

bestowed upon the intellectual amelioration of the Greeks should produce no fruits corresponding to it. That the Romaic language is susceptible of very great improvement, without becoming unintelligible to the common people, has been proved by the test of experiment. The dialect which is now commonly used by men of education in Greece, at least in their writings, is so far purified and refined, that any person, competently versed in Hellenic, can travel through many pages of it without meeting with any serious obstacle. We suppose that the newspaper called *Ἑλληνικὰς Τηλέγραφος* is intended for general circulation among the Greeks, and the style of that is very respectably free from barbarisms. We doubt, however, whether any sensible alteration has yet taken place in the colloquial phraseology of the middle and lower classes of society; for the *Λυρικά* of Athanasius Christophulus, which are extremely popular amongst the Greeks of Constantinople, are written in a most barbarous dialect. Mr. Leake has several judicious observations on this subject, which the length of this article prevents us from transcribing; but we entirely coincide with him in thinking, that the only plan by which the Greeks can hope to better their condition, is that upon which they are now acting, the careful education of their youth. An enlightened and active race of men, animated by the pride of ancestry and a desire of political freedom, and possessing great advantages of local situation, cannot long remain the slaves of an ignorant and slothful government. But till some portion of information is diffused through the mass of the people, and the national character is rendered consistent and respectable by national education, no happy result can be expected from any interposition in their favour. The stream of knowledge must flow through the soil, and fertilize it by slow degrees, before it can produce the fruits which are looked for; and it can hardly be expected that any of us should live to see that interesting time when Greece shall be enabled to resume an independent place in the great family of Europe.

ART. XIII. *The Works of the English Poets, from Chaucer to Cowper; including the Series edited, with Prefaces Biographical and Critical, by Dr. Samuel Johnson: and the most approved Translations. The additional Lives by Alexander Chalmers, F.S.A. In 21 vols. Royal Octavo. London: Printed for all the Booksellers.*

MR. Chalmers tells us in his preface, that the labour of some years has been exerted in forming this collection. That it would be the labour of some years to carry it through the press is apparent,

apparent, and labour enough it must have been to correct the proof-sheets with that laudable attention to prevent mistakes of the *u* for the *n*, and the *e* for the *c*, which has been bestowed upon them; but what other labour can have been exerted in forming such a collection in such a manner we are unable to discover. It required no great pains to strike out from the contents of Dr. Anderson's collection those authors whom Mr. Chalmers thinks proper to expel from the house of poets; nor to put in those whom the said Mr. Chalmers, by a more benignant act of the same sovereign will, has been pleased to admit to a seat.

Mr. Alexander Chalmers is well known to the public, both as an author and an editor, by many useful and laborious works. The present is his greatest undertaking: how he is qualified for it, and in what manner he has performed it, we shall endeavour to shew. In this collection, he professes to give a body of the standard English poets. 'It cannot, however,' he says, 'be unknown to those who have paid any attention to the subject, that the question of too much or too little in these collections, does not depend on the previous consideration of the merit of the poet, so frequently as on the relative rank which he seems destined to hold among his brethren.'—Alas, we have hardly begun our voyage, and we are aground upon the shallows! 'There are but two rules,' he proceeds to say, 'by which a collector can be guided; he must either give the best poets, or the most popular; but the question who are the best, involves all the disputed points in poetical criticism, and popularity is a most uncertain and fluctuating criterion;' he therefore 'conceived it would be proper to be guided by a mixed rule.'—If there be any difficulty here, it is of Mr. Chalmers's own making; with the powers which he tells us were given him by the booksellers, the principle upon which he should have proceeded is perfectly clear. A body of the standard English poets ought to contain those writers who are popular; those who have been so; those works which are of importance in the history of English poetry, and those which, displaying great and extraordinary powers of mind, are therefore worthy of preservation, though some unhappy misdirection or obliquity of judgment should have excluded the authors from popularity in their own days, and from fame for ever:—all those from which the accomplished scholar, the lover of poetry, the true antiquary, the philosopher or the poet would derive instruction or delight.

'Another embarrassment,' says this editor, 'of late origin indeed but almost invincible, was occasioned by the extreme rarity and high price of many of the works which it would have been desirable to reprint. Even where, as in the present instance, the spirit of the proprietors would not have suffered the high price to keep back what was necessary, it was sometimes found that private sales
and

and barter among the tribe of collectors had almost entirely removed the articles in question from the public market. If this be meant as an excuse for the imperfectness of the collection we must deny its validity. Mr. Chalmers acknowledges the liberal offers of Mr. Hill, Mr. Park, Sir Egerton Brydges, and Mr. Heber,—all whose stores were open to him: is there a single work which, upon his mixed rule, or our principle, ought to be included in a body of the English poets, that was not to be found in one or other of their collections? Would not each and every one of these gentlemen, distinguished as they all are by their liberality, have afforded him every facility for making the collection as complete as possible? and would they not have permitted transcripts for that purpose to have been made from the rarest and choicest volumes? Most certainly they would. On this head therefore there could have been no difficulty, even if the works, which were necessary to render the collection what it professes to be, had been of the utmost rarity; instead of being, as in general they were, easily to be obtained. But the truth is, that Mr. Chalmers is incompetent to the task which he undertook; he has not the requisite knowledge; and is still more lamentably deficient in the requisite judgment; and not being contented to appear in the character of a mere reprinter, in which capacity he might have deserved well of the public, he has ventured to thrust himself forward as a critic also, and to decide upon what he does not understand.

The collection begins with Chaucer, Mr. Chalmers telling us, that 'though the names of many English rhymers have been recovered, and many more anonymous writers, or rather translators of romances flourished between the latter end of Henry the Third's reign and his time, they neither invented nor imported any improvements in the art of versification.' He asserts also, that 'as many of these metrical romances were to be accompanied by music, they were less calculated for reading than recitation.'—The same thing might be said with equal truth, that is to say with equal senselessness, of every ballad and song that ever was written. There ought to have been a volume anterior to Chaucer, containing Robert of Gloucester, Robert of Brunne, Piers Ploughman, and the best of the metrical romances. A life of Chaucer is given, succinctly relating all that is known concerning him; but Critic-being, as Fielding interprets it, 'like *homo*, a word common to all the human race,' Mr. Chalmers could not complete this sketch without displaying his talent in criticism. Of the catelectic verses, and the other technical remarks of the Editor upon metre, we need say nothing; but the oracular decision with which he concludes is worthy of especial notice. After observing it is not probable that Chaucer can ever be restored to popularity, because his language
must

must remain an unsurmountable obstacle with that numerous class of readers to whom poets must look for universal reputation,—he says 'poetry is the art of pleasing; but pleasure, as generally understood, admits of very little that deserves the name of study.' The profundity of the remark and the precision of the definition are alike admirable; and admirably must the critic, who thus defines poetry, be qualified to edit a collection of the English poets, and appreciate their merits, and determine what works and what writers shall or shall not be included. The whole of Chaucer's prose writings are given: now though the Tale of Melibeus and the Person's Tale could not have been omitted without making the Canterbury Tales incomplete, the other prose works which occupy a seventh part of the volume are surely misplaced. With so little thought has Mr. Chalmers executed his task, that Lydgate's Story of Thebes is printed here with a running heading of 'Poems imputed to Chaucer.' The glossary is abridged from Tyrwhitt's,—abridged indeed! and of the references, one of its most essential parts, for no imaginable reason, unless that the fitness of numbering the lines was overlooked. In some places the reference could not be conveniently expunged, and the neglect of numbering them renders it useless.

