have exhibited few of the qualities of a refined orator, but who had studiously concealed those which they did possess, and secretly despised in their hearts the arts to which their triumphs had been owing.[4] But this is no more than is the case with all the arts which aim at influencing, or charming mankind. The theatre, the romance, poetry itself, share at times in the same degradation. It would be as unjust to stigmatise oratory as the art of sophists or declaimers, intended to seduce or deceive those who cannot see through its artifices, as it would be to reproach the stage with the vulgarity of the buffoon, or novels with the licentiousness of Aretin, or poetry with the seductions of Ovid. We must not think lightly of an art which has been ennobled by the efforts of Cicero and Burke in the most refined assemblies, because it has also led to the triumphs of O'Connell and Wilkes in the most ignorant.

To the highest triumphs of the art of oratory, that first of blessings, Civil Liberty, is indispensable. More truly of it than of the liberty of the press, it may be said, "It is our vital air: withdraw it, and we perish." Regulated freedom is essential to its success. It is hard to say whether it perishes most rapidly amidst the studied servility of courtly rhetoric, or the coarse adulations of democratic flattery; whether the atmosphere of Constantinople or that of New York is most fatal to its existence. Genius, and that of the very highest kind, may exist in despotic communities; but it is degraded by selfishness and misdirected by servility.

Where there is only one ruling power in the state – be it monarchical, aristocratic, or democratic – this corruption is equally certain, and equally unavoidable. The sonorous periods in which Fontanes celebrated the triumphs of the empire, the impassioned strains in which Robespierre eulogised the incorruptible virtue of the people, the coarse flattery with which O'Connell captivated his ignorant and excitable audiences, equally marked the approach of the period in which oratory, if such a

[4] This was well known in ancient times. "Corruptas," says Quintilian, "aliquando et vitiosas orationes, quas tamen plerique judiciorum pravitate mirantur, quam multa impropria, obscura, tumida, humilia, sordida, lasciva, effeminata sunt; quæ non laudantur modo a plerisque, sed quod pejus est, *propter hoc ipsum, quod sunt prava laudantur." – Inst. Orat*. ii. 5.

régime continued, must die a natural death. Under such influences it necessarily perished from its own exaggeration: it ceased to be impressive, it became ridiculous. As in all the other arts which are intended to please and instruct mankind, Truth, and a regard to the limits of nature, are essential to its success. Exaggeration and hyperbole not only degrade the character of eloquence, but destroy its influence, because they induce a style of expression with which subsequent times, emancipated from passing influences, cannot sympathise – look upon as contemptible. Then, and then only, will oratory attain its highest perfection, during that period "slow to come, soon to perish," as Tacitus said of balanced freedom, during which no one interest in the state is irresistible; and truth, in assailing the vices or resisting the encroachments of others, can find a fulcrum from whence to direct its efforts. Withdraw the fulcrum – remove the support – and truth, and with it genius, will sink to rise no more.

It is surprising, however, how solicitous the human soul is for liberty of expression; how eagerly, if one channel is closed, it seeks out and often finds another. When the power of Government, or the tyranny of the majority, has shut out the natural expression of unfettered opinion in the discussion of the social and political interests of man, it takes refuge in the regions of imagination. Romance becomes the vehicle of independent thought: the stage the arena of unrestrained debate. So delightful is free expression to the human mind, that it proves agreeable even to those whose ascendency may seem to be endangered by its prevalence. It may appear strange, but it is undoubtedly true, that the germ of the doctrines of human perfectibility, the general vices of those in authority, and the expedience of universal freedom alike in trade and employment, emanated from the precincts of the most despotic authority in Europe, and at the period of its highest exaltation. It was in the palace of Versailles, in the court of the Grande Monarque, and when discharging the duties of tutor to the Dauphin, that Fenelon wrote, for the instruction of his royal pupil, *Telémaque*– perhaps the most thoroughly democratic work, in its principles, that ever emanated from the pen of genius. It was in the boudoir of Madame de Pompadour, and when surrounded by the corruptions of Louis XV., that Quesnay first announced the doctrines of throwing all taxes on the land, and of universal freedom of trade and occupation, which have subsequently had so powerful an influence in producing the Revolution of France, and altering the political system and social conditions of Great Britain.

The extraordinary perfection to which tragedy has been brought in many modern countries where the institutions are of a despotic character, is mainly to be ascribed to this cause. The stage became the outlet of independent thought; it was there alone that unfettered expression could be safely attempted. Put into the mouths of historical or imaginary characters, portraying remote events, for the most part drawn from the classical ages of Greece or Rome, such unrestrained ideas attracted no disquietude in the depositories of authority. They were regarded as an attribute of a primeval world, which had as little relation to the present, and as little bearing on its fortunes, as the skeletons of the Mammoth, or the backbones of the Ichthyosauri, on its material interests. A direct argument in favour of republican institutions would have secured for its author a place in the Bastile, or in the dungeons of the Inquisition; an incitement to the people to take up arms, to dethrone the reigning monarch, would have led to the scaffold; but the most eloquent and impassioned declamations in support of both the one and the other, when couched in verse, put into the mouth of Virginius or Brutus, and repeated on the stage by a popular actor, excited no sort of apprehension. On the contrary, it was only the more admired from its very novelty. Such ideas fell on the mind, amidst the seductions and restrictions of a despotic court, with somewhat of the charm with which the voice of nature, and the picture of her beauties, was in the last days of the French monarchy listened to from the gifted pen of Rousseau, or the vehement and imaginary passions of the Greek Corsairs, as delineated by Byron, were regarded by the worn-out victims of London dissipation.