The second volume contains Gower, Skelton, Surrey, Wyat, Gascoigne, and Tuberville. Gower is properly now for the first time introduced into a collection of the English poets. Hoccleve and Minot should have followed; and if it were thought proper (and assuredly it was so) to include any of Lydgate's poems, here they should have been placed in their chronological order. Hawes ought to have been added, the last of those poets who form the second age of English poetry, and may be called the school of Chaucer:—all indeed are woefully inferior to their great master, but all contributed to the improvement of their native tongue, and therefore were benefactors to their country. Chaucer himself was a star of the first magnitude: no man ever did so much with a language in so rude a state, and only Shakspeare has surpassed him in his intuitive knowledge of human character, and the universality of his genius. Mr. Chalmers indeed, with that comfortable self-satisfaction which he derives from flourishing in the nineteenth century, when the world has the advantage of being enlightened by lectures on poetry, assures us that Chaucer's popularity is gone by:—it may be so with those ladies and gentlemen who conceive poetry to be 'the art of pleasing,' and believe that nothing which requires thought can possibly give pleasure. Chaucer has not written for critics and readers of this nature: they follow their instinct:—the butterfly does not alight upon the elm or the oak—flowers and shrubs are for the insect's pitch, and the dandelion to him is as sweet as the

rose. But the rank which the father of English poetry holds in literature has not been assigned by caprice, or fashion, or superstition. He whom Spenser called his master, and to whom Milton referred as to his great and immortal predecessor, is justly placed with them in the first class of poets, and his fame, like theirs, is for ever. It is a reproach to our literature that the *Canterbury Tales* should be the only portion of his works which have been edited with any degree of care or ability.

Mr. Chalmers has done well in including Skelton, but he has merely reprinted the imperfect and careless edition of 1736. 'It yet remains,' he says, 'to explain his obscurities, translate his vulgarisms, and point his verses. The task would require much time and labour, with perhaps no very inviting promise of recompense.' Let the reader judge whether this be a sufficient excuse for an editor who makes Skelton speak,

Of Tristem and King Marke
And all the whole warke
Of bele I sold his wife!—p. 294.

and who, rather than venture upon any emendation of a grossly corrupted text, has printed all the comic and satirical poems, and most of the others, without any punctuation whatever! Considering the manner in which works of this kind are *got up* in England, it would certainly have been too much to expect that the writings of so difficult an author should be elaborately elucidated; yet surely some kind of glossary ought to have been annexed, and those pieces should have been added which Ritson indicated, and which have come to light since Ritson's death. Mr. Chalmers has some sense of Skelton's power, but when he ventures upon delivering a critical opinion, he produces only a tissue of inconsistencies, one sentence contradicting another. He tells us that there is occasionally much sound sense and much just satire on the conduct of the clergy, and presently adds, that if his vein of humour had been directed to subjects of legitimate satire, he might have been more worthy of a place in this collection. Did it never occur to him that Skelton's buffooneries, like the ribaldry of Rabelais, were thrown out as a tub for the whale, and that unless he had thus written for the coarsest palates, he could not possibly have poured forth such bitter and undaunted satire in such perilous times? Well did he say of himself—

Though my rime be ragged,
Tattered and jagged,
Rudely rain-beaten
Rusty and moth-eaten,
If ye take well therewith
It hath in it some pith.

So

So much pith indeed, that an editor who should be competent to the task; could not more worthily employ himself than by giving a good and complete edition of his works. The power, the strangeness, the volubility of his language, the audacity of his satire, and the perfect originality of his manner, render Skelton one of the most extraordinary writers of any age or country.

Some additional poems of Surrey are printed from a manuscript in Mr. Hill's possession. They had appeared before in Mr. Park's edition of the *Nugæ Antiquæ*. 'Certain psalmes' also are added to Sir Thomas Wyatt's poems. The poems of uncertain authors, as contained in Tottel's edition, follow. Mr. Chalmers then passes to the Elizabethan age. Considering the bulk of the collection, it would have been better to entitle it the *British Poets*, and to include those writers of Chaucer's school, by whom the poetical succession was maintained in Scotland when it failed in England. Such writers as Barbour, James I. Gawain Douglas, Lindsey, and Dunbar, ought not to be omitted in a body of national poetry; and with what propriety in later times can Burns be spared, whose celebrity, great and extensive as it is, is not beyond his merits? This defect may be supplied by a single supplementary volume, or at most by two, and we mention it in the hope that this will be done, not to censure the editor for proceeding upon a plain and intelligible rule, though we differ from him concerning its propriety. But the capricious manner in which his choice of the English poets has been made, without rule or reason, or reference to any possible principle of selection, deserves to be severely censured. In the interval between Lydgate and the age of Elizabeth two writers flourished, the one the most popular, the other by far the greatest poet that appeared between Chaucer and Spenser; Tusser and Sackville, both of whom Mr. Chalmers has rejected.—Tusser, both for manner and matter is exceedingly curious; and no poet ever produced a greater effect upon his contemporaries and immediate followers than Sackville. Indeed, instead of omitting his matchless *Induction*, Mr. Chalmers ought to have inserted the whole of the *Mirror of Magistrates*.

We must thank him, however, for the additions which he has made to Dr. Anderson's list. Gascoigne's works were very scarce, and well worthy of being preserved. He deals largely in the alliterative fashion of his day, in baths of bliss, and chips of chance, and gripes of grief, but is withal a valuable writer in every point of view. Whetstone's, 'Remembrance of the well employed Life and godly End' of this poet, has been properly prefixed, from one of the scarcest tracts in our language. 'Tuberville,' we are told, 'has a place in these volumes as a sonneteer of great note in his time; although, except Harrington, his contemporaries and suc-

cessors appear to have been sparing of their praises.' This sentence is a happy specimen of the clearness of the editor's ideas, and the precision of his language; for besides the complete contradiction which it contains, there is not a single sonnet among the poems which follow. The most curious of this author's writings are his rhymed letters from Russia, but Mr. Chalmers, instead of inserting them, refers the reader to Hakluyt.

'Spenser,' this editor tells us, 'was the founder of a school more numerous than any other: a school of which it is sufficient praise that Cowley, Milton, and Dryden acknowledged their obligations to it, and that in more recent times it has conferred celebrity on Prior, Gray, Akenaide, and Beattie.' A note adds, that these names do not include above half of the poets who have practised the stanza of Spenser. Mr. Chalmers will, perhaps, be surprised at being told that only one of those whom he has mentioned has practised it; his classification of Prior, and Gray, and Akenaide, in the school of Spenser is worthy of his critical acumen. Mr. Todd's edition is followed. There is a reason why Britain's *Ida* should have been rejected, which ought to have occurred to an editor who has on other occasions shown himself scrupulous upon points of morality. That it is not Spenser's is certain; and as he is one of the purest poets of any age or country, a poem of this description ought not to stand among his works. Daniel and Drayton follow, upon both of whom Mr. Chalmers ventures some unhappy criticisms; then Warner, a writer not included in Anderson's collection, but highly deserving of a place:—we know not for what reason Mr. Chalmers has omitted the second part of his work. The lines in this edition are divided, as by Mr. Ellis in his specimens of this poet, and by Dr. Percy: the poem therefore is printed as if it had been written in the common ballad measure, with a space between each stanza. But it is injurious to an author who wrote in the seven-foot couplet to have his work printed as if it was written in a four-lined stanza; for the variety of pause, and the continuity of the true measure are made to appear as blemishes by this alteration. Typographical convenience has been the obvious motive;—some of Gascoigne's pieces are in this long measure, and in printing them in columns it has been necessary to double over almost every line. A better remedy for this unsightliness than that of marring the metre by splitting it, would have been to print all such poems in pages of single column, for it is evident that no space in this instance is gained by dividing it into two.

The fifth volume commences with Shakspeare's poems, for having inserted which, Mr. Chalmers pinning his faith upon the sleeve of George Steevens, and 'the general conclusion of modern critics,' thinks it necessary to offer something like an apology. He acknowledges,

ledges, with Mr. Steevens, that 'the strongest act of parliament which could be framed would fail to compel readers into their service;' nevertheless he, the said Mr. Alexander Chalmers, expresses a modest hope that the scattered beauties which they contain may be enough to justify their admission into his collection of the British poets!—a collection which contains Roscommou and Halifax, Sheffield and Stepney, Blackmore and Blacklock, Fawkes, Rag Smith, Sprat, Duke, King, *et id genus omne!*—Peace be to the Shaksperian commentators! May the earth lie lighter upon them than they lie upon Shakspeare! If their annotations did not contain abundant proof how seldom they went beyond the literal meaning of the words, the contemptuous manner in which they have almost uniformly spoken of his poems would alone demonstrate their utter incapacity of comprehending the mind and character and spirit of the poet.

Sir John Davies follows. Davenant has manifestly formed his versification upon that of this writer; and Dryden formed from both his opinion of the powers of the quatrain as an heroic measure. With the life of Donne (the next in the series) Mr. Chalmers has taken some pains, yet he has overlooked some of the most characteristic parts of Izaak Walton's well-known memoir. The editor joins in the condemnation which is usually bestowed upon Donne's ruggedness: Donne has, however, in many places shown that he possessed the diction as well as the feeling of a poet, and the ruggedness of his satires is evidently designed as an imitation of Horace. We have Bishop Hall next; his verses occupy six-and-twenty pages, and Mr. Chalmers has thought proper to bestow thirty upon Warton's Analysis of his Satires, nearly half of which consists of extracts from the poems which follow! Then comes William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, 'another of those men of genius who have anticipated the style of a more refined age,' says Mr. Chalmers,—by which is meant that Lord Stirling wrote smooth verses. This is the first time that his works have been printed in any collection of the Poets. Bishop Corbet's poems are also properly inserted. The other authors in this volume are Ben Jonson, Carew, and Drummond. The sixth volume is richer; it adds to the former collections, Sir John Beaumont, his brother the dramatist, with several miscellaneous poems which were tacked on to his by some ignorant or needy editor; Habington, Cartwright, Sherburne, Brome, and Cotton; and it includes Giles and Plinæus Fletcher, Wm. Browne, Davenant, Suckling, and Crashaw. In the seventh we have only Cowley, Denham, and Milton; Waller and Butler might have been added here to make the volume of its proportionate bulk, and complete the division of the old school. How imperfect this division is in the

earlier periods has been already shown, and a supplement is equally required for the Elizabethan and subsequent age. Among the writers of the former we would see Churchyard, Constable, Watson, Willoby, Southwell, Barnaby Googe, Nicolas Breton, Chapman, Chalkhill, Abraham Fraunce, and Sir Philip Sidney; and among those of the first half of the 17th century, Sylvester, the best parts of George Wither, Quarles, May, Herbert, Herrick, Lovelace, Cleveland, and Randolph. A volume also might well be appropriated to ballads, epigrams, and state poems; anonymous productions in which our language is uncommonly rich.

Dr. Johnson's collection ends with Lord Lyttleton. Mr. Chalmers rejects Pattison, Aaron Hill, Brown, Shaw, Penrose, Bruce, and Græme, whom Dr. Anderson had admitted, and of whom only the last is unworthy of a place; he adds Byrom, Fawkes, and Brooke to the list of what, for want of a better word, may be called the penultimate generation of poets, and J. Warton, Owen Cambridge, Mason, Sir W. Jones, Beattie, and Cowper, of those who have more lately deceased. Andrew Marvell, Norris of Bemerton, Oldham, and Lady Winchelsea should also have been added.—Where Johnson ends, the present editor resumes his biographical and critical labours, collects his information with laudable care, and deals out his praise or censure with oracular solemnity, and qualifying *yets* and *buts*, which keep the sentences in nice equipoise. Upon this portion of the work a few remarks may be permitted, with no other connection than the sequence in which they occur. A silly censure upon Cawthorn is repeated for having been fond of concerts and operas, though he had no knowledge of music, and as silly an apology offered in the remark that his knowledge of the fine arts was so general that it is difficult to believe he was ignorant of the principles of music: as if music could not be felt and enjoyed unless the science were understood! Well had it been for Mr. Chalmers if he could have been content to admire poetry with the same modest acknowledgment of his inability to appreciate its merit or understand its nature! The life of Churchill repeats a tale of his being refused admission at Oxford, from the foundation of Westminster, because he was found deficient in learning. Mr. Chalmers doubts the story because he infers from Gibbon's admission at Magdalen College that the examinations were not very strict; had he known what the discipline of Westminster is, he would have seen that the circumstance could not possibly be true. No boy can pass through the College at Westminster without being perfectly competent to the regular examination when he leaves it. The editor bestows due commendation upon the powers of Churchill, wasted as they were upon worthless subjects, and comments with not undeserved severity upon the errors and vices of the poet. Yet it is
not

not in a tone of unmitigated censure that the life of this extraordinary man should be written. To one who died in his thirty-fourth year something may be allowed on the score of hot youth, unsubdued passions, and principles which were rather unsettled than depraved. It ought also to have been remembered that he was not without some redeeming virtues,—that he had an open heart and a liberal hand, and was as steady as he was ardent in his friendships. Temporary as were the topics upon which he squandered himself, and wicked as was the malignity of his personal satire, the general strain is of that character which, now that all party and personal feelings are gone by, elevates the reader by its manliness and generous spirit. This it is which, like spice in a mummy, has preserved, and will continue to preserve his works from the dissolution to which the subject would otherwise have hastened. The life of such a man should be written in the spirit of philosophy: it is not difficult to trace the self-delusions by which he was misled, and the lesson which such a life holds out would be most impressive, when expressed with most charity for one who deserves compassion even more than condemnation.