If we would see in modern literature the most exact counterpart which Europe has been able to present to the oratorical perfection of antiquity, we must look for it, not in the debates of its National Assemblies, or even the effusions of its pulpit eloquence, but in the speeches of its great tragic poets. The best declamations in Corneille, Alfieri, and Schiller, are often nothing but ancient

eloquence put into verse. The brevity and force of Shakspeare belong to the same school. These men exhibit the same condensation of ideas, terseness of expression, depth of thought, acquaintance with the secrets of the heart, which have rendered the historians and orators of antiquity immortal. Like them in their highest flights, they present intellect and genius disdaining the attractions of style, the flowers of rhetoric, the amplifications of imagination, and resting solely on condensed reason, cogent argument, and impassioned pathos. They are the bones and muscles of thought, without its ornament or covering. It is this circumstance which rendered their drama so popular, and has given its great masters their colossal reputation; and in their lasting fame may be found the most decisive proof of the undying influence of the highest species of eloquence on cultivated minds. Men and women went to the theatre not to be instructed in the story – it was known to all; not to be dazzled by stage effect – there was none of it: but to hear oratory of the highest, pathos of the most moving, magnanimity of the most exalted kind, repeated with superb effect by the first performers. The utmost vehemence of action, with all the aids of intonation, action, and delivery, was employed to heighten the effect of condensed eloquence, conveying free and lofty sentiments which could nowhere else be heard. This was the secret of the wonderful influence of the stage on the polished society of Paris, during the latter days of the monarchy. The audience in the *parterre* might be seen repeating every celebrated speech with the actor.

To illustrate these observations, we shall subjoin a few passages – two from Corneille, one from Shakspeare, one from Alfieri, and two from Schiller, in prose – partly to show how nearly they approach to the style of ancient oratory, and partly from a sense of the hopelessness of any translation conveying more than a prosaic idea of the terseness and vigour of the originals, —

> "When the people are the master, tumults become national events. Never is the voice of reason consulted. Honours are sold to the most ambitious, authority yielded to the most seditious. These little sovereigns, made for a year, seeing the term of their power so near expiring, cause the most auspicious designs to miscarry, from the dread that others who follow may obtain the credit of them. As they have little share in the property which they command, they reap without hesitation in the harvest of the public, being well assured that every one will gladly pardon what they themselves hope to do on a future occasion. The worst of states is the popular state."[5]

Corneille's celebrated picture of Attila, which he puts into the mouth of Octar, but which was really intended for Louis XIV., exhibits another example of the condensed style of oratory, perhaps still more applicable to a greater man than the Grande Monarque, —

> "I have seen him, alike in peace and war, bear everywhere the air of the conqueror of the earth. Often have I beheld the fiercest nations disarm his wrath by their submission. I have seen all the pleasure of his heroic mind savouring of the grand and the magnificent, while his ceaseless foresight in the midst of peace had prepared the triumphs of war; his noble anxiety, which, amidst his very recreations prepared the success of future designs. Too happy the people against whom he does not turn his invincible arms! I have seen him, covered with smoke and dust, give the noblest example to his army – spread terror everywhere by his own danger – overturn walls by a single glance, and heap his own conquests on the broken pride of the haughtiest monarchs."[6]

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[5] *Cinna*, Act ii. s. 1."Quelle prodigieuse supériorité," says Voltaire in his *Commentaries* on this passage, "de la belle Poésie sur la prose! Tous les écrivains politiques ont délayé ces pensées, aucun n'a approché de la force, de la profondeur, de la netteté, de la précision de ce discours de Cinna. Tous les corps d'état auraient du assister a cette pièce, pour apprendre à penser et à parler." – Voltaire, *Commentaires sur Corneille*, iii. 308.

[6] Corneille, *Attila*, Act ii. s. 5.

Napoleon said, if he had lived in his time, he would have made Corneille his first councillor of state. He was right: for his thoughts were more allied to the magnanimity of the hero than the pathos of the tragedian; and his language savoured more of the sonorous periods of the orator than the fire of the poet.

Beside these specimens of French tragic eloquence, we gladly place the well-known speech of Brutus in *Julius Cæsar*, which proves that Shakspeare was endowed with the very soul of ancient oratory: —

> "Romans, countrymen, and lovers! Hear me for my cause, and be silent that you may hear; believe me for mine honour, and have respect to mine honour that you may believe; censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses that you may the better judge. If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Cæsar's, to him I say that Brutus' love to Cæsar was not less than his. If, then, that friend demand why Brutus rose against Cæsar, this is my answer: not that I loved Cæsar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather that Cæsar were living and die all slaves, than that Cæsar were dead to live all free men? As Cæsar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice in it; as he was valiant, I honour him; but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There are tears for his love, joy for his fortune, honour for his valour, and death for his ambition. Who is there so base that would be a bondsman? If any, speak, for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? If any, speak, for him have I offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his country? If any, speak, for him have I offended. I have done no more to Cæsar than you should do to Brutus. The question of his death is enrolled in the Capitol; his glory is not extenuated, wherein he was worthy; nor his offences enforced for which he suffered death."[7]

This is in the highest style of ancient oratory. Whoever has had the good fortune to hear this noble speech repeated by the lips, and with the impressive manner of Kemble, will have no difficulty in conceiving how it was that eloquence in Greece and Rome acquired so mighty an ascendency. Shakspeare has shown, however, in the speech of Antony, which follows, that he is not less master of that important part of oratory which consists in moving the feelings, and conciliating by pathos an adverse audience. Antiquity never conceived anything more skilful, or evincing a more thorough knowledge of the human heart, than thus turning aside the lofty patriotic and republican ideas awakened by Brutus' speech, first by the exhibition of Cæsar's garments, rent by the daggers of his murderers, and yet wet with his blood, and then unveiling the mangled corpse itself!