In the biographical account of Falconer, some circumstances are mentioned which ought to be remembered when the question of literary property is under the consideration of the legislature. In consequence of the success of his *Marine Dictionary*, his widow was beholden to the charity of the late Mr. Cadell for occasional assistance, and notwithstanding the success of his *Shipwreck*, a deaf and dumb sister of the poet was lately (and perhaps still is) living in a hospital! Mr. Chalmers censures Grainger for having chosen the sugar cane as the subject of a didactic poem: ‘connected,’ he says, ‘as an English merchant may be with the produce of the West Indies, it will not be easy to persuade the reader of English poetry to study the cultivation of the sugar plant, merely that he may add some new imagery to the more ample stores which he can contemplate without study or trouble.’ The critic’s objection is not to the kind of poem, but to the particular subject; now it would be impossible to select any subject for that kind which is capable of being so richly and variously adorned. If Grainger has invoked the muse to sing of rats, and metamorphosed, in Arcadian phrase, negro slaves into swains, the fault is in the writer, not in the topic. The arguments which he has prefixed are indeed ludicrously flat and formal.

Subject proposed—Praise of St. Christopher—The red Brick Mould—Praise of Jamaica and of Christopher Columbus—Composts may improve other Soils—Whether Dung should be buried in each hole, or scattered over the Piece.—The Beauty of holing regularly by a Line—Of Monkeys—Of Rats and other Vermin—Hymn to the Month of January when
 Crop

Crop begins—Planters should be pious—When the Sugar is of too loose a Grain, a little Grease settles it—The French often mix sand with their Sugars—Their Practice not followed by the English—Of Rum—Its Praise—Negroes when bought should be young and strong—Negroes should always be treated with Humanity—Praise of Freedom—Of Cherges—Of the Yaws—Praise of Commerce—Praise of Louis XIV. for the Code Noir—Praise of the River Thames, &c. &c.

The wretched and disgraceful history of Boyse gives occasion to Mr. Chalmers to display his prowess against a man of straw. 'There are those,' he says, 'who have no scruple to tell us that genius is an apology for all moral defects, and that none but the plodding prudent sons of dulness would reveal or censure the vices of a favourite poet. Such is already the influence of this perversion of the powers of reasoning, that if it is much longer indulged, no man will be thought worthy of compassion or apology, but he who errs against knowledge and principle, who acts wrong and knows better.' The very commendable morality of this editor is not always improved by its savour of methodism, and it might be well for him to remember that uncharitable feelings are more likely to be misbestowed than charitable ones.

Concerning William Thompson, we may add to the short notices collected by Mr. Chalmers, that he was educated at Appleby school, under Yates, a man who obtained the appellation of the Northern Busby. Yates would always insist upon his spelling his name without the *p*, saying, you come *thomp, thomp*, upon one's ear with your *Thompson*. The poet, however, persisted in retaining a letter which serves at least the purpose of distinguishing his written name from that of the author of the Seasons. Mr. Chalmers incidentally mentions Dennis and Emily as two versifiers of forgotten reputation: this Dennis we believe to have been the model on whom Peter Pindar formed his manner; a manner which, however grossly it has been misapplied, has become so popular, that the question of its originality is not altogether incurious; and Emily's poem upon Death, which is printed among the Elegant Extracts, shows more ability than is to be found in half the poems of these later volumes, and has procured for the author more reputation than will ever fall to the lot of half those versifiers whom Mr. Chalmers has admitted into his collection.

It is related of Lloyd, that he was betrothed to a sister of Churchill, that she attended him with great affection during his last illness, and died soon after him. Mr. Chalmers says this story is not very probable, adding that the lady did not die till between three or four years afterwards, as if this lapse of time any ways invalidated the fact of her having died of a broken heart! This sort of arbitrary contradiction is at all times reprehensible, and more especially so when

when it attempts to throw a doubt upon circumstances which men are the better for believing. What is there improbable in the account? Even Mr. Chalmers, who has no weak compassion for the errors of men like Lloyd, admits that in his friendships he was warm, constant, and grateful, more sinned against than sinning. Why then should he choose to disbelieve that such a man should have been beloved by the sister of his only faithful friend; that that sister attended on him in sorrow, and in sickness, and in prison—when every one else had abandoned him, and that she herself died the slow victim of grief? He ought not to have asserted that the story was improbable unless he could have produced some reasons for thinking it so.

‘It would be difficult,’ says this author, ‘even upon the principles of fastidious criticism, and impossible upon those of comparison, to exclude Byrom from a collection of the English poets: merely as literary curiosities his poems are too interesting to be longer neglected.’ Their oddity indeed well entitles them to the room which they fill. This writer has been compared of late to the Spanish Friar, Luys de Escobar, for the manner in which he treated of all subjects in easy verse, pouring forth extempore lines upon any thing which came in his way; his opinion of one sermon, his abstract of another; the Passive Participle’s Petition to the Printer of the Gentleman’s Magazine; remarks on any book or pamphlet of the day; critical remarks on several passages in Horace, in which various readings are proposed in rhyme, versifications of collects, and of passages from his favourite divines Law and Jacob Behmen! His head seems to have been a rhyming machine which fell to work upon whatever came into it. One poem entitled Careless Content is so perfectly in the manner of Elizabeth’s age, that we can hardly believe it to be an imitation, but are almost disposed to think that Byrom had transcribed it from some old author, and that the transcript being found among his papers, was printed among his works. Let the reader judge for himself.

‘CARELESS CONTENT.

‘I am content, I do not care,
 Wag as it will the world for me;
 When fuss and fret was all my fare,
 It got no ground as I could see:
 So wher away my caring went,
 I counted cost, and was content.
 With more of thanks and less of thought,
 I strive to make my matters meet;
 To seek what ancient sages sought,
 Physic and food in sour and sweet:
 To take what passes in good part,
 And keep the hiccups from the heart.

With

With good and gentle humour'd hearts,
 I choose to chat where'er I come,
 Whate'er the subject be that starts;
 But if I get among the glum,
 I hold my tongue to tell the truth,
 And keep my breath to cool my broth.
 For chance or change of peace or pain;
 For Fortune's favour or her frown;
 For lack or glut, for loss or gain,
 I never dodge, nor up nor down:
 But swing what way the ship shall swim,
 Or tack about with equal trim.
 I suit not where I shall not speed,
 Nor trace the turn of ev'ry tide;
 If simple sense will not succeed
 I make no bustling, but abide:
 For shining wealth, or scaring woe,
 I force no friend, I fear no foe.
 Of ups and downs, of ins and outs,
 Of they're i'th' wrong, and we're i'th' right,
 I shun the rancours and the routs,
 And wishing well to every wight,
 Whatever turn the matter takes,
 I deem it all but ducks and drakes.
 With whom I feast I do not fawn,
 Nor if the folks should flout me, faint;
 If wotend welcome be withdrawn,
 I cook no kind of a complaint:
 With none dispos'd to disagree,
 But like them best who best like me.
 Not that I rate myself the rule
 How all my betters should behave;
 But fame shall find me no man's fool,
 Nor to a set of men a slave:
 I love a friendship free and frank,
 And hate to hang upon a hank.
 Fond of a true and trusty tie,
 I never loose where'er I link;
 Tho' if a bus'ness budges by,
 I talk thereon just as I think;
 My word, my work, my heart, my hand,
 Still on a side together stand.
 If names or notions make a noise,
 Whatever hap the question hath,
 The point impartially I poise,
 And read or write, but without wrath;
 For should I burn, or break my brains,
 Pray, who will pay me for my pains?

I love

I love my neighbour as myself,
 Myself like him too, by his leave;
 Nor to his pleasure, pow'r, or pelf,
 Came I to crouch, as I conceive:
 Dame Nature doubtless has design'd
 A man the monarch of his mind.

Now taste and try this temper, sirs,
 Mood it and brood it in your breast;
 Or if ye ween, for worldly stirs,
 That man does right to mar his rest,
 Let me be deft, and debonair,
 I am content, I do not care.'—vol. xv. p. 199.

Mr. Chalmers's life of Chatterton is written in that spirit of pharisaic morality which blinds the understanding as much as it hardens the heart. He tells the history of the Rowley papers just as a pleader would have told it at the Old Bailey if Chatterton had been upon trial for forging a bill of exchange! After saying that 'his general conduct during his apprenticeship was decent and regular; and that on one occasion only Mr. Lambert thought him deserving of correction for writing an abusive letter in a feigned hand to his old schoolmaster;'—he adds, in true Old Bailey logic, 'so soon did this young man learn the art of deceit, which he was now preparing to practise upon a more extensive scale.' When this letter was written Chatterton was hardly fifteen!—Upon publishing his first modern antique in the Bristol Journal, the subject excited inquiry, and the paper being traced to him, he was consequently interrogated, says Mr. Chalmers, probably without much ceremony, where he had obtained it. '*And here his unhappy disposition showed itself in a manner highly affecting in one so young, for he had not yet reached his sixteenth year, and according to all that can be gathered, had not been corrupted either by precept or example.*' To the threats, we are told, 'of those who treated him, agreeably to his appearance, as a child, he returned nothing but haughtiness, and a refusal to give any account. By milder usage he was somewhat softened, and appeared inclined to give all the information in his power. The effect, however, of this mild usage was, that instead of all, or any part of the information in his power, he tried two different falsehoods.'

'He became an infidel, but whether this was in consequence of any course of reading into which he had fallen, or that *he found it convenient to get rid of the obligations which stood in the way of his past or future schemes*, it is not very material to inquire.'—'In his writings we find some passages that are more licentious than could have been expected from a young man unhackneyed in the ways of vice, but not
 more

more so than might be expected in one who was premature in every thing, and had exhausted the stock of human folly at an age when it is usually found unbroken. *All his deceptions, his prevarications, his political tergiversation, &c. were such as should have been looked for in men of an advanced age, hardened by evil associations, and soured by disappointed pride or avarice.*

His deceptions and prevarications, be it remembered, all relate to the Rowley poems and papers, which are things very like the effect of disappointed pride and avarice! and to call his boyish essays in political controversy *political tergiversation*, is as preposterous an abuse of language, as it would be to call Mr. Chalmers a judicious critic, or a candid biographer.

Mr. Chalmers is undoubtedly learned, for he writes about catelectics, and there is a well known book within the compass of his classical studies which must have taught him that

Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes
Emollit mores nec sinit esse feros—

but unhappily he has not learnt those arts 'faithfully,' for if he had, his feelings upon this subject would not have been thus 'brutal.' However dangerous may be the distinction between venial and mortal sins in the practical casuistry of the Romish church, that puritanical spirit whose moral laws are framed in the temper of *Draco*, is more detestable, and not less pernicious. Mr. Chalmers refers the whole fiction of Rowley to original sin;—the young man 'not having been corrupted either by precept or example.' Satan, no doubt, had about as much to do with it as with the burning of the missionaries' printing-office at Serampore, an affair of which they suppose him to have repented, because of the liberal subscriptions which were raised to repair the loss. The deception was not intended to defraud or injure one human being, and might most assuredly have been begun and continued without the slightest sense of criminality in Chatterton. And for the other eccentricities of his life, and its melancholy catastrophe, Mr. Chalmers might have remembered that there were original diseases in the world as well as original sin, and that when the coroner's inquest returned a verdict of insanity after his death, that verdict might very possibly be correct. It is at least rendered highly probable by the fact, that there was a decided insanity in his family.

Mr. Chalmers is not contented with blackening the character of Chatterton;—he must also depreciate his writings. He allows them only to be wonderful when considered as the productions of a boy, and says that the coldness with which the collected edition of his works was received by the public, is perhaps a proof that it will not be possible to perpetuate the fame of an author, who has
concealed

concealed his best productions under the garb of a barbarous language, which few will be at the trouble of learning. That edition fully answered the purpose for which it was designed; it preserved the sister of Chatterton from poverty and want in her latter years, and enabled her to leave her only child well provided for according to her rank in life,—a late act of justice to the dear, and only relatives of a man of high and distinguished genius. As for the fame of Chatterton, which this editor thinks it will not be possible to perpetuate, Mr. Chalmers's opinion will never be weighed in the scale against it. The history of the Bristol Boy will always attract curiosity to his poems, and that curiosity will be amply repaid. Horace Walpole has been frequently inveighed against by the ardent admirers of Chatterton, with more severity than justice,—we recommend Mr. Chalmers to them in future as a proper subject for any castigation which they may be pleased to bestow in prose or rhyme.

One of the most remarkable of this author's acknowledged poems is a ludicrous description of Whitefield's preaching, and this Mr. Chalmers has thought proper to omit, without noticing the omission. That Whitefield is now known to have been a sincere and a good man, is certainly true; it is not less true that he was a fiery enthusiast,—the editor might have been satisfied with vindicating his character in a note, and ought not to have exercised his inquisitorial power by striking out what is a faithful, as well as spirited portrait of a character, the existence of which cannot be denied. Sins of omission, however, are not the only offence of this editor. Cooper, the translator of the *Ver-vert*, wrote a Latin epitaph upon his first born child, who died the day after his birth, and had it inscribed upon a monument. In the language of the epitaph there is nothing hyperbolic, except the word *desideratissimus* should be thought so, when applied to one so young; a very venial trespass: it has, however, appeared so preposterous an act of folly and affectation to Mr. Chalmers, that he has thought proper to annex to it in the body of Cooper's works, a burlesque translation 'which appeared some years ago in the *Gentleman's Magazine*,' and which is in such a strain of coarse and witless vulgarity that we verily suspect no person could be capable of admiring it but the writer himself. For example—

This lovely boy,
His dad's first joy,
Was son of Squire John,
And Sue, his wife, who led their life,
At town called Thurgaton,

The passage which, according to Mr. Alexander Chalmers's ideas of wit, is thus wittily ridiculed, is as follows:

-Hic

Hic jacet
 Quod mori potuit
 Henrici Gilberti Cooper,
 Infantis desideratissimi,
 Filii natu maximi
 Johannis Gilberti Cooper,
 De Thurgaton—in agro Nottinghamiensi,
 Et Susannæ, uxoris ejus.