The eloquence of Alfieri and Schiller, perhaps, of all modern writers, is that which approaches most closely to the brief and condensed style of ancient oratory. The speech of Icilius, in the noble drama of *Virginia*, by the first of these writers, affords a fair specimen of its power: —

> "Listen to my words, O people of Rome! I who heretofore have never been deceitful, who have never either betrayed or sold my honour; who boast an ignoble origin, but a noble heart! hear me. This innocent free maid is daughter of Virginius. At such a name, I see your eyes flash with resplendent fire. Virginius is fighting for you in the field: think on the depravity of the times; meanwhile, exposed to shame, the victim of outrage, his daughter remains in Rome. And who outrages her? Come forward, O Marcus! show yourself. Why tremble you? He is well known to you: the last slave of the tyrant Appius and his first minister – of Appius, the mortal enemy of every virtue – of Appius, the haughty, stern, ferocious oppressor, who his ravished from you your freedom, and, to embitter the robbery, has left you your

[7] *Julius Cæsar*, Act iii. s. 2.

lives. Virginia is my promised bride: I love her. Who I am, I need not say: some one may perhaps remind you. I was your tribune, your defender; but in vain. You trusted rather the deceitful words of another than my free speech. We now suffer, in common slavery, the pain of your delusion. Why do I say more? The heart, the arm, the boldness of Icilius is known to you not less than the name. From you I demand my free bride. This man does not ask her: he styles her slave – he drags her, he forces her. Icilius or Marcus is a liar: say, Romans, which it is."[8]

That Schiller was a great dramatic and lyric poet, need be told to none who have the slightest acquaintance with European literature; but his great oratorical powers are not so generally appreciated, for they have been lost in the blaze of his poetic genius. They were, however, of the very highest order, as will at once appear from the following translation (imperfect as it, of course, is) in prose, which we have attempted of the celebrated speeches of Shrewsbury and Burleigh, who discussed before Queen Elizabeth the great question of Queen Mary's execution, in his noble tragedy of *Maria Stuart*: —

SHREWSBURY

"God, whose wondrous hand has four times protected you, and who to-day gave the feeble arm of gray hairs strength to turn aside the stroke of a madman, should inspire confidence. I will not now speak in the name of justice; this is not the time. In such a tumult you cannot hear her still small voice. Consider this only: you are fearful now of the living Mary; but I say it is not the living you have to fear. *Tremble at the dead – the beheaded.* She will rise from the grave a fiend of dissension. She will awaken the spirit of revenge in your kingdom, and wean the hearts of your subjects from you. At present she is an object of dread to the British; but when she is no more, they will revenge her. No longer will she then be regarded as the enemy of their faith; her mournful fate will cause her to appear only as the granddaughter of their king, the victim of man's hatred and woman's jealousy. Soon will you see the change appear! Drive through London after the bloody deed has been done; show yourself to the people, who now surround you with joyful acclamations: then will you see another England, another people! No longer will you then walk forth encircled by the radiance of heavenly justice which now binds every heart to you. Dread the frightful name of tyrant which will precede you through shuddering hearts, and resound through every street where you pass. You have done the last irrevocable deed. What head stands fast when this sacred one has fallen?"

BURLEIGH

"Thou sayest, my Queen, thou lovest thy people more than thyself – show it now! Choose not peace for yourself, and leave discord to your people. Think on the Church! Shall the ancient faith be restored with this Stuart? Shall the monk of new lord it here – the legate of Rome return to shut up our churches, dethrone our queen? I demand the souls of all your subjects from you. As you now decide, you are saved or lost. This is no time for womanish pity: the salvation of your people is

[8] *Virginia*, Act i. s. 3.

> your highest duty. Has Shrewsbury saved your life to-day? I will deliver England, and that is more." —*Maria Stuart*, Act iv. s. 7.

Demosthenes could have written nothing more powerful – Cicero imagined nothing more persuasive.

We shall now, to justify our assertion that it is in the dramatic poets of modern Europe that a parallel can alone be found to the condensed power of ancient eloquence, proceed to give a few quotations from the most celebrated speeches of antiquity. We have selected, in general, those from the historians, as they are shorter than the orations delivered in the forum, and can be given entire. A fragment from a speech of Demosthenes or Cicero gives no sort of idea of the original, because what goes before is withheld. To scholars we need not plead indulgence for the inadequacy of our translations: they will not expect what they know to be impossible.

Tacitus, in his Life of Agricola, puts into the mouth of Galgacus the following oration, when he was animating the Caledonians to their last battle with the Romans under Agricola.