It is a duty to notice in the severest manner this gross instance of what cannot be called by a milder term than editorial insolence.

The life of Smollet would furnish a counterpart to the history of Gilbert Stuart, and his Scotch-English Review, as related in one of our former numbers from Mr. D'Israeli's *Calamities of Authors*. He was the original editor of the *Critical Review*, and here, says Mr. Chalmers,

'It was his misfortune, that the fair display of his talents, and perhaps the genuine sentiments of his heart, were perverted by the prejudices of friendship, or by the more inexcusable impulses of jealousy, revenge, and all that enter into the composition of an irritable character. He seems to have gladly embraced the opportunity, which secrecy afforded, of dealing his blows around without discrimination, and without mercy. It is painful to read the continual personal abuse *he levelled at his rival Mr. Griffiths, and the many vulgar and coarse sarcasms* he directed against every author, who presumed to doubt the infallibility of his opinion. It is no less painful to contemplate the self-sufficiency displayed on every occasion where he can introduce his own character and works.'

A few specimens of this critical offal Mr. Chalmers has inserted, and it may be a wholesome warning for some of those, who pursue the same calling in the same spirit, to behold one of their predecessors deservedly gibbeted for his offences.

Mr. Chalmers repeats with an expression of incredulity, the assertion that Smart wore a path upon one of the paved walks belonging to Pembroke Hall. Smart resided there about fourteen years;—we have seen an apartment in which the tiled floor has been worn into a *deep* path by the feet of an imprisoned king, in no longer a space of time. Neither Dr. Anderson, nor the present editor has been able to discover a copy of the *Song of David*, which Smart composed when confined in a mad-house, indenting the lines with a key upon the wainscot. The loss of a poem composed under such circumstances, by a man of such talents, is greatly to be regretted. The following are some of the few stanzas which have been preserved by the Reviewers; Smart has

* A poet of Byrom's vein might aptly address the *Petition of the Relative Pronoun* Which to Mr. Chalmers.

never written with more strength and animation,—and perhaps never with so much feeling.

He sung of God, the mighty source
Of all things, the stupendous force
On which all things depend:
From whose right arm, beneath whose eyes,
All period, power and enterprize,
Commence, and reign, and end.
The world, the clustering spheres he made,
The glorious light, the soothing shade,
Dale, champaign, grove and hill;
The multitudinous abyss,
Where secrecy remains in bliss,
And wisdom hides her skill.
Tell them, I AM, Jehovah said
To Moses, while Earth heard in dread,
And smitten to the heart,
At once above, beneath, around,
All Nature, without voice or sound,
Replied, O Lord, THOU ART!

Smart's Song of David is not the only modern poem which has in this manner disappeared; several others are mentioned by Mr. Chalmers. If the Universities and other public libraries, now that they have succeeded in enforcing the heaviest tax that ever was imposed upon literature in any country, should properly preserve the copies which they have obtained, some little advantage may thus arise from a measure, the shameless injustice of which will one day be reprobated as loudly and as universally as it deserves.

In the life of Wilkie, Mr. Chalmers hints only at his antipathy to clean sheets, and gives at full length the encomium written by Hume upon the Epigoniad in the form of a letter to the Critical Reviewer. In one of his private letters Hume confesses that it was 'uphill work' to attempt to force this heavy piece of imitative verse-work into notice;—but there seems to have been a national feeling excited among the author's countrymen in his behalf, and Smollet had even the assurance in his history to enumerate the Epigoniad among those things which conferred lustre upon the age of George II!—Paul Whitehead falls under the merited condemnation of his biographer for his share in the orgies at Mednam Abbey; but we know not why the bequest of his heart to be deposited in Lord le Despenser's mausoleum, should be censured as any thing more than a foolish imitation of a not very wise practice among the highest ranks.—Hart's life of Gustavus Adolphus, the editor tells us, was 'a very unfortunate publication. Hume's House of Tudor came out the same week, and Robertson's History

History of Scotland only a month before, and after perusing these, poor Harte's style could not certainly be endured.' Mr. Chalmers perhaps may require to be told that industry in collecting, examining and arranging the materials of history, and fidelity in using them, are the first qualities of an historian: that in those qualities Harte has not been surpassed;—that in the opinion of military men Harte's is the best military history in our language, and that it is rising, and will continue to rise in repute.

A piece is added to Goldsmith's poems which had escaped his former editors,—Threnodia Augustalis, upon the death of the Princess Dowager of Wales, performed at the great room in Soho Square, and hastily written for the occasion. The plan is as common-place as the subject, and there is just a sufficient specimen of blank verse to show that Goldsmith's felicity of style was not universal: this species of composition *tetigit et non ornavit*. There are, however, lines which redeem the poem. Mr. Chalmers extols Armstrong above Dyer as a poet; and though he admits that Dr. Johnson's *Irene* is radically defective as a tragedy, praises it for splendour of language, richness of sentiment, and harmony of numbers! The next life contains a yet more unlucky display of this editor's critical attainments. Glover, he tells us, 'thought that iambic feet only should be used in heroic verse, without admitting any trochaic;—a notion which is much to be regretted in a writer whose judgment as a critic was acknowledged by the best scholars of his time.' A critic of this calibre plays with edge tools when he talks of iambics, trochaics and catelectics: it should seem almost impossible that a man who has read a single page in either of Glover's long poems should have written so absurd a sentence. He ventures upon verbal criticism also: on a former occasion he complains of a licentious use of the elision in such words as *ominous* and *following*, showing that he judges of verse by the eye, and here he instances as words too familiar for heroic poetry—*forestall*, *obtus*, *superfluous*, *authoritative*, *timber*, &c. &c. Mr. Chalmers might as well attempt to build a house without timber and without tools, as to write poetry if such words as these are to be prohibited. Smollet was equally happy in this line of criticism: he censured Grainger for using words which, he said, were either not English, or not used by good authors, as *noiseless*, *redoubtable*, *feud*, and, to his great comfort, was reminded that these very words were used by Shakspeare. Examples of this kind are sufficiently frequent; but they have not yet taught the cobblers of criticism not to go beyond their last.