> "As often as I reflect on the origin of the war, and our necessities, I feel a strong conviction that this day, and your will, are about to lay the foundations of British liberty. For we have all known what slavery is, and no place of retreat lies behind us. The sea even is insecure when the Roman fleet hovers around. Thus arms and war, ever coveted by the brave, are now the only refuge of the cowardly. In former actions, in which the Britons fought with various success against the Romans, our valour was a resource to look to, for we, the noblest of all the nation, and on that account placed in its inmost recesses, unused to the spectacle of servitude, had our eyes even inviolate from its hateful sight. We, the last of the earth, and of freedom, unknown to fame, have been hitherto defended by our remoteness; now, the extreme limits of Britain appear, and the unknown is ever regarded as the magnificent. No refuge is behind us; naught but the rocks and the waves, and the deadlier Romans: men whose pride you have in vain sought to deprecate by moderation and subservience. The robbers of the globe, when the land fails they scour the sea. Is the enemy rich, they are avaricious; is he poor, they are ambitious – the East and the West are unable to satiate their desires. Wealth and poverty are alike coveted by their rapacity. To carry off, massacre, seize on false pretences, they call empire; and when they make a desert, they call it peace.
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> "Nature has made children and relations dearest to all: they are carried off by levies to serve elsewhere: our wives and sisters, if they escape the lust of our enemies, are seduced by these *friends* and *guests*. Our goods and fortunes they seize on as tribute, our corn as supplies; our very bodies and hands they wear out amidst strifes and contumely, in fortifying stations in the woods and marshes. Serfs born in servitude are once bought, and ever after fed by their masters; Britain alone daily buys its slavery, daily feeds it. As in families the last slave purchased is often a laughing-stock to the rest, so we, the last whom they have reduced to slavery, are the first to be agonised by their contumely, and reserved for destruction. We have neither fields, nor minerals, nor harbours, in working which we can be employed: the valour and fierceness of the vanquished are obnoxious to the victors: our very distance and obscurity, as they render us the safer, make us the more suspected. Laying aside, therefore, all hope of pardon, assume the courage of men to whom salvation and glory are alike dear. The Trinobantes, under a female leader, had courage to burn a colony and storm castles, and, had not their success rendered them negligent, they would have cast off the yoke. We, untouched and unconquered, nursed in freedom, shall we not show, on the first onset, what men Caledonia has nursed in her bosom?

> "Do not believe the Romans have the same prowess in war as lust in peace. They have grown great on our divisions: they know how to turn the vices of men to the glory of their own army. As it has been drawn together by success, so disaster will dissolve it, unless you suppose that the Gauls and the Germans, and, I am ashamed to say, many of the Britons, who now lend their blood to a foreign usurpation, and in their hearts are rather enemies than slaves, can be retained by faith and affection. Fear and terror are but slender bonds of attachment; when you remove them, as fear ceases terror begins. All the incitements of victory are on our side: no wives inflame the Romans; no parents are there, to call shame on their flight; they have no country, or it is elsewhere. Few in number, fearful from ignorance, gazing on unknown woods and seas, the gods have delivered them shut in and bound into your hands. Let not their vain aspect, the glitter of silver and gold, which neither covers nor wounds, alarm you. In the very line of the enemy we shall find our friends: the Britons will recognise their own cause; the Gauls will recollect their former freedom; the other Germans will desert them, as lately the Usipii have done. No objects of terror are behind them; naught but empty castles, age-ridden colonies; dissension between cruel masters and unwilling slaves, sick and discordant cities. Here is a leader, an army; there are tributes, and payments, and the badges of servitude, which to bear for ever, or instantly to avenge, lies in your arms. Go forth then into the field, and think of your ancestors and your descendants."[9]

It is scarcely necessary to say that this speech was written by Tacitus: most certainly nothing half so perfect was ever conceived by Caledonian chief or Caledonian orator, from that day to this. But as the great speeches in antiquity were all written, this gives a specimen, doubtless of the most favourable kind, of the style of oratory which prevailed amongst them. No modern historian has either ventured or been able to put anything so nervous and forcible into the mouth of any orator, how great soever. If he did, it would at once be known that it had not been spoken, but was the fruit of the composition of the closet.

Catiline, who, like many other revolutionists, possessed abilities commensurate to his wickedness, thus addressed the conspirators who were associated to overturn the sway of the Roman patricians: —

> "Had not your valour and fidelity been well known to me, fruitless would have been the smiles of Fortune: the prospect of as mighty domination would in vain have opened upon us; nor would I have mistaken illusive hopes for realities, uncertain things for certain. But since, on many and great occasions, I have known you to be brave and faithful, I have ventured to engage in the greatest and noblest undertaking; for I well know that good and evil are common to you and me. That friendship at length is secure which is founded on wishing and dreading the same things. You all know what designs I have long revolved in my mind; but my confidence in them daily increases, when I reflect what our fate is likely to be, if we do not vindicate our freedom by our own hands. For, since the republic has fallen under the power and dominion of a few, kings yield their tributes, governorships their profits to them: all the rest, whether strenuous, good, noble or ignoble, are the mere vulgar: without influence, without authority, we are obnoxious to those to whom, if the commonwealth existed, we should be a terror. All honour, favour, power, wealth, is centred in them, or those whom they favour: to us are left dangers, repulses, lawsuits, poverty. How long will you endure them, O ye bravest of men? Is it not

[9] *Agricola*, c. 31, 32.

better to die bravely, than drag out a miserable and dishonoured life, the sport of pride, the victims of disgrace? But by the faith of gods and men, victory is in our own hands: our strength is unimpaired; our minds energetic: theirs is enfeebled by age, extinguished by riches. All that is required is to begin boldly; the rest follows of course. Where is the man of a manly spirit, who can tolerate that they should overflow with riches, which they squander in ransacking the sea, in levelling mountains, while to us the common necessaries of life are awanting? They have two or more superb palaces each; we not wherein to lay our heads. When they buy pictures, statues, basso-relievos, they destroy the old to make way for the new: in every possible way they squander away their money; but all their desires are unable to exhaust their riches. At home, we have only poverty; abroad, debts; present adversity; worse prospects. What, in fine, is left us, but our woe-stricken souls? What, then, shall we do? That, that which you have ever most desired. Liberty is before your eyes; and it will soon bring riches, renown, glory: Fortune holds out these rewards to the victors. The time, the place, our dangers, our wants, the splendid spoils of war, exhort you more than my words. Make use of me either as a commander or a private soldier. Neither in soul or body will I be absent from your side. These deeds I hope I shall perform as Consul with you, unless my hopes deceive me, and you are prepared rather to obey as slaves, than to command as rulers."[10]

The topics here handled are the same which in every age have been the staple of the conspirator and the revolutionist; but it may be doubted whether they ever were put together with such force and address. The same desperate chief, on the eve of their last conflict with the consular legions: —

"I well know, fellow-soldiers, that words add nothing to the valour of the brave; and that an army will not be made from slothful, strenuous – from timid, courageous, by any speech from its commander. Whatever boldness nature or training has implanted in any one, that appears in war. It is vain to exhort those whom neither dangers nor glory excite. Terror shuts their ears. But I have called you together to mention a few things, and to make you sharers of my councils. You know, soldiers, what a calamity has been brought upon us by the cowardice of Lentulus; and how, when I awaited succours from the city, I was unable to set out for Gaul. Now, however, I will candidly tell you how our affairs stand. Two armies, one issuing from Rome, one from Gaul, beset us: want of provisions obliges us quickly to change our quarters, even if we inclined to remain where we are. Wherever we determine to go, we must open a way with our swords. Therefore it is that I admonish you that you have now need of stern and determined minds: and when you engage in battle, recollect that riches, honour, glory, in addition to liberty, are to be won by your own right hands. If we conquer, everything awaits us: provisions will be abundant, colonies ready, cities open. If we yield from fear, circumstances are equally adverse: neither solitude nor friend shields him whom his arms cannot protect. Besides, soldiers, the same necessity does not impel them as us. We fight for our country, our liberty, our lives; they for the domination of a few. On that account, mindful of your pristine valour, advance to the attack. You might have, with disgrace, lingered out a miserable life in exile: a few, bereft of their possessions, might have remained, fed by charity, at Rome: but as such a fate seemed intolerable to freemen, you have attended me here. If you would shun these evils, now is the moment to do so. None ever exchanged war for peace, save by victory. To hope for safety in flight, and, at

[10] Sallust, *Bell. Cat.*

> the same time, rescue from the enemy the arms by which the body is covered, is the height of madness. Ever in battle they run the greatest danger who are most timid: boldness is the only real rampart. When I reflect on you and your deeds, O soldiers, I have great hopes of victory. Your spirit, your age, your bravery, encourage me: besides necessity, which makes heroes even of cowards. The straits of the ground secure you from being outflanked by the enemy. Should Fortune fail to second your valour, beware lest you perish unavenged. Rather fall, fighting like men, and leave a mournful and bloody triumph to your enemies, than be butchered like sheep when captured by their arms."[11]

With what exquisite judgment and taste is the stern and mournful style of this speech suited to the circumstances, all but desperate, in which Catiline's army was then placed!

No one supposes that these were the identical words delivered by Catiline on this occasion. Unquestionably, Sallust shines through in every line. But they were probably his ideas; and, unquestionably, they were in the true style of ancient oratory. And that what was spoken fully equalled what has come down to us written, is proved by innumerable passages in speeches which undoubtedly were spoken; among which, we select the graphic picture of Antony in his revels – spoken by Cœlius, and preserved by Quintilian: —

> "They found him (Antony) oppressed with a half-drunken sleep, snoring aloud, lying across the most beautiful concubines, while others were reposing around. The latter, when they perceived the approach of an enemy, strove to awaken Antony, but in vain. They called on him by name, they raised him by the neck: one whispered softly in his ear, one struck him sharply; but to no purpose. When he was so far roused as to recognise the voice or touch of the nearest, he put his arms round her neck, unable alike to sleep and to rise up; but, half in a stupor, he was tossed about between the hands of the centurions and the harlots."[12]

What a picture of the triumvir and rival of Brutus, as well as of the corrupted manners of Rome!

Demosthenes, in his celebrated speech against Æschines, burst into the following strain of indignant invective: —

> "You taught writing, I learned it: you were an instructor, I was the instructed: you danced at the games, I presided over them: you wrote as a clerk, I pleaded as an advocate: you were an actor in the theatres, I a spectator: you broke down, I hissed: you ever took counsel for our enemies, I for our country. In fine, now on this day the point at issue is – Am I, yet unstained in character, worthy of a crown? while to you is reserved the lot of a calumniator, and you are in danger of being silenced by not having obtained the fifth part of the votes.
>
> "I have not fortified the city with stone, nor adorned it with tiles, neither do I take any credit for such things. But if you would behold my works aright, you will find arms, and cities, and stations, and harbours, and ships, and horses, and those who are to make use of them in our defence. This is the rampart I have raised for Attica, as much as human wisdom could effect: with these I fortified the whole country, not the Piræus only and the city. I never sank before the arms or cunning of Philip. No! it was by the supineness of your own generals and allies that he triumphed."[13]

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[11] Sallust, *Bell. Cat.*

[12] Quintilian, lib. iv. 2.