The *Athenaid*, which could not be included in Anderson's collection, is contained in this. It ought always to accompany the *Leonidas*. Mr. Chalmers censures it because, he says, the events
of

of history are so closely followed as to give the whole air of a poetical chronicle. To this opinion we may oppose the fact of having ourselves repeatedly perused it in early youth, for the interest which the story continually excited. Glover endeavoured to imitate the ancients, but wanted strength to support the severe style which he had chosen. He has, however, many and great merits, this especially among others, that instead of treading in the sheep-track wherein the writers of modern epics, till his time, *servum pecus*, had gone one after the other, he framed the stories of both his poems according to their subject, without reference to any model, or any rule but that of propriety and good sense. 'He was supposed by Dr. Warton,' says Mr. Chalmers, 'to have left some curious memoirs of his life, but as so many years have elapsed without their appearance, this was either a mistake, or they have been deemed unfit for publication.' A portion of this history has lately been made public, and it is as interesting as any thing can be which relates to the politics of such unimportant times. It has led to a supposition that the author of Junius and of these memoirs, were one and the same person; and an Inquiry has been published, which must be allowed to have shown satisfactorily that the various requisites which must have existed in Junius, are to be found in Glover. It is thus proved that Glover *might have been* the author, but no proof has as yet been adduced that *he was*. We should rejoice if this inquiry should bring forth more of his remains, and lead to a collected edition of the works of an author who, though too highly extolled in his own day, must ever hold a respectable rank among the English poets. This is the more to be wished, because Glover's history has been hitherto very imperfectly given. The editor of his Memoirs would do more honour to the memory of this distinguished man by executing this task, than if he should succeed in identifying him with the most eminent libeller of his day; for the literary character of Junius will not maintain its rank. It is as little difficult in these times to write a malicious style, as it is to produce smooth verses; and he who, like Junius, is deterred by no sense of veracity or of shame from bringing forward bold accusations which he knows to be unfounded; misrepresenting and distorting facts, and seasoning calumny and detraction with insult, may easily obtain the reputation of writing with vivacity and strength. But the trick has grown common; some of the most eminent professors of the art have been 'stripped and whipped' as they deserved; and they have discovered, somewhat too late, while writhing under the wholesome discipline, that the precepts of the moral law are not to be violated with impunity.

Whitehead, the laureate, is said to have contracted his school friendships either with noblemen or gentlemen of large fortune; and it is asked if this choice, which some imputed to vanity and

others to prudence, 'might not be owing to his delicacy, as that would make him easily disgusted with the coarser manners of ordinary boys.' We know not whether this execrable folly comes from Dr. Balguy or Mason, but it is lamentable to think that either should have been capable of uttering it. Mr. Chalmers talks of his being enabled to remain at school by his own frugality, and such assistance as his mother could give him: in what manner could his own frugality contribute to this?—In the life of that good man Scott of Amwell, a sort of last dying speech and confession, which the quakers published after his death, is inserted, without any suspicion that it will injure the memory of Mr. Scott. 'Those,' the editor adds, 'who have admired him as the excellent and benevolent citizen and the favoured poet, will not, it is hoped, whatever their religious opinion may be, view him with less complacency on his death-bed as a christian.' This precious paper requires some comment; Scott's life had not merely been innocent and decorous, but eminently useful. 'He was esteemed regular and moral in his conduct,' says this very document, 'and extensive in his knowledge; very remarkably diligent and attentive in promoting works of public utility, in assisting individuals in cases of difficulty, and in the conciliation of differences. Nevertheless,' it is added, 'there is reason to believe he frequently experienced the conviction of the spirit of truth for not faithfully following the Lord.' Whether any heavier offence can be proved against him by the society than that of having styled himself Esquire in one of his title-pages, and used such heathen words as December and May in his poems, instead of twelfth month and fifth month, we know not; but when he was dying at a vigorous age of a typhus fever, he was 'brought down,' says this quaker-process, 'as from the cliffs of the rocks and the heights of the hills into the valley of deep humiliation.' 'Being convinced of his own low and unprepared state, he said he himself was unworthy of the lowest place in the heavenly mansions, but hoped he should not be a companion of accursed and wrathful spirits.' In this state of 'religious concern' he continued till he died, and the quakers published the account 'as a word of reproof to the careless, and of comfort to the mourners on Zion.' They will probably not be well pleased at seeing it republished in a work which will preserve it for many centuries. Thirty years have done much towards softening down the asperities of the sect; and if they had among their members at this time one who wrote such poems as Scott of Amwell, they would regard his works as things which did honour to the society as well as to the author. The Romanists draw a veil over their confessions, with due reverence for the feelings, as well as due tenderness for the infirmities of human nature. How much wiser and better is their practice than that which drags into day-light these death-bed scenes; and
founding

founding a judicial process upon whatever comes from the lips of a man upon the rack of disease, publishes sentence against him, and wounds the living while it stigmatizes the dead!

A correspondent in the *Gentleman's Magazine* asserted that Mickle was employed by Evans to fabricate some of the *old ballads* published by him, and Mr. Chalmers says this calumny was fully refuted in a subsequent letter. An opinion has been expressed in a former number of this journal that many of the modern ballads in Evans's collection were written by Mickle: there was no attempt at deceit in the case, and nothing but a spirit of malignant stupidity could extract from it an accusation against the author. Perhaps it would not yet be too late to discover other pieces of this very able writer which exist in the periodical publications of the day. The *Old Bachelor*, a poem of striking merit, which was reprinted in the *Annual Anthology* from the *Town and Country* magazine, seems to bear the marks of his hand.

In the life of Logan Mr. Chalmers speaks of the discovery of Ossian's poems as if he believed in their authenticity. Because some pieces which are printed among the remains of poor Michael Bruce have been ascribed to Logan, he has not thought it proper to admit Bruce's poems into his collection; and, speaking of Lord Woodhouselee's appointment to the professorship of history at Edinburgh for which Logan was soliciting, he tells us that the talents of the successful person, had talents been the criterion, must have excluded all competition. A title of Logan's talents would make ten Lord Woodhouselees.—He defends the parishioners of Logan for quarrelling with him on the score of his literary pursuits, saying 'there can be surely no great injustice in complaining of studies which diverted him from his profession, a profession which he had voluntarily chosen, and in which he was liberally settled;' as if the active pursuit of literature were in any way incompatible with the duties of the ministry! A valuable addition is made to T. Warton's works, by the discovery of five pastoral eclogues, the scenes of which are laid among the shepherds oppressed by the war in Germany. They were published in 1745, and ascribed to him on the competent authority of Isaac Reid. The plan is stated in the preface to be 'entirely new,' and the design 'essentially distinguished from any productions of their kind either ancient or modern:' the author adds, 'I hope it will not be thought odd, or ill chosen. The opposing interests of a peaceful and rural life, and the tumultuous scenes of war, together with the various struggles and passions arising from thence, seem by no means an improper field for the most elegant writer to exercise his genius in.' They are certainly remarkable productions for a youth of eighteen; but Warton, though undoubtedly to be believed in asserting his own originality, was mistaken when he supposed that no former produc-

tion of the same kind was to be found. The Jesuit Jean de Bussièrès has an eclogue precisely upon the same plan.

The Life of Mason is written with praise-worthy care in collecting scattered notes. It does not mention that he was a frequent guest at Rokeby, now a celebrated name, and that the faded decorations of a favourite summer-house which overlooks the wild Greta, are carefully preserved as the work of his hand. Mr. Chalmers's character of this poet is expressed as usual with laboured and inaccurate pomposity; its import however is just, he censures the fanciful profuseness of his ornaments, the epithets which encumber what they do not illustrate, and the stiff and strained alliteration which he so perpetually affected: and he does justice to the bold and original conceptions of a writer who aimed at nobler and better things than any of his contemporaries. The Heroic Epistle, and the other piece which appeared under the same fictitious name, are added here to Mason's works, upon sufficient evidence, but not without a wish, says Mr. Chalmers, that they could have been attributed to some writer of less private or public worth. The editor has not shewn the same judgment in his estimate of the literary merits of Sir William Jones, to whom he assigns a very high rank among modern poets:—it is not Sir William Jones's poetry that can perpetuate his name. The Life of Cowper is Mr. Chalmers's best production, and we quote from it that part which relates to the intellectual malady of the poet, in justice to the writer, though we still must wish that Cowper's lot had fallen among friends whose religious opinions had been of a happier character.

‘ It appears to the present writer, from a careful perusal of that instructive piece of biography published by Mr. Hayley, that Cowper, from his infancy, had a tendency to errations of the mind; and without admitting this fact in some degree, it must seem extremely improbable that the mere dread of appearing as a reader in the house of lords should have brought on his first settled fit of lunacy. Much, indeed, has been said of his uncommon shyness and diffidence, and more, perhaps, than the history of his early life will justify. Shyness and diffidence are common to all young persons who have not been early introduced into company, and Cowper, who had not, perhaps, that advantage at home, might have continued to be shy when other boys are forward. But had his mind been, even in this early period, in a healthful state, he must have gradually assumed the free manners of an ingenious youth, conscious of no unusual imperfection that should keep him back. At school, we are told, he was trampled upon by the ruder boys who took advantage of his weakness, yet we find that he mixed in their amusements, which must in some degree have advanced him on a level with them: and what is yet more extraordinary, we find him associating with men of more gaiety than pure morality admits, and sporting with the utmost vivacity and wildness with Thurlow and others, when it was natural to expect that he would have been glad to court solitude for the purposes of study, as well as for the indulgence of his habitual shyness, if, indeed, at this period it was so habitual as we are taught to believe.

‘ Although,

‘ Although, therefore, it be inconsistent with the common theories of mania, to ascribe his first attack to his aversion to the situation which was provided for him, or to the operation of delicacy or sensibility on a healthy mind, it is certain that at that time, and when, by his own account, he was an entire stranger to the religious system which he afterwards adopted, he was visited by the first attack of his disorder, which was so violent and of such a length as to put an end to all prospect of advancement in his profession. It is particularly incumbent on all who venerate the sound and amiable mind of Cowper, the clearness of his understanding, and his powers of reasoning, to notice the date and circumstances of this first attack, because it has been the practice with superficial observers, and professed infidels, who are now running down all the important doctrines of revealed religion under the name of methodism, to ascribe Cowper’s malady to his religious principles, and his religious principles to the company he kept. But important as it may be to repel insinuations of this kind, it is become less necessary since the publication of Mr. Hayley’s Life, which affords the most complete vindication of Mr. Cowper’s friends; and decidedly proves that his religious system was no more connected with his malady than with his literary pursuits; that his malady continued to return without any impulse from either, and that no means of the most judicious kind were omitted by himself or his friends to have prevented the attack, if human means could have availed. With respect to his friends, there can be nothing conceived more consolatory to him who wishes to cherish a good opinion of mankind, than to contemplate Cowper in the midst of those friends, men and women exquisitely tender, kind, and disinterested, animated by the most pure benevolence towards the helpless and interesting sufferer, enduring cheerfully every species of fatigue and privation, to administer the least comfort to him, and sensible of no gratification but what arose from their success in prolonging and gladdening the life on which they set so high a value.’—pp. 600, 601.

Three volumes of translations bring up the rear of this collection. They contain Pope’s Homer, Dryden’s Virgil and Juvenal, Pitt’s *Æneid*, and Vida’s *Art of Poetry*; Francis’s Horace, Rowe’s Lucan, Grainger’s Tibullus, Fawkes’s Theocritus, Apollonius Rhodius, Coluthus, Anacreon, Sappho, Bion, Moschus and Musæus; Garth’s Ovid, Lewis’s Statius, Cooke’s Hesiod, Hoole’s Ariosto and Tasso, and Mickle’s *Lusiad*. There was at least as much cause for including Cowper’s Homer as Pitt’s Virgil; and miserably ignorant indeed must that editor be, not merely of the merit of books, but of the estimation in which they are held, who could prefer Hoole’s Tasso to Fairfax’s.

Upon comparing Mr. Chalmers’s collection with Dr. Anderson’s, the advantage appears at first sight to be greatly on the side of the former. The type and paper are materially better,—they are as good as could be desired, and the text is far less incorrect. But the quantity of additional matter is by no means so great as the additional number of volumes might seem to promise, and the

omission of *Sackville* occasions a grievous deficiency, while it affords the most undeniable proof of the editor's unfitness for his task. It is scarcely possible to conceive two persons performing the same work with feelings more different than Dr. Anderson and Mr. Chalmers. The former a thorough lover of poetry, indulgent to the artist for the sake of the art: the latter a thorough-paced professional critic, so entirely ignorant of his subject as to fancy that *Glover* used no trochees in his verse, and to class *Prior*, *Gray*, and *Akenside* in the school of *Spenser*, and talk of their writings in the *Spenserian stanza*!

He has told us that 'Poetry is the art of pleasing.' We will not attempt to define with equal precision what criticism is, but we will tell Mr. Chalmers what it is not. It is not the art of composing pompous sentences which swell like an inflated bladder, and are as empty as the bladder when you prick them for the meaning. It does not consist in talking of *catelectics*, and *trochaics*, and *elisions*. It is not displayed by chusing out half a dozen or half a score words from a poem containing as many thousand lines, and condemning them as too familiar for heroic poetry. It is not the art of finding fault. It is not, whatever ladies and gentlemen may think, common to all persons who have enjoyed the benefits of modern education. It requires long habits of thoughtful and comprehensive study, as well as intuition. It may be reduced to rules; but the best rules will no more make a man a critic, than they can make him a poet, painter, or musician, if the predisposing and innate faculty be wanting.

To good old Dr. Anderson the poets and the literature of this country are deeply beholden; it is with great pleasure that we render this tribute of justice to him while he is living to receive it. The booksellers, as their predecessors had done with Dr. Johnson's edition, would have begun the collection with *Cowley*. Dr. Anderson prevailed upon them to include some of the earlier and greater writers, and the four volumes which were thus appropriated, though fewer than he wished and were really required, gave the collection its chief, almost its only value. Many of the *Elizabethan* poets were thus, for the first time, made generally accessible, and if the good old school of poetry has been in some degree revived, Dr. Anderson has been mainly instrumental towards a reformation which was so devoutly to be wished for.

We have spoken severely of Mr. Chalmers, not exactly meting to him with the same measure wherewith he has meted, for he has had fair measure at our hands. One who shows so little tenderness for the errors of others has no reason to expect any for his own. The critic who is convicted of incapacity deserves to be chastised, like the soldier who disgraces himself in the day of battle; he has thrust himself into a profession which makes weakness a crime.

NEW