[13] *De Coronâ, Orat. Græc.* i. 315, 325.

We add only an extract from the noble speech of Pericles, on those who had died in the service of their country, which is the more valuable that Thucydides, who has recorded it in his history, says that the version he has given of that masterpiece of oratory is nearly the same as he heard from Pericles himself.

> "Wherefore I will congratulate rather than bewail the parents of those who have fallen that are present. They know that they were born to suffering. But the lot of those is most to be envied who have come to such an end, that it is hard to say whether their life or their death is most honourable. I know it is difficult to persuade you of this, who had often rejoiced in the good fortune of others; and it is not when we are deprived of goods not yet attained that we feel grief, but when we are bereaved of what we have already enjoyed. To some the hope of other children, who may emulate those who have gone before, may be a source of consolation. Future offspring may awaken fresh interests in place of the dead; and will doubly benefit the city by peopling its desert places, and providing for its defence. We cannot expect that those who have no children whom they may place in peril for their country, can be considered on a level with such as have made the sacrifices which those have made. To such of you as time has denied this hope, I would say, 'Rejoice in the honour which your children have won, and let that console the few years that still remain to you – for the love of glory alone knows no age; and in the decline of life it is not the acquisition of gain, as some say, which confers pleasure, but the consciousness of being honoured.
>
> "To the children and brothers of those we mourn, who are here present, I foresee a noble contest. Every one praises the dead. You should endeavour, I will not say to equal those we have lost, but to be only a little inferior to them. Envy often divides the living; but the grave extinguishes jealousy, for it terminates rivalry. I must speak of the virtue of the women who have shared in our bereavement; but I shall do so in a few words. Great will be your renown, if you do not yield to the weakness of your sex; and place as little difference as possible between yourselves and the virtue of men. I propose that the children of those who have fallen should be maintained, till puberty, at the public expense – a reward at once to the virtue of the dead, and an incitement to the emulation of the living: for among those to whom the highest rewards of virtue are opened, the most worthy citizens are found. And now, having honoured the dead by your mourning, depart every one to his home."[14]

Enough – and some may, perhaps, think more than enough – has been done to convey an idea of that far-famed oratory, of which Milton has said —

> "Thence to the famous orators repair,
> Those ancients, whose resistless eloquence
> Wielded at will that fierce democracy,
> Shook the arsenal, and fulmined over Greece,
> To Macedon, and Artaxerxes' throne."[15]

For comparison with these splendid passages, we gladly lay before our readers the famous peroration of Mr Burke's oration against Mr Hastings, long esteemed the masterpiece of British eloquence.

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[14] Thucydides, ii. § 32, 33.

[15] *Paradise Regained*, iv. 268.

"My Lords, at this awful close, in the name of the Commons, and surrounded by them, I attest the retiring, I attest the advancing generations, between which, as a link in the great chain of eternal order, we stand. We call this nation, we call the world to witness, that the Commons have shrunk from no labour; that we have been guilty of no prevarication; that we have made no compromise with crime; that we have not feared any odium whatsoever, in the long warfare which we have carried on with the crimes – with the vices – with the exorbitant wealth – with the enormous and overpowering influence of Eastern corruption. This war, my Lords, we have waged for twenty-two years, and the conflict has been fought, at your Lordships' bar, for the last seven years. My Lords, twenty-two years is a great space in the scale of the life of man; it is no inconsiderable space in the history of a great nation. A business which has so long occupied the councils and the tribunals of Great Britain cannot possibly be huddled over in the course of vulgar, trite, and transitory events. Nothing but some of those great revolutions, that break the traditionary chain of human memory, and alter the very face of nature itself, can possibly obscure it. My Lords, we are all elevated to a degree of importance by it; the meanest of us will, by means of it, more or less, become the concern of posterity – if we are yet to hope for such a thing, in the present state of the world, as a recording, retrospective, civilised posterity: but this is in the hand of the great Disposer of events; it is not ours to settle how it shall be. My Lords, your House yet stands; it stands as a great edifice; but let me say, that it stands in the midst of ruins – in the midst of the ruins that have been made by the greatest moral earthquake that ever convulsed and shattered this globe of ours. My Lords, it has pleased Providence to place us in such a state, that we appear every moment to be upon the verge of some great mutations. There is one thing, and one thing only, which defies all mutation, that which existed before the world, and will survive the fabric of the world itself – I mean justice; that justice which, emanating from the Divinity, has a place in the breast of every one of us, given us for our guide with regard to ourselves and with regard to others, and which will stand, after this globe is burned to ashes, our advocate or our accuser before the great Judge, when He comes to call upon us for the tenor of a well-spent life.

"My Lords, the Commons will share in every fate with your Lordships; there is nothing sinister which can happen to you, in which we shall not all be involved; and if it should so happen that we shall be subjected to some of those frightful changes which we have seen – if it should happen that your Lordships, stripped of all the decorous distinctions of human society, should, by hands at once base and cruel, be led to those scaffolds and machines of murder upon which great kings and glorious queens have shed their blood, amidst the prelates, amidst the nobles, amidst the magistrates, who supported their thrones, may you in those moments feel that consolation which I am persuaded they felt in the critical moments of their dreadful agony!.. My Lords, if you must fall, may you so fall! but, if you stand – and stand I trust you will – together with the fortune of this ancient monarchy – together with the ancient laws and liberties of this great and illustrious kingdom – may you stand as unimpeached in honour as in power; may you stand, not as a substitute for virtue, but as an ornament of virtue, as a security for virtue; may you stand long, and long stand the terror of tyrants; may you stand the refuge of afflicted nations; may you stand a sacred temple, for the perpetual residence of an inviolable justice."[16]

[16] Burke's *Works*, vol. xvi. pages 415, 416, 417, 418, 420.

The peroration of Lord Brougham's speech in favour of Queen Caroline, which was carefully studied, and, it is said, written over several times, is not unworthy to be placed beside this splendid burst.

> "Such, my Lords, is the case before you! such is the evidence in support of this measure – evidence inadequate to prove a debt, impotent to deprive of a civil right, ridiculous to convict of the lowest offence, scandalous, if brought forward to support a charge of the highest nature which the law knows, monstrous to ruin the honour and blast the name of an English Queen! What shall I say, then, if this is the proof by which an act of judicial legislation, a parliamentary sentence, an *ex post facto* law, is sought to be passed against a defenceless woman? My Lords, I pray you to pause: I do earnestly beseech you to take heed. You are standing upon the brink of a precipice – then beware! It will go forth as your judgment, if sentence shall pass against the Queen. But it will be the only judgment you ever pronounced which, instead of reaching its object, will return and bound back upon those who give it. Save the country, my Lords, from the horrors of this catastrophe – save yourselves from this peril. Revere that country of which you are the ornaments, but in which you can flourish no longer, when severed from the people, than the blossom when cut off from the roots and stem of the tree. Save that country, that you may continue to adorn it; save the crown, which is in jeopardy, the aristocracy, which is shaken; save the altar, which must stagger with the blow that rends its kindred throne! You have said, my Lords, you have willed, the church to the Queen have willed that she should be deprived of its solemn service. She has instead of that solemnity the heartfelt prayers of the people. She wants no prayers of mine. But I do here pour forth my humble supplication to the Throne of mercy, that that mercy may be poured down upon the people, in a larger measure than the merits of its rulers may deserve, and that your hearts may be turned to justice."[17]

On the trial of Mr John Stockdale, Lord Erskine thus spoke: —

> "I have been speaking of man and his nature, and of human dominion, from what I have seen of them myself among nations reluctant of our authority. I know what they feel, and how such feelings can alone be repressed. I have heard them in my youth from a naked savage, in the indignant character of a prince, surrounded by his subjects, addressing the governor of a British colony, holding a bundle of sticks in his hand, as the notes of his unlettered eloquence. 'Who is it,' said the jealous ruler of the desert, encroached upon by the restless foot of English adventure – 'who is it that causes to blow the loud winds of winter, and that calms them again in summer? Who is it that causes this river to rise in the high mountains, and to empty itself into the ocean? Who is it that rears up the shade of these lofty forests, and blasts them with the quick lightning at his pleasure? The same Being who gave to you a country on the other side of the waters, and gave ours to us; and by this title we will defend it,' said the warrior, throwing his tomahawk upon the ground, and raising the war-sound of his nation. These are the feelings of subjugated man all round the globe; and, depend upon it, nothing but fear will control where it is vain to look for affection."[18]

Some of Mr Grattan's speeches are said to have been the most eloquent ever delivered in the House of Commons. The following burst of indignant patriotism, on the supposed wrongs of Ireland, affords a favourable specimen of his style of oratory: —

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[17] Brougham's *Speeches*, i. 227, 228.

[18] Erskine's *Speeches*, ii. 263.

> "Hereafter, when these things shall be history, your age of thraldom and poverty, your sudden resurrection, commercial redress, and miraculous armament, shall the historian stop to declare, that here the principal men amongst us fell into mimic traces of gratitude: they were awed by a weak ministry, and bribed by an empty treasury; and when liberty was within their grasp, and the temple opened her folding-doors, and the arms of the people clanged, and the zeal of the nation urged and encouraged them on, that they fell down, and were prostituted at the threshold.
>
> "I will not be answered by a public lie in the shape of an amendment: neither, speaking for the subjects' freedom, am I to hear of faction. I wish for nothing but to breathe in this our island, in common with my fellow-subjects, the air of liberty. I have no ambition, unless it be the ambition to break your chains, and contemplate your glory. I never will be satisfied as long as the meanest cottager in Ireland has a link of the British chain clanking in his rags: he may be naked, he shall not be in irons. And I do see the time is at hand, the spirit is gone forth, the declaration is planted: and though great men should apostatise, yet the cause will live: and though the public speaker should die, yet the immortal fire shall outlast the organ which conveyed it, and the breath of liberty, like the word of the holy man, shall not die with the prophet, but survive him."[19]

We shall add only to these copious and interesting quotations two passages from the greatest masters of French eloquence.

Bossuet, in his funeral oration on Henrietta, daughter of France and Queen of England, the consort of Charles I., thus expresses himself: —

> "Christians!" says he, in the exordium of his discourse, "it is not surprising that the memory of a great queen – the daughter, the wife, the mother of monarchs – should attract you from all quarters to this melancholy ceremony; it will bring forcibly before your eyes one of those awful examples which demonstrate to the world the vanity of which it is composed. You will see in her single life the extremes of human things: felicity without bounds, miseries without parallel; a long and peaceable enjoyment of one of the most noble crowns in the universe – all that birth and grandeur could confer that was glorious – all that adversity and suffering could accumulate that was disastrous; the good cause attended at first with some success, then involved in the most dreadful disasters. Revolutions unheard of, rebellion long restrained, at length reigning triumphant; no curb there to license, no laws in force. Majesty itself violated by bloody hands – usurpation and tyranny, under the name of liberty – a fugitive queen, who can find no retreat in her three kingdoms, and was forced to seek in her native country a melancholy exile. Nine sea voyages undertaken against her will by a queen, in spite of wintry tempests – a throne unworthily overturned, and miraculously re-established. Behold the lessons which God has given to kings! thus does He manifest to the world the nothingness of its pomps and its grandeur. If our words fail, if language sinks beneath the grandeur of such a subject, the simple narrative is more touching than aught that words can convey. The heart of a great queen, formerly elevated by so long a course of prosperity, then steeped in all the bitterness of affliction, will speak in sufficiently touching language; and if it is not given to a private individual to teach the proper lessons

[19] Grattan's *Speeches*, i. 52, 53.

> from so mournful a catastrophe, the King of Israel has supplied the words – 'Hear, O ye great of the earth! Take lessons, ye rulers of the world!'"[20]

A very different man from Bossuet, but who was perhaps his superior in nervous eloquence, Robespierre, thus spoke on the last occasion when he addressed the Convention, then bent on his destruction: —

> "They call me a tyrant! If I were so, they would fall at my feet: I should have gorged them with gold, assured them of impunity to their crimes, and they would have worshipped me. Had I been so, the kings whom we have conquered would have been my most cordial supporters. It is by the aid of scoundrels you arrive at tyranny. Whither tend those who combat them? To the tomb and immortality! Who is the tyrant that protects me? What is the faction to which I belong? It is yourselves! What is the party which, since the commencement of the Revolution, has crushed all other factions – has annihilated so many specious traitors? It is yourselves; it is the people; it is the force of principles! This is the party to which I am devoted, and against which crime is everywhere leagued. I am ready to lay down my life without regret. I have seen the past; I foresee the future. What lover of his country would wish to live, when he can no longer succour oppressed innocence? Why should he desire to remain in an order of things where intrigue eternally triumphs over truth – where justice is deemed an imposture – where the vilest passions, the most ridiculous fears, fill every heart, instead of the sacred interests of humanity? Who can bear the punishment of seeing that horrible succession of traitors, more or less skilful in concealing their hideous vices under the mask of virtue, and who will leave to posterity the difficult task of determining which was the most atrocious? In contemplating the multitude of vices which the Revolution has let loose pell-mell with the civic virtues, I own I sometimes fear that I myself shall be sullied in the eyes of posterity by their calumnies. But I am consoled by the reflection that, if I have seen in history all the defenders of liberty overwhelmed by calumny, I have seen their oppressors die also. The good and the bad disappear alike from the earth; but in very different conditions. No, Chaumette! 'Death is *not* an eternal sleep!' – Citizens, efface from the tombs that maxim, engraven by sacrilegious hands, which throws a funeral pall over nature, which discourages oppressed innocence: write rather, 'Death is the commencement of immortality!' I leave to the oppressors of the people a terrible legacy, which well becomes the situation in which I am placed: it is the awful truth, 'Thou shalt die!'"[21]

It must be evident to every impartial person, from these quotations, that the superiority of ancient to modern eloquence, so far as the art itself is concerned, is great and indisputable. The strong opinion of Lord Brougham, on this subject, must command the universal assent of every reasonable mind: —

> "It is impossible for any but the most careless observer, to avoid remarking the great differences which distinguish the oratory of ancient from that of modern times. The immeasurable superiority of the former is far from being the only, or even the principal, of these diversities: that proceeds, in part, from the greater power of the languages, especially the Greek – the instrument wielded by the great masters of diction; and in so far the superiority must for ever remain undiminished by any efforts on the part of modern rhetoricians. If, in such varied and perfect

[20] Bossuet, *Oraisons Funèbres*.

[21] *Hist. Parl.*, xxxiii. 406.

excellencies, the most prominent shall be selected, then doubtless is the palm due to that entire and uninterrupted devotion which throws the speaker's whole soul into his subject, and will not even – no, not for an instant – suffer a rival idea to cross its resistless course, without being swiftly swept away and driven out of sight, as the most rapid engine annihilates or shoots off whatever approaches it with a velocity that defies the eye. There is no coming back on the same ground, any more than any lingering over it. All is done at once; but the blow is as effectual as it is single, and leaves not anything to do. All is at each instant moving forward, regardless of every obstacle. The mighty flood of speech rolls on in a channel ever full, but which never overflows. Whether it rushes in a torrent of allusion, or moves along in a majestic exposition of enlarged principles, descends hoarse and headlong in overwhelming invective, or glides melodious in narrative and description, or spreads itself out shining in illustrations, its course is ever onward and ever entire; never scattered, never stagnant, never sluggish. At each point manifest progress has been made, and with all that art can do to charm, strike, and please. No sacrifice, even the smallest, is ever made to effect; nor can the hearer ever stop for an instant to contemplate or admire, or throw away a thought upon the great artist, till all is over, and the pause gives time to recover his breath."[22]

[22] Lord Brougham on the Eloquence of the Ancients. *Speeches*, iv. 379, 445, 446.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